

ACO OPERATIONS ASSESSMENT CAPABILITY

Report Published on 16 December 2011

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The success of NATO operations, as described in SHAPE's Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD), is predicated on an Operations Assessment capability at each level of Allied Command Operations that can determine progress toward an operation's objectives and make recommendations to decision-makers. In late 2010, SHAPE expressed concern over possible shortcomings in ACO's Assessment capability created by the variations in Assessment structures and manning at the different levels in ACO and, to assuage this concern, requested JALLC to analyze the Operations Assessment capability in ACO.

The JALLC was tasked to analyze the current and proposed Assessment structures, processes and tools at the operational and strategic levels in order to recommend appropriate support for the Operations Assessment requirements of ACO. The project had the following analysis objectives:

- Ascertain the requirements of NATO HQ and SHAPE for Operations Assessment
- Determine whether the proposed JFC/JFHQ and SHAPE-level structures are adequate to meet these requirements for Operations Assessment
- Establish if NATO processes and tools are sufficient in breadth and depth to support Operations Assessment



A planner briefs the JFC Lisbon Command Group during Exercise LOYAL VISION. The purpose of Operations Assessment is to provide Commanders with feedback on progress and allow them to make informed decisions on how to adjust the operation plan.

MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Shortfalls that have been identified in the current Operations Assessment capabilities in ACO, particularly at SHAPE, are not being addressed in proposals for the future structure. The lack of an adequate Operations Assessment capability at SHAPE undermines the Assessment planning and execution processes,

NATO's commitment to a Comprehensive Approach requires that Operations Assessment staffs are able to collect data from a wide variety of sources and make informed reports that assist decision making that spans the entire breadth of the political, social, and economic spectrum. To support this effort, availability of subject matter experts and operational analysts is necessary for Operations Assessment.

The Operations Assessment process as described in the COPD and the NATO Operations Assessment Handbook and the tools that support Assessment are sound; in

practice, however, structural deficiencies and a lack of Operations Assessment support impedes the overall Assessment process and could impair decision making. The focus of Assessment staffs has been on producing the politically-oriented Periodic Mission Review rather than informing the Operational Planning Process at the operational and military-strategic level.

To resolve these issues, the JALLC Team recommends:

- creating an independent Operations Assessment capability at SHAPE
- drafting a high-level policy and/or doctrine that governs Operations Assessment within NATO
- ensuring that Operations Assessment capabilities at all levels have access to subject matter experts and operational analysts





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Admiral James Stavridis, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, gives direction and guidance to the Strategic Operations Planning Group during Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR as part of the commander's decision-making cycle. Well-resourced and coherent Assessment structures and processes give planning staffs the ability to deliberately measure progress and thereby provide the strategic and the operational commander with insight on if and to what extent they are achieving the mission objectives. Such insight allows commanders to make informed decisions on how to adjust the operation and can serve as the basis for periodic mission reporting to NATO's political leadership at the North Atlantic Council.

PROJECT EXECUTION

The analysis was based on qualitative methods using document research and interviews of key Assessment personnel in ACO. JALLC conducted over 30 interviews with staff at NATO HQ, SHAPE, and the three JFCs, as well as other NATO commands and agencies including HQ ISAF and NC3A, between May and September 2011. An Interim Report was submitted to SHAPE with initial findings on 30 September 2011 to inform NATO's October ministerial meetings. Comments on the interim version were received from commands throughout NATO and incorporated into the Final Report.

PROJECT TEAM

LT. COMMANDER DAN FILLION, US NAVY

LCDR Fillion has served as a helicopter pilot in the United States Navy since 1997. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan, and has a master's degree in International Public Policy from Osaka University in Japan. He has deployed as a pilot in support of US counter-narcotics operations in the Caribbean and as part of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, and as an aircraft carrier Tactical Action Officer in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Horn of Africa operations. He arrived at JALLC in 2010 after an assignment in US Seventh Fleet.

LT. COLONEL ZSOLT HORNYAK, HUNGARIAN ARMY

LCOL Hornyak has been a JALLC analyst since July 2010. Trained as a Signals Intelligence Officer, his postings include Hungarian Defence Forces Staff, JFC Brunssum, and the UN Mission to Angola.

MR. NIGEL BRANSTON, CIVILIAN

Nigel Branston is a retired Royal Air Force officer, with tours in Allied HQs in Naples and Brunssum. He has been involved in operations ranging from the Falklands War (1982), NATO's International Force (IFOR) in the Former Yugoslavia (1995-96), to ISAF, to Director of Staff of JFC Brunssum's Deployable Joint Task Force HQ within the NRF. Nigel joined the JALLC in 2007 as an analyst. He has worked on several projects including Managing Partnerships; Outreach; Intelligence; Dismounted Soldier Systems; Reconstruction and Stabilization.

NATO LLDB ITEMS

- Item #1324 – Resourcing an Operations Assessment Capability at all Levels*
- Item #1325 – Policy and Doctrinal Support for Operations Assessment*
- Item #1326 – Expert Support for Operations Assessment*
- Item #1327 – Aligning Strategic-level Operations Assessment with PMR Development*
- Item #1328 – Software for Operations Assessment*



JALLC

JOINT ANALYSIS AND LESSONS LEARNED CENTRE
AVENIDA TENENTE MARTINS – MONSANTO
1500-589 LISBON
PORTUGAL

PHONE: +351 21 771 7007/8/9
FAX: +351 21 771 7098

NATO'S LEAD AGENT FOR JOINT ANALYSIS

All JALLC Reports, the LL Portal, and NATO LLDB Items may be found in their entirety under the *Products* section on the NS WAN:

<http://www.jallc.nato.int>

Non-classified reports and LLDB Items, Project FactSheets, the Joint Analysis Handbook and Lessons Learned Handbook can be found on JALLC's Internet site at the same [address](#).

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