

## Military Strategic Assessment

Why Periodic Mission Reviews may not be fulfilling the purpose

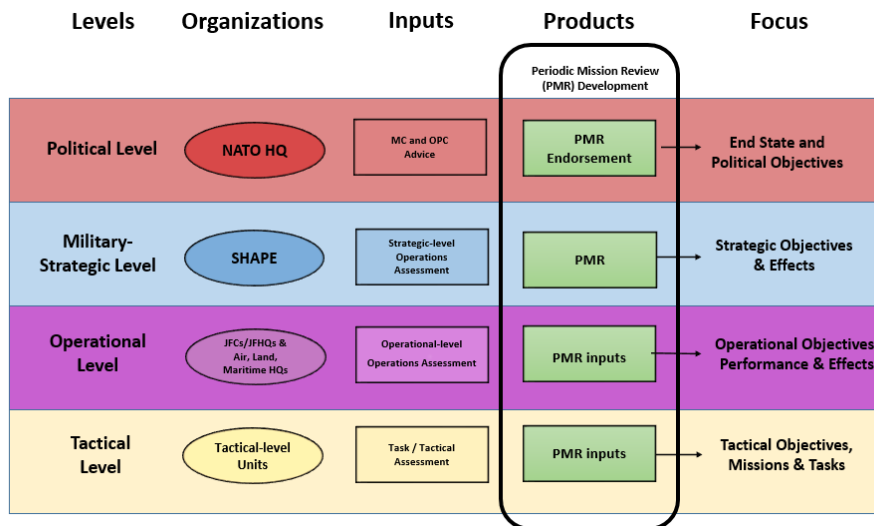
Report Published 10 March 2023

### Project Overview

NATO is an organization that is involved in responding to and managing complex crises, conflicts, and disasters. These activities demand a coordinated planned response across a wide spectrum of activities. To ensure the best possible outcome, it is essential that each mission/operation follows a carefully crafted and agreed Operations Plan (OPLAN) and that a feedback mechanism is in place to assess progress and provide timely advice and recommendations to decision makers.

In NATO, Operations Assessment (OPSA) is a continuous process that determines the results and progress of operations towards mission accomplishment. The purpose of OPSA is to provide feedback to decision makers on whether an operation is being executed as planned and if it achieving the desired results. The primary document to provide feedback to the NATO Nations is the Periodic Mission Review (PMR).

OPSA practitioners perform assessments across the strategic, operational, and tactical levels to inform an array of decisions. The figure below shows the levels and organizations at which OPSA takes place and, broadly, the focus that each level applies to the development of PMRs.



PMR content is developed across the different levels, from the tactical level to the political level. Each level is responsible for refining the input to the PMR with aim of ultimately informing the Political Level on how the End State and Political Objectives are being met. The figure above shows the levels and focus of PMR content, as identified by the JALLC project team



The project looked at current and (recent) past NATO operations and missions.

Top: NATO's Military Committee in session, discussing NATO Mission in Iraq.

Bottom: Chairman of the Military Committee official visit to Slovenia February 2023.

Source for both: [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int)

JALLC PROJECT FACTSHEET

“The project team determined that PMRs should contain, as a minimum, an assessment of certain topics—referred within the report as key elements—and that the assessment should be conducted at the military strategic level.”

## Project Overview (continued)

The topic of OPSA in NATO has been the subject of a number of studies that, collectively, have documented challenges faced by OPSA practitioners across multiple operations. However, the majority of these studies focussed on OPSA conducted at the operational level. This JALLC study focussed on OPSA conducted at the military strategic level (i.e. at SHAPE). As such, this study centred on two main aspects of OPSA: the PMRs as the product of military strategic OPSA; and the role of SHAPE in the development of PMRs.



*The project looked at current and (recent) past NATO operations and missions.*

*Left: Operation Sea Guardian conducts the first patrol in Eastern Mediterranean for 2023.*

*Right: NATO military-to-military talks with African Union. Source for both: [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int)*

## Key Findings

The JALLC project team first determined that PMRs should contain, as a minimum, an assessment of certain topics—referred to in the report as *key elements*—and that the assessment should be conducted at the military strategic level. However, one of the issues identified in this study is that PMRs do not include all the key elements and, where they are included, often the assessment is conducted at the operational—not military strategic—level.

Further content analysis of the PMRs also indicated that some PMRs contain information that decision makers in NATO HQ consider as extraneous, which may not always be useful/required for decision makers at the political level.

Lastly, the report includes analysis of a notional PMR lifecycle and highlights the impacts of different staffing and approval times between selected missions/operations.

Aside from highlighting issues with the PMRs, the report describes the different approaches adopted by SHAPE to the development of PMRs, and outlines a number of factors that could be addressed to potentially improve the content and usability of PMRs, and SHAPE's approach to their development.

The report is classified NATO RESTRICTED. A copy may be requested by contacting the JALLC subject to appropriate security credentials .

## Project Team

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