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**“TACTICAL OVERWATCH”: A POWERFUL EVOLUTION OF
INTELLIGENCE REACH, BUT NOT WITHOUT ITS CHALLENGES**

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Abstract

The U.S. Army is transforming to meet the challenges of future conflicts, even while engaged in ongoing combat and security and stability operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Army intelligence is also transforming to provide robust capabilities to identify, characterize and counter the evolving threats we are likely to encounter in increasingly complex environments. The Army Deputy Chief of Staff, Intelligence (G2) identified 8 critical initiatives that comprise Focus Area Actionable Intelligence, one of 17 Focus Areas identified by Army Chief of Staff, General Peter J. Schoomaker, as key to successful Army transformation. One of the critical initiatives of Focus Area Actionable Intelligence is “Tactical Overwatch”, a realignment of intelligence expertise to leverage the full range of operational, joint and national intelligence capabilities to support the tactical force. It is essentially a focused evolution of the concept of “Intelligence Reach”, employed over the last decade by units to access capabilities and information resident at higher echelons of command or within the National community. Neither necessarily precludes the other, and using both provides tactical commanders with the best possible intelligence support. The technological advancements of the past decade make Tactical Overwatch, properly employed, a significant combat-multiplier. But it is not without challenges. This paper explores Intelligence Reach, briefly looks at some enabling technologies developed by the U.S. Army’s Intelligence and Security Command, and discusses the evolution of Tactical Overwatch. It also explores challenges to Tactical Overwatch becoming a core competency throughout Army Intelligence.

“TACTICAL OVERWATCH”: A POWERFUL EVOLUTION OF INTELLIGENCE REACH , BUT NOT WITHOUT ITS CHALLENGES

INTRODUCTION

Our vision is to implement a new approach..., creating a dedicated structure to provide intelligence or tactical oversight, focusing higher level intelligence capabilities in direct support to the tactical echelons.

Lieutenant General Keith B. Alexander,¹ USA, 7 April 2004²

United States Army Intelligence is continuously attempting to address shortfalls in providing dedicated support to warfighting commanders. A systemic fault is that intelligence is not universally available to those that need it most, the tactical commander, when they need it and in a usable form. What tactical commanders need is intelligence that is actionable. “Tactical Oversight” is a new initiative, part of Focus Area – Actionable Intelligence, which is intended to address this deficiency. However, Tactical Oversight faces several challenges posed by Army intelligence culture, force structure and command relationships.

This paper introduces the concept of Tactical Oversight within the construct of Army Intelligence transformation, compares and contrasts it to an existing support concept of

¹ LTG Keith Alexander currently serves as the Director of the National Security Agency (DIRNSA). He previously served, in reverse chronological order, as U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff, Intelligence (DCSINT/G2), Commander, U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command (USAINSCOM), and Director of Intelligence (J2), U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM).

² LTG Keith Alexander, then Deputy Chief of Staff, Intelligence (G2), U.S. Army. Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, United States Senate, 108th Congress, 2d Session. *Statement of Lieutenant General Keith B. Alexander, Hearings on Fiscal Year 2005 Joint Military Intelligence Program (JMIP) and Army Tactical Intelligence and Related Activities (TIARA)*. (7 April 2004); available from http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2004_hr/040704alexander.pdf; Internet; accessed 10 September 2006. Hereafter referred to as LTG Alexander.

Intelligence Reach, identifies some technological enablers that empower Overwatch, and finally, articulates some challenges facing its full implementation.

Tactical Overwatch leverages new technologies, but an obvious question is if this capability is proliferated throughout the Military Intelligence (MI) force, is there a need for Overwatch. This question is also explored.

Intelligence Reach was a mechanism to supplement constrained capability, particularly in the tactical force, but it put an additional burden on already stretched resources.

Dedicated, focused support from an Overwatch element is designed to take some of this workload off of the supported force. Army Intelligence senior leadership has invested a lot of energy in the Tactical Overwatch concept, however, it remains to be seen if an initiative that has succeeded as a proof-of-concept will be able to overcome the challenges it faces.

Transformation

The Army will reorganize its combat and institutional organization to meet the needs and requirements of operating in the current and projected security environment. We must assume sustained operations will be the norm, and not the exception. As we continue the process of transforming our Army while at war, we will redesign our formations to provide modular, capabilities-based organizations, increasing their relevance and responsiveness to the Combatant Commanders.

General Peter J. Schoomaker, CSA³

³ United States Army. The Way Ahead: Our Army at War, Relevant and Ready. Washington, D.C., 2006; available from <http://www.army.mil/thewayahead/relevant.html>; Internet; accessed 24 October 2006.

The U.S. Army is transforming, even while extensively engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Chief of Staff, U.S. Army (CSA), General Peter J. Schoomaker, recognizes the imperative to win the current fight but also understands the need to transform to be capable of fighting and winning the nation's wars of the future. Army senior leaders, to "focus" transformation efforts, established 17 Focus Areas (FA) providing guidance for planning, preparation and execution of actions affecting change.⁴ One of these FA is "Actionable Intelligence" (AI).⁵ LTG Keith B. Alexander, Army Deputy Chief of Staff, Intelligence (G2) developed FA AI to ensure that intelligence transformation is "synchronized within the overarching Army plan, ensuring that the intelligence capabilities and processes are fully capable of supporting a joint and expeditionary quality force that will be relevant and ready to fight our nation's wars and defend our homeland."⁶ FA AI is a roadmap for Army Intelligence transformation into the future. It is comprised of eight critical initiatives, one of which is "Tactical Overwatch".

Tactical Overwatch

"Army Intelligence was challenged to meet all of its wartime requirements while adapting "the way we fight" intelligence as part of an interdependent joint enterprise....The Army implemented a network-centric "tactical Overwatch" capability that provides dedicated, focused intelligence support to deployed tactical forces from fixed knowledge centers, providing precise, tailored information verses megabits of data.

2005 Army Modernization Plan⁷

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ LTG Alexander. pp. 1.

⁷ Department of the Army. 2005 Army Modernization Plan. pp.

Much about Tactical Overwatch is, at its core, conceptual and evolutionary, and thus not yet outlined in doctrinal or other published works. However, although a current focus of the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) and the U.S. Army Intelligence Center (USAIC) is to formalize the concept and educate the broader force on its application and utility. Tactical Overwatch is an evolving concept for providing “direct support intelligence to an operationally engaged tactical unit (Division and below) from a dedicated analytical element at a fixed location outside of enemy contact.”⁸ Tactical Overwatch is essentially another form of Intelligence Reach, which provides commanders the ability to access intelligence information resident at higher echelons within the military intelligence structure as well throughout the national intelligence community. As a method of focusing dedicated intelligence support to a tactical formation, Tactical Overwatch leverages technological advances and data access not previously available. Tactical Overwatch is conceptually designed to provide a tactical commander, through his S2/G2⁹, access to the full spectrum of intelligence capability, without having to “fish” for it. There is a dedicated element, focused on a specified commander’s intelligence needs and sufficiently versed in the commander’s intent to anticipate future intelligence requirements

Intelligence Reach

Before discussing Tactical Overwatch further, it is useful to gain some understanding of Intelligence Reach. Intelligence Reach is not a new concept for U.S. Army Intelligence. It is

⁸ Altman, John and Heath Davenport. Tactical Overwatch: Reachback Support to the Tactical Commander. Draft White Paper, HQ INSCOM. September 2006. Unpublished.

⁹ The S2 is the intelligence staff officer at Battalion and Brigade levels. The G2, a member of a General Staff, is the intelligence officer at Division and Corps.

loosely defined as “the ability to rapidly access information, receive support, and conduct collaboration and information sharing with other units and organizations unconstrained by geographic proximity, echelon, or command”,¹⁰. Intelligence Reach, outlined in Army doctrine in Field Manual 2-0 (Intelligence), is an existing process whereby Army commanders at all levels access capability at higher echelons and throughout the national Intelligence Community (IC). As noted by BG John Custer¹¹, “...everyone firmly agrees that all future Army operations will incorporate multilevel, multifunction reach operations...the intelligence community has organized itself around the concept for more than a decade...,”¹² providing a framework for enhancing intelligence support to tactical commanders. There is an established architecture that gives tactical and operational level intelligence elements the ability to submit information requirements to a higher headquarters or to the national intelligence community. BG Custer identifies three crucial components to assure an effective reachback capability:

- ◁ Advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems having appropriate interfaces with higher headquarters and outside agencies and appropriate connectivity for distributed operations at range and in urban and complex terrain.
- ◁ A set of tactics, techniques and principles (TTP) to govern staff activity.
- ◁ A well-trained staff that understands the capabilities available through reachback and how to employ them for mission requirements.¹³

¹⁰ Department of the Army. FM 2-0: Intelligence. May 2004.

¹¹ BG John M. Custer, at the time of writing his article, was Deputy Commandant, U.S. Army Intelligence Center, Fort Huachuca, Arizona. He currently serves as J2, USCENTCOM.

¹² Custer, John M. Reach: Leveraging Time and Distance. The U.S. Army Professional Writing Collection. March-April 2003. Hereafter referred to as “Custer”.

¹³ Custer.

The system, however, remains stove-piped. Intelligence leaders in the tactical Army (G2s and S2s) and their staffs must know where the relevant data is held and submit specific queries to a diverse array of organizations to get the answers they need, putting tremendous importance on the third crucial component cited by BG Custer.

Tactical Overwatch shares the crucial components of Intelligence Reach, however the two concepts differ in important ways. Reach relies on a Push or Pull system, sometimes referred to “Smart Push” and “Smart Pull”. The former “occurs when the producers of information are knowledgeable of a customer’s requirements and can send the desired information to the customer without further requests”. The latter “occurs when the customer (usually the forward-deployed headquarters, but in reality any element in the network) is familiar enough with existing databases to anticipate the location of desired information”.¹⁴

Push assumes visibility at higher echelons of a commander’s Priority Intelligence Requirements (PIR), and standing requirements for support stipulated in a unit’s Statement of Intelligence Interest (SII). Yet Push is hampered during wartime by technological constraints frequently noted in lessons learned from previous conflicts. Referenced in a Congressional Research Service (CRS) Issue Brief to Congress in 2001, there remained “numerous technical difficulties, especially in transmitting data in usable formats and in a timely manner”.¹⁵ U.S. Marine Corps forces, fighting side-by-side with Army forces, faced a similar dilemma, noting that “after crossing the line-of-departure,

¹⁴ Custer

¹⁵ Best, Richard A. [Intelligence Issues for Congress](#). Updated November 9, 2001.

the division received very little actionable intelligence from external intelligence organizations. The division had to assemble a coherent picture from what it could collect with organic and direct support (DS) assets.”¹⁶ While Tactical Overwatch cannot of itself overcome the communications constraints, when a unit pauses a tailored “intelligence refuel” becomes more relevant.

Pull means a unit must submit a Request for Information (RFI), through a higher echelon, where it is either answered or validated and sent higher, to be answered by any number of intelligence organizations. There is no one element oriented on a particular commander’s PIR, aside from organic intelligence capability. With Tactical Overwatch, a specified intelligence entity is identified to provide dedicated intelligence, constantly focused on the PIR of the supported commander. A Tactical Overwatch support element has no other responsibilities but to satisfy the requirements of the supported commander. Similarly, while Reach requires an intelligence staff to know where to go for satisfaction of their commander’s PIR, Tactical Overwatch provides the bridge between the supported unit and the full capacity of the Intelligence Community. A Tactical Overwatch element, using TTP¹⁷ established with the supported unit prior to deployment, and an understanding of that commander’s intelligence needs, receives RFI’s and uses unique data access and data-mining and visualization capabilities to leverage all available intelligence information to respond to the query in a format specified by the supported element. In concept, a supported unit has a “one-stop” shop for leveraging the full capability of the military and national intelligence community.

¹⁶ Operation IRAQI Freedom (OIF): Lessons Learned.
http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/1mardiv_oif_lessons_learned.doc.

¹⁷ Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures.

Recognizing constraints on tactical bandwidth, a Tactical Overwatch element produces intelligence products responding to supported commanders PIR and posts them to that units' website. The unit accesses the finished product without the requirement to tie up limited bandwidth to "pull" it from higher.

Advancements in technology over the past ten to fifteen years present the opportunity to take the concept of Intelligence Reach to the next level. One query, on a specific intelligence question, to a dedicated supporting element, can conceivably leverage the full power of the intelligence community. This is the essence of Tactical Overwatch: Intelligence Reach supercharged by technological advances, in communications and analysis, with dedicated assets providing focused intelligence support to tactical commanders on the battlefield.

Technological Advances

For the purpose of this paper, a single event is identified as a defining one in the journey to the current technological capability that gives Tactical Overwatch so much potential. The attack on the USS Cole on 12 October 2000, provided an impetus for several of the ongoing enhancements to Army intelligence capability. The findings of the Cole Commission, at the strategic level, correctly identified that units require specific information on the terrorist threat they might face in their Area of Operations, however; the commission did not begin to address the real complexity of the problem¹⁸. How and from where this specific threat information was to come remained a key challenge.

¹⁸ DoD USS Cole Commission Report: Executive Summary. 9 January 2001.

Brigadier General Keith Alexander, at the time of the attack on the USS Cole, Director of Intelligence (J2) at U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), and formerly G2 of the 1st Armored Division during Operation DESERT STORM, long recognized a significant deficiency in how intelligence information was gathered, processed, analyzed, and disseminated. His belief, shared by many in the military intelligence community, was that the dissemination and analysis of critical intelligence data was over-compartmentalized, stove-piped and, more often than not, difficult to obtain due to outdated and bureaucratic policies. Analysts lacked both access to data and the advantage of technological advancements which would allow them the ability to access, sort, visualize and analyze huge volumes of data, preferably from a single workstation. This represented the “analytic challenge” facing Army intelligence. He knew that disparate intelligence data, was cached and databased at numerous locations throughout the intelligence community. If made accessible, it could be rapidly manipulated and analyzed to identify unforeseen patterns and relationships. This could have held the key to predicting and preventing the terrorist attack on the USS Cole and future attacks on our armed forces. He would later capture this challenge visually while commanding the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) in the following graphic (Figure 1)¹⁹.

¹⁹ INSCOM Intelligence Operations Center (IOC). [Command IOC Briefing](#). Regularly updated.

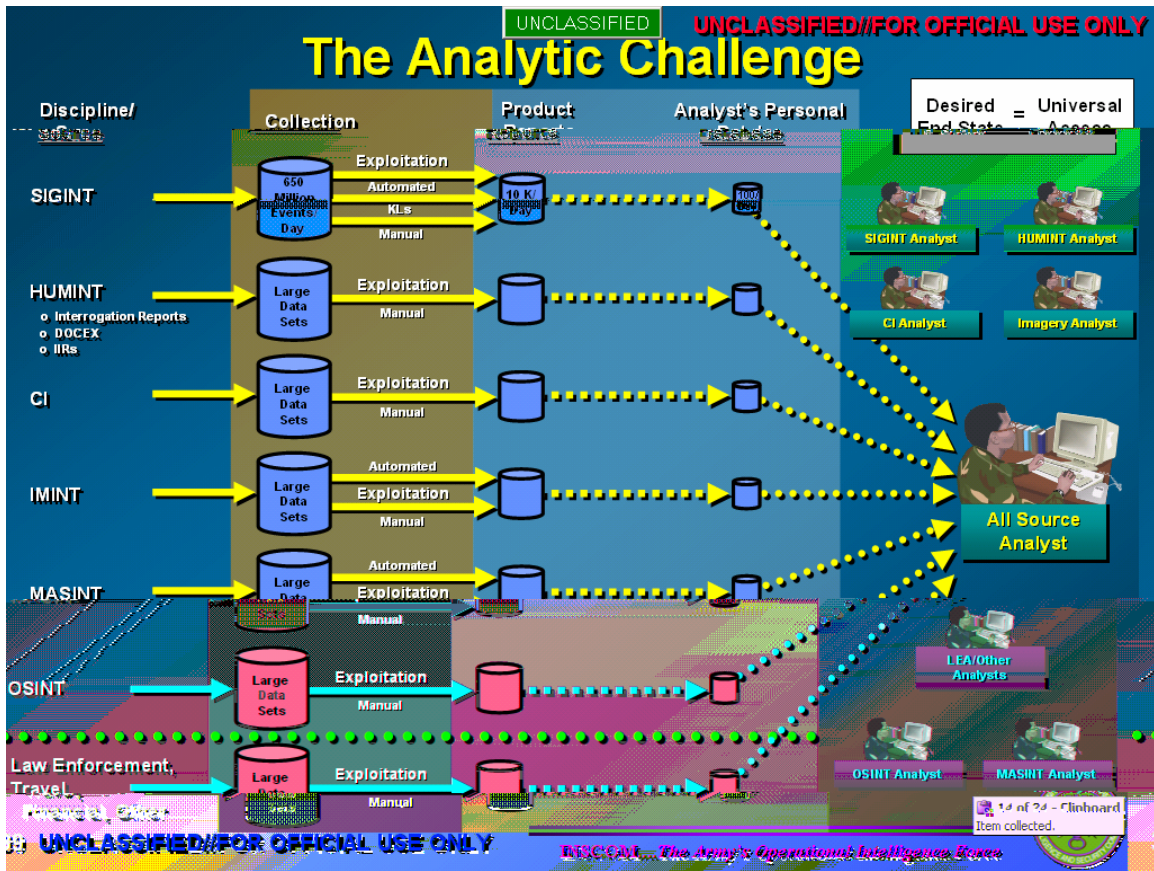


Figure 1.

The graphic depicts how intelligence is collected within specific disciplines (i.e. SIGINT, HUMINT, CI, IMINT, MASINT, OSINT, etc.)²⁰, and traditionally routed to discipline specific analysts. Each discipline employs analysts to process raw information into something understandable and reportable...this practice must continue, because single-source intelligence analysis, by highly-trained specialists, yields vital information. While discipline specific analysts are still necessary, the all-source analyst²¹, trained to fuse this data into a comprehensive intelligence product, should have access to the data, regardless of its origin, at the earliest point

²⁰ SIGINT is an acronym for Signals Intelligence; HUMINT, Human Intelligence; CI, Counter-intelligence; IMINT, Imagery Intelligence; MASINT, Measurements and Signatures Intelligence; OSINT, Open-Source Intelligence.

²¹ An All-Source analyst is trained to fuse the diverse discipline specific intelligence into a comprehensive intelligence picture or assessment, for use by the Operational Commander.

in time where that intelligence can be processed and become “actionable”. This does not mean that single-source intelligence cannot be acted upon, but a more comprehensive battlespace picture, provided by all-source analysis, gives the commander better overall situational awareness and understanding. Usability of the information, of course, differs based on discipline, but the concept centers around easy access to the data.

MG John Defreitas III²², the current Commanding General of INSCOM, sums it up this way.

How does an all-source analyst rapidly and accurately:

- < Mine large data sets
- < Manage and move data within an enterprise
- < Gain universal access to data, and
- < Make that data useful to those that need it²³

While still at CENTCOM, BG Alexander worked hard with national agencies to break down institutional barriers that kept vital information out of the hands of military analysts. He was initially successful in securing agreements with certain national agencies whereby large amounts of information, then only available in discipline specific databases at various national agencies, were made available to CENTCOM analysts. The information, however; was still largely historic, and had to be reviewed and analyzed message by message, in an attempt to produce a coherent intelligence picture. Technological advancements in intelligence collection were such that the amount of information collected always exceeded the system’s (and the analysts) ability

²² Prior to assuming command of INSCOM, MG Defreitas was the Director of Intelligence (C2), Multi-National Forces – Iraq (MNF-I).

²³ INSCOM Command Briefing on the Intelligence Operations Center. 2006.

to sort through, analyze and make sense of the voluminous amounts of data collected. What analysts need is a similar technological edge.

Within the Land Information Warfare Activity (LIWA), now the 1st Information Operations Command (1st IO CMD), formed at INSCOM in the mid-1990s, there was ongoing experimentation with new technologies that allowed analysts to query huge repositories of data, manipulate and visualize the data and discern analytic conclusions.²⁴

I was amazed in two trips that I took to Fort Belvoir that the Army was....able to use new software tools and high-speed computers to do what is commonly called ``profiling," to take vast amounts of information about the classified and unclassified information and process it and analyze it so that a picture could be drawn and a threat could be developed, proliferation could be monitored.

Congressman Curt Weldon, 2002²⁵

Using resources in LIWA's Information Dominance Center (IDC), "INSCOM became the Army's critical information conduit for compressing, processing, and analyzing huge amounts of raw data gathered by national and service sources. This provided INSCOM with the capability to provide formidable intelligence funneled to commanders and national law enforcement agencies in near real-time.²⁶ The significance and potential of the data-mining and visualization tools being used by LIWA analysts would provide the foundation for a capability that currently underpins Tactical Overwatch.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Statement by Congressman Curt Weldon. Congressional Record: May 21, 2002 (House)

²⁶ INSCOM History, p.10.

In October 2002, MG Alexander, now Commander of INSCOM, formed the Intelligence Operations Center (IOC) as an all-source intelligence “dominance center”.²⁷ He migrated the capability developed in LIWAs IDC to this new all-source intelligence center, with a vision of building a construct for gathering and analyzing huge volumes of intelligence data. All available intelligence information would be “ingested” into a single database, where the data was normalized and tagged for easy query and retrieval. Sophisticated data-mining and visualization tools, developed and/or tested at INSCOM with the assistance of leaders of industry and academia, would allow analysts to rapidly execute queries against the entire database, manipulate and visualize the data to show patterns and relationships. Analysts would now have a much better capability to very quickly provide commander’s with actionable intelligence.

In July 2003, MG Kimmons²⁸ assumed command of INSCOM, and directed the priority of the IOC would be on providing intelligence support to ongoing combat operations in Iraq. The next logical step was, of course, to conduct a test of INSCOMs capabilities to conduct Overwatch in support of a tactical unit in combat.

Joint Intelligence Operations Capability – Iraq and the Distributed Common Ground System – Army

²⁷ INSCOM Command Brief. 2006.

²⁸ LTG John F. Kimmons currently serves as the Army Deputy Chief of Staff, Intelligence (DCSINT/G2). He succeeded LTG Alexander as both Commander, USAINSCOM and earlier as J2, USCENTCOM where he performed those duties during both Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF), before assuming command of INSCOM in July 2003.

Earlier, the question was posed, if a significant capability to address the challenges facing analysts was proliferated throughout the MI force, why the need for Overwatch. This section describes that capability and seeks to answer that question.

The Joint Intelligence Operations Capability – Iraq (JIOC-I), currently operational in Iraq,²⁹ from Multi-national Forces – Iraq (MNF-I) down to, in some cases Brigade level, provides the capability to “obtain information through a uniform query across the field of intelligence databases...giving analysts the ability to extract data faster and to spend more time on the analytical side”, vice spending the majority of their time hunting for data.³⁰ JIOC-I is the migration of technologies, analytic tools and data access developed within INSCOMs IOC to the Iraqi theater of operations.

LTG Kimmons explains that the Army is working to create a flat, intelligence network, replacing the older echelon-based approach to production and dissemination.³¹ Defined as “flat” when “there can be immediate and equal data access by organizations”,³² this network will employ better sensing systems and...provide better access to vital information.³³

JIOC-I capabilities will spiral into the Distributed Common Ground System – Army (DCGS-A) which “is the Army’s centerpiece of the future joint DCGS intelligence framework that will

²⁹ The Army began fielding of JIOC-I capability to Afghanistan in early-2006.

³⁰ Ackerman, Robert F. Intelligence Information Drives Army Operations at a Faster Pace. SIGNAL Magazine. December 2005.

³¹ Ackerman, Robert F. Army Intelligence Consolidates Data. SIGNAL Magazine. October 2005. Hereafter referred to as “Ackerman 2”.

³² “Intelligence Leader: Interview with Major General Barbara Fast”, *Military Information Technology*, [online edition]; available from http://www.military-information-technology.com/print_article.cfm?DocID=1347; Internet; accessed 11 September 2006.

³³ Ackerman 2.

integrate and fuse (the synthesis of multiple intelligence sources and disciplines) intelligence at all levels from the Brigade Combat Team to the national level. It is developing into a worldwide web-based intelligence services architecture accessible via a (single) computer workstation.³⁴

The resulting “flat” network provides analysts, at all echelons and locations access to data (both intelligence and combat information) across all classification levels in order to help them understand direct/indirect relationships across complex social, economic and operational networks, over time. It supports localized operational fights and geographically dispersed analysts conducting reach operations, tactical overwatch, or training.³⁵ So, if intelligence units throughout the Army will eventually have this capability, why the need for Overwatch?

In an inevitably constrained force structure environment, resources at each echelon are habitually consumed supporting the intelligence requirements of their respective commander and staff. As capability increases, the requirements of the supported commander always expand to capitalize on the new capacity. Hence, the need for Tactical Overwatch.

The Proof of Concept

At the direction of the Army G2, INSCOM initiated a proof-of-concept for Tactical Overwatch in early 2004, providing dedicated support to the 3d Infantry Division (3ID), the first Army unit to undergo Transformation and deploy to Iraq.³⁶ Originally, the 297th MI Battalion, 513th MIB, under the Operational Control (OPCON) of U.S. Army Central

³⁴ Torchbearer National Security Report. Key Issues Relevant to Actionable Intelligence. Virginia: AUSA, June 2005.

³⁵ Enclosure 9.

³⁶ Altman, pp.1.

(ARCENT) was to conduct the Proof-of-Concept, however; deployment orders to Iraq took this unit out of the calculus. The task fell to the INSCOM IOC. An independent team of analysts stood up to conduct the test, providing dedicated, direct support to the 3ID, destined for Iraq, and by all markers, the Proof-of-Concept was a tremendous success. Feedback from G2s and Operational Commanders was immense³⁷. Feedback from supported Brigades included the following:

“Got the files...awesome. Your work corroborates and expands on a significant portion of our target set. Definite sustain.”

- “Your help has been invaluable. Our ability to provide supporting reports and locate targets was tremendously enhanced by Tactical Overwatch...we’ll be coming back for more.”
- “The TOST³⁸ products were very useful. Specifically, the link diagrams revealed organizations and personalities that we were not tracking.”
- “These products confirmed our templating of personalities and relationships for AIF³⁹ Group [of concern to us]⁴⁰.”
- “Products are excellent. The AIF⁴¹ group information and diagrams provided consolidated information in a manner we didn’t fully realize...it will be easy for us to develop further.”

³⁷ Footnote encompasses following feedback from supported units. INSCOM IOC Brief. Tactical Overwatch Lessons Learned. Continuously updated.

³⁸ For the Proof-of-Concept, INSCOM established a dedicated Tactical Overwatch Support Team (TOST), focused on 3ID intelligence requirements.

³⁹ Anit-Iraqi Forces. Refers to elements in Iraq resisting the new Iraqi Government.

⁴⁰ Author added.

⁴¹ Ibid.

- “Based on the content of your products we are changing the way we do our targeting.”

G2/ACE⁴² elements noted that:

- “The shape files were exactly what we were looking for...so I hope you don’t mind doing a few more.”
- “The OPRES packages provide the 80% solution, not only saving our analysts’ time and effort, but they serve as a great product for target development...units constantly refer to them.”
- “TOST puts together comprehensive flat files on any topic...analysts here can focus on the near fight...building off the TOST products.”
- “We would not have been able to put together this complex and detailed product in this visual format with the tools we have.”
- “DIF⁴³ interrogators needed days to a week to research and prepare for an interrogation...your complete searches cut the time into one day”
- Corps Analyst commenting to a 3ID analyst about an AIF group ANB⁴⁴ chart...”they did a damn good job.”

⁴² ACE – The Analysis and Control Element. The mission of the ACE is to perform collection management; produce all-source intelligence; provide IEW technical control; and disseminate intelligence and targeting data. The ACE supports the commander in executing battle command and planning future missions across the range of military operations. The ACE integrates the missions, functions, and resources of the former technical control and analysis element (TCAE) and TOC support element (TOCSE) at corps, division, separate brigade, and ACR. At theater Army, the ACE replaces the Echelons Above Corps Intelligence Center (EACIC) and the TCAE. As the ACT, it replaces the IEW support element (IEWSE) and improves support at the divisional maneuver brigade. The ACE centralizes analysis and collection management in one organization under the operational control (OPCON) of the G2 (S2). The formation of the ACE goes beyond consolidation or collocation. The ACE provides balance to all-source analysis products and synergy to the execution of CI, human intelligence (HUMINT), IMINT, and SIGINT operations. U.S. Army Field Manual, 34-25-3.

⁴³ Detention and Interrogation Facility.

Tactical Overwatch is a proven concept, with support currently provided by the INSCOM IOC to the 4th Infantry Division and the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), in Iraq. Likewise, one of INSCOM's Theater MIBs, the 513th MI Bde, is providing tailored Tactical Overwatch support to the 10th Mountain Division in Afghanistan.

The original Tactical Overwatch concept focused on INSCOM's Theater Military Intelligence Brigades and Groups (MIBs/MIGs) as the primary echelon from which this type of support would be conducted. Conceivably, however; any intelligence element empowered with JIOC-I/DCGS-A capabilities can provide Tactical Overwatch support to another element, regardless of unit affiliation or physical location.

Challenges

Tactical Overwatch offers a promising enhancement to warfighter support, however; there are significant challenges to making this a core competency for Army intelligence. First, "fenced", dedicated intelligence support downward is contrary to the current MI culture. It inhibits flexibility and agility...the ability to flex resources in response to changing situations, not to mention that echeloned intelligence assets habitually focus on the requirements of that echelon's commander. Second, current plans for Military Intelligence transformation throughout the force

⁴⁴ Analyst Notebook (ANB). Analyst's Notebook is part of a suite of products that allow very large, complex logs to be analysed and subtle connections to be found in extensive distributed enterprises. SC Magazine. *12 Analyst's Notebook*. Not dated; available at <http://www.scmagazine.com/us/products/productdetails/5d58119d-0da7-7982-7a61-779258e54f2e/i2+analysts+notebook+/>; Internet; accessed 24 October 2006.

makes Tactical Overwatch a troublesome proposition. Third, the current focus of Tactical Overwatch on INSCOMs Theater Military Intelligence Brigades/Groups (MIBs/MIGs) is challenged by the fact that these units are under the operational control (OPCON) of their respective Army Service Component Commands (ASCC).

Culture

Institutionally, Army intelligence units are focused on supporting the intelligence requirements of their respective commanders. Search for a reference supporting this argument, and you won't find one...but it is a fact. Force structure is designed along this construct. Nowhere in Tables of Organization and Equipment (TOE) or Tables of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) is there a separate resourcing of the capability to provide dedicated intelligence support to a lower echelon. Each echelon, through reach, will respond within its capability to the intelligence requirements of a lower echelon, but this capability is far from "dedicated". Intelligence units are typically consumed with satisfying the information needs of their own commander and staff, with little capability left to "focus downward". Intelligence products produced at each level are disseminated throughout the force, but they are not necessarily tailored to answer the PIR of a subordinate commander. S2/G2s at each level, rely on the organic collection and analysis capabilities to satisfy the intelligence requirements of their respective commanders. Little is left to focus on the requirements of the lower echelon. Even with plus-ups to TOE/TDA, ostensibly "fenced" to provide dedicated support lower, there will be significant pull to augment already stretched resources to provide intelligence support to their respective commanders.

Force Structure Changes

Tactical Overwatch is intended to break this paradigm, with resources specifically allocated to provide this dedicated support. But the concept doesn't have sufficient investment from the Army. INSCOM MIB/MIGs, as mentioned earlier, are the current focus of the Tactical Overwatch construct. Each will be resourced with a capability (although minimal) to provide Tactical Overwatch support to deployed tactical units. Each will be augmented with an additional nine analyst authorizations for the purpose for standing up a Tactical Overwatch capability, with the exception of the 513th MIB, which will receive 18. Currently, the remainder of future Army Intelligence force structure does not incorporate a Tactical Overwatch capability. The planned dissolution of the Corps MI Bde's, and realignment of Division-level intelligence capability to focus on collection, vice analytic capability, creates a void in Tactical Overwatch capacity. As a tactical unit "looks up" for intelligence support, the first echelon prepared to provide that support is a theatre MIB/MIG...which, based upon lessons learned from the INSCOM IOC experience with Tactical Overwatch, proves to be inadequate.

The ASCC Dynamic

INSCOM MIB/MIGs are all under OPCON of their respective Army ASCC and dedicated to satisfying the intelligence requirements of that command. While each, based upon current Army planning, will have a small, dedicated capability within the Theater MIB/MIGs to provide Tactical Overwatch to a supported unit, the requirements of their respective commands is paramount. If Tactical Overwatch is to be the agile intelligence capability it is intended to be,

there must be buy-in from the ASCC commanders. They must be willing to allow a portion of their analytic capability to be focused on “the problem of the day”, irrespective of whether it is in direct support of their theater commander’s PIR. This is much more difficult than it seems. Intelligence capability is stretched already, and dedicating a portion of that capability, focused outside of their supported theater, is not an attractive proposition to most J2s.

CONCLUSION

Tactical Overwatch represents a real opportunity in providing timely, relevant, actionable intelligence to tactical units engaged in operations. Army Intelligence must address specific challenges to implementation of this concept throughout the force. The following recommendations may provide an azimuth for making Tactical Overwatch a successful combat-multiplier:

First, Army Commanders and G2s at every level need to be educated on the value-added of Tactical Overwatch. A module of instruction on Tactical Overwatch should be included in the curriculum for all Pre-Command Courses (PCC) and G2 preparatory courses. Tactical Overwatch needs to be written into Army doctrine and proliferated as a concept throughout the force, an effort that is already being sponsored by current INSCOM Commander, MG Defreitas. The draft White Paper, cited in this paper, provides a starting point for educating the force on the benefits Tactical Overwatch offers Army Intelligence. But there is a long way to go.

Second, current force structure changes make only a token investment in Tactical Overwatch. Current increases to INSCOM Theater MIB/MIG structure provide only a “cadre” capability to those units, which will require significant augmentation should they be required to provide the 24/7 dedicated, specifically focused support to a deployed unit that is required. The Army must truly invest in this concept, or it will fail, victim to the natural inclination to use all available intelligence resources to “flex” to respond to the ever-changing requirements of all commanders.

Third, and perhaps the most significant obstacle to overcome, in the current construct, is the ASCC dynamic. J2s rely on MIB/MIGs to be focused on the intelligence requirements of their commanders, and by extension, the commanders of the geographic Unified Commanders they support. The idea that a MIB/MIG in one theater would dedicate resources to support deployed units in another theater is a stretch, one that is a hard-sell for the supported J2. With the current focus of Tactical Overwatch on INSCOMs theater MIB/MIGs, all of which are OPCON to their respective theater Army component command, gaining endorsement of Tactical Overwatch from J2s is vital, and potentially insurmountable.

In summary, this paper has introduced the concept of Tactical Overwatch and identified that the initial Proof-of-Concept was a tremendous success, by all measures. But Tactical Overwatch faces significant challenges. As an institution, Army leadership outside of the intelligence community must be educated on, and embrace the concept, to ensure it’s future viability. Force structure needs to be examined to determine if sufficient investment has been made to establish a real capability to execute this type of dedicated support and J2s (and the ASCC Commanders they support) need to endorse the idea that a portion of their OPCON intelligence capability

(Theater MIB/MIGs) may be required to provide spotlight Tactical Overwatch support to Army tactical elements that may be operating outside of their respective Theaters Area of Responsibility.

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