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Honing the Tip of the Spear: Developing an Operational-Level Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield for Special Operations Forces

by

Peter J. Don
Major, U.S. Army

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The contents of this paper reflect my own views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

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Faculty Advisor
CAPT David Jones, USN

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Chapter I

Introduction

First, break down the wall that has more or less come between special operations forces and the other parts of our military, the wall that some people will try to build higher. Second, educate the rest of the military – spread a recognition and understanding of what you do, why you do it, and how important it is that you do it. Last, integrate your efforts into the full spectrum of our military capabilities.

Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William J. Crowe, U.S. Navy
The SOF/Conventional Force Charge, 1 June 1987

The Special Operations Forces (SOF) guidance articulated by Admiral Crowe in 1987 remains compelling and relevant today to both a Joint Force Commander (JFC) and a Joint Task Force Commander (JTF). These commanders are responsible for integrating, supporting, and employing SOF into operations and campaigns to shape the regional environment, as well as deter and defeat threats in a designated area of operation. However, the absence of an operational-level Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) for SOF, which fuses national and theater-level intelligence with tactical intelligence, hinders the capability of a JFC and JTF to effectively support the critical intelligence requests and requirements of a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) and its SOF components. Moreover, it tempers intelligence analysis, dilutes operational planning, and endangers SOF missions, which rely on fused, relevant, precise, and time-sensitive intelligence.

The existing IPB process has not been modified to address the myriad of asymmetrical and asynchronous threats and the complex operational environments SOF may encounter. The global security environment, coupled with the dynamics of special operations, warrants developing an operational-level IPB for SOF, whose unique intelligence requirements necessitate further collection, research, correlation, and commensurate analysis than normally required in IPB to support mission planning and execution for conventional forces.

The purpose of this paper is to identify problems, recommend reforms, and assist JTF and JSOTF commanders, operational planners, and intelligence staffs in focusing and

conducting operational-level IPB for SOF. The focus of the analysis is at the operational level. Yet, based on the nature of special operations, it will touch on the strategic and tactical levels. In addition, this analysis does not separately analyze the intelligence functions and disciplines, such as human, signal, and imagery intelligence, in relation to SOF, but synthesizes them into all-source intelligence.

Following the introduction, each chapter of this paper concentrates on aspects of the IPB process and special operations. Chapter II provides a synopsis of the purpose and functional parameters of the current IPB and JIPB processes. Chapter III describes the principal missions and collateral activities of SOF and their unique and challenging intelligence requests and requirements. Chapter IV analyzes the absence of an operational-level IPB for SOF and examines factors that shape and disrupt IPB for SOF. In addition, it indicates several approaches commanders and intelligence staffs may consider in conducting IPB for SOF. Finally, Chapter V draws conclusions and recommendations on how the current IPB process may be adapted to support special operations.

The scope of SOF for this analysis includes units which a JFC, JTF, and JSOTF commander may utilize to support military objectives within a theater such as Army Special Forces, Special Operations Aviation, Rangers, Civil Affairs (CA), Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), Navy Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) teams, Navy Special Boat Units, SEAL Delivery Vehicle teams, and Air Force Special Operations, Combat Weather, and Special Tactics teams. Specific intelligence support to each of these specialized units is distinctly different in purpose, scale, and diversity. Each deserves its own analysis and study.

Chapter II

Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield

> If you know the enemy and yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself and not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither yourself nor the enemy, you will succumb in every battle.
>
> Sun Tzu – *Art of War*, 400 BC

The acronym “IPB” is universal throughout military lexicon, but its essence and intent are often misunderstood. IPB occurs at all levels of warfare and comprises an iterative four-step process: (1) Define the Battlefield Environment, (2) Describe the Battlefield Effects, (3) Evaluate the Threat, and (4) Determine Threat Courses of Action (COA).[1] It assists in organizing and analyzing information on an adversary, terrain, and environment to enable a commander to “selectively apply and maximize his combat power at critical points in time and space on the battlefield.”[2]

IPB is a sound, intensive, and dynamic process. It is not, however, a substitute for analysis, nor is it merely a threat template or a compilation of intelligence products. Human thoughts, laced with biases and perceptions, drive the IPB process. It must occur before, during, and after operational planning, especially since new information and intelligence can alter the situation, the threat assessment, the operational environment, and mission analysis. It cannot be conducted in a vacuum and must be inextricably interwoven with operational thought and planning. The commander's role in the IPB process is critical, principally because he drives the intelligence process to achieve information superiority by culling and distilling information into intelligence to assist in reducing uncertainties, developing situational awareness, and creating his vision of the battlefield.

The Army IPB process serves as the doctrinal benchmark, especially since the other services have adopted and assimilated IPB into their doctrine. Despite the implementation of the IPB process, each service interprets, deliberates, and utilizes IPB differently.[3] One may discount the IPB process, arguing that it is too structured in design and inhibits intelligence analysis. However, IPB is intended for “units of all types, at all echelons, across the entire spectrum of conflict, and during the conduct of any mission.” [4] That said, the doctrinal principles of IPB remain constant. However, their application may vary with each specific situation and operation, as well as with conventional threat forces and with threat forces operating within a military operations other than war (MOOTW) environment. The

principles of IPB necessitate evaluating the effects of the battlefield on operations and determining an adversary's courses of action based on doctrine, capabilities, disposition, and location.[5] These principles underscore several assumptions inherent to the IPB process, which can affect operational planning and intelligence analysis. First, friendly forces have knowledge of the terrain and weather within the AO. Second, the adversary has a formal doctrine. Third, the adversary uses and adheres to a doctrine. Finally, friendly forces comprehend the adversary's tactics and doctrine. If placed in the context of unconventional warfare or a MOOTW environment, where SOF predominately operate, then these assumptions may frequently become immaterial.

IPB has evolved from a traditional two-dimensional model into a three-dimensional analysis called Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (JIPB), which now addresses the ground, air, maritime, and space factors of an area of operation and interest. It is important to note that IPB and JIPB differ in "relative purpose, focus, and level of detail."[6] These differences can bifurcate operational-level intelligence and result in a duplication of effort and non-relevant IPB products, such as annotated imagery used for SOF targeting and planning. Consequently, for a JTF and JSOTF, this may distort the common operational picture, hinder the staff planning and decision-making processes, and dilute the unity of effort.

Chapter III

Special Operations and Intelligence

> Intelligence is to special operations – any type of special operations – as water is to fish. The one is unthinkable without the other.
>
> B. Hugh Tovar
> "Intelligence Assets and Special Operations," *Special Operations in U.S. Strategy*

For a JFC and JTF, SOF stand as a strategic and operational capability rather than a tactical-level force operating in the margins of military operations. SOF are "regionally oriented, culturally aware forces [that] provide a depth of expertise not available to the conventional forces," which allows them "to operate 'in the seam' between peace and war."[7] Their experience, language proficiency, special military skills, and knowledge of foreign cultures and militaries allow them to exploit and nurture the human element. SOF can operate in hostile and denied locations across the range of military operations to

> "conduct operational and strategic missions that directly or indirectly support the joint force commander's (JFC's) campaign plan. SOF missions originate with the JFC – often with the advice of the joint force special operations component commander (JFSOCC) – and are directed toward exactly the same ends as the operations of conventional forces. . . SOF can help the JFC seize the initiative, reduce risk, facilitate maneuver, and achieve decisive results by attacking operational and strategic targets."[8]

SOF Missions and Intelligence Requirements

SOF have nine principal missions: counter proliferation (CP), combating terrorism (CBT), special reconnaissance (SR), unconventional warfare (UW), direct action (DA), foreign internal defense (FID), psychological operations (PSYOP), civil affairs (CA), and information operations (IO).[9] In addition, SOF execute a myriad of collateral activities, such as counterdrug activities, personnel recovery, security assistance, and coalition support.[10] Unlike conventional operations, special operations respond to the changes in the regional and global environment that occur along the operational continuum.

Special operations differ from conventional operations "in degree of physical and political risk, operational technique, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets."[11] These operations entail complex and diverse intelligence requirements for SOF, from detailed information for a DA and SR mission to information normally allocated for strategic operations. Thus, for a JFC or JTF, intelligence prevails as a major operational function in special operations and may even determine a specific mission, as well as its feasibility.

Although intelligence required by operational-level SOF for planning and execution parallels that needed by conventional forces operating in a MOOTW environment, intelligence products for SOF support their complex and unique missions which encompass the civil, military, psychological, and political objectives of a JFC or JTF in support of national policy. SOF missions equate to ephemeral and detailed intelligence requirements, which "place unusual demands on theater and national intelligence systems." [12] At level command levels SOF rely more heavily on strategic-level support and products than do conventional units and require dissemination to the operational and tactical levels in near-real-time, based on a limited organic analytic capability at the tactical level and the remoteness of a target or operating area inherent in some missions, such as DA, FID, or CT.

Based on the consistent dependency on higher echelon intelligence, one may contend that technology is the solution to automate the IPB process and satisfy SOF intelligence requests and requirements. Improvements in web-based technology and intelligence systems now provide theater and tactical-level intelligence staffs with a capability to rapidly access and transmit information to SOF. While these technological advances enhance SOF capabilities and intelligence, they are only part of a solution, especially since IPB remains a cognitive practice and is susceptible to influencing factors.

Special Operations Calculus: Measured in Minutes and Degrees

Even when leveraging technology and balancing operational functions, a JFC and JTF should understand that focused, timely, detailed, and synthesized intelligence is critical for a JSOTF and SOF components to determine the feasibility and suitability of missions, identify appropriate targets, develop COAs, and sustain operational planning and execution.[13] This is important since SOF operate at lower operational levels and entail decentralized execution.

First, the JTF should focus intelligence collection and analysis on the atypical aspects of SOF, especially in an environment where it is difficult to assess the situation or define a non-doctrinal enemy in terms of conventional IPB. The prevalent differences between intelligence for SOF and conventional forces are ones of focus, the nature of the conflict, and the importance of demographics; these provide a means to understand the current social, tactical, and political patterns, identify external support, and predict future events. However, theater-level intelligence efforts predominantly focus on an adversary's conventional capabilities, force composition, and "kinetic targeting," rather than understanding the "human dimension."[14] Operations in the last decade and recently in Afghanistan, illustrate that the population itself becomes the key terrain or "critical terrain," which is essential for successful special operations, such as CA, PSYOPS, UW, or FID.[15] Thus, adjusting the intelligence focus and integrating such information into an operational-level IPB for SOF can alter the overall operational situation and assist a JTF commander in understanding a country or a clan's attitudes and reactions toward U.S. military actions and interests. Additionally, problems with compatibility can affect operational focus, since theater and "national intelligence agencies organize personnel and data bases along geographical and functional lines that do not necessarily fit nicely with [SOF] missions and environments."[16] Colonel Timothy O'Neil, former J-2 for Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR), contends

theater collection management and intelligence assets were not focused on SOF deployment areas and “SOF priorities were rarely considered a priority by the EUCOM J2 staff until there was a crisis.”[17]

Second, a JSOTF requires immediate access to all-source intelligence to plan and execute missions. Time constraints and security considerations accelerate and compress decision and intelligence cycles to support “direct-action operations, particularly those aimed at capturing or killing specific individuals or groups, depend for their success to a large degree on having timely, high-quality intelligence about the target in question.”[18] In Afghanistan, the nature of the threat and situation affected the planning and decision cycles to the degree Navy Captain Robert Harward, Commander of Combined JSOTF – South, could not use the standard "96-hour planning process" to identify and strike a target and "had to dramatically compress the cycle to as short as an hour or two."[19] Access to near-real-time theater and national-level intelligence is crucial to facilitate an IPB process at all levels. A JTF and JSOTF must strike a balance between data timeliness and availability.

Finally, SOF missions necessitate that a JFC or JTF achieve granularity and synthesis in their intelligence analysis and development of mission and target specific products for SOF planning and execution. A JTF and JSOTF should exploit and “sensitize the Intelligence Community” (IC) to satisfy SOF requirements.[20] This entails constant coordination and interface with IC agencies to attain the level of detail stipulated in the requests for information. Effective operational-level IPB ensures analysis and synthesis are interactive and interrelated to support SOF planning and targeting. Accurate operational-level intelligence of an enemy’s capabilities, critical vulnerabilities, and center of gravity enables a JSOTF to precisely plan and execute special operations in support of a JFC or JTF commander’s information requirements, operational goals, and objectives.

Chapter IV

Operational-Level IPB for SOF

> To become both wise and courageous one must acquire a method, a method to be employed in learning as well as in applying what has been learned.
> Mao Tse Tung

The absence of an operational-level IPB process for SOF creates a divide between the strategic and tactical levels. This divide complicates a JTF and JSOTF's ability to direct, focus, and integrate intelligence toward common operational objectives. For a JFC or JTF, the scope of operational-level intelligence is significantly larger than tactical-level intelligence, especially in relation to time, space, and purpose. However, the integration of SOF changes the dynamics of intelligence at all levels of a campaign or operation. JFC and JTF commanders should understand that SOF consistently demand "the highest-quality intelligence at the lowest tactical level."[21] Therefore, a JFC and JTF should ensure that during the planning and execution of special operations, asset allocation and target specific intelligence from tactical units to national-level agencies to support IPB remains seamless and time-sensitive. During the conduct of IPB, JTF and JSOTF planners and intelligence staffs should consistently consider and revisit factors such as political and legal sensitivity, force vulnerability and security, and cultural and social issues, which are either not considerations, or if conceived, are not mission-critical factors in conventional operations. Such critical factors may not only affect the mission execution, but also alter the JTF and JSOTF commander's estimate of the situation or negate the overall feasibility of the operation. Lieutenant Colonel Harold Bakken advises commanders and their respective intelligence staffs that:

> Special operations by their nature are tremendous consumers of intelligence as well as being great sources of information. SOF intelligence requirements range from the macro-strategic assessments of a geographic target country or entity, to granular,

> micro-detailed combat information. The combatant commanders' SOF must have continuous access to intelligence products, automated (and correlated) databases, and sophisticated mission planning material/equipment. SOF uses this information not only to plan and rehearse the operation, but also to continuously assess the feasibility of the mission.[22]

Similarly, the relationship between SOF and IPB has been described as "symbiotic," illustrating that SOF demand IPB products for mission planning and execution and the IPB process, in turn, operates on "critical information obtainable only by SOF assets."[23] Lieutenant Colonel David Maxwell, former Army Special Forces Battalion commander, contends that every mission SOF conduct necessitates IPB and that SOF have the capability to directly support the IPB process at all levels of warfare, not only for special operations, but also for conventional forces and other agencies.[24] For example, a JTF can task Navy SEALS to conduct beach landing surveys to determine the feasibility and suitability of an area for amphibious operations or direct Army Special Forces to perform SR missions in denied areas to locate and target an adversary's mobile surface to air missile systems in support of sequential DA missions. The critical information obtained by SOF directly supports and enhances the JIPB and operational planning of a JFC or JTF.

One may contend IPB for SOF mirrors IPB for conventional forces in MOOTW. However, the IPB assessments and supplemental products required by a JSOTF and SOF components are more diverse, involve extensive collection, and require greater accuracy than most JTF directed conventional missions. JFC and JTF staffs should understand that SOF require intelligence to "avoid adversary forces, regardless of size or composition, as opposed to information that would allow conventional forces to engage the adversary." [25] An operational-level IPB process for SOF requires developing intelligence assessments and products, which center on the vulnerability and security of the friendly force in relation to the adversary.

The absence of an operational-level IPB for SOF implicates current intelligence doctrine. As mentioned in Chapter II, the disparities between IPB and JIPB involve focus, purpose, and level of detail. Lieutenant Colonel Richard Burklund, J-2 for Special Operations Command Joint Forces Command (SOCJFCOM), rationalizes that "since the JSOTF is a planning headquarters that stands at the juncture of the operational and tactical continuum, it will use JIPB to synchronize intelligence support to SOF planning. The JSOTF seeks to create analytic synergy through the integration of the [SOF] components various IPB analyses."[26] With the absence of joint doctrine, Army doctrine prescribes that SOF intelligence staffs conduct both IPB and JIPB since the process is the same, but caveats that IPB products and requirements for a tactical-level DA mission are significantly different from those necessitated to plan and execute an operational-level FID mission.[27] Burklund submits the differences between SOF missions and their corresponding intelligence requirements significantly increase at a JSOTF level of planning.[28] In addition to the differences between SOF missions and intelligence requirements, additional matters may arise which can disrupt and shape the IPB and JIPB processes to support SOF.

Precipitants to IPB Dysfunction

The disparities between JIPB and IPB, coupled with the factors of time, space, and forces, can result in a duplication of effort, isolated intelligence analysis, contrasting views of critical factors, or dichotomous IPB products at the JTF, JSOTF, and SOF component levels. SOF components principally employ the tactical-level IPB process, not JIPB, to support target and situation development, mitigate risk, and determine the overall effects of the environment, adversary, and operational area on a mission. For example, an Army SOF component may be responsible for planning and executing a joint DA mission, which involves both Navy SEALS and Army Special Forces using Air Force Special Operations

aircraft to infiltrate to and exfiltrate from their designated target. While the SOF elements share the same operational objectives, each element may demand different intelligence requirements and IPB products from the SOF component and higher echelons to support their respective mission planning. This can undermine the unity of effort and result in compounding or canceling effects for the IPB and JIPB processes.

Stovepipes and Sacred Cows

Additional factors may arise, which directly affect and subsequently shape the IPB processes for SOF at the tactical and operational levels. Since no two special operations are ever the same, the associated intelligence support requirements will change with each specific operation. Consequently, for a JTF, the conduct of JIPB warrants knowing the consumer, which is tantamount to understanding the specific intelligence requests and requirements of a JSOTF, a SOF component, or a SOF team.

Depending on the campaign or operation, a JTF may have multiple JSOTFs, each with similar or unique capabilities, yet designated with separate missions and targets. Consequently, competing demands arise from JSOTFs and SOF components vying for priority of finite JTF intelligence resources and products to sustain their respective IPB processes.[29] Competing demands and duplicative processes can tax and squander theater and national-level intelligence resources. The sanctimonious operational profiles, security concerns, and sheltering of proprietary intelligence sources and methods incite sensitivities and compartmentalization between JSOTFs and SOF components within a JTF. JTF and JSOTF commanders should remain cognizant of these factors to establish intelligence priorities, maintain operational security, sustain unity of effort, and establish a common operational picture. The challenge is to avert intelligence stovepipes, allay the operational sacred cows, and reduce the competing demands during the IPB and JIPB processes.

Ultimately, such factors can impede the JTF and JSOTF intelligence cycles and affect dissemination and integration of intelligence, which JSOTF and SOF components require to continuously update their specific JIPB and IPB processes and products.

Breaking the Cycle

Lieutenant Colonel Maxwell cautions that SOF "are often trapped by IPB" in that SOF conduct IPB during the mission planning phase and then are "afraid to update it as the situation changes."[30] Limiting IPB to only the operational planning phase undermines the principles and continuous, cyclical nature of IPB, and arrests the flow of information. Information must constantly flow between JTF and JSOTF to anticipate and understand SOF component mission and IPB requirements. A JSOTF J-2 staff and Joint Operations Center can establish a watch center to facilitate the flow of intelligence information by maintaining constant access to near-real-time theater and national-level operations and intelligence links and nodes. Moreover, to sustain the flow of information and enhance the IPB and JIPB processes, SOF mission debriefs should consistently occur to obtain and report intelligence information to a JSOTF and JTF. New information assists a JFC, JTF, or JSOTF in reassessing an enemy's critical vulnerabilities and center of gravity, validating friendly COAs, and refining intelligence assessments. More importantly, SOF must provide feedback to intelligence analysts on the accuracy, usability, relevancy, and timeliness of the intelligence used for mission planning and execution. In view of the factors affecting IPB, a JTF and JSOTF may consider several approaches to develop an operational-level IPB, which encompasses the strategic, operational, and tactical intelligence requirements of SOF.

One IPB Process - Three Lenses

One may argue the basic IPB process should remain constant regardless of the level of war, since doctrine stipulates the IPB process applies to all situations and environments.

However, the IPB process and its underlying assumptions fixate on a specific level of war. Intelligence at all levels of warfare differs in application and focus, and therefore generates the distinctions between the JIPB and IPB processes. This can lead to a myopic view of an operation. Operating at only one level of warfare results in "perceiving the world through a lens or screen that channels and focuses and thereby may distort the images that are seen."[31] To mitigate this operational predisposition and assist SOF planning, a JTF and JSOTF may examine special operations through three IPB lenses – strategic, operational, and tactical. Rotating and focusing the lenses on an operation may assist a JSOTF in fusing JTF operational-level JIPB with SOF component tactical-level IPB to achieve a holistic perspective of an operation. Moreover, this may alter perceptions and assumptions of a situation or threat and expose new variables to an operational environment. For example, changing perspectives to analyze the terrain and weather in Afghanistan illustrated the strategic, operational, and tactical effects on friendly and enemy operations. Major Chris Miller explained that the geography and winter climate in the Hindu Kush region limited lines of communication (LOC) between bases in neighboring countries and Afghanistan, restricted operational infiltration routes of SOF elements, and influenced UW operations with Northern Alliance and anti-Taliban forces. At a tactical level, the terrain and weather degraded rotary wing performance, impinged on SOF mobility, and confined operating areas to specific elevations.[32] Thus, a JTF and JSOTF's ability to simply examine an operation with multiple IPB perspectives may enhance the operational-level framework, direct the overall intelligence effort, and refine the common operational picture.

Establishing a Battlefield Zero

Another approach to bridge the gap between JIPB and IPB to obtain an operational-level IPB for SOF involves establishing the JFC or JTF JIPB process and products as the median for all

JSOTF and SOF components to use in mission planning and execution. One may assert a standardized IPB analysis is not warranted, especially since SOF intelligence units should shift between IPB and JIPB during planning and execution. However, a JTF JIPB median would serve as an analysis benchmark and a product baseline to highlight intelligence gaps or requirements between a JTF and JSOTF. It would stand as a point of departure for the development of supplemental products such as a target intelligence packet (TIP).

A TIP is a supplemental and specifically tailored product resulting from IPB to support the SOF targeting and mission planning processes for a DA or SR and FID or UW mission. TIPs were paramount to conduct SR and UW operations in Afghanistan. For example, a CJSOTF intelligence staff constructed separate and distinct TIPs for each of the 25 geographically separated coalition SOF teams deployed throughout the operational area.[33] In addition, the initial positioning and basing of SOF in Afghanistan to conduct UW depended heavily on information on the socio-economic and geo-political environments in the region as well as intelligence on the leadership, intentions, composition, capabilities, and locations of the Taliban, Northern Alliance, and anti-Taliban forces.[34] A TIP concentrates on either direct or indirect application of military force and depicts a target's disposition, composition, vulnerabilities, command structure, demographics, geographic and weather factors, neutral parties, infiltration and exfiltration routes, and target peculiarities.[35] During peacetime or war, a TIP format assists a JFC or JTF intelligence staff in several ways. First, it presents a JFC or JTF intelligence staff with a standardized listing of tactical, operational, and strategic-level SOF intelligence requirements by mission type. Second, it can assist theater and national-level intelligence elements in understanding SOF intelligence requests, especially analysts unfamiliar with special operations. Third, in relation to existing JIPB products, it can direct and assist a JFC or JTF in constructing operational-level supplemental

IPB products for a JSOTF and SOF components. Thus, understanding SOF supplemental IPB requirements, a commander's strategic objectives, concept of operation, and operational guidance for an operation can assist both JTF and JSOTF in planning, preparing, and coordinating JIPB, establishing intelligence requirements early, and determining the requisite analysis and production effort based on time available. This may also improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a JTF and JSOTF in conducting JIPB.

The establishment of a JIPB median may reduce divergent IPB processes and ensure the intelligence tasks and purposes at all levels are mutually supporting and contribute not only to the intelligence effort for SOF, but to the overall success of an operation and campaign. This should occur both horizontally and vertically within a JTF, JSOTF, and SOF components, to promote focused and relevant JIPB and IPB processes. The command relationships, especially between JTF and JSOTF intelligence staffs must remain clear and adaptable to align IPB efforts and facilitate the transactional flow of intelligence. Both a JTF Joint Intelligence Support Element (JISE) and a JSOTF JISE can greatly assist commanders and staffs in remaining operationally focused, prioritizing intelligence collection, allocating intelligence assets, and instilling a collaborative IPB effort.[36] It may facilitate a JSOTF and its SOF components in systematically updating their IPB analyses with a JTF's baseline JIPB products, as well as support mission analysis, sustain the indications and warning system, direct the targeting processes, and enhance situation development at a JTF and JSOTF. The JIPB analyses coalesced with the SOF operational plans would illustrate any differences between the overall friendly plan, the estimated enemy COA, and the current situation.

Chapter V

Conclusion and Recommendations

The problems that exist in the world today cannot be solved by the level of thinking that created them.
Albert Einstein

SOF collect and require intelligence at all levels of warfare. Compared to conventional IPB, IPB for SOF entails and thrives on extremely focused, timely, detailed, and synthesized intelligence from all levels of warfare for mission planning and execution. The absence of an operational-level IPB for SOF tempers the ability of a JFC and JTF to support the intelligence requests and requirements of SOF. Development of an IPB for SOF may result from either changing intelligence perspectives and operational perceptions to fuse strategic and tactical intelligence to support special operations or by establishing the JTF JIPB process and products as a median and a point of departure to create supplemental products for a specific SOF mission. Essentially, an operational-level IPB for SOF necessitates that commanders and intelligence staffs at all levels comprehend both the traditional IPB process and the dynamics of special operations. This is relevant today, since SOF may serve as the principal operational-level force in a theater campaign or operation. As a result, a JFC or JTF must render precise and relevant intelligence to a JSOTF to ensure the judicious and precise employment of SOF to shape the operational environment and set conditions for success. An operational-level IPB for SOF may assists commanders and intelligence staffs in balancing predictive intelligence aspects of a campaign or operation, which focus on the future developments of a JTF in the weeks and months ahead, with the perishable and actionable intelligence at the tactical-level, calculated by SOF in minutes and days.

There are no metrics for IPB. Commanders and staff measure the effectiveness of IPB by the overall level and degree of understanding of an adversary and an operational

environment. An over-reliance on technology seeks to transform IPB into a science. In fact, IPB is an art entrenched in operational art, enabling operational commanders to conduct effective mission analysis, formulate rapid decisions, exercise innovative solutions, sustain unity of effort, and orchestrate forces to accomplish complex military objectives.

The United States is at war with mercurial threats with global reach and support from surrogate states. In the conduct of the global war on terrorism, it remains unlikely that the intelligence demands of SOF will lessen. This is paramount, especially since the Secretary of Defense recently authorized U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to plan and execute counterterrorism operations on al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks.[37] A decision perhaps centered on concerns that conventional intelligence and operational planning are not responsive and effective to enable SOF to successfully persecute terrorists.

In order for an operational-level IPB to hone the tip of the spear, a synthesis must occur between special operations and intelligence doctrine. USSOCOM, in consonance with the other Combatant Commands, the military services, and the IC, should establish a formalized JIPB process, which encompasses the strategic, operational, and tactical intelligence requirements for SOF. A comprehensive, standardized inventory of mission specific intelligence requirements and products should accompany the process. The process would educate in order to increase the breadth and depth of knowledge at all levels of intelligence to support SOF. The resultant requirements and JIPB process must be integrated and codified into service, theater, and joint doctrine, training, and databases. It must be resilient enough to pursue and analyze future SOF missions and operational environments, such as IO and urban warfare, and prepare for an eventual synthesis of JIPB into operations, where a SOF sensor-to-shooter interface may someday occur in real-time minimizing the division between intelligence and operations on the future battlefield.

Notes

[1] Headquarters, Department of the Army, Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield, Field Manual (FM) 34-130 (Washington, DC, 8 July 1994), 1-1.

[2] Ibid.

[3] For additional information on the IPB process for each service refer to: Headquarters, Department of the Navy, Naval Intelligence, Naval Doctrine Publication 2 (Washington, DC: September 1994), 16; Headquarters, Department of the Navy, Intelligence Support to Operations Afloat, Naval Warfare Publication 2-01 (Washington, DC: January 1997), 4-3; Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Intelligence Operations, USMC Warfighting Publication 2-1 (Washington, DC: February 1998), 3-10; Headquarters, Air Force Doctrine Center, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Operations, Air Force Doctrine Document 2-5.2 (Washington, DC: April 1999), 40-43.

[4] FM 34-130, iv.

[5] Ibid., 1-5.

[6] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace, Joint Pub 2-01.3 (Washington, DC: 20 May 2000), I-1.

[7] U.S. Congress, Senate, Armed Services Committee, Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, Statement by General Charles R. Holland, Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, On the State of Special Operations Forces (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 12 March 2002).

[8] United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), U.S. Special Operations Forces Posture Statement 2000 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000), 2-3.

[9] Ibid., 4.

[10] Ibid., 5.

[11] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Special Operations, Joint Pub 3-05 (Washington, DC: 17 April 1998), I-1.

[12] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Special Operations Operational Procedures, Joint Pub 3-05.3 (Washington, DC: 25 August 1993), VI-1.

[13] Joint Pub 3-05, V-2.

[14] Anthony Hale, MAJ, USA, interview by author, electronic mail, <haleanthony@nwc.navy.mil> "SOF IPB Questions" [Email to Peter Don <donp@nwc.namy.mil>], 15 January 2003.

[15] Gerald M. Gordner, MAJ, USA, interview by author, electronic mail, <gordnergm@bragg.army.mil> "SOF IPB Questions." [Email to Peter Don <donp@hoffman.army.mil>], 10 September 2002.

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[29] Lawrence Brown, MAJ, USA, interview by author, electronic mail, <brownl@nwc.navy.mil> "SOF IPB Questions." [Email to Peter Don <donp@nwc.navy.mil.], 15 January 2003. Major Brown served as an Army SOF intelligence officer in Afghanistan. He indicated there were three JSOTFs operating in Afghanistan and not all of them could receive priority of effort for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) or requests for information (RFI). In addition, he stated theater intelligence assets did not answer some RFIs even though a SOF mission was imminent.

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[33] Gordner.

[34] Miller.

[35] Joint Pub 3-05.5, E-1, F-1.

[36] Joint Pub 3-05.1, VI-4, 5. The JTF JISE serves as the interface between the theater-level intelligence and the JSOTF and SOF components. Similarly, a JSOTF JISE coordinates with the JTF JISE and theater intelligence and other intelligence units to develop threat and situational assessments, provide intelligence support to forward deployed SOF elements, and develop target intelligence packages (TIP).

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