Mission Analysis (Key Notes continued)
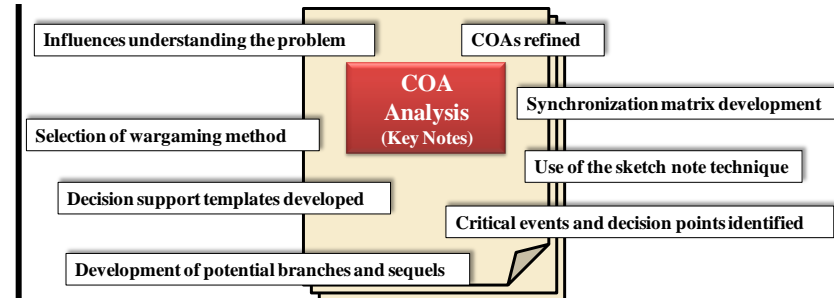
● The initial commander's intent should be clear, concise, written, and complete.

● Don't look at the Commander with surprise as he concludes his intent and guidance. If there is some information you need that the Commander didn't address, now is the time to ask him. He will most likely leave the TOC following the Mission Analysis Brief and you will be left with more assumptions.

● Developing COA evaluation criteria is possibly one of the most important tasks in Mission Analysis. Allows the staff a quantitative way to evaluate their COAs. Try to have an odd number of evaluation criteria (this will generally eliminate a tie vote between COAs). Use weighting very judiciously. An evaluation criterion with a weight of 2 will negate two evaluation criteria with a weight of 1. If you decide that something is 3 times as important, it should probably be the only evaluation criteria. Based on your weighting, an unweighted COA can be chosen, but when your weighting is applied, a different one might be chosen. Develop good, strong metrics for your criteria. Make sure your staff understands the metrics. It may mean something different to each WFF or staff section. The staff needs to understand that they will be using the evaluation criteria to evaluate the COAs based on their own WFFs or staff sections. **DO NOT MAKE THIS QUALITATIVE, BUT QUANTITATIVE. The staff will have the opportunity to apply judgment during COA Comparison.**

● Issuing the WARNO needs to be done quickly. There is no set rule as to what is included. Rule of thumb . . . give the subordinate elements the elements they need to continue planning. See FM 5-0 for minimum standards. Determine who is to produce this product, establish a suspense, and annotate it in the TACSOP / PSOP.

COA Development (Key Notes)

- Options created
- Initial array of friendly forces
- Task organization created
- COAs selected for war-gaming
- Assessment of relative combat power
- COA statements and sketches developed
- Commander's planning guidance refined
- Broad concept developed on how to accomplish the mission
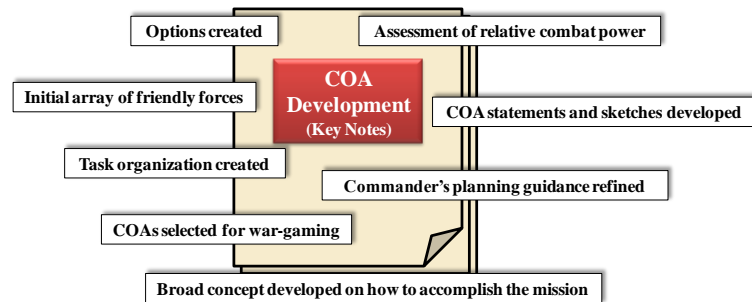
● Remember the outputs from this step become the inputs for the war game. Make your products in a way that will facilitate this. Either draw your COA sketches with terrain or use the map (during the war game you will need a geo-referenced product . . . start early and use a map).

● Each team should have their starting products on the same media (overlay on a map, terrain sketch, MS PowerPoint presentation or MCS). Whatever you do, ensure it is annotated in the TACSOP.

● Keep to the time line. DO NOT spend so much time on a single step that you lose the capability to finish in a timely manner. Don't forget to include your concept of ISR. Post a collective list of identified specified and implied tasks from Mission Analysis to ensure all tasks have been addressed. You can't build friendly COAs to defeat enemy COAs if you don't depict the enemy situation on your sketch.

● As you assess relative combat power, consider all elements. Analyze force ratios based on historical evidence. Don't forget to factor in host nation support. If you didn't do an adequate job in identifying your unit's strength and capabilities during Mission Analysis, this task will be very difficult.

● Limit the number of participants during generation of options. Focus on three tasks:

    - Determining the decisive effort
    - Determining the unit shaping operations
    - Determining the unit sustaining operations

● Keep your eye on the FADS-C criteria. Don't spend time or present a COA that you don't believe will work. The definition of a good friendly COA is one that will defeat all enemy COAs.

● As you array forces, do not overlook ISR tasks. Start with a general task organization, by unit, broken down two levels. From here, you can apply combat power by taking from the general task organization as you place elements against a specific task. Start with the decisive operation and determine the forces needed to achieve the ratio you determined in the previous step. As you apply elements, ensure you have a task and purpose for each element.

● Use a minimum number of graphic control measures (GCM) to clearly convey the scheme of maneuver. Ensure your GCMs are ready to be geo-referenced and are prepared for the next step in the MDMP. Always start with the Commander's battlefield visualization.

● When you assign headquarters, use groupings of elements and tasks based on type of unit and scope of command and control. Remember the "rule of five." Some units may be identified by name. In an IBCT reconnaissance squadron, there is only one dismounted troop. You may call it by name just as you can call an HHC by name. Ensure you establish command and support relationships.

● Ensure you pay attention to the GCMs and that they are annotated, as you feel necessary, when developing the broad concept. Ensure you include the Commander's desired end state. Use decision graphics to show your combat power (this may change during the war game). Ensure all of your specified and implied tasks have been addressed. Your sketch must be put on a map for the next step. Get started now while the remainder of the staff works on the COA statement.

● As part of the COA Briefing, ensure you brief any new IPB. Update the Commander and staff on answered RFIs and any outstanding RFIs. Update your facts and assumptions. Be prepared, not only to brief your COAs, but why you used the specific force for each task and why you used specific GCMs. The briefer of each COA must be intimately familiar with that COA. Brief any refinements in COA evaluation criteria.

● Remember, if all COAs are rejected, you must go back to step 1 of COA Development. The Commander has the option of taking elements of one COA and piecing it into another COA. If this happens, ensure you ensure it still meets the FADS-C test.

● Identify the CCIR attached to any decision point. Ensure the list is manageable. War game the essential tasks you have identified.

COA Analysis (Key Notes)

- Influences understanding the problem
- COAs refined
- Selection of wargaming method
- Synchronization matrix development
- Decision support templates developed
- Use of the sketch note technique
- Critical events and decision points identified
- Development of potential branches and sequels

● Determine who the "taskmaster" is. You will need one to stay on task and on time. War gaming can and will quickly degenerate into an uncontrollable mess.

● War gaming is not about prediction. It is about addressing friendly COAs against ECOAs. You can not say definitively which will ever be better. The enemy has a say so. But, if done correctly, war gaming can lead to the development of reactions to mitigate enemy events.

● War gaming must be done with a map or other geo-referencing tool.

● Keep everybody at the table. Don't let people stray or carry on side bar conversations or you'll never get through.

● As you gather tools, ensure you have a geo-referenced medium for war gaming and a complete set of friendly and enemy icons.

● Have your TACSOP / PSOP handy.

● Ensure you have a copy of FM 1-02 at the table so you can draw doctrinally correct GCMs.

● Your scribes are tools. Make sure they are sharp!!

● Whatever tools are required for each staff section should be annotated in their "smart book" or section SOP and brought to this event.

● In order to be successful during the gathering the tools portion of this task step, it should have been started during COA Development.

● When you list all friendly forces, it should be the same as when you did COA-Development. Have all the icons for all units two (2) levels down and any specialty elements that may even be further down (e.g., Tactical PSYOP Team, Civil Affairs Team).

● Ensure you include all attachments. Your force list cannot change for the COAs.

● If you grouped your elements during COA-Development as decision graphics, these task organized icons can be used for the war game.

● Check the assumption list. Ensure they haven't been answered.

● This is an ongoing task from Receipt of Mission to Orders Production. Ask yourself, "Are they still relevant?"

● Determine if any of your assumptions are going to require a decision point or a branch plan.

● Your first determination in war gaming should be the initial set of all forces, both friendly and enemy. This helps set the stage for war gaming and ensures participants know where all the elements are located.

● Devote the time to refining time estimates during the war game. Look at the terrain and how movement will take you through the plan. This will generally tell you which of the war gaming methods will be best suited to your mission. During an offensive or defensive operation, where the battlefield is broken up by phase lines, the belt method may be best. Convoy operations or movement down a continuous corridor may lend itself to the avenue-in-depth method. Two or more simultaneous events happening between the same phase lines may be better war gamed as two individual boxes rather than one belt. The box method is good for specific actions in a specific place, like objectives or passage of lines. Stability Operations lend themselves to non-traditional methods, that of war gaming by critical event throughout the width and breadth of the battlefield.

● While there are two doctrinal methods of capturing results, most experienced staff officers will tell you that the synchronization matrix is the only way to fully synchronize all of the WFFs during the war game.

● The synchronization matrix lends itself to COA Comparison by having the entire critical event placed on a single column.

● Whichever method you use, ensure your staff doesn't wait until it's their turn to talk to determine what they will be saying. Think ahead and write down what you will say either on the sketch note or on a piece of paper (sticky notes work well) and be prepared to give it to the scribe.

● If you use a digital synchronization matrix, avoid displaying it on a wall. It will reduce staff focus on note taking and ensuring that they are synchronized with the other staff sections.

● Understand the action-reaction-counteraction methodology. The force with the initiative, the attacker, is the action portion. If your unit is on a security patrol, they are not the action. The ambush is the action. Try to identify second and third order effects. The enemy *should* always have the same actions or reactions during a separate COA Analysis. This keeps one COA from being skewed by the actions of the enemy. There is the chance, that based on the actions of friendly forces, the enemy will find an exploitable flank or vulnerable position. The red commander *should* address this vulnerability, for it is the mission of the red commander not to win, but to serve as a tool for staff planning.

● There is a possibility that the scheme of maneuver in one COA, when war gamed, is no longer feasible and must be discarded based on the FADS-C criteria. Have a thick skin. This is not an attack on you or your staff section and especially not between the red commander and the blue commander.

● The XO will serve as referee between these two entities. Just remember, you are trying to synchronize your plan and defeat all ECOAs. Ask yourselves if each turn met the commander's intent. Assess the results of the turn against both the screening and evaluation criteria.

● The COA Briefing is optional and is used to review and ensure all relevant points of the war game have been captured. Revise your running estimates based on the war game.