# Insights and Best Practices Focus Paper

# Assessment

*Second Edition*

Deployable Training Division
Joint Staff J7

July 2013

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

This is the Second Edition of the Assessment Insights and Best Practices Focus Paper, written by the Deployable Training Division (DTD) of the Joint Staff J7 and published by the Joint Staff J7.

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## PREFACE

The Joint Staff J7 supports the CJCS and the Joint Warfighter through joint force development to advance the operational effectiveness of the current and future joint force. This paper, written by the Deployable Training Division (DTD), helps inform both the joint warfighters and key functions within the J7, notably lessons learned, doctrine, education, and future joint force development. In addition to this paper, the DTD has also developed an overarching Joint Operations Insights and Best Practices Paper and numerous other focus papers that share insights and best practices for various challenges observed at joint headquarters. All of these papers are unclassified for broad accessibility. I commend these papers for your reading.

The DTD gains insights on operational matters through regular contact and dialogue with combatant and joint task force commanders and their staffs as they plan, prepare for, and conduct operations. The DTD observer/trainers collect and compare practices among the different headquarters, draw out and refine "insights" and "best practices," and share them with the joint force.

We are fortunate to have several senior flag officers, active and retired, assist in development and vetting of these insights and best practice papers. Of note, General (Retired) Gary Luck, a Senior Fellow at the National Defense University, plays an active part. Their participation not only helps keep the DTD trainers at the theater-strategic and operational level, but also ensures that they retain a commander-centric perspective in these papers.

Please pass on your comments to DTD's POC Mr. Mike Findlay so that we can improve this paper. Email address is: js.dsc.j7.mbx.joint-training@mail.mil.

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.** Assessment informs decision-making. Assessment helps:

- Deepen understanding of the operational environment.
- Depict progress toward accomplishing the mission.
- Inform commander's intent, guidance for design and planning, prioritization, and execution.

**Assessment**

1. What happened? (Collection & Monitoring)
2. Why? So What? (Analysis & Evaluation)
3. What do we need to do? (Action for Improvement)

Assessment helps answer the questions "what happened," "why and so what," and "what do we need to do" across three areas:

- Task assessment focused on "are we doing things right" by assessing performance of our tasks. Task assessment, much like AARs and hot washes, helps review and improve our techniques and procedures in how we perform our tasks.
- Operational environment (OE) assessment focused on "are we doing the right things" by assessing how we are changing the OE, for better or worse. OE assessment, probably the one in which most effort is expended, assesses how the OE is changing, and allows us to gauge if we are doing the right things to change the environment. It directly influences prioritization, amending the current plan if off course, and future planning.
- Campaign assessment focused on "are we accomplishing the mission" by assessing progress in achieving our objectives. Campaign assessments occur at higher commands. They focus on whether the operation is on plan in terms of timelines or success criteria and make recommendations for changes to address shortfalls or new challenges.

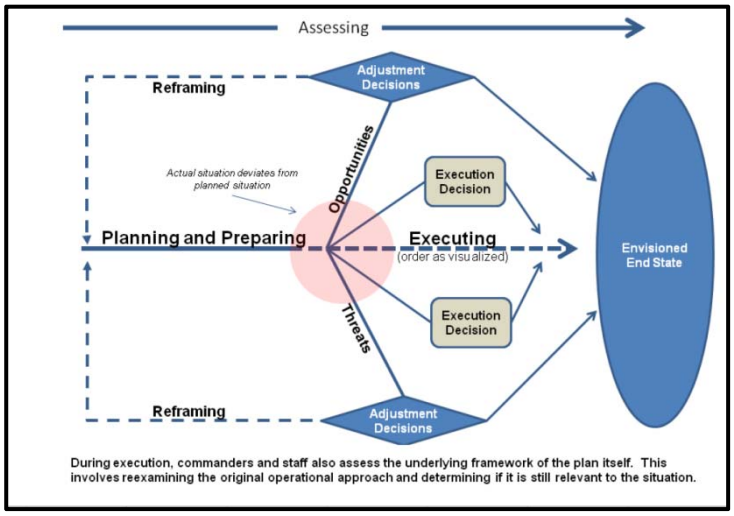
Assessment processes and organizational constructs are continuing to evolve. Insights:

- Assessment includes monitoring of relevant information, evaluation to judge progress and determining "why" the current degree of progress exists, and actions for improvement.
- The commander develops his own assessment, supported by staff input and their assessments, and through circulation and discussions with commanders and stakeholders.
- Plan for assessment, including determination of MOPs and MOEs and how to assess.
- Be careful of falling into the trap of assessing what you can, versus what you should.
- Incorporate both quantitative and qualitative information indicators. Human judgment is integral to assessment and often key to success. Balance a reliance on human judgment (qualitative) with direct observation and mathematical rigor (quantitative) to reduce the likelihood of skewed conclusions and decisions. This is related to the next insight…
- Avoid committing valuable time and energy to excessive and time-consuming assessment schemes and quantitative collection efforts that may squander valuable resources.
- Involve interagency and other stakeholders. Their perspectives enrich your assessment.
- Use caution in establishing cause and effect. Recognize risk in drawing erroneous conclusions particularly in the case of human behavior, attitudes, and perception. Address confidence of the assessment conclusions and risk in implementation of recommendations.
- Assess task performance through daily staff updates and battlefield circulation. Assess the OE periodically at operational HQs. Assess campaign progress less frequently at theater HQs.
- Consider establishment of an Assessment Cell either in the Plans directorate or as an empowered separate staff directorate to oversee the overall assessment process. Use some form of working group and board to coordinate staff input for decision and guidance.
- Assessment efforts within the HQ are a staff-wide responsibility. Consider assigning staff ownership for the various aspects or lines of effort (LOE) to enable more comprehensive and qualitative input, and provide a deeper and more accurate staff assessment to the commander.

## 2.0 ASSESSMENT BASICS.

> **Definition of Assessment:**
> 1. A continuous process that measures the overall effectiveness of employing joint force capabilities during military operations.
> 2. Determination of the progress toward accomplishing a task, creating an effect, or achieving an objective.
>
> *- JP 1-02*

Commanders, assisted by their staffs and subordinate commanders, continuously monitor and assess the operational environment and the progress of the operation. Assessment helps the commander determine progress toward attaining the desired end state, achieving objectives, and performing tasks. Based on their assessment, commanders direct adjustments thus ensuring continued progress toward accomplishing the mission. Staff-level assessments will typically inform (and be informed by) the commander's personal assessment. Commanders provide balance between the staff reliance on quantitative indicators and limit data reporting burdens on their subordinate units. The commander develops his own assessment, in part through these staff assessments, but even more so through qualitative, subjective indicators collected through battlefield circulation, instincts, and discussion with subordinate commanders and stakeholders.




Assessment drives design and planning. Commanders use assessment to help decide whether to continue the current course, execute branch plans or sequels, otherwise reprioritize missions or tasks, or even revisit campaign design or the operational approach through reframing to achieve overall mission objectives (see figure) based on the actual situation and potential threats or opportunities. As a result, they may provide additional guidance and intent to subordinates in the form of fragmentary orders, request additional support, or provide recommendations for additional diplomatic, informational, military, economic (DIME) actions from key stakeholders or external partners.

CCIRs support assessment. CCIRs at most operational level headquarters support two major activities:[1] They provide information requirements that directly support assessments which deepen understanding of the environment and inform planning guidance. CCIRs also support commander decision-making by directly supporting decisions on execution of branch and sequel plans.

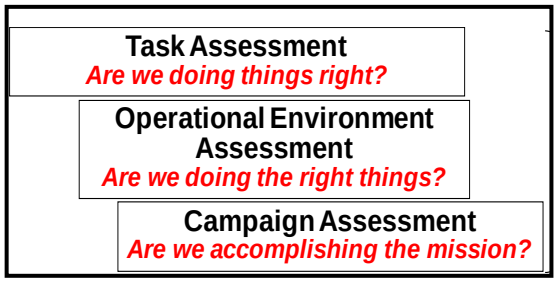
**Focus of Assessments.** Different level headquarters will likely have different assessment focus. *At the risk of over-simplification*:

- Tactical level headquarters focus more on task assessment - whether they are performing assigned or implied tasks to standard (using measures of performance (MOP)) answering if they're "doing things right." MOPs answer the questions "was the task completed?" and "was

[1] See CCIR Focus Paper. Use URLs on inside of front cover.

it completed to standard?" (e.g., delivery of equipment, construction of a school, or seizure of an objective to specified standards) to assist the unit in improving future performance.

- Operational level headquarters focus on OE assessment addressing whether they are achieving the identified necessary conditions (measures of effectiveness (MOE)-oriented) within the OE for mission success (e.g., progress in gaining support of populace or decrease in enemy activity) answering if they're "doing the right things."
- Theater level (i.e., Geographic Combatant Command-GCC) headquarters often look more broadly at campaign assessment within the area of responsibility (AOR) assessing whether they are achieving theater-strategic or campaign objectives (objective-oriented) answering progress toward "accomplishing the mission." These HQs also often conduct long-term strategic assessments focused on theater engagement objectives and application of resources.




**Types, Frequency and Venues for Assessment.** Assessment should be continuous with numerous opportunities for informing and being informed by the commander.

We have observed that tactical level headquarters conduct *task assessments* fairly frequently within the current operations event horizon. Opportunities for this form of assessment are both formal (at daily and weekly update assessments) and informal (based on battlefield circulation, cross-talk, and other venues such as discussions with mission partners).

***Assessment Process Observations***

| Assessment Aspects | Task Assessment | OE Assessment | Campaign Assessment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Source (basis) for criteria | Directed tasks in OPORD | Desired Conditions (Operational Environment) in OPORD | End State Objectives (Success Criteria) |
| Criteria | Primarily MOP | Primarily MOE | MOE |
| Indicators | Largely quantitative (e.g., is task accomplished to standard?)<br>May have commander qualitative input | Balance of quantitative and qualitative input | Balance of quantitative and qualitative input |
| Collection Means | Reports, SIGACTs, subordinate commanders, circulation | Reports, Polls, subordinate commanders, stakeholders, circulation | Reports, Polls, subordinate commanders, stakeholders, circulation |
| Analysis and Evaluation | Current operations centric, hot wash and commander qualitative | Staff analysis and evaluation through staff-wide efforts, with focused assessment cell and working group. Commander parallel evaluation based on qualitative (opinion-based) indicators through commander crosstalk and circulation. Informed by staff efforts | Combination of the quantitative staff efforts and commander qualitative analysis and evaluation. Trend analysis. |
| Commander – Staff Interface Venues | Daily updates, hot washes. | Periodic OE staff assessment updates, commander post circulation reports. | Formal assessment briefings and conferences. |
| Actions for Improvement | Staff and Subordinate commanders provide recommendations. Commander decisions. | Staff and Subordinate commanders provide recommendation. Commander decisions. | Staff and Subordinate commanders provide recommendations. Commander decisions |

Operational level headquarters focus their efforts on assessing the OE at the appropriate frequency (possibly monthly or quarterly) to drive planning and prioritization. Venues for this level of assessment use MOE and range from formal to informal with formal assessments presented by the staff.

Theater-strategic headquarters normally focus on campaign assessment at quarterly or semi-annual frequency. These assessments are often more formal and fully inclusive with other stakeholders.

**Basis for Assessment.** As noted earlier, assessment helps deepen the understanding of the OE and how a joint force is progressing toward accomplishing the mission. Thus the plan (including the unit's mission, objectives, and desired environmental conditions) forms the basis for assessment. We find MOP (focused on task accomplishment) and MOE (focused on how we are doing and mission accomplishment) are largely determined during planning together with relevant CCIR to prioritize collection, analysis, and information sharing. We find that these assessment criteria (and CCIR) require periodic review and refinement or change as the mission and plan evolve.

**Definitions:**
**Measure of performance (MOP):** A criterion used to assess friendly actions that is tied to measuring task accomplishment.
**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 1-02*

Development of MOP criteria are fairly straight forward as they are normally drawn directly from assigned tasks in the plan. Evaluation of MOPs is also relatively straight forward and can often be answered in a yes or no answer.

***Examples of Indicators***

| | MOP | MOE |
|---|---|---|
| Quantitative | •Number of IEDs discovered<br>•Rounds fired<br>•Objective seized<br>•School built | • Number of IED discovered vs number of IED effective attacks<br>• Forces or civilians injured |
| Qualitative | • Integration with supporting commanders<br>• Understanding of assigned tasks | • Sentiments of HN leaders / populace on security situation.<br>• HN commanders' assessment on ability to provide security |

Development of MOE criteria is much more difficult. The up-front correct determination of MOEs during planning is important. A focus on the relevant MOE enables an accurate visualization of progress toward mission accomplishment. Likewise, measuring the wrong things can bias results and recommendations on the way ahead. For example, two different conclusions could be formed in the well-known example from the World War II Battle of the Atlantic in which the leadership debated on how to measure success in the antisubmarine campaign; whether success was based on the number of submarines sunk or on the number of allied ships sunk. With the objective being protection of allied shipping, an assessment focused on reducing numbers of allied shipping sunk (not on subs sunk) changed our antisubmarine campaign.

Another example accentuating the need to clearly define what we need to assess can be seen in stability operations in which we may incorrectly focus collection (and subsequent analysis) on how much aid/advice/assistance (MOP-oriented) the U.S. provides a host nation rather than developing indicators on how much (or little) the host nation needs our assistance (MOE-oriented). In this case, the MOP criteria (how much aid we provide) is not as relevant to discerning progress in accomplishing the mission as is assessing if the host nation is growing independent of our support (MOE focused).

**Qualitative Aspects of Assessment.** Operational environment and campaign assessment are tough and necessarily commander-centric. The commander is probably the best source of this subjective, opinion-based assessment due to his battlefield circulation, interaction with other commanders and stakeholders, and his intuition, experience, and instincts. Functional staff directors (not just the J2) can also provide qualitative inputs based on their focus. We find that the commander can assist greatly in this aspect by providing feedback on his perspectives to the

staff (who are often stuck in the HQ) so they can better understand how he views the environment based on his circulation.

**Quantitative Aspects of Assessment.** We find that disciplined staff-centric quantitative input can help serve as a potential start point and a check for commanders' more subjective qualitative indicators and assessment. Much of this quantitative aspect of assessment is framed to answer specific MOE or MOP developed by the staff planners to measure progress toward achieving objectives and mission accomplishment. This quantitative, "factual" data may also be required by national-level decision makers and supporting organizations. By its very nature, the quantitative aspect of assessment is very data-centric and requires a degree of mathematically-oriented, data processing capability.

There can be a penchant to over-engineer staff level assessments with massive amounts of data to support the commander and ensure that the commander can objectively defend the assessment process, metrics, and recommendations to higher HQ (HHQ) and national level decision-makers. These larger, data-centric briefings can overwhelm subordinates with information reporting demands. We have also seen how some data-heavy assessments may not always clearly inform a commander's personal assessment as they often lack the more subjective "why" and "so what" together with recommendations. Additionally, some assessments tend to incorrectly focus on measuring level of activity versus actual progress toward achieving objectives.

**A Necessary Balance of Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators for Assessment.** Most HQs we have observed have noted the need to balance the above quantitative and qualitative approaches in assessment to reduce the likelihood of skewed conclusions. Commanders recognize this and provide guidance on achieving this balance. They avoid committing valuable time and energy to excessive and time-consuming assessment schemes and quantitative collection efforts that may squander valuable resources at their HQ and subordinate HQ that could be used elsewhere. They limit the amount of time and effort their staffs put into the collection and evaluation of quantitative indicators while recognizing their personal responsibility to apply their experience, intuition, and own observations in developing a more subjective, commander-centric, qualitative assessment.

**Staff-Wide Effort in Staff Assessment.** Assessment within the HQ is a staff-wide effort, not simply the product of an assessment cell. Consider assigning staff ownership for the various aspects or lines of effort most closely associated with their staff responsibilities rather than restricting the assessment function to one staff section or cell. This ensures staff-wide inclusion in the assessment process, ensures qualitative input into the process, and ultimately provides a deeper and more accurate holistic staff-produced assessment to the commander. The commander can then use that staff-produced assessment to inform and possibly enrich his personal assessment gained through battlefield circulation, key leader engagement and other venues.

**Recommendations Based on Evaluation of Assessment Criteria.** A key staff challenge is developing and making recommendations to the commander on "what needs to be done" based on evaluation of the above noted quantitative and qualitative indicators. A related challenge is avoiding drawing erroneous conclusions between cause and effect especially regarding changes in human behavior, attitudes, and perception.

We often find that just thinking through and developing the "what happened," the "why," and the "so what" of assessment can consume the staff and they do not get to what may be the most important aspect – recommending "what needs to be done." Staff must make recommendations.

It focuses their efforts, assists the commander, and can be a useful azimuth check between the commander and staff. Staff assessments and recommendations can help inform the commander's personal assessment which helps enrich commander's guidance for design and planning and intent for subordinates.

Insights:

- Focus the evaluation aspects of assessment beyond the "what happened," to the "why and so what," and the "what needs to be done." We find that answering the "why" is the most important element as it will deepen understanding and drive the "what needs to be done."
- Determine the type of assessment and the frequency of venues for the specific HQ corresponding to the level of the HQ, mission, environment, and available resources.
- Incorporate assessment requirements into CCIR development.
- Develop feasible MOE and MOP indicators during planning ensuring that the reporting requirements and evaluation workload are sustainable by the HQ and subordinates. Periodically review and update.
- Do not confuse activity with progress.
- Ensure command-centric qualitative, instinct, and experience-based assessments inform and are informed by staff-centric quantitative assessments.
- Institute a process in which the commander provides feedback to the staff on what he has seen, heard, or experienced as he circulates in the battlespace to ensure the staff is aligned and understand his perspectives and subsequent decisions. We often find that the staff's lack of understanding of the commander's perspectives is a major cause for the staff not providing the commander what he wants in updates and briefs.
- Leverage other reporting requirements while minimizing separate, redundant assessment reporting requirements to minimize additional workload on subordinate units and staff.
- Develop staff-wide input to the staff assessment products to enrich the commander's assessment.

## 3.0 KEY ROLES.

**The Commander.** As emphasized throughout this paper, the assessment process is commander-centric. The commander leverages staff and subordinate assessments, his own battlefield circulation and discussions with stakeholders, and his experience and instincts in developing a personal assessment. This assessment enriches subsequent guidance for design and planning, commander's intent, prioritization, and ultimately execution in pursuit of mission accomplishment.

**Subordinate Commanders.** Subordinate commanders assist in assessment by providing additional commander-centric assessments to the operational commander leveraging the same attributes noted above.

**Chief of Staff (CoS).** The CoS guides the staff-wide assessment effort to help inform the commander's assessment and support decision making.

**Assessment Cell Chief.** Every HQ has some organization charged with coordinating the staff assessment process to inform and be informed by the commander. We find that the chief for this section should have recent operational experience. While having quantitatively-oriented, operations research systems analysis (ORSA) expertise in the cell is extremely important, we find that the chief needs a broader perspective to better align and guide the cell's activities to best inform the commander.

**J2 (and Joint Intelligence Operations Center).** The J2 plays an important role in assessment, particularly the OE assessment, since much of the information may be provided by the J2 / JIOC, and much of this data will likely be much broader than a military-only perspective.

**Staff.** As noted earlier, the entire staff has a role in assessment. Most commands assign staff ownership for the various aspects or lines of effort most closely associated with their staff responsibilities rather than restricting the assessment function to one staff section or cell.

**Mission partner / Stakeholder Involvement.** Many commands make conscious attempts to include non-governmental, interagency, and coalition partners and stakeholders in arriving at their assessment. These other perspectives enrich the assessment process. Continuous collaboration between the military and our mission partners and stakeholders tends to break down barriers and help enrich staff-wide assessment.

In some cases, assessment efforts support outside stakeholders (e.g., DoS, USAID, FEMA, and foreign governments). For example, in a humanitarian assistance operation, the military's primary goal may be to serve in support of civilian efforts. Therefore, a measure of mission progress may be the reduction of military assistance to crisis response and move toward transition. Another example could be the measure of processing and moving U.S. citizens during a noncombatant evacuation operation.

<u>Insights</u>:

- Assessment are commander-centric. The commander has the best overall understanding of the progress of the unit toward mission accomplishment and must share his perspectives and assessment with the staff.
- The CoS ensures staff-wide support to assisting the commander in his assessment.
- Select an individual with recent operational experience as the assessment cell chief.

- Task the assessment cell chief to coordinate staff-wide input to assessment and provide a balance of “defendable” quantitative data with qualitative information to enrich the commander’s assessment.
- Ensure the entire staff understands that they all play a part in assessment.
- Interagency and multinational involvement add value to the assessment process; they share their perspectives and enrich (and can influence) the process.
- Host nation security forces (as appropriate) can also assist the assessment process. They can help validate findings and assist in transition planning (i.e., transfer of responsibility to the host nation forces).
- Conduct periodic commander conferences to share assessment perspectives. These help ensure command-wide “deepening” of understanding of the OE, the force’s progress toward mission accomplishment, and necessary changes.

## 4.0 ORGANIZATIONAL IMPLICATIONS.

**Assessment Cell.** Recognizing that the commander is at the center of assessment, we have seen that an assessment-focused staff element can assist in coordinating the staff efforts to inform and be informed by the commander.

Two overarching points:

- We find that this staff element must be sufficient in size to coordinate efforts and manage information in developing staff assessments, but not so large that it takes on the entirety of the assessment function with the increased tendency to develop additional burdensome reporting requirements to independently build a stovepiped assessment. It also ensures others have to participate and keeps the process "honest."
- Proper placement of the assessment staff element is also important. Up front, we have seen most assessment staff elements in operational headquarters placed in the J5 (to inform planning efforts) while many combatant commands place their assessment function in their J8 (focused on theater security cooperation, overall theater campaign plan assessments, and fiscal aspects). We find that placement at the operational level must take into account appropriate staff oversight and integration with the entire staff. We have seen the potential for the assessment element to take on the focus of the particular staff directorate with which it is associated. For example, if it resides in the J2, it could have more of an intelligence collection or enemy focus, in J3 an operational execution focus, and in J5 a plans focus. Likewise, if it is directly subordinate to the CoS, it may not have sufficient principal staff oversight. We have seen most operational HQ place the assessment element in the J5 with clear direction that assessment is a staff-wide function. Wherever placed, it must have senior staff backing.

The assessment cell orchestrates information, analysis, assessment, and recommendations from across the staff, subordinate units, and stakeholders to inform the commander and gain the commander's personal assessment. This includes the responsibility to collate, analyze, and share logical and defendable products to support the commander's assessment. Thus it is beneficial to include ORSA personnel in the cell. This cell normally also has the responsibility of sharing the commander's assessment to HHQ and relevant stakeholders.

The cell normally forms the core of a working group that supports development of the staff assessment. It also supports planning teams in refining desired (and undesired) outcomes, MOEs, MOE indicators (MOEi), and assessment criteria developed by the staff planners in support of those conditions. The assessment working group also supports periodic validation of existing objectives/desired outcomes.

As noted above, assessment cells in the J8 of a CCMD focus on providing a holistic assessment for Theater Security Campaign Plans based on steady state operations. However this J8 assessment cell may be challenged to support dynamic assessment requirements associated with crises / contingencies. We often see temporary placement of members of the J8 assessment cell into a J5 or J3-led Crisis Assessment Cell to orchestrate the more dynamic assessment requirements. Having members of the Crisis Assessment Cell integrated in the design and planning of crisis action planning and execution helps provide the necessary framework to support the more dynamic assessments. The Crisis Assessment Cell can work to isolate the changes in systems' behavior that initiated the crisis to better refine the objectives and desired effects to achieve the military end state. It can also develop an assessment framework (architecture) that identifies the SMEs within the staff that can provide the insights for holistic

assessments to inform the commander on the environmental impacts of whole of government(s) actions and enrich recommendations. This Crisis Assessment Cell can also provide the nucleus of the Crisis Assessment Working Group (CAWG) that collects insights on the MOEs, MOEIs, and other indicators that may lead to decision/decisive points towards objectives and the end state to inform the planners on how well we are doing and determine if a change to the plan is necessary. Having the CAWG at the end of the daily battle rhythm provides an opportunity to collect information and provide timely feedback to the Joint Planning Group for subsequent decisions by the commander.

Insights:

- At Combatant Command level during a crisis response, establish some form of J3 or J5-led crisis assessment cell that supports crisis planning and assessment. Identify J8 Assessment Cell members to man or support the formed crisis assessment cell.
- At the Operational Level, consider establishment of an assessment cell in the J5 or as an empowered separate staff directorate to oversee the overall assessment process and inform planning.
- Resource the assessment cell to coordinate, analyze, and share assessment information.
- Use a working group to bring together staff, subordinate, and stakeholder input to assessment.
- Determine the critical path for assessment inputs and outputs that supports ongoing planning efforts to inform the command on holistic changes to the operational environment.

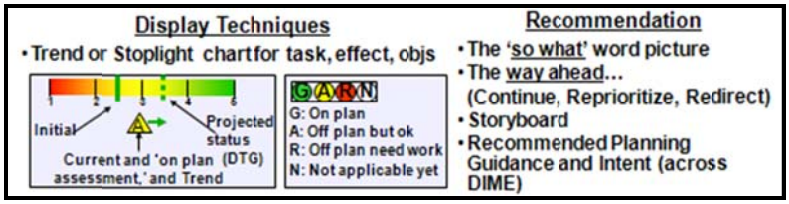
**5.0 STAFF ASSESSMENT PRODUCTS.** Staff assessment products should directly support the commander's requirements:

- Deepen understanding of the OE.
- Measure progress toward achieving objectives and accomplishing the mission.
- Inform commander's intent, guidance for design and planning, prioritization, and ultimately execution.

**Tailor support to the Commander.** The commander has an important responsibility to tell the staff <u>what</u> he or she needs, <u>when</u> (how often) it is needed, and <u>how</u> he wants it. This section provides some examples of the "how" to provide assessments – focusing on visualization of progress. We find that the staff must understand how the commander wants to get information in order to best craft products. Additionally, staffs need to ensure clear connections between the objectives and the metrics they are using.

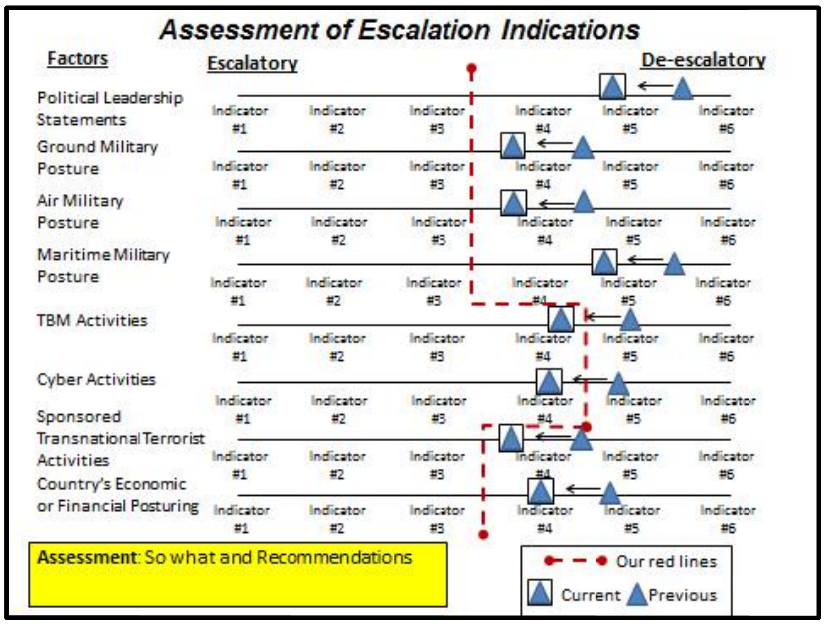
**Example Products** (these examples are oriented more to OE and campaign assessments)**.**

The figure on the right presents one way to present information to the commander. Up front, we find that staff products need some form of means to explain change, trends, and future requirements (e.g., host nation forces must be mission capable by "X" date to participate in a planned operation). This helps place recommendations in the proper context.



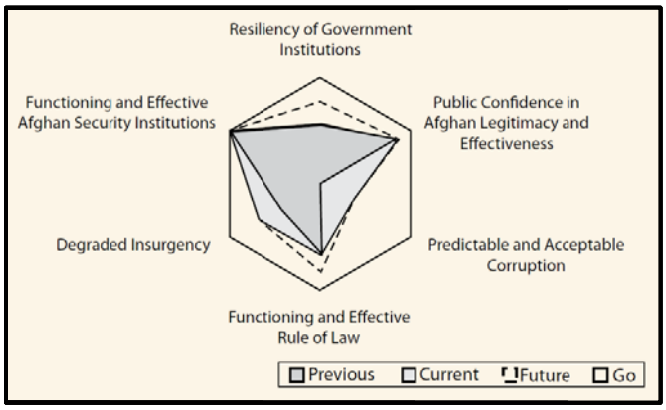

Several commanders use geographically-based products that use red, amber, green color-coding on maps depicting "status" of the OE. These allow tracking of progress over time, provides easily understood and granular understanding for the operational commander, and provides a common framework to allow sharing and discussion among commanders. Others like trend charts, radar or spider charts and thermograph charts.

Trend and radar or spider charts often depict adversary or friendly trends across several factors to inform the commander. For example, the depicted trend chart focuses on assessing an adversary's escalatory or de-escalatory actions. This kind of chart is useful in phase 0 and phase 1 activities when a commander (most likely at the theater-strategic level) is attempting in conjunction with other elements of national and international power to change behavior without escalating to war.

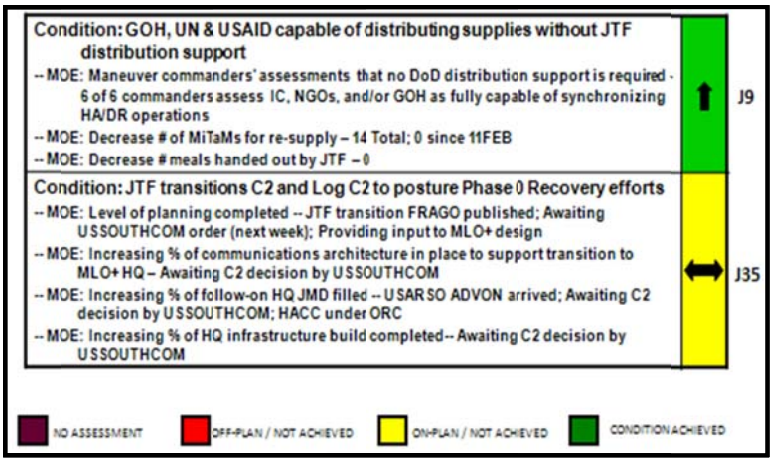



The radar chart or spider chart is another method used to depict a holistic assessment

using multiple axes that can either represent lines of effort or other assessment criteria. The chart informs progress or the lack of progress towards a designed end state. The chart can be layered like the adjacent example to indicate progress based on previous assessments and in this example, the assessment provided a future assessment indicating the potential improvement based on the success of ongoing projects and even identify areas to shift resources. The above example and excellent discussion on this is provided in "Recognizing Systems in Afghanistan: Lessons Learned and New Approaches to Operational Assessment," Upshur, Roginski and Kilcullen. Prism 3, No.3, 87-104.




Identification of staff ownership by assigning Offices of Primary Responsibility (OPRs) for tracking the objectives and conditions is important in staff-level assessments. The below example (figure) depicts this together with a technique of depicting information. In this example, the J9 and J35 are responsible for assisting in answering the overall question of whether or not the Humanitarian Assistance Line of Operation is progressing. An individual from that particular J-code, acting as the OPR, has the responsibility of ensuring that the other J-codes are supporting the process. The right side of the figure shows the various J-codes who "own" the MOEs for this operation. This example shows a combination of quantitative and qualitative information in assessment.




Insights:

- Answer the questions: "what happened," "why and so what," and "what needs to be done." Focus products on the type of assessment: task, OE, or campaign.
- Products need to be kept simple or you risk confusing the message – particularly if used with host nation/non-English speaking leaders, our interagency partners or in coalition operations. It is very easy to lose sight of the key points when briefs become too complex.
- Staff assessments should provide recommendations to the commander based upon the assessment. These recommendations are normally not developed by the assessment cell, but rather by the affected/responsible staff focused on specific LOOs/LOEs and MOEs.
- Be cautious in using "junk arithmetic," overly simplistic color coding, excessive optimism, and too many metrics. Be sensitive to overly simplistic cause and effect conclusions. Assessments and recommendations need to be unbiased and transparent.

# Glossary
## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAR – After-Action Review
AOR – Area of Responsibility
APAN – All Partners Access Network
CAWG – Crisis Assessment Working Group
CoS – Chief of Staff
DIME – Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic
DOD – Department of Defense
DTD – Deployable Training Division
FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency
GCC – Geographic Combatant Commander
HHQ – Higher Headquarters
HN – Host Nation
HQ – Headquarters
IED – Improvised Explosive Device
J2 – Intelligence Directorate of a Joint Staff
J35 – Future Operations staff assigned to the Operations Directorate of a Joint Staff
J9 – Commonly the Civil-Military Operations Directorate of a Joint Staff
JIOC – Joint Intelligence Operations Center
JLLIS – Joint Lessons Learned Information System
JP – Joint Publication
JTF – Joint Task Force
LOE – Lines of Effort
LOO – Line of Operation
MOE – Measures of Effectiveness
MOEi –Measures of Effectiveness Indicators
MOP – Measures of Performance
OE – Operational Environment
OPR – Office of Primary Responsibility
ORSA – Operations Research Systems Analyst
USAID – United States Agency for International Development

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