

STAFF PROCESS

Quick Reference Series

Military Decision Making Process **Step 3- Course of Action Development** **(Book 3 of 5)**



September 2012

The Staff Process Quick Reference Series (SPQRS) addresses scores of Mission Command topics. Each SPQRS edition is dated and numbered for reference purposes.

SPQRS - 3 - 2012

About This Book

Purpose

This publication has been developed as a tool to assist unit commanders and staffs with the third step of the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP), *Course of Action Development (COA-D)*.

How It's Organized

This 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.

The *Course of Action Development* major task (step) 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 sub-task. Selected tools to assist in task execution are also included, along with a glossary of applicable terms and acronyms.

Note from the Author

This book 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 the commander, XO, principal or 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” ensuring 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 soliciting 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 ATTP 5-0.1 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 diagram concerning the third step of the MDMP, *Course of Action Development*.** A graphic example unique to the MDMP step being addressed precedes each MDMP step in this publication.

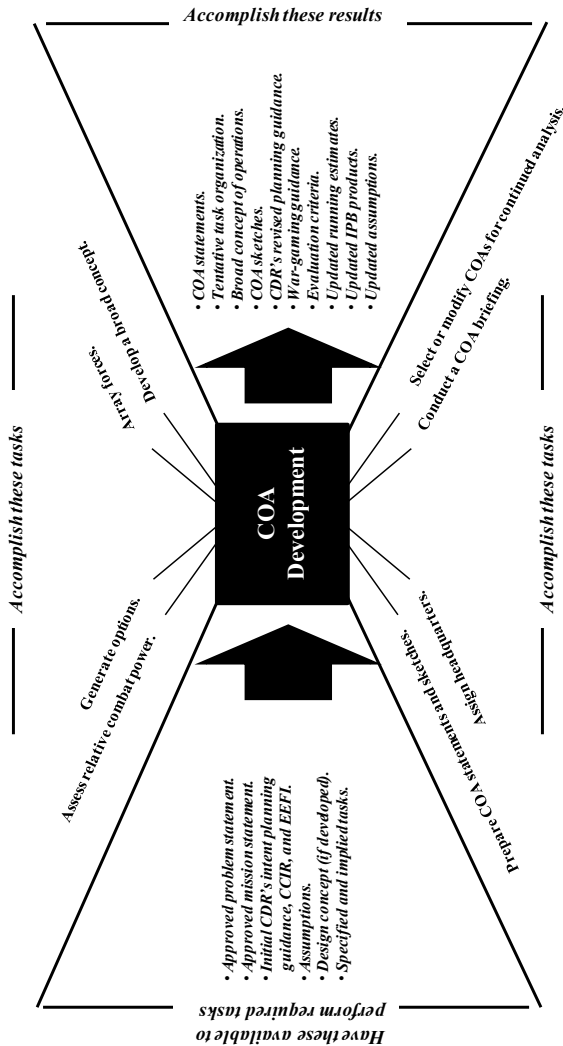


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Introduction to the MDMP

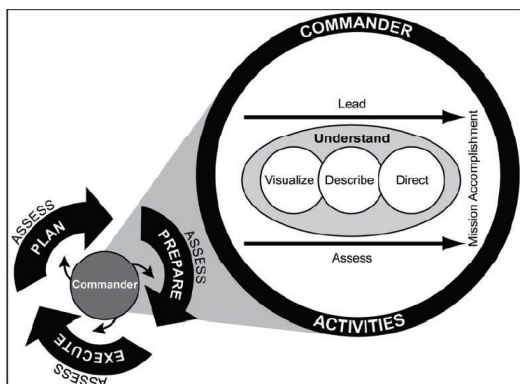
The MDMP is an iterative planning methodology that integrates the activities of the commander, staff, subordinate headquarters, and other partners to understand the situation and mission; develop and compare courses of action; decide on a course of action that best accomplishes the mission; and produce an operation plan or order for execution (ATTP 5-0.1).

The MDMP

- Helps leaders apply thoroughness, clarity, sound judgment, logic, and professional knowledge to understand situations, develop options to solve problems, and reach decisions. *ATTP 5-0.1*
- Helps commanders, staffs, and others think critically and creatively while planning. *ATTP 5-0.1*
- Facilitates collaborative planning. The higher headquarters (HHQ) 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 decision making, and resolve conflicts before publishing the plan or order. *ATTP 5-0.1*
- 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. *ATTP 5-0.1*

TIP

It is critical that you assist the commander in achieving 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 4-1 in ATTP 5-0.1. It includes other key input and output information identified in the MDMP step sections of Chapter 4, ATTP 5-0.1.

Key inputs	Steps	Key outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher headquarters' plan or order or a new mission anticipated by the commander 	<p>Step 1 Receipt of Mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commander's initial guidance Initial allocation of time
Warning order		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher headquarters' plan or order Higher headquarters' intelligence and knowledge products Knowledge products from other organizations Design concept (if design precedes mission analysis) Updated Running Estimates Initial commander's guidance COA evaluation criteria (from commander's initial guidance) 	<p>Step 2 Mission Analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved problem statement Approved mission statement Initial commander's intent Initial CCIRs and EEFls Initial commander's planning guidance Information themes and messages Updated IPB and running estimates Assumptions Resource shortfalls Updated operational timeline COA evaluation criteria
Warning order		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved problem statement Approved mission statement Initial commander's intent, planning guidance, CCIR, and EEFl Updated IPB and running estimates Assumptions Design concept (if developed) Specified and implied tasks 	<p>Step 3 Course of Action (COA) Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COA statements and sketches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tentative task organization Broad concept of operations Commander's revised planning guidance to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> War-gaming guidance Evaluation criteria Updated running estimates and IPB products Updated assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated running estimates Revised commander's planning guidance Updated IPB products COA statements and sketches Updated assumptions 	<p>Step 4 COA Analysis (War Game)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refined COAs Potential decision points War-game results Initial assessment measures Updated assumptions Decision support templates and matrixes Synchronization matrixes Potential branches and sequels Updated running estimates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated running estimates Refined COAs Evaluation criteria War-game results Updated assumptions 	<p>Step 5 COA Comparison</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluated COAs Recommended COAs Updated running estimates Updated assumptions COA selection rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated running estimates Evaluated COAs Recommended COA Updated assumptions 	<p>Step 6 COA Approval</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commander selected COA and any modifications Refined commander's intent, CCIRs, and EEFls Updated assumptions Final commander's planning guidance
Warning order		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commander selected COA with any modifications Refined commander's intent, CCIRs, and EEFls Updated assumptions Commander's final planning guidance 	<p>Step 7 Orders Production</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved operations plan or order Schedule for rehearsals

Who Talks to Whom About What

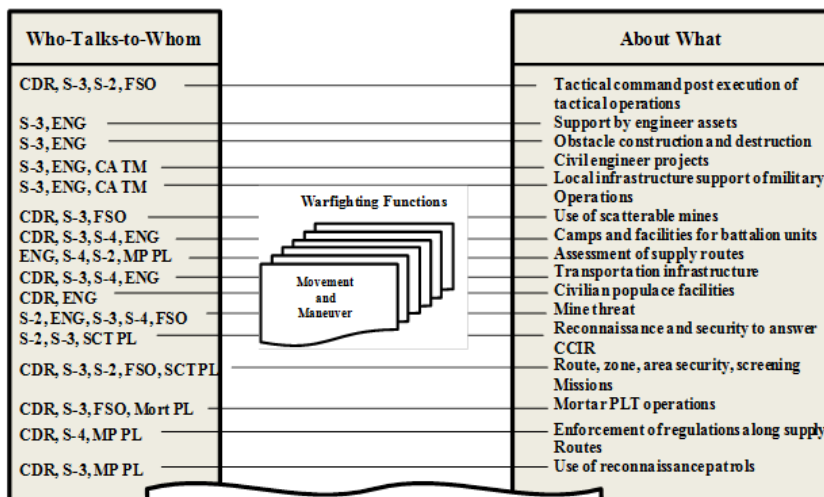
Remember the earlier comment about the “Devil is in the details?” Nowhere is this more true than knowing who to communicate with to get the right answer or product, in the right sequence or format, at the right time. Planning standard operating procedures (PSOP) and Tactical SOPs (TACSOP) should have 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.”



So...if you are the S-3, this is an example of the collaboration that should occur on a given list of topics within the WEF Movement and Maneuver.

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 are identified. A complete list of collaboration topics within each WFF may be found in the MTC-LVN June 2012 edition of the *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 interest (AO) and area of influence (AI) Conditions for successful decisive operations Synchronization of all the elements of combat power Commander’s (CDR) 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 US 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, 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	Tactical command post execution of tactical operations
S-3, ENG	Support by engineer assets
S-3, ENG	Obstacle construction and destruction
S-3, ENG, CA TM	Civil engineer projects
S-3, ENG, CA TM	Local infrastructure support of military operations
CDR, S-3, FSO	Use of scatterable mines
CDR, S-3, S-4, ENG	Camps and facilities for battalion units
ENG, S-4, S-2, MP PL	Assessment of supply routes
CDR, S-3, S-4, ENG	Transportation infrastructure
CDR, ENG	Civilian populace facilities
S-2, ENG, S-3, S-4, FSO	Mine threat
S-2, S-3, SCT PL	Reconnaissance and security to answer CCIR
CDR, S-3, S-2, FSO, SCT PL	Route, zone, area security, screening missions
CDR, S-3, FSO, Mort PL	Mortar platoon (PLT) operations
CDR, S-4, MP PL	Enforcement of regulations along supply routes
CDR, S-3, MP PL	Use of reconnaissance patrols

WFF - Intelligence

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

Who Talks to Whom About What (cont.)

WFF - Intelligence (cont.)

Collaboration With	About What
<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 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, IIA</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 intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB)</p> <p>Intelligence production team</p> <p>Use of human intelligence (HUMINT)</p>

Who Talks to Whom About What (cont.)

WFF - Intelligence (cont.)

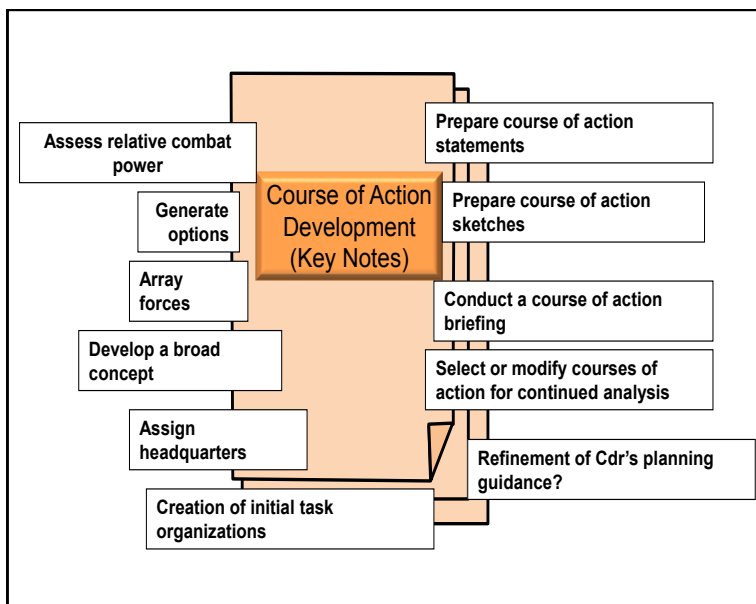
Collaboration With	About What
S-2, SSO	Release of classified US information in accordance with the multinational sharing agreements
S-2, S-3, NGO	Integration of nongovernmental organizations (NGO), international organizations, host nation (HN) / police, civilian police, and others into the intelligence process
S-2, G-2	Integration of intelligence assets from higher levels
All Staff	The BN Collection Plan
S-3, S-2	Assessment of the enemy to US 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 <i>COA Analysis</i>
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	BN Observation Plan
S-6, S-2, IIA, CA,	Battle damage assessment (BDA) and MOE are integrated into intelligence estimates
MISO TM	Terrain visualization on the effects of terrain on friendly and enemy operations
ENG, S-2	Terrain visualization on the effects of terrain on friendly and enemy operations
MISO TM, CDR, S-3,	Military information support operations (MISO) activities in support of the battalion
XO, S-2	Enemy propaganda
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

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.



MDMP Step 3 Highlights



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. Battle staff personnel are encouraged to cross reference trends comments with the applicable step.



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.

TTP

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 PIR), the commander's concept for deploying reconnaissance assets, his concept of target acquisition, his intent for employing friendly assets, etc. The battalion TACSOP should address the components of the commander's planning guidance, at a minimum, those outlined in Chapter 4 of ATTP 5-0.1. 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 provide 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 TACSOP 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.

Course of Action Development (cont.)

Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

TASK: Perform Course of Action Development

- Assess relative combat power
- Generate options
- Array forces
- Develop a broad concept
- Assign headquarters
- Develop COA statement and sketches
- Conduct COA Briefing
- Select or modify COAs for continued analysis

FEEDBACK COMMENTS

3. COA-D process steps are sometimes omitted in the interest of time available. Staffs often get in a hurry to begin wargaming and fail to formulate each warfighting function role in the developed COAs. They then use the wargaming 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 has made the decision to pursue 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 wargaming 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 wargaming results in the wargaming process becoming a COA development session. Have the XO / S-3 use the TAFT-produced COA-D job aid chart from the TAFT publication, *The Azimuth* #36 (1st Qtr, 2013) as a checklist for each of the subtasks.

4. Insufficient detail in a course of action 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. 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," has available time, space, and resource 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 TACSOP 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

- Assess relative combat power
- Generate options
- Array forces
- Develop a broad concept
- Assign headquarters
- Develop COA statement and sketches
- Conduct COA Briefing
- Select or modify COAs for continued analysis

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

TTP

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. ATP 5-0.1), 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. Staff 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 doctrinal 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).

Course of Action Development (cont.)

Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

TASK: Perform Course of Action Development

- Assess relative combat power
- Generate options
- Array forces
- Develop a broad concept
- Assign headquarters
- Develop COA statement and sketches
- Conduct COA Briefing
- Select or modify COAs for continued analysis

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 in formation into the COA-D process.

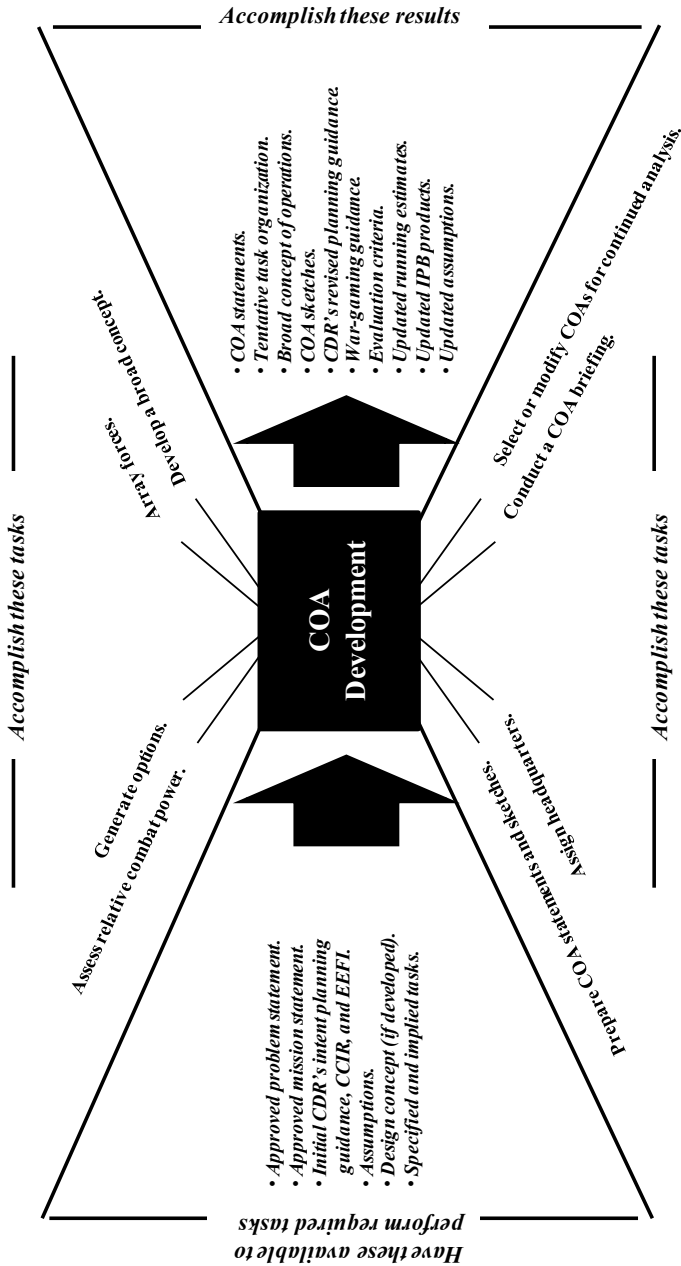


DISCUSSION

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 wargaming. In the time available, the staff will focus on the most likely enemy COA, but still attempt to adequately wargame 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 fire support 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




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 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.

- 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 TACSOP, 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 time line and interim time hacks . . . Be prepared to abide by them! A staff member should be assigned to monitor the time line.
- 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 TACSOP.
- 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.)

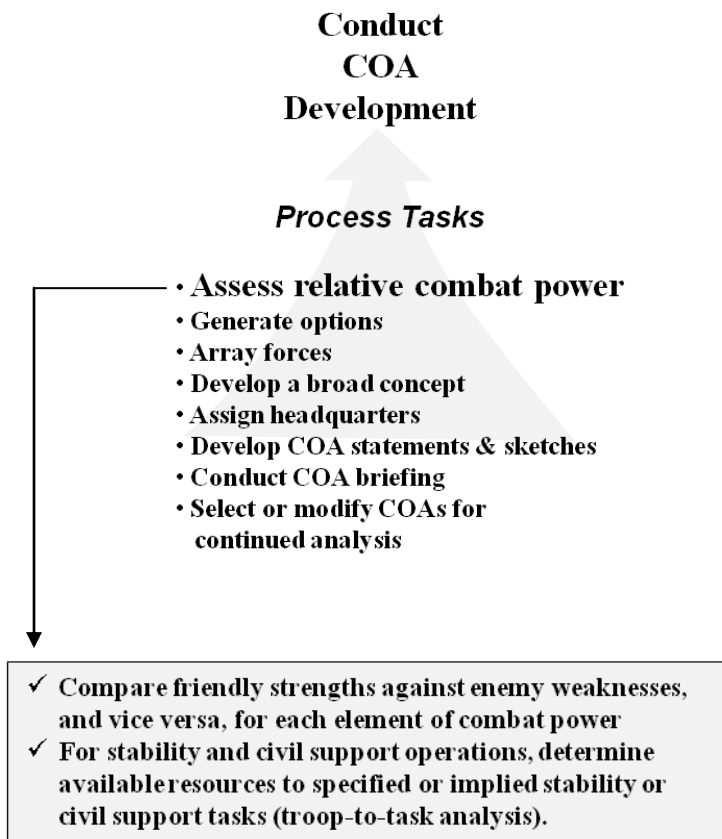
Check them off as you go.

- 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 task and purpose 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 a 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 of the 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 combat power element.

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

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

**INTELLIGENCE:**

What collection assets are available?



What intelligence exists about the enemy main effort and how will they employ combat multipliers to support their COAs?



What are the key indicators to confirm or deny enemy COAs?



Within the time available, have sufficient enemy COAs (starting with the most likely and including the most dangerous) been provided?



How will enemy, weather, and terrain affect potential COAs?



How will current intelligence affect targeting?



What procedures are in place to maintain an up-to-date enemy picture?



What gaps exist in the unit Collection Plan?



Have RFIs been planned / submitted to address those gaps?



Do IPB products identify facts and assumptions that will assist in determining likely enemy COAs?

**MOVEMENT and MANEUVER:**

Do friendly and enemy elements have positional or mobility advantages or disadvantages relating to other friendly forces, the enemy, and the terrain?



Can a positional advantage be gained to deliver fires or fire potential to accomplish a task or purpose?

**FIRES:**

What are the advantages and disadvantages associated with direct and indirect fire capabilities?



What are the weapons systems range capabilities, day and night target acquisition capabilities, non-lethal capabilities, joint capabilities, and sustainment capabilities?



How would enemy and friendly elements best use firepower to integrate with, and enhance the advantages of, maneuver to accomplish their task and purpose?

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

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

**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 reconnaissance and security capabilities, passive and active security measures within the operating environment, engineer, air defense artillery, CBRN, and 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 is the status of evacuation assets?



What is 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 inform and influence (II) and II-related activities (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 incorporates 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 TACSOP.
- 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

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 the 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.

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.

- 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 operational 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 of the WFF areas 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 is 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.

Course of Action Development (cont.)

Helpful Tips (cont.)

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

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Keep constant staff focus on the planned operation, the commander's guidance, and the unit's unique contribution to the HHQ mission. During "brainstorming" sessions, it is easy get "side tracked" by branches and sequels.



Don't waste the commander's and staff's time on options that you don't believe will work.

Be the time enforcer! Ensure staff discipline is applied to how available time is used.

Each COA sketch should be portrayed in the same manner (sketch, overlay on a map, digital product). Strive to use products that can be easily translated into geo-referenced products for *COA Analysis*. You will have to get into the "eaches" and "everys" during this next step and time wasted is time lost.

Notes:

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 COIN 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
- ✓ 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, lastly, 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

Course of Action Development (cont.)

Helpful Tips (cont.)

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

- 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 battle area (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 battle area 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 w/its task and purpose, linked to how it supports the HHQs' concept.
- ✓ Designation of shaping operation along w/their task and purpose, linked to how they support the decisive operation.
- ✓ Designation of sustaining operation along w/their tasks and purpose, linked to how they support the decisive and shaping operations.
- ✓ Designation of the reserve, including its location and composition.
- ✓ R & S operations.
- ✓ Essential stability tasks.
- ✓ ID maneuver options that may develop during operations.
- ✓ Assignment of subordinate AOs.
- ✓ Scheme of fires.
- ✓ Information 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.

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 purpose, 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 surveillance and reconnaissance operations, I&I activities (IIA) 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 all WFFs 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 deficiencies 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 (FRAGO), you can count on coordination difficulty.



Course of Action Development (cont.)

Helpful Tips (cont.)

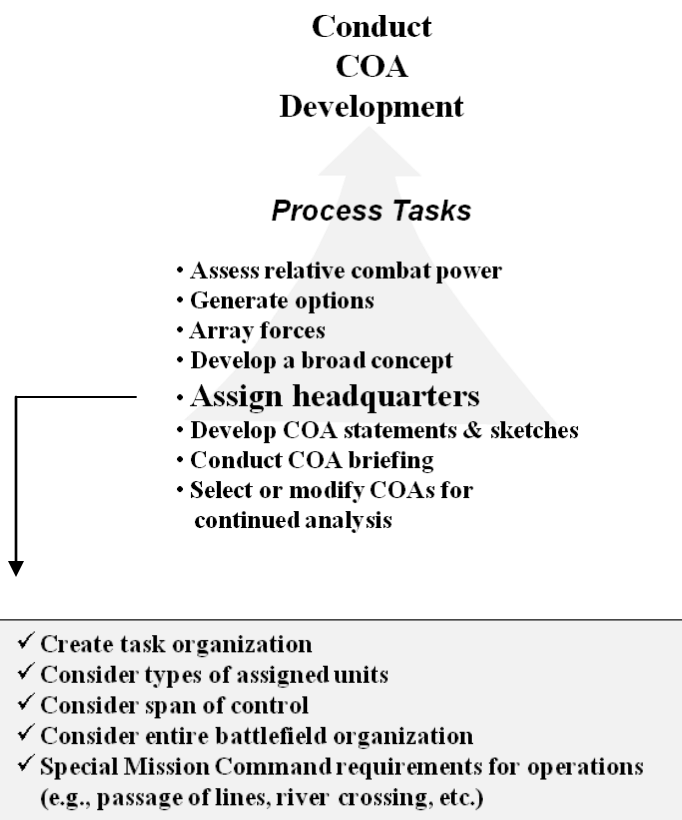
Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- If the 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 movement, 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”



Course of Action Development (cont.)**Task: Assign Headquarters****Actions That Must Occur**

Check them off as you go.

The staff assigns HQ 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 what 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 TACSOP.

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 brigade. 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.

Course of Action Development (cont.)

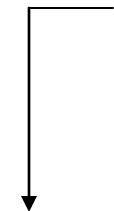
Task: Develop COA Statements and Sketches

“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.
- ✓ Reconnaissance 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 subordinate unit.

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.

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 in 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, 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 clearer picture of the scheme of maneuver, direct and indirect fire 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

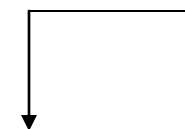
Course of Action Development (cont.)**Helpful Tips (cont.)**

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

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | That the staff articulates how the unit will successfully accomplish the mission in relationship to the decisive point |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | That the staff includes all elements in the statement, such as task and purpose for the decisive operation, task and purpose for the shaping operation, task and purpose for sustaining operations, task and purpose for reconnaissance 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 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | That the staff uses decision graphics. (They will help simplify COA Analysis as they sort out results from the war-game) |
| <input type="radio"/> | 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 WFF supporting assets will achieve the decisive point and execute the scheme of maneuver. |
| <input type="radio"/> | 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: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Unit and subordinate unit boundaries to designate zones / sectors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Unit movement formations (but not subordinate unit formations) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Additional phase lines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Assembly areas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Battle positions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong points |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ground and air axes of advance / direction of attack |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Engagement areas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Objectives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Forward edge of the battle area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Forward line of own troops and/or line of departure / line of contact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Major man-made and natural obstacles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Direct fire and indirect fire support coordination measures |

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.

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 TACSOP 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

OIL

Helpful Tips

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

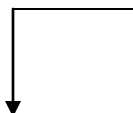
Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- 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

Notes:

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.

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 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.

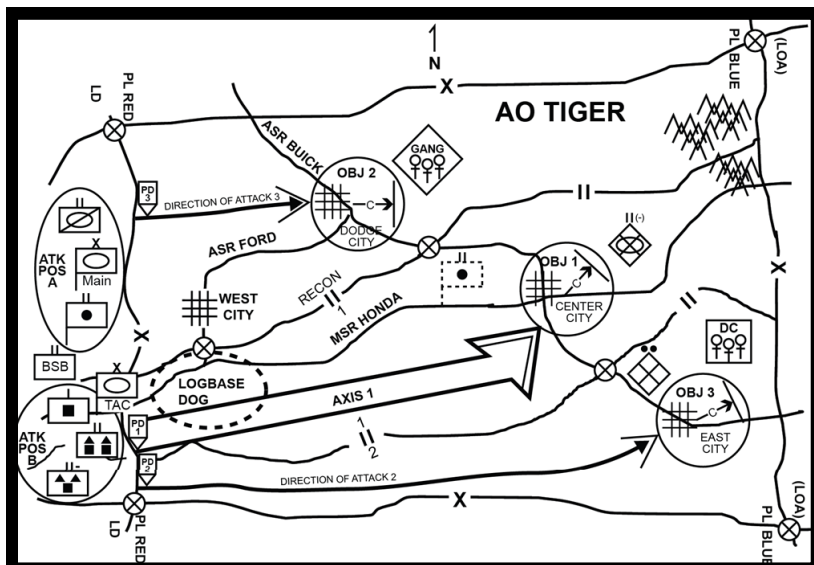


Which ones do I need? Which ones will work for me?

Course of Action Development (cont.)

Some Tools That May Help

Sample Brigade COA Sketch (extracted from Figure 4-4 , ATTP 5-0.1)



MISSION: On order, 3d HBCT clears remnants of the 72d Brigade in AO TIGER to establish security and enable the host-nation in reestablishing civil control and governance in the region.

INTENT: The purpose of this operation is to provide a safe and secure environment in AO TIGER that enables the host-nation and other civilian organization to reestablish civil control, restore essential services, and reestablish local governance within the area. At end state, the BCT has cleared remnant enemy forces in AO TIGER, secured population centers, and is prepared to transition responsibility for security to host-nation authority.

DECISIVE OPERATION: Combined Arms BN #1 (two armor/two mech) (ME) begins movement from ATK POS B, crosses LD at PD 1, and attacks along AXIS 1 to clear remnants of the 72d Brigade and secure the population in OBJ 1.

SHAPING OPERATIONS: Combined Arms BN #2 (-) (two armor/one mech) in the SOUTH follows Combined Arms BN #1 from ATK POS B, crosses LD at PD 2, and attacks along DIRECTION OF ATTACK 2 to clear OBJ 3 and provide security to displaced civilian site vicinity EAST CITY. RECON squadron in the NORTH begins movement from ATK POS A, crosses LD at PD 3, and attacks along DIRECTION OF ATTACK 3 to clear hostile gang vic OBJ 2 and provide security to enable NGO delivery of humanitarian assistance to WEST CITY and DODGE CITY. 3rd HBCT Main CP moves and co-locates with RECON squadron.

The BCT reserve, Mech Company, locates with BSB vic AA DOG with priority of commitment: 1) OBJ 1 in support of Combined Arms BN #1; 2) MSR HONDA security; and 3) Security of supply/relief convoys.

3d HBCT TAC CP moves and co-locates with Combined Arms BN #1 in OBJ 1. HBCT main CP locates in ATK POS A. O/O moves and co-locates with RECON squadron in OBJ 2.

BCT FIRES will disrupt enemy mortars vic OBJ 1 and position to provide responsive precision fires to destroy remnant enemy forces in AO TIGER.

BCT RECONNAISSANCE AND SURVEILLANCE operations focus on: 1) Identifying the location and disposition of enemy forces vic. OBJ 1; 2) Observation of MSR HONDA between PL RED and PL BLUE; and 3) Observation of dislocated civilian traffic from CENTER CITY to EAST CITY.

SUSTAINING OPERATION: The BSB will establish LOGBASE DOG vic WEST CITY with MSR HONDA, ASR FORD, and ASR BUICK as the primary routes used to sustain operations. The BSB coordinates with humanitarian relief agencies to help rapidly restore essential services in AO TIGER.

TACTICAL RISK is assumed in the northeastern portion of AO TIGER by utilizing primarily reconnaissance and surveillance assets to maintain situational awareness of hostile elements that may use mountains to reconstitute forces.

AO	area of operations	HBCT	headquarters brigade combat team	OBJ	objective
ASR	alternate supply route	LC	line of contact	PD	point of departure
ATK POS	attack position	LD	line of departure	PL	phase line
BCT	brigade combat team	LOA	limit of advance	RECON	reconnaissance
BN	battalion	MECH	mechanized	TAC	tactical
BSB	brigade support battalion	MSR	main supply route	vic	vicinity
CP	command post	NGO	nongovernmental organization		
DC	displaced civilians	O/O	on order		

Course of Action Development (cont.)**Some Tools That May Help**

Sample COA Development Briefing Format

Sample COA Development Briefing Format

(Reference: ATTP 5-0.1, Commander and Staff Officer Guide, September 2011)

(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.)

Commander's Intent
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battalion Commander's intent. • Commander's intent one level up.
Mission
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One level up.
Concept of Operations
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One levels up.
Mission
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved battalion mission statement. • Approved problem statement (if used)
Updated IPB
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enemy, terrain, weather, and key civil considerations.
Most likely Enemy COA
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For additional guidance see FM 2-01.3 (C-2), para 1-28.
Most Dangerous Enemy COA
Enemy SITTEMP
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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				

Troop-to-Task (Unit)

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.)

<p>COA 1 Task Organization</p> <p>COA 1 Statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission: • Intent: • Decisive Operation: • Shaping Operation: • Fires: • Reconnaissance and Surveillance: • Sustaining Operation: • Tactical Risk: <p>COA 1 Sketch</p>
--

<p>COA 1 Rationale</p> <p>COA 2 Task Organization</p> <p>COA 2 Statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission: • Intent: • Decisive Operation: • Shaping Operation: • Fires: • Reconnaissance and Surveillance: • Sustaining Operation: • Tactical Risk: <p>COA 2 Sketch</p>
--

<p>COA 2 Rationale</p> <p>Request for Information (RI) Status</p> <p>Number of RI's <u>Submitted</u>: _____</p> <p>Number of RI's <u>Answered</u>: _____</p> <p>Number of RI's <u>Pending</u>: _____</p> <p>Number of RI's <u>Disapproved</u>: _____</p> <p>RI's Requiring Commander's Attention:</p> <p>COA Evaluation Criteria</p> <p>Refined Commander's Intent</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BN CDR's Intent is 3-5 sentence long. <p>Refined Planning Guidance</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BN CDR's initial planning guidance.
--

Acronyms and Abbreviations

A

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
BSTT – Battalion Staff Training Team
BUB – battle update briefing

C

CA – civil affairs
CASEVAC – casualty evacuation
CBRNE – chemical, biological, radioactive, nuclear and high yield explosives
CCIR – commander’s critical intelligence requirements
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
DTT – Doctrine Training Team

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(s)
FM – field manual
FRAGO – 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(s)
GLOCS – 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(s)
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(s) 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
MCS – mobility, counter-mobility, and survivability
MCS – Mission Command Systems
MCTSP – Mission Command Training Support Program
MDMP – Military Decision Making Process
MEDEVAC – medical evacuation
METT-TC – mission, enemy, terrain, time available, troops available and civilians
MISO – military information support operations (formerly PSYOP)
MOE – measure of effectiveness
MOP – measure of performance
MTC – Mission Training Complex
MTC-LVN – Mission Training Complex-Fort Leavenworth

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(s)
OPLAN – operation plan
OPORD – operation order
OPSEC – operational security

P

PIR – priority intelligence requirements
PLT – platoon
PSOP – plans standard operating procedure

R

R&S – reconnaissance and surveillance
RETRANS – retransmission
RFI – request(s) for information
ROE – rules of engagement
RTO – radio-telephone operator

Acronyms and Abbreviations

S

SA – situational awareness

SIGO – signal officer

SIR – specific information requirement(s)

SITTEMP – situation template

SOP – standard operating procedure(s)

SU – situational understanding

SWEAT-MSO – sewage, water, electricity, academic, trash-medical, safety, and other considerations

T

TACSOP – tactical standard operating procedures (also called **TSOP**)

TAFT – Training Analysis Feedback Team

TAI – targeted area(s) of interest

TLP – troop-leading procedure(s)

TO – task organization

TPED – tasking, processing, exploitation, and dissemination

W

WARNO – 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, including FM 1-02, *Operational Terms and Graphics*.

-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. ATTP 5-0.1

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

Mission Training Complex - Fort Leavenworth

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. FM 3-0

Composite Risk Management (CRM) – Composite risk management is the Army’s primary decisionmaking process for identifying hazards and controlling risks across the full spectrum of Army missions, functions, operations, and activities (Term changed to Risk Management IAW Army Doctrinologist) FM 5-19

-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 wargaming. 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. FM 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 collection and reconnaissance and surveillance planning. FM 2-01.3

Mission Training Complex - Fort Leavenworth

Glossary

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. ATTP 5-0.1

-F-

Friendly Force Information Requirement (FFIR) – (joint) Information the commander and staff need to understand the status of friendly force and supporting capabilities. ATTP 5-0.1

-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

Intervisibility Line (IVL) – Not a terrain feature, but an effect of terrain on observation. A relative, localized, pattern of limitations on observation, caused by (often subtle) variations in terrain elevation relative to an Observer and the Observed. Terrain that allows observation from one point to another. FM 3-90.1

Intelligence Warfighting Function – The related tasks and systems that facilitate understanding of the operational environment, enemy, terrain, and civil considerations. FM 3-0

-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. TC 2-01

Latest Time Intelligence is of Value (LTIOV) – The time by which information must be delivered to the requestor in order to provide decision-makers with timely intelligence. FM 2-01.3

Glossary

-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

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. FM 3-0

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. FM 3-0

-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 (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

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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. FM 3-0

Operations Process – The major mission command activities performed during operations: planning, preparing, executing, and continuously assessing the operation. The commander drives the operations process. FM 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. FM 1-02

Overlay Order – A technique used to issue an order (normally a fragmentary order) that has abbreviated instructions written on an overlay. FM 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. FM 3-0

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). FM 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

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

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Glossary

-S-

Situational Awareness (SA) – Immediate knowledge of the conditions of the operation, constrained geographically and in time. FM 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 decision making. 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. FM 3-0