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Topic: C2 Concepts, Theory, and Policy

Title: Next State Planning: A “Whole of Government” Approach For Planning and Executing  
Operational Campaigns

Authors: Dr. Alexander Kott, Mr. Len Hawley, CDR Glenn Brown, Dr. Gary Citrenbaum,  
Mr. Peter S. Corpac

Points of Contact:  
Dr. Alexander Kott  
Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency  
3701 N. Fairfax Drive  
Arlington, VA 22203  
(571) 218-4649  
[alexander.kott@arpa.mil](mailto:alexander.kott@arpa.mil)

Mr. Peter S. Corpac  
Science and Technology Associates  
4100 N. Fairfax Drive  
Arlington, VA 22203  
[PCorpac@stassociates.com](mailto:PCorpac@stassociates.com)  
(580) 284-1256

## **Abstract**

The Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA) and U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), as part of the Integrated Battle Command program, have developed a planning process for leaders to plan and execute campaigns at the operational level of war. The "Next State Planning" provides a process for operational leaders to plan campaigns along multiple political, military, economic, social, informational economic lines of effort and employ all elements of national power.

Next State Planning divides a campaign into a sequence of well defined, short duration "stepping stones" that can be achieved through coordinated, multiple domain, Line of Effort operations. Next states are defined in terms of objectives or end states rather than actions. It is an iterative planning process where the next state, N1, is well defined with specific actions planned to achieve it and next states N2-N... are less defined. This postpones the decision as to how to achieve the state until closer to execution time, when uncertainties will have been considerably reduced. Metrics are established and next states evaluated against achievements on the ground. The plan, allocation of resources, next states and over all objectives are then modified based operations. It provides framework for executing civil and military operations.