



MARCH 2009

ATTACK THE NETWORK PART 1: OIL SPOT METHODOLOGY ASYMMETRIC WARFARE GROUP

OVERVIEW:

This document facilitates discussion, training and implementation of effective targeting methods at the Battalion and Brigade level. In this paper, the Oil Spot Strategy is discussed as a model for describing insurgent influence. This methodology can enable leaders to better understand the critical links within an insurgent cell and serve as a basis for understanding Attack the Network concepts.

BACKGROUND:

Over the past several months, AWG personnel met with various operations and intelligence professionals who described the continuing challenge of Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) asset integration and synchronization at the Brigade Combat Team level. This does not mean there have not been major successes in both training and in war. There are Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) and Battalions (BNs) in Iraq that have modified targeting and analysis functions to Find, Fix, Finish, Exploit and Analyze threats and Disseminate (F3EAD) the information; they pushed intelligence to the lowest level possible and provided accurate, predictive analysis that resulted in the kill or capture of numerous High Value Individuals (HVIs). Many times success seems to hinge on the validity of one crucial piece of data—one valuable human source or one Signals Intelligence analyst that is THE Subject Matter Expert. This trend indicates a need for an adaptation of target methodology and its link to collection platforms. Challenges with producing continuous, precise targeting data are further compounded in an asymmetric environment.

Current doctrine, focused on targeting and ISR, is most effective in a deliberate Military Decision Making Process (MDMP), but it is more difficult to achieve desired effects against an asymmetric threat without modifying our analysis, integration and synchronization of intelligence assets. Specifically, the challenge becomes, “how do we target specific individuals when timing is crucial?” **Find, Fix, Finish, Exploit, Analyze, and Disseminate (F3EAD) is an effective methodology for the Counter Insurgency (COIN) fight.** The benefit of utilizing F3EAD is that it refines the targeting process to identify and defeat specific individuals. A potential down-side to this approach is focusing critical collection assets on targets that are at the lowest level and not focusing assets against networks. The argument can be made that the defeat of Tier III and lower targets creates only a momentary vacuum that will be filled by other recruits quickly. A BCT must develop a method for attacking an entire network to be successful at achieving a Brigade Commander’s intent on a mission (e.g. neutralize Insurgent X Special Groups in zone). **Attacking a network requires leaders and analysts to understand the link between an enemy’s Critical Capabilities, Requirements, and Vulnerabilities, as well as, indicators reflecting that an enemy action has occurred.** Attacking a network requires leaders and analysts to understand the link between an enemy’s Critical Capabilities, Requirements, and Vulnerabilities, as well as, indicators reflecting that an enemy action has occurred.

The change required is not drastic. In fact, much of what is taught in Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) can be used; units need to focus on non-traditional indicators at the lowest possible level. In the COIN fight, analysts at the BN and BCT level have to understand each threat’s center of gravity, ideology and methodology. Units must also identify the most vulnerable, critical nodes within a network for targeting focus. This level of analysis is required before ISR can be prioritized and, ultimately,

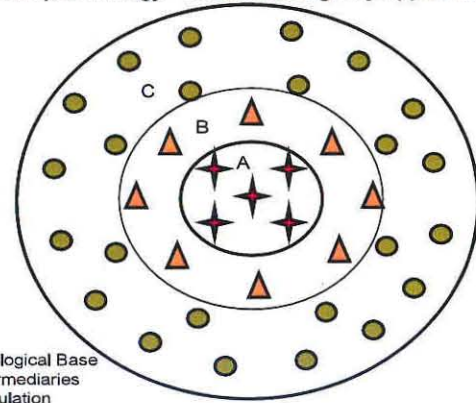
find and fix HVIs.

It is not enough to determine there are certain enemy key leaders in your zone. Leaders and analysts, especially members of BCT and BN S2 staff sections, must have a fundamental understanding of enemy capabilities in their area of operation. This understanding must be derived from the enemy's area of influence because the threat often operates over long distances and does not compartmentalize operations based on terrain; they take advantage of their capabilities and hide their vulnerabilities.

INSURGENT INFLUENCE DESCRIBED THROUGH THE OILSPOT METHOD:

The Oil Spot method applied to countering an insurgency is not a new concept. Commanders are applying this method to the COIN fight to successfully protect the strategic center of gravity in Iraq: the Baghdad population. The primary intent of Part I in this series is to describe how the Oil Spot Method can help visualize insurgency networks. Part II will continue the discussion by describing Center of Gravity Analysis, via the Dr. Strange model, to understand the parts of a network that should be targeted at the BCT level. Part III completes the series by describing effective COIN templating and ISR techniques.

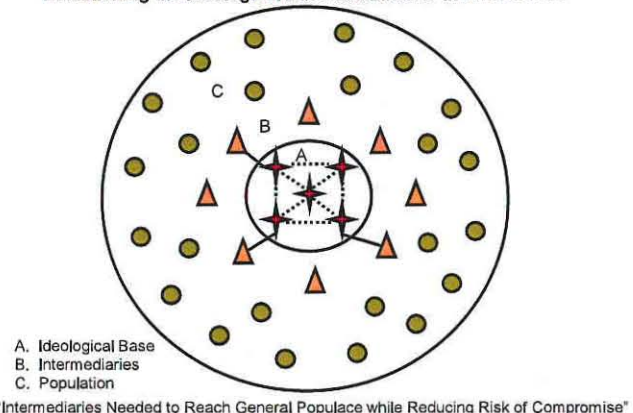
Oil Spot Strategy – Counter Insurgency Application



An insurgency works counter to the efforts of the established government. Insurgent leaders more than likely cannot directly influence or control the population; their ideology may not appeal to most people they want to win over. To ensure their own survivability, insurgent leaders have to isolate themselves from the very thing they want to control, the people (the COIN Center of Gravity). Even if the insurgent leaders have the popular support of the people they must have good Operational Security or risk compromise. A fledgling insurgency's first priority is to protect the trusted circle of hard-core, ideologically-focused leaders. Insurgent leaders are usually categorized as an ideological based insurgency and are the Tier I targets friendly forces must isolate and neutralize through both lethal and non-lethal means.

As this circle of trust builds, the insurgent leaders find vetted agents that are outside the inner circle (with access to the general population, but limited access to key leaders). These middle-men are called "intermediaries". The intermediaries interact with the leaders to understand their objectives and establish the links with valuable facilitators within the population. Once this linkage from the ideological base to the general population is established, the insurgency is ready to move to the next level of influencing the center of gravity.

Establishing the Ideological Base and Links to Intermediaries

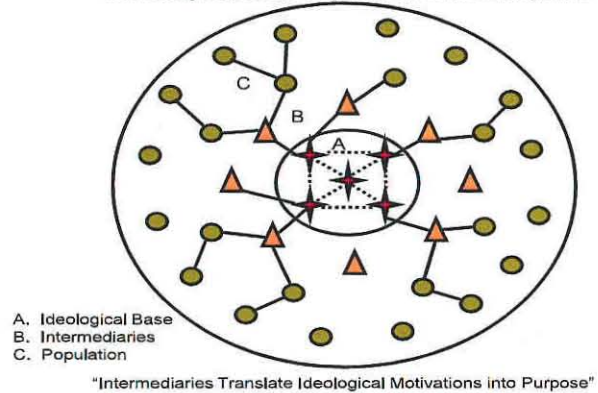


Intermediaries, or Tier II targets, may adopt the ideological beliefs of the insurgent leaders, but they may be motivated by other factors including revenge, money, poor government leadership/programs and religion. Intermediaries are a part of the population, but are susceptible to recruitment by the ideological base. They also have connections within their communities and know the potential recruits for operational cells.

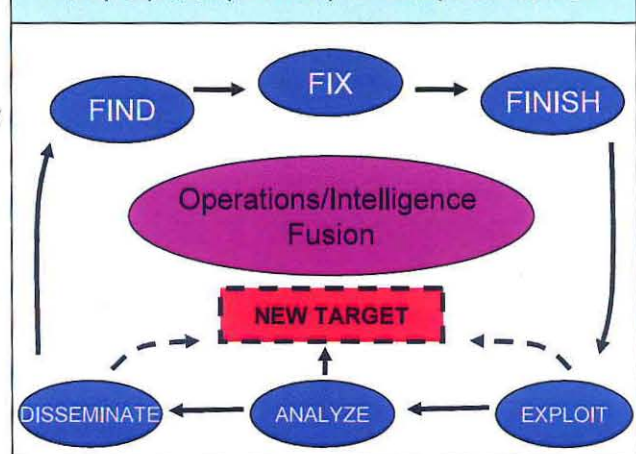
Not applying the F3EAD Methodology against Tier I or II targets can cause more attention to be paid to threat action than capabilities, causing commanders to focus on those who have taken direct action against us rather than on those who are more capable and dangerous.

The targeting aspects of the F3EAD Methodology modifies the D3A Methodology based on proven Special Operations Forces' Tactics, Techniques and Procedures. A practical application of F3EAD is in personality targeting, but F3EAD is much more than that. F3EAD should be used as a commander's tool to visualize and understand the terrain, threat, friendly capabilities and intended effects. Not applying the F3EAD Methodology against Tier I or II targets can cause more attention to be paid to threat action than capabilities, causing commanders to focus on those who have taken direct action against us rather than on those who are more capable and dangerous. As a result, targeting focuses on Tier III targets: individuals normally a part of the center of gravity that both Coalition Forces and the insurgent ideological base are fighting for control over. The consequence of this targeting focus can include immediate (but short term) gains in security, loss of populace support for other initiatives, and additional motivation for disenfranchised personnel to join the insurgency. To counter our actions, all the intermediaries have to do is recruit another disaffected person from the population. There is no lasting effect on the insurgency.

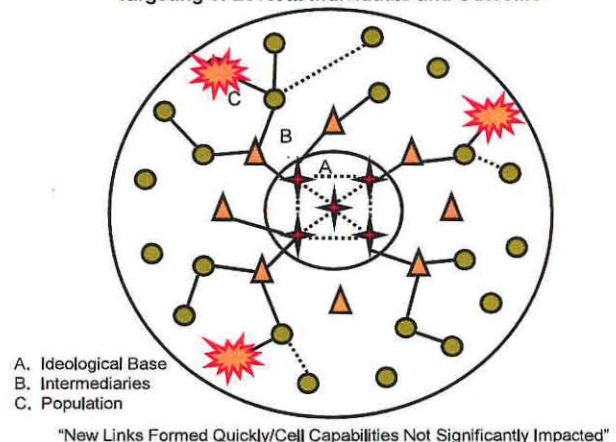
Reaching Out to the Population/Establishing Cells



FIND, FIX, FINISH, EXPLOIT, ANALYZE, DISSEMINATE

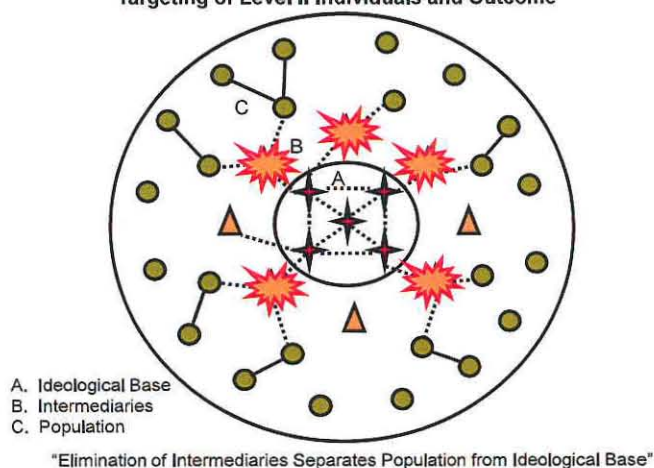


Targeting of Level III Individuals and Outcome



A better application of force at the BCT and below level is to focus on the intermediaries, the Tier II targets who are the link between the ideological base and the center of gravity, although this may not result in an immediate decrease in violence or improved security. This is where it can be difficult for commanders and staffs, exposed to hostile action on a daily basis, to shift their targeting priorities. Eliminating Tier III targets will provide immediate results, but not lasting ones. However, a determined effort to eliminate the intermediaries will eventually force Tier III targets toward a decision point; they must devolve into criminal elements to acquire resources or reconcile with the majority of the population. Tier II targets are the vital link between the ideological base and the center of gravity. Tier II targets can include financiers, false document providers, media experts, bombmakers, weapons smugglers, trainers and recruiters. This is where BCTs can focus their attention and achieve long-term success against an insurgency.

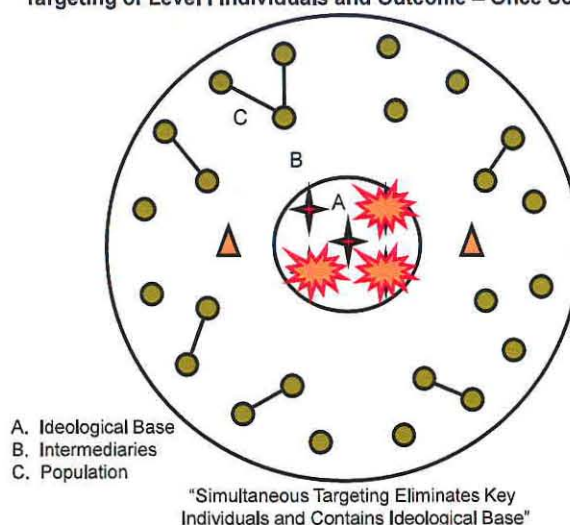
Targeting of Level II Individuals and Outcome



This is where the regional fusion cells enable the fight. Fusion cells synchronize Special Operations Forces and General Purpose Forces (GPF) assets, as well as, intelligence and operations, providing BCT and BN commanders access to enablers they cannot traditionally leverage. These expanded ISR capabilities provide the targeting information to BCT and BN commanders, enabling them to kill or capture Tier I and Tier II targets. (See AWG Product "Regional Fusion Cells—The Phenomenon" at our SIPR Website)

The insurgent leaders must now risk exposing themselves more to the population to recruit replacement intermediaries. This increases our chances of their identification and targeting with precision forces. At a minimum, **successful targeting of Tier II targets by BCTs will force the ideological base to consolidate and reorganize their personnel and resources—significantly impacting the threat's operational tempo.** Simultaneous targeting of Tier I and Tier II targets will have an even greater impact. Because Tier I targets are ideologically based, often resourced by external state/non-state supporters and aware of their vulnerabilities, they are harder to identify and target. Tier I targets require dedicated ISR assets routinely available only at the division and higher levels. **This is where the Regional Fusion Cells enable the fight. Fusion cells synchronize Special Operations Forces and General Purpose Forces (GPF) assets, as well as, intelligence and operations, providing BCT and BN commanders access to enablers they cannot traditionally leverage. These expanded ISR capabilities provide the targeting information to BCT and BN commanders, enabling them to kill or capture Tier I and Tier II targets.**

Targeting of Level I Individuals and Outcome – Once Separated



CONCLUSION:

Analysts, staff members and leaders need to understand the fundamentals of how an insurgency attempts to impact the population (Center of Gravity). Recognizing that BCTs can have more impact by targeting Tier II, Intermediaries, is a critical first step in identifying the vulnerable parts of an insurgency network. This helps focus and synchronize ISR and analysis. Part II of this series will continue the discussion by describing Center of Gravity Analysis as it applies to Critical Capabilities, Critical Requirements, and Critical Vulnerabilities. Part III will describe doctrinal templating of insurgent networks, ISR focus, and synchronization to the commander's intent and scheme of maneuver.

Look for Attack the Network Methodology Part 2 and 3



**ATTACK THE NETWORK PART 1:
OIL SPOT METHODOLOGY
ASYMMETRIC WARFARE GROUP**

SIPR: <http://army.dailis.mi.army.smil.mil/org/aawo/awg/default.aspx>

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