Chapter Title: Introduction

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Book Author(s): Ben Connable, Jason Campbell, Bryce Loidolt and Gail Fisher
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Introduction

The purpose of counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign assessment is to provide military and policy decisionmakers with an understanding of how a campaign is progressing toward achieving the strategic end state defined by national policy. Assessment is typically a military task, and in Afghanistan theater-level assessment, groups in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and ISAF Joint Command (IJC) are tasked with assessing the ISAF campaign plan and supporting assessment of the joint and combined transition plan (Inteqal).[1] These efforts tend to rely on a modified version of effects-based assessment (EBA), as defined in U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) doctrinal publications. EBA requires the analysis of strategic end states to find and apply measures of effectiveness (MOEs), measures of performance (MOPs), and indicators that might help determine progress.[2] Table 1.1 provides a comparison of MOEs, MOPs, and indicators, and Figure 1.1 shows how MOEs and MOPs are derived from strategic and operational objectives and how they fit within the campaign assess-

Table 1.1
**Effects-Based Terminology for Assessment**

MOE	MOP	Indicator
Answers the question: Are we doing the right things?	Answers the question: Are we doing things right?	Answers the question: What is the status of this MOE or MOP?
Measures purpose accomplishment	Measures task completion	Measures raw data inputs to inform MOEs and MOPs
Measures *why* in the mission statement	Measures *what* in the mission statement	Information used to make measuring *what* or *why* possible
No hierarchical relationship to MOPs	No hierarchical relationship to MOEs	Subordinate to MOEs and MOPs
Often formally tracked in formal assessment plans	Often formally tracked in execution matrixes	Often formally tracked in formal assessment plans
Typically challenging to choose the correct ones	Typically simple to choose the correct ones	Typically as challenging to select correctly as the supported MOE or MOP

SOURCE: HQDA, 2010, p. 6-3, Table 6-1.

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[1] *Inteqal*, the Dari and Pashto word for *transition*, is the designation used to identify the official transfer of security responsibilities in Afghanistan from ISAF to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA).

[2] These are colloquially referred to as "metrics" although they do not necessarily fit within strict scientific definitions of *metric* or *metrics*. For the purposes of this report we will use the term *metrics* to encompass measures of effect, measures of performance, and indicators.

Figure 1.1
The Effects-Based Assessment Process
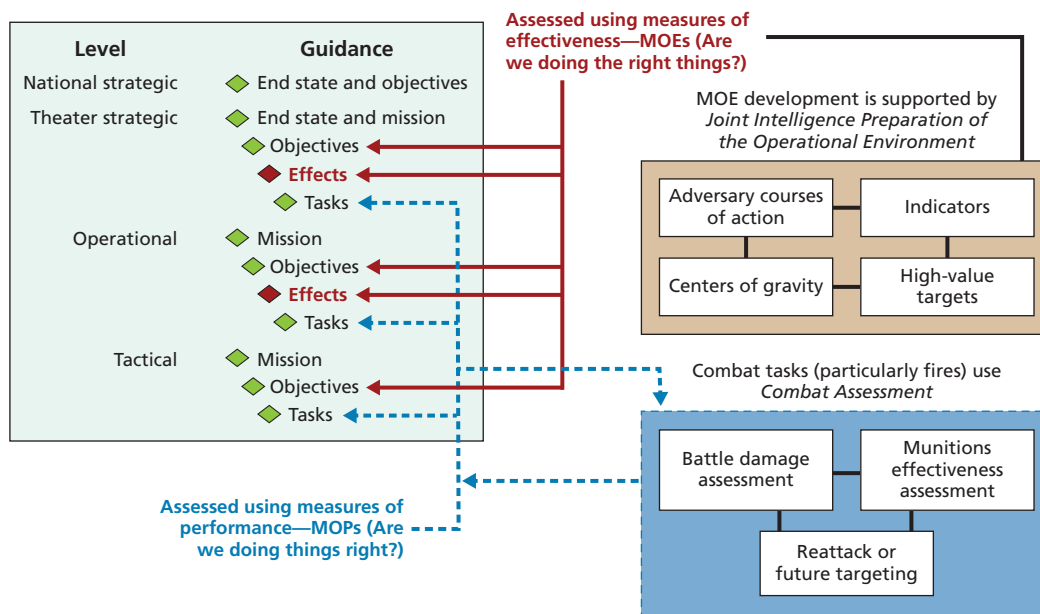
SOURCE: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2007, p. IV-20, Figure IV-6.
RAND *TR1014-1.1*

ment framework. Taken together, the table and the figure represent standing U.S. military doctrine on EBA. Assessment staffs in Afghanistan use effects-based language from doctrine and build some assessments from MOEs and MOPs, but other assessments are narrative or consist simply of annotated time-series charts.[3]

Figure 1.1 shows how military staffs at each level of command should feed assessment with information and (to varying degrees) analysis. At the theater level and below, each staff section focuses on assessing "effects" and "performance" using MOEs and MOPs as defined in Table 1.1. Intelligence reporting also feeds the assessment process (i.e., joint intelligence preparation of the environment). This system was developed to address conventional warfare and not irregular operations like COIN; this is obvious in the focus on battle damage assessment and associated actions at the tactical level. In this process, the equivalent of the battalion staff has no role in measuring or assessing effects, but in COIN, the battalion staff may be the one most capable of delivering relevant input into the assessment process. This incongruity undermines the ability of all military staffs to develop a comprehensive COIN assessment that is anchored in accurate and contextual information.

Together, Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1 also generally describe the process by which military commanders and staffs determine their centralized, or "core," metrics for assessment. Identifying, defining, and vetting metrics has historically proved challenging for assessment staffs in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. In the Afghanistan campaign, one metric (or MOE)—freedom of movement (FoM)—has been particularly elusive. ISAF has made efforts to address the challenges of FoM assessment: In 2010, a FoM working group established by ISAF explored

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[3]   A more detailed explanation of EBA can be found in Connable, forthcoming, and the U.S. Army's Field Manual 5-0, *The Operations Process* (HQDA, 2010, Appendix H).

the issue and developed a proxy methodology to address this gap in the assessment process, but the findings from the working group did not fully describe the challenges of collecting data and assessing FoM. As of early 2011, theater-level assessment entities at NATO, IJC, and subordinate commands in Afghanistan continued to try to capture and assess this metric in the absence of a common definition, means of data collection, and substantive link to strategic end state.[4]

Purpose

The target audience for this report is U.S. military commanders, staffs, and experts engaged in efforts to assess the COIN campaign in Afghanistan. The purpose of the report is to inform the target audience and the broader COIN community as to how and why a military staff might assess FoM to support decisionmaking at the tactical and theater levels of command. To explain how and why (or why not) to assess FoM, it is important to examine the concept and challenges of FoM in some detail. Because it is necessary to address FoM for COIN in general terms to explain its role in assessment, an ancillary purpose of this report is to examine FoM as a condition and objective in irregular warfare and in Afghanistan. Consequently, this report should also inform policy debate over COIN end-state conditions. The specific purposes of this examination are as follows:

1. Describe what FoM is in both a very broad context and within the context of COIN.
2. Explain why FoM matters to counterinsurgents.
3. Describe the various aspects of FoM and explain how they might be assessed.
4. Analyze past and current efforts to assess FoM in Afghanistan.
5. Identify challenges that a theater assessment staff is likely to face when assessing FoM.
6. Recommend an approach to FoM assessment that will assist a theater assessment staff in developing a realistic and effective assessment process.

Research Methodology

After conducting an initial literature review, we approached our analysis along two parallel tracks and developed key findings and recommendations by comparing the findings from these two tracks. One track involved analyzing FoM as a concept in order to ascertain theoretical best practices, while the other entailed an examination of past and current efforts to assess FoM in Afghanistan. The findings reported here reflect a convergence of these two distinct research efforts.

Track one research involved a review of historical case-study literature, COIN literature by prominent theorists and practitioners, and U.S. joint and service doctrine on operations and COIN. This track was also guided by iterative discussions between RAND researchers after each phase of review, discussions with assessment experts, and interviews with members of theater- and regional-level staff officers in Afghanistan. Track two research also relied on interviews and iterative discussions, as well as a review of past and current official documentation

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[4]   IJC has developed a definition and issued an order on metrics, but the order is restricted.

on FoM and FoM assessment in Afghanistan. This track examined how assessment staffs had attempted to assess and report findings on FoM at various commands in Afghanistan.

Issues Not Addressed in This Report

This report assumes that ISAF will continue to rely on a centralized, effects-based approach to assessment that is informed by subordinate analyses. Therefore, it does not make recommendations for fundamental changes in the assessment process; findings are designed to fit within the current process. A separate annex to this report addresses some specific assessment issues that pertain directly to ongoing operations. The annex was delivered to an appropriate theater assessment group in Afghanistan and is not available for public release.

How This Report Is Structured

This report is structured to reflect the two-track approach of the overall research effort. It begins with a background discussion of the concept of FoM in various contexts in Chapter Two. The literature review addresses some of the root documentation of FoM in human rights publications but focuses on traditional and doctrinal publications on COIN. The chapter then addresses basic concepts of FoM in COIN and frames some of the challenges that assessment staffs are likely to face in assessing FoM. Chapter Three examines past efforts to assess FoM in COIN. It also examines assessment methods, technical collection methods, and third-party (nonmilitary) assessment efforts in Afghanistan. Building from the two tracks (theory and practice), Chapter Four presents recommendations designed to help commanders and assessment staffs build a logical, practical, and comprehensive approach to assessing FoM in the context of Afghanistan.