# What is a DTAG?

After the announcement of the NMW DTAG, I had some questions about the nature of that event. Let me explain.

A DTAG or Disruptive Technology Assessment Game is a war game-like experiment to stimulate thinking differently about a problem. The term 'war game' refers to the method by which two teams are playing against each other based on a scenario or vignette. The game consists of two phases resulting in a Military Led and the second in a Technology Led Confrontation.
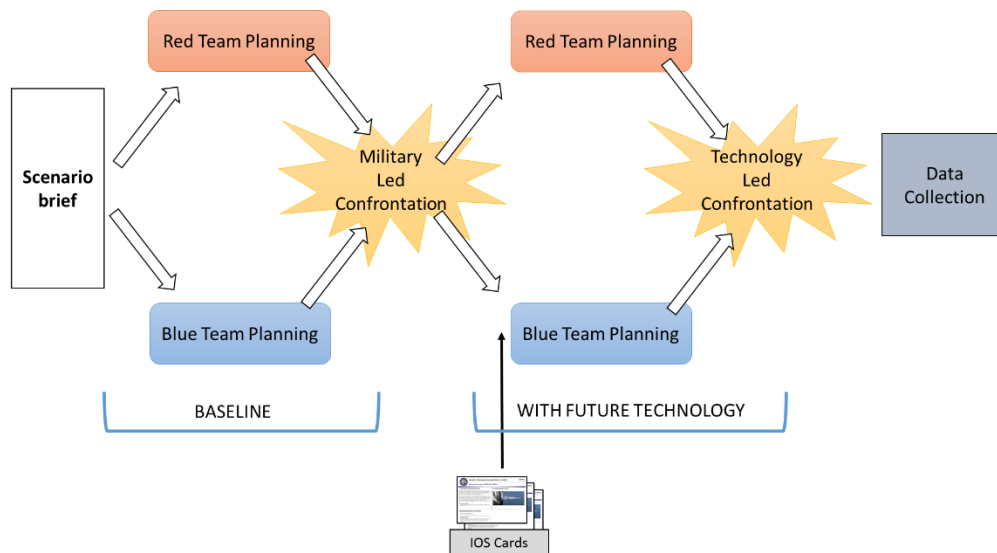
In the first phase, after explaining the scenario that puts the teams in a specific setting, the teams use the first period to plan according to current procedures using current technology. Because the military participants have the expertise, they lead this work. The confrontation of the two Courses of Actions (CoAs) are led by the military experts, hence the name. From this confrontation, the teams have an idea of what the opposing team's intentions.

The scenarios are critical to the game. Scenarios must be suited for the object of the DTAG and contain the right level of details, not too much nor too little. The scenarios should put the teams into specific settings to stimulate creativity and to combat boredom.

At the start of the second phase, the teams receive a bundle of Ideas of Systems (IoS) cards, which combine future technologies, sometimes combined with or based on existing equipment, to create new systems. These systems are theoretical, but should be feasible within the considered timeframe, and have the potential to change the way for solving a situation when employed by the military or an adversary.

The teams can use a limited set of the IoS cards that the members assess as having the biggest impact on the CoAs or can come up with new IoS during the DTAG. They need to pick those cards that fundamentally change the approach to the same scenario. There is no need to stick to the first CoA, they are allowed to change it completely.

As the previous one this phase end with a confrontation of the two CoAs. The most important aspect here is to understand what changed in their approach and why that has changed. Technology in itself is not disruptive; the innovation lay in the way one use it.

During the event, analyst follow the discussions to capture the whys and the hows technology is used in a disruptive way. The confrontations only show the technologies and approaches retained by the teams, but knowledge about the ones that did not make the final selection is equally important. After the event, all that data is collected and analyzed into meaningful input for the concept developer.

A DTAG is useful by the need to prepare it stimulating disruptive/innovative thinking in developing the technology and IoS cards, and the scenarios. As a discovery experiment, it finds an ideal place at the start of the concept development process when there is a need for new approaches. However, organizing a DTAG demands many resources and the decision to organize one should not be taken lightly.

A limited version of the DTAG could use as a tool to stimulate disruptive thinking on the work floor or in courses.