



ANNEX 3-0 OPERATIONS AND PLANNING

**ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

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Assessment processes differ according to the level at which they are performed, what type or portion of an operation is being assessed, and what organization is tasked to perform them. Nonetheless, there are five basic elements that are common to most strategy assessment efforts.

- ★ **Define and understand the strategy.** Developing end states and the ways and means to achieve them is critical to successful assessment and later recommendations for change. Those responsible for assessing a strategy should be involved in its design and planning from the start. Assessment should always flow from a thorough understanding of the commander's intent.
- ★ **Develop criteria.** Criteria define the attributes and thresholds for judging progress toward the end state and accomplishment of required tasks. They help ensure that only relevant and necessary data is monitored and collected, and that consistent and logical feedback is provided to the commander.
- ★ **Identify measures and collect data.** Assessment measures—including measures of effectiveness (MOEs) and measures of performance (MOPs)—should be drafted as part of operational design and planning, and should relate directly to the criteria they are supporting. Data for assessment exists throughout the operational environment, and monitoring and collection requires the concerted efforts of those responsible for a given level of assessment, along with federated<sup>1</sup> military organizations, other US government agencies, and multinational partners. Monitoring and collection should be planned.
- ★ **Analyze.** Analysts should look critically at the data stream that emerges from data collection. While well-defined assessment criteria and measures should ensure relevant data is being collected, analysts should continually evaluate the usefulness of the collected data toward the assessment. Analysis is and will likely remain more art than science and requires adept and experienced analysts. This is one of the reasons that federated support to assessment is so important.

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<sup>1</sup> Federation, although not formally defined refers to the relationships and agreements created with intelligence and assessment experts across many different disciplines in the Department of Defense (DOD), in non-DOD agencies, multinational partners, and others, to facilitate the free exchange of expertise, analysis, and assessment. See Air Force Doctrine (AFD) Annex 3-60, Targeting, for more information.

- ★ **Present insights and recommendations.** Based on the analysis, strategists and planners may make recommendations, ranging from a simple re-attack on a [tactical](#) task level to major re-direction of a [campaign](#) (as through a [branch](#) or [sequel](#)). Successful adaptation requires constant reevaluation of assessment criteria, analysis, and recommendations for future action to commanders at all levels.

Assessment can be labor- and time-intensive. Some [effects](#), especially at the operational level and above, but also when dealing with phase II and III [battle damage assessment](#) (BDA) (effects on a [target](#) or [target system](#)), may only become evident over extended periods of time and require the use of multi-source and multi-discipline [intelligence](#). An example of this is the [targeting](#) of buried facilities. In such cases, there may be evidence that a weapon hit the target, but due to delayed fusing, the degree of its effective functioning may be very difficult to determine. It may take communications intercepts, studies of electrical usage, or “pattern of life” analysis over time to determine whether or not such a facility is still functioning and, if functioning, to what degree it is still effective. Nevertheless, assessment should be responsive to the commander’s decision-making cycle, whatever the scale or pace of the operation. Future campaigns and major operations may not afford commanders the luxury of time and resources that assessment has historically consumed. Further, as [effects-based](#) principles have come to be accepted, commanders prefer to measure many of the [indirect effects](#) that friendly actions create, increasing requirements for assessment resources. Commanders can facilitate a sound effects-based assessment processes by the following means:

- ★ Prepare to perform effects assessment, especially during [air operations center](#) (AOC) exercises. Commanders, strategists, planners, and [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance](#) (ISR) specialists should know what they should be getting from the assessment process and how to get it.
- ★ Institute federated and [reachback](#) partnerships in peacetime. Federation partners should know what the desired [objectives](#) and effects are. Obtaining immediate feedback from agencies and units requesting an effect provides an immediate assessment of whether or not a particular effect was achieved.
- ★ When necessary, employ estimated physical damage assessment techniques to assess the results of combat operations. Modern weapons are sufficiently accurate and precise that they may be assumed to have accomplished their intended [direct effects](#) unless some evidence exists to the contrary. Using estimated damage assessment may free up time and manpower resources that can then be devoted to effects assessment. Although “assuming” physical damage is never the desired approach, manpower and other limitations may sometimes make it necessary.
- ★ Prepare assessors to capture the risk trade-offs the commander may have to assume when disparities between task accomplishment and effects assessments occur. While assessors should focus on effects assessments, they may still need to count “holes in the ground” made by friendly ordnance for specific target sets.

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