

CHAPTER 9

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES TARGETING PROCESS

This chapter describes the SOF targeting process and mission planning. The targeting process includes developing a database and planning and constructing the SOMPF.

This chapter is a guide for SOF targeting. Although the procedures and end products generally apply for all ARSOF, theaters may apply different methods across the operational continuum. However, if modifications are made, they must not be so different that they degrade SOF theater or service interoperability.

SOF commanders conduct both deliberate and adaptive targeting missions. They receive their missions

through the joint strategic planning process, which is explained in JCS Publication 3-05.5 and FM 100-25, Chapter 6.

Although both SOF and conventional mission planning require all-source intelligence, SOF targeting and mission planning depends more upon highly detailed and broadly focused intelligence than conventional planning.

Developing these plans requires coordination among several staff elements at various levels, particularly in the intelligence and operations directorates or departments. This coordination must extend from the SOF in the field to theater and national levels.

JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS TARGETING PROCESS

Theater campaign planning drives the joint SO targeting process. In turn, the SO targeting process drives SO mission planning. The CINC establishes a Joint Targeting Coordination Board (JTCCB) to direct the theater targeting process. This includes SO targeting as well. Figure 9-1 shows this process. The JTCCB –

- Consists of members of the CINC staff and representatives of each subordinate command.
- Ensures all theater-level deep surveillance and attack resources are effectively employed.
- Establishes SO targeting objectives and priorities based on the CINC's SO targeting guidance and concept of SOF employment.

- Receives, consolidates, reconciles, and establishes priorities for SO target nominations from subordinate force commanders, and, if necessary, from supported allied force commanders.
- Tasks the SOC to assess, plan, and conduct the mission.
- Determines support requirements and tasks the appropriate agencies to support the mission.
- Tasks the service intelligence production agencies (IPAs), through their respective components, to support the targeting process.

MISSION TASKING PACKAGE

When the JTCCB nominates a target, a target system, or an objective area to be attacked by an SOF unit, the JTCCB forwards the nomination in a mission tasking package (MTP) to the SOC target panel. The MTP includes target identity, location, and desired results. (See Appendix C.)

Upon receipt of the MTP, the SOC target panel designates the appropriate SOF unit as the mission planning agent (MPA) for the nominated mission. For ARSOF,

the MPA is normally the SFG or the senior ranger force headquarters.

The SOC target panel forwards the MTP and available intelligence to the MPA to perform a feasibility assessment (FA). Although off-the-shelf operational and intelligence data is the norm, limited outside tasking may be levied to answer certain basic PIR, or in a joint environment, essential elements of information. At a minimum, the MPA needs–

- Area study data.
- DIA intelligence analysis.
- Maps:
 - 1:250,000 of the area where the target is located.
 - 1:50,000 scale covering a 20-nautical mile (NM) radius of the target.
 - City maps, special MC&G products, sketches, and special maps,
- Imagery:
 - Imagery annotated with only a north arrow and coordinate reference point at 1:50,000 ratio, covering a 20-NM radius around the target area.
 - Imagery annotated with only a north arrow and coordinate reference point, at 1:10,000 ratio, covering the target itself.
 - Automated tactical target graphic (ATTG) of the target.
- Current OB and installation data and overlays covering the target, operational area, or AI. This includes–
 - Ground order of battle (GOB).
 - Air order of battle (AOB).
 - Electronic order of battle (EOB).
 - Naval order of battle (NOB).
 - Missile order of battle (MOB).
 - Railway networks.
 - Airfields.
 - Port facilities.
 - Telecommunications facilities.

FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

When the MPA commander receives the MTP and the available intelligence, he convenes a target assessment group (TAG) to assess the SOC mission statement and mission concept. The intelligence representative in the TAG must–

- Play a key role in determining the feasibility of the nominated target.
- Analyze all available information concerning the threat, the target, and target characteristics.
- Integrate this intelligence with operations data on friendly force posture, capabilities, weapons effects, weather effects, objectives, rules of engagement, and doctrine.

The commander uses two analytical tools during the FA and throughout the entire SO targeting and mission planning process to assess mission validity and requirements. They are–

- The IPB process.
- Criticality, accessibility, recuperability, vulnerability, effect, and recognizability (CARVER).

The IPB process assists the commander in his battle focus. It enables him to see and understand the battlefield sufficiently to make sound tactical decisions. Chapter 10 discusses IPB for SOF in detail.

The S2 uses CARVER in target analysis. The product of this analysis aids the commander to determine if the unit can service the target. Appendix D discusses CARVER in detail.

After careful analysis, the MPA formalizes and completes the assessment in the FA format and forwards it through the SOC target panel to the SOC commander. (See Appendix C for the SOF FA format.) The SOC commander concurs or nonconcurr with the FA and forwards it to the JTCB for approval.

If the target is valid and feasible, the JTCB adds the target to the approved target list and assigns it a priority.

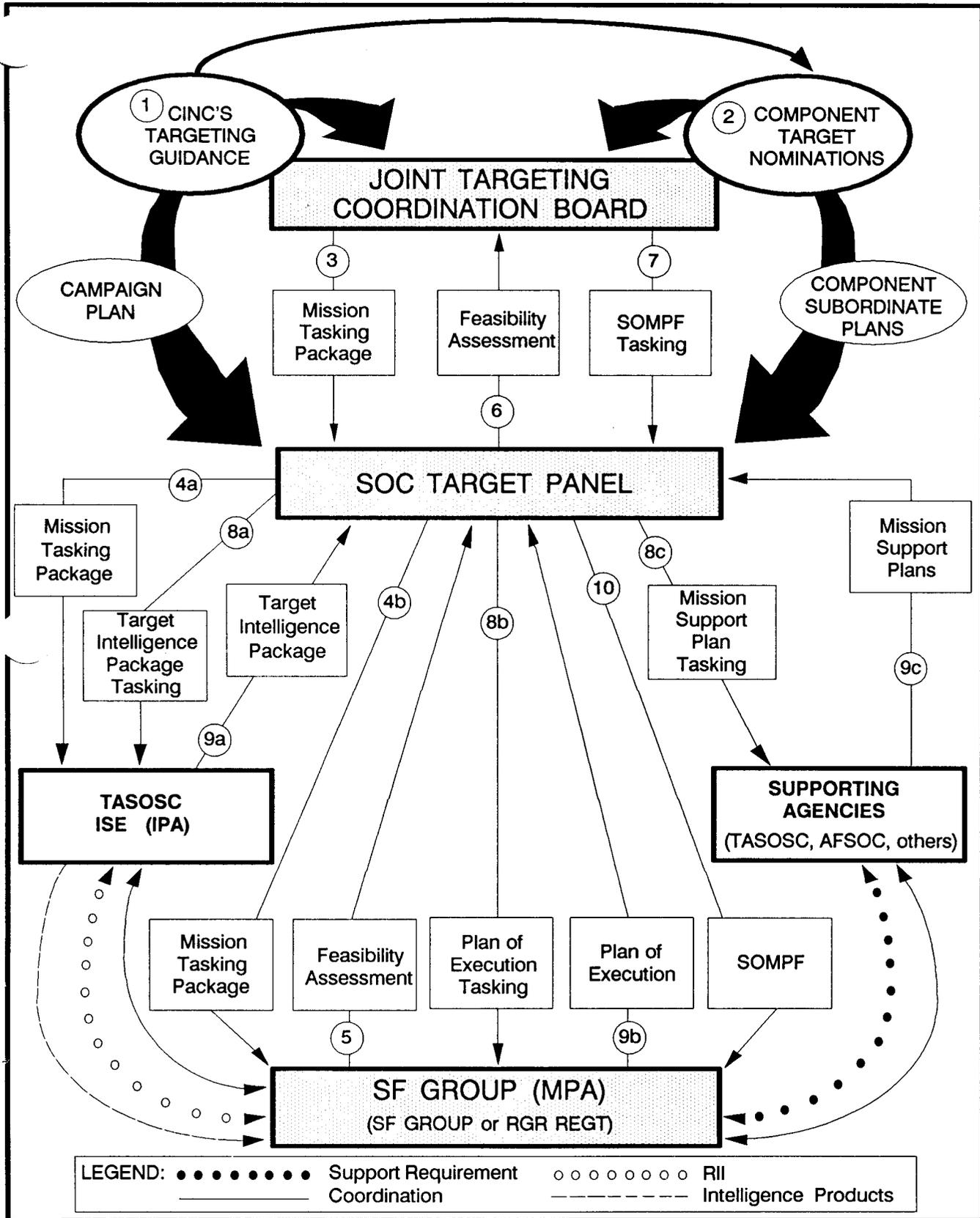


Figure 9-1. Joint SO targeting process.

The JTCB then directs the SOC to prepare a SOMPF for the target. Figure 9-2 shows the SOMPF basic structure and responsible organization.

TARGET INTELLIGENCE PACKAGE

At the same time the JTCB tasks the SOC to prepare a SOMPF, the JTCB also tasks the appropriate service IPA to produce a TIP that supports the SOMPF. The TIP contains details on the target, operational area, and other aspects of the mission. (Appendix C contains TIP formats.)

All-source intelligence that is timely, detailed, and tailored is vital to the SO targeting and mission planning process. The US intelligence community includes many agencies that support various echelons of the command structure. These agencies differ in purpose and to the degree they support tactical mission requirements of individual operational elements.

Just as intelligence requirements for different conventional forces may vary, so do some of the intelligence requirements for ARSOF. However, the majority of ARSOF intelligence requirements are similar to those of conventional forces, although the degree of detail is frequently greater.

Much of the intelligence required for ARSOF mission planning is already available within the US intelligence community. However, many "target specific" items will require more collection, research, analysis, and textual elaboration than normally afforded to conventional mission planning. If target specific intelligence is not available, analogies or estimates drawn from similar targets in the same regions should be provided.

When an ARSOF element completes an FA and forwards it for target validation, a crucial part of this assessment is the intelligence requirements section. This section modifies and amplifies the information required to plan a mission. This becomes the RII addressed in the TIP. The TIP supports the entire mission planning process based on the analysis provided.

A key to effective SO intelligence support is for ARSOF to fully exploit the intelligence system. To do this, ARSOF operators must work with the intelligence agencies to sensitize the intelligence community to ARSOF requirements. This should include prioritized requirements and explanations for detailed PIR. The

SOC ensures the MPA prioritizes these requirements during the deliberate and adaptive targeting processes.

The mechanism (both procedural and technological) of providing suitable SO intelligence support must be flexible to effectively satisfy the adaptive (combat and crisis) and deliberate (peacetime and route) mission planning processes. This mechanism is the I&W system.

Adaptive targeting provides the most rigorous and critical conditions under which to conduct effective SO intelligence support; so the overall system must be able to meet urgent, short-fused requirements. Adaptive targeting procedures should be used to energize periodic readiness exercises and to facilitate effective transition to actual combat and crisis support. The system's capability to effectively support ARSOF across the operational continuum is enhanced by realistic tasking during peacetime.

Primary sources used to satisfy SO intelligence requirements are the respective theater service intelligence production agencies, normally the TASOSC ISE. Only the joint force commander (JFC) and theater CINCs can ensure SO intelligence support requirements are recognized, understood, validated, integrated, and satisfied.

ARSOF requirements must be integrated with overall theater objectives. This arrangement works if SO intelligence requirements are defined and the intelligence community is allowed sufficient time to respond. The peacetime intelligence support mechanism must provide support at an accelerated pace during crisis or war.

ARSOF needs immediate access to these intelligence sources to plan and execute missions. Reliable, secure communications between the theater intelligence organizations and the SOC or JSOTF must be established and maintained throughout any crisis or conflict.

Secure communications must extend to other service SOF components (Naval Special Operations Forces [NAVSOF] and Air Force Special Operations Forces [AFSOF]); and provide for secure voice, data transfer, and imagery transfer between SOF components and the SOC or JSOTF.

This communications system must support SOF intelligence requirements as well as the needs of other intelligence users.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS MISSION PLANNING FOLDER (SOMPF)

BASIC STRUCTURE

RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION

MISSION TASKING PACKAGE

SOC

TRANSMITTAL DOCUMENTS

ALL PARTICIPANTS
(assembled by the SOC)

TARGET IDENTIFICATION DATA

SOC

CINC MISSION GUIDANCE

CINC
(forwarded by the SOC)

RECORD of CHANGES

SOC

RECORD of DISTRIBUTION

SOC

TARGET INTELLIGENCE PACKAGE

THEATER SERVICE INTELLIGENCE

TARGET AREA INFORMATION

Appropriate Theater Service
Intelligence Production Agency (IPA)

DETAILED TARGET DESCRIPTION

Appropriate Theater Service IPA

MAPS, CHARTS, and TARGET MATERIALS

Appropriate Theater Service IPA

PLAN OF EXECUTION

MISSION PLANNING AGENT

COMMANDER'S ESTIMATE

Mission Planning Agent

SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNIT PLAN

Mission Planning Agent

MISSION SUPPORT PLANS

Supporting Agencies

Figure 9-2. SOMPF structure and responsible organization.

This intelligence ADP and communications system also must be structured to support ARSOF missions conducted in advance of tactical theater communications systems deployment.

Timely, effective communication from the SOC or JSOTF through the JFC or CINC to the national intelligence system is critical to ARSOF success. Maximum use of ADP products and SR reporting is important. This includes ADP message processing disseminating, and analyzing.

The MPA needs the TIP before the plan of execution (POE) can be completed. However, the POE development can be initiated at the same time as the TIP is being prepared.

PLAN OF EXECUTION

The MPA is the coordinating authority for a mission. The SOC commander directs the MPA to prepare a POE. The SOC commander directs other SOF units to prepare mission support plans, as appropriate. Appendix C contains the SOF POE format. Joint planning sessions between the MPA and supporting SOF units are essential to produce quality plans.

The scope of the supported MPA commander's coordinating authority over supporting SOF units is prescribed in the SOC directive. Unless otherwise specified by the SOC directive, the supported MPA commander has the authority to exercise general direction of the supporting effort. (See JCS Publication 0-2.)

Based on the complexity of the planning SOF commanders assign actual mission planning responsibility to the lowest possible level. As the POE planners refine the mission concept (MICON), they develop a list of specific operational, IEW, and support requirements.

The MPA staff forwards requirements beyond its organic capabilities to the TASOSC. At the same time, it also forwards these requirements to appropriate supporting SOF units for them to include in their mission support plans.

The POE planners regularly brief the MPA commander to ensure the planning effort adheres to the commander's intent. POE development concludes with a formal decision brief to the MPA commander. Then, the POE is finished and forwarded to the SOC target panel. Figure 9-3 shows the POE development flow.

The MPA's SIO continues to play a key role throughout the entire SOF mission planning and targeting process. The SIO must continue to perform IPB and target analysis during POE development. By reducing the operational uncertainties and analyzing the target, the SIO can focus the collection effort where it is most effective. This allows him to identify the existing intelligence gaps to the SOC or JSOTF so these RII can be forwarded to the TASOSC ISE. The TASOSC ISE attempts to answer these RII in the TIP.

MISSION SUPPORT PLANS

In coordination with the MPA, the TASOSC and supporting SOF units prepare their mission support plans. These plans must identify how the supporting unit intends to meet the requirements identified by the POE planners. Depending on the nature of the mission, mission support plans and their annexes include but are not limited to—

- Infiltration, resupply, and exfiltration.
- Signal, intelligence, and other CS.
- OPSEC and deception.
- Basing and other CSS.

ASSEMBLY OF THE SOMPF

Upon receipt of the POE and mission support plans, the SOC target panel assembles the SOMPF and forwards it to the SOC commander for review and approval. Once the SOC commander approves the SOMPF, he may direct the MPA to conduct a POE capability demonstration. This demonstration should simulate the approved POE closely, subject to OPSEC and other limitations. Following the demonstration, the MPA corrects identified shortfalls in the POE. The MPA must maintain at least one copy of each approved SOMPF.

ADAPTIVE TARGETING

The peacetime deliberate targeting process must be modified to perform adaptive targeting during crisis or war. The key to adaptive targeting is concurrent activity. When the MTP is received, the MPA treats it like an alert order under the joint operations planning system (JOPS) crisis action procedures. The MPA commander issues a warning order to the appropriate subunit and begins POE preparation as soon as the FA is complete. See JCS Publication 5-02.4 for JOPS crisis action procedures.

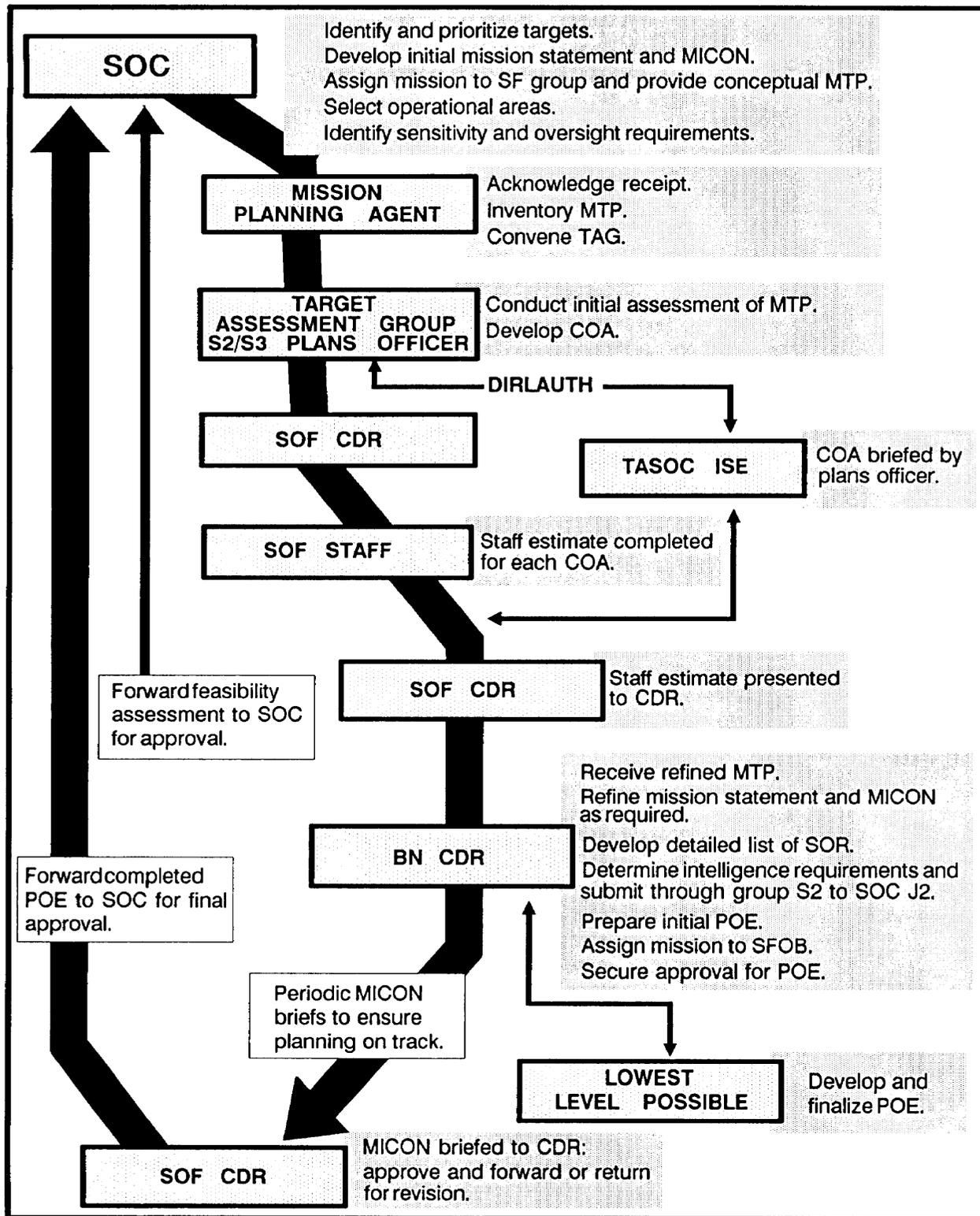


Figure 9-3. POE development flow.