

# Clearly Aware of Confusing Situations before Making a Decision

## Strategic Pre-Decision Analysis Method (MAPS<sup>1</sup>)

Notification from the editorial staff

*As mentioned by colonel BOTELLA in his article about joint simulation, one of the components of strategic decision assistance deals with strategic anticipation, which enables to estimate “global maneuver margins” in the various relevant power fields. At this stage, simulation aids the decision support group in formulating the “decision model” in a more rigorous and comprehensive way, then in evaluating the various possible answers when using this model. A methodology enables to develop simulation for this strategic anticipation: it is the strategic pre-decision analysis method presented by Captain Yann BERTRAC in this article.*

Though major symmetrical-prone conflict hazards have considerably decreased with the end of the cold war, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 tragically reminded us that the Kantian ideal is not yet relevant. The former geostrategic bipolarity was superseded by a larger uncertainty area within which conflict kinds have changed. The concept of threats against which we have to defend ourselves - evading the concepts of war between nations or factions - shifted towards hazards against which we have to protect ourselves. New hazards - mainly including terrorism and proliferations of all kinds - have become more difficult to identify and to detect. Taking advantage of imbalance between rich and poor countries, these **new crises** have thus become **asymmetrical, looser, more unpredictable and simultaneously more sophisticated** as they occur in a larger number of areas.

In order to understand them and manage them, nations should thus **have a larger span of answers available that would include a larger number of actors to solve them**. Everything become more difficult: (currently, still mainly military) assets are most often shared within the framework of multinational coalitions; in headquarters, communication speed results into responses and responsibility levels being compressed; in the field, operations should be more and more dynamic, flexible, proportionate and revertible; and very often, purely military responses are not the most efficient ones.

For all these reasons, crisis responses have become more sophisticated. For each nation, mastering this sophistication becomes a challenge at interagency level; it deals with the awareness of antagonistic situations as well as with the use of various relevant (diplomatic, political, economic, military, etc.) power tools and their coordination.

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## To meet this complexity, one solution only...

Outcome logic and a new decision-making assistance tool rely on a specific method: the "MAPS". For a couple of reasons, an approach through outcomes and effects seems to be a major response tool to meet sophistication mastering.

In the past, asset logic linked aims and assets strongly together (actually, there was really no competition among the various possibilities); currently, within the framework of a specific aim, outcome logic results into the emergence of *a need for an adjustment between a specific requirement for multi-field decisive points and a multi-actor asset offer.*

Previously, it was not difficult to justify the maintenance of military assets in front of the obvious Soviet threat. Today, it has become necessary to justify these assets - both in size and kind - towards civilian taxpayers by presenting the return on - both political and economic - investments. Shifting to outcome logic corresponds to this aim.

When planning crisis response operations - among others coalition ones - *outcome logic thus suggests - at the pre-decision analysis stage - to split arbitrations linked to aim conception from those linked to asset identification.*

If possible, the process has to be broken down into coherence levels. Discussion around decisive points (multi-area aims) could then be carried out independently from the survey of the various relevant assets to meet them (multi-actor achievements). Completing a more formal and rationalized desired end state is a collective dialogue tool. Indeed, outcome logic is suitable for using new ADP (Automatic Data Processing) techniques (multi-level breaking-down, morphological analysis, etc.) employed by the MAPS method.

## MAPS implemented by an inter-agency working group

The purpose of this method - used only by the "political strategic level" defined in IM2 4,000 - consists in assisting a decision-maker to make a decision that will be forwarded to the strategic military level.

Its main aim is a **systemic and objective analysis of situations**, by using several angles of approach. It is particularly useful to throw light on complicated situations.

Mainly used in a proactive approach, it enables to present the global analysis of a complicated and crisis-prone situation as well as its short-term and mid-term evolution; to clarify the political objective that is going to

be used as a basis to reach the desired end state; and to provide a decision-maker with answers, or COAs (Courses of Action) or sophisticated strategic options - to reach this objective - including an appraisal of his margin of maneuver towards the evolution of the situation and the strategies of the different relevant groups or actors.

Thus, starting from a systemic or global approach to present sophisticated answers to the current problem, effect logic or outcome logic underlies it to a large extent.

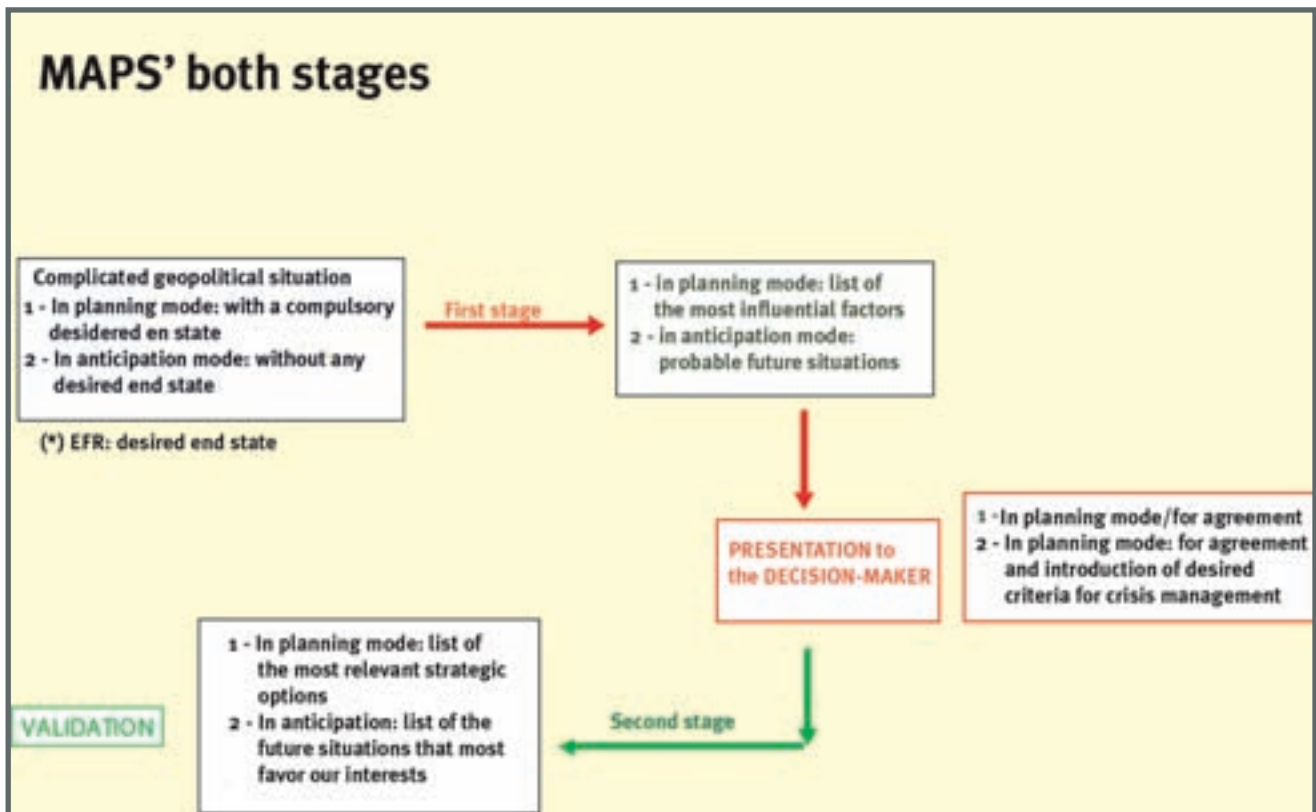
The MAPS method is a **general estimate process**, supported - in its various stages - by a set of tools aiding in carrying out group work, in interpreting expert's advice and in evaluating margins of maneuver.

At the (French) Ministry of Defense users are both civilians and militaries working at strategic level; before submitting a decision (dealing with crises or other strategic areas), they need to have the most comprehensive and clear awareness of a complicated situation where numerous (civilian, military, economic, demographic, etc...) factors are intermingled as well as their consequences.

In the industrial world, two major groups only use such a method.



Réf. IM 4 000



This method enables to:

- **In a proactive approach**, to present:
  - probable future changes in the current geopolitical situation (prospective analysis);
  - interactions existing among the strategies of the different concerned parties and their involvement in the probable evolution of the situation;
  - a political objective, as a basis for a future desired end state and COAs, which - once agreed upon - could become inter-agency strategic options;
  - the whole of this could go with an appraisal on margins of maneuver and possible political-military “hazards”.

- **In a planning approach**, to present :

- An updated analysis of the situation that concludes with the presentation of our most relevant “strategic options” owing to the early decided end state that has been agreed upon (centers of gravity, influential actors, power levers), then to draft and assess relevant options for action.
- The early anticipation work could then be used again as a tool to follow up the situation (forecasting work or measuring the effects produced by an in-progress operation) and in support of the inter-agency co-ordination works for crisis management and for preparing crisis outcome.

It is important to notice that decision-makers impose their constraints at the beginning of an analysis only in the “planning” mode: at least the desired end state possibly crisis management constraints.

Whatever the mode is, the pre-decision analysis method includes a presentation of the first analysis outcome to the decision-maker.

1 MAPS - *Méthode d'analyse prédécisionnelle stratégique. Strategic pre-decision analysis method.*

2 *Instruction ministérielle. Ministerial Directive.*

Within a couple of years, this method was applied - in anticipation - to two actual complicated geopolitical situations by an expert group driven by the Directorate, Strategic Policy (“DAS”). This work was presented a few weeks after it had begun. Currently, some European nations follow French works in order to possibly meet up with their methods or to have them tend toward each other.