



EXERCISE EAGLE DAGGER 09

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“The NRDC-ITA Core Process uses a number of Multi Disciplinary Working Groups MDGs to analyse a problem, produce a solution and deliver results in support of the Decision Making Process. This process is central (Core) to the Corps Business of this HQ and should be known by all Staff intimately. This article looks at the changes made to the process in the last 12 months and how it is being developed and tested on Ex EAGLE DAGGER 09”.

Introduction

“Washing machines” and “Corps planning” are not words usually spoken in the same sentence however since the end of last year I have heard the words ‘washing Machine’ used on many occasions by our very own DCOM, Maj Gen Capewell. This was the analogy chosen to describe the way in which we [the NRDC-ITA] conduct our Core business¹. The comparison between producing clean clothes and delivering orders to our subordinates could be interpreted as being a simple process that simply needs dirty washing (the problem or task) detergent, water (Divisions and MDGs) and a push of the button (Command). However, my wife would argue that the laundry process is not

¹ The Core Process is defined in the 4 steps: Plan, Refine (and synchronise), Execute and Assess.

as simple as it seems and that there are many technical and complicated and (of course!) experienced based stages that need to be completed to get the timeliest and above all, best results.

Our Core Process is no different, it seems on the face of it that the COM NRDC-ITA simply presses the NRDC start button and with a whirr, a knock and a final spin out pops a comprehensive OPOD with its associated annexes ready for our subordinate units to act on. The reality though is that there are many facets to this procedure; a web of processes and sub-processes that have all evolved in order to break down what we have been told to do, work out what has to be done, provide solutions, decide on a course of action, allocate resources, execute the mission or task and finally follow it up with an assessment of how it all went and

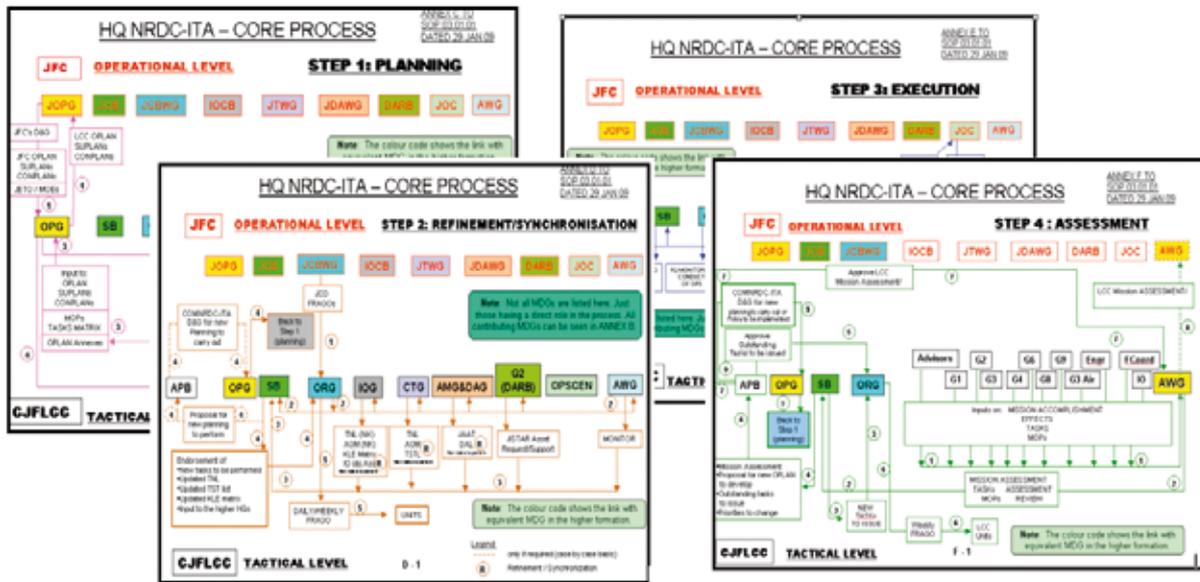


FIG. 3: Flow diagram's for each step of the Core Process (SOP 03.01.01)



events flow diagram's (seen in Fig.3) that represent each stage of the Core Process of Plan, Refine (and Synchronise), Execution and the Assessment.

New SOIs for each of the MDGs were then developed and the package was endorsed by the Commander, which concluded the initial IOCP task; the overhaul of the way in which this Headquarters conducts its Corps Business was completed and all that was left to do was to test what had been developed. Ex EAGLE DAGGER 09 was to be the testing ground.

Ex EAGLE DAGGER – The MDG Test

It was no coincidence that Ex EAGLE DAGGER was in part designed to test the findings of the IOCP WG; from its conception the aim was:

'To train non-ISAF personnel in the decision making process, practicing Headquarters plans and procedures'.

More specifically the exercise was to look in detail at the critical elements that form the core decision-making process, in particular:

- The HQs ability to assimilate information.
- Achieve Staff coordination and interaction.
- Prioritising.
- Timeliness.
- Situational understanding.
- Flexibility.
- Outputs.

All of these areas are influenced by the work of the MDGs.

How did the MDGs function?

Real time constraints and limitations on the exercise meant it was not possible to fully test all aspects of the Core Process, so not all MDGs were put through the wash. In addition, exercise time jumps resulted in compressed timelines and meant that some of the MDG meetings were held too close together resulting in very full days for participants with dual roles. However, the new



SOP 03.01.01 stood up to the challenge and delivered a better solution to the Core Process than previous versions. Whilst there are amendments and adjustments to be made, these are small and should be considered as fine-tuning a fully reconditioned washing machine. The SOIs for each of the MDGs also functioned effectively and only minor adjustments are necessary to “tweak” the way in which the MDGs worked.

The Way Ahead

All of the lessons identified from Ex EAGLE DAGGER are now being incorporated into a review of the SOI and SOP documents and procedures leading to the final test; Ex EAGLE BLADE 09. It is here that the process will have its final assessment as it will be put through the most demanding wash cycle yet; a full 24/7 war fighting exercise in-

volving the whole HQ and elements of our affiliated units in support.

Conclusion

The Core Process has been successfully revised and all personnel understand the new SOPs and SOIs that support the changes. The process works exceptionally well in theory, and it still requires some final adjustment. Ex EAGLE BLADE 09 will prove the ultimate test bed for the core process and it is anticipated that this final assessment will then close the review.

It is important to remember that although these procedures are a vital tool for the Staff, they are not critical to success, but if followed will enable the Staff to focus more clearly on what is really important – The Enemy. ■