



# FODA:

## A Modern Approach to Army Targeting Methodology, Part 2

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*This article is the second in a three-part series aimed at revolutionizing and proposing necessary changes to the Army's current targeting methodology. Please make sure to read part one first and follow up with part three for a full overview.*

### Frame Within a Frame

The Frame, Orient, Decide, and Assess (FODA) framework is distinguishable from the Army Design Methodology (ADM) frame in terms of scope. The ADM provides an environmental frame which discusses the Operational Environment (OE) within historical, current, and projected contexts. The FODA frame is more precise and bound to specific start and stop points, derived from outputs of the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP)—specifically from Mission Analysis (MA) and Course of Action (COA) analysis. This adherence to a specific phase, objective, or critical event enables more focus and precision as units transition to the rest of the FODA targeting methodology. Each of the categories provides a specific measure, conducive to framing the targeting methodology, similar to the methods (belt, box, avenue-in-depth) provided when war gaming:

- **Phase:** bound by time (Joint Forcible Entry [JFE] to Expansion of Lodgment)
- **Objective:** bound by conditions (Line of Departure [LD] from Tactical Assembly Area [TAA] to the seizure of an objective)
- **Critical Event:** bound by a specific event (trigger of an event to its resolution)

### Orient

The Orientation step in the FODA targeting methodology revolves around two key concepts and serves two main purposes. First, it aims to emphasize awareness of one's environment in relation to time and place. At any given moment, an organization should be able to temporally determine its orientation pertaining to its targeting efforts. This involves assessing completed tasks as well as identifying those that remain, focusing on the effects still needed to create the desired conditions in the Area of Operations (AO).

The second purpose behind the Orientation step aligns with John Boyd's concept of filtering and processing information, as described in his influential briefings. Orientation creates a unique feedback loop between Framing and Assessments, influencing how an organization receives and interprets information about the OE. It focuses on how

*U.S. Soldiers with Charlie Battery, 2nd Battalion, 146th Field Artillery Regiment, Washington National Guard, lay their M777 Howitzers on target during their fire mission training exercise at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., Feb. 1, 2025. This hands-on training exercise helps Soldiers prepare for their upcoming live fire evaluation, ensuring they meet required standards and remain mission-ready. (U.S. Army National Guard Photo by Spc. Stephen San Jose)*

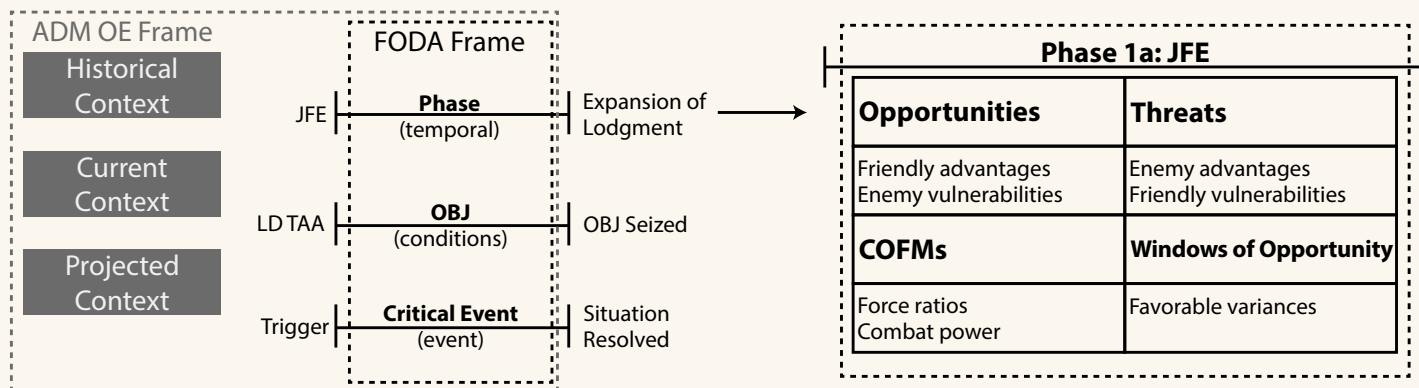


Figure 1: Depiction of the FODA frame within a frame.

the OE is evolving to help the organization achieve its end state. Being fixed in a single orientation, without proper feedback, limits an organization’s understanding by confining its perspective. Orientation, whether intentional or not, heavily influences what is observed. This concept is illustrated when considering change blindness, a “psychological phenomenon where individuals fail to notice significant changes in a visual scene, especially when the change occurs during a brief visual interruption or distraction.”<sup>[1]</sup>

The output of the Orientation step, as it feeds into the Decide step, should be clearly developed so that refined targeting objectives can focus on the capabilities of a system. These targeting objectives should be detailed and encompass task, purpose, and time.

### Decide

The Decide step addresses the first half of the targeting definition as outlined in FM 3-60: selecting and prioritizing targets and then matching the appropriate response. This involves starting with the targeting objective and systematically aligning detection, delivery, and assessment platforms to the identified targets. Multiple targets may be chosen to support each targeting objective, but the organization should remain focused on the effects needed to achieve the desired end state. Additionally, the execution of all targeting operations occurs during this step.

### Assess

The Assessment portion of the FODA methodology has a unique relationship with the Frame, Orient, and Decide steps. The assessments encompass Battle Damage Assessment (BDA), Munitions Effectiveness Assessment (MEA), and re-engagement recommendations, as well as monitoring and evaluating as defined in ADP 5-0. Monitoring is the continuous observation of those conditions relevant to the current operation. Evaluating is using indicators to judge progress toward desired conditions and determining why the current degree of progress exists.

It is important to understand the assessment relationship with each step, as no two are identical. The next several paragraphs seek to help give an understanding of these feedback loops.

#### Assessment relationship with the Frame step

The variables associated with Framing are not static and change as the OE does. It is neither reasonable nor possible to account for every conceivable variable. Therefore, it is crucial to continuously re-frame each variable as the operation

progresses. This concept is analogous to the following: if we are on track, then there is no change to current course; if there is a positive variance, then there is an opportunity to create a sequel; if there is a negative variance, then there is a threat to mission success, and thus, we need a branch plan. Adjustments to these variables must be made within the scope of the ongoing operation.

#### Assessment relationship with the Orient step

As stated previously, the Orient step is a continuous process that helps an organization understand its current battlefield conditions. While the feedback loop must be fast to prevent the plan from becoming obsolete over time, it is crucial to avoid knee-jerk reactions. The necessary speed does not always equate to making immediate adjustments. Often, the OE may shift in a way that benefits friendly targeting efforts. The focus of



Prior to the arrival of Javelin Missiles, soldiers from Charlie Company began preparing for the training exercise with the missile targeting system. In a historic moment of training for the Idaho Army National Guard, Soldiers fired the FGM - Javelin portable anti-tank missile on Sunday while conducting a series of field training exercises scheduled for the week on the Orchard Combat Training Center ranges. (Photo by Thomas Alvarez)



Soldiers with Battery A, 1st Battalion, 174th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, Ohio Army National Guard fire an Avenger Weapon System during a live-fire short-range missile range near White Sands Missile Range, NM. The range was part of a culminating training event focused on building proficiency with the Avenger Weapon System; a platform capable of targeting, engaging and shooting down low-flying enemy aircraft. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jarred Woods)

this feedback loop is to ensure timely and effective orientation rather than rapid changes. Specifically, it should concentrate

on targeting objectives and the detection and delivery of assets required to achieve desired effects. This feedback loop is essential for building cumulative success.

**Assessment relationship with the Decide step**

This feedback loop ensures that the equipment used is performing as intended. MG(R) Longo’s paper titled “A Commander’s Assessment” provides a clear approach: assess decisions, detection, delivery, and the assessments themselves.<sup>[2]</sup> This comprehensive evaluation should also include the Measures of Performance (MOPs) and Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs) related to targeting objectives. In this way, an organization receives real-time feedback on the conditions created while adapting to a changing OE. Although all feedback loops are important, this one has a unique significance. It is crucial for each warfighting function to continuously evaluate its actions that contribute to the targeting process. These assessments will trigger the re-orientation of the organization. To remain effective, an organization must move beyond merely reverse-engineering problem sets and focus on re-orienting as needed.

**Assessment Visualization**

It is important to visualize how each of these feedback loops operate, especially in an environment where diminishing returns may occur as time increases and conditions evolve. This degradation of effectiveness is exacerbated by friendly formations’ untimely and ill-informed reactions. The FODA targeting methodology seeks to prevent atrophy of the plan over time.

*Thank you for reading part two of this three-part series. Please follow up with part three for a full overview of FODA methodology.*

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**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Simons, D. J., & Levin, D. T., “Change blindness,” *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 1(7), (1997): 261–267, [https://doi.org/10.1016/s1364-6613\(97\)01080-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s1364-6613(97)01080-2).  
<sup>2</sup> Longo, M. (R) R., & Schmidt, L. J., *Field Artillery Professional Bulletin*, 1, (2020): 8–11. [https://d34w7g4gy10iej.cloudfront.net/pubs/pdf\\_59034.pdf](https://d34w7g4gy10iej.cloudfront.net/pubs/pdf_59034.pdf).