

# THE TARGETING PROCESS

(Part II)

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## Preface

This second article discusses deeper on the four-step process and its products. First we need to focus our attention on the meeting rationale itself and then move to analyse how this process is developed & synchronise within the Core Process functions along planning of future operations.

## Targeting meeting

Targeting meetings are not just a single function conference. They consist of a synchronized sequence of meetings which properly conducted are the most effective method of focusing and synchronizing the CC/TF's combat power to determine and attack targets essential to the success of the mission. What is really essential & required is the full integration and participation of all joint & combined battlefield operating systems to ensure that the right target chosen is attacked by the most effective, accurate and valuable asset at the time we decided.

Since the targeting process is designed to integrate, synchronize and focus the combat power of the Sub-units, it must be effectively integrated into the HQ Core process & part of the daily battle rhythm. The staff has to be organised IOT determine first essential topics as:

- Define, IAW Cdr D&G, what enemy targets have to be attacked;
- Define and prioritize the assets (even at strategic level) to identify where the targets are, keep monitoring & track them with a real time view;
- Coordinate all the available kinetic & no-kinetic means IOT choose the most effective way to attack the nominated targets optimising our assets and avoiding or limiting CD to the essential;
- Be able to assess the results of the attack in terms of performances and the impact given even to the third parties and to the environment. This has to foreseen a medium and long perspective view.

The staff must conduct detailed analysis to select the targets and determine the best mix of sensor and attack systems essential to the success of the mission. Where, as "success of the Mission" we intend to achieve the desire effects we foreseen in the planning phase, undermining the undesired and unintended one and looking always on having the less impact on the external environment. So that this process, from one side, needs to be well trained, it requires, because of its sensitivity, the dedicated personal time, energy, and attention of the Commander.

For that reason, it is imperative for the commander to understand and really become involve of if, firstly of the process itself but more deeper on all the possible implications that this targeting could create in the battlefield. Commander emphasis makes a difference. The difference is articulating a clear vision of what needs to be accomplished throughout the targeting process. This vision combines and synchronizes the art and science of each battlefield operating system and brings a focused winning effort to when the attack in due, whatever lethal or no-lethal mean is used . Successful targeting requires that commanders and their staffs possess:

- An understanding of the all functions associated with the targeting process.
- Knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of organic and supporting target acquisition and attack systems.

## Targeting methodology

As seen in the previous article, targeting is a dynamic cycle process; it must keep up with the changing face of the battlefield. There is two different tier of conducting a targeting process. In fact in the planning phase the Staff is more focusing on developing the decide products that are essential for conducting an effective execution targeting phase later. Therefore in this planning phase the staff carry on the developing of all required (decide) products that allows Cdr to take decisions:

**Step 1. Decide.** The staff, lead by G2, start to develop the following documents helpful to provide the overall focus and sets priorities for intelligence collection effort and final attack/influence planning. These phase is designed to restore pace within the battlefield. It translates the Commander's intent into a plan. It helps the commander to decide what targets to engage/influence, how to acquire those targets, in what priority should targets be attacked or influenced and when and where those targets are likely to be found, how to attack them in a way that meets his intent. It also provides the first feedback necessary to ascertain whether his Direction & Guidance has been met. Note that this methodology is developed from Bn and Brigade Level up to Corp level synchronising effort with the others CCs. This implies an integration of the single Core Level process whatever is the level of the unit. The decide function is vital to produce the following documents:

- **Hight Value Target List (HVTL);**
- **High Payoff Target List (HPTL);**
- **Target Selection standards matrix (TSS);**
- **The attack guidance Matrix (AGM);**
- **The combination of those above three matrix is the final document** that allow rapid engagement decisions during current operations. This is the final step of the DECISE Function.

**Step 2. Detect.** This process determines accurate, identifiable, and timely requirements for the collection systems. The intelligence collection plan or reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) plan result from the detect phase as well as the refinement of the TSS. The detect phase analyse:

- Identifies target locations, its nature and determines if it is dynamic or static;
- Determines which assets could better perform the task to locate, monitor and track the targets;
- Specifies accuracy of target location required to attack the target;
- Estimates duration of targeting time once acquired;
- Time constraints;
- BDA Assets and criteria.

**Step 3. Deliver.** Refine the Attack/Influence Guidance Matrix and the selection of an attack/Influence system (or combination of systems, i.e.

Land, Air and Navy and/or by using no-lethal means). Besides the staff produces the schemes of manoeuvre and fire plans. These products answer the following tactical and technical questions:

• **Tactical Questions:**

- When should the target be attacked? Or what is the most effective time to attack it?
- What is the desired effect to achieve and what is the desirable degree of damage , or both?
- What attack system (lethal or non lethal) could be more effective in achieving the DE ,undermining the undesired and unintended effect & the degree of damage and what is the level of achievement that could be met the DE foreseen e.g., percentage of casualties or destroyed elements, or impact on enemy operations in terms of time, allocation or application of assets; e.g., percentage of casualties or destroyed elements, or impact on enemy operations in terms of time, allocation or application of assets;?

• **Technical Questions:**

- What unit will conduct the attack?
- Whenever used lethal means, number and type of munitions to be employed? This imply an assessment on the impact on the target & the BDA;
- What is the response time of the attacking unit?

**Step 4. Assess.** This aspect is quite challenging to determine, especially for the no-kinetic effects. Often it is based on an estimate approach which not always reply to the Commander request. Battle damage assessment (BDA) is the timely and accurate estimate of damage resulting from the application of military force, either lethal or no lethal, against a target. It is an appraisal of the effects of attacks/influence on targets designated by the Commander. BDA serves the following purposes:

- provides Commander with timely and accurate snapshots of their effectiveness on the enemy ;
- provides an estimate of the enemy's combat effectiveness, capabilities and intentions.
- helps to determine if a re-target process IOT re-attack is necessary.

In the next article we will see how to prepare & execute a Targeting Meeting. ■