ASSESSMENT INTERPRETATION

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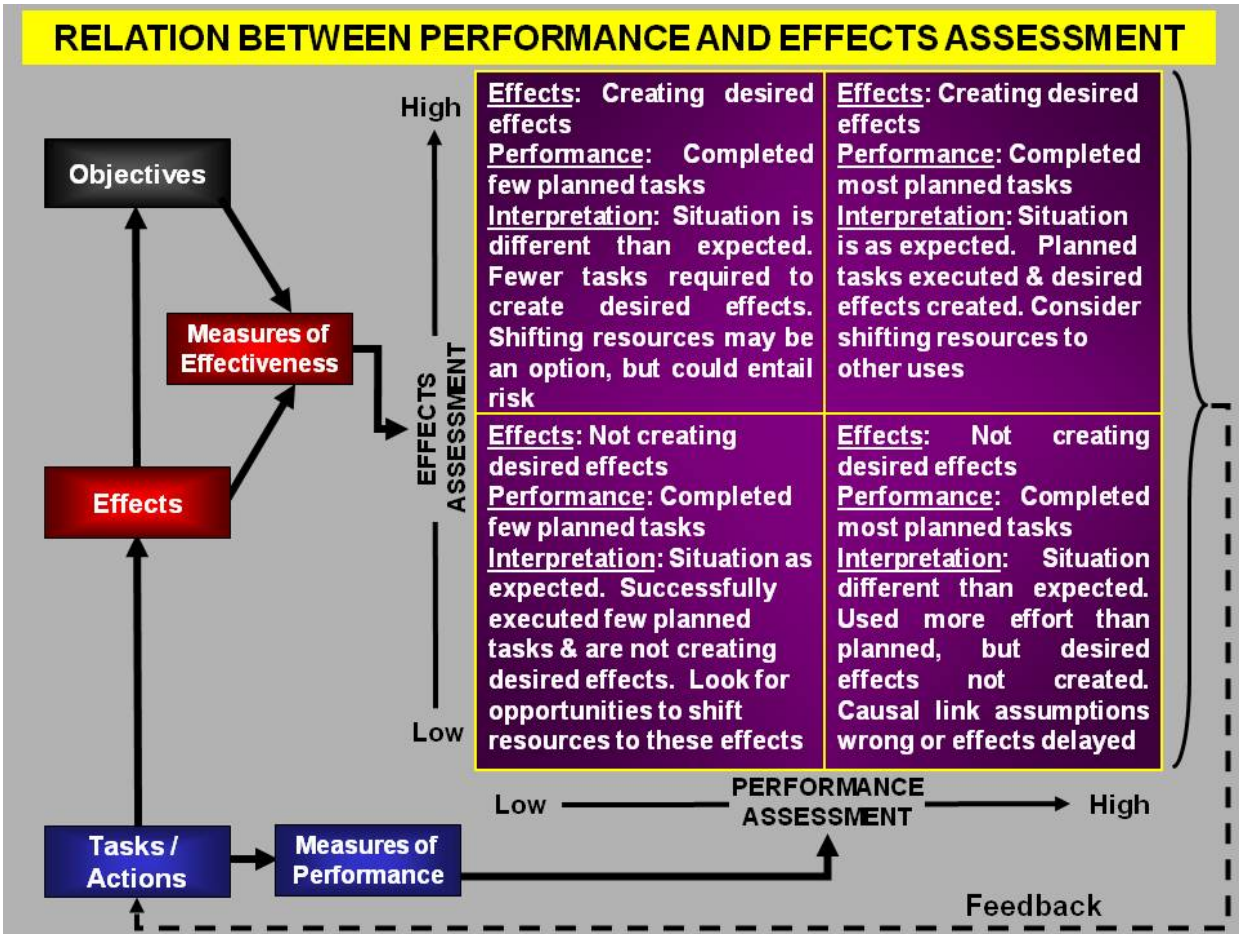
The purpose of assessment is not merely to report on the measures, but rather to provide analytically supported insights into the effectiveness of the commander's strategy and information with which to make decisions. There are numerous analytic techniques available to summarize data analysis in performing effective assessment. The technique chosen should be tailored to the operational environment, taking into account such factors as the pace of operations, available expertise, and reachback support capabilities. Assessors should also take into account the level of warfare and the commander's primary concerns. The "Relation Between Performance and Effects Assessment" figure provides a framework with which to compare the effect and performance assessments when determining the level of objective achievement.



Relation between Performance and Effects Assessment

Overall, assessment interpretation can be broken into two major types: effects and performance assessment. **Effects assessment,** based on measures of effectiveness (MOEs), should provide the commander with the overall picture of progress toward objective or end state achievement. **Performance assessment,** based on measures of performance (MOPs), should provide commanders with an overall picture of how well their forces are executing the strategy's ways and means.

The relationship between effects assessment and performance assessment can be characterized in several basic ways. The scores may be similar, the performance assessment may be higher than the effect assessment, or the effects assessment may be higher than the performance assessment.

In the first case, similar effect and performance assessments suggest the operation is proceeding as expected with effects being achieved in proportion to the level of subordinate task completion. This does not necessarily mean that the operation is on schedule, and a correlation between effect and performance does not necessarily imply causality. The assessment should continue to be monitored for any changes to the apparent equilibrium.

Disconnects between effect and performance assessments indicate that portions of the plan may require further examination. A high performance assessment paired with a low effect assessment is an indication that the completion of planned tasks is not leading to the desired effects. Numerous issues including data latency, delayed effects, or a misunderstanding of the enemy system may be driving the score mismatches. Examples of score mismatches include:

- Having confirmation of successful leaflet drops (high performance) supporting special operations efforts to turn the local population against the adversary, but there has been no change in the number of civilian tip-offs on adversary activity in the area (low effectiveness).

- Having battle damage assessment (BDA) indicating the destruction of national power production (high performance) which was done with the intent of limiting enemy command and control (C2), but the adversary's integrated air defense system (IADS) is still operating in a coordinated and timely fashion, showing no apparent degradation (low effectiveness).

In other words, the assumptions about the direct links between the achievement of tasks and the objectives they support may be flawed. In this situation, the primary focus of the assessment should be to identify and highlight these imbalances to the strategists and planners so they can recommend changes to the strategy or plan.

Conversely, when the effect is assessed higher than the performance, desired effects are being achieved without the expected completion of corresponding tasks. Again, numerous issues including data latency, enemy deception, good fortune, and

misunderstanding of the enemy system could lead to this apparent contradiction. For example:

- ✪ BDA indicates that strikes on enemy strategic surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites missed their targets (performance); however, the adversary has not fired any SAMs during the last five air tasking order (ATO) cycles (effectiveness).

- ✪ Planners have not taken any planned actions against enemy fighters (poor performance); however, the adversary is not flying any fighters (high effectiveness).

In these cases, the commander may be able to reallocate resources to another objective. Identifying these opportunities allows the commander to execute operations more effectively and efficiently. However, a high effect assessment paired with a low performance assessment may be temporary if much of the enemy's capability to adversely impact the desired effect remains. For example, in the example above, the enemy could bring their aircraft out of hiding and begin inhibiting friendly air operations. Capturing such remaining capability helps determine the operational risk commanders would incur if they choose to reallocate resources. If the commander decides the risk is acceptable, assessors should work with the strategists and planners to identify and prioritize those objectives warranting additional resources.

A significant consideration when interpreting effectiveness and performance results is that complex systems often begin internal change without showing outward signs that are measurable to observers. It is thus often necessary for commanders, planners, and strategists to counsel patience in following a particular COA to allow time for desired changes to work their way through targeted systems and manifest themselves as desired behaviors in the operational environment.