



# Welcome to Connections UK 2025



# Safety Brief

Tom Mouat



## Dress code:

- No military uniform please.

## Security.

- Name badges.
- Red Lanyards.
- Protests.
- Strangers.

## Fire.

- Alarms and detectors linked to University control room.
- University Fire Response Team.
- Escapes and fire assembly points.

## Facilities.

- Toilets.
- Shop (Costcutter).

## Emergencies:

- Dial 999
- Brunel Security Team (24/7) on **01895 255786**





Howell &  
Lecture Centre



Hamilton  
Centre





# Welcome to Connections UK 2025

How to get the most out of Connections UK conferences

Graham Longley-Brown

Colin Marston

Alex Vince

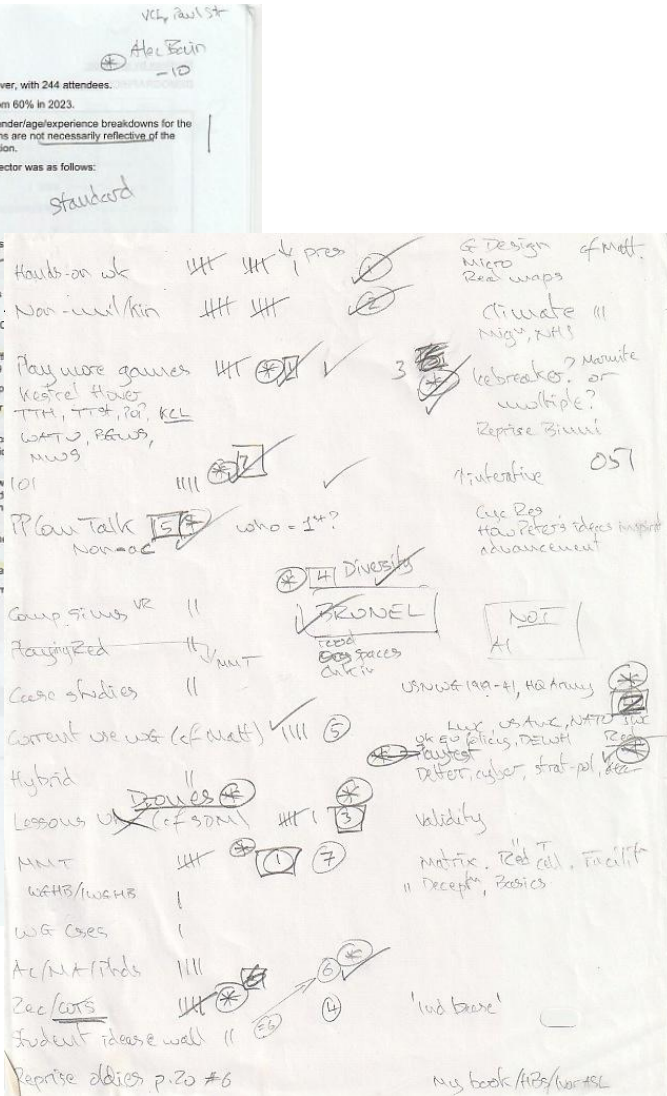
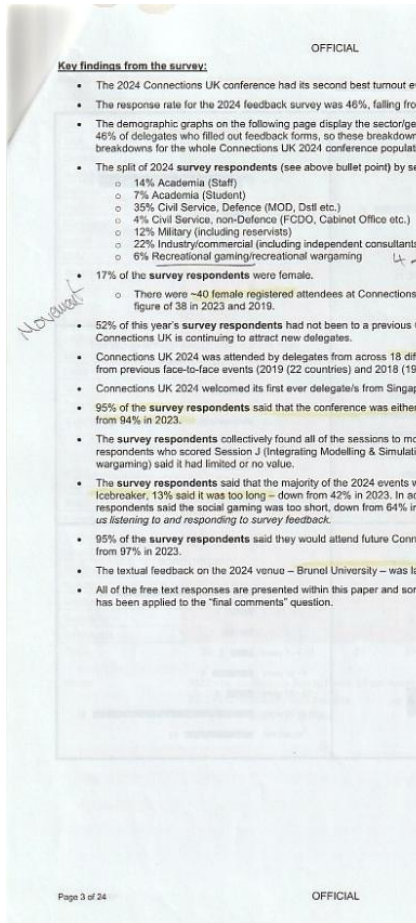




# Shaping Connections UK conferences: **your part in the plans**



- Begin with the end in mind. Please start noting points **now** for the feedback survey
- How we build this, and subsequent, conferences



- **Course content sharing, PhD work, wargaming handbooks.**
- Calls for networking enhancements (formal meal, attendee list, structured games for networking).

**Why:** Many attendees are practitioners; they want to see real applications, compare notes, and learn from peers.

**Suggested Topics/Features for Connections UK 2025**

- Ukraine & Hybrid Conflict**
  - Panels comparing Western and Russian wargaming lessons from Ukraine.
  - Workshops on integrating drones, cyber, and information warfare into games.
- Beyond Defence: Societal Wargaming**
  - Climate change, migration, pandemics, NHS/emergency response wargaming.
  - “Civil-military integration” games.
- Diversity & Next Generation Showcase**
  - Dedicated slot for **student/early-career presentations**.
  - Panel on **diversity and inclusion in wargaming** (already volunteer-offered).
- Game Design Labs & Workshops**
  - Red Teaming, deception, microgame creation.
  - Skills-based practicals (map-making, digital tools, design cycle exercises).
- Technology in Practice**
  - Sessions on **VR, reinforcement learning, digital+manual integration**, showing real applied examples.
  - Case studies of **AI use in wargaming** that worked (or didn't).
- Professional Practice Sessions**
  - MOD/NATO/industry case studies: what works, what doesn't.
  - Review of **past wargaming insights** (“best of the back catalogue”).
  - Standards & definitions: clarifying what counts as a wargame.

**Why These Should Feature**

- They **directly respond to repeated attendee requests** in survey comments.
- They align with **committee advice** (Banks, Sabin, Bae, Downes-Martin all emphasized Ukraine, workshops, and reducing lecture-heavy formats).
- They build on **2024's successes** (high value given to deterrence, resilience, and design workshops).
- They address **shortcomings** (diversity visibility, over-reliance on talks, underwhelming AI content).



# Connections purpose: to advance and preserve the art, science and application of wargaming



**Key:**

- Planning factors
- Plenary/all involved
- Blocks
- Deleted
- Refreshments
- Overlapping boxes show possible streams

**Strategic Plan - 2025 elements:**

- Liaising with peer reviewed Journals
- Encouraging greater contributions to PAXSIMS or GUWS.
- Curated repository - lessons identified / learnings, wargaming insights.
- Engaging recreational wargamers**
- Support to other events

**Feedback survey overarching findings:**

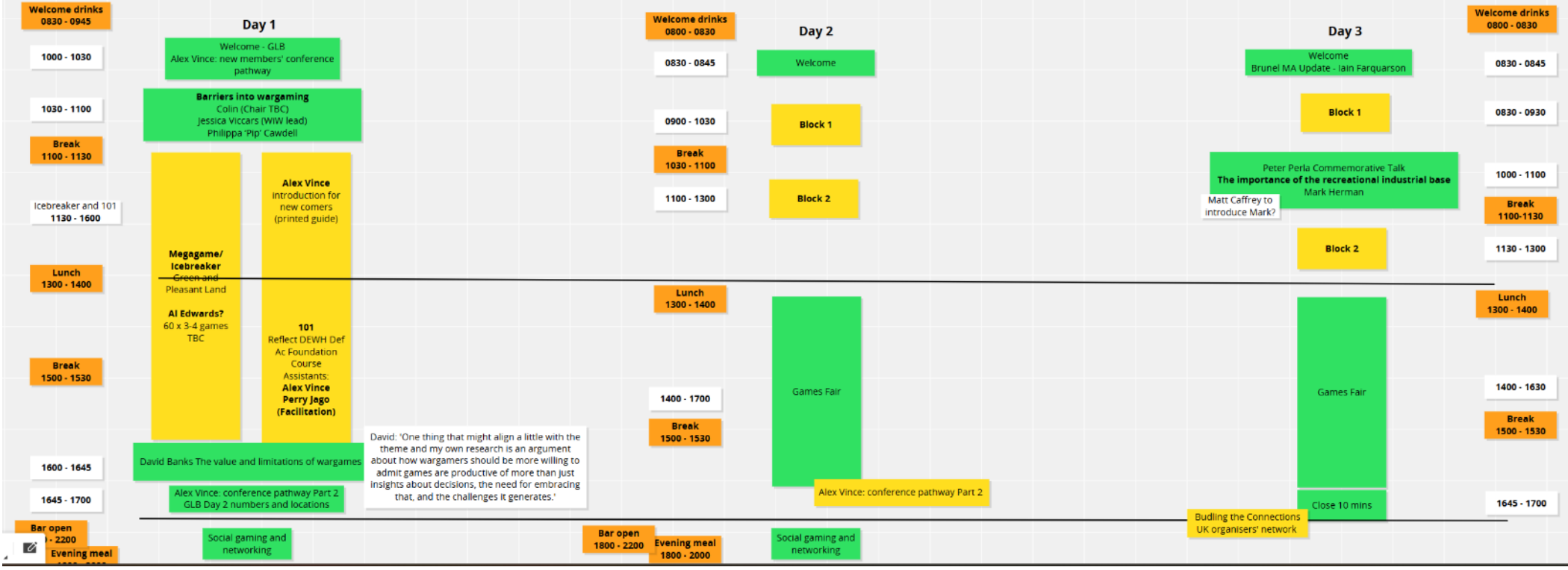
- Length correct
- Play more games
- Mix presentations and hands-on 50%
- Encourage diversity
- 101 required
- Icebreaker required

**Feedback survey suggested content (in order of number of mentions):**

- Hands-on workshops
- Non-Defence gaming
- Lessons from Ukraine/how 'Red' is wargaming
- Insights from/linking to recreational wargaming
- Insights from/linking to academia
- Current uses of wargaming in Defence
- Wargaming MMT
- Reprise previous CUK sessions that were well received
- Wargaming courses syllabi
- Book summaries/key takeaways

**Consultative Committee feedback and suggestions:**

- SDM. Lessons from Ukraine. How 'Red' are wargaming. This should be the focus of the whole conference.
- Seb. Minimise presentations, maximise hands-on workshops
- David. Same as SDM. Some workshops, but not as much as Seb suggests.
- Matt & Phil. Re-engage with the recreational wargamer industrial base.
- Phil. I endorse Matt's suggestion for a future session on the links between professional gaming and the 'base', so as not to lose this key dimension of networking.
- Rex. An 'unpopular opinions' panel: how to wargame sensitive issues.
- Alex. The flow of the conference - planning out how a new Joiner first engages.
- Cath. Academia. A pitch on Public Engagement / Academic impact.



David: 'One thing that might align a little with the theme and my own research is an argument about how wargamers should be more willing to admit games are productive of more than just insights about decisions, the need for embracing that, and the challenges it generates.'



# Shaping Connections UK conferences: **your part in the plans**



Colin Marston

- Begin with the end in mind. Please start noting points now for the **feedback survey**
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## Suggestions how to approach this year's conference

Peter Perla: 'Wargames are an act of communication; a conversation'

- So is Connections UK!
- Please engage in the conversation and gameplay
- 'Playful inquisitiveness'
- Network actively
- Evening networking
- Social gaming





## But please do all this respectfully

- Connections UK is committed to supporting the Derby House Principles
- Ground rules on the back of the programme
- For support in the first instance, see Sophie DeBolle
- ...or any of the Connections UK Team, wearing a yellow badge



Alex Vince

## Conference Pathway

- The conference pathway is made of two parts:
  - Printout in each programme suggesting a pathway for newcomers
  - Check ins at the end of each day for anyone who needs one

We want to make newcomers to our practice welcome - wargaming isn't just the skill, it's the people!

# Brunel site map

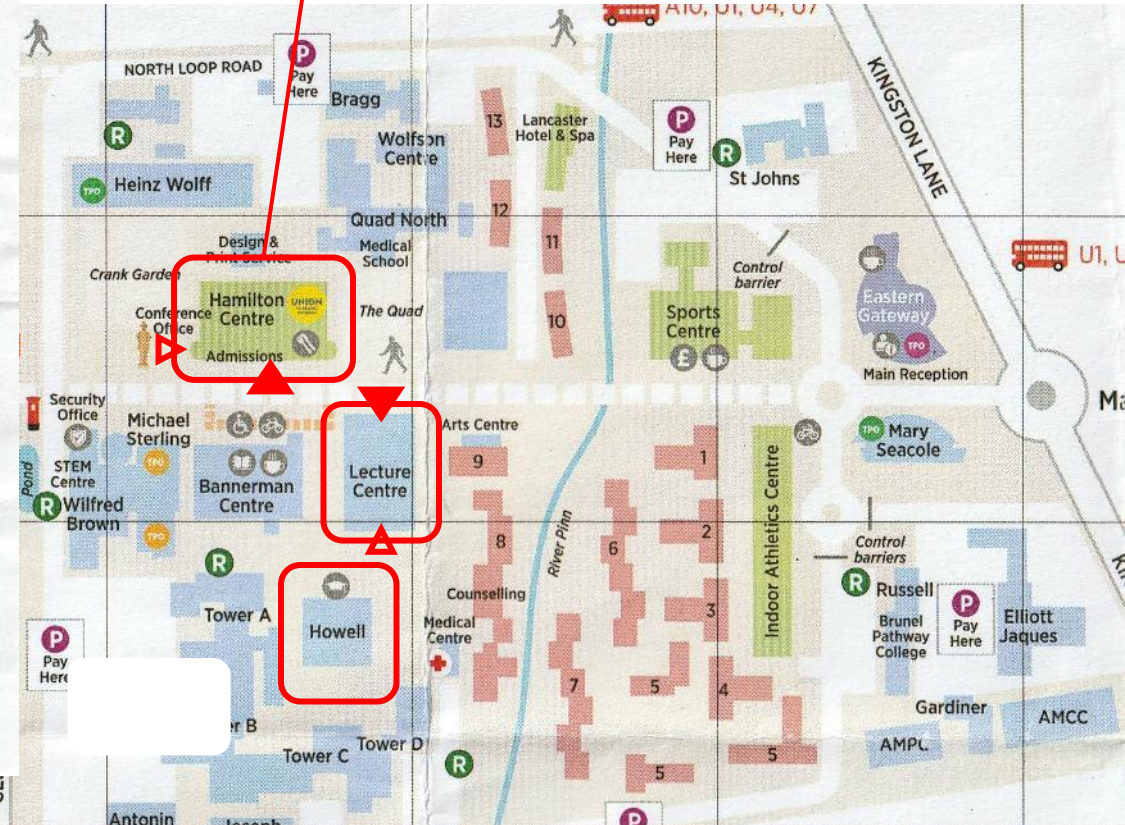
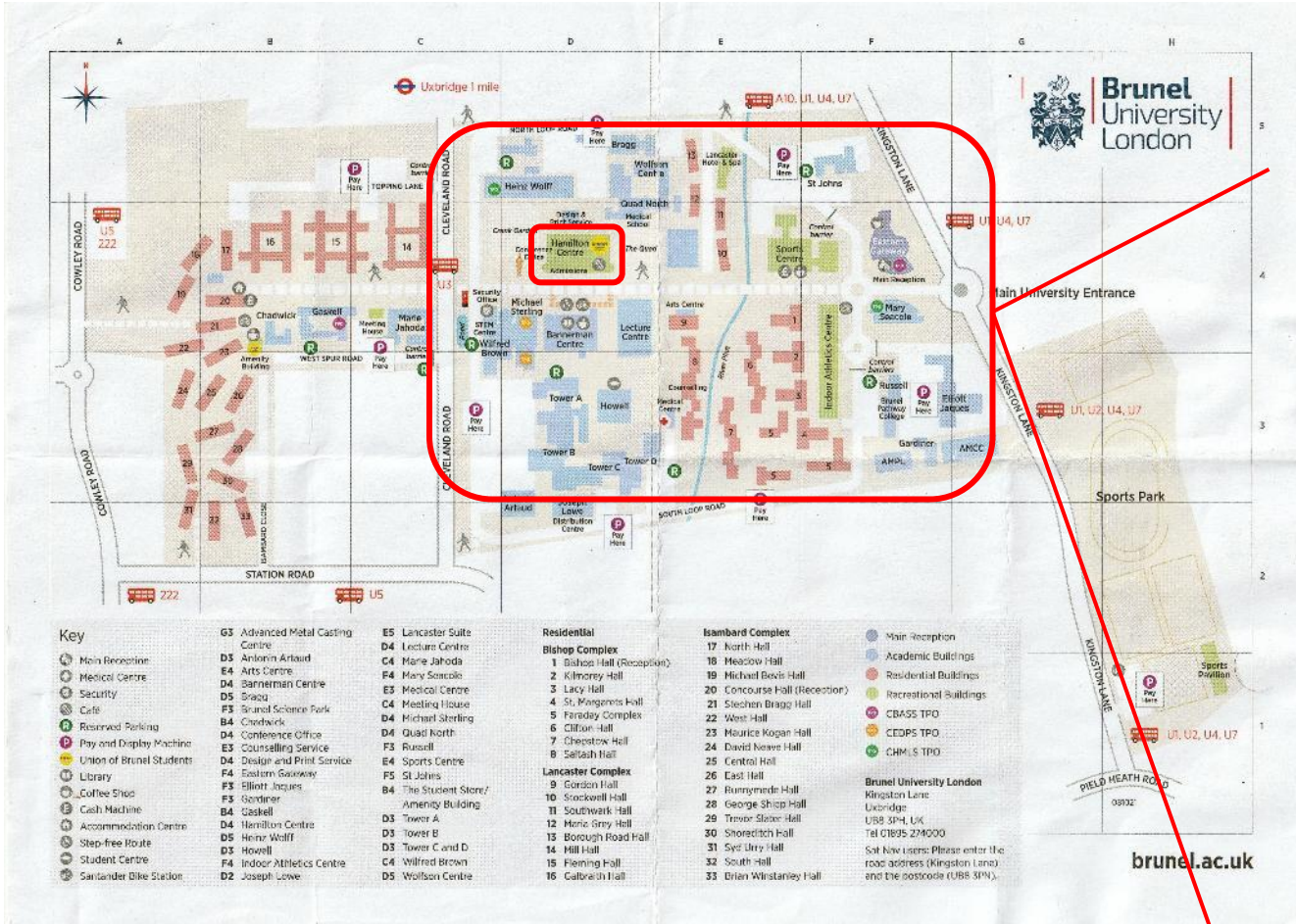


Newton Room 1<sup>st</sup> floor:

Lunch

Evening networking

Social gaming





# General points



- All presentations have the video and audio uploaded to the website
- Q&A is **not** recorded
- Day 2 reception and refreshments are in the Howell 0800 – 0830
- **You now need to annotate your programme for Day 2 locations, and we will do the same tomorrow morning for Day 3**



# Connections UK 2025

## Welcome to Day 2



# General points



- Speaker bios are available at xxxx
- Chairs do not need to introduce speakers, who can do that briefly themselves
- All presentations have the video and audio uploaded to the website
- Q&A is **not** recorded
- Laptops are in place
- How our adversaries wargame. Stephen and Neil please see AI



# Games Fair

Jim Wallman





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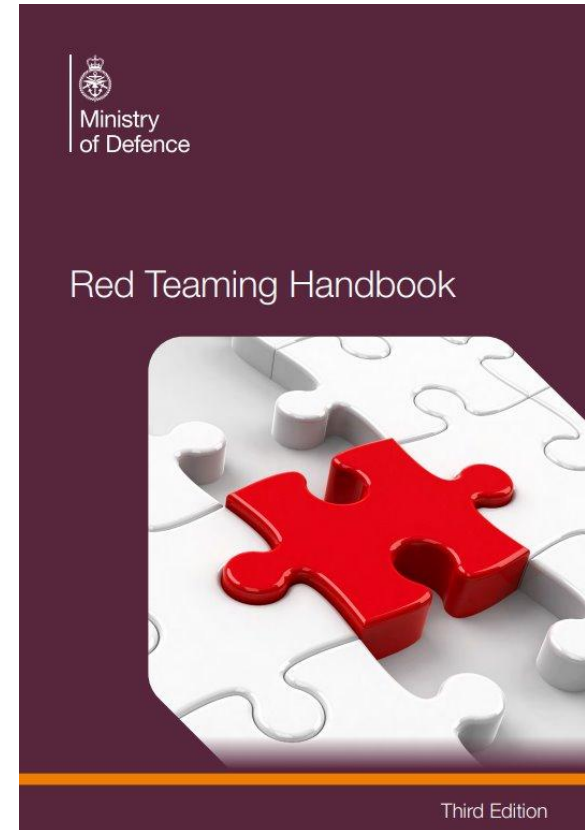


# Red Teaming Definitions

## x Red Cell

**Red Team:** 'A team that is formed with the objective of subjecting an organisation's plans, programmes, ideas and assumptions **to rigorous analysis and challenge.**'

**Red Team mindset:** 'A philosophy or state of mind where problem solvers and decision-makers **apply Red Teaming techniques** and approaches **to everyday challenges and problems routinely.** It is a habitual mode of thinking and working that involves fast and efficient approaches in time-pressured scenarios across a range of situations and levels within an organisation. **The concept of a Red Team mindset is very similar to critical thinking.**'



# Premortem Analysis

## Value Added

People can become overconfident once they have arrived at their plan. An active inquiry aimed at foiling trouble can negate the pull of a false sense of security, any consensus, or groupthink. The divergent phase of the exercise openly embraces objectivity and skepticism, prompting participants to question a course of action and its assumptions/tasks.

## The Method

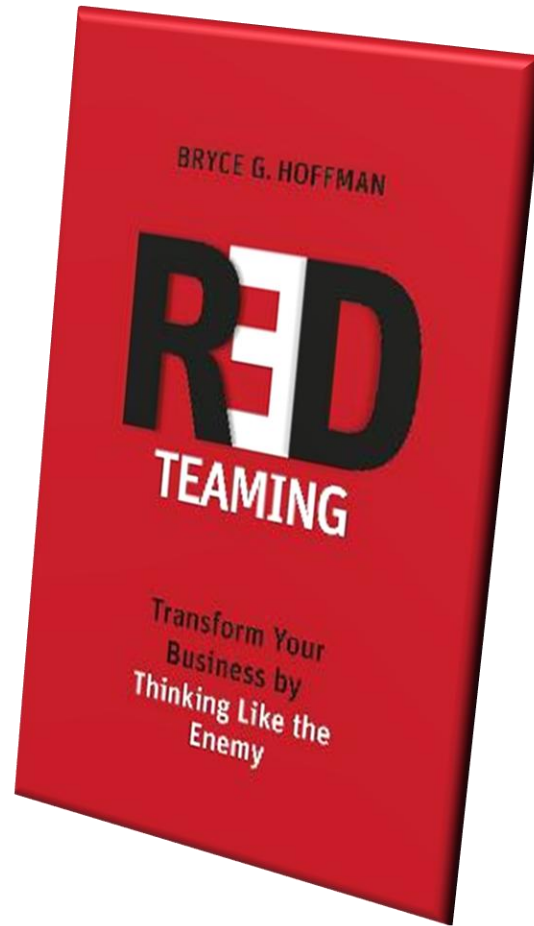
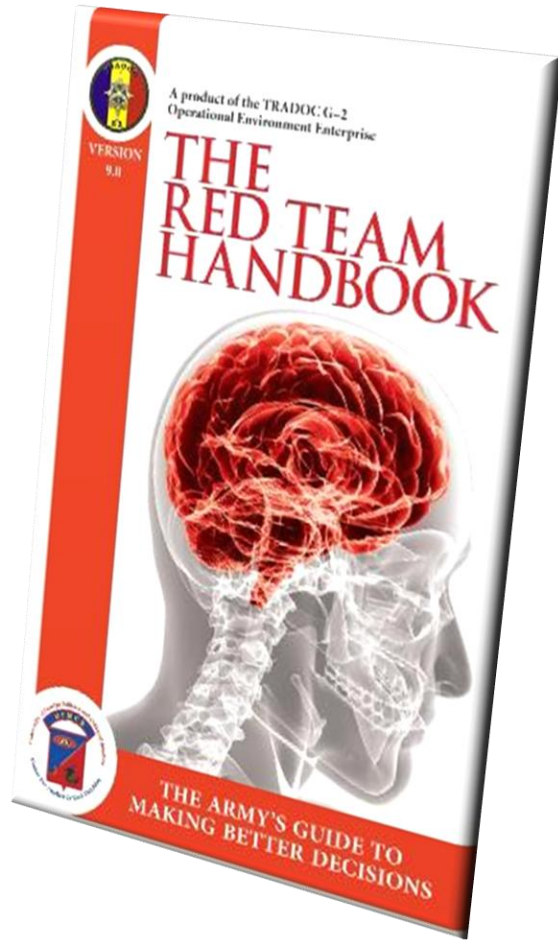
Unlike Risk Analysis, begin with the assumption that the plan has failed.

1. Prepare. At a minimum, participants must be familiar with the plan.
2. Gather and imagine the plan has failed. Accept the failure and answer, "What caused it to fail? How did this happen?"
3. Generate reasons for the failure. Allow participants several minutes to write down all the possible reasons they can think of. Do this individually first, so that the

insights and experience of each participant are brought to bear.

4. Consolidate everyone's lists into one long list. Solicit input from each participant, one at a time. Go around the room and record their ideas on a whiteboard or poster paper. Continue until all ideas are exhausted.

# To learn to apply Red Teaming, go read stuff – then just do it!



# Influence Wargaming Handbook

