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Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Collection Management in the Brigade Combat Team during COIN: Three Assumptions and Ten "A-Ha!" Moments on the Path to Battlefield Awareness

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INTRODUCTION

We found traditional CM and subsequent analytical methods inapplicable to our fight, but realized that we had to develop systems which met CM needs within counterinsurgency (COIN) to maintain our relevance to our lower and higher echelons.... Our most unconventional initiative was to have our PIR span the full spectrum of BCT Operations, essential when fighting in a COIN environment

Collection Management (CM) has long been considered the bane of any intelligence officer's existence, even in the days of force-on-force doctrine when intelligence operations were much simpler than they are today. Those of us in the S2 section of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 1st Cavalry Division operating in the Karkh Security District (KSD) of Baghdad, Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) 06-08, felt no differently about CM when we took over our area of operations (AO). We began those operations with three basic assumptions:

- That CM was somehow an irrelevant, if not exactly a dinosaur of Cold War intelligence art
- That enemy focused priority intelligence requirements (PIR) would drive our knowledge management (KM) system
- That after five years of war we would find a KM system in place that met the commander's needs in counter-insurgency (COIN)

War like life is a journey of discovery and the flaws in those assumptions revealed themselves in ten "A Ha!" moments during our journey. We found traditional CM and subsequent analytical methods inapplicable to our fight, but realized that we had to develop systems, which met CM needs within a COIN environment to maintain our relevance to our lower and higher echelons. After six months of development, we implemented an improved CM cycle that optimized our unit capabilities and mitigated our weaknesses - one that supported our balanced lethal and non-lethal operational tempo. Improving our CM cycle compounded our successes within our unique, high-density, urban AO. We combined doctrinal and non-doctrinal approaches to ensure our PIR

were linked directly to the BCT Commander's decision points, and his desired effects. Our most unconventional initiative was to have our PIR span the full spectrum of BCT Operations, essential when fighting in a counterinsurgency (COIN) environment. Even though our experience was highly specific, the lessons we learned are universal and can be applied to any operational environment.

ASSUMPTION 1: DOCTRINAL CM WAS A DINOSAUR

Like most units fighting the war today, we began with the premise that the doctrinal CM Cycle as put forward in Field Manual 34-2 *Collection Management and Synchronization Planning* was not well-suited to a COIN fight. The way we had been taught CM seemed like an archaic doctrine, written for an army of old fighting an enemy of old. That we were not alone in this assessment was proven by the way other units had been applying CM during the last five years of OIF.

At most levels, CM had devolved into only asset management, with not half as much effort directed at requirements management. This was the reason why countless people spent countless hours organizing an unmanned aerial system (UAS) schedule or Guardrail schedule, while only one or two spent time answering requests for information (RFI) from lower echelons.

In the end, we realized that upper echelons felt that their primary duty to us was to provide access to collection assets, not to provide the answers to the requirements we sent to them. Of course, it is always easier to push the obligation of answering a question back to the originator, rather than finding another unit that already *has* the answer to that question. So like many units, we decided that we did not need a CM cycle, just some asset management.

In this way, we perpetuated the problem and made ourselves as irrelevant to our own battalions as our higher headquarters were to us. After all in a bottom-fed Intelligence fight, the higher echelon (at every level) is almost never in a position to provide additional resolution on their subordinate unit's sector. What we called our CM Cycle consisted of submitting our subordinate battalions' UAS requests to our division to get approved, 72 hours before execution. When asked how we managed our assets, our reporting, and our feedback, the answer was, "we make it up as we go along."

As our information requirements (IR) got more detailed and became cyclic themselves, however, the BCT S2 decided that the CM cycle should be the primary forcing function for the pace, priority, and quality of intelligence in a "full-service" unit – one that collects, analyzes, and distributes intelligence. Unfortunately, the CM section, which does not really exist on the BCT table of organization (MTOE) was an Army-of-One, just handling the UAS requests.

We recognized our own ignorance concerning our district. We also recognized that equally ignorant people would turn to us when they wanted to know anything, everything, or everything about anything in our area of operation (AO). We figured the sheer volume of IRs would be impossible to manage by one soldier, so we identified the need for an effective automated system to compile, organize, and track the requirements.

ASSUMPTION 2: STANDARD ENEMY-FOCUSED PIR WOULD DRIVE OUR KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

As we began to centrally consolidate our IRs from all of our intelligence soldiers who received them, we saw the need for some sort of organized matrix. So, we put them all into a basic collection plan (ref. FM 34-2) and tried to tie them to the generic priority intelligence requirements (PIR) that we had adopted from the unit we replaced. We inputted these IRs into an Excel™ spreadsheet and distributed it through e-mail, but soon found out that e-mailing 27 versions of the latest matrix to 200 plus requestors and 50 plus asset managers became impossible to track!

When confronted with the miscommunication resulting from this chaos, we decided to upload the spreadsheet onto an HTML SharePoint Portal (not an FTP folder), as a central depository where everyone could look at what everyone was asking and see what had already been answered. When we decided to do everything online, we quickly realized that we didn't know where our own information was, never mind attempting to direct other people to our own products.

So, we had to implement an effective Knowledge Management (KM) program first, as a sound base for requirements and asset management as well as intelligence analysis and distribution. Since we had no good model for what KM was, we again "made it up as we went along." We revamped how we organized raw reporting, analytical products, summaries, and requests, how we sorted our folders (by topic, not by author) and websites (by topic, finished products only) and our information dissemination plans (no more e-mail distribution lists! Post it and send out a link!).

We started with the S2 section but eventually incorporated the S3 section and the chiefs of our five lines of effort (LOE) to do the same thing because many of the unit's IRs were not enemy-focused. Each and every intelligence officer in this war has gotten phone calls asking the time of a governance meeting, or the date of an economic assessment, or the effectiveness of an information operations (IO) flyer. Once we did this we significantly cut down on email spam, circular reporting. Everyone could find everyone else's information, across the staff, 24 hours a day. Our motto for breaking the email culture was "more people need to know **then** you know"; they were words to live by and we did.

ASSUMPTION 3: SOMEONE ELSE HAD FIGURED IT OUT

When we realized that what we sought to do was "graduate-level" intelligence operations, we figured that someone else must have already figured out what "right" looked like. We figured we could look at the collection plans out there from the past five years from different units. We were wrong. The collection plans were archaic, rigid, and inapplicable to the unconventional battle space. They had not evolved since OIF-II. We realized we would have to start from scratch.

We already had some PIRs; it's one of those mandatory products you had to do for an operation like "count the number of vehicles you have" or "make a list of important tasks." But, the overwhelming majority of echelons above us did not have a full spectrum collection strategy;

they only had asset schedules, usually centered around full motion video (FMV) assets like UAS and Aerostats. What's more, HUMINT and SIGINT collection strategies were often stove-piped, and not synchronized with each other.

We knew that to be effective in a “fire-hose of information” AO, we had to have a living, ever-changing full spectrum Collection Plan. We decided to apply our improved CM cycle to support our “Intelligence Support to Lethal Targeting” section, which had the most perishable, time-sensitive IRs. We had this section write down all the IRs from each of their target packets and loosely fit them under one of our five enemy focused PIRs we had at the time.

We then tasked collection on these IR out in fragmentary orders (FRAGO) with the basic 5Ws (who what where when and why) in no real priority or easily manageable format. That worked for a while for targeting, but as other analysts saw the benefit to the lethal targeting section, they too, started chipping in IRs for their analytical products, realizing that instead of just passively waiting for a miracle to answer some of their intelligence gaps, they could *get* them answered. So the IR list online grew bigger and bigger. Fortunately, by this point, we had learned which assets could handle what types and amounts of IRs, so we began to write really effective specific orders and requests (SOR) tailored to capabilities of specific collectors.

THE FIRST A-HA! IS INTELLIGENCE BOUND BY THE ENEMY?

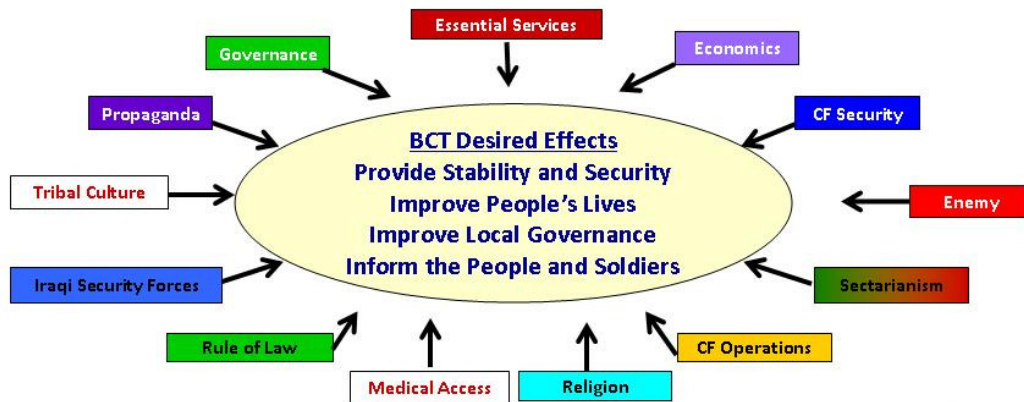
Common wisdom—also doctrine—dictates that if a group of IRs are answered, thereby fulfilling a commander's PIR, then the commander should be able to take action at the DP tied to the PIR. That is the “magic” of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR). We had the IRs tasked and we were collecting on PIR but our magic pot refused to boil. We asked ourselves, “Is our Intel section really helping this Brigade's operations?”

We looked at our priorities of effort, our PIR list, and the first “A Ha!” hit us with, “Hmm, they're all anti-enemy, but most of our operations are pro-Iraqi.” Additionally, most of the phone calls we get are questions about ‘this local leader’, ‘that entrepreneur’, ‘the other doctor’, ‘the sewage lines’, or a hundred similar issues.

We always tell the requestors that we don't know the answer to their questions because we're just the Intel folks, and if their question is not enemy-related, we don't care!” Then the requestor would say, “Isn't Intel supposed to know everything?” That was a revealing question! On average, our unit conducted more than 50% non-lethal operations, so why was our intelligence cycle just supporting the less than 50% lethal operations? Our answer, “because that's the way it's always been done,” seemed weak. We asked ourselves, “Is intelligence only about the enemy?”

Change your thinking!

- Traditional, enemy-based PIR are just not going to cut it!
- The enemy is just one factor in the Common Operating Picture
- Believe it or not, in COIN, your Herbivores will generate more requirements than your Carnivores



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We had been flexing all of our intelligence efforts towards defeating the enemy, so why were we still not winning the war? Where was the magic? Maybe, because we should have been flexing our intelligence efforts towards supporting the five friendly lines of operation, instead!

This idea was way outside the box - we were excited and scared. We asked the Commander, "Sir, would you mind if we prioritized your collection and analysis not in terms of just your enemy, but in terms of your overall campaign goals? Since your operations are 50% non-lethal, we recommend your collection efforts reflect this."

He approved the idea and supported our initiatives.

THE SECOND A-HA! WE FIND ONLY THAT WE SEEK

For collection operations to change its focus, we had to rewrite the PIR they supported. As we rewrote our PIR to support our non-lethal operations, we reviewed our lethal PIR and saw that we had written ourselves into a box of conventional expectations of our enemy, based on old doctrine. This is a common mistake that most units make, as had the unit from which we had taken authority.

When we first arrived in theater we used the approach we observed other units using for their

enemy PIR, which is centered on the “WHAT” or “HOW” of the enemy attack. (This approach is most often used for Force Protection priority areas.) Many units try this method because they think, “If I know HOW the bad guys will attack (i.e. WHAT they will use to attack), I can watch for clues about their attack and prevent or counter it.” We had written our enemy PIR based on their example, which was centered on the “How” or “What.” Our original PIR were similar to theses:

- What are the indicators and warnings that insurgents will attack our soldiers and allies, our secure areas, and our local nationals using Improvised Explosive Devices?
- What are the indicators and warnings that insurgents will attack our soldiers and allies, our secure areas, and our local nationals using Indirect Fire?
- What are the indicators and warnings that insurgents will attack our soldiers and allies, our secure areas, and our local nationals using Direct Fire?
- What are the indicators and warnings that insurgents will attack our soldiers and allies, our secure areas, and our local nationals using Chemical weapons? (Believe it or not.)

As we started creating the analytical products resulting from this line of collection, however, we realized we were just responding to symptoms of the problem, not the problem itself. We pursued the “WHAT” approach primarily by counting various types of significant actions (SIGACT) and trying to draw statistically relevant conclusions by type of attack, improvised explosive device (IED), suicide vehicle IED (SVBIED), rocket attacks, and so on.

Due to the nature of this so-called “analytical method,” we quickly started calling this method “bean counting.” Units, like ours, would build all sorts of pie charts, graphs, “wheels of death” and other gee-wiz graphical products from all the SIGACTs in their sector, and present them as finished intelligence products without ever making the next mental leap of faith of the “so what?” This is not intelligence work and the Army would probably be better served by hiring a bunch of post-graduate statisticians to do this.

Too many MI professionals get into the endless cycle of crunching together SIGACTs to create irrelevant averages. These statistical analyses sometimes work when fighting against one enemy with one doctrinal template and one motivation. When fighting multiple insurgent groups, however, this creates numbers and averages that ultimately make no sense because many of the insurgent groups are operating with their own agenda and their own time line, which is completely unrelated to the group using the same types of attacks for different reasons in the next neighborhood.

Additionally, the “WHAT” approach is reactive in nature and takes units down the “Counter-IED” rabbit hole. As Air Force Lt Col Mike “Starbaby” Pietrucha stated in his presentation, “*All Over the Chart: A Few Thoughts from an Irregular Warfare Perspective*”, “Counter-IED” is like saying “Counter-AK-47.” Countering specific SIGACT types does not get to the root of the problem. Unfortunately, a large amount of today's Army leadership has fallen victim to the SIGACT-trap, abundantly using the latest catch phrase, “Let's get to the left of the BOOM!” This mind set has resulted in the creation of all sorts of “Counter IED” organizations and special task

forces at echelons above the BCT and Division, ones that soak up trained personnel who should be down at battalion and below level. Good intentions gone awry.

In a bottom fed intelligence fight the higher the echelon you try and do Intelligence analysis at the less relevant you are; this is the inverse of the conventional Army we all grew up in. The intelligence personnel in many of these Task Forces and other Counter IED organizations would have been more effectively used manning company intelligence support teams, which in turn would have actually had a greater impact in the long run neutralizing insurgent groups that used IEDs as a method of attack.

The "WHAT/HOW" calamity does have a flip side, however, with the great successes of explosive ordnance disposal and Air Force weapons intelligence teams pushed down to BCT level. These teams were heroes, and when fully integrated into the BCT, bridged the gap between the technical side of the "WHAT" and the analytical side of the "SO WHAT."

Unfortunately, enemy TTPs were so continuously and quickly evolving that we could never get ahead of the enemy's decision cycle and disrupt it, the ultimate goal of operational level units. We decided to shift gears to a less defensive posture (and less bean-counting) because we knew that brigade intelligence should drive brigade-level lethal targeting. Of course, before you can target anyone, you need to know WHO they are. Units usually start asking about the "WHO" because they think, "If I know WHO the bad guys are, I can find them in a crowd and stop them before they attack." Thus, we re-wrote our PIR centered on the "WHO" of our enemy. They were very similar in wording to this:

- Who are the Sunni insurgents attacking our soldiers and allies, our secure areas, and our local nationals?
- Who are the Shia insurgents attacking our soldiers and allies, our secure areas, and our local nationals?
- Who are the Foreign Fighters attacking our soldiers and allies, our secure areas, and our local nationals?

Unfortunately, we found that the enemy was too good at hiding themselves within non-combatants, using multiple names, ID cards, nicknames, and appearance changes. We were expending way too much energy at trying to just positively identify (PID) our enemy for an insufficient return. We just couldn't figure out WHO THEY WERE!

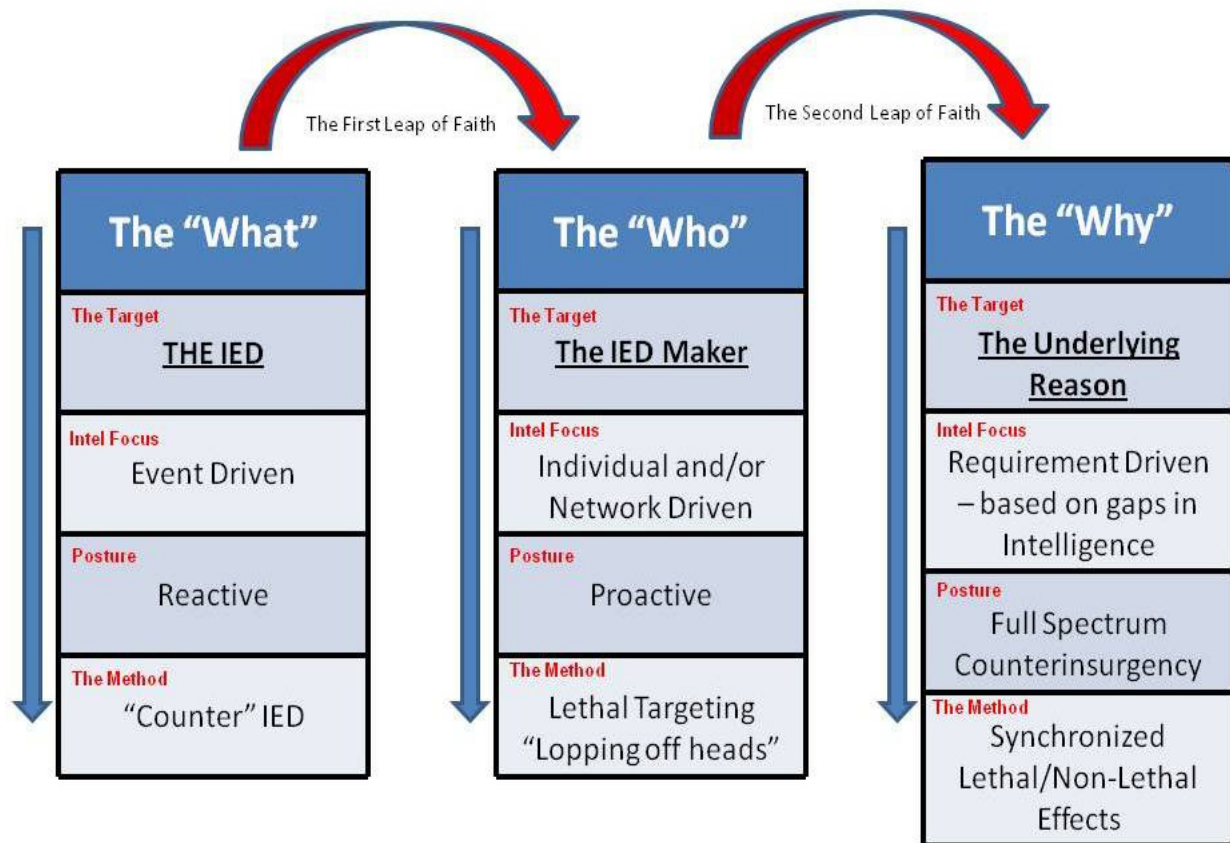
Finally, we realized (after much trial and error) that what we really wanted to know was WHY our operations were working or not working. We could observe whether our operations were meeting their measures of effectiveness and hence, assess if they were being effective. If they were not being effective, we could assume that this was because the enemy was actively targeting (or countering) our operational goals. So, we rewrote our PIR around enemy intentions, centered on the "WHY" of an organization. We thought, "If we know WHY our enemy is attacking our desired effects, maybe we can figure out how to appease them."

So, we rewrote our PIR within the reference of our operational objectives:

- Why are certain organizations attempting to infiltrate our secure areas?
- Why are certain organizations attempting to intimidate local nationals?
- Why are certain organizations attempting to attack Coalition Forces?

Fortunately, the “WHY” almost never changes in a culture based on ideology and principles. Additionally, if you know the “WHY”, then you can deduce “WHO they are,” ”WHAT they want,” and perhaps, “HOW to get it to them another way” or “HOW to change their minds.” Moreover, since the “WHO” are not homogeneous, you can identify possible methods to unite “Them” by promoting talks amongst groups with similar intentions/desires/goals.

Evolution of COIN Analysis



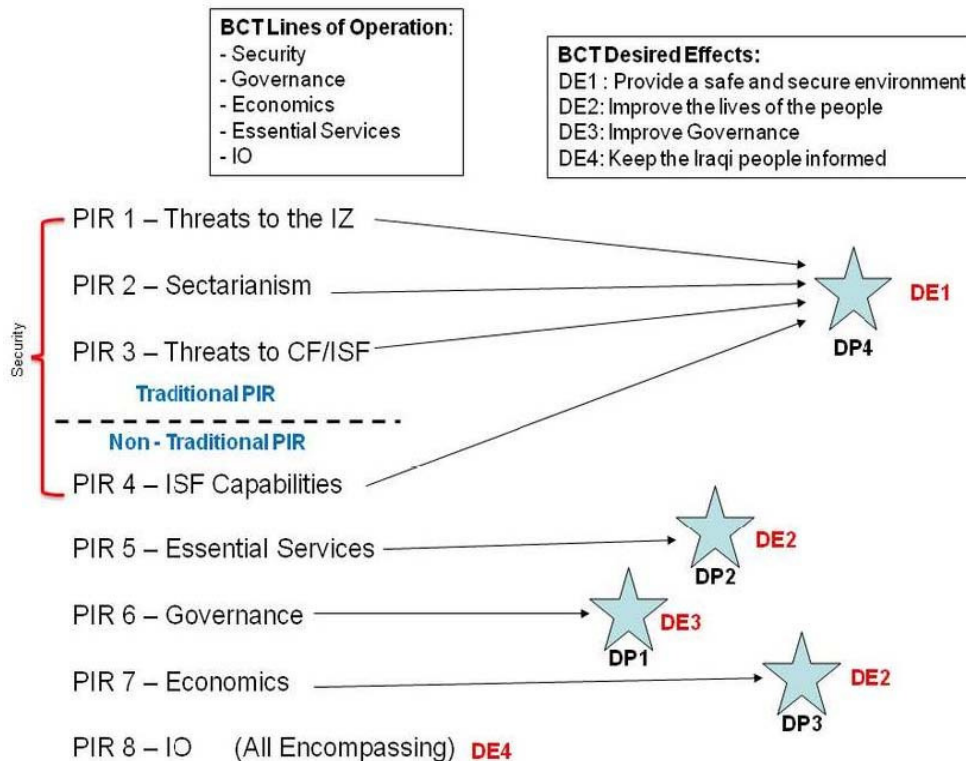
THE THIRD A-HA! INTELLIGENCE DOES REALLY DRIVE MANEUVER...AND MANEUVER FURTHER DRIVES INTELLIGENCE

As we deciphered the code on writing proper PIR, we stumbled upon the fact that most of our lethal targets could probably be "neutralized" non-lethally. This is, after all, the ultimate goal of a COIN campaign: "To neutralize 100% of lethal targets through 100% non-lethal means."

These "non-lethal means" were within our commander's desired effects (DE), each facilitated by his five LOE. Our non-lethal PIR, then, had to be directly related to the DP facilitating the campaign plan for his DE.

As a result, that the intelligence section focused on the "WHY" of the COIN effort supported the full-spectrum of our Commander's MOEs, PIRs, DPs, and DEs. This meant that everyone in the staff, not just the intelligence section, had to be part of visualizing the problem and exacting the solution.

We began by polling the commander, the staff, the LOE chiefs, and the units for what they wanted to know. It soon became evident that many people wanted to know various things because they were "good to know" or "cool to know". In order to better focus our LOE Chiefs, we took the commander's intent, and broke it out into four main DEs.



Our standard for writing PIR became: "If we get you an answer to this question, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH IT?"

Because if you're not going to do anything with it, there's no reason to threaten collection assets' lives to get it answered."

Thus, we added the following non-lethal PIRs:

- Why are ISF units in our sector not yet able to take control of local security?
- Why do certain populations in our sector not have access to sufficient Essential Services?
- Why are certain Economic areas in our sector not growing?
- Why is local Governance in our sector, at the Neighborhood and District level, not effective?
- Why are Coalition Forces and Government of Iraq IO ineffective?

THE FOURTH A-HA! HOW TO KNOW WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

When we created our final PIRs and attached DPs, we had to make the big questions easier to answer. We began with what we actually already knew about the PIR. Most of that came from non-intelligence sources. Once we had laid out what we did know, our intelligence gaps became evident and we split out specific IRs to organize what we really didn't know.

We sat down with every LOE chief to help them organize their requirements. We'd ask them what they wanted to know and they'd say, "everything" and we'd say, "that's not possible, so what else do you want to know?"

Then, we grouped these IRs into SIRs (backwards from doctrine) but we helped the LOE chiefs tie intermediate goals and DPs to answered SIR. That in turn helped them develop their scheme of maneuver within their lane. This synchronized the BCT's CM scheme of maneuver with the five LOEs, meaning the BCT was synchronized across its full spectrum of operations.

THE FIFTH A-HA! HOW TO EAT THE ELEPHANT

We ended up with a mega collection plan with 250 SORs. It was an elephant and we were the pygmies trying to eat it. All the assets tasked pushed back, saying they couldn't possibly fulfill all of these requirements. We told them they were probably already collecting some of the IRs within their own priorities and some they had probably already answered but we didn't know about it. In that case, we removed the taskings. Some, however, were very time-sensitive and perishable so they had to answer immediately, if not sooner. The asset managers then said, "Split the SORs up, then, because I can't feed this mega-list to my ops guys. We have our own ops to do."

So, we realized we needed to understand the asset's own priorities and decide how much max of their effort/combat strength we could take up without reducing their ability to do their organic ops. Our SORs got split into three categories:

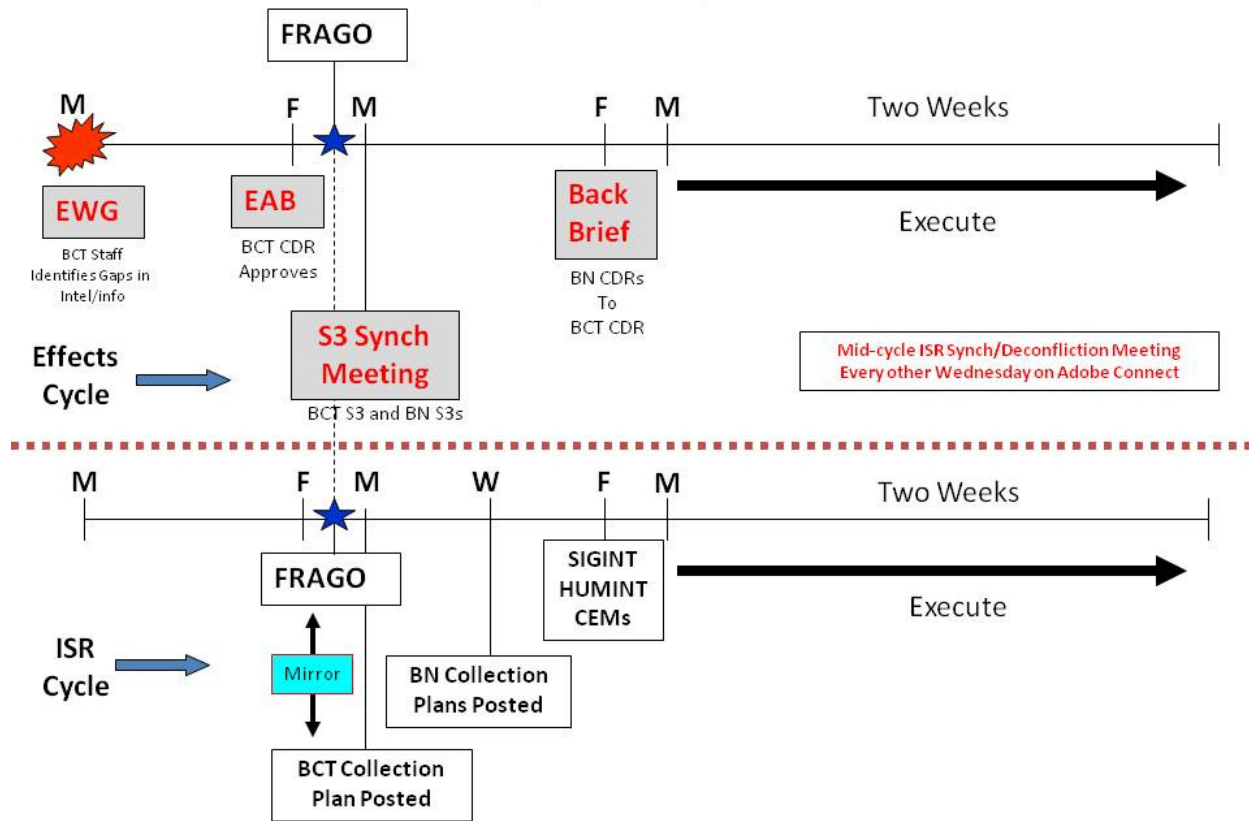
- Stuff that we'll only want to know once to support a specific, time-sensitive op (specified/perishable; tasked bi-weekly)
- Stuff that's ever-changing, so we'll ALWAYS want to know updates about it (framework; changes tasked once)
- Stuff that'd be great to know if you happen to collect on it by accident (opportunistic; not tasked, but consolidated.)

Additionally, we made the Collection Plan user friendly. You could cut and paste to create kneeboards. We added background products, graphics, report templates to pre-plan most of the asset's collection scheme of maneuver, as if we were the collector. All the assets had to do was execute. This drastically increased the quality of the reporting because it gave them more time for real analysis. We learned the assets, their personalities, their needs and their training. We made it just too easy for them to execute to even consider refusal. We made the elephant look like a ready-made meal.

Assets tend to think they know better than you, and they do have a very high resolution, high magnification, yet teeny, tiny view of the world. So, we had to show them how their info fit into the bigger picture. We paid for their information with analysis to help them with their future operations. This is a big problem with task-organized units, even in the military where command and control is strict. People do not want to do what an inorganic higher wants them to do.

So how long would it take to eat the elephant? Well obviously more than a day: we found that things in COIN just do not change that quickly. We published our BCT collection plan every two weeks, one week out from its execution, not every day like you do in a conventional environment. The battalions also did their collection plans on a bi-weekly basis once they had time to digest the BCT collection plan. We also published a SIGINT and HUMINT collection emphasis message (CEM) bi-weekly to synchronize the meal service. All of these products I just mentioned were centrally posted on the Portal on a predicable schedule so that everyone could see what everyone else was doing.

The Effects and ISR Cycle (One Month)



THE SIXTH A-HA! HOW TO MAKE MORE EXPERTS

In the old days, collectors had to count BMPs or describe enemy unit symbols via spot reports to win the war. In COIN, collectors have to fulfill requirements that would require a separate bachelor's degree per SIR. Although we had subject matter experts (SME) at the brigade level on various non-lethal topics, we only had one or two. We had to use these SMEs most efficiently, meaning we could not send them out as direct collectors. We made these SMEs develop detailed report templates that our ground-pounder collectors could print and fill out the very specific questions on-site. This allowed the collector to facilitate expert analysis without the experts having to be in ten places at once.

This detailed report template could ask the collector to, "Count the number of sprockets in this widget, write down the colors of the wires at this generator, and take a picture at the hub." When the report came in, the expert could tell you how many days of electricity the block would have left. This also removed untrained observer bias. Sometimes the SMEs wanted to know the collector's gut feeling, especially as it applied to atmospheric conditions of the human terrain, (i.e., how people looked, how they felt, etc.) and they could add those types of questions, too.

These collection report templates were hyperlinked into the collection plan into a "report via" column, and were pulled down from online, and resubmitted upon completion online. We tried to make our collection plan as easy to execute without placing too much strain upon the battalion's already thin troop-to-task spread. Ideally, each company would have had an ISR pre-briefer and de-briefer; one or two soldiers who implicitly understood the background of the reporting requirements and could pull the important information from the collectors. The better companies currently try to do some of this in "debrief cafes" where all patrols must submit detailed observations post-mission, but without any detailed guidance.

THE SEVENTH A-HA! HELP ME HELP YOU

As we created more and more complicated reporting requirements, some asset managers wanted to know how this report fit into the big picture because they felt there were important questions the requester was not asking because he was not on the ground. For those people, we also tied a background document to each SOR which either linked to the LOO scheme of maneuver, next two week ops schedule, or the targeting packet, or the running estimate, and the ultimate goals, vs. their current ability to meet those goals. By knowing the background of an SOR, some soldiers would return from the recon mission with the answer to an SOR, but then they'd also tell you, "But what you should REALLY KNOW is that the building over there is more important to this SIR because of x, y, and z indicators." Others, who didn't have time to learn the background, or who didn't care, just did the minimum SOR answer, and that was okay, too.

This is where the delineation of roles within the Military Intelligence community, especially between brigade, battalion, and the company intelligence support team (COIST) is critical. The COIST is based on the model of the British and Israeli armies who have extensive experience in COIN. The COISTs must be the front end and back end for ISR synchronization (i.e. asset management) of the ground-pounder collector. The whole process in COIN depends on them!

If we really practice what we preach, then we have to take the "Every Soldier Is A Sensor" mindset to heart and use these COIST to increase the quantity and quality of ground-pounder reporting, thus reducing the burden on the battalion S2 sections, which are currently facilitating the prebrief and debrief turnstile for all of the company patrols. A COIST can only do so much analysis within today's operational tempo. But if they execute their asset management mission effectively, however, this will allow the battalion S2 sections to better focus on intra-battalion AO analysis and targeting. With better analysis in the battalions, the brigades can then concentrate on inter-battalion and brigade boundary analysis, to facilitate the division's mission, and so on.

THE EIGHTH A-HA! HOW TO MANAGE SUCCESS

This way, the Collection Plan became a living, breathing, working product. But, because we had now so many assets out there, working on so many SORs, we had to develop a synchronization meeting where we got together at the end of a cycle as a compass-check. We did this meeting online using the "Breeze" collaboration tool, and we had all the asset and mission managers

online with all the Battalion S2s.

At each one, we'd say:

- For the cycle you just completed, here's what we asked you to answer. Just to make sure we got it, recognizing that we owe you feedback on its validity and applicability into analysis next two weeks, what did you answer? What couldn't you answer and why? How do we get that answered?
- Then, for the cycle you just entered, back brief your acknowledgement of the SORs you are tasked to answer and your ISR scheme of maneuver to execute.
- Finally, for the future cycle, here's the draft of what you will be tasked. Are these SORs feasible or not? What are your recommendations?

This was a critical evolution and with each synch meeting, our CM got better, faster, more effective, and more accurate. SIGINT and HUMINT CEMs were deconflicted, adjusted, and everyone knew why and what we were doing as well as how it fit into the overall effort.

THE NINTH A-HA! LET OTHERS DO THE WORK FOR YOU

We didn't get dissemination/distribution under control until the second half of the tour. It was easy to disseminate tasked reporting, but inorganic, supplemental reporting which could have answered IRs often slipped through the cracks.

To correct this, we had our S2 Operations section input the incidental tips, observations, lateral unit reporting, etc, into the portal so everyone could set up auto-key word alerts. They had to be aware of all IRs and follow up with requestors to let them know the additional information. And using the portal as the primary disseminator versus email distribution lists facilitated the widest possible distribution, and prevented circular reporting. At first, it was hard for them to shift to non-enemy based reporting, but they figured it out.

THE TENTH A-HA! THE COIN APPROACH TO ANALYSIS

We knew that with our manning, we could do better big-picture analysis than the tactical level. We learned that event-driven production was always too late to affect a decision; the requests were always reactionary. Additionally, the requestors wanted the products to prove their point, not necessarily the right point. Finally, they were never able to provide an accurate picture because analysts did not have the time to collect on the appropriate indicators for a sufficient time. "Jack of all trades, Master of none" provided too fuzzy of a big picture for the operational level.

To crack the code on being able to create big picture yet high resolution products, we had to change our analytical approach by:

- Predetermining indicators for all contingencies within our campaign plan and create running estimates per PIR
- Making specific products based on the combination of analytical products of running estimates.
- Making everybody an analyst, including intelligence and non-intelligence folks, operators, janitors, EVERYONE!

So, when a specific product requirement came up, instead of dropping everything and digging into the database for all the raw intelligence and analyzing it all from scratch, we had pre-packaged pockets of knowledge, which we pulled together, cross-referenced, and submitted as the party-line.

THE FINAL EVOLUTION: VISUALIZING THE COIN BATTLEFIELD

“If I had to do it all over again, I’d have the BCT staff create a KM section whose sole job is to manage requirements and reporting, incidental and specified, throughout the brigade, higher lateral and lower across the full spectrum of COIN operations, not just intelligence. Of course we had limited manpower, but we would have gotten much more bang for our buck as compared to how we ended up using some of our people.” LTC Scott Downey. S2, 2BCT, 1CD

With excellent PIR, actually linked to DPs, and tied to the commander's DEs, we were able to help the commander and his staff visualize the evolution of any problem, question, or situation that developed on the battlefield "in time and space." These intelligence running estimates allowed us to cross-reference the human terrain picture with CF and Iraqi security force operations, GOI activities, and enemy attacks. This provided a very accurate representation of our human terrain and how it responded to external stimuli, lethal and non-lethal, friendly, neutral, and enemy. Of course, the non-lethal SMEs had to do the Running Estimates (REs) for the non-lethal PIR, while we, the Intelligence Section, provided the reporting and the "enemy piece" to augment and assist their development of their Human Terrain pictures.

Long story short, we had to "change the experiment" to provide relevant intelligence support to the COIN battlefield. We did this by reorganizing our section by well-written PIR and by LOE-functionality:

- PIR 1-3 (lethal) and PIR 4-8 (non-lethal) Running Estimates showed how our desired operations were being countered; The indicators of which fed the:
- Network Analysis section charged with analyzing the capabilities, limitations, composition, disposition, and strength of enemy and “friendly” networks. The negative indicators of which fed the:

- Targeting section that supported lethal and non-lethal targeting operations designed to increase the effectiveness of our full-spectrum operations.
- We also assigned individual soldiers as analysts for “additional duty” positions like “reconciliation” or “FPS liaison.” When our ePRT came in to take over these economic, governance, and ESS functions, half our staff handed over their projects to the Department of State as did half of our analysts hand over their products. The DoS now had in their hands reference-able products showing the evolution of various effects in our AO, and how our human terrain responded to certain stimuli.

This reorganization of the S2 section was the forcing function that made lethal and non-lethal operations work together, supplementary and complementary, as they are supposed to do, in full spectrum operations. Once we got our herbivores and carnivores in the same room, talking to each other, we realized that lethal and non-lethal targeting and effects were not two different processes, it had to be one simultaneous, synchronized, and full spectrum process. This collaboration allowed us to prevent unintentional, negative consequences by coordinating all actions with all SMEs, and ensured that one action would always be exploited by another, that made sure that no actions were contrary to each other. Most importantly, this full-spectrum collaboration exploited the positive effect of every mission by all arms of the unit, resulting in a snow-ball to avalanche of success in our Area of Operations.

The ability of our intelligence section to change its mind-set facilitated our BCT’s ability to conduct long-term, methodical, full-spectrum operations, synchronized across every aspect of lethal and non-lethal effects. The commander’s PIR were directly linked to his DPs and spanned all of his LOE. As a result, the intelligence section, in conjunction with the LOE chiefs, identified and collected upon gaps in information across that same full-spectrum of operations. Effective COIN requires these processes to be interrelated and dependent upon each other. In addition, in a modular staff (with so many specialized entities) everyone must become both a producer of subject-matter-expertise products as well as a consumer of the others subject-matter-expertise products. This multi-faceted collaboration is essential if we expect to “win the war” in a highly complex urban COIN environment.

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