



HOW CAN THE *RED TEAM* HELP CARRY OUT THE AIR FORCE PLANNING PROCESS?

Colonel Cătălin CHIRIAC, PhD

"Carol I" National Defence University, București

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Command has always been the responsibility of commanders, regardless of the echelon, its materialisation being based on decision as well as on decision-making process.

The geometry of the operating environment, the continuous transformation of the types of operations and, implicitly, of the way of approaching them have led to the identification of alternatives in terms of supporting the decision-making act. In this regard, the concept (and possibly its materialisation) of Red Team can be a viable alternative.

Keywords: operational environment; capabilities; Red Team; air force planning process; risk management;



DEFINITION OF TERMS

The concept of *Red Team* is represented at the level of a military structure or organisation by a group whose purpose is to support the decision-making process. The specific activity of this team is known as *Red Teaming*.

Generally, the *Red Team* for military structures is an independent group that helps an organisation to improve its effectiveness and that can assist a commander and staff to think critically and creatively (JP 5-0, 2020, p. III-76). More definitions regarding the *Red Team* and its specific activity are presented in *table no.1*.

Table no. 1: Defining the concept of Red Team

Red Team	Source
Red Team – An organisational element comprised of trained and educated members that provide an independent capability to fully explore alternatives in plans and operations in the context of the operational environment and from the perspective of adversaries, and others.	JP 5-0, <i>Joint Planning</i> , CJCS, 2020, p. J-1
Red Team – A cross-functional organisational element comprised of trained members that provides the commander with an independent capability to fully explore alternatives in plans and operations, supporting intelligence, and to enhance staff decision-making through the simulation of critical and creative thought.	Joint Doctrine Note 1-16, <i>Command Red Team</i> , Joint Force Development, 2016, p. I-2
Red Teaming – a function that provides commanders with an independent capability to fully explore alternatives in plans, operations, concepts, organisations and capabilities in the context of the operational environment (OE) and from the perspectives of partners, adversaries and others.	<i>The Applied Critical Thinking Handbook</i> , University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies TRISA, Ft Leavenworth 2015, p.2

The Red Team for military structures is an independent group that helps an organisation to improve its effectiveness and that can assist a commander and staff to think critically and creatively.



While the Red Team has the role of supporting the planning process by validating the assumptions, the Red Cell plays the role of the opponent, not only in terms of mentality or decision, but effectively through capabilities, strength structure, doctrines or rules of engagement.

<i>Red Team</i>	<i>Source</i>
Red Teaming – the art of applying independent structured critical thinking and culturally sensitised alternative thinking from a variety of perspectives, to challenge assumptions and fully explore alternative outcomes, in order to reduce risks and increase opportunities.	<i>A Guide to Red Teaming, The Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Ministry of Defence, 2010, p. 1-1</i>

Military and non-military organisations responsible for drawing up plans should be able to count on the support of the *Red Teams*, as their critical and creative approach provides an alternative to solving a problem. While the *Red Team* reduces risk in an organisation by providing support for anticipating, understanding and adapting to change, its usefulness is to avoid surprise, identify opportunities and alternatives, support analysis and decision-making. Through its distinctive work, the *Red Team* helps the organisation adapt to change and improve its management functions, with an emphasis on the planning function.

It should be noted that *Red Team* and *Red Cell* structures are not synonymous. While the *Red Team* has the role of supporting the planning process by validating the assumptions, the *Red Cell* plays the role of the opponent, not only in terms of mentality or decision, but effectively through capabilities, strength structure, doctrines or rules of engagement. The *Red Team* does not have the role of an opponent, even if it uses a technique called *adversary emulation* to think or make decisions similar to the opponent, but does not play its full spectrum of actions (Joint Doctrine Note 1-16, 2016, p. I-6).

RED TEAM PLANNING SUPPORT

Military structures can use *Red Teams* to plan and execute operations, as their way of working allows the overall planning to be viewed from other perspectives. In this regard, the *Red Team* contributes to the joint effort of analysing and solving the problems of the staff or planning group, often serving as a “*devil’s advocate*”, normally focusing on supporting information, operations and planning structures (JP 5-0, Ib., p. J-1).

The working techniques are diverse and different from the traditional approach used by the military planner. Whether it is *structural, creative,*

*diagnostic or challenging techniques*¹, the Red Team's tools must ensure the development of creative thinking in support of identifying error-inducing sources.

The Red Team's support during planning consists of active participation in planning groups and the development of their own products that support the planning effort. It should participate from the earliest stages of the process, in order to understand the phenomenon, but also to ensure the time needed to consider specific products before making decisions.

Theoretically, the Red Team can be used to support all phases or steps of a planning process, but there may be situations where the characteristics of the team cannot meet the level of planners' requirements. In these circumstances, I consider that at least for the planning sequence in which the mission of the structure is analysed and the courses of action are established, the use of the Red Team is of utmost importance. Also, the comments of the Red Team can be used by planners to develop sequels and branches to operations plans. While the Red Team can suggest alternatives to the known products of the planning process, the results of its work should be well analysed (may be included or put on hold, as appropriate) before the planning products are completed.

At the level of the Air Force, operations planning is regulated by the existence of various doctrines and manuals, but the main tool is *Manualul de planificare a operațiilor aeriene (Air Operations Planning Manual)*. With the aim of "structuring and presenting, in general, the air operations planning process in order to facilitate the development of operations, the supporting plans and their annexes by all structures with responsibilities in the planning of Air Force operations" (*Manualul de planificare a operațiilor aeriene*, 2020, p. 11), the manual intends aligning the specifics of the air forces with the existing provisions at the operational level.

The air operations planning process, specific to the Air Force, comprises six phases and follows the strategic and operational planning process. The phases of the process are (Ib.):

Phase 1 - Initial situation awareness of a potential/actual crisis.

Phase 2 - Tactical appreciation of the strategic environment.



ROMANIAN
MILITARY
THINKING

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¹ The techniques presented are detailed in *Red Teaming Guide – second edition*, Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Ministry of Defence, 2013, pp. 3-9.



- Phase 3 - Tactical estimate.
- Phase 4 - Tactical plan development.
- Phase 5 - Execution.
- Phase 6 - Transition.

RED TEAM AND AIR OPERATIONS PLANNING SUPPORT

At the Air Force level, the *Red Team* can provide an independent capability to review and improve the work of the planning group. In order to maximise the effectiveness of the team, it is necessary for it to know the planning process and to be involved as early as possible in the process. At the same time, it is imperative that the staff involved in planning should understand both the role of the team and especially the way its staff work and relate.

The best times when the *Red Team* can support the planning process are presented in table no. 2.

Table no. 2: The interaction of the Red Team with the planning process

No.	The phases of the planning process	Phase characteristics	The Red Team's role ²
1.	Phase 1 - Initial situation awareness of a potential/actual crisis	The purpose of the phase is to achieve and maintain an adequate level of knowledge of the situation, to uphold the assessment of the air situation and decision-making, in support of the process of developing the tactical level commander's recommendations for the operational level commander (<i>Manualul de planificare</i> , lb., p. 15).	Alternative assessments of the situation in the area of interest. Recommendations for the commander.

In order to maximise the effectiveness of the team, it is necessary for it to know the planning process and to be involved as early as possible in the process. At the same time, it is imperative that the staff involved in planning should understand both the role of the team and especially the way its staff work and relate.

² As previously presented, the activity of the Red Team will have a specific character, using alternative methods of analysis, thus departing from the patterns of analysis performed by intelligence or operations staff. The role is expressed through possible actions or activities of the team.

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No.	The phases of the planning process	Phase characteristics	The Red Team's role ²
2.	Phase 2 - Tactical appreciation of the strategic environment	The purpose of the phase is to understand the strategic situation, the nature of the problem, the desired end state, the strategic objectives and to develop the tactical level commander's proposals for the operational level commander regarding the military response options/OMR (Ib., p. 16).	<p>Assessments of the existing situation, from the Air Force's perspective</p> <p>Alternative evaluation of OMR regarding the mission of the Romanian Army from the point of view of the Air Force.</p> <p>If the <i>Red Team</i> did not participate in the CPOE³ evaluation with the planning group, it should conduct an independent and alternative evaluation of the CPOE developed at the higher echelon.</p> <p>Information and recommendations for the commander.</p>
3.	Phase 3 - Tactical estimate <i>Sub-phase III.A - Mission analysis</i>	The purpose of this sub-phase is to analyse the mission received, to identify the tasks necessary to fulfil it, to determine the key factors and assumptions that will influence the fulfilment of the mission, as well as the limitations on freedom of action (Ib., p. 19).	<p>Support for establishing the problem to be solved, factor analysis, identification/analysis of the assumptions (an important element is the validation of assumptions as the situation evolves) and operational limitations (as far as possible).</p> <p>Perform an alternative analysis on the opponent's centre of gravity, capabilities, requirements and especially its critical vulnerabilities.</p>



³ Comprehensive Preparation of the Operational Environment.



No.	The phases of the planning process	Phase characteristics	The Red Team's role ²
			<p>The team can participate in the development of implied and essential tasks, performing risk analysis, developing CCIRs⁴ from own perspective.</p> <p>If possible, the team should participate in the preparation of the mission analysis briefing and post-briefing recommendations.</p> <p>Information and recommendations for the commander.</p>
	<p>Phase 3 - Tactical estimate <i>Sub-phase III.B - Courses of action development</i></p>	<p>The purpose of this sub-phase is to develop one or more courses of action that will fulfil the mission effectively, based on the directions and orientations of the operational level commander (Ib., p. 31).</p>	<p>Support of courses of actions development by providing perspectives that can normally go beyond the traditional approach of planners.</p> <p>Participate in the analysis of courses of action, focusing on the possible consequences and likely effects associated with each course of action.</p> <p>Advising all parties involved in the war game on how the actions of the Air Force can be viewed at the level of the higher echelon or the structures with which it cooperates.</p> <p>Participate in the wording/ improvement of the criteria for courses of action comparison.</p> <p>Information and recommendations for the commander.</p>

⁴ Commander's Critical Information Requirements.

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No.	The phases of the planning process	Phase characteristics	The Red Team's role ²
4.	Phase 4 - Tactical plan development	The purpose of the phase is to develop the air operation plan in accordance with the directions of the higher echelon.	<p>Review of the main elements on which the team expressed its point of view, depending on the evolution of events.</p> <p>Participation in the development of the annexes of the air operations plan, with emphasis on the evaluation elements.</p> <p>Further development of new information and products on the evolution of the operating environment.</p> <p>Inform and advise the commander if the analysis of the team reveals major problems during implementing of the plan.</p> <p>Support the planning effort during the review and adjustment of the plan, through newly created situation assessments and development of directions and information.</p>
5.	Phase 5 – Execution	The purpose of the phase is to implement the air operation plan, as developed and approved by higher echelon.	Given the specifics of the air force regarding the execution as well as the particularities of the air tasking cycle, the opportunities of the <i>Red Team</i> to influence the conduct of air operations is quite limited, the team being able to make its mark in the assessment activity.





No.	The phases of the planning process	Phase characteristics	The Red Team's role ²
			If it is necessary to work on a new plan of operations or to develop branches and sequels to the existing plan, the team's input will be in accordance with the requirements of the planning team and will follow, in a compressed form, the support given prior to air operation planning.

The Red Team ensures the extension of the understanding of the operating environment and can advise the command team in the key points of the planning process.

The elements presented in *table no. 2* contribute to the understanding of the idea of creating and using that organisational element called the *Red Team*, because the benefits of using it are greater than the costs of identifying staff, establishing the size of the structure or specialised training programmes. The statement is supported by the *Red Team's* contribution to the planning process, which can be summarised as follows:

- Ensures the extension of the understanding of the operating environment;
- Can advise the command team in the key points of the planning process;
- Provides a different perspective to process-specific concepts (assumptions, risk assessment, factor analysis, operation design etc.);
- Provides alternative analyses of participating actors, focusing on identifying vulnerabilities and how they can be protected or attacked;
- Makes objective assessments at different times, using various and distinct techniques;
- Performs own analyses, from different perspectives and with various approaches, but all in support of the planning process.

CONCLUSION

The presence of a *Red Team* along with a planning group, working together to plan an operation, does not guarantee the success of the operation. However, it can certainly have benefits over

the decision-making process. The *Red Team*, with the unconditional support of the commander, can successfully support the planning process at the Air Force level, by providing alternatives to the interpretation of the main actors or dynamic situations that characterise the current operating environment.



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