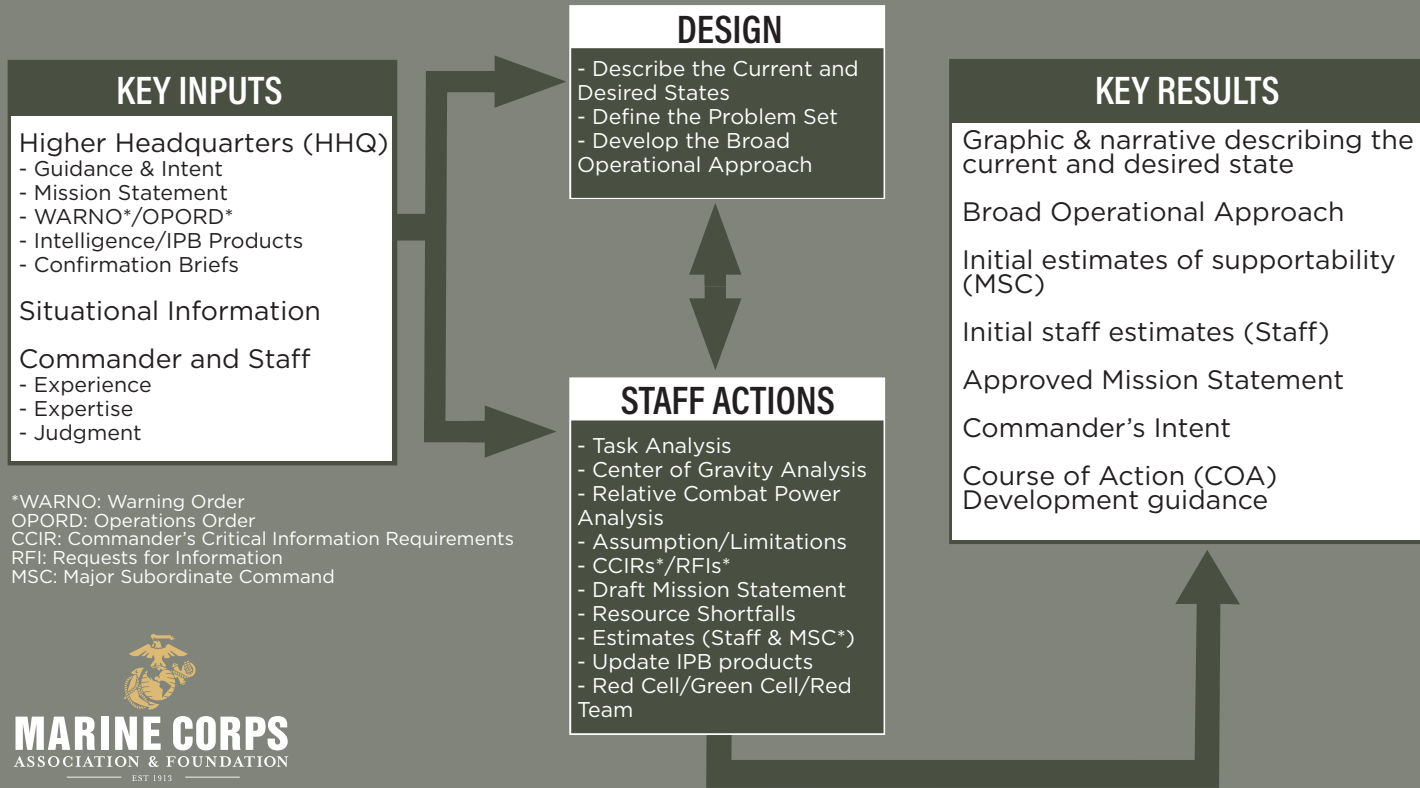


THE MARINE CORPS PLANNING PROCESS

STEP ONE: PROBLEM FRAMING



Problem Framing

Purpose: To gain an understanding of the environment and the nature of the problem set.

STAFF ACTIONS

Concurrent and Complementary

1. Analyze Tasks

- Specified: Anything specified (OPORD*, Mission Statement, verbal, etc)
- Implied: Necessary to accomplish a specified task
- Essential: Specified or implied tasks that **MUST** be performed to accomplish mission

2. Analyze Center of Gravity

- Enemy and friendly (COG*, CC*, CR*, CV*)

3. Develop Assumptions

- Logical
- Realistic
- Essential for Planning
- Doesn't assume away an adversary capability

4. Determine Limitations

- Restrains: what can't be done
- Constraints: something you must do

5. Develop Mission Statement

- Who, What, Where, When, Why
- Must address the problem set

6. Propose Initial CCIRs

- Planning CCIRs
- Operational CCIRs

7. Perform Ongoing Activities

- IPB* product refinement
- Red Cell activities/Green Cell activities
- Refinement of staff estimates and estimates of supportability
- Battlespace refinement
- Resource shortfalls identification
- Commander's Critical Information Requirement review/update
- Requests for information



DESIGN

Goal is to achieve understanding through critical thinking and dialogue

1. Commander's Orientation

2. Describe the current and desired states of the operating environment

3. Define the problem set

- As they exist within the environment
- Preventing the environment from progressing toward the desired state

4. Develop the Broad Operational Approach

- Input and Synthesis of both design and staff actions
- Graphic and Narrative
- Commander's initial intent and guidance

**PRESENT PROBLEM
FRAMING BRIEF**

**COMMANDER'S COURSE
OF ACTION GUIDANCE**

Broad Operational Approach

ISSUE WARNO

*COG: Center of Gravity
CC: Critical Capabilities
CR: Critical Requirements
CV: Critical Vulnerabilities

IPB: Intelligence preparation on the Battlespace

THE MARINE CORPS PLANNING PROCESS

STEP TWO: Course of Action Development

KEY INPUTS

Design & Staff Actions
Operational Approach
Approved Mission Statement
Commander's Intent
Commander's COA Development Guidance

Activities

Establish battlespace framework
Array forces (friendly, adversary, population)
Assign purpose and then tasks for each subordinate element
Task organize
Sequencing of actions to achieve the mission
Divide operation into phases
Integrate activities across time and space
Establish control measures
Present COA Development brief to Commander

KEY RESULTS

COA graphic & narrative
Refined IPB & intelligence products
Planning support tools
-DST*/DSM*/Synch Matrix
Estimates of Supportability
Staff estimates
Commander's Wargaming Guidance and Evaluation Criteria
Updated WARNO



COA DEVELOPMENT

Purpose: Develop one or more options for accomplishing the mission
in accordance with the commander's operational approach

Operational Approach

-Commander's Intent
-Commander's COA Guidance

- Types of Operations
- Forms of Maneuver
- COG Analysis
- Battlespace Framework
- Influence & Deception Activities
- Risk Guidance

COA Criteria

1. **Feasible:** Accomplishes mission with the available time, space, and resources
2. **Acceptable:** Worth the cost
3. **Suitable:** Accomplishes the task and purpose
4. **Distinguishable:** COAs differ from each other
5. **Complete:** Address all the tasks

Activities

1. Establish Battlespace Framework

- Organize the battlespace
 - Spatial/functional
 - Deep, close, rear
 - Decisive, shaping, sustaining
- Organize the force
 - Main effort, supporting effort, reserve, security

2. Array Initial Forces

- Determine RCPA* required to accomplish task
- Array forces starting with decisive operations and continuing with shaping and sustaining operations

3. Assign Purpose and Then Tasks

- What is necessary to accomplish mission?

4. Convert Generic Units to Specific Units

5. Task Organize

- Structure and resource the force to conduct operations
- Establish command and support relationships

6. Sequencing

- Arrangement of actions to achieve the mission

7. Phasing

- Divide operations into phases

8. Develop COA Narrative and Graphic and Synch Matrix

9. Determine Control Measures

10. Rough Cut COA Brief

- Rough Task Organization
- Rough COA Graphic & Narrative

11. COA Refinement

- Develop supporting concepts

12. Conduct COA Development

13. Commander's Wargaming Guidance Evaluation Criteria

*RCPA: Relative Combat Power Analysis

THE MARINE CORPS PLANNING PROCESS

STEP THREE: Course of Action War Game

KEY INPUTS

COA graphic & narrative
Planning support tools
Estimates of supportability
Staff estimates
Commander's wargaming guidance & evaluation criteria

Activities

Assign War Game billets
Collect documents & tools
Select War Game technique
Conduct COA War Game
Record COA War Game results
Refine staff estimates, estimates of supportability, & supporting concepts
Present War Game brief

KEY RESULTS

Identified branches & sequels
Refined IPB & intelligence products
Refined staff estimates
Refined estimates of supportability
Approved COAs for comparison and decision
Comparison criteria/guidance



COA War Games

Purpose To Improve the Plan

1. Validate COAs by testing each COA against a thinking adversary
2. Improve each COA
3. Evaluate strengths & weaknesses of each COA
4. Better understand problem and environment

Inputs

- Commander's Wargaming guidance
- Commander's evaluation criteria
- IPB products
- Planning support tools

War Game Techniques

- Key Events or Sequence of Critical Tasks
- Avenue in Depth
- Belt
- Box

Activities

1. Organize for Wargaming
2. Gather documents & tools
3. Select a War Game technique
4. Conduct a War Game

- Roll call
- Orientation to the War Game board
- Commander's War Game guidance
- Confirm task organization two levels down
- Review CCIRs and assumptions
- Review critical events to be war gamed
- Identify war game method to be utilized
- Red/Green cells brief their COAs to be war gamed
- Review rules of War Game
- Execution of turns

Action

- Describe operations to all friendly units
- Describe the mission/tasks
- Describe the desired outcome

Reaction

- Describe operations of all friendly units
- Describe probable outcome of contact

Civilian Reaction

- Describe actions of other actors in the OE*

Counteraction

- Identify additional actions and resources required
- Modify COA as necessary

5. Record and display War Game results

- War Game worksheet
- Synchronization Matrix

6. Assess the War Game results



*OE: Operating Environment

THE MARINE CORPS PLANNING PROCESS

STEP FOUR: COA Comparison and Decision

KEY INPUTS

- Updated IPB products
- Updated, complete COAs
- COA war game worksheet
- COA evaluation worksheet
- Resource shortfalls
- Updated CCIRs
- Decision Support Template & Decision Support Matrix
- Branches & sequels identified for further planning

Activities

Evaluate COAs against
Commander's Evaluation Criteria

Compare COAs

Commander's Decision

KEY RESULTS

Approved COA

Guidance for branches & sequels

Updated WARNO



COA Comparison And Decision

Purpose

For the Commander to **evaluate** all friendly COAs against established criteria, then **compare** each COA against each other, and **decide** which COA best accomplishes the mission.

1

Evaluate Course of Action

The separate evaluation of each COA against the Cmdr's Evaluation Criteria with special consideration to advantages, disadvantages, and risk.

2

Compare Courses of Action to each other

The comparison of each COA to each other using the advantages, disadvantages, and risks developed in the evaluation step.

3

Commander's Decision

The Commander selects the COA that best accomplishes the mission.

There are four options:

- Select
- Modify
- New
- Discard

4

Refine the Concept of Operations

The concept of operations is a general description of actions to be taken and a generic organization for combat that serves as the basis for supporting concepts, functional or detailed Planning, and branch and Sequel planning.

5

Update the Warning Order

The Warning Order allows subordinates to continue concurrent planning.

Potential Evaluation Criteria

- Principles of war
- Limitation of casualties
- Exploitation of the adversary's weaknesses/friendly strengths
- Population considerations
- Opportunity for maneuver
- Concentration on combat power
- Speed
- Supportability
- Political considerations
- Force protection
- Risk assessment

THE MARINE CORPS PLANNING PROCESS

STEP FIVE: ORDERS DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE

The Orders Development Step translates the commander's decision into oral, written, and graphic direction sufficient to guide subordinate planning, execution, and initiative.

KEY INPUTS

Approved COA
CONOPS*



ACTIVITIES

- Refine the CONOPS
- Prepare the order or plan
- Orders reconciliation
- Orders crosswalk
- Approve the order or plan

KEY RESULTS

Approved order or plan
Planning support tools



*CONOPS: Concept of Operations



MARINE CORPS
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EST 1913

ORDERS DEVELOPMENT

Activities

-Refine the CONOPS: Refined staff estimates and IPB products from the approved COA allow planners and supporting staff sections to proceed with functional and detailed planning.

-Prepare the order or plan: The Chief of Staff or Executive Officer dictates the format for the order, sets and enforces the time limits and development sequence, and assigns responsibility for annex development to the appropriate staff sections.

-Orders reconciliation: An internal process during which the staff conducts a detailed review of the entire order

-Orders crosswalk: An external process in which the staff compares its order with the order of higher, adjacent, and subordinate commanders to achieve unity of effort and ensure the superior commander's intent is met.

-Approve the order or plan:
Commander's signature

Types of Combat Orders

OPORD

A directive issued by a commander to subordinate commanders for the purpose of effecting the coordinated execution of an operation.

Fragmentary Order (FRAGO)

An abbreviated form of an operation order issued as needed after an operation order to change or modify that order or to execute a branch or sequel to that order.

WARNO

A preliminary notice of an order or action that is to follow.

Execute Order (EXORD)

An order to subordinates that directs them to execute existing orders or plans and conveys guidance not provided in earlier instructions.



THE MARINE CORPS PLANNING PROCESS

STEP SIX: TRANSITION

KEY INPUTS

Approved order or plan
Planning support tools
IPB & intelligence products



ACTIVITIES

- Transition brief
- Transition events (rehearsals, drills exercises, briefs)
- Confirmation briefs



KEY RESULTS

Subordinate commanders & staff ready to execute the order
Ongoing development of plan for branches and sequels

Successful transition enhances the situational understanding of those who will execute the order, reinforces the intent of the commander, promotes unity of effort, and generates tempo.

TRANSITION

Transition Briefs (Future to Current Ops, Higher HQ to Lower)

- Internal transition is when the planning staff moves its plan to execution (Future Operations to Current Operations)
- External transition occurs between the commander and subordinate commanders

Transition Events

Confirmation Brief (Subordinate to HQ)

Transition Event Options

- Map brief
- Terrain model brief
- Communications exercise
- Rehearsal of concept drill
- Combined Arms rehearsal
- Key leader rehearsal
- Reduced force rehearsal
- Full dress rehearsal