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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**TITLE: SUPPORTING THE COMBATANT COMMANDS WHILE PROVIDING REALISTIC  
TRAINING TO THE FUTURE MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCES**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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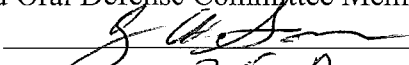
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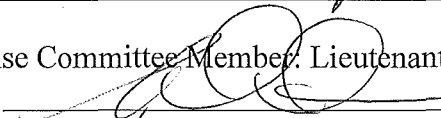
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## Executive Summary

**Title:** Supporting the Combatant Commands while providing realistic training to the Future Marine Expeditionary Forces

**Author:** Major Matthew J. Neely, United States Marine Corps

**Thesis:** Service-level Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) training requires a complete overhaul to prepare the largest Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) to operate as a Combined or Joint Task Force in the future operating environment. By adopting the Joint Operations Planning Process (JOPP) and developing real, operational concepts and plans, the MEF will increase readiness and support the development of plans and requirements for Combatant Commanders.

**Discussion:** Marine Corps Order 1500.53 MAGTF Staff Training Program is adequate in addressing Marine Expeditionary Brigade and Major Subordinate Elements (MSEs), but falls short of training a MEF level staff. The service needs to develop a regimen to train MEFs to standard in their assigned METs while providing operational support to a Combatant Commander. General Robert B. Neller, the 37th Commandant Marine Corps' Guidance FRAGO-1 states, "The Marine Corps is currently not organized, trained, and equipped to meet the demands of a future operating environment."

<sup>1</sup> The change in training begins with training MEFs accordingly in the future. Critical Task 6.2: "Evolve the MAGTF" of the *Marine Corps Operating Concept* (MOC) dictates the MEF to be ready to serve as a Combined or Joint Task Force Headquarters. This begins with MEFs utilizing the JOPP instead of the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP). Critical Task 6.5: Exploit the Competence of the Individual Marine of the MOC also addresses abandoning the fictitious exercise scenarios. Soliciting problems from Geographic Combatant Commanders (CCDR) or Marine Component Commands (MARFOR) can take the place of the fictitious scenarios.

Yemen, Haiti, Nigeria, and Libya are some of the world's fragile states that the MEFs could use as a scenario. Exercising developing and issuing notional planning directive to MEFs frees the Marines to develop the exercise scenario to unimaginable depths and builds the MEF Staff's cultural and situational awareness of a specific country and region.

In execution, the MEF Education and Training Program (METP) life cycle, an 18-month endeavor, would be broken down into five phases: Education, Planning, Preparation, Execution, and Assessment, and become the unit PME program and major training exercise. A CCDR or MARFOR propose contingency scenario to the MEF to conduct deliberate planning. MAGTF Staff Training Personnel (MSTP) support the MEF staff during the planning process, and the MEF Commanding General and CCDR conduct In Progress Reviews (IPR) to provided additional guidance. The exercise could culminate with the delivery a level 2 or level 3 Concept Plan (CONPLAN) and Command Post Exercise (CPX) using MAGTF Tactical Warfare Simulation (MTWS) to exercise, wargame if you will, specific phases of the CONPLAN. MSTP, senior mentors, and/or the J7 provide continuous assessment to the exercise force.

**Conclusion:** A new exercise framework will achieve both the CMC objectives in FRAGO-1 and the MOC and the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff's three Objectives to 1) Restore Joint Readiness, 2) Improve our joint war fighting capability, and 3) Develop leaders for Joint Force Next. Most importantly, it provides the CCDR with a CONPLAN and a MEF staff ready to execute.

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## *Preface*

From 2011-2016, I had the opportunity to participate in several exercises in U.S. Pacific Command (U.S. PACOM), U.S. European Command (EUCOM), U.S. Africa Command (U.S. AFRICOM), and U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM). I gained an appreciation for realistic scenarios and distaste for those that are fictitious as an augment to MEFs, MEBs, JTFs, CJTFs, Sub-unified Combatant Command, and NATO Commands during training exercises. It was my last assignment in the II MEF Red Team and participation in MEFEX 16 that was the motivation for this project. I witnessed planners work months in developing hundred-page plans that were useless after the exercise. The MEFs need to stop fighting the Soviets in the current Marine Corps exercise scenarios “Amberland” (Eastern United States) and “Orangeland” (Southwest United States). Developing innovative solutions to our nation’s problems requires the Marine Corps to unleash the exercise force on a real problem with real people. The target audience is Marine Corps’ Training Command and members on the MEF Staff with the goal of changing how the MEF CE prepares for future conflict.

I want to acknowledge the II MEF and 2d MEB 0505 Planners, and Future Operations Officers Colonel David Suggs, Lee Suttee, and Hall Bain for their mentorship and guidance. I cannot thank them enough for the education I received in Global Force Management, exercise development, budgeting, operational assessment, and planning. I would also like to thank Lieutenant Colonel Michael Russ for his mentorship and assistance on the topic.

## INTRODUCTION

A critical task outlined in the Marine Corps Operating Concept (MOC) is creating the future force, specifically, evolving the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). The Marine Corps cleared the first obstacle in accepting the need to change, but is now wrestling with the difficulty of deciding how and what to change. “There is a difference between adapting to win and adapting to survive.”<sup>2</sup> General Robert B Neller, 37th Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) provided his vision and planning guidance in *FRAGO-1/2016 Advance to Contact* and identified the critical tasks in the MOC. In these two documents, the Marine Corps outlines desired end states. The Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) of the future needs to be capable of operating as a Combined or Joint Task Force across the five domains of land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace.<sup>3</sup>

To do this, the Marine Corps requires the proper organizational structure and war fighting capabilities to influence, control, and address a target population when supporting national objectives. The MEF has the potential to plan, coordinate, support, and employ elements of national power, but currently lacks the training. Service level MEF training is inadequate in preparing the largest MAGTF to operate as a Combined or Joint Task Force in the future operating environment. This is not because of a lack of resources or time; our MEFs currently conduct training in exercises every two years. The issue with MEF training is choosing the right, forward looking scenarios against an enemy that adapts quickly in multifaceted and multi-domain warfare.

Marine Corps Order (MCO) 3500.11F, Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Program (MAGTFTP)<sup>4</sup>, MCO 1500.53B, Marine Air Ground Task Force Staff Training Program (MSTP)<sup>5</sup>, and MCO 1553.3B, Unit Training Management (UTM), describe MAGTF training requirements in detail. Together, these orders provide the framework to train and evaluate the MEF and its major subordinate elements to Navy and Marine Corps Order (NAVMC) 3500.116,

MAGTF Command Element (CE) Training and Readiness (T&R) Manual standards<sup>6</sup>. This process requires updating to prepare MEFs for becoming the nexus of Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTFs) in the future. The MEF's Mission Essential Task List (METL), described in NAVMC 3500.116, only has tasks from the Marine Corps Task List. Becoming a C/JTF requires a Joint Mission Essential Task List (JMETL) consisting of tasks in the Universal Joint Task List (UJTL).

MEFs will not succeed if the command element (CE) cannot design a framework to determine effectiveness in and on the operating environment. An institutional training gap exists when it comes to assessing operations, all validated by the lack of formal training courses. Because of the gap in training, operational objectives are unmeasurable tasks that force staffs to resort to task completion and enemy attrition as a measure of success. An end state, objective, effect, and task all require assessment; however, the staff only focuses on completing tasks.

Current Service Level Training Exercise (SLTE) for a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), MEF Forward (MEF FWD) and MEF is the Large Scale Exercise (LSE). The Marine Corps is training its one-star, two-star, and three-star command MAGTFs under the same exercise framework, but it is not adequate for operational level commands. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the service to develop an innovative approach for educating and training MEF FWD and MEF staffs, and leaving LSE to the MEB. By this, MEFs achieve their training objectives, gain cultural awareness, and provide support to the Combatant Commands (CCMD).

Changing how the Marine Corps supports Combatant Commanders (CCDR) in planning drives how the Marine Corps builds and trains the future force. The service requires a framework for understanding, developing, and exercising plans that support the six Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC) in multi-domain warfare. Employing MEFs to assist in the development of future Operation Plans (OPLANs) or Concept/Contingency Plans (CONPLANs) is efficient and puts the operating force at the forefront of readiness linked with GCCs.<sup>7</sup>

The new framework for training would have MEFs developing a five-phase CONPLAN to address a contingency/crisis under the direction of and review by CCDRs, Marine Force Components (MARFOR), and the MAGTF Staff Training Program (MSTP). MSTP and/or the Joint Staff Training Directorate (J7) could assess the CONPLAN. Then the CCDR or MEF Commanding General would identify a portion of the plan to exercise in the MAGTF Tactical Warfare Simulation (MTWS), perhaps in a 14-day Command Post Exercise (CPX) against a thinking enemy (deliberate, robust Red Cell).

### ***JOINT FORCE AND CMC GUIDANCE***

In October of 2015, the 19th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), General Dunford, delivered a message to the Joint Force outlining three key tenants for joint forces: 1) Restore Joint Readiness, 2) Improve our joint war fighting capability, and 3) Develop leaders for Joint Force Next.<sup>8</sup> Following the CJCS's Guidance, the 37th CMC, General Robert Neller, issued his Planning Guidance "FRAGO-1/2016 Advance to Contact (37th CPG)." Building upon the previous CMC Planning Guidance issued by General Dunford, he detailed that the service needed to focus on evolving and adapting to win the nation's battles in the future operating environment. This would require a Marine Corps that succeeded in conducting operations across the Range of Military Operations (ROMO). The major themes being:

- 1) Maintaining and improving the high-quality people that make up today's Corps;
- 2) Decentralizing the training and preparation for war, while adhering to Maneuver Warfare principles in the conduct of training and operations;
- 3) Modernizing the force, especially by leveraging new and evolving technologies.<sup>9</sup>

Other key topic areas outlined increasing integration with Naval and Joint Forces and focusing on planning and conducting Information Operations (IO).

### ***EMBRACE JOINT WAR FIGHTING***

A Marine Corps dedicated to preparing MEFs to be JTFs requires making several changes in the way it prepares and readies itself. A well-trained MEF trained and able to be the nexus of a JTF provides a greater capability to the CCDR than a well-trained, stand-alone MAGTF. Smaller MAGTFs train to deploy from the sea and conduct specific operations and missions, whereas the MEF must plan, deploy, direct, and employ forces across the range of military operations in a multi-domain problem.

First, though the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP) is relevant as the service's doctrine for planning, when planning for leading joint operations, MEFs need to incorporate the Joint Operation Planning Process (JOPP). Similarities exist between all the Service's planning processes. However, JOPP requires the MEF to incorporate operational design and create operational approaches to war fighting in addition to outlining tactical maneuvers. JOPP also enables the MEF to incorporate joint, interagency, inter-governmental and multinational (JIIM) organizations into a common planning process.

Next, to command and control JTFs also requires an adjustment to terminology when assigning units to a MAGTF. MCWP 3-40.1 states that command relationships between Marine units within the MAGTF do not use Operational Control (OPCON) and Tactical Control (TACON). This is confusing to JIIM partners and requires continued education and explanation. The Marine Corps could conform and adopt joint COMREL terminology within the MAGTF and gain familiarity. The MEF can also better leverage authorities by using joint terminology. For example, if the CCDR maintains the authority to conduct Information Operations at the CCMD level, the MEF could request the CCDR to give the MEF TACON of IO Marines. The Marines assigned TACON to the MEF give the MEF commander access to capability, not possession of the capability.

Lastly, a JTF formed by a MEF cannot fully rely only on Marines to command and control and understand the nuances of a joint force. Identifying key billets on the MEF staff where other

service leaders can be a part is integral. The need to address staff assignments to increase the Marine Corps' relationship with the Navy<sup>10</sup> could perhaps result in the MEF Deputy Commander becoming a U. S. Navy Rear Admiral (Lower Half), potentially improving naval integration with Marines. Moreover, addressing how the Marine Corps integrates joint force staff officers on the MEF staff requires boldness in creating key staff position and leading the change required to have officers and enlisted personnel assigned. Some example changes to the MEF Table of Organization (T/O) could include:

- MEF G-2: U.S. Air Force O-6 (Space Command Experience)
- MEF G-3 Dep: U.S. Army O-6 (Armor experience)
- MEF G-3 Air Planner: U.S. Air Force O-5 (Group 5 Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) experience)
- MEF G-3 Fires and Effects U.S Army (Information Operations experience)
- MEF G-3 Naval Planner: U.S. Navy O-5 (Amphibious ship experience)
- MEF G-4 U.S. Navy O-5 (Naval logistics experience)
- MEF G-6 Dep: U.S. Navy O-5 (Communication experience on naval ships)
- Special Staff Officer: Special Operations Coordinator/Liaison (Special Operations Command)

Sacrificing key billets normally filled by Marines to increase war fighting prowess may be worth changing the organization. A MEF possessing a mix of the four services holding key billets and permanently assigned in garrison creates instant credibility when assessing capability for becoming the nexus of a JTF. The Marine Corps integrated joint and coalition officers on the MEF (FWD) staffs in Iraq and Afghanistan. The service should train and operate in garrison similar to how they will operate in a deployed environment.

### ***TRAIN LIKE WE FIGHT***

“Training like we fight” is essentially preparing a unit to deploy for the most likely and dangerous scenarios. The Marine Corps is preparing the force for how the service wants to fight, not how the MEF will fight or some combination thereof. The enemy the MEF wants to fight is susceptible to intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities and generally maneuvers in brigade-sized elements. In exercises, the MEF quickly locates and neutralizes the enemy's air defense assets to attack their centralized command and control system. The enemy

MEF wants to fight is also usually never able to locate the large MEF centers of command or disable friendly electronic systems (to include Global Positioning Systems) for more than a few hours. The MEFs always win in their exercises. This reinforces bad habits and provides future leaders with an inflated confidence and unrealistic sense of current and future conflict.

MCO 1553.3B, Unit Training Management (UTM), outlines the Marine Corps Training Principles<sup>11</sup>:

- (1) Train as You Fight.
- (2) Make Commanders Responsible for Training.
- (3) Use Standards-Based Training.
- (4) Use Performance-Oriented Training.
- (5) Use Mission-Oriented Training.
- (6) Train the MAGTF to Fight as a Combined-Arms Team.
- (7) Train the MAGTF to Fight as a Part of a Joint Force.
- (8) Train to Sustain Proficiency.
- (9) Train to Challenge.
- (10) Integrate Values Based Training and Leadership.

### ***ISSUES WITH CURRENT TRAINING***

Fictitious, rearward looking scenarios are the source of the problem with current MEF training and meeting the intent of the above order. Scenarios with fictitious nations, people, and organizations limit the staff in developing the operating environment. Conversely, hypothetical scenarios open the MEF staffs to unlimited possibilities, open source information, creativity, and in many cases, access to the nation's classified and compartmented information. Nominally, there are no shortages of adversaries in this world. Therefore, instead of fabricating adversaries and fighting in a fake war, a more efficient use of time and resources is the MEFs developing plans from hypothetical scenarios espoused by GCCs.

Inevitably, MEF planning would give way to planning operations within the context of theater campaign plans and sorting out host nation agreements, to name a couple of possibilities. In this context, planning in an unconstrained environment allows the freedom to develop the actual size of the force and capabilities needed for a scenario, ensuring truth in the reporting of what it takes to accomplish the mission. The un-constraining of exercise force will likely result

in a force that spends more time in research, planning, application, and reflection than one devoted to developing the exercise scenarios.<sup>1</sup>

Many MEF exercises also focus on phase II or phase III activities. Many times, this negates the most difficult processes a MEF conducts as a part of a real-world contingency, the deployment phase. Phasing combat power to an area of operation (AO) requires the MEF to develop the capabilities required for mission first then understanding how to deploy them and in what order to ensure the buildup of combat power is complementary to winning. The MEF, when doing this as a functional team, exercises the administrative actions of the G-1 and Headquarters Marine Corps Manpower in addition to logistic actions required to deploy a MEF. These actions, from staffing, moving, to employing and consolidating the force, are integral to its function. Not doing so may result in the underdevelopment of decisive actions required in phase II-III, and potentially undermining the synergy of the staff and JTF.

Phase II-III actions, like targeting and attrition of an enemy force, are important, but should not be the focus in exercising and training when a comprehensive approach is more palpable. Fighting the MEF from force formulation to winning on the battlefield requires scenarios that cover the spectrum of actions expected. This strives to create realistic conditions that will ultimately give way to a CE that can go beyond enemy attrition as its measure of success.

### ***OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT***

Operational assessment should be a main objective in training. The oversight of assessment is dangerous, and without formal assessment training, staffs may misdiagnose problems and exacerbate battlefield conditions. Many Marines, to include those on a MEF CE,

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<sup>1</sup> Using a real nation as the exercise area of operation, many of the products developed in the Intelligence preparation of the Battlefield(IPB) or Joint Intelligence Preparations of the Operating Environment (JIPOE) could be used in the future.

struggle with crafting Measures of Performance (MOP) and Effectiveness (MOE) that best describe the difference between Combat Assessment and Operational Assessment.

Marines that have a basic understanding of assessment should rightly question “are we doing things right, and are we doing the right things?” However, a better way to look at assessments is by asking “did task scripted and accomplished achieve the desired effect?” This underlying problem, how the Marine Corps trains MEF CEs to assess, results in staffs do not understand how to properly measure operational success. MEF CEs resort to counting enemy tanks destroyed as a measure of effectiveness. The counter-argument generally espoused is that a MEF is a tactical unit and it is the JTF’s responsibility to measure the operational success. MEFs need to train and perform operations as a JTF, therefore they need to understand how to assess operational success.

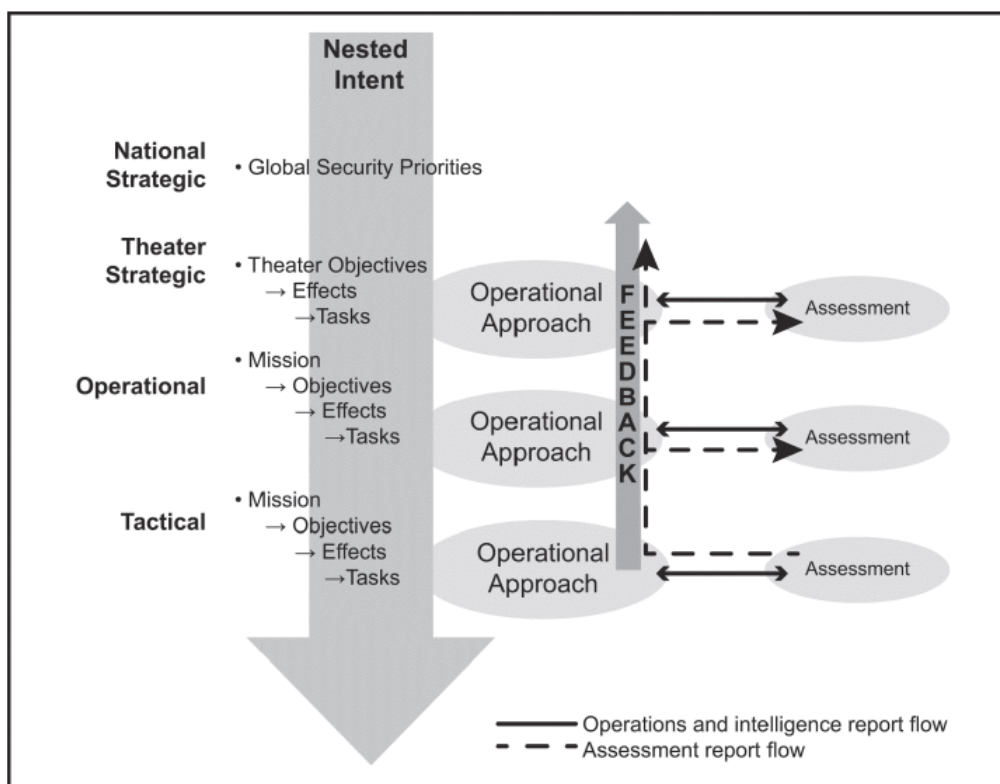


Figure 1 12

Air-Sea-Land Application (ALSA) Publication, *Operational Assessment*, describes combat assessment as “battle damage assessment (BDA), munitions effectiveness assessment (MEA),

and future targeting and re-attack recommendations.”<sup>13</sup> ASLA Publication (Marine Corps Reference Publication 5-1C) defines a MOP as “a criterion tied to measuring task accomplishment used to assess a friendly action.”<sup>14</sup> A task is “a clearly defined action or activity specifically assigned to an individual or organization that must be done as it is imposed by an appropriate authority.”<sup>15</sup> Measuring task accomplishment then is only half the operational assessment. The MOEs capture the other half.

An MOE is “criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment that is tied to measuring the attainment of an end state, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect.” Indicators used to assess MOPs and MOEs are “item[s] of information that provides insight into a measure of effectiveness or measure of performance.” It is clear; the only indicator required for an MOP may be a report from the subordinate that the task issued is complete. Conversely and complementary, indicators for MOEs require more thought and collection. Therefore, MEF CEs and major subordinate commands or elements (MSC/MSE) are responsible for conducting combat assessment against the tasks they receive from the MEF.

An example of conducting a Combat Assessment:

The MEF CE tasks the Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) with destroying the power supply of an enemy command center to deny the enemy electricity. The MAW subsequently tasks a Marine Aircraft Group (MAG), that then tasks a squadron, to order an attack platform to destroy power station at a specific location. The resulting MOP to assess might encompass the following:

1. Was the selected munition capable of destroying the target?
2. Did the pilot locate the correct target?
3. Did the pilot deploy the munition?
4. Did the munition strike the target?
5. Did the munition function as designed (dud or high order)?

These questions are indicators to assess the MOP of destroying the target. The MEF cannot assess MOEs of tasks if any of the answers to the questions above were “no.”

The MEF assessment of the MOE might query:

1. Did the power station stop producing power?
2. Did the enemy's command center lose electricity?

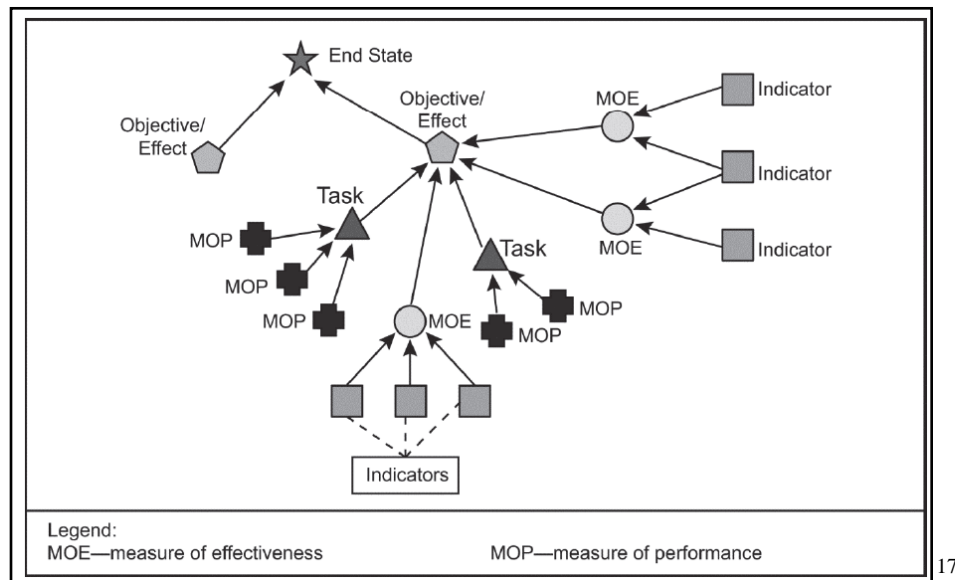
If the answer to the two questions is “yes” then the MAW would have achieved the desired effect as required by the task. Anything different subsequently results in further evaluation of degradation and/or function of the system, and potentially re-tasking if deemed necessary and priority for continuing operations. This example explains how combat assessment in an operation drives tactical actions. As the MEF (subordinate to a JTF) reports task completion (MOP) to the higher command, and then the higher command would then look to assess the MOE associated; the JTF conducting operational assessment.

ASLA Publication (Marine Corps Reference Publication 5-1C) defines Operational Assessment as: “A continuous process to determine the overall effectiveness of employing joint force capabilities during military operations by measuring the progress toward accomplishing a task, creating a condition or effect, or achieving an objective that supports decision making to make operations effective.”<sup>16</sup>

A MEF CE focused on being the nucleus or genesis of a JTF should receive an evaluation on their ability to conduct an operational assessment during training exercises. The MEF CE must be able to design, execute, and assess achieving a set of conditions rather than counting tasks, though it may be a part of doing so. Current assessment during exercises generally focus on Combat Assessment or plainly stated, completing assigned tasks from higher commands. This is sufficient for a MEF to be a subordinate command in a JTF, but a MEF as the JTF requires an operational assessment framework.

The identification of assessment measures, subjective and objective, begins in the design and conceptualizing phase of planning. If the MEFs are bound by using MCPP and not JOPP or some other framing technique in complex problem solving, then the planning team is starting out

at a disadvantage. A focus on operational design, after assessing, analyzing, and reflecting on the problem posed, is the largest difference between MEF as a subordinate in a JTF and a MEF that assumes the role of a JTF. The latter, when MEF assigned as the lead in a JTF, presents a situation that requires military options to achieve theater and/or national objectives codified in an operational approach further developed by subordinate commands.



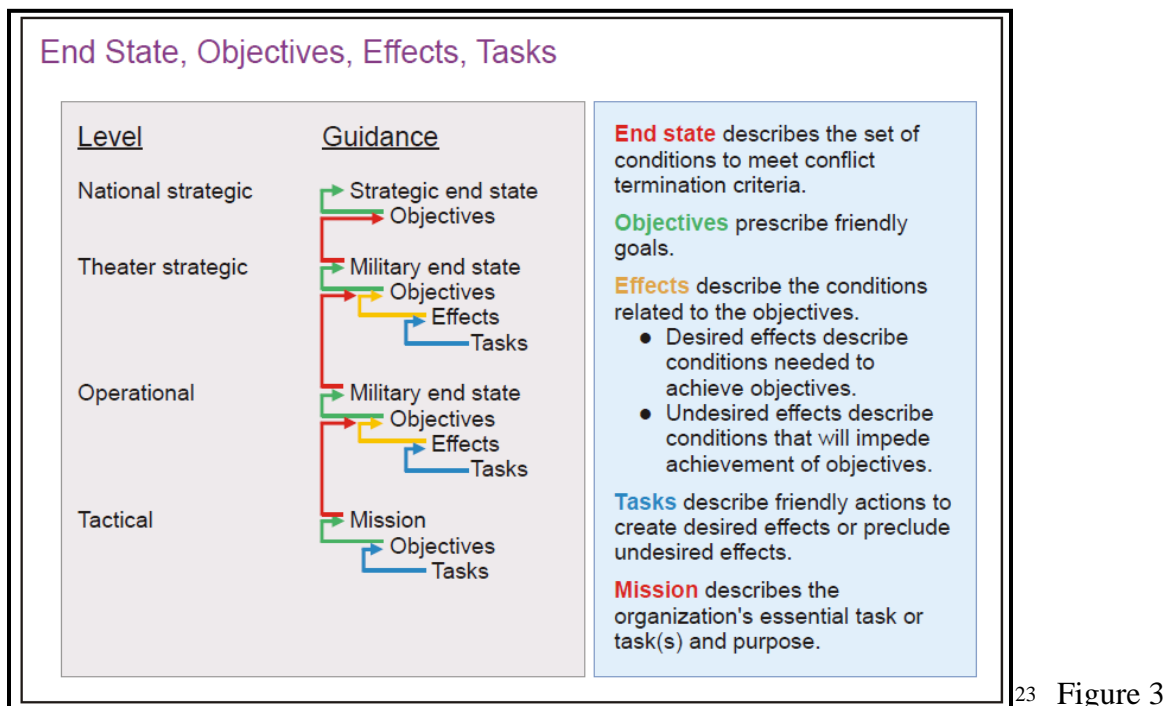
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Figure 2

Understanding how to properly conduct an operational assessment begins with defining “termination” and differentiating between “military end states” and “end states”. Joint Publication 5-0 (JP 5-0) describes how “termination” is determined at the strategic level “the supported JFC must know how the President and SecDef intend to terminate the joint operation and ensure that its outcomes endure.”<sup>18</sup> Second, JP 5-0 defines “military end state” as “the set of required conditions that defines achievement of all military objectives.”<sup>19</sup> “End state” is further defined in JP 1-02 DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms as “the set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander’s objectives.”<sup>20</sup> The difference between the terms is there is only one military end state, as defined by the commander’s operations, yet linked to the end states ascribed by the objectives.

Hand-in-hand with objective are “conditions”. Whereas a condition is “a physical or behavioral state of a system that is required for the achievement of an objective”<sup>21</sup> an objective is

“a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable goal toward which every military operation should be directed.”<sup>22</sup> These two terms are inextricably linked to “effect”, defined as “a physical and/or behavioral state of a system that results from an action, a set of actions, or another effect.” A force can plan for an effect, but must forecast or react to unexpected effects. To support the completion of an objective, a commander will task a unit to achieve a desired effect. Together, these terms provide the basis for designing an approach and assessment framework for an operation.



The operational assessment framework measures the JTF’s accomplishment of desired objectives to achieve military end states. Designing the framework starts with termination, as defined by the National Command Authority. Inevitably, this drives the CCDR and JFC with determining the second element, the military end state. The military end state becomes the JFC’s conflict termination criteria or set of conditions to achieve. In other words, the military end state defines the desired change to the system, and objectives outline specific changes to the system.

Under each objective, a list of desired effects to change the system.<sup>2</sup> Indicators that measure performance and effectiveness of the tasks issued (MOPs and MOEs) drive the tasks issued to subordinate units. The above is necessary and honors creating the framework for the operational assessment.

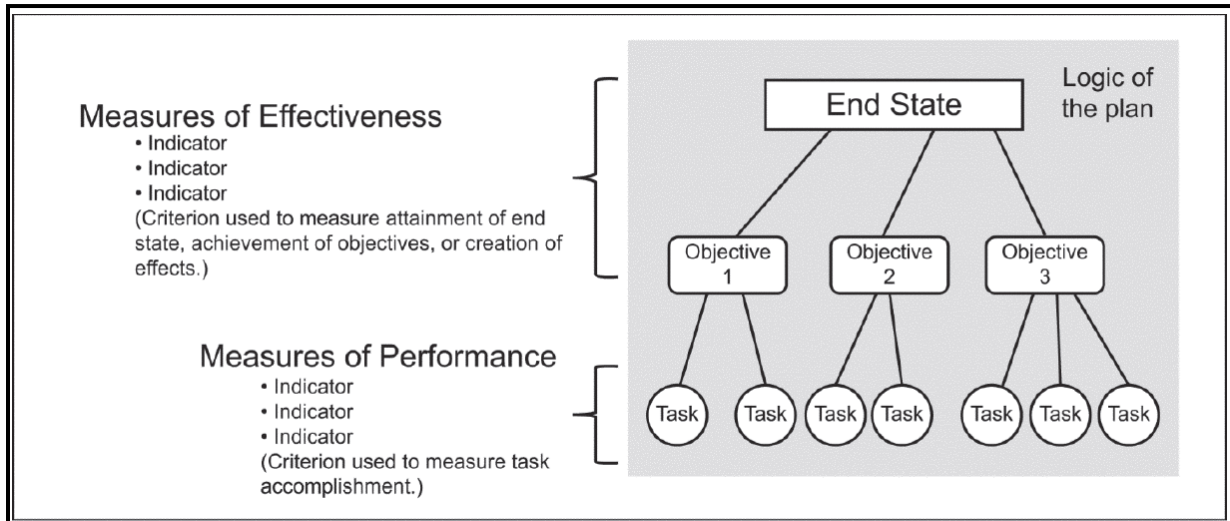


Figure 4

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### ***FUTURE MEF CE TRAINING FRAMEWORK***

The future MEF CE Education and Training and Program (METP) is an 18-month curriculum of study and application, more than a training plan. The 18-month program is broken into five phases: Education, Planning, Preparation, Execution, and Assessment. Since the Marine Corps requires each MEF to conduct an exercise every two years, the exercise program balances the exercise requirements with real world responsibilities of the MEF CE Staff. Seeing that there is not a clear end and beginning to each phase, the phases thus represent a primary focus area of the staff during the time period. The METP incorporates time for required readings of publications and books from assigned reading list, completing online training, and attending

<sup>2</sup> During execution, subordinate units will execute the assigned tasks and conduct a combat assessment. When the combat assessment is completed, the subordinate unit reports the task as complete. This is the indicator that the operational assessment MOP was completed and the JTF MEF will task the collection assets to gather information to determine the effectiveness of the completed MOP. In the combat assessment example, degrading the enemy command's communication was one of many tasks the operational command issued to produce an effect. The desired effect was the enemy command was degraded in communicating. This effect, when paired with other effects (from other tasks) were designed to achieve an objective, to defeat the enemy command.

training courses specific to each section. In theory, the first phase of the METP becomes the MEF CE's Professional Military Education (PME) Program.

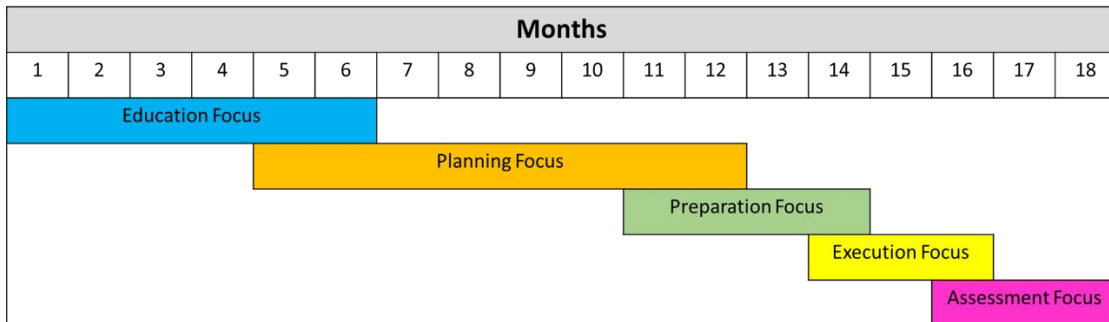


Figure 5

First, the planning phase incorporates Headquarters (HQ) Marine Corps Policy, Plans, and Operations (PP&O), MARFOR HQ, a Geographic CCDR and their staff, and USMC MAGTF Staff Training Program (MSTP). Second, these staffs support the MEF CE in identifying a real-world scenario for the CCDR where the MEF CE as a JTF will begin planning for addressing contingency. Third, the preparation phase is utilized for preparing for the simulated execution of developed concept plan in MTWS, providing a full spectrum simulation/war game against the computer system to assess the completeness of the plan. Fourth, the execution phase is a two-week evolution that exercises the staff during selected portions of the CONPLAN in MTWS against a response cell manned to role play assigned billets based on real individuals and groups identified in the concept plan. Lastly, the MEF CE is under continuous assessment throughout the evolution and debriefed at the end of the 18 months. The assessment phase focuses on the lessons learned; modifications to the CONPLAN; METs and JMET task accomplishment; and delivery of an updated CONPLAN to the CCDR and in turn, the MARFOR and CCDR become the final authority for acceptance and modification.

By this evolution, the CCDR receives an updated CONPLAN developed by a staff capable of executing it. With three MEF CEs executing this training plan every 18-months, an individual

Marine assigned to the staff would take part of developing two CONPLANs in a three-year tour. Over time, this builds the global awareness, staff proficiency, and capability of the Marine Corps. From the service perspective, the Marine Corps is relevant to the Geographic CCDRs and better prepared to execute operations in the future.

The Education Phase.

The education phase of the METP begins with understanding the purpose of the 18-month program and further broken down into six PME blocks:

Advanced block on national and theater strategy and its role in military, operational planning

- Block 1 on Joint War fighting
- Block 2 on JTF organization
- Block 3 on staff specific aspects of Joint War fighting
- Block 4 on the development of plans and orders
- Block 5 on resident courses individuals require on the MEF CE Staff to operate a command center.

The Advanced block covers down on national and strategic guidance and capabilities, like shown in Figure 7. The target training audience is senior staff members and individuals with selected key billets within the staff, such as MAGTF Planners, Special Technical Operations (STO) Planners, and members that require to be “read in” to Top Secret- Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS-SCI) programs. The educational objective here to gain an understanding of national and strategic policy, strategic processes, and other capabilities generally held at the national and strategic level.

**Advanced PME Block**

- National Security Strategy (NSS)
- Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)
- National Defense Strategy (NDS)
- National Military Strategy (NMS)
- Unified Command Plan (UCP)
- Guidance for Employment of the Force (GEF)
- Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP)
- CJCS Joint Risk Assessment
- Theater Campaign Plan (for a specific CCMD)
- Special Technical Operations (STO)
- Information Operations (IO)
- Military Deception (MILDEC)
- Space Operations
- Cyber Operations/ U.S. CYBERCOM
- National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)
- Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)
- National Security Agency (NSA)
- National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)

Figure 6

Block 1 begins with reading Ludwig Von Bertalanffy's *General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications* and focuses on Joint War fighting. The selected book is a primer for the MEF CE staff members to look at the Marine Corps as part of the system in the Joint Force, rather than a single service branch. Many of the complementary instruction topics (Figure 8) are courses targeting the majority of the MEF CE Staff (E7-E9 & O3-O6) with an objective of gaining a functional understanding of Joint Force organization and planning. This includes using the

**Block 1 PME**

- CMC Reading list book: "General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications" - Ludwig Von Bertalanffy
- Introduction to Joint Fundamentals
- Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES) - Global Force Management (GFM) Executive Presentation
- Joint Operations
- Joint Operations Planning
- JTF Level Command Relationships and Joint Force Organizations Joint HQ Organization, Staff Integration, and Battle Rhythm
- Joint Command, Control, and Communication
- Interorganizational Coordination
- Interorganizational Coordination and Multinational Operations

Joint Operation Planning Process and understanding how the Joint Staff conducts Global Force Management (GFM). After completing this block, the staff will have a basic understanding how to organize coordination and collaboration between joint and multinational forces and how a battle rhythm supports the commander's decision making process.

Figure 7

Block 2 begins with reading Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom's *The Starfish and The Spider*. This primer is intent on engaging the staff in looking at how organizations are structured. The book discusses how centralized, decentralized and distributed organizations function. The target audience here is the entire MEF CE staff with an educational objective of understanding

**Block 2 PME**

- CMC Reading list book: "The Starfish And The Spider" - Ori Brafman; Rod A. Beckstrom
- JTF Level Command Relationships and Joint Force Organizations
- Lifecycle of the JTF - Overview
- Lifecycle of the JTF - Plan and Form
- Lifecycle of the JTF - Deploy and Redeploy
- Lifecycle of the JTF - Employ
- Lifecycle of the JTF - Transition
- JTF - Port Opening, Seaport of Debarkation (JTF-PO SPOD) Course

Figure 8

the types of organizational structures and the life cycle of a JTF; necessary for a MEF CE who may be employed as the nexus of a JTF.

Block 3 PME focuses on individual staff section topics. The courses outlined in Figure 9 are not required for every member of the staff, but allocates and accounts for time when staff directorates educate their sections. Therefore, Block 3 PME book is General Stanley McChrystal's (Ret) *Teams of Teams*, a book that primes the staff with understanding how to stove pipe planning and the importance of coordination and decision making. Other common items in Block 3 PME are MAGTF Information Operations and cultural training and education. The cultural training is less on language but more on the culture for the specific country of the MEF CE exercise scenario.

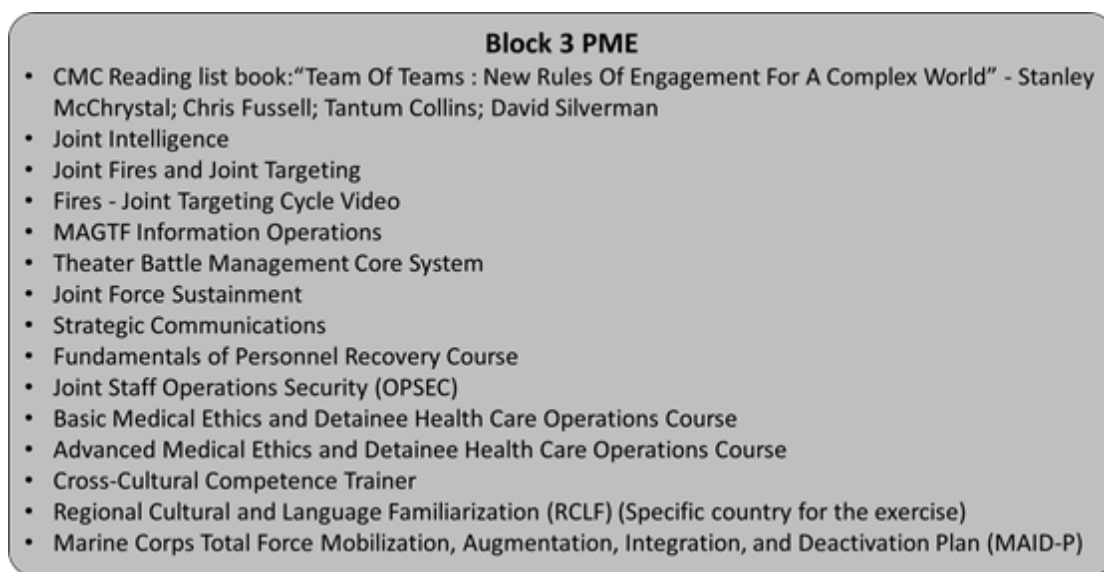
- 
- Block 3 PME**
- CMC Reading list book: "Team Of Teams : New Rules Of Engagement For A Complex World" - Stanley McChrystal; Chris Fussell; Tantum Collins; David Silverman
  - Joint Intelligence
  - Joint Fires and Joint Targeting
  - Fires - Joint Targeting Cycle Video
  - MAGTF Information Operations
  - Theater Battle Management Core System
  - Joint Force Sustainment
  - Strategic Communications
  - Fundamentals of Personnel Recovery Course
  - Joint Staff Operations Security (OPSEC)
  - Basic Medical Ethics and Detainee Health Care Operations Course
  - Advanced Medical Ethics and Detainee Health Care Operations Course
  - Cross-Cultural Competence Trainer
  - Regional Cultural and Language Familiarization (RCLF) (Specific country for the exercise)
  - Marine Corps Total Force Mobilization, Augmentation, Integration, and Deactivation Plan (MAID-P)

Figure 9

A greater understanding of the culture contributes to the staff preparation of Joint Intelligence of the Operational Environment (JIPOE) and leads to increased synergy in the concept of operations. Therefore, the educational objective is for the staff to focus on culture, information operations, and their primary section requirements.

Block 4 PME focuses on ethics, Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) and the development on plans and orders. The selected book, Michael Walzers's *Just and Unjust Wars*, outlines theories to go to war and conduct in war. This primer assists the staff in developing their CONPLAN and

study begins with understanding the organization of an OPLAN. The block then transitions to assessments and METL development, essential for identifying essential tasks in a CONPLAN. Moreover, the Theater Campaign Plan (TCP) overview is for the staff to view an actual classified CCDR TCP, helping the MEF CE staff to understand how their

**Block 4 PME**

- CMC Reading list book: "Just And Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument With Historical Illustrations" - Michael Walzer
- Marking Classified Documents
- Operation Plans and Orders
- Universal Joint Task List
- Marine Corps Task List
- Assessments
- Mission Essential Task List Development
- Theater Campaign Plan
- Crisis Action Planning
- Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC)
- Military Law
- Ethics and Integrity

Figure 10

CONPLAN nests with their higher command. The courses on ethics and military law tie the PME Block together. The educational objective for Block 4 is to understand the CONPLAN supports the TCP, and how that writing an effective plan with an understanding how the rules of engagement are placed on the force to achieve objectives and not to limit combat effectiveness, is done well.

Block 5 PME focuses on how the MEF CE operates the MEF Command Center. The book to support is Gary Kline's *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*. Leaders operating in a command center need to understand how to assess the situation and make quick decisions based on mission and intent. In today's command centers, the amount of information can quickly overload decision

space and paralyze decision making. Understanding how to weed through the amount of information systems

**Block 5 PME (Resident Courses)**

- CMC Reading list book: "Sources Of Power: How People Make Decisions" - Gary Klein
- GCCS-J Common Operational Picture (GCCS-J COP)
- Battle Command Sustainment Support System (BCS3) Operator.
- Command and Control Personal Computer (C2PC) Operator.
- Command Post of the Future (CPOF) Basic Operator.
- Commander's C2 Systems Overview.
- Common Logistics Command and Control System (CLC2S) Operator.
- Common Tactical Picture Management.
- Effects Management Tool (EMT).
- Precision Strike Suite-Special Operations Forces (PSS-SOF).
- SharePoint Advanced Site Manager.
- Transportation Capacity Planning Tool (TCPT) Operator.
- Other Resident Courses required for planning or the exercise

Figure 11

produce, discern effectively when compared to mission and intent, and present pertinent information relevant to the decision maker is integral in the process. The educational objective for this block, therefore, is to train the staff on how to best utilize the command and control (C2) systems in addition to learning how to filter information and understand what is necessary for decision making.<sup>3</sup>

Nominally, one might expect that this will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of MEF CE Battle Rhythm and support informed decision making by commanders.

### The Planning Phase.

The planning phase begins at the start of the METP as PP&O solicits the GCCs for sponsorship. Inevitably, the MARFOR HQ will become the sponsoring command and will assist the MEF and GCC in selecting the contingency for which the MEF will plan against. The planning phase ends with the completion of a level 2 or level 3 CONPLAN submitted to the GCC, MARFOR and PP&O.

The real-world scenario<sup>4</sup> would be accompanied by strategic planning guidance to include the apportionment tables outlined in the GEF, and real-world assigned and allocated forces. Current events and policy updates are considered “fair game” for planning. Because the intent is to produce an actual living CONPLAN, everything is “in scenario” and the plan susceptible to change throughout.

Like in doctrine, IPR A would result in an approved mission statement and contain Course of Action (COA) guidance to further develop the concept. IPR C supports an approved COA and

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<sup>3</sup> Timing-wise, the Advanced PME Block, Block 1 PME, and Block 2 PME are designed to be completed during the first six months of the exercise life cycle and prepare the exercise force for the planning and interaction with PP&O, MARFOR, the Geographic Combatant Command (GCC). Blocks 3 and 4 are designed to occur during the first ten months of the Education and Planning Phase. These blocks prepare the force to conduct their operational planning team and begin writing their CONPLAN. Block 5 should be conducted between months 11-15 of the exercise life cycle. The education phase should be completed by month 15, or prior to the simulated execution of the CONPLAN in MTWS with the response cell.

<sup>4</sup> The GCC planning directive will define the contingency to plan. The subsequent CCDR’s planning guidance given to the MEF Commanding General (CG) in combination with the planning directive provides the basis for Operational Planning Team (OPT) formulation.

updated guidance from the CCDR where the MEF CE staff can continue detailed planning and develop their CONPLAN in greater depth. Oversight by MSTP and senior mentors will provide the assessment on the planning process going into preparing for IPR F, where the MEF CE will seek an approved CONPLAN.

With CONPLAN approved, the exercise preparation phase begins and MTWS is loaded with CONPLAN for simulation and wargaming. The MEF refinement of the plan post-wargaming is integral to developing required branch, sequels, and subordinate supporting plans.

In IPR R, the CCDR and their staff do not have any training responsibilities to the training audience. Further participation and observation is up to the CCDR. The GCC staff and/or J7 provide assessment/feedback to the MEF CE following IPR R. The CCDR can now identify the section of the CONPLAN to exercise against a response cell in simulation.

#### *The Preparation, Execution, and Assessment Phases.*

The CONPLAN MSTP/J7 evaluation begins following the approval of the plan, providing the training audience to update prior to the execution final exercise (FINEX). FINEX simulates the execution of a specific part of the CONPLAN in practical exercise. The FINEX takes place over a two-week period against a MEB staff serving as an adversarial response cell. The FINEX is current operations focused and executes the plan with scenario injections that drive the battle rhythm and the CG and staff to make decisions. The MEF CE staff must conduct an operational assessment on the first and last day of the 14-day exercise and following the execution phase, the exercise assessment phase begins.

The assessment phase begins by identifying an assessment framework that incorporates the training end state with exercise objectives, MOPs, indicators, and MOEs. Evacuating specific metrics throughout the METP as the MEF CE conducts debriefs and compiles the information into the exercise After-Action Reports (AAR). Reporting training in the Defense Readiness Reporting System Marine Corps (DRRS-MC) captures the completion of training as well as

documenting proficiency. The MEF CE delivers the CONPLAN (following the AAR and any plan refinements) in a final report to the CCDR, MARFOR and PP&O for review. The CCDR is the appropriate entity to submit the CONPLAN to the Joint Staff for review and validation prior to the CONPLAN becoming official.

## ***CONCLUSION***

The CJCS, General Dunford and the CMC General Neller provided their guidance in developing the force of the future and the Marine Corps needs to change how it prepares the MEF CE for future conflict, especially if expected to function as and lead a JTF. The staff of the MEF should strive to fill a quarter of its rolls with members of the other services and the Marines on staff should understand joint command and control. The MCPP has a place when planning a Marine Corps problems. However, a JTF utilizes JOPP, MCPP and a host of other frameworks to solve complex problems. Therefore, the service should adhere to the training principles and train the MAGTF how it will fight as part of the joint force.

Abandoning artificial scenarios for use of current and forecast events will free the minds of Marines and give way to the inquisitive and creative thought required for producing viable and holistic solutions to military problems. By this, the Marine Corps has the opportunity to increase the level of proficiency of conducting multi-domain operations while incorporating the culture of the operating environment.

Ultimately, this shift in understanding will result in MEF CEs able to properly assess their operational effectiveness instead of only their task accomplishment. The MEF Education and Training Program (METP) is training how the Marine Corps fights, preparing the MEF to operate in the Joint Force and increasing the operational effectiveness of the DoD. CONPLANs developed by General Officer staffs instead of with a small room of action officers ensures education in training and establishes a foundation that increases proficiency in planning and war

fighting for all Marines. The METP will set the Marine Corps apart in the Joint Force and reinforce why the JTF MEF and the Marine Corps remains the force of choice.

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