

LESSON 7 TRANSITION

“They will soon feel the hard hand of war.”
&
“The crueller it [war] is, the sooner it will be over.”
—General William T. Sherman

Lesson Introduction

Transition, the last step of the MCPP, is designed to ensure that the plan developed by the Operational Planning Team (OPT) and drafted by the staff is properly passed to the operations section that will execute it. The Transition step is designed to ensure that those charged with executing the plan fully understand the plan, the war gaming analysis, and the associated decision support tools. This passing of the “baton” must be smooth, complete, and rapid to maintain planning and operational tempo. Transition takes place in two ways. If the planners are not the executors, as is the case at the MEF and MSC levels, then they will transition the plan to those executors. Similarly, higher headquarters will always transition the plan to its subordinates.

Student Requirements by Educational Objective

Requirement 1

Objective 1. Recognize the inputs, tasks, and outputs associated with the Transition step.

Objective 2. Use the Transition step to create the appropriate outputs of this step in the context of an operational or tactical situation. [JPME 2(c),3(a)(c)]

Read:

- MCWP 5-1, pp. 7-1 to 7-3 (3 pages)

The OPT nucleus comes primarily from the future operations section within the MEF G-3. On the other hand, the current operations section within the G-3 executes MEF operational plans and orders. Herein lies the challenge of Transition.

Transition is an extremely volatile step. It is inherently difficult to execute someone else’s plan. Even though the OPT passes the plan with all its detailed supporting documentation, it is very challenging to convey to the members of the current operations section the valuable situational awareness acquired from the planning process. The OPT member who accompanies the plan helps achieve consistency between the plan and its execution. Ideally, having a G-3 current operations representative in the OPT allows the plan to be accompanied by an actual executor. Unfortunately, personnel shortages often preclude this from happening. An alternative method is to have the member of the OPT most familiar with the plan (COA proponent) accompany it. All of these techniques contribute to a smooth transition and help maintain the situational awareness gained during the planning process.

If the newly developed plan is in the first phase of a larger campaign plan, transition may occur more smoothly because of the greater availability of time. However, if the plan being transitioned to current operations is one in a sequence of continuing operations in an already fast-paced campaign, transition is more complicated and risky. Time and personnel are already invested in operations, situational awareness within current operations is focused on the current or near-term battle, and the current situation is very dynamic. Both, future and current operations must enter this step knowing that transitioning a plan is a friendly critical vulnerability. Awareness of this fact is our biggest mitigating factor. General George S. Patton, Jr., stated, *“Plans must be simple and flexible. Actually they only form a datum plane from which you build as necessity directs or opportunity offers. They should be made by the people who are going to execute them.”* Although Patton might disagree with having a Transition step in planning, we find that in today’s complicated battlespace, planners and executors need to specialize tasks in order to build operational tempo. This becomes very important as the rates of information exchanged within the battlespace escalate. Ultimately, the continuity and consistency within the MEF lies with the commander.

The interactive multimedia instruction (IMI) (Web/CD-based) product allows each student to use the Transition step in a practical application setting. You can accomplish objective 2 can only by using the practical application portion of the IMI product.

**** View the interactive multimedia instruction for lesson #7 immediately following this lesson’s summary.**

Lesson Summary

Transition is a continuous process that requires a free flow of information between commanders and staffs by all means available. A successful transition enhances situational awareness and preserves the integrity of the concept of operations, which in turn promotes unity of effort and generates operational tempo throughout the force.

**** View the interactive multimedia instruction titled “Capstone Review” after you complete lesson #7.**

JPME Summary

AREA 1					AREA 2					AREA 3					AREA 4					AREA 5				
A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E
							X			X		X												