



Land Warfare Doctrine 5-0

Planning

2018

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Introduction

The aim of *Land Warfare Doctrine 5-0, Planning* is to provide a conceptual framework for planning in Army. It is a philosophical publication that is designed for use by all commanders, staff and planners. The publication defines planning and plans, describes the benefits of planning, and the nature of planning and plans. Importantly, *Land Warfare Doctrine 5-0, Planning* describes the principles of planning in Army and introduces the detailed planning procedures that can be used.

Land Warfare Doctrine 5-0, Planning is consistent with joint doctrine on planning while providing relevant additional context that for Army commanders, staff and planners. It is the foundation for procedural-level planning doctrine.

Chapter 1

An introduction to planning

Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.

Dwight D Eisenhower¹

To plan effectively, it is important to first appreciate the fundamental nature of planning and plans. It is also important to understand the environment in which planning is conducted, and the ways that planning processes add value in managing that environment.

What is planning?

The Australian Defence Glossary defines planning as the ‘act or process of preparing a detailed proposal, developed in advance, for doing or achieving something’. This definition identifies that planning is preparatory. It requires the projection of thoughts forward in time to consider possible events before they occur rather than reacting to events as they occur. In its simplest form, planning is thinking before doing. Planning requires that potential decisions and actions, along with their potential consequences, are considered and evaluated in advance.

This definition also identifies that planning needs an objective. Planning is not an end in itself, but a way of preparing to reach a future goal or endstate. This desired future varies with the situation, but always requires action to be taken in order to effect a change. Without the objective there is no need to plan.

Key to understanding this definition is the concept that planning is a mental and cognitive process. It is an activity of the mind guided by a process. The planning process requires planners to visualise the sequence of effects or conditions that need to be achieved in order to bring about the objective and endstate.

Generally, there are five elements to any planning process:

- Assess the situation – gather information, understand the environment, and identify the problem or problems to be solved.
- Establish goals and objectives to define the desired outcome or endstate and the measures of success.

1. Eisenhower, Dwight D 1957, Remarks at the National Defense Executive Reserve Conference, accessed via <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10951>

- Conceptualise and then detail a course of action that will bring about the outcome.
- Evaluate and wargame the course of action to identify likely difficulties and ensure adequate coordination.
- Issue a plan to initiate action.

The primary product of planning is a plan. A plan is a series of executable actions that are intended to achieve the objective. It describes what actions will be taken, in what manner, by whom, with what resources and, importantly, for what purpose. Plans may be formal and documented, or a verbally articulated informal concept.

Once the plan is issued the real work begins. Orders are issued, rehearsals are conducted, battle procedure commences, back briefs are conducted, and the plan is tested and adjusted. The plan then becomes a new starting point for the critically important task of further planning.

The planning process used by Army is the military appreciation process. The Australian Defence Force uses the joint military appreciation process. These processes are discussed in [Chapter 4](#).

The planning environment

Army must be capable of planning for war. The nature of war – a violent clash of wills between adaptive and learning adversaries, in environments of chance, friction and uncertainty – does not change. At the same time the character of war is constantly changing and the Army must prevail in actions across the spectrum of conflict. This environment can and does create planning challenges.

The planning environment is also affected by the Australian warfighting approach, which is grounded in manoeuvre theory. 'Manoeuvre focuses commanders at every level on exploiting enemy weaknesses, avoiding enemy strengths and protecting friendly vulnerabilities. ... Manoeuvre draws its power primarily from opportunism – taking calculated risks and the exploitation of chance circumstances and of forced and unforced errors.'² Planning must embrace this warfighting approach.

Another component of the Australian philosophy that affects the planning environment is mission command. Mission command defines the command and planning environment. In mission command, orders are expressed to emphasise the effect required rather than being prescriptive. Mission command is a decentralised approach to command and control that is consistent with the conceptual frameworks described in [Land Warfare Doctrine 3-0, Operations](#), and assists commanders and staffs to conceive, plan, and orchestrate actions. Most importantly, it is consistent with our warfighting approach.³

2. [Land Warfare Doctrine 1, The Fundamentals of Land Power](#) [Chapter 3].

3. [Land Warfare Doctrine 3-0, Operations](#).

Manoeuvre and mission command are discussed in more detail in [Land Warfare Doctrine 1, The Fundamentals of Land Power](#) and in [Land Warfare Doctrine 3-0, Operations](#).

Complexity

When a situation is simple, the solution is also likely to be simple and easy to identify. In contrast, when a situation is complex it can be difficult to understand all the factors that need to be considered, and to identify and analyse all the options available for achieving the objective.

Undertaking military operations is, and always has been, a complex activity. It involves numerous actors, decisions and activities in a range of domains which can interact with each other in a variety of ways. In the contemporary operating environment, technology 'has increased the flow of information into, within and outside military operations, adding a layer of complexity for commanders at all levels'⁴. Global connectivity blurs traditional modes of war, there has been a rise in non-state actors, and war is increasingly being waged 'among the people'. The operating environment is complex.

Planning allows this complexity to be managed. It provides a disciplined framework for planners to work within and facilitates the analysis needed to break down a complex problem into manageable parts. Planning procedures provide the systems to ensure that all relevant factors are considered thereby reducing risk.

Planning also enables complex solutions to be integrated into a coherent plan. Defined planning processes allow the synchronisation of disparate combat power towards a unified outcome. It also allows identification of a method to deny that same synchronisation of effect to an enemy.

Adaptation

Through planning, both friendly and enemy commanders and staff visualise a possible future and prepare themselves for potential outcomes. Planning allows tasks to be assigned to subordinates facilitating the mental and physical preparation for the 'clash of wills' which is inherent in adversarial struggles against a thinking enemy.

However, in the military environment, change is a constant. As action is taken, the various parties to the situation react and the situation is changed. The adaption cycle – act, sense, decide and adapt – characterises both friendly and enemy forces and means that a plan that may have been valid and appropriate when originally developed can become less suitable as the situation changes.

For commanders, the challenge is to keep pace with the evolving situation and move through the adaption cycle faster than the adversary. Effective planning will identify and develop a range of actions that may be enacted in response to a range of events. It allows forces to be proactive and attempt to influence events before

4. [Land Warfare Doctrine 1, The Fundamentals of Land Power](#) [Chapter 1].

they occur. This understanding allows effective action even as the situation changes.

Further, planning can help with effective responses to unpredictable events. The development of a thorough understanding of the situation and the environment allows commanders and planners to recognise previously unforeseen opportunities and to act quickly to seize the initiative.

Planning generates a program of action based on intent. It seeks certainty and clarity to design effective and appropriate action while knowing that changes in effort and direction are likely. Planning allows for contingency and redundancy which facilitates adaptation.

Chance

‘In all situations of conflict, chance creates random and unpredictable events that present a commander with opportunities and threats. Successful exploitation of unanticipated opportunities can exacerbate the effect of chaos on the enemy. Dealing with fleeting opportunities requires devolved authority and responsibility, highly developed analytical skills and creative thinking by all soldiers, and a determination to act.’⁵ The natural tendency is to plan in detail thereby leaving as little as possible to chance. However, planners will not be able to foresee and prepare for all the random and unpredictable events that chance creates. The planning challenge in this situation is to develop a solution or plan that can manage the unforeseen, rather than a plan or solution that prescribes every action in detail. Chance highlights the importance of the kind of planning which facilitates adaptation.

Friction

Friction is ‘the force that makes the apparently easy so difficult’⁶. The factors that generate friction are enemy action, adverse weather, complex terrain, poor coordination, insufficient or inaccurate information, and human error. These factors combine to make even the simplest of actions difficult to accomplish.⁷ Despite sound planning procedures, and capable and qualified commanders and individuals to work through that planning procedure, friction will create a range of planning challenges. Planning is focused on out-thinking the enemy who may not act as anticipated. It requires information which may be insufficient or inaccurate. Planning also requires coordination which may be sub-optimal. It is conducted by humans who are prone to error. Therefore, the planning process is not immune to friction and the challenges it creates.

However, the process of planning can minimise the effects of friction. Working through the steps of a planning process encourages a common understanding of the problem or task, and the situation both between the commander and the staff,

5. *ibid* [Chapter 1].

6. Clausewitz, C von 1993, *On War*, edited and translated by M Howard and P Paret, Alfred A Knopf, Princeton University Press, New York, pp. 87–88.

7. *Land Warfare Doctrine 1, The Fundamentals of Land Power* [Chapter 1].

and across all staff branches. This situational awareness reduces uncertainty and helps to manage the effects of friction.

Standardised planning processes provide guidance to ensure that all relevant information is sourced and considered. In particular, they require planners to develop and maintain a detailed understanding of the adversary and the environment. This shared understanding promotes cooperation and unity of effort and encourages appropriate coordination across all elements, both during planning and during execution.

Uncertainty

‘Uncertainty pervades the battlefield in all forms. Incomplete, inaccurate and often contradictory information about the enemy, the environment and the friendly situation creates uncertainty, or the “fog of war”. In the face of this uncertainty, individuals and organisations at all levels must be educated and postured to act intuitively and decisively, informed by adaptive planning processes and tactical procedures in the absence of complete information.’⁸ By definition, planning involves attempting to predict what will happen in the future. However, accurately predicting future events is not possible. This inability to know what will happen in the future creates uncertainty, which makes effective planning more difficult.

Uncertainty increases with the length of the planning horizon. There is a higher degree of certainty of the facts surrounding an activity that is to take place tomorrow when compared to the facts surrounding an activity that may or may not take place in two months’ time. Conversely, planning well into the future allows adequate time to consider options, develop a plan and prepare to enact that plan. The trade-off between certainty and effective preparation is a key planning challenge.

Noting that the environment is fundamentally uncertain, and that planning is by definition based on assumptions about how the future will unfold, planners must remain aware that planning does not allow them to predict the future. Uncertainty increases with the length of the planning horizon, and with the rate of change in the environment, but can never be completely eliminated.

Effective planning allows decisive and effective action to take place in the midst of uncertainty, mitigating its effects. The ability to adapt to a changing situation in a prepared and considered way is enhanced by anticipating and preparing for possible future events, opportunities and risks.

Further, planning allows priority information requirements to be identified, which provide triggers for the additional planning or replanning as the plan is being executed and the situation evolves.

8. *ibid* [Chapter 1].

Chapter 2

Planning and plans

Planning is undertaken for a wide range of activities: force structures and the distribution of the personnel liability across that force structure, training for individuals and collective capabilities, and administrative activities. Critically, planning is undertaken for Army's core business, for military operations and particularly for joint land combat.

Planning

The ultimate responsibility for the execution of a plan rests with the commander. As such the commander must be the chief planner in any organisation and must ensure that each planning activity is adapted to the specific situation. This planning situation will be a combination of a range of factors as described in this section.

Strategic to tactical

Military actions are conducted at three levels: strategic, operational and tactical.¹

Planning at the strategic level allows the development of military strategic objectives, strategic concepts and tasks in support of the national strategy. At the operational level, planning considers the campaigns and operations that form a bridge between strategic objectives and tactical actions. Planning at the tactical level involves developing objectives, concepts of operations, and tasks for the employment and sustainment of military forces in combat or non-combat military activities at a particular time and place.

In practice the levels of conflict and the distinction between them may not always be clear. Tactical actions may have disproportionately desired or undesired effects, and conversely tactical force elements may be tasked directly by the strategic level to achieve strategic effects. Consequently, planners may be required to consider factors across all levels.

These concepts are discussed in more detail in [Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 3.0, Campaigns and Operations](#) and in [Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 5.0, Joint Planning](#).

1. As discussed in [Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 3.0, Campaigns and Operations](#).

Conceptual to detailed

Planning is conducted along a continuum from conceptual to detailed. Conceptual planning establishes the aims, objectives and intentions and involves developing broad concepts for action. Conceptual planning can occur at all levels of war and is considered the art of war. Conceptual planning is the main planning effort for the commander and provides the basis for all subsequent planning.

At the other end of the continuum is detailed planning which is the development of the broad concept into a complete and executable plan. It is the science of war and is the main planning effort of the staff. Detailed planning establishes the necessary supporting plans (that is, fire support, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and logistics); and confirms the synchronisation, coordination and technical issues needed to accomplish the objectives defined by conceptual planning.

The Australian approach to this continuum is embodied in the concept of operational art which is discussed in [Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 5.0, Joint Planning](#) and in [Land Warfare Doctrine 3-0, Operations](#).

Time

While all planning attempts to look to the future, the planning horizon – how far into the future is being planned – will affect how the planning activity unfolds. Planning well in advance of an event allows for a more detailed consideration of the various factors that can influence the plan, as well as allowing more time for preparation before the plan is executed. Planning to a shorter planning horizon leaves less time for detailed consideration and requires force elements to react faster.

The planning horizon also affects uncertainty. Planning to a longer planning horizon leaves more opportunity for the situation to change, while a shorter planning horizon generally means a more certain understanding of the situation.

As discussed in [Chapter 1](#), manoeuvre theory regards war as a competition based on time and space in which the ability to maintain a higher tempo of operations relative to the enemy's creates opportunities. In this competition, speed of decision-making is critical. Planning, as a decision support tool should therefore not occur at the expense of tempo. Equally, if time is available and there is no advantage to acting faster, there can be little excuse for not taking the time to plan adequately. Commanders, staff and planners must be constantly aware of how much time a situation allows for planning, and make the most of that available time.

The Australian approach to planning horizons defines planning as deliberate or immediate. Deliberate planning is 'planning for the possible' and is concerned with identifying potential military responses to possible scenarios within a given time frame. It is therefore largely assumption-based. Deliberate planning is intended to ensure that considered guidance for the employment of the ADF is available as a starting point for immediate planning.

Immediate planning is 'planning for the likely or certain'. Because it is usually conducted in response to actual events it is more detailed and specific than

deliberate planning. Immediate planning includes planning in a crisis situation (that is, crisis planning), planning for future and current operations, and planning for the termination of current operations.

The relationships between time, uncertainty and planning type are displayed in Figure 2–1.

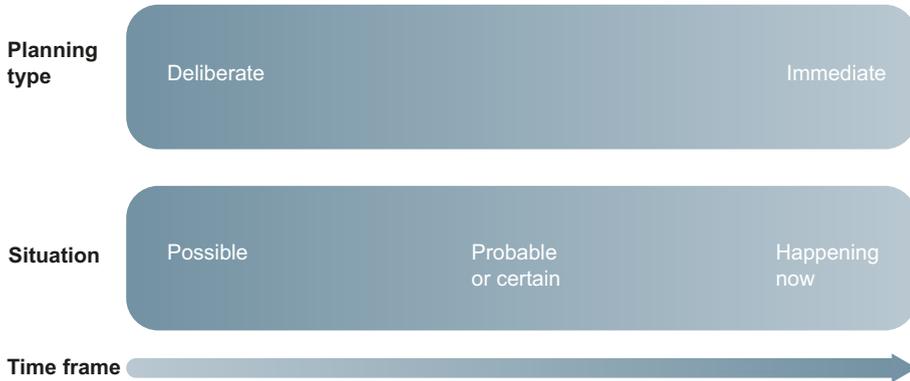


Figure 2–1: Time, uncertainty and planning

Deliberate and immediate planning are discussed in more detail in [Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 5.0, Joint Planning](#).

At the tactical level, planning is usually conducted in three temporal frames – in response to events from current operations, future operations related to current objectives and future plans which usually relate to subsequent objectives.

Commanders and planners should aim to achieve a balance between planning far enough ahead to adequately prepare for foreseen and unforeseen events, and ensuring that the results of planning remain relevant to the changing situation.

Participation

Depending on the situation, planning will be undertaken by an individual commander or by a commander who is supported by a staff. Planning by an individual can be appropriate in some situations. However, group planning is more capable of dealing with higher degrees of complexity, and provides opportunities for creative approaches to solving the given problem. Planning is always a command-led process.

It is important that planning is not conducted in isolation unless the situation is unavoidable. While the product of the planning process – the plan – is important, significant benefit is also gained from the learning and shared understanding that develops during the planning process. The collaboration that occurs between participants in a planning process provides broader insights into the problem under consideration and saves time. Further, participation by those who will

eventually be required to execute the plan can make the plan more effective by ensuring that the realities and constraints of execution are considered.

Higher participation levels are essential for quality planning; this is achieved by encouraging the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders and perspectives in the planning team.

While high levels of participation should generally result in a more comprehensive and thorough plan, group planning takes more time than individual planning. As always, the planning approach that is selected must consider the time available and how to make best use of that time.

Plans

Generally, a plan will describe the desired outcome, the actions needed to achieve the desired outcome, the necessary control measures and the measures of success. Good plans seek to achieve objectives efficiently and economically, and retain a clear focus on the demands that will be placed on those who execute them. They are as simple as the situation allows and flexible enough to facilitate adaptation and initiative. Good plans are coordinated but not unduly constrained by coordination, and they are issued in a timely fashion. Effective written plans are comprehensive, clear, concise and direct.

In developing plans, there are many interrelated factors to consider.

Simplicity

Simplicity is a fundamental principle for effective plans. A simple plan is easier to develop and understand. Simple plans are easier to implement, thus reducing the potential impact of the fog of war. Simple plans are also easier to modify should there be a need to adapt to a changing situation.

However, each plan must deal with the complexity of the situation and some situations will require more complex plans.

Plans can be simplified by:

- providing a clear and concise statement of commander's intent
- reducing the number of tasks or actions in a plan to the minimum necessary for the plan to succeed
- delegating detailed planning of tasks to subordinate commanders.

Integration

Integration of plans ensures that the plans developed in various organisations achieve unity of purpose. An effective plan is based on a concept of operations which looks one level up and two down to describe how the forces will support the mission of the higher headquarters and how the actions of subordinate units fit together to accomplish the mission. Each succeeding echelon's concept of operations should be framed with the same methodology or embedded within the

higher echelon's concept of operations. 'Commanders do this by organising their forces by purpose. Commanders ensure that the primary tasks for each subordinate unit include a purpose that links the completion of that task to the achievement of another task, or objective, or an endstate condition.'²

Coordination

A successful plan will effectively coordinate the actions of two or more elements for the accomplishment of a common task. This coordination ensures that the actions of the various elements tasked to execute a plan complement each other, rather than working against each other.

The degree of coordination can affect how simple a plan is. A higher degree of coordination creates a higher degree of complexity. The level of coordination can also affect how flexible a plan is – increased coordination generally reduces flexibility. The level of detail required also means that highly coordinated plans take additional time to prepare.

This is not to say that coordination is not necessary. Good control and coordination measures remove uncertainty thereby enhancing flexibility. Some situations require a higher degree of coordination while others permit a less coordinated solution. The key is to ensure that the plan is coordinated to the appropriate degree.

Plans should not add coordination or control measures unless they are necessary for the success of the mission or task. Where coordination measures can be removed through the appropriate task organisation of force elements this is a sound option.

Flexibility

*A plan is not a fixed succession of steps to be slavishly followed but, rather, is a solid foundation for adaptation to changing circumstances.*³

It is rare that a plan is enacted exactly as anticipated during planning. The situation may change as a result of enemy action, friendly action, weather, time, and a range of other factors. Therefore, plans must be flexible enough to evolve in response to changes in the situation and allow for action that was not originally planned. The more uncertain a situation is, the greater the flexibility required.

Ideally, plans allow an organisation to adapt to changes in the situation in two ways: by designing actions or responses in advance of the need to act, and by supporting the exercise of initiative during execution. Flexible plans maximise freedom of action, which facilitates this adaptation.

2. Wade, NM 2010, *The Battle Staff SMARTbook*, 3rd edition, The Lightning Press, Florida pp. 1–20.

3. [Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 5.0, Joint Planning](#), p. 1-7.

When the planning horizon is appropriate, flexibility can be designed into plans. Multiple courses of action can be identified, developed and analysed. This provides a solid foundation on which to base decisions as the need arises.

Alternatively, plans can be designed to facilitate initiative – the plan provides a baseline, and the subordinate commander is authorised to depart from the plan as required in response to the situation within the commander’s intent.

While flexibility and adaptability are important, a degree of control and coordination will always be necessary. Any departures from the original plan must remain within the commander’s intent and changes to the plan will impact on other elements.

A plan can provide flexibility by:

- using mission command
- designing control and coordination measures that maximise freedom of action allowing subordinates to adapt without impacting on other parts of the plan (when subordinates know their limits and their area of operations, they have freedom of action within these constraints)
- establishing an effective feedback mechanism which provides information on how the execution is progressing and identifies when the plan needs to change
- designing branches and sequels for likely contingencies and flexible reserves to combat unforeseen circumstances
- providing shared situational awareness, and a common understanding or expectation of how the plan may unfold
- reinforcing the commander’s intent so that subordinates can exercise initiative while conforming to this higher purpose.

Timeliness

Effective planning requires a timely decision and orders being issued to subordinates. Concurrent or parallel planning and warning orders allow subordinates to complete their own planning and preparations.

When time is short, the planning process should generate just enough information for the commander to make a reasonably informed decision, and allow time for subordinate commanders to quickly and effectively assess the situation.

[Land Warfare Procedures - General 0-5-1, Staff Officers Guide](#) provides further information on plans.

Common planning errors

Lack of critical thinking

No-one is thinking if everyone is thinking alike.

General George S Patton Jr⁴

Effective planning requires creativity and critical thought. The benefits of higher participation in planning have already been discussed, but there is a risk that groupthink will erode these benefits.

Command provides the dynamic and creative spark. Commanders apply experience, vision and creativity in planning.

Critical thinking is an important skill for planners to develop and exercise because it enables them to challenge accepted norms, to determine the right questions to ask and to answer those questions with an intellectual rigour that might otherwise lack depth. The result is the development of astute and comprehensive concepts which identify and address the problem(s) they plan to overcome. This is far more effectively than if considered in isolation, or in limited or professionally 'stovepiped' circumstances.

Rigidity in mindset

As change is a constant, adaptation is a key to success. Designing flexible plans that encourage and facilitate adaptation is a good start, but planners must also actively question existing plans, assumptions and doctrine in light of the unfolding situation. Commanders and planners must fight for information on the evolving situation and make the necessary adjustments.

Plans are only a start point for further planning. They must suggest a pattern of operational action not a fixed formula that unfolds without alteration.

Trying to abolish uncertainty

While planners must anticipate what actions will occur and decide how to respond to those actions, it is not possible for planners to predict the future. Uncertainty remains a constant.

A commander and their staff who are not comfortable with uncertainty, and who do not use its very opaqueness as a weapon, cannot hope to seize the initiative and overcome a superior enemy force. The failure or refusal to accept uncertainty can result in plans that are not sufficiently robust and that fail to provide a sound platform for adaptation to a changing situation. Another possible outcome is taking too much time to plan. Attempting to abolish uncertainty before issuing the plan can result in a loss of tempo.

4. Williamson, PB 2009, *General Patton's Principles For Life And Leadership*, 5th edition, Management and Systems Consultants, Tucson, p. 158.

At best planning provides an informed forecast of how future events will likely unfold and planners must accept this reality.

Seeking too much detail

Planning brings with it the temptation to over-engineer solutions to problems and to digress into unnecessary detail. Planners must always bear in mind the need to keep plans as simple as possible. This ensures that the chance for misunderstandings between the planners and those implementing the plan are minimised, while concurrently maximising the chance of completing a relevant plan in a timely manner.

Army's approach to managing this risk is the practice of planning two levels down to ensure feasibility and providing intent one level down to enable mission command.

Over-adherence to process

While planning processes or methodologies are designed to make planning efficient and effective, they should be applied with judgement. Planners who do not understand the intellectual framework that supports the planning process can be tempted to rigidly follow each step of the process without consideration for the problem they are trying to solve.

In some situations parts of the doctrinal process may be inappropriate or counterproductive. Planning methodologies are not an end in themselves, and planners should fit the process to the problem under consideration, rather than rigidly following the process.

Chapter 3

Principles of Army planning

Principles are a ‘series of factors that successful commanders have found necessary to consider in the past’¹. They provide guidance and instruction without being binding. This chapter describes the principles of Army planning.

Planning is command-led

Planning plays an essential part in command decision-making and therefore commanders are critical to the planning process. Often commanders are the most experienced individuals in an organisation, and they have the ultimate responsibility for the execution of the plan. The plan is the commander’s tool for executing an operation, so the plan must reflect the commander’s visualisation for the operation. It is not sufficient for the commander to merely participate in planning; commanders must drive the planning process.

Commander’s involvement

The commander is the key player in planning, but there is no rule regarding the level of involvement they have in the process of planning. Their involvement will depend on a number of factors, such as:

- the problem or situation being considered
- the time available to make a decision
- the state of training and experience of the staff
- the level of decision-making required
- the potential complexity of the required decision
- the style and personality of the commander.

Successful planning is dependent on establishing a mutual understanding between the commander and the staff on the mission and the desired outcomes of an action or operation. The means by which this is achieved is through the articulation of the commander’s intent and guidance. The commander’s intent and guidance are based on the results of conceptual planning conducted by the commander or by the process of design.

1. [Land Warfare Doctrine 1, The Fundamentals of Land Power](#) [Chapter 1].

Design

Where time is available and complexity warrants it, commanders may initiate the conduct of planning with a design to guide subordinates and staff. Design can be thought of as problem framing – locating, identifying and formulating the problem; its underlying causes, structure, and operative dynamics – in such a way that an approach to solving the problem emerges. This visualisation complements the commander’s appreciation and orientation.

The specific content of design will vary depending on the situation, but the intent will always be to develop an enhanced understanding of the environment and the nature of the problem. Commanders should engage the staff and subordinate commanders in discussions during the design process. Design is discussed in more detail in [Chapter 4](#).

Commander’s guidance

Commander’s guidance is the basis for all subsequent planning by the staff² and is therefore critically important to successful planning. It includes:

- *Mission.* The mission is the primary binding agent. The articulation of purpose is the superior and essential component of the mission to which all subordinate commanders are bound. Missions are, therefore, nested from highest to lowest. The essential tasks and constraints (for example, timings and locations) are articulated in the mission and are drawn from the analysis of higher intent. They may change and can be changed to meet the purpose of the stated mission.
- *Commander’s intent.* The commander’s intent³ is the commander’s personal expression of the purpose of the operation. It is clear, concise and easily understood. It usually includes how the commander envisions achieving a decision as well as the desired endstate. It should indicate opportunities that may be created by interaction with the enemy. Commander’s intent helps subordinate commanders and planners to understand the larger context of their action – the ‘big picture’ – which will guide them in the absence of orders. It allows subordinates to exercise judgement and initiative – when the task assigned is no longer appropriate to the changed situation – in a way that is consistent with the higher commander’s aims. This freedom of action, within the framework of commander’s intent, creates tempo during planning and execution.
- *Commander’s critical information requirements.* The commander’s critical information requirements identify information on friendly activities, enemy activities and the environment that the commander deems critical to maintaining situational awareness, planning future activities, and assisting

2. [Land Warfare Doctrine 5-1-4, The Military Appreciation Process](#) [Chapter 4].

3. Commander’s intent is a subset of commander’s guidance; they are not the same thing. Intent paints a picture to help guide subordinates actions in the absence of further direction; commander’s guidance on the other hand is direction: preliminary decisions to focus planners’ actions.

in timely and informed decision-making. The critical information requirements may be stated by the commander and may also be proposed by the staff. The number of information requirements must be limited to only those which support critical decisions rather than a general understanding. They lead directly to key decisions. They also link directly to assumption-based planning; as the commander's critical information requirements are generated an assumption is stated as the answer and planning continues based on the assumed answer. This allows planning to proceed in the absence of certain information, and creates tempo. Importantly, as assumptions are made a method must be developed and assets tasked to answer the assumptions. If the assumed answer proves wrong then the planning flowing from the assumed answer must be reviewed regarding its validity.

- *Battlespace analysis.* Battlespace analysis allows a commander to compare their assigned area of operations to the mission assigned or deduced. It allows the commander to understand their area of influence and area of interest. The analysis of time, space and mission fuses the commander's understanding of the possible, and also prompts a better understanding of likely sequels. If the area of operations is too small, the commander requests a larger area; if too large they request a new or modified area. The commander must have the freedom of action to achieve the mission, but must also be able to command and control the force throughout their assigned area of operations.
- *Centres of gravity and critical vulnerabilities.* An important part of commander's guidance is their understanding of centres of gravity and critical vulnerabilities. This analysis assists the commander in visualising the relative strengths and weaknesses of enemy and friendly forces, and in identifying opportunities. Commander's guidance on centres of gravity and critical vulnerabilities helps to shape further analysis by the staff and saves time. It will be refined over time, but focusing the staff early on centres of gravity and critical vulnerabilities ensures that the staff look to identify enemy weakness, or develop options to expose weakness, so that friendly strength can be focused decisively.

Initial commander's guidance will be as detailed or as broad as the situation requires. It should address the commander's understanding of the environment and the nature of the problem, and may include information on friendly and enemy centres of gravity, decisive points, lines of operations information requirements, how timelines affect priorities, and acceptable risk. As planning continues the commander refines their understanding of the situation and provides additional guidance as necessary.

Planning is collaborative

While planning is command-led, collaboration is critical. Collaboration involves commanders, subordinate commanders, staffs and others sharing information, knowledge, perceptions, ideas and concepts throughout the planning process. Collaboration can improve the understanding of the situation, the commander's intent, the concept of operations and the tasks to subordinate units.

Some steps of the planning methodologies discussed in [Chapter 4](#) enforce collaboration but additional collaboration should be encouraged. Ideally, collaboration will be a state of mind rather than an enforced activity. It is not a top-down activity; all those involved in the planning and execution of an operation can (and should) contribute and benefit from collaboration.

Collaboration can also support parallel planning with two or more echelons of an organisation planning for the same operation almost simultaneously. Parallel planning can significantly reduce planning time but will not be effective without collaboration. The use of warning orders; frequent communication between commanders, staff and subordinate commanders; and the sharing of information or planning products are all collaborative activities which support parallel planning.

Liaison officers, who facilitate a common understanding between adjacent units or formations, are invaluable in encouraging collaboration.

Planning is iterative and continuous

Planning does not stop once a plan has been generated. It is continuous and involves a number of ongoing, iterative and interdependent procedures which respond to changes in the situation. As situational awareness improves, and feedback is provided from subordinate commanders and others the plan is refined. Variations to the plan can be based on previously developed branches and sequels, or may be developed in response to an unanticipated change to the situation.

Branches and sequels are types of contingency plans which anticipate future options, uncertainties, opportunities or reversals, and are intended to shorten decision cycles, and to retain the initiative. They are planned in advance and enacted when the changing situation dictates. Enacting a branch or sequel is in itself a change that will necessitate further planning.

Commanders and planners must always retain a focus on the future. While the current operation is important and must be monitored and managed as it occurs, the objective is to remain proactive rather than reactive. For this reason, it is common for a dedicated planning staff to be established. These individuals retain a future focus and pass responsibility for enacting and monitoring plans to a dedicated current operations staff.

Planning is integrated

Activities, operations or events in one part of the battlespace may have effects on other areas and events. Planning is integrated in order to synchronise action towards a common purpose. Integration of planning ensures that all relevant factors are considered and negative impacts are avoided. Integrated planning requires discipline to ensure that information is shared; all relevant factors are thoroughly considered; and actions are appropriately coordinated, controlled, and synchronised.

Planning conducted in isolation rarely generates effective plans. Integration requires involvement of the 'right' individuals in the planning process. Individuals with appropriate knowledge and experience should be brought into the planning team. They may be members of the staff, commanders of specialist units or liaison officers.

Planning is enemy-focused

To succeed in war – the clash of opposing wills – the enemy must be defeated. So planning must support this objective.

It is not sufficient for planning to generate actions for friendly forces to take. As mentioned in [Chapter 1](#), without an objective there is no need to plan. Planning must generate actions that have an effect on the enemy. This principle is supported by manoeuvre theory's focus on defeating the enemy's will to fight by seeking to create complex problems for the enemy through the employment of tempo, surprise, logistic support and aggression. Further, many of the situational changes that planning needs to recognise and adapt to will be linked to enemy action. A focus on the enemy is critical to effective planning.

Chapter 4

Planning methodologies

Thus, planning can mean different things to different people, to different organisations, or to different echelons within an organisation. While almost any military activity involves some form of planning, there is no universal procedure or technique equally suited to all requirements. We must adapt the planning methods we use to the particular requirement we face.¹

Considering the planning environment as discussed in [Chapter 1](#), and the range of options for planning and plans described in [Chapter 2](#), the commander must select an appropriate planning methodology. The choice of method will be based on the available time, resources (for example, staff, subordinates and information) and operational circumstances.

Each of the following planning methodologies promote the principles of planning as described in [Chapter 3](#).

Design

Design and planning are two related but discrete activities. 'Design provides the vision to achieve the objective. Planning is the integrated formulation, prioritising, sequencing and synchronisation of action to make the plan a reality.'² [Figure 4-1](#) highlights the nature of design when compared to planning and the relationship between the two activities.

1. United States Department of Defense 1997, *Marine Corps Doctrine Publication 5, Planning*.
2. [Land Warfare Doctrine 3-0, Operations](#) [Chapter 5].

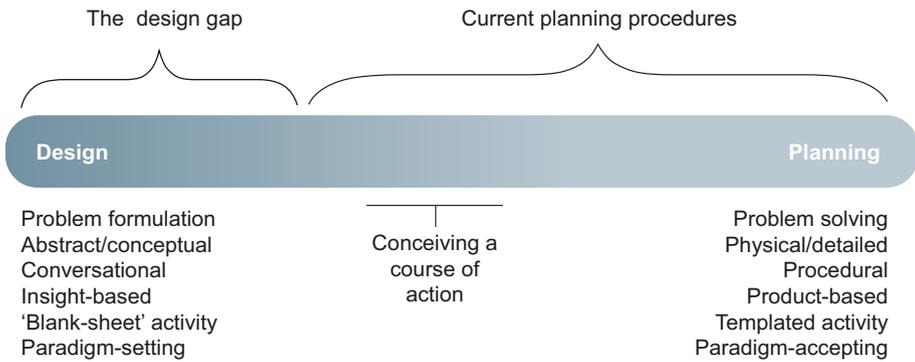


Figure 4–1: Design versus planning

The key contribution that design makes is allowing the commander to:

- integrate their personal knowledge of a situation, including the results of any reconnaissance and personal discussions with higher commanders, with their intuition and experience
- develop their own commander's intent
- confirm the guidance to be provided to staff at key points in the planning cycle
- influence the direction the staff will take when solving the problem at hand
- facilitate reorientation of staff planning if and when required
- understand (along with their staff) how actions have changed the dynamics of the situation.

Design is a continuous process assists the commander to visualise, describe and direct those actions necessary to achieve a desired endstate and accomplish an assigned mission. It is especially important in considering complex, dynamic and ill-structured problems. Design should allow: the formulation of the purpose; the desired effects on the enemy; and how the commander envisions seeking a decision (expressed as a defeat mechanism) of an action or operation.

Visualisation

Visualisation is a continuous process that requires the commander to understand the current situation and to identify possible future options and sequences for gaining an operational advantage against the enemy. It is a product of multiple inputs to the commander that include personal reconnaissance, interaction and shared understanding with subordinate commanders, inputs from higher, and the continual assessment by the staff. By expressing and stating their visualisation the commander focuses planning and execution by subordinates and staff. Visualisation helps the commander provide initial commander's guidance to initiate or develop mission analysis.

Description

Description combines conceptual and functional³ planning. It allows the staff to describe how the commander's visualisation could be practically implemented as courses of action. Analysis by the staff provides further insights on the situation and may prompt the commander to refine the vision, commander's intent and initial guidance on decisive and shaping actions, and on sustainment.

Direction

Direction combines functional and detailed planning. The staff use the warfighting functions to develop and then assess courses of action, and recommend a course of action to the commander. The commander assesses the recommendation based on the visualised design and provides direction allowing the staff to prepare plans and orders.

The military appreciation process

The military appreciation process is a decision-making and planning tool applicable at all levels which can be used to develop a tactical plan in response to a given situation across the spectrum of operations.

The military appreciation process consists of the following five steps:

- preliminary analysis
- mission analysis
- course of action development
- course of action analysis
- decision and execution.

These steps are supported by the continuous process of intelligence preparation of the battlespace.

When used by a staff the military appreciation process is a detailed, thorough and time-intensive process for when adequate planning time and sufficient support staff are available to thoroughly examine numerous friendly and enemy courses of action. Typically, the military appreciation process occurs during the preparation of operational plans, when planning for an entirely new mission and during staff training designed specifically to teach the military appreciation process.

The individual military appreciation process is conducted by commanders without the aid of a staff. This normally occurs when commanders at sub-unit and below plan military tasks.

3. Functional planning considers how the various warfighting functions can contribute to achieving the commander's visualised concept.

The combat military appreciation process is a combat decision-making tool that is derived from the individual military appreciation process and is used post-H-hour in response to a contact or incident that requires an immediate response. It draws on the commander's knowledge of previous planning processes, accumulated battlespace knowledge, military judgement and tactical experience. A commander will normally conduct a combat military appreciation process when there is insufficient time to consider all factors. There are four steps in the combat military appreciation process:

- mission analysis
- enemy/threat analysis
- terrain analysis
- develop and execute.

It is largely based on intuition and situational awareness.

The authoritative reference for the military appreciation process is [Land Warfare Doctrine 5-1-4, The Military Appreciation Process](#).

The joint military appreciation process

The joint military appreciation process is used for joint campaign and operation planning. The process produces a concept of operations that can subsequently be used to form the basis of an operation plan.

The joint military appreciation process consists of the following five steps:

- scoping and framing
- mission analysis
- course of action development
- course of action analysis
- decision and concept of operations development.

These five steps are supported by the joint intelligence preparation of the operational environment which assists commanders and staff to develop and maintain situational understanding. Plan development and execution, which is necessary to implement plans developed using joint military appreciation process, is not considered part of joint military appreciation process itself.

The joint military appreciation process is described in detail in [Australian Defence Force Publication 5.0.1, Joint Military Appreciation Process](#).

Conclusion

Planning, the process of developing a course of action that will achieve a specified objective, is key to Army's success in the contemporary operating environment. It provides the tools to manage complexity, adaptation, chance, friction and uncertainty, and supports Army's warfighting approach.

Commanders, staff and planners in Army plan across the strategic, operational and tactical levels, and along the continuum from conceptual to detailed planning. Time is a consideration in undertaking deliberate and immediate planning, and participation can improve planning outcomes.

In generating plans, planners consider simplicity, integration, coordination, flexibility and timeliness. The objective is to generate plans that are as simple as the situation allows and flexible enough to facilitate adaptation and initiative.

Planning in Army is guided by the following principles:

- planning is command-led
- planning is collaborative
- planning is iterative and continuous
- planning is integrated
- planning is enemy-focused.

There are a range of planning tools or methodologies available to commanders, staff and planners in Army. These include design, the military appreciation process and the joint military appreciation process.

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Endmatter

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Gender

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