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Intelligence During Operations Other Than War: Counterdrug Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield

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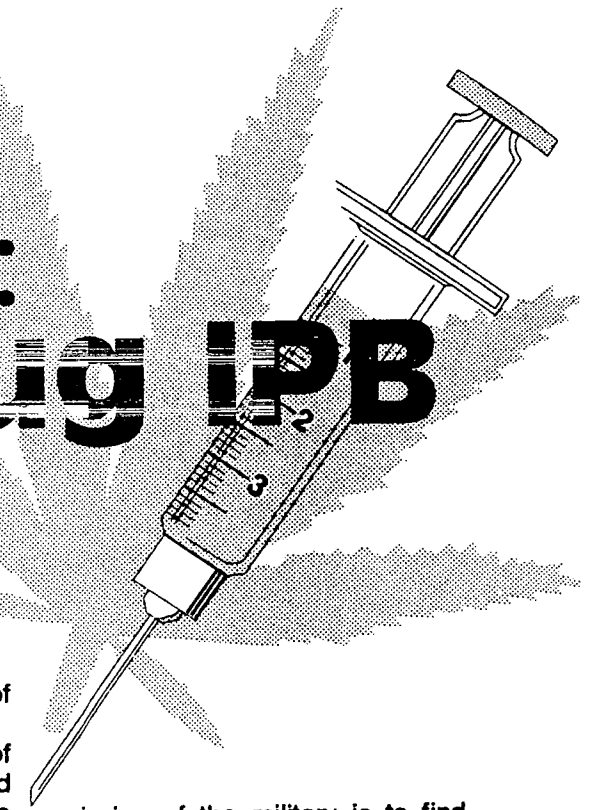
Intelligence During OOTW: Counterdrug IPB



by Major Christopher M. Schnaubelt

Doctrine cannot be static if it is to remain relevant to the everchanging strategic environment.

—General Frederick M. Franks, Jr.[1]

Intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) in operations other than war (OOTW) challenges intelligence analysts. Nevertheless, they must generate products that meet the commander's tactical needs. To do this, they will have to modify IPB methodology. When the threat consists of rioters, natural disasters, drug smugglers, or mass immigration instead of motorized rifle regiments, how does an intelligence analyst develop IPB products?

This problem was the subject of Lieutenant Colonel William V. Wenger's and First Lieutenant Frederic W. Young's article, "The L.A. Riots and Tactical Intelligence" (Oct-Dec 92). Wenger and Young argued that most IPB products (such as modified combined obstacle overlay [MCOO], event template, doctrinal template, or decision support template) were not applicable to civil disturbance operations. Their assertion that much of the IPB process was irrelevant during the Los Angeles riots stimulated a debate in several letters to the editor in **MIPB**.[2]

Although some field manuals address IPB in the general context of OOTW,[3] there are many examples that show a specific application. The IPB process can be used during OOTW. The key, however, is to modify the various products to meet the commander's decision making requirements for a specific type of operation.

This article gives an example of a modified form of IPB adapted for counterdrug operations. While these operations are unique in many respects, this example could serve as a guide to IPB during OOTW.

Interagency Coordination and Intelligence

Like many other OOTW missions, counterdrug support requires interagency coordination and collaboration—often at the task force level or below.[4] Battalion and company commanders who provide counterdrug support frequently operate in direct support of a law enforcement agency (LEA). Effective operations require cross-cultural understanding between the military and the LEAs we support.

While law enforcement and military operations have many things in common, there are differences. Each of the two fields has its own particular training focus, target, and procedures.

One critical function of law enforcement, for example, is to arrest suspects and bring them to trial. This role requires maximum restraint in the use of force. Law enforcement officers are specially trained to protect lives and property and to collect and preserve evidence. Conversely, the primary mission of the military is to find the enemy and destroy him and his equipment.

The similarities and differences between law enforcement and military concepts are exemplified in intelligence. LEAs and military units typically have intelligence sections dedicated to collecting and analyzing information about the threat. Much law enforcement intelligence is reactive. It often depends on confidential informants. (MI analysts refer to this as human intelligence.) The purpose of most law enforcement intelligence is to bring a particular case to court and get a conviction.

On the other hand, MI tends to be predictive. The MI analyst looks for indications of future enemy actions. With this data, the commander can strike the enemy at the decisive time and location. Partly because of this predictive focus, MI analysis is in great demand by LEAs.

Counterdrug IPB

In traditional combat operations, IPB is the basic methodology analysts use to do many things including predicting where and when the enemy will be on the battlefield. With some modification, agents can use IPB in

counterdrug operations to identify the decisive time and location to interdict drug trafficking.

The IPB process is defined in **FM 34-130, Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield**, and other sources. Therefore, this article will focus on elements specific to counterdrug operations. I will review some of the basic IPB elements to make the information useful to law enforcement personnel as well as to MI analysts.

Counterdrug intelligence preparation of the battlefield (CDIPB) is a valuable tool that MI analysts can bring to a counterdrug operation. CDIPB combines traditional analysis with the specific needs of joint military-law enforcement counterdrug operations. (Some civilian organizations prefer to substitute the word "operation" for "battlefield." Regardless of semantics, the process is the same.)

Although IPB originally focused on a predictable "Cold War" threat doctrine, drug trafficking is not as predictable, and does not lend itself to a standardized "smuggling doctrine." Still, drug trafficking involves moving people and material. This movement is subject to the constraints of terrain, weather, and the potential presence of counterdrug forces.

An analysis of these constraints provides clues to the location and activity of drug traffickers. The following section discusses CDIPB using the four steps of the IPB process:

- ☐ Define the battlefield environment.
- ☐ Describe the battlefield's effects.
- ☐ Evaluate the threat.
- ☐ Determine threat courses of action.

Define the Battlefield Environment

The counterdrug battlefield consists of the area of operations (AO) and the area of interest (AI) just like the battlefield during operations in war. Supported LEAs expect to conduct operations in the AO. It may coincide with all or part of an LEA's jurisdiction.

The AI, which extends beyond the AO, consists of areas in which analysts can develop information on smuggling or activities that affect the operation. For example: agents involved in an interdiction operation along the southwest border would have an interest in clandestine airfield activity in Mexico, even though they would interdict the plane in the United States. In this instance, potential drug trafficking airfields south of the U.S./Mexico border would be in the AI.

On a smaller scale, agents may participate in an operation to eradicate a particular marijuana garden in a rural area. The AO here might be the garden itself. The AI might be surrounding road networks used by either counterdrug forces or growers.

Describe the Battlefield's Effects

Two components of this particular step of the IPB process are terrain analysis and weather analysis.

1. **Terrain analysis.** This process determines how terrain will affect the movement of drug traffickers. Terrain factors such as vegetation, slope, and cross-country mobility affect every trafficker mode of travel. Analysts must evaluate each mode of transport. For example, rugged terrain impedes vehicles, but provides security for foot and pack animal traffic. Highways allow trucks to move, but they expose smugglers who travel on foot or by pack animal.

In CDIPB, the OCOKA factors (observation and fields of fire, concealment and cover, obstacles, key terrain, and avenues of approach) and mobility corridors focus on terrain as it relates to drug trafficking.

a. **Observation and fields of fire.** In drug trafficking operations, good observation helps traffickers avoid detection. Drug traffickers hide when they spot counterdrug personnel.

Electronic line of sight is also an important consideration in CDIPB. Drug traffickers often use electronic intercept equipment to detect the presence of counterdrug personnel. Smugglers use natural terrain features to maximize observation and communications and electronic monitoring equipment. They emplace day and night observation devices, radios, radar detectors, and scanners to provide early warning of law enforcement personnel.

b. **Concealment and cover.** This is the "flip side" of observation. For drug traffickers, concealment and cover are vital in avoiding detection. Smugglers move where vegetation and terrain offer the best concealment. Aircraft used in smuggling activities use low-level flight and nap-of-the-earth techniques to avoid radar detection. Maritime smugglers use remote beaches and harbors to off-load shipments. They may try to blend in with legitimate sea traffic.

Concealment and cover are also important in eradication operations. Marijuana cultivators hide their gardens from aerial observation by growing them under forest canopies or within the fog line of coastal areas. Smugglers increasingly use indoor operations to hide marijuana cultivation.[5]

c. **Obstacles.** Obstacles affect the movement of drug traffickers. The analyst must learn the location of obstacles to foot, horse, vehicular, maritime, and air movement. They must assess the affects on drug trafficking if agents remove, overcome, or bypass these obstacles.

d. **Key terrain.** This includes any feature that traffickers or counterdrug forces can use to their advantage. The most important terrain aspect to drug traffickers is a place they can use for logistical support and security. High ground overlooking a high speed avenue of ingress and egress is key terrain because smugglers can establish an observation post on high ground. Residences and

other structures that provide refuge from counterdrug forces or observation sites and a place to stash drugs are also key terrain.

e. Avenues of approach (AAs) and mobility corridors. These are roads, trails, rivers, and harbors; or for aircraft, valleys that allow low-level flight. Analysts evaluate drug traffic AAs in terms of expected modes of transportation, intelligence, and statistical history.

Using these factors, the analyst examines terrain aspects important to traffickers:

- ☐ Alternate routes. Availability of alternate routes to react to counterdrug forces.
- ☐ Escape routes. Availability of escape routes that provide quick withdrawal from crossing or stash sites.
- ☐ Security. Availability of routes with the greatest security. They avoid checkpoints and areas where counterdrug forces could interdict them.
- ☐ Crossing sites. Traffickers avoid rivers and open spaces. They prefer crossing sites where they can move fast and reduce their vulnerability.

Analysts evaluate counterdrug force AAs in terms of how counterdrug forces will interdict the smugglers. For example, counterdrug forces may be unable to move an arrest team by vehicle into rough terrain where traffickers use foot or pack animal transportation.

If analysts expect smugglers to travel on foot or by pack animal, the AAs are accessible trails that provide good mobility and concealment. Vehicular AAs are roads or flat areas between ports of entry where smugglers can sneak across the border. Maritime AAs include rivers or beach sites where traffickers can move loads to ground transportation.

Ports of entry (land, sea, and air) are avenues for the shipment of illegal drugs into the United States. The massive volume of legitimate traffic entering the United States each day hides loads of contraband. (Only a small portion of individuals, vehicles, and cargo containers entering or leaving the United States is inspected.) An important distinction between AAs in "Cold War" IPB and CDIPB is the potential for change in the mode of transportation.

Photographs provided by author

Soldiers and law enforcement officers conduct a reconnaissance for indications of drug trafficking or production.

For example, an armor division will not typically change into light infantry when reaching a severally restricted area, then change back into armor where the terrain is unrestricted. Drug traffickers, however, are more flexible. They move the drugs by truck to rough terrain between U.S. Customs ports of entry, unload and move them across the border on foot or by pack animal, then reload them into trucks on the other side.

f. **Other features.** When preparing terrain factor overlays, the analyst should pay particular attention to some features that do not normally appear on topographic or military maps:

- ☐ Long established smuggling routes.
- ☐ River width, depth, velocity, bank height, and river bed composition to determine crossing points and restrictions.
- ☐ Terrain features such as caves, abandoned mines, and structures to hide drug loads.
- ☐ Vegetation and irrigation ditches for hiding.
- ☐ Changes to terrain (such as roads and highways) and temporary features (such as Border Patrol checkpoints) over the years.
- ☐ Locations where "key terrain" (elements of the local population) provides drug traffickers logistical support. This includes access to river or border crossing sites, boat docks, private roads and structures, or landing strips.

g. **Intelligence and statistical factors.** These factors incorporate known or suspected information on trafficking activity with the terrain, including—

(1) Evidence of electronic surveillance or communications equipment used to monitor law enforcement activity and to coordinate smuggling operations. Confirmed reports of traffickers using surveillance and communications equipment are potential indicators of trafficking.

(2) Visual signs of trafficking such as abandoned or stashed loads, drug packaging or waterproofing debris, and vehicle or foot tracks crossing the border between ports of entry and in areas where legitimate traffic is unlikely.

(3) Drug seizures in a particular area or AA are obvious indicators.

(4) Logistical support factors, including—

- ☐ Transportation networks such as railroads and public and private roads that traffickers could access.
- ☐ Property (structures or land) that traffickers could use to store and move drugs, especially if controlled by trafficking organizations.
- ☐ Known or suspected stash sites and staging areas for shipments.

(5) For ports of entry inspections, analysts develop profiles or indicators to target traffic with the highest probability of smuggling activity.

2. **Weather analysis.** This process examines factors that affect drug trafficking, including temperature, visibility, precipitation, and light data. Extreme weather conditions affect personnel and equipment. Cold weather reduces the battery life of communications equipment. Hot weather reduces the life of electronic equipment and increases the amount of water people in the field need. Analysts use light data to determine the effects of illumination on both counterdrug forces and traffickers. Analysis of a particular AO may show that traffickers usually operate when there is no moon.

The MCOO is the basic product analysts develop from defining the battlefield area, terrain analysis, and weather analysis. The degree of detail shown on the MCOO depends on the time available and the size and location of the counterdrug operation.

An analyst uses the MCOO to determine the relative ease or difficulty of moving through an area. Analysts must consider the combined effects of weather and terrain on each mode of travel. Heavy rain does not affect vehicles on asphalt highways, but thunderstorms may prevent aircraft operations. (On the other hand, high winds aloft may ground aerostat radar platforms but not high-risk aerial smugglers.) Reduced visibility favors ground drug trafficking operations.

Evaluate the Threat

Threat evaluation is the analysis of drug traffickers. We use many of the same factors used in analyzing military forces: operations, tactics, capabilities, and equipment. Analysts develop a drug trafficker data base to build a picture of the threat and conduct continuous IPB. Information in the data base includes organizational structure, modes of operations, and personal data on smugglers.

To develop the drug trafficker data base, the intelligence analyst reviews the smuggling threat within an AI. Sources of information include—

- ☐ State and local law enforcement data bases and apprehension and seizure reports.
- ☐ El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) reports.
- ☐ U.S. Border Patrol intelligence reports.
- ☐ Drug Enforcement Administration data bases (NADDIS) and reports.
- ☐ FBI data bases (NCIC).
- ☐ U.S. Customs Service data bases (TECS) and reports.
- ☐ Regional Information Sharing System data bases.
- ☐ Department of Defense data bases (ADNET/Emerald II).
- ☐ Open sources.
- ☐ Confidential informants.

Military personnel must know the legal and policy restrictions on collecting and handling some types of information and intelligence.[6] During operations in the United States, military personnel may not target individuals for surveillance. Military organizations may not have or maintain files on private citizens. In certain instances, however, specifically assigned military personnel (augmentees) may help LEAs analyze and file information on suspects if the supported LEA retains the information. This is permissible only if the military provides direct support to an LEA and does not pass the information to a military entity.

To complete threat evaluation, the analyst creates a drug trafficking incident and situation map (INSITMAP). The INSITMAP is both an analysis tool and a means to brief the task force commander or other law enforcement officials. If there is heavy activity in the AI, the analyst may need to create two maps that show incidents and the situation separately.

The INSITMAP shows all permanent information on drug trafficking forces, such as known crossing sites, organization boundaries, clandestine airfields, staging areas, and established smuggling routes. Also shown are drug trafficking incidents—the transitory events usually associated with drug traffic:

- ☐ Isolated seizures.
- ☐ Cumulative LEA seizures in a particular area.
- ☐ Trafficker surveillance and scouting.
- ☐ Trafficker communications.
- ☐ Trafficker electronic monitoring of law enforcement.
- ☐ Suspected trafficking aircraft landings.

Once analysts plot drug trafficking incidents, the INSITMAP provides cumulative historical data that helps identify smuggling trends and patterns of activity. This information allows the intelligence analyst to make judgments about the intensity of drug trafficking in specific areas, the amount of support traffickers receive from the local population, and potential areas for trafficking activity.

Determine Threat Courses of Action

When developed properly, the INSITMAP is equivalent to a drug trafficking situational template. The INSITMAP also shows counterdrug force locations and operation plans. If the map shows counterdrug force information, limit access as necessary to maintain operations security.

Analysts use an INSITMAP reference chart to record and ex-

Reconnaissance team prepares to sling-lift marijuana and cultivation materials to a destruction site.

plain map entries. The chart includes: map symbols, entry item number, report number of information source, activity date and time, description, location, trafficking organization (if known), LEA case number (if applicable), and comments.

1. **Initial collection requirements.** Consistent with the intelligence cycle for any operation, analysts identify initial collection requirements and use them to drive initial collection planning and management. Examples of initial collection requirements include—

- ☐ What locations are drug traffickers likely to use as lookout positions?
- ☐ What routes are they likely to use?
- ☐ What weapons are they likely to possess?
- ☐ What electronic collection and countermeasures do they have (scanners, radar detectors)?
- ☐ What threats do counterdrug forces face (booby traps, natural hazards)?
- ☐ What are the traffickers' modes of operations (cultivation methods, trafficking routes and methods, security consciousness, weapons of choice, propensity for violence)?
- ☐ How are traffickers likely to respond to counterdrug operations (for example, change modes of operation, confront counterdrug forces, avoidance, cease activities)?

2. **The event template.** The analyst develops a drug trafficking event template with named areas of interest (NAI). In CDIPB, drug trafficking activity, or the absence of activity at NAI, confirm or deny the predictability of traffickers. Analysts develop NAI throughout the AI where significant trafficking may occur.

Intelligence personnel analyze significant drug trafficking activity and expected smuggling events on the template to provide trafficking indicators. The analyst can predict what traffickers will do next when they compare what traffickers are doing to what they can do.

The decision support template

The decision support template (DST) displays areas where significant trafficking activities will probably occur and target areas of interest (TAI) along trafficking routes where counterdrug forces can interdict the traffickers. In essence, analysts identify good locations for arrests and seizures. These locations include—

- ☐ Known drug trafficking river crossing sites.
- ☐ Trans-shipment points.
- ☐ Stash sites.
- ☐ Drug pickup points.
- ☐ Clandestine airfields with a smuggling history.

After analysts select the TAI, they identify decision points. These relate drug trafficking events to the decisions required to execute interdiction operations. They show the deadline for making those decisions. Agents must decide to launch an interdiction aircraft, for example, early enough for it to arrive at the drop-off point while the traffickers are still there. The decision support template can provide the link between intelligence and counterdrug operations.

Conclusion

Counterdrug IPB can help LEAs use their limited resources

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DRUGS

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more effectively. Through the CDIPB process, intelligence analysts provide important MI support, an important force multiplier, in the nation's counterdrug efforts. Better yet, the military can train law enforcement personnel on CDIPB. The lessons developed from counterdrug support may also prove useful in other OOTW activities. By adapting IPB to the needs of the field commander, MI can help meet the challenges of OOTW.

Endnotes

1. Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., and Richard H. Shultz, Jr., eds., "Army Doctrine and the New Strategic Environment" in **Ethnic Conflict and Regional Instability: Implications for U.S. Policy and Army Roles, and Missions**, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1994, 275.

2. My own observations during the riots was that the MI cycle stopped because of uncertainty over how to adapt it to the situation. At least one brigade commander said MI was "irrelevant" to the situation. Most deployed brigades and battalions cannibalized their S2 sections to provide liaison officers, journal clerks, and drivers. As the examples provided in LTC Wenger and 1LT Young's article show, most MI section products merely involved a repetition of local LEA information. Also, there was a distinct difference between the military and law enforcement's concepts of intelligence. Almost all law enforcement "intelligence" was merely information and involved little or no analysis.

3. **FM 100-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict; FM 7-98, Operations in a Low Intensity Conflict**; and **FM 100-19, Domestic Support Operations**. A draft of this article was used to develop the CDIPB annex in **Joint Pub 3-07.4, Joint Counterdrug Operations** (March 93 Final Draft).

4. In "A Power Projection Army in Operations Other Than War," **Parameters** 23 (Winter 93-94) 4-26, MG S.L. Arnold and MAJ David T. Stahl point out the importance and complexities of interagency coordination. They suggest that during OOTW you must consider external coordination as an additional battlefield operating system.

5. While the presence of cover may be less of a consideration in counterdrug operations than it is in combat operations, the analyst should consider the presence of cover.

6. As Mr. Hawkins pointed out in his letter to the editor (Apr-Jun 94), the following apply: **Executive Order 11905, U.S. Foreign Intelligence Activities; EO 12333, U.S. Intelligence Activities; DOD Reg 5240.1-R, Procedures Governing the Activities of DOD Intelligence Components That Affect U.S. Persons**; and **AR 381-10, U.S. Army Intelligence Activities**. Also, see **FM 100-19, Domestic Support Operations**, 3-5.

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