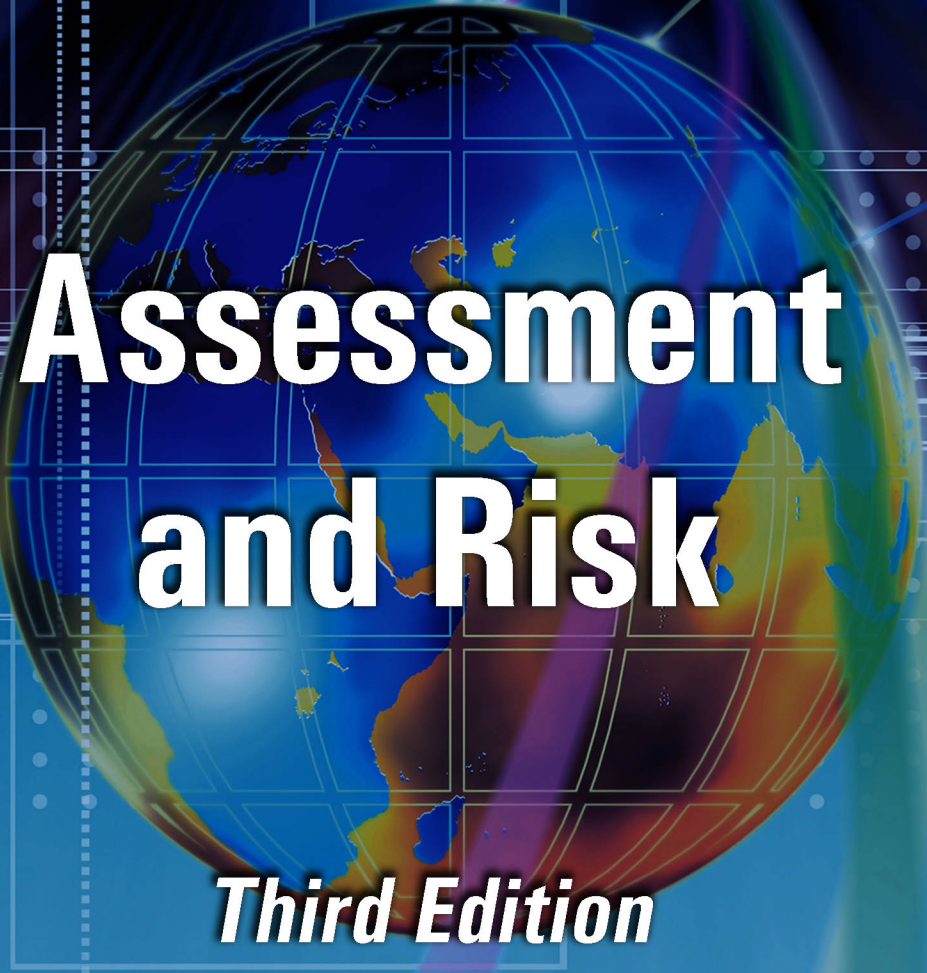# Insights and Best Practices Focus Paper

Assessment and Risk

Third Edition

Deployable Training Division
Joint Staff J7

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Approved for public release

This is the *Third Edition* of the *Assessment and Risk 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. This edition incorporates *__risk__*.

Scope:
- Basics of assessment
- Roles in operational and theater-strategic HQs
- Global Integration insights
- Risk Assessment and Decision-making
- Assessment products

Table of Contents:

Terminology and Acronyms: Numerous military acronyms and organizational names are used in this paper. They are defined in the glossary to speed readability in the body of the paper for the intended readership.

Additional Resources:
- Joint Doctrine Note 1-15, Operation Assessment, 15 January 2015
- Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Planning, 16 June 2017; Chapter VI, Operation Assessment, and Appendix D, Operation Assessment Plan
- NATO Operations Assessment Handbook, Version 3.0, 01 July 2015
- MTTP (ATP 5-0.3, MCRP 5-1C, NTTP 5-01.3, AFTTP 3-2.87) Operation Assessment
- CJCSM 3105.01, Joint Risk Analysis, 14 October 2016

Accessibility: This and other insights and best practices papers can be accessed on the internet at the Joint Electronic Library site: http://www.jcs.mil/Doctrine/focus_papers.aspx.

PREFACE

This paper shares insights and best practices on how assessment and risk analysis inform planning and enrich decision making. The Joint Force leverages assessments from the strategic to operational level. We see heavy emphasis on assessment and risk supporting the Global Campaign Plans and related planning efforts focused on the five priority challenges (China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and Violent Extremist Organizations). This helps inform force employment, planning, and force development and design.

> "However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results"
> - *Winston S. Churchill*

This paper focuses on three primary audiences:

- Commanders and Deputies at Combatant Command HQs, sub-unified commands, joint functional components, and JTF HQs as they leverage assessment to inform guidance.
- Chiefs of Staff (COS) as they develop and refine HQ organization and processes.
- Staff directors as they develop and use assessments to support decision making.

Five overarching considerations:

- Focus on answering "what happened," "why and so what," and "what do we need to do" to inform design and planning, and enrich decision making.
- Include mission partners and other stakeholders. Their perspectives enrich your assessment.
- Incorporate quantitative and qualitative information indicators. Human judgment is integral to assessment and often key to success. There are also numerous technology applications that can support assessment in today's rapidly evolving information driven environment where assessment and decisions making may increasingly occur at machine speed.
- Organize the assessment effort internal to the HQ to enhance outputs and responsiveness.
- Leverage risk assessment to communicate risk and enrich decision-making.

This and other focus papers share observations and insights on joint force HQs observed by the Joint Staff J7 Deployable Training Division. DTD shares these papers with the joint force and the joint lessons learned, joint doctrine, and future concepts communities.

Please send your thoughts, solutions, and best practices to the DTD's POC, Mike Findlay, as you think, plan, and work your way through these challenges.

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

Assessment measures progress of our approach in competition, crisis, and conflict to inform future decisions. Risk analysis informs decisions on global posture and options.

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

Assessment and risk analysis enrich decision making. Assessment and risk analysis help:

- Deepen understanding of the environment.
- Depict progress toward accomplishing the mission.
- Inform guidance for design and planning, commander's intent, acceptable risk, prioritization of efforts, and decisions during execution.
- Risk analysis helps frame and assess risk, and informs risk judgement and risk management decisions.

Assessment helps answer **"what happened, why and so what,** and **what do we need to do."**

- **Task** assessment focuses on **"are we doing things right"** by assessing performance of our tasks. Task assessment, much like after-action reviews and hot washes, helps review and improve our techniques and procedures in how we perform our tasks.
- **Operational environment (OE)** assessment focuses on **"are we doing the right things"** by assessing how we are changing the OE, for better or worse. OE assessment directly informs prioritization, amending the current plan if off course, and future planning.
- **Campaign** assessment focuses on **"are we accomplishing the mission"** by assessing progress in achieving objectives. Campaign assessments occur at higher echelon commands. Campaign assessment focuses on whether the operation is on plan in terms of timelines or success criteria, and provides recommendations to address shortfalls or emerging challenges.

Observations, Insights, and Best Practices:

- Assessment is a continuous activity that begins in design and continues through execution.
- Include subordinates and mission partners; their perspectives enrich your assessment.
- The commander develops his/her own assessment through battlespace circulation, dialogue, and engagement, and supported by the staff's assessment-related input.
- Share assessments with your higher HQs to inform their efforts.
- 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. Leverage technology applications.
- Avoid committing valuable time and energy to excessive and time-consuming assessment schemes and collection efforts that may squander valuable resources. Focus on how your commander wants to receive assessments, such as spider charts, thermographs, or narratives.
- Be careful of falling into the trap of assessing what you can versus what you should.
- Use caution in establishing cause and effect. Recognize the 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.
- Assessment efforts within the HQ are a staff-wide responsibility. Consider assigning staff ownership for various aspects of the operation and lines of effort (LOEs) to enable more comprehensive and qualitative input, and to provide a more meaningful and accurate staff assessment to the commander.

2.0 ASSESSMENT.

Commanders, assisted by their staffs and subordinate commanders, continuously monitor and assess the OE and the progress of the operation. We have observed that well-organized, effective assessment processes help

> **Definition of Assessment:**
> A continuous activity that supports decision making by ascertaining progress toward accomplishing a task, creating an effect, achieving an objective, or attaining an end state for the purpose of developing, adapting, and refining plans and for making campaigns and operations more effective.
> *- JP 5-0*

commanders determine progress toward attaining the desired end state(s), achieving objectives, and performing tasks. Based on their assessment, commanders direct adjustments to ensure continued progress toward accomplishing the mission. Staff-level assessments will typically inform and be informed by the commander's personal assessment. Commanders balance the staff's dependence on reported quantitative and/or qualitative assessment-related indicators with the burden on subordinate units associated with data reporting. The commander develops his/her own assessment, in part through these staff assessments, but even more so through subjective indicators collected through battlefield circulation, KLEs, 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, reprioritize missions or tasks, or even revisit campaign design or the operational approach. Reframing the problem may be required to achieve

"During execution, commanders and staff also assess the underlying framework of the plan itself. This involves reexamining the original operational approach and determining if it is still relevant to the situation."

overall mission objectives (see figure) based on the actual situation and potential threats or opportunities. As a result, commanders may provide additional guidance and intent to subordinates, request guidance or additional support from superiors, or provide recommendations for additional diplomatic, informational, military, economic, financial, intelligence, law enforcement, (DIME-FIL) actions from key stakeholders or external partners.

Commander's critical information requirements (CCIR) support assessment efforts. CCIRs at most operational-level HQs support two major activities. First, CCIRs capture specific information requirements that directly support assessments which deepen understanding of the environment and inform planning guidance. Second, CCIRs aid commander decision making by directly supporting decisions on execution of branch and sequel plans.

Focus of Assessments. Depending on the echelon, each HQ will likely have a different assessment focus. Irrespective of level, respective staffs determine indicators to identify specific pieces of information that infer changes in the OE.
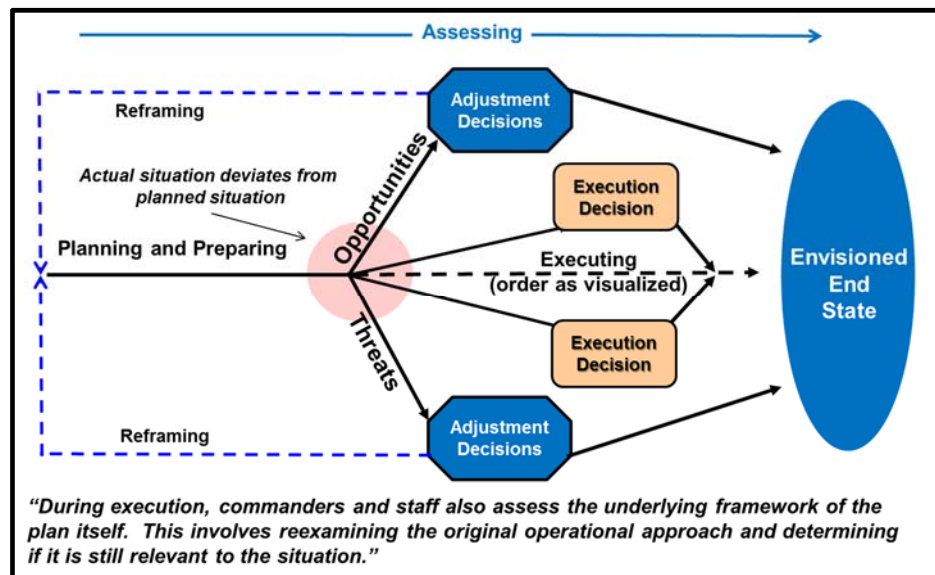
- Tactical-level HQs focus more on task assessment, i.e., whether the tactical HQs are performing assigned or implied tasks to standard (using MOPs) answering if these HQs are "doing things right." MOPs answer the questions "was the task completed?" and "was it completed to standard?" (e.g., delivery of equipment, construction of a school, or seizure of an objective to specified standards) to assist the unit(s) in improving future performance.
- Operational-level HQs focus on OE assessment addressing whether they are achieving the identified necessary conditions (MOE-oriented) within the OE for mission success (e.g., progress in gaining support of populace or decrease in enemy activity) answering if these HQs are "doing the right things."

| **Task Assessment** |
| *Are we doing things right?* |
| **Operational Environment Assessment** |
| *Are we doing the right things?* |
| **Campaign Assessment** |
| *Are we accomplishing the mission?* |

- Theater-level HQs (e.g., Geographic CCMDs-[GCCs]) 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.
- Assessment at the theater-strategic and national-strategic level is starting to focus on assessment by domain leveraging both functional components (e.g., JFACC, JFLCC) and Functional CCMDs (e.g., CYBERCOM and SPACECOM). This orientation better identifies vulnerabilities and opportunities across domains for exploitation.
- Tactical-level assessments are nested under operational-level assessments which in turn are nested under the theater-level strategic assessment.

Assessment Process.
Implement assessment early in the planning process, be continuous, and gain touch points to inform and be informed by the commander.

We have observed that tactical-level HQs conduct *task assessments* 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

Assessment Steps

Activity	Primarily during	Output
Develop Assessment Approach	Design and Planning	Assessment approach including: • Assessment framework and construct • Specific outcomes (end state, objectives, effects) • Commander's estimate/CONOPS
Develop Assessment Plan	Planning	• Approved assessment plan • Data collection plan • Approved contingency plan/operation order
Collect Information and Intelligence	Execution (JPIOE and CCIR development and collection)	Data collected and organized, relevant to joint force actions, current and desired conditions
Analyze Information and Intelligence	Execution (working groups)	• Draft assessment products • Vetted and validated recommendations
Communicate feedback and recommendations	Execution (provided to decision makers)	Approved assessment products, decisions, and recommendations
Adapt Plans or Operations/Campaigns	Execution Planning	• Revised plans or fragmentary orders • Updated assessment plan • Updated data collection plan

circulation, cross-talk, and other venues such as discussions with mission partners).

Operational-level HQs focus their efforts on *assessing the OE* at an 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 HQs normally focus on *campaign assessments* at quarterly or semi-annual frequency. These assessments are often more formal and fully inclusive with relevant stakeholders.

Basis for Assessment. As noted earlier, assessment helps expand 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, and may change as the mission and plan evolve.

DEFINITIONS
Measure of performance (MOP): Indicators used to assess friendly (i.e. multinational) actions tied to measuring task accomplishment. MOPs help answer the question "are we doing things right?" or "Was the task completed to standard?"
Measure of effectiveness (MOE): Indicators used to help measure a current system state, with change indicated by comparing multiple observations over time to gauge the achievement of objectives and attainment of end states. MOEs help answer the question, "Are we doing the right things to create the effects or changes in the conditions of the OE that we desire?"
Indicator: In the context of operation assessment, a specific piece of information that infers the condition, state, or existence of something, and provides a reliable means to ascertain performance or effectiveness. *- JP 5-0*

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

Development of MOE criteria is more difficult. Correct determination of MOEs up front during planning is important. A focus on the relevant MOEs enables an accurate visualization of progress toward mission accomplishment. Likewise, measuring the wrong things can bias

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

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 the protection of allied shipping, an assessment focused on reducing numbers of allied shipping vessels sunk (not on submarines sunk) changed our antisubmarine campaign.

Qualitative Aspects of Assessment. Understanding the OE and campaign assessment is complicated and necessarily commander-centric. Because of their extensive operational experiences, commanders are typically the best sources for subjective, opinion-based assessments. Commanders' assessments are strengthened by their battlefield circulation, interaction with other commanders and stakeholders, and their intuition, experiences, and instincts. Functional staff directors (not just the J2) can also provide qualitative inputs based on their focus. We find the commander can assist greatly by providing feedback on his/her

perspectives to staff members (who are often HQ-bound) so they can better understand how the commander views the environment based on his/her 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 senior staff directors and commanders' more subjective qualitative indicators and assessments. The 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 data-centric and requires a degree of mathematically-oriented, data processing capability.

We also find the requirement to more quickly understand and adapt to the rapidly evolving information driven environment. Assessment and decision making will increasingly occur at machine speed in armed conflict with near peer competitors. The challenge is to assess and make decisions aided by technology while also retaining the human dimension and bias for action, and preserving the ability to operate without technology-based tools and enablers.

There can be a desire 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. Left unchecked, these extensive, data-centric briefings have the potential to 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 the assessments often lack the more subjective "why" and "so what" together with recommendations. Additionally, some assessments tend to focus incorrectly on measuring the level of activity rather than actual progress toward achieving objectives.

A Necessary Balance of Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators for Assessment. Many HQs have identified the need to balance the above quantitative and qualitative approaches in assessment to reduce the likelihood of skewed conclusions. A well-balanced assessment process avoids excessive and time-consuming assessment schemes or quantitative collection efforts that squander valuable resources and may be insufficient at informing the commander's decision cycle. Continuous commander and staff involvement is key to achieving this balance. A commander can limit the amount of time and effort the staff invests in the collection and evaluation of quantitative indicators and codifying his/her role in applying experience, intuition, and judgment in developing a more balanced assessment.

Staff-wide Assessment Effort. Assessment is a staff-wide effort, not simply the product of an Assessment Cell. This ensures staff-wide inclusion in the assessment process, introduces qualitative input into the process, and ultimately provides a more meaningful, accurate, and holistic staff-produced assessment to the commander. The commander can then use that staff-produced assessment to inform and possibly enrich his/her personal assessment gained through battlefield circulation, KLEs, 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 perceptions.

We often find that just thinking through and developing the "what happened," the "why," and the "so what" of assessment can consume staff members and they do not get to what may be the most important aspect—recommending "what needs to be done." The staff must make recommendations. Developing viable recommendations focuses staff 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 efforts, as well as commander's intent. All of this contributes to effective mission command.

Observations, Insights, and Best Practices:

- 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 required and the frequency of venues for the specific HQ depending on the HQ's echelon, mission, OE, and available resources.
- Assess the adversary through their lens – don't fall into the trap of mirror imaging. Well-resourced red cells with access to other experts can provide a more realistic view of the adversary, enhance the quality of the assessment, and deepen your understanding.
- Incorporate assessment requirements into CCIR.
- Develop feasible MOE and MOP indicators early in the planning process to ensure that the reporting requirements and evaluation workload are sustainable by the HQ and subordinates. Periodically review and update. Incorporate all relevant stakeholders in crafting these indicators to ensure that the right things are being measured.
- Do not confuse activity with progress. Hope is not a method.
- Ensure commander-centric qualitative, and experience-based assessments inform and are informed by staff-centric quantitative assessments.
- Incorporate technology applications which can aid assessment, risk assessment, real-time modeling, and decision support tools.
- Institute a process in which the commander provides feedback to the staff on what he/she has observed, heard, or experienced during battlefield circulation to ensure the staff is aligned and understands his/her 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 staffs.
- Develop a comprehensive assessment framework and codify in a HQ's SOP; this SOP describes staff-wide input requirements to the process to enrich the commander's assessment.
- Value an interorganizational approach to creating an informed comprehensive assessment.

3.0 KEY ROLES.

The Commander. As emphasized throughout this paper, the assessment process is commander-driven. The staff and subordinate HQs' assessments inform the commander's decision making. This operational assessment enriches subsequent guidance for design and planning, commander's intent, prioritization of efforts, and ultimately execution in pursuit of mission accomplishment.

Subordinate HQs and Components. Subordinate HQs and components provide operational tactical assessments to the commander. For example, a component reporting that a particular task has been accomplished may trigger a decision point for the higher commander

Chief of Staff (COS). The COS coordinates with the assessments lead to ensure frequent commander touch points. Additionally, the COS is the key driver of staff-wide integration and involvement in achieving the assessments approach to help inform the commander's assessment and decision making.
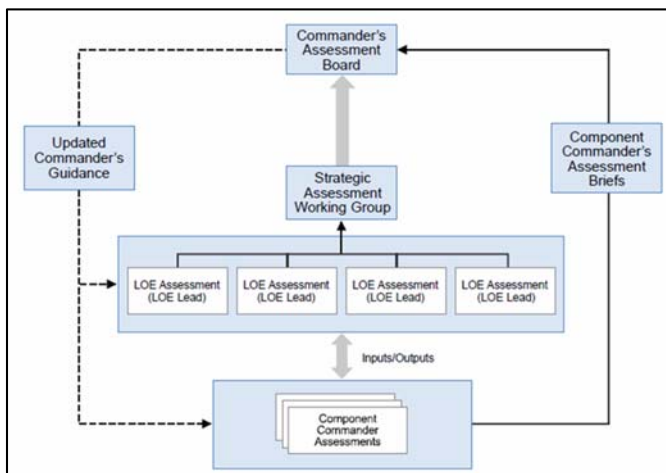
Assessments Lead. Every HQ should have a staff section or cell charged with coordinating the staff assessment process. We find that the chief of this section or cell should have recent operational experience. While having quantitatively-oriented operations research and systems analysis (ORSA) expertise in the cell is extremely important, we find that the chief needs a broader operational perspective to better align and guide the cell's activities to best inform the commander. The assessments cell lead should develop an assessment approach (or framework) to help align and guide the staff in capturing the required information/data. This person should confirm that the assessment framework includes input from all stakeholders and staff directorates to ensure that the assessment ultimately supports the commander's decision making.

Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR). The OPRs are the primary source of information used to build the assessment framework. Their role should be to support the assessments lead by providing indicators to MOEs and MOPs. Given their functional area expertise they should also provide recommendations on improvements to the assessment approach.

Identification of staff ownership by assigning Offices of Primary Responsibility (OPRs) for tracking the objectives and conditions is important in integrating staff-level assessments. The example to the right (see figure) depicts this integration with a technique for assigning responsibility and 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 (LOO) 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 figure shows the various J-codes who "own" the MOEs for this operation. This example also shows a combination of quantitative and qualitative information in assessment.

J2 (and Joint Intelligence Operations Center [JIOC]). The J2 has a vital role in assessment, particularly the initial OE assessment derived from Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment (JIPOE) and the Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, and Infrastructure (PMESII) analytical construct. Intelligence integration in the assessment process provides analysis of the other actors within the region to better portray the OE.

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

Mission Partner/Stakeholder Involvement. Many commands strive diligently to include nongovernmental, interagency, and allied and coalition partners and stakeholders in the assessment process. These diverse perspectives enrich the assessment process and provide a whole-of-government, as well as coalition perspectives. Continuous collaboration between the military, mission partners, and stakeholders tends to reduce barriers and help improve staff-wide assessment.

In some cases, assessment efforts support outside stakeholders, e.g., Department of State (DOS), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Federal Emergency Management Agency (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 US citizens during a noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO).

<u>**Observations, Insights, and Best Practices**</u>:
- An effective assessments process is commander-centric. The commander has the best overall understanding of the progress toward mission accomplishment through engagements and other touchpoints, and should share his/her perspectives and assessment with the staff.
- The COS ensures staff-wide support to assist the commander in his/her assessment.
- Select an individual with recent operational experience as the assessment lead (cell chief).
- Task the Assessment Cell chief with developing an assessments approach or framework to coordinate staff-wide input and provide a balance of "defendable" quantitative data with qualitative information to enrich the commander's assessment.
- Ensure all staff members understand that they play a part in assessment.
- Leverage functional components to provide assessment within their respective domain, for example your supporting Cyber element may provide key assessment (and vulnerabilities and opportunities) within the cyber domain that can be addressed by other components.
- Interagency and multinational partner (i.e., interorganizational) involvement adds value to the assessment process; their diverse perspectives enrich (and can influence) the process.
- HN security forces can also assist the assessment process. They can help validate findings and assist in transition planning, e.g., transfer of responsibility to HN forces.

4.0 ORGANIZATIONAL IMPLICATIONS.

Assessment Cell. While recognizing the pivotal role the commander has regarding assessment, we have seen that an assessment-focused staff element can assist greatly in coordinating staff efforts to inform and support 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. Then, there is an increased tendency to develop additional burdensome reporting requirements to independently build a stove-piped assessment process. A viable assessment methodology 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 HQs placed within the J5 Directorate (to inform planning efforts) while some CCMDs place their assessment function in their J8 Directorate (focused on theater security cooperation, overall theater campaign plan assessments, and programming 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 challenges when the assessment element takes on the focus of the particular staff directorate with which it is associated.

The Assessment Cell fuses information, analysis, assessments, and recommendations from across the staff, subordinate units, and other relevant 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 also shares the commander's assessment with HHQ, subordinate commands, other and relevant stakeholders.

The cell normally forms the core of a working group that supports development of the staff assessment. The cell also supports operational planning teams (OPTs) in identifying 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 within CCMD J8 Directorates may focus on providing holistic assessments for Theater Campaign Plans (TCPs) based on steady-state operations. However, a J8 Assessment Cell may be challenged to support dynamic assessment requirements associated with crises and contingencies. We often see temporary placement of J8 Assessment Cell members into a J5-led or J3-led Crisis OPT to orchestrate the more dynamic assessment requirements. Having members integrated into the design and planning efforts during both crisis planning and execution helps provide the necessary framework to support the more dynamic assessments. This temporary "crisis assessment cell" can endeavor to isolate the changes in various systems' behaviors that initiated the crisis in order to better refine the objectives and desired effects to achieve the military end state. These individuals can also develop an assessment framework (architecture) that identifies the subject matter experts (SMEs) within and external to the staff who 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, MOEi, and other indicators. Its efforts may lead to

decision/decisive points towards objectives and the military end state(s) 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 an OPT or Joint Planning Group for subsequent decisions by the commander.

Depending on the nature of the mission, we have also observed that independent Assessments staff sections find success in simply modifying their battle rhythm to account for the compressed timeline associated with a crisis or contingency. They do this by increasing the frequency of their regular B2C2WGs, and work with the COS to ensure that the timing of their events continues to positively impact commander's decision making.

Observations, Insights, and Best Practices:
- At CCMD level during a crisis response operation, establish some form of J3-led or J5-led Crisis OPT with key assessment personnel membership.
- At operational-level HQs, 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 assessment inputs.
- Determine the critical path for assessment-related inputs and outputs that support ongoing planning efforts to inform the command on holistic changes to the OE.

## 5.0 ASSESSMENT PRODUCTS.

Products help visualize assessment:
- Enrich comprehensive understanding of the OE.
- Depict progress toward achieving objectives and accomplishing the mission.
- Support and inform the commander's decision cycle. Informing commander's intent, guidance for design and planning, prioritization of efforts, and ultimately execution.

Tailor support to the Commander. The commander has an important responsibility to inform the staff on what he or she needs, when (how often) it is needed, and how he or she 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 receive 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 the OE and campaign assessments)**.** Products may range from pure narratives to different types of displays – focused on the commander's requirement.

The figure on the right presents one way to present information to the commander. Up front, we find that staff products need some means to explain change, trends, and future requirements, e.g., HN forces must be mission capable by "X" date to participate in a planned

operation. This helps place recommendations in the proper context. Commanders may prefer geographically-based products that use red, amber, and green color coding on maps depicting "status" of the OE. These allow tracking of progress over time, provide easily understood and granular understanding for the operational commander, and provide a common framework to allow sharing and discussion among commanders. Other commanders may prefer 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 early operations when a commander (most likely at the theater-strategic level) is
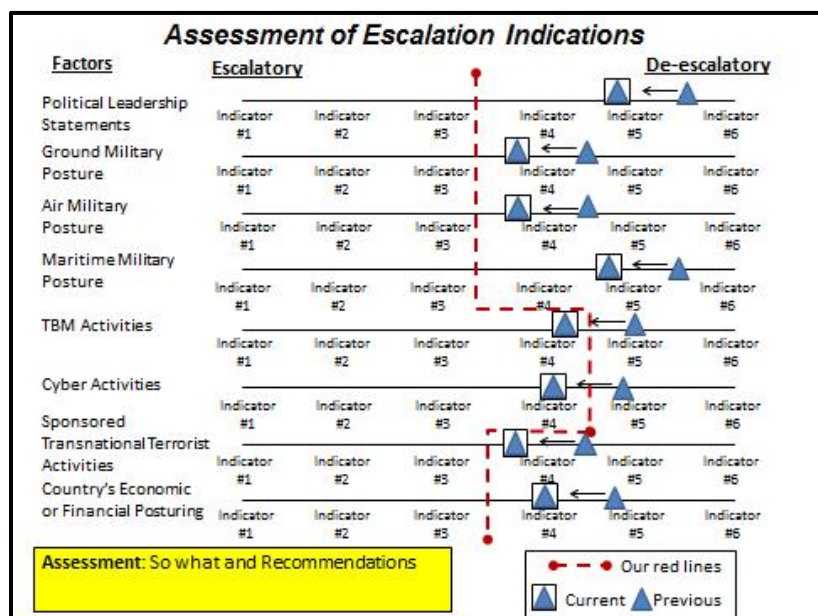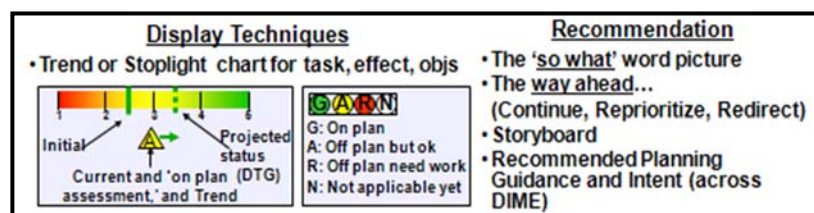
attempting in conjunction with other elements of national and international power to change behavior without escalating to war.

The radar chart or spider chart is another method used to depict a holistic assessment using multiple axes that can either represent LOEs or other assessment criteria. The chart informs progress or the lack of progress towards a desired end state. The chart can be layered like the adjacent example to indicate progress based on previous assessments. In this example, the assessment provides a future assessment indicating the potential improvement based on the success of ongoing operations and even identifies areas to shift resources. The above example and amplifying 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.
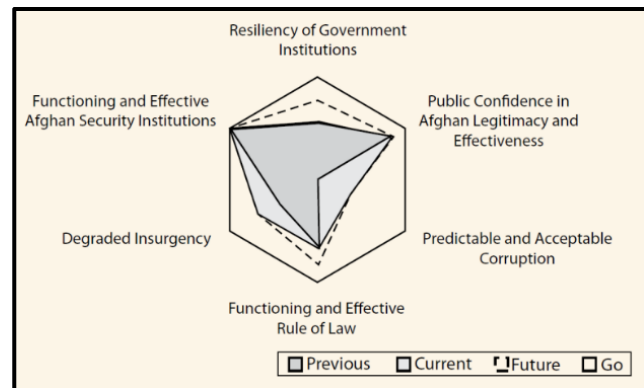
Products visualizing assessment by domain are currently still in the formative stage but appear to have the potential to further all-domain approaches to achieve overmatching power. An example of early products are depicted in the adjacent figure.

Observations, Insights, and Best Practices:

- 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.
- Keep products simple or you risk confusing the message.
- Spend time on developing an assessment plan and what products will best portray the assessment. Commanders establish priorities for assessment through their planning guidance, CCIRs, and decision points.
- Staff assessments should provide recommendations to the commander. These recommendations are developed by the Assessment Cell through input provided by the staff directorates focused on specific LOOs/LOEs and MOEs.
- Ensure assessments and recommendations are unbiased and transparent.
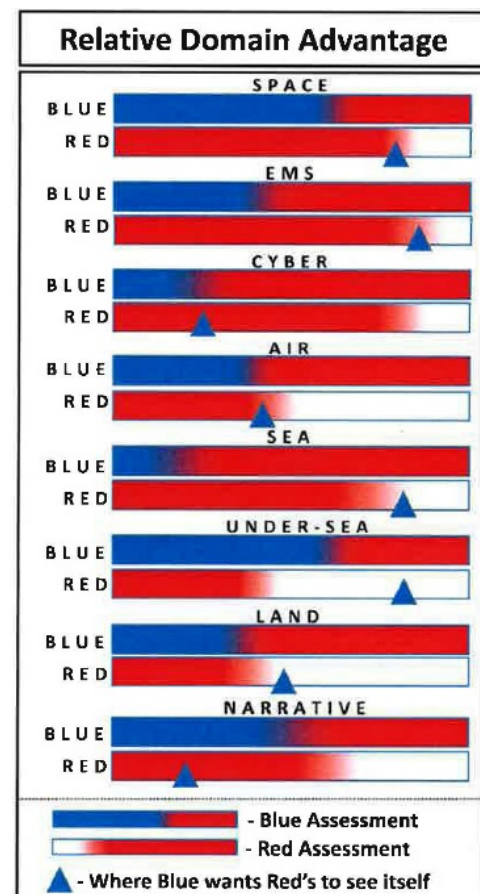
6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT SUPPORTS DECISION-MAKING.

Risk assessment serves national, departmental, and military leaders as they set priorities and allocate resources to mitigate risk. Identifying, assessing, and mitigating strategic and military risk lays the foundation and priorities to employ, manage, and develop the Joint Force to meet national military objectives. [Much of the discussion in this section comes from CJCSM 3105.01, Joint Risk Analysis.]

Risk, the probability and consequence of an event causing harm to something valued, is a key element of decision-making across the Joint Force. The combination of probability and consequence determines the initial risk characterization. Accurately appraising risk allows leaders and staffs to manage and communicate risk effectively to inform decisions across disparate processes.
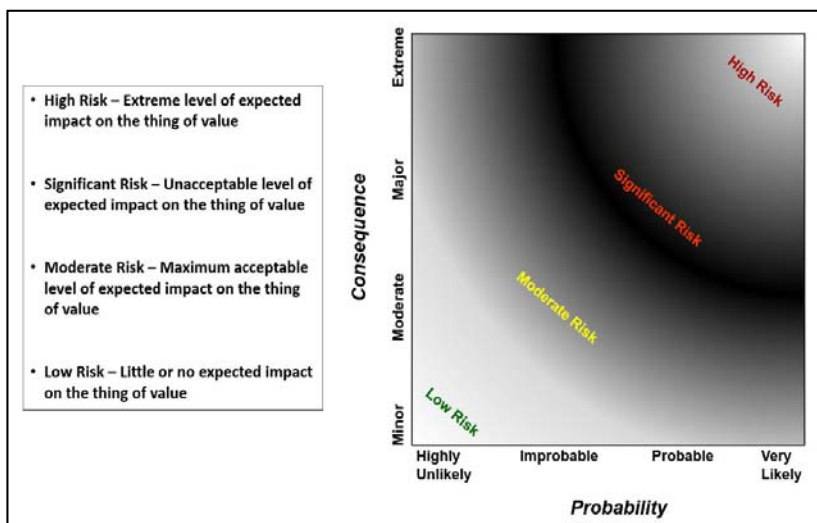

The Joint Risk Assessment Methodology (JRAM) uses a framework with three major components and four steps or activities (see figure) to address risk comprehensively. The three components are Risk Appraisal – generation of knowledge and understanding; Risk Management – decisions and actions to manage or mitigate risk; and Risk Communication – the exchange of risk perspectives across processes and among leadership. Four steps are essential in a viable risk process:

1) Problem Framing - establishing the risk conventions and "risk to what?"
2) Problem Assessment - identifying and scaling threats, "risk from what?"
3) Risk Judgment - developing a risk profile, "how much risk?" and evaluating the risk – "how much risk is ok?"
4) Risk Management – decisions and actions to accept or mitigate – "what should be done about the risk."
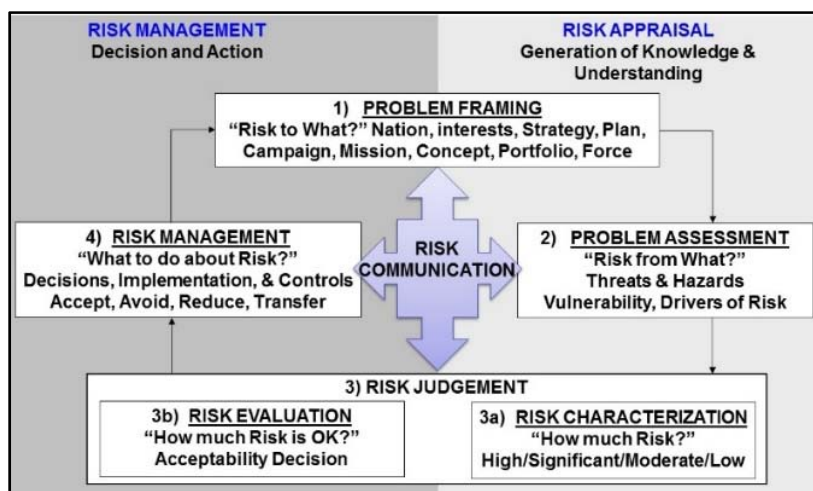
Risk also has a time-dimension; commanders may assume risk by acting prematurely or too late. Acting too soon based on too little information creates potential risk as does waiting too long and

being forced into decisions and not providing subordinates sufficient time to plan and act. As depicted in the figure, a feasible decision window allows for adaptation and learning, maintaining the flexibility to respond to the situation. Late decisions take away flexibility and infringe on preparation time. Failure to assess effectively can result in underestimating or overestimating a given challenge or threat. Underestimation may lead to unanticipated casualties and time delays. Overestimation of the threat can paralyze the force so

opportunities to gain the initiative are lost. There is also risk associated with achieving catastrophic success which may lead to high expectations of subsequent action. Without anticipatory sequel or branch planning unmet expectations for follow through may create seams and ill will.
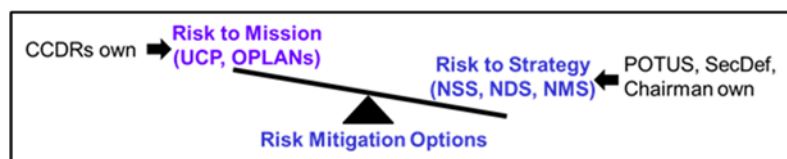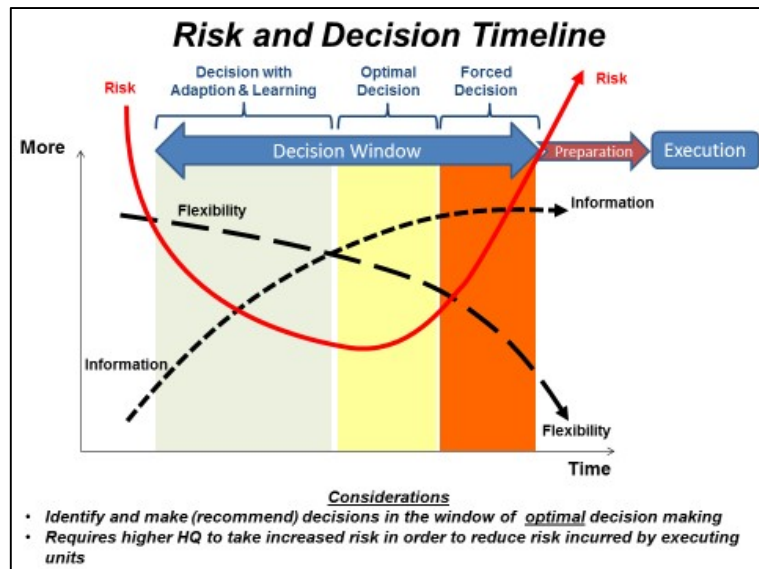
Considerations:

- Communicate risk to enrich commander decision-making, inform higher and adjacent headquarters and mission partners, and provide context and guidance to subordinates.
- Problem framing is a key process – and focuses on risk to what. Different organizations and echelons have different roles and responsibilities (see figure). Joint Force Commanders won both risk to mission and risk to force; The President, Secretary of Defense, and Chairman own respectively, risk to National Security Strategy (NSS), National Defense Strategy (NDS), and National Military Strategy (NMS). The Services provide risk to force generation which informs both the Joint Force and National leaders.
- Collaborate with the CCMDs and Services and account for their mission-centric perspectives of risk (risk to mission) and opportunities based on their different mission sets, threats, and perspectives. Mitigating risk from one CCMD or Service perspective may unintentionally transfer it elsewhere.
- Incorporate risk to strategy to support the NDS and NMS – the boxer's stance. Leverage the J5, J8, and Services in this endeavor.
- Incorporate OSD into risk synthesis to gain insight on policy implications.
- Leverage red teams and red cells. Red teams, an independent group that challenges an organization to improve its effectiveness, can aid a commander and the staff to think critically and creatively; see things from varying perspectives; challenge their thinking; avoid false mind-sets, biases, or group thinking; and avoid the use of inaccurate analogies to frame the problem. A red cell is composed of members of the intelligence directorate, focuses on understanding the threat and decision calculus to improve intelligence analysis, products, and processes, and better discern risk.

Glossary
Abbreviations and Acronyms

A2/AD – Anti-access/Area Denial
AAR – After-Action Review
AOR – Area of Responsibility
APAN – All Partners Access Network
A/SPOD – Aerial Port/Seaport of Debarkation
A/SPOE – Aerial Port/Seaport of Embarkation
B2C2WG – Boards, Bureaus, Centers, Cells, and Working Groups
CAWG – Crisis Assessment Working Group
CCDR – Combatant Commander
CCIR – Commander's Critical Information Requirement(s)
CCMD – Combatant Command
CJCS – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
CJCSM – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum
COS – Chief of Staff
CSEL – Command Senior Enlisted Leader
DIME – Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic (analytical construct)
DIME-FIL – Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic, Financial, Intelligence, Law Enforcement
DOD – Department of Defense
DOS – Department of State
DTD – Deployable Training Division
FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency
FRAGORD/FRAGO – Fragmentary Order
GCC – Geographic Combatant Command
GIO – Globally Integrated Operations
HHQ – Higher Headquarters
HN – Host Nation
HQ – Headquarters
J2 – Intelligence Directorate of a Joint Staff
J35 – Future Operations staff assigned to the Operations Directorate of a Joint Staff
J5 – Strategic Plans and Policy
J8 – Force Structure, Resources and Assessments
J9 – Commonly the Civil-Military Operations Directorate of a Joint Staff
JIOC – Joint Intelligence Operations Center

JIPOE – Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment
JLLIS – Joint Lessons Learned Information System
JP – Joint Publication
JPP – Joint Planning Process
JRSOI – Joint Reception, Staging, Onward movement, and Integration
JTF – Joint Task Force
KLE – Key Leader Engagement
LOC – Line of Communication
LOE – Lines of Effort
LOO – Line of Operation
MOE – Measures of Effectiveness
MOEi – Measure of Effectiveness Indicator
MOP – Measures of Performance
NEO – Noncombatant Evacuation Operation
OE – Operational Environment
OPR – Office of Primary Responsibility
OPT – Operational Planning Team
ORSA – Operations Research and Systems Analysis
PMESII – Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, and Infrastructure (analytical construct)
SME – Subject Matter Expert
TCO – Theater Campaign Order
TCP – Theater Campaign Plan
TMM – Trans-regional, Multi-domain, and Multifunctional (Security Challenges)
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
VEO – Violent Extremist Organization

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