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PLANNING FOR ASSESSMENT

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Planners, commanders, and analysts may not know the impact of [strategic attacks](#) (SA) immediately because SA most often works through psychological, systemic, cascading, or other higher-order [effects](#). Therefore, successful SA may depend on anticipatory [operational](#) and campaign [assessment](#) done as part of planning. Accurate assessment provides the groundwork for analysts to determine how well the plan is developing during execution. This applies even more so to SA operations. The subjective and sometimes tenuous linkage between cause and effect could make intermediate steps in the effects chain hard to detect, leading to the false impression that particular operations are ineffective. As with [joint intelligence preparation of the operating environment](#) (JIPOE), deriving such insight is not easy and should be thoroughly planned for. Planners will need help from national-level assets (many of the same used for “up-front” analysis) and since these resources are “low density, high demand,” gaining access will be much easier if coordinated early. Planners and intelligence collection managers should also consider ongoing collection requirements during plan execution: what type of information will be needed, what assets will be needed, and how will these assets be controlled and sustained. Planners should be as thorough and detailed when planning for assessment as when planning for any other aspect of SA.
