Chapter 6
Assessment

ASSESSMENT PURPOSE

6-1. The purpose of assessment is to support the commander's decision making. Commanders continuously assess the situation to better understand current conditions and determine how the operation is progressing. Continuous assessment helps commanders anticipate and adapt the force to changing circumstances. Commanders incorporate assessments by the staff, subordinate commanders, and unified action partners into their personal assessments of the situation. Based on their own assessments, commanders modify plans and orders to adapt the force to changing circumstances. Assessment is a staff-wide effort, not simply the product of a working group or a particular staff section or command post cell. Assessment of IO objectives and effects is an integral part of the staff-wide assessment process. Assessment requires a commitment of resources that must be balanced against other competing requirements and priorities of work; however, without sufficient resources, assessments often prove ineffective or fail altogether. This means that the IO officer will need to negotiate and prioritize this effort to make it meaningful to support decision making.

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

6-2. All plans and orders have a general logic. This logic links tasks given to subordinate units with achieving objectives and achieving objectives with attaining the operation's end state. An assessment framework incorporates the logic of the plan and uses measures—MOEs and MOPs—as tools to determine progress toward attaining desired end state conditions, as shown on figure 6-1 (see discussion beginning in paragraph 6-17 for more information about MOEs, MOPs, and indicators).

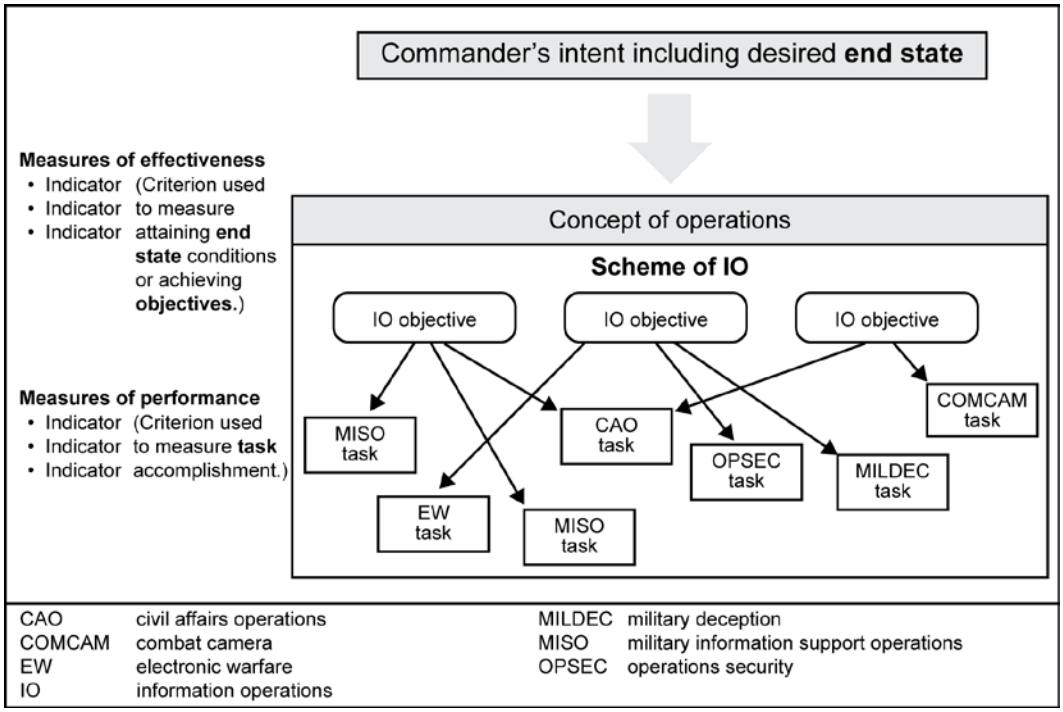

Figure 6-1. Framework for assessment

ASSESSMENT FOCUS

6-3. Different levels of headquarters likely have different assessment focuses. Tactical-level units focus primarily on task assessment. Operational-level units focus on environmental (operational and information) assessment. Strategic-level units focus on campaign assessment. Table 6-1 summarizes the various aspects that differentiate one level of focus from another.

Table 6-1. Aspects of assessment by level of focus

Assessment Focus			
Assessment aspect	***Task***	***Environment***	***Campaign***
Source (basis) for criteria	Directed tasks in OPORD or OPLAN.	Desired conditions in OPLAN or OPORD.	End state objectives (success criteria).
Criteria	Primarily MOP.	Primarily MOE.	MOE.
Time horizon	Near (daily).	Mid (weekly or monthly).	Long (monthly, quarterly, or annually).
Indicators	Largely quantitative; may have qualitative commander input.	Mixed-method.	Mixed-method.
Collection means	Reports, SIGACTs, subordinate commanders, circulation.	Reports, polls, media analysis, subordinate commanders, stakeholders, circulation.	Reports, polls, media analysis, subordinate commanders, stakeholders, circulation.
Analysis and evaluation	Current operations centric, after action review, and commander qualitative.	Staff analysis and evaluation through staff-wide efforts, with focused ad hoc assessment cell or working group. Commander parallel evaluation based on qualitative (opinion-based) indicators through commander crosstalk and circulation. Informed by staff efforts.	Combination of the quantitative staff efforts and commander qualitative analysis and evaluation. Trend analysis.
Commander – Staff interface venues	Daily updates, after action review.	Periodic OE or information environment staff assessment updates; commander's circulation reports.	Formal assessment briefings and conferences.
Actions for improvement	Task refinement, changes to quantities or methods of delivery, additional IRC support, and reengagement or repetition of IRC tasks.	Better understanding of local culture, improved information environment analysis, message refinement, and reengagement by alternate means.	Reassessment of campaign strategy, refinement of commander's end state, and expansion of IO planning and execution, including unified action partners.

IO	information operations	OE	operational environment
IRC	information-related capability	OPLAN	operation plan
MOE	measure of effectiveness	OPORD	operation order
MOP	measure of performance	SIGACT	significant activity

TASK ASSESSMENT

6-4. A task assessment asks whether units or IRCs are performing assigned or implied tasks to standard using MOPs. Task assessment answers the question, "Are we doing things right?" as well as follow-on questions such as, "Was the task completed?" and "Was it completed to standard?"

INFORMATION (AND OPERATIONAL) ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT

6-5. Environment assessment asks whether units are achieving the necessary objectives and conditions—MOEs-oriented—in the information and operational environments necessary to accomplish the mission. This type of assessment answers the question, "Are we doing the right things?"

CAMPAIGN ASSESSMENT

6-6. Campaign assessment is undertaken at the theater level (such as the geographic combatant command) in the area of responsibility to assess whether units achieve theater strategic or campaign objectives (objective-oriented). This type of assessment answers questions about progress toward accomplishing the mission. Campaign assessment also includes long-term strategic assessments focused on theater engagement objectives and the ethical, effective, and efficient application of resources.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

6-7. Assessments can be quantitative or qualitative or both (mixed method). One method is not necessarily better than another. The various components of the assessment framework—end state, objectives, and tasks, as well as the type of intelligence or information gathered—all govern which method is best suited to yield the feedback necessary to support decision making and operational adjustments.

QUANTITATIVE

6-8. Objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bounded (known as SMART) lend themselves to quantitative assessment because they employ MOEs that are similarly specific and measurable. A quantitative methodology is well-suited for almost all task-level assessments and selected environment and campaign assessments. By its nature, quantitative methodology is data-centric and requires the requisite automated systems and personnel expertise to employ it effectively. Quantitative assessment tends to be staff-centric and is often a check on commanders' more subjective, qualitative assessment.

QUALITATIVE

6-9. Effective qualitative assessments require the same rigor, if not more, as quantitative assessments and benefit from expertise in their design and conduct. The IO officer, IRCs, functional staff leads, and members of a working group or ad hoc assessment cell assist with the design and conduct of qualitative assessments (just as they do with quantitative assessments). For MOPs, the IRCs are the best resource for whether an activity has started, or is completed, and the standards to which it was performed. For MOEs, the IO officer—working with the intelligence staff and other members of the staff—assesses for the commander whether, and to what extent, units achieve effects in the information environment. To the degree possible, qualitative assessments are enhanced by turning qualitative information into quantitative values. This process helps remove subjectively and facilitates the compilation and reporting of findings.

MIXED-METHOD

6-10. Mixed-method or blended assessments combine quantitative and qualitative assessment methodologies to gain the best of both. IO, in particular, benefits from mixed-method assessments due to the diverse range of effects it can create in the information environment, from directly observable physical effects to long-term cognitive effects.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

6-11. Assessment involves three inter-related phases: monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment (directing action for improvement). FM 6-0 discusses each of these phases in detail. In the evaluation phase, three sets of criteria are employed to evaluate progress: MOEs, MOPs, and indicators.

MONITORING INFORMATION OPERATIONS

6-12. *Monitoring* is continuous observation of those conditions relevant to the current operation (ADRP 5-0). Monitoring within the assessment process allows staffs to collect relevant information, specifically that information about the current situation that staffs can compare to the forecasted situation described in the commander's intent and concept of operations. Progress cannot be judged, nor effective decisions made, without an accurate understanding of the current situation.

6-13. The IO officer monitors IRCs to determine progress towards achieving the IO objectives. Once execution begins, the IO officer monitors the threat and friendly situations to track IRC task accomplishment, determine the effects of IO during each phase of the operation, and detect and track any unintended consequences. The IO officer works closely with the intelligence cell, intelligence staff officer, and IO working group representatives to provide a running assessment of the effectiveness of threat information efforts and keeps the operations staff officer and various integrating cells informed.

EVALUATING INFORMATION OPERATIONS

6-14. *Evaluating* is using criteria to judge progress toward desired conditions and determining why the current degree of progress exists (ADRP 5-0). Evaluation is at the heart of the assessment process where most of the analysis occurs. Evaluation helps commanders determine what is working and what is not working, and it helps them gain insights into how to better accomplish the mission.

6-15. During execution, the IO officer works with the intelligence cell and integrating cells to obtain the information needed to determine individual and collective IO effects. Evaluation not only estimates the effectiveness of task execution, but also evaluates the effect of the entire IO effort on the threat, other relevant audiences in the AO, and friendly operations. Evaluation assesses whether IO achieved its scheme of IO and subordinate objectives to support the overall mission.

6-16. In the evaluation phase, two sets of criteria are employed to evaluate progress: MOEs and MOPs. Task execution is evaluated using measures of performance. Task effectiveness, objective attainment, and mission accomplishment are evaluated using measures of effectiveness, which compare achieved results against a baseline. Progress of both MOEs and MOPs is signaled by indicators (see FM 3-13 for IO-specific considerations for each criteria that the commander and staff study when undertaking assessment of effects in the information environment).

6-17. A *measure of effectiveness* is an indicator used to measure a current system state, with change indicated by comparing multiple observations over time (JP 5-0). MOEs help measure changes in conditions, both positive and negative. MOEs are commonly found and tracked in formal assessment plans. MOEs help to answer the question, "Are we doing the right things?" In terms of IO, MOEs chiefly assess changes in the information environment, specifically changes in human behavior. The IO officer is responsible for developing an IO assessment plan as part of the unit's overall formal assessment plan.

6-18. A *measure of performance* is an indicator used to measure a friendly action that is tied to measuring task accomplishment (JP 5-0). MOPs help answer questions such as, "Are we doing things right?" or "Was the action taken?" or "Were the tasks completed to standard?" A MOP confirms or denies that a task has been properly performed. MOPs are commonly found and tracked at all echelons in execution matrixes.

6-19. No direct hierarchical relationship exists between MOPs and MOEs. MOPs do not feed MOEs or combine in any way to produce MOEs. MOPs simply measure the performance of a task; however, these tasks are essential to fulfilling each objective. How MOPs and MOEs relate to each other is driven by unit SOP and the mission or activity being evaluated. For IO, IRC units or staff representatives are responsible for task execution and, in coordination with the IO officer through the IO working group, contribute to MOP development and task assessment.

6-20. In the context of assessment, an *indicator* is an item of information that provides insight into a measure of effectiveness or measure of performance (ADRP 5-0). Indicators take the form of reports from subordinates, surveys, polls, and information requirements. Indicators help to answer the question, "What is the current status of this MOE or MOP?" A single indicator can inform multiple MOPs and MOEs (see table 6-2 for additional information).

Table 6-2. Assessment measures and indicators

	MOE	***MOP***	***Indicator***
Purpose:	Measure attaining an end state condition, achieving an objective, or creating an effect.	Measure task accomplishment.	Provide insight into an MOE or MOP.
Answers:	Are we doing the right things?	Are we doing things right?	What is the status of this MOE or MOP?
Why and What:	Measures *why* (purpose) in the mission statement.	Measures *what* (task completion) in the mission statement.	Information used to make measuring *why* or *what* possible.
Relationship:	No direct hierarchal relationship to MOPs.	No hierarchal relationship to MOEs.	Subordinate to MOEs and MOPs.
Tracking:	Often formally tracked in formal assessment plans.	Often formally tracked in execution matrixes.	Often formally tracked in formal assessment plans.
Level of Challenge:	Typically challenging to choose the appropriate ones.	Typically simple to choose the appropriate ones.	Typically as challenging to select appropriately as the supported MOE or MOP.
MOE measure of effectiveness		MOP measure of performance	

Criteria Development

6-21. IO objectives drive the way in which the staff (IO officer) develops MOEs and MOPs. The unit's mission, commander's intent and guidance, and an understanding of the information environment provide the information required to develop IO objectives. More specifically, objective statements help staffs decide which effects need to be generated in the information environment to achieve the commander's intent. Figure 6-2 shows how to develop the IO objective statement using the effect, target or target audience, action, and purpose (known as ETAP) rubric (see also paragraph 4-39 for details on this rubric).

Note. In the figure 6-2 example, the T stands for *target* because the object of the effect is an entity or object that performs a function for the enemy or adversary, rather than an individual or group selected for influence (for which the T would stand for *target audience*).

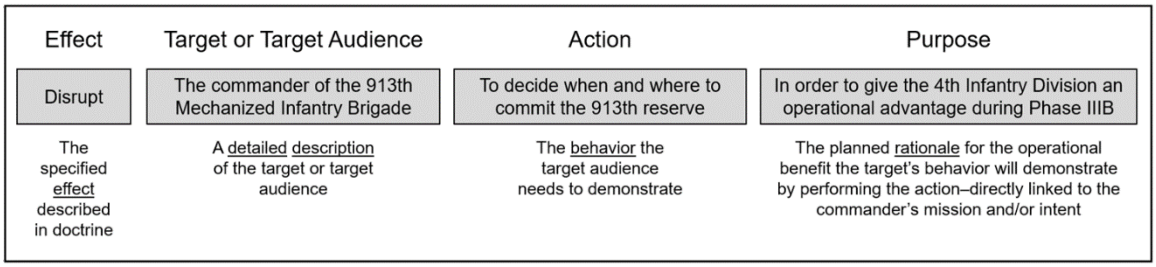

Figure 6-2. Information operations objective statement using effect, target, action, and purpose rubric

Measure of Effectiveness Development

6-22. MOEs measure whether or not units achieved IO objectives successfully—that the effects on the target or target audience produced the desired action or outcome, even if they were not directly caused by planned military action. Typically, the IO officer develops more than one MOE per objective statement to account for randomness, offset disruption or impairment in monitoring the target, and enhance reliability and validity of data. Figure 6-3 on page 6-6 illustrates an MOE statement.

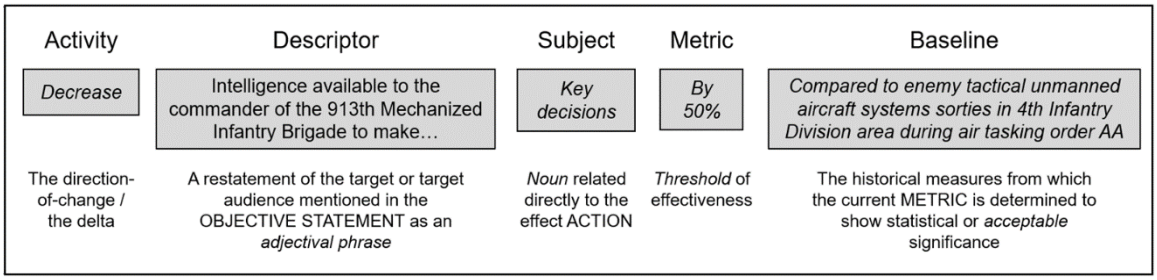

Figure 6-3. Sample measure of effectiveness statement

Measure of Performance Development

6-23. MOPs explain what and how; they specify the activity that IRCs must undertake to create effects in the information environment. MOPs capture the means and medium IRCs will employ, the quantity of effort, and the target. While a given IRC task may have a single MOP, there are typically two or more MOPs. Rarely does a single activity or IRC achieve the desired behavior change. Changing behavior requires both variety and repetition, particularly if such a behavior change needs to be enduring. Figure 6-4 provides an example of how the IO officer, in coordination with IRC representatives, establishes MOPs.

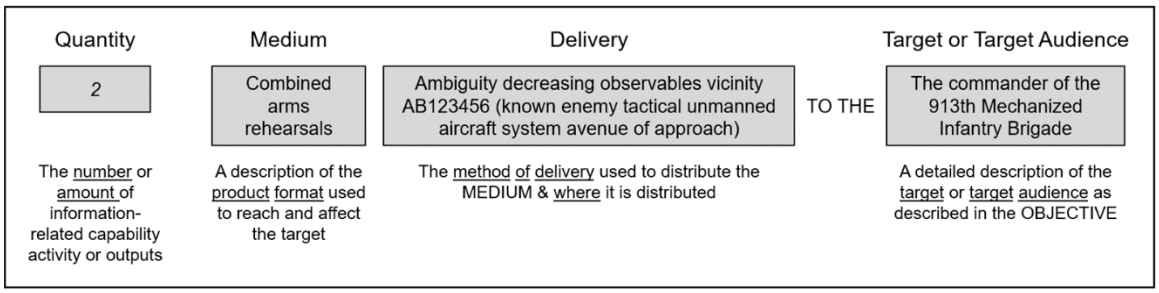

Figure 6-4. Example measure of performance statement

Indicator Development

6-24. Units track the status of MOPs and MOEs using indicators. Indicators are an item of information that provides insight into an MOE or MOP; they are observables or items of information that help the staff determine whether units conduct IRC actions to standard and create the required effect. Using the example MOE statement in figure 6-3, an indicator would be a single enemy tactical unmanned aircraft system sortie. An MOP indicator would be intercepted imagery of the friendly rehearsal captured by the tactical unmanned aircraft system that validates the fact the enemy has observed it.

Logic or Theory of Change

6-25. An important part of the logic of the overall plan is the logic of the IO effort or theory of change in the information environment. Figure 6-5 portrays the relationship among objectives (the change that needs to happen) and MOPs, indicators, and MOEs. The logic of the effort is shown as a relationship among available, selected, and synchronized IRCs and the effects expected over time. While the figure suggests that this logic is generic, it is not. It is specific to every objective and combination of IRCs. Although discussed here as part of assessment, the logic of the IO effort undergirds the scheme of IO (discussed in Chapter 4), reinforcing the cyclical nature of the operations process and the value of post-execution and pre-planning assessments (see also FM 3-13 for a discussion on objectives).

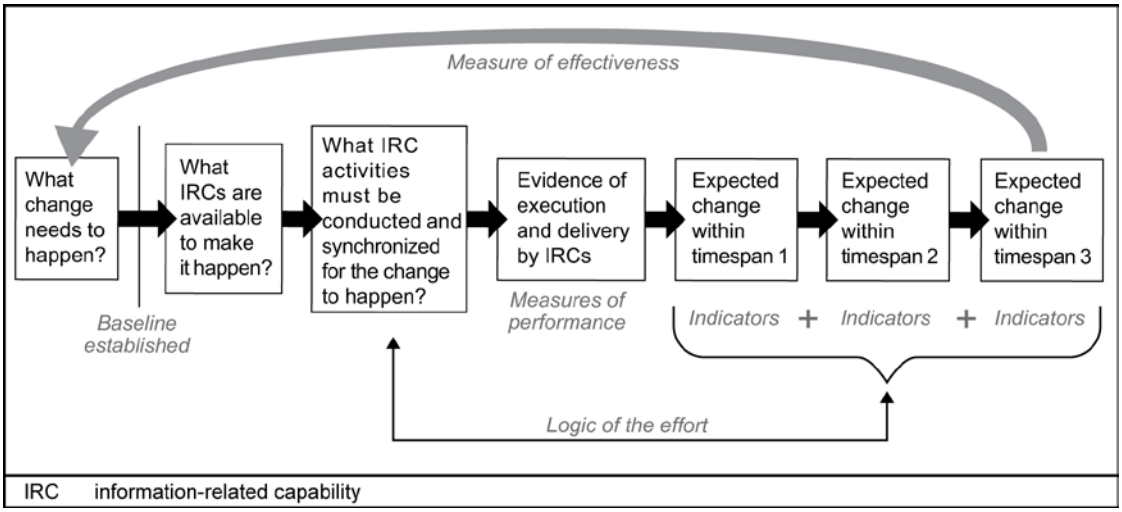

Figure 6-5. Logic flow supporting attainment of an information operations objective

Assessment Products

6-26. Staff assessment products should directly support the commander's requirements, such as deepening understanding of the operational and information environments, measuring progress toward achieving objectives and accomplishing the mission, and informing the commander's intent and guidance. Efficient staffs also develop, tailor, and optimize products to meet the commander's expectations and ways of receiving information. Staffs also tailor products to match the focus or level of assessment. Campaign assessments are substantially fuller or richer in terms of the scope of information presented than is a task assessment.

6-27. As figure 6-5 depicts, achieving IO objectives depends on producing specific effects in the information environment that ultimately cause the enemy or adversary—as well as many intervening variables, actors, or audiences—to change behavior. Assessment, therefore, seeks to verify and explain the change that is or needs to occur—whether through trend analysis or the expected progression from one indicator to another. Figure 6-6 on page 6-8 illustrates several common methods for depicting trends or the status of a given condition in an information environment. Figure 6-7, also on page 6-8, provides a counterinsurgency example that depicts indicator trends supporting an MOE. Figure 6-8 on page 6-9 overlays these trends on a map of the AO.

Note. Staffs can use each of these methods to measure progress among any of the various elements of an IO objective, either singly or in combination: the objective itself or the MOE, MOP, and indicators that support it. Also, effective staffs pair a diagram with additional essential or optional information that facilitates decision making, most importantly the bottom line or "so what."

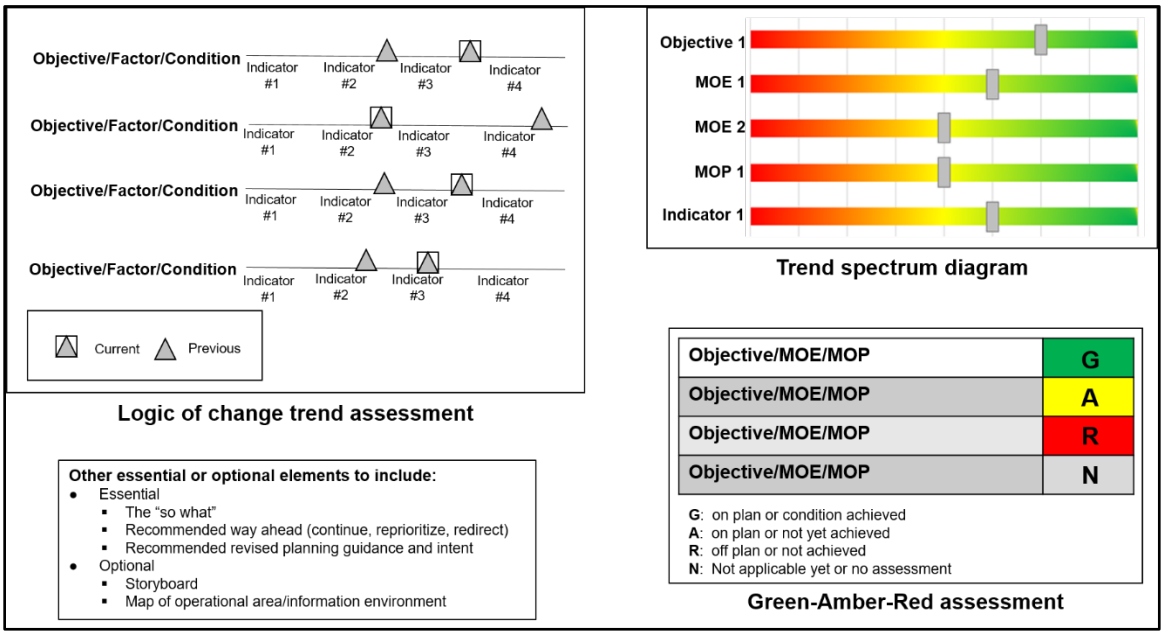

Figure 6-6. Sample assessment product templates

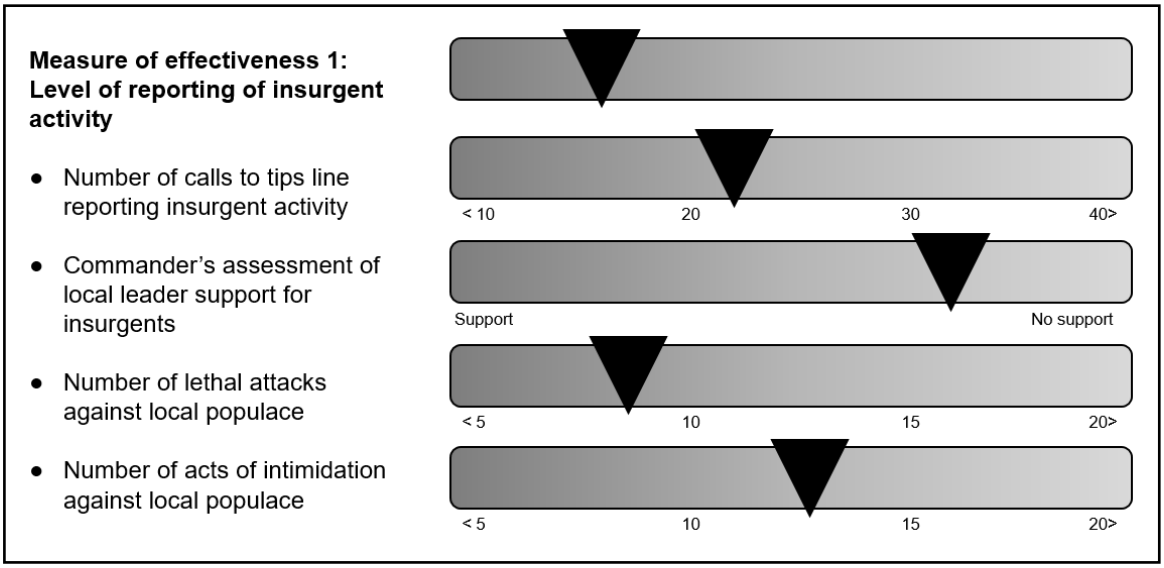

Figure 6-7. Example counterinsurgency measure of effectiveness assessment

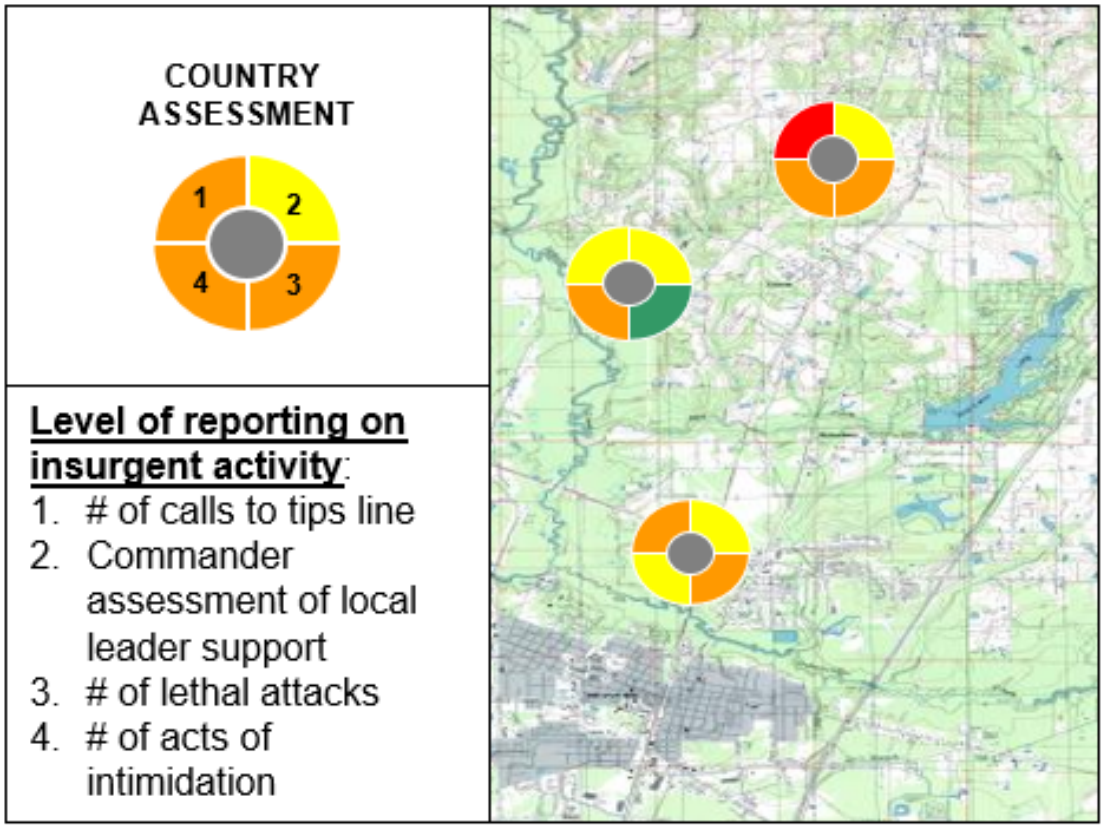

Figure 6-8. Assessment in relation to the area of operations

Adjusting Information Operations

6-28. Monitoring and evaluating are critical activities; however, assessment is incomplete without recommending or directing action or adjustments. Assessment may diagnose problems, but unless it results in recommended adjustments, its use to the commander is limited.

6-29. When developing recommendations, staffs draw from many sources and consider their recommendations within the larger context of the operation. While several ways to improve a particular aspect of the operation might exist, some recommendations could impact other aspects of the operation. As with all recommendations, staffs should address any future implications.

6-30. Based on evaluation, the IO officer adjusts IO to further exploit enemy vulnerabilities, redirects actions yielding insufficient effects, or terminates actions after they have achieved the desired result. The IO officer keeps the operations staff officer and commander informed of IO effects and the impacts they have on friendly and adversary operations.

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