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Putting the PRIORITY Back Into PIR: PIR Development in a COIN Environment

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Linking Your Brigade/Regimental Combat Team Priority Intelligence Requirements to Desired Effects and Campaign Plan Decision Points - "A Way That Worked for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division during Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08.

Developing successful Priority Intelligence Requirements is the first, most important, and most difficult step of the ISR Synchronization Process. It is in this step that an Intelligence Section either establishes themselves as proactive, predictive, and relevant to the Commander's Decision Making Cycle or as passive news reporters, giving history lessons, and playing "Monday Night Quarterback" to the Commander and his staff.

PIR development is also what most units get wrong. The generally accepted tenets of PIR development, which most intelligence officers learned in the schoolhouse and most commanders grew up expecting, are not applicable within a counterinsurgency environment. In this article, we will explain how to write COIN PIR that are linked to Brigade or Regimental level decision points within a long-term counterinsurgency campaign plan. In addition, we will discuss how to write PIR Running Estimates, which will track your progress in answering your Commander's PIR.

The recommendations in this article are based on "A Way" that was successful for the authors' unit, as intelligence officers in the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. In 2007, 2-1CAV was involved in the planning and execution of the Baghdad Security Plan (BSP) in the Karkh Security District, which was a crucial part of the larger "surge". The BSP gave Coalition Forces the much needed opportunity to establish security in heart of Iraq's capital and the subsequent momentum to conduct wide-scale, full-spectrum operations necessary to stabilize the country. While every BCT's sector is unique, and those sectors change over time, we argue that there are certain new tenets of PIR Development in a COIN environment that will never change.

In this article we have outlined the sequence of those products which implement the basic tenets of intelligence. The Commander Drives Intelligence, Intelligence drives Maneuver, and (in a counterinsurgency) Maneuver feeds and thus drives more Intelligence. This non-traditional, maneuver-based intelligence is what we like to call "Operational Intelligence" or OPSINT. OPSINT is intelligence derived from your Patrols, Every Soldier is a Sensor (ES2), Key Leader Engagements (KLEs), Governance and Reconciliation meetings, Combat Logistical Patrols, Tip Lines, and just about everything else your unit does. They are all sources of information critical

to the success of the mission. It is important to note that collecting OPSINT is not one of those “staff cycles” outlined in some doctrinal manual. Rather, it is one continuous process simultaneously executed by all the BCT War Fighting Functions, as they move concurrently towards a common goal, over time, and not losing sight of the ultimate campaign objectives.

In this article we will discuss how to develop relevant PIR that are tied to your long term campaign goals, directly supporting the objectives within each of your Lines of Effort (LOEs). We will then discuss how to measure where you stand on each PIR by using PIR Running Estimates. We will not go into all the other steps in the ISR Synchronization process, but the methodology discussed in this article are critical in its execution as outlined in FM 2-01.

Setting the Stage, Step One: Envisioning Success

Before we can begin to write proper PIR, we must understand how the BCT CDR defines “Success”, A.K.A. his Desired Effects. If the commander cannot see himself “Successful”, then the Intelligence and Maneuver elements will not be able to help him achieve it. He must be able to picture this “Success” in terms of the Human Terrain in his Area of Operations positively reacting to the activities of his unit and his host-nation partner’s unit.

His Campaign Plan is then his “Road to Success” and his Measures of Effectiveness are the individual bricks that “Pave the Road to Success.” To maximize predictive intelligence and minimize troops to task, these MOEs must be as “observable” and “tangible” as bricks that fit together to make a path or build a wall. We can’t just pick any old bricks for this road (two squares, three octagons, five rectangles), just throw them in a pile, and expect them to fit together or lead anywhere. In the same way, it’s important to remember that a whole bunch of quantitative MOEs, though easy to find, do not really say that much in and of themselves. Bean-counting, alone, never works.

Just as the BCT CDR has his Desired Effects, the Enemy also has their Desired Effects and a road to those effects. In addition, the Enemy is actively working to prevent us from achieving our DEs (by putting up road-blocks) and we must be actively trying to prevent them from achieving theirs (by demolishing their road.) The intelligence section must design the PIR to evaluate who is winning the struggle to shape the Human Terrain (who is further along their road) towards their vision of “Success.”

In COIN the ISR Synchronization Plan (the brick factory) is the intelligence section’s long term Scheme of Maneuver to gather information (make the bricks) to answer those PIR. The PIR Running Estimates then track both parties’ progress in shaping that Human Terrain within a specific time period. Since the BCT CDR can expect to continue his same mission for quite a while, it’s important for him to be able to see whose Desired Effects are achieving the upper hand within the past two weeks. This facilitates his re-evaluation of his operations (change the direction of the road.) Remember, in COIN, being able to observe change on a Human Terrain is like watching continents move, so at the BCT level we updated our PIR Running Estimates every two weeks.

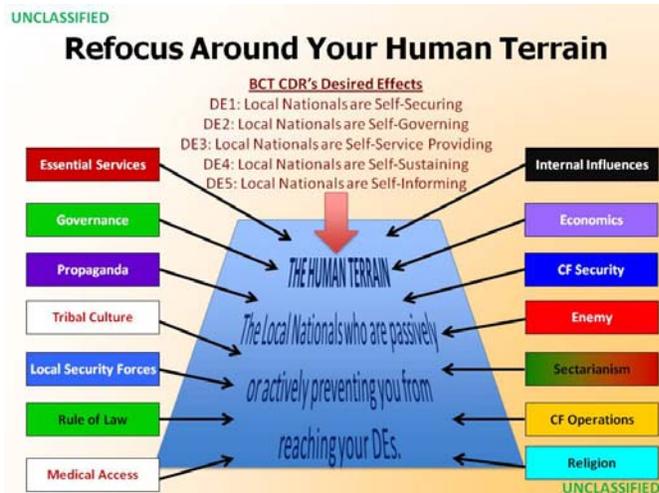
Since developing and understanding the BCT's Desired Effects is so critical to the Intelligence Warfighting Function, it is important for the BCT CDR to involve his Intelligence, Operations, and Line of Effort Officers in their design. The wording associated with these Effects can result in the unit becoming defensive, vice offensive, the operations concentrating on killing bad guys instead of building up good guys, the CDR's view of the battlefield being a small, short-term, situational awareness window as opposed to a wide, long-term, predictive window. These questions will shape the way the BCT CDR's staff and subordinate units approach ISR and can exponentially enhance or limit the success of BCT Operations.

The way the BCT CDR defines success is absolutely critical to PIR development. In a generic COIN environment, Phase One Success is establishing Security, Phase Two Success is providing sufficient minimum Electricity, Phase Three Successes are facilitating a self-sustaining Economy, establishing an effective and representative Government and enhancing services. Phase One is essential for the rest of the Phases to even have a chance, but the rest rely on concurrent successes of one another. When you think about it, this makes sense; any Business School student will tell you that a sense of safety is mandatory for a developing population to move beyond self-preservation tactics, and that electricity is a necessary precursor to an effective Economy. Once the streets are safe and the lights turn on, the money starts flowing. Once there is money to be earned, the inhabitants now have a vested interest in preserving their lifestyles through maintaining security, and participating in Government.

In a COIN environment your DEs are focused on transition to host-nation partner control of five Lines of Effort (in our case). Different units at different echelons serving in both OIF and OEF have organized their LOEs differently, from as few as three to as many as seven. Consider how your DEs may differ if you are in a much more kinetic mission, versus a transition mission, versus a post SOFA mission. They SHOULD be different.

Setting the Stage, Step Two: Develop a Process

Our BCT never lost sight of the fact that we were here for "The People", the Human Terrain. Of course the Human Terrain varies for each Commander and understanding all the factors that impact the Human Terrain is not enough. You must also understand how these influences interact with each other concurrently, and over time (just like understanding how one brick provides strength and support to another when both are walked on.) This is where good staff collaboration and knowledge management coupled with a "flat knowledge management architecture" pays huge dividends. Ideally, the various staff functions merge into one large process that eliminates the "stove-piping" of information. Stove-piping information is like having five brick-layers laying five individual and separate columns of bricks next to each other; these thin columns will not be able to facilitate any type of realistic traffic. But, when laid together in an overlapping pattern with strong mortar in between, the staff can build a five-lane highway. In the same way, a perfect staff should not wait for a meeting to share information; everyone should already have access to each other's work. This allows the meetings you do have, whether in a room or online, to turn into a collaborative brainstorming session, as opposed to an infomercial from each member of the staff.



Our Effects process morphed several times during the first few months we were in theater, but for the second half of the deployment, we had a very predictable cycle that became increasingly effective. Initially our EWG was an Effects Working Group in name only; it was more like an S3 synch meeting, with all the staff sitting there fielding questions from time to time if they were called upon. Later, once we had an actual campaign plan, the LOE Chiefs ran this meeting and it became much more interactive, and everyone got something out of it.

We still struggled, however, in turning our bi-weekly Effect Working Groups from ‘Death by Power Point’ into a more collaborative environment. Even after we got away from the “EWG in name only” the LOE Chiefs would still each get up and brief their part one after another (talking about their individual column of bricks), then sit down and tune out. Later, we got rid of the slides altogether and had a discussion instead of a briefing. We looked on the wall at our BCT Commander’s printed Desired Effects and had each LOE Chief talk about where he saw his LOE influencing ongoing BCT operations, and how he saw the road ahead. As the LOE chiefs began actually talking to each other, their columns of bricks approached one another’s and eventually, began overlapping to enhance one another’s operations.

We were extremely fortunate to have five, very effective, LOE chiefs who were handpicked by the BCT Commander. In increasingly greater instances, the information discussed by each LOE chief in these meetings was not new to the others because we had a very effective portal-based knowledge management system. Everyone in the BCT could routinely check each other’s products at any time, but meetings were a good time to work out final coordination details. By the latter half of the deployment, we did not have to have a meeting to exchange information or to update each other – we did it continuously. Once we crossed that HUGE hurdle, the whole processes became more effective.

Setting the Stage, Step Three: Detailing the Approach

The Lines of Effort Chiefs are the brick-layers, by which the Human Terrain will be directed to walk towards the BDE CDR’s vision of success. In our case we had Five LOEs. It all depends on how the Commander wants to approach his Human Terrain, and on personalities, to include strengths and weaknesses within his staff. Our BCT Commander empowered his LOE Chiefs and had them each develop mini-campaign plans within their LOEs, which they would submit to the planners and Effects Coordinator, who would ensure that each plan augmented the successes of another LOE, and none countered another. Being a LOE Chief was not an additional duty for them, it was their full time job. As time went on the LOE Chiefs became the primary briefers, planners, and executors within the BCT Staff.



Requirements Management

Each of these people **NEED** to know something to do their job, but as the BCT S2 I needed to know something from each of them too. *Hey, let's work together.*

A day in the life....

- IO: Where is anti-Gol propaganda being distributed?
- S9: What is the District government meeting schedule?
- Surgeon: What is the Yarmouk Hospital bed capacity?
- PAO: Who are the local Iraqi Television Station contacts?
- EN: How many Alaska barriers will it take to surround Muhalla 208?
- Security: How effective have bollard fences been in improving security of the Ali Bob Market?
- Economics: Who are the entrepreneurs in M207?
- Essential Services: Where are sewage lines broken in our sector?
- Reconciliation: Which Sunni Sheikhs are promoting sectarianism?
- ISF Cell: How functional are the ISF CPs on Haifa Street?
- Rule of Law: When a murder happens, what is the judicial process?

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Each of the LOE Chiefs had their minimum mission sets for which they were responsible for planning, executing, and evaluating. In our example the BCT Commander assigned multiple Functional Area Officers or NCOs to each LOE Chief to ease the burden. For example:

- The Security LOE Chief also had under him a Major at the JSS ISF Cell, the Field Artillery Warrant doing Lethal Targeting coordination with the ISF, and the Provost Marshal who worked coordination with the local Iraq Police (IPs) for training and recruitment.
- The Governance LOE Chief non-lethally targeted District-level government organizations, while the BNs targeted Neighborhood level organizations. Under the Governance LOE our Air Force BCT Electronic Warfare Officer also served as the Reconciliation Officer, and the Judge Advocate General also worked on Rule of Law within the District Judicial Department.
- The Essential Services Chief had a task-organized Infrastructure Coordination Element handling all contracting in the District. The BDE Surgeon ran the Medical Services functional area, under essential services, and assisted in coordinating medical facility evaluations throughout the BCT AOR.
- The Economics LOE Chief worked with the District Chamber of commerce and oversaw the Micro-Loans program.

- Finally, the Information Operations LOE Chief worked closely with the attached PSYOP teams, the Public Affairs Officer, and the Intelligence Section. IO was part of the planning for every operation, whether it was lethal or non-lethal. It was “all encompassing” to our operations. Effective IO allowed all the other Lines of Effort to reach their transition DPs faster.

After DE identification, the planners must develop a Campaign Plan based on mapping the current Human Terrain through pattern analysis and LOE SITEMPs. In addition, in a modular staff everyone has to be a “prosumer”, a producer and consumer of each other’s information. Just like a “fused” all-source intelligence product integrates all the “INTs,” a good staff effort in COIN integrates analysis from each of the staff enablers to produce a high-definition big-picture analysis, so that the Commander can get the high level of fidelity about the status of the Human Terrain he needs to make the right decisions. The biggest challenge here is teaching other staff sections and Line of Effort Chiefs how to create SITEMPs for their LOEs, how to write good Running Estimates for their LOEs, and then how to write good ISR Tasks based on gaps in information that their Running Estimates have identified.

While S2 folks around the Army know how to do an Enemy SITEMP, how many people know how to do an Economic SITEMP, or a IO SITEMP, just to name a few? However, our LOE Chiefs figured it out and the S2 shop was critical in showing them how. Once we laid all these SITEMPs on top of each other (Enemy and all the LOEs) it was amazing how the answer to your Human Terrain dilemma would jump out at you. From these LOE SITEMPs BCT level planners can develop Campaign oriented DPs; these are the final decisions that are made once PIR Running Estimates indicate we have reached success.

Setting the Stage, Step Four: Produce Intelligence

Once the Campaign Plan was developed, all of these LOE subject matter experts (SMEs), and the Battalions who had to execute their plans, began asking questions to the Intelligence Section and asking for resources from the Operations Section. We began to notice that very few of these questions actually had anything to do with the Enemy. Most of the RFIs coming out of the LOE Chiefs were about the local population, the Human Terrain. In fact, over time, our “Herbivore” staff officers at BCT and BN level were generating twice as many RFIs as our “Carnivores.” Our BCT was now conducting a balanced Lethal/Non-Lethal Effects cycle, and our increased successes drove us further towards the Non-Lethal. This, too, makes sense in the big picture, since in a perfect world, an effective COIN campaign plan would achieve 100% of its effects through 100% non-lethal means: prevention of crime and death through education, health care, information operations, representative government, etc, etc.

In a bottom fed intelligence and information fight 80-90% of your RFIs will be answered by assets internal to your organization. Many of these organic assets do not consider themselves intelligence collectors but THEY are interacting with locals who are important to the BCT CDR’s Campaign Plan. This goes back to our definition of OPSINT near the beginning of the article, every operation your unit does, lethal or non-lethal, is a source of information that feeds the greater understanding of the Human Terrain. In COIN, every enabler in the unit MUST be

Information is Currency in a SASO Fight



The COIN Intel Fight remains 90% bottom-up, 10% top-down
So, how relevant were we at BCT level to the units below us?

"Stability Operations are like watching continents move"

- The sum of a lot of small and varied factors affect their overall speed and location
- Signs of change are almost un-noticeable in the short-term
- *Over time, change can be measured through many different and specialized indicators*
- The ability to manage your collection requirements and reporting at the lowest level is the key to success

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included in the ISR Synchronization cycle. The other 10-20% can be answered through Intelligence reach, RFIs to higher, or ISR Requests to higher. Creating a meshed or "flat" knowledge management system within your organization gives the entire staff easy access to each others' knowledge, priorities, and efforts. This makes everyone's products better because they know that their audience is wide and this improved analysis fully integrates all staff efforts towards the common campaign goals. It also makes

deliberate MDMP and Time Sensitive Planning go much faster, since most of your staff's products are already "ready-to-update" and usually just need to be tweaked for a particular mission.

On the Stage: PIR Decides if the Intelligence Warfighting Function (IWF) is Relevant or a Waste of Time

Now that we have set the stage for our discussion, you may be wondering why we spent so much time talking about the rest of the staff functions and have mentioned Intelligence Operations so little. The answer is, "To be relevant to the BCT CDR's Decision Points, the Intelligence War Fighting Function MUST understand the intricacies of all of his staff functions and Lines of Effort which also affect his Decision Points."

The reason that many Intelligence Staffs are perceived to be less relevant in a counterinsurgency is that many leaders who have "grown up" in the Army or the Marines expect the Intelligence Section to operate in accordance with conventional doctrine. We are here to tell everyone differently: many concepts from conventional doctrine still apply to our current theaters, but their application has changed dramatically. The only mission of the Intelligence Section is to answer the commander's PIR, but if his PIR are not COIN-centric, his Intelligence Section will not help him make the correct decisions in his COIN battlefield.

Backstage: How PIR Use to be Written and WHY

In a conventional, top-fed Intelligence fight, Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield relied heavily on already established enemy Order of Battle and doctrinal templates. Once those templates were overlaid upon the terrain to develop the situational template, the S2 crossed off enemy doctrinal capabilities prevented by the layout of the terrain. Then, the S2 developed Enemy Courses of Action based on this SITEMP and developed PIR which would confirm or deny the expected ECOA and then provide early warning for which of the other possible ECOAs the enemy would actually employ. Because the S2 had a lot of information about the who, what,

why, and how of enemy operations, the PIR were often written in Yes/No format in order to facilitate *short-term*, impending tactical, operational decisions to counter enemy operations.

Frontstage: Why COIN PIR Must be Written Differently

In COIN, the assumptions we naturally made about knowing the who, what, why, and how of enemy operations must be killed. Our PIR must be written to now answer ALL of the 5Ws and H. In addition, our assumption about the relevant time-frame of our PIR must also be discarded because the decisions they support may be VERY *long-term*. Finally, our traditional assumption about the target of our PIR must also be eliminated. Traditional, “Enemy-focused” PIR are just not going to cut it in COIN because the enemy is just one factor in the Common Operating Picture.

From all of these dead assumptions, we can now argue that Doctrinal, “Yes/No Question” or “Simple, One-concept” PIR will limit the BCT CDR’s ability to analyze the entire situation. Since COIN is complex and multi-faceted, so too should be his PIR. Instead, the Commander’s Priority Intelligence Requirements must help him assess how close he is to his Desired Effects (desired end-state). Once he achieves a Desired Effect, he can decide to transition the aspects of the Lines of Effort that support that Desired Effect to local national control.

Through trial and error highlighted in the article, *Intelligence Surveillance, and Reconnaissance in a Counterinsurgency: Ten A-ha Moments on the way to Battlefield Awareness* (Small Wars Journal, Nov 10, 2008: <http://smallwarsjournal.com/mag/2008/11/isr-collection-management-int.php>), we had great success in writing our PIR around the “Why,” the advantages of which we will now explain.

Bad PIR Examples

First here are some examples of bad COIN PIR. We’ve all seen them before, usually tucked away in some obscure folder on someone’s hard-drive, or posted on the wall, behind the supply closet. These PIR, written for a specific method of attack that a particular insurgent groups is observed to use, and is reactive in nature. These PIR focus on the “What or When” but does not get to the heart of the issues, the pervasiveness of enemy operations within the Human Terrain.

“What is the composition, disposition, and strength of the enemy?” is often followed by the proverbial: “How, when, and where will the enemy attack us?” PIR like these are the first steps in derailing your entire ISR Synchronization process. When we surf the SIPRNET of units at various echelons in all different theaters of operation, in all sorts of different situations, we unfortunately see examples of PIR like this over and over again.

Most importantly, the answer to this question does not recommend a next action nor is it tied to a single Decision Point. If you really “know” your enemy, you can decide to target them lethally, non-lethally, directly, indirectly, or never, depending on what you are trying to achieve.

“Who are the enemy operating in our AO?” is the second type of poor PIR we see. Going after the “Who” is more proactive than going after the “What” but it still does not get to the heart of

the issue. And, just like Socialism, it may look good on paper but in reality, it's a complete failure. This is because it takes so much man-power just to positively identify the enemy in a region where names, nicknames, clothing, vehicles, homes, and even identification badges were easily exchangeable. Even when we were able to flex our entire Intelligence War Fighting Function to answering the "Who," we learned that targeting specific individuals, and trying to disrupt or neutralize specific networks, only had short term effects. Since we did not get to the root of the problem these organizations were able to reconstitute themselves relatively quickly. Lopping off heads was just like mowing grass.

This does not mean that the lethal targeting effort is not important; it is an essential part of the Security LOE. It also helps set the conditions for the other LOEs to be successful, but it is not an end in and of itself. Conversely the other LOEs facilitate the success of the lethal targeting effort. As we have stated, in COIN, everything is interrelated.

Good PIR Examples

Imagine, if instead, you figured out "Why" one particular insurgent group chooses to attack the unit (with IEDs in one case), or more importantly, "Why" the insurgent group has the ABILITY to move freely within the Human Terrain to attack the unit. Wouldn't this give you much more relevant and actionable answers within a COIN campaign? Imagine again, then if every "Why" question had multiple answers from multiple LOEs. Wouldn't some of these answers provide information related to "Who" is in the insurgent group and "Who" others provide passive or direct support to them? The beauty of asking "Why" is that the answers are complex, multi-faceted, and often vary from neighborhood to neighborhood and from insurgent groups to insurgent group. PIR has to answer the previously unknown parts of Who, What, When, Where, How, *WHY!!!* This is the evolution of writing proper, RELEVANT, COIN PIR.

When you step back and think about it, this makes a lot of sense. When you play a football game and lose, you want to evaluate "Why" you lost, which envelops "Who" was on your team and "Who" was on the opponent's team, "What" plays both teams executed, "How" both were trained or equipped, "Where" the game was located (home field advantage), and "When" in the season it occurred (experience level). If you lose, you can very logically assume that one or more of these influences passively or actively countered your team's vision of "Success." Similarly, if you are unsuccessful in your BCT operations to mold and shape your Human Terrain (i.e., achieve your Desired Effects), you can assume it is because one or more of the multiple influences affecting your Human Terrain are passively or actively countering your success. When you learn *WHY* you are unsuccessful in your operations supporting each desired effect, you will also get the answer to the rest of the *5Ws and H*.

CRUCIAL SIDE-ADVANTAGE: THE ANSWER TO YOUR PIR WILL RECOMMEND AN INTEGRATED, FULL-SPECTRUM SERIES OF NEXT ACTIONS!!!

Multiple Personality Disorder: Changing Your PIR Changes Your Priorities!

The great thing about spending a lot of time and energy writing good PIR the first time is that it prevents the unit from having to rewrite PIR as conditions change. Once you have well-written,

campaign-focused PIR, then you will never be forced to enter “react to contact” mode any more as an Intelligence Officer. This means that you can keep your eyes on the prize, facilitating your commander’s campaign-plan DPs, despite ups and downs in attacks, or changes in TTPs.

This is a crucial difference from the role conventional PIR played in the Military Decision Making Process. In force-on-force campaigns, a Battalion or above usually had to plan different, often unrelated operations due to the fact that they continued to move forward and change their AO after they completed a mission. This meant that their PIR were what we now call “Time-Sensitive” or “Named-Operation” PIR, tied to a *short-term* series of actions. But now that units clear and retain their AOs, many units also design “Enduring” or “Steady-State” PIR, tied to *long-term* campaigns.

Fun Flashbacks: Take a Moment to Imagine (or Remember) this Frustrating Scenario:

Dilemma: IEDs are hot in your sector. Multiple task forces and even agencies have been created at echelons above you to get “Left of the Boom.” One day, your Commander comes into your intelligence shop and says, “We have to fix this IED problem!” So, what do you do? Stop everything, pull your analysts together and try to devise a plan that ensures every single collector and analyst concentrates on “the IED problem.”

Then, the next week it’s... “Murders and Sectarian Violence are really increasing! Reconciliation must be our main focus!” You KNOW what to do; you gather your analyst and redirect your collection efforts, again! Even worse, you CHANGE YOUR PIR! Enter Vehicle-Borne IEDs, Man-Portable Air Defense Missiles, Money Launderers, each one of them with their fifteen minutes of fame, in the “Hall of the Shiny Balls of the Week.” We all know these methods of attack are serious business, especially if you and your Soldiers are on the receiving end of them, but in order to win (so we are NOT on the receiving end anymore) we need to get at the root of the problem. These are methods of attack used by insurgent networks to achieve THEIR campaign goals. How do we neutralize THEIR Desired Effects? “Why” are we not being successful in doing that?

What’s the take-away here? When you divert, redirect, reassess, redesign your ISR Scheme of Manuever every time someone presents an even shinier ball than before, how does this impact your ability to collect, manage, analyze, and distribute intelligence in support of your commander’s campaign plan over the long term? It is the ultimate NEUTRALIZER of the Intelligence War Fighting Function. Multiple enemies use multiple tactics to keep us distracted, in order to prevent us from achieving our Desired Effects! Stop and think about it for a moment. Doesn’t it make sense?

When we travel to different units and schoolhouse classes, soldiers always ask where enduring versus operational PIR fit into the picture. This is a great question and a dilemma for most BN S2s. Does your Commander want short term PIR tied to the next operation, or does he want to have PIR that are tied to his LOEs, that get to the root of the problem. Ultimately the Commander is always right as they are HIS PIR, but as MI Professionals we can set him up for success by giving him PIR that are comprehensive in nature, and tied to all aspects of the overall campaign plan. On a side note we were also asked where we keep our “Starfish” PIR (As it was

explained to us by this eager captain, Starfish are a commander's PRIORITY PIR.) That would be Priority Priority Intelligence Requirements. Kind of like VIP and Very VIP.

Some intelligence requirements will never go away, due to the continuous nature of our mission. Other intelligence requirements, however, are only applicable before, during, or after a specific operation. But, if you find yourself in a situation where your operational Specific Intelligence Requirements (SIR) do not fit under your PIR, then you have to ask yourself (or your Commander) "How does this mission support our Campaign Plan?" or ask, "Are your Priority Intelligence Requirements capturing everything you need to know?" If you have written good PIR to support your Campaign Plan, you will find that you do not have to create PIR for each operation. Instead, nest Operational and Enduring SIRs under each of your existing PIR. It all goes back to using your PIR for long term goals while making your SIRs/IRs beneath them the dynamic part that changes as the situation requires.

Now that you are feeling defeated, let us offer a better way: leave your PIR alone, make your SIR process dynamic instead as previously mentioned. We updated our SIRs every two weeks, or as needed. When writing your PIR, ask yourself the following, "Reality Checklist" questions:

Reality Checklist One: PIR DEVELOPMENT

1. Is this PIR tied to a Campaign Decision Point, which is tied to the Campaign Plan's Desired Effects? Does it support the objectives within each LOE?
2. Does this question seek to find out the Underlying Reason of our failure or success?
3. Is this question specific to OUR mission or a generic slide-filler?
4. Does it encapsulate the Specific Intelligence Requirements (ISR Tasks) that LOE Chiefs and BNs actually want to know?
5. Do the answers to this question include references to our operations, local national operations, enemy operations, and the human terrain?
6. Is this PIR important specifically to your (BCT) echelon? Or, is this a Division or BN PIR?
7. If the PIR is answered, will the BCT do something different? Or, is this beyond the scope of the BCT's authority?
8. Who cares? So What?

Similarly, when you are writing your SIRs, use the following "Reality Checklist" to make sure you're on track:

Reality Checklist Two: SIR DEVELOPMENT

1. Is this SIR tied to a near term Operational/Mission Set Decision Point?
2. Does that Decision Point support the Operation/Mission set's Desired Effects as defined by the BCT Commander?
3. Does this SIR seek to find out the Underlying Reason?
4. Does this SIR encapsulate the hundreds of Information Requirements related to this topic that LOEs and BNs actually want to know?

5. Do the answers to this SIR include references to our operations, local national operations, enemy operations, and the human terrain?
6. Does this SIR fit under more than one PIR? In a COIN Campaign oriented on the Human Terrain this is likely, but it's not a problem!

How to Drink from a Fire Hose: PIR Running Estimates

Well-written COIN PIR open the flood gates for relevant information, which must be collected, managed, analyzed, and distributed in an understandable manner. If the COIN environment is the fire hose, then your PIR Running Estimates are the pressure-regulating valves, which filter the first level of relevant information and direct the water into your analytical process funnel. A PIR Running Estimate is a historical, graphical depiction of how our Human Terrain responded to stimuli over time (the last two weeks in our case). In addition, it is a grading tool which made us self-teaching, and self-improving. Finally, it is a continuous re-evaluation of where we stand on each PIR, which gave us the ability to identify well thought-out gaps in Intelligence. These intelligence gaps became Information Requirements, and generated new SIRs in a continuous cycle.

We, the authors, must be honest. We had heard of “Running Estimates” but had no idea what they did or how they could help us. In fact, we pulled out the doctrine (on PDF) and pressed Ctrl-F to find the mention of REs to try to figure out how they could help us. But, it took several iterations before we realized their true value.

Initially the co-author, the BCT S2, envisioned doing running estimates based on methods of attack. In hind sight this was a big mistake. Doing an IED, VBIED, IDF, etc...etc... Running

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Who Makes Your PIR Running Estimates?

TOPIC	MADE BY
Why are local:	
• PIR1: Security forces unable to secure our AO?	• ISF Cell OIC/Security LOE Chief/S2 PIR1 Analyst
• PIR2: Governance unable to represent the needs of the population?	• S9 GOV LOE Chief/S2 PIR2 Analyst
• PIR3: Public services unable to provide civil services to our population	• ESS LOE Chief/CA Commander/S2 PIR3 LOE Chief
• PIR4: Chamber of Commerce unable to promote a growing economy?	• S9 Economics LOE Chief/CA Commander/ S2 PIR4 Analyst
• PIR5: Entities unable to control the information environment?	• S7 IOCOORD/PSYOP Commander/S2 PIR5 Analyst
• Network Analyses (Lethal and Influence Organizations)	• S2 Network Analysts/LOE Chiefs
• Lethal Targeting Packets – HVIs	• S2 Lethal Targeting Analysts/FEC Lethal WO
• Influence Targeting Cards	• S2 Influence Targeting Analysts/FEC Influence WO

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Estimates was reactive in nature, and did not get to the heart of the problem. They essentially became history papers and more “bean counting”. After much trial and error we decided to do a Running Estimate for each PIR. It was a tool for the whole staff to see where we stood on each LOE, and the objectives within each. This meant the LOE chiefs had input, but also benefited from the output. These REs helped the staff coalesce as the REs were no longer “just some Intel product the S2 made” but a team effort.

How to Create Valves

1. Our collection sections (single-source analysts for HUMINT, SIGINT, IMINT, OPSINT) produced daily reports in summary form (HUMSUM, SIGSUM, IMSUM, OPSUM).

2. Our production section (all-source analysts) then evaluated each report for their applicability to any collection requirement within our ISR Synchronization Plan and “tagged” each report to a PIR in our Daily GRINTSUM.
3. Our PIR section (all-source analysts) then collected all other reports, indications, SIGACTS, and CONOPS, and Storyboards, which applied to a single PIR for the last two weeks to make one of our Draft PIR Running Estimates.
4. Our PIR Working Groups then discussed all of these reports (LOE reps and one member from each single-source INT) to ensure that we had EVERY applicable report or event (blue, yellow, green, or red).
5. Our PIR analysts then discussed the previous Estimate’s prediction (about the past two weeks) and the current situation for the PIR (ensuring that was how everyone else saw it, too).
6. The Working Group then came to a consensus on why the prediction was accurate, semi-accurate, or completely wrong. This portion was our self-grading and self-teaching portion.
7. Based on our ability (or lack thereof) to have predicted the future from the previous estimate, the Working Group then brainstormed future intelligence actions together.
8. These working groups occurred two days before the final PIR Running Estimate was published, which gave our analysts time to develop future actions, and then update their Intelligence Gap list by crossing off filled gaps from the previous Estimate, and identifying new gaps.
9. After the Working Group, our PIR analysts then evaluated each Intel Gap to see if it had met the conditions to upgrade to an IRs (based on action ability).
10. Our PIR Analysts then published the Final PIR Running Estimate two days after the Working Group.
11. Our Network analysts (all-source analysts) then pulled each Estimate to see which of their Network Analysis gaps and requirements were met. They updated their link diagrams, SITEmps and COAs.
12. Our Network analysts then nominated lethal and non-lethal targets to the Targeting Section (all-source analysts and Field Artillery soldiers). The all-source analysts and Field Artillery soldiers then produced our lethal and non-lethal Target Packets
13. The Targeting Section’s Field Artillery Warrants then worked with all the LOEs to develop targeting plans for each target, lethal and non-lethal.

Again, the MOST REVOLUTIONARY aspect of creating these PIR REs were the self-grading portion where we actually wrote why we were right, off, or wrong, and what actions we would take in the future to either maintain or improve our predictive ability. These actions could be in our collection management, analysis, or distribution phases. The actual MAGIC occurred when, over time, our analysts were almost never wrong about their ability to predict how certain events affected the Human Terrain. Of course, not being omniscient, our unit was never able to GATHER all relevant information upon which to make predictions, but for the information that we had, we KNEW how it would affect our Human Terrain. After Eight rounds of working groups (each PIR WG was offset by three days from the next one) we no longer needed the WGs to facilitate collaboration and info sharing. The members of the WG began to cross-check each other on a daily basis. And when E-4s started collaborating with other E-4s on their own, we knew we had achieved SUCCESS!

Conclusion

Writing PIR at any echelon in support of a COIN Campaign plan has to span the full spectrum of influences on the Human Terrain. If your operations are 70% non-lethal then why would your PIR be 90% kinetic? Looking at the current MNC-I Campaign LOEs and Campaign Objectives the other day we realized that if they achieved all their non-lethal objectives that they would defeat the insurgents without firing a shot, in a perfect world. However, we do not live in a perfect world so we know that there will always be a percentage of lethal operations in COIN, however, they are not decisive in and of themselves, nor will they ever be. The IWF's ability to support the WHOLE Campaign plan, measure success in the form of PIR Running Estimates, and synchronize information requirements from across the staff make the IWF a powerful, and let us say Decisive tool, in what is the most complex of combat environments.

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