



21st-Century Marine Expeditionary Intelligence Analysis (MEIA-21): An Overview

MEIA-21 is a formal initiative to structure, standardize, and professionalize tactical intelligence analysis in the Marine Corps. It professionalizes Marine expeditionary intelligence, equipping intelligence analysts with analytically rigorous Structured Models, Approaches, and Techniques (SMATs)—*applied tradecraft*—to provide commanders with actionable, reliable tactical intelligence in conventional and irregular warfare while also instilling the cognitive and creative skills to create and refine that tradecraft.

MEIA-21 will reinforce foundational analytic skills and bring applied analytic tradecraft to the Marine Corps Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Enterprise (MCISR-E).

The post-9/11 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004 mandates analytic integrity, rigorous methodology, tradecraft quality, improved standards, and lessons learned throughout the Intelligence Community. The Director of National Intelligence (DNI) has implemented these congressionally directed analytic standards via a number of community directives (e.g., ICD 203 Analytic Standards, Proper Standards of Analytic Tradecraft [1]–[8]). The reforms have improved the analytic process by clarifying estimative language, developing better sourcing, normalizing the product review and evaluation processes, structuring the way judgments are made, and standardizing the look and required content of intelligence products. These top-down reforms have driven the development of standards and approaches (such as Structured Analytic Techniques (SATs)) that can be described as foundational tradecraft and have become the mainstay of training courses and professional seminars in the Intelligence Community.

This foundational tradecraft, however, fails to provide analysts with specific means (elementary or advanced) by which to analyze the nature, cause, identity, and pattern of adversary and population networks—a glaring omission, given the nature of today’s intelligence problems. Another stark omission is the failure to capture intelligence techniques that have emerged from 10 years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan and fully analyze their strengths, weaknesses, and limitations so they can be improved and reused or discarded.

Although foundational knowledge and tradecraft remain the basis from which intelligence analysts must operate, MEIA-21 seeks to move the Marine Corps intelligence enterprise beyond the foundational base to provide analysts with a master menu of specific analytic solutions that can be directly applied to produce reliable intelligence across the range of military operations—*applied tradecraft*. MEIA-21 defines applied analytic tradecraft as Structured Models,

Approaches, and Techniques (SMATs)—the synthesis of best practices from the field infused with techniques and methods derived from the social and physical sciences. SMATs focus on specific functional areas such as target identification, enemy and pattern-of-life analysis for human targeting, and economics and accounting for the threat finance/financial intelligence. Applied analytic tradecraft represents a *new* class of investment requiring a commitment of time and resources to evolve the workforce to the point where analysts document their techniques, seek to improve them using scientifically rigorous methods, and deliberately grow applied analytic tradecraft to meet analysis requirements in a wide range of fields.

Core Principles of MEIA-21

1. Successful operations require reliable tactical intelligence.
2. Reliable tactical intelligence is achieved through structured, mission-specific applied tradecraft.
3. Tradecraft-driven intelligence analysis is conducted using analytically rigorous processes.
4. Social science intelligence (SSI) is the key to successful intelligence analysis in COIN and other nonconventional operations.
5. In an era of enormous quantities of potentially useful data, technology is critical to intelligence work.
6. Intelligence analysis is a profession and should be structured as such.



Social Science Intelligence

Contending with conventional, counterinsurgency (COIN), and nonconventional operations in the upcoming decades of the 21st century, Marines will be exposed to socially complex environments and hybrid armed groups. Many of these threats (conventional and nonconventional) and adversaries (state, state proxies, and nonstate actors) will be more agile, less visible, and possess an information advantage where it is easier for them to see and target us than for us to see and target them.

Given this operational environment, the MCISR-E must analyze more than an adversary's characteristics and capabilities. Expeditionary intelligence must address the context within which adversaries operate; the institutions within which they live; and their fears, perceptions, and motivations; in short, we must consider the totality of the human sphere as it applies to our adversaries.

This new approach to intelligence analysis, focusing on understanding human social organization is called *Social Science Intelligence (SSI)*. There has been significant growth in the techniques and technologies of intelligence analysis, especially in the social sciences such as economics, political science, anthropology, and other disciplines relating to the study of human behavior. Most advanced knowledge in these fields is hard to access because it is dispersed within academia and not directly focused on intelligence-related problems. Consequently, it plays an inadequate role in tactical intelligence today—Marine intelligence analysts' knowledge of human-centered problems tends to be subjective, unscientific, technologically weak, and based mostly on the raw intuition and personal experience of the individual analyst.

The challenge is to develop, refine, and deploy applied techniques that enable us to understand the totality of the human domain framework with speed and precision. An analytic modernization plan that captures critical best practices, leverages the best social and physical science know-how available, and makes available sophisticated analytic instruments that analysts can readily apply to intelligence problems is critical to success. When made available, these methods and approaches give analysts social and physical science expertise from the fields that parallel the questions faced by intelligence (e.g., accounting, organizational theory, elite analysis, political science, economics, and census/registry).



SMATs are Explicit, Rigorous, and Reliable Applied Tradecraft

Under MEIA-21, social science methods are inserted into applied tradecraft called *Structured Models, Approaches, and Techniques (SMATs)*. Distilled into models and approaches, SMATs give analysts an outline, a representation of social dynamics that fuses the current or past techniques of analysts with social science. Social science-infused SMATs increase understanding so that analysts can generate *insight* (knowing why something has happened or is happening) and *foresight* (being able to identify and anticipate what may happen). Building the analytic capability to create insight and foresight requires the purposeful creation and application of applied tradecraft.

- A SMAT is a structured approach to addressing a specific **intelligence question** (e.g., What do we know about the organizational structure of an insurgent group or how stable is the rule of law in a given operational landscape?).
- Within that overarching framework, the SMAT **defines and explains the theoretical basis** (e.g., social network theory) for the analytical structure it defines. It guides the analyst in using specific theories to enhance understanding.
- In addition to insights from social science theory, the SMAT contains **direction as to how to create intelligence products**, including the types of raw collection reports used, tools for conducting machine-aided analysis, and guidelines on how to use the theories to produce sound analysis to support operations.
- SMATs include **model intelligence products** that analysts can use to convey their findings to commanders in clear, actionable, and precise ways.



Threat Finance: A SMAT Case Study

By GySgt Michael Austin, Intelligence Support Battalion

The Threat Finance SMAT was originally developed in 2008–2009 by former members of the Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) 08.01 Multi-National Force West (MNF-W) Economic & Political Intelligence Cell. Before development of the original SMAT, threat finance analysis at the tactical and operational levels consisted primarily of identification and monitoring of smuggling routes and gray/black market oil and fuel prices.

To expand situational awareness of enemy funding streams, Marines leveraged their experience in OIF to develop a Threat Finance SMAT focused on identifying and exploiting the financial networks of underground organizations. Going beyond the physical movement of goods and funds and analysis of black market trends, the SMAT concentrates on *sources and methods of financing* and identifying *key financial nodes* of underground organizations.

The Teaching Package

Once the analytic framework was defined, the Marines developed the following training materials:

- A 12-page technique paper
- A 40-minute PowerPoint-based lecture
- A 2-hour practical application period, during which students read through a series of about 12 information sources and to describe the structure of a threat finance network, to include a link chart, as part of an insurgent group profile

Refined with the Analytic Rigor of the Social Sciences

The Threat Finance SMAT was then subjected to evaluation and validation by the Social Science Board (SSB), comprising experts in anthropology, organizational psychology, and insurgent financing analysis. Based on the SSB's recommendations and with its assistance, the SMAT was enhanced by the following:

- Explaining the threat finance process through existing *economic models* (Leites and Wolf's *Economic Model of Insurgency*)
- Enhancing graphic portrayal of *the analytic steps involved* in threat finance analysis
- Increasing discussion on *developing collection requirements and driving collection* of threat finance network-associated information
- More specific information on threat finance organizations and *resources within the Intelligence Community*.

Practical application of the enhanced SMAT still includes development of a link chart, but the final evaluation/exam portion is *enhanced to include the creation of Source-Directed Requirements* and the completion of narrative information for inclusion into an Insurgent Group Profile.

Disseminated and Deployed

The original SMAT has been taught to **more than 300 Marines**, encompassing a number of Marine Corps intelligence units, by three training cadres (the CMEIK, the Intelligence Support Battalion (ISB) Methods Group, and the 2d Intel Bn Methods Group). It is taught as part of the Economic & Political Intelligence Cell's and 2d Intelligence Battalion's predeployment training packages; was a core required class in ISB's FY2009 and FY2010 Training, Exercise, and Evaluation Plans (TEEPs); and is actively used by II MEF (fwd) in the Regional Command – Southwest Analysis Center (SWAC). The enhanced Threat Finance SMAT has been taught to approximately 110 Marines, the vast majority of whom are enlisted Intelligence Specialists, but also Signals Intelligence Analysts, Senior All-Source Intelligence Analysis Officers, MAGTF Intelligence Officers, and others within the Marine Corps intelligence enterprise. The enhanced SMAT will be operationally deployed to the SWAC in August 2011, is a core required class in ISB's FY 2012 TEEP, and is taught by the CMEIK and its associated Tradecraft Groups. The teaching module is available on the CMEIK portal.



Each SMAT is contained and described within a defined structure that includes the following user-friendly documentation, training, and implementation elements:

A concise paper explains the intent of the SMAT, the theory behind it, and how it is employed. Each paper contains the following:

- Introductory material
- Background and history
- Source(s) of information
- Strength(s) and weakness(es) of the approach
- Implementation
- Key takeaway(s)

Training materials include the following:

- A presentation for formal instruction
- A practical application exercise
- A final exam
- A course facilitator's guide

Applicable analytic tools and technologies

- e.g., Advanced Analytics

Model intelligence products

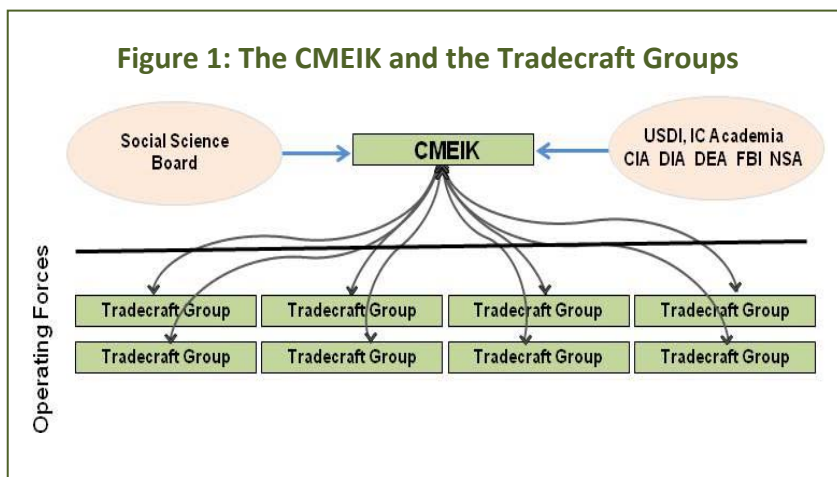
- e.g., the Adversary Group Profile

The Center for Marine Expeditionary Intelligence Knowledge and Tradecraft Groups

The Center for Marine Expeditionary Intelligence Knowledge (CMEIK) instantiates the MEIA-21 vision for the MCISR-E, serving as the repository for, and caretaker of, applied tradecraft. The fixed-site CMEIK collects analytic methods developed in the field by Marines, from other Intelligence Community (IC) elements, from academia, or from tradecraft groups functioning in the Operating Forces. The CMEIK validates, cleans, and standardizes them and then creates an easy-to-use SMAT package that can be used by individuals or units to train with and master.

The CMEIK is the nexus for intelligence analysis tradecraft in the MCISR-E. It is the caretaker of tradecraft, providing quality assurance, training, archiving, a portal for dissemination, and organizational continuity. Because it is a fixed site, the CMEIK requires an institutional link into the forward-operating components of the intelligence enterprise.

Tradecraft groups are the keepers of tradecraft within analytic elements of the intelligence and radio battalions and in other Marine intelligence formations (e.g., wing, division). Consisting of certified *analytic methodologists* with expertise in applied intelligence tradecraft and advanced social science analysis, tradecraft groups provide the practicing intelligence analysts with up-to-date knowledge of tactical intelligence tradecraft and reinforce analytic rigor and community-accepted standards for analysis. They are the on-site experts in analytic methodology and applied tradecraft, overseeing the coaching and use of foundational skills (e.g., SATs) and applied tradecraft (SMATs) within the unit. They also engage in the improvement and development of SMATs in the field and communicate related developments back to the CMEIK. As an integral fixture of the unit within which they serve, tradecraft groups also have a permanent and strong dotted-line connection to the CMEIK (see Figure 1).



The DIRINT envisions the Marine expeditionary analytic workforce under MEIA-21 as a credentialed workforce of expert analysts who apply rigor and discipline to analysis, using a framework for knowledge creation based on expert analytic skills and processes; social science intelligence; and a culture that foments the rapid capture, refinement, training, and institutionalization of analytic methods emerging from the front lines.

