

The Stability Operations Information Center (SOIC)

Comprehensive Understanding for Comprehensive Operations



“In studying the laws for directing wars that occur at different historical stages, that differ in nature and that are waged in different places and by different nations, we must fix our attention on the characteristics and development of each, and must oppose a mechanical approach to the problem of war.” - Mao Tse Tung

REGIONAL COMMAND (RC) WEST SOIC DIRECTOR

COUNTERINSURGENCY ADVISORY & ASSISTANCE TEAM (CAAT)
RC-WEST
HERAT, AFGHANISTAN

I. Introduction

The complexities of COIN present significant challenges toward developing adequate understanding of the operating environment. Most of DoD's doctrine and organizations were developed for war between nation states. In fact, the governing logic of our planning processes and our staff organizations was built on deductive logic where syllogism, reductionism, and other "engineering" approaches produced adequate results when applied against foes organized and guided by like logical constructs. However, the contemporary operating environment is not offering us a mirrored logical construct to plan and execute against. The conflicts we find ourselves engaged in now, and likely in the future, are "irregular" conflicts where many conventional military processes and organizations are often unable to deliver adequate results. "War amongst the people" is by nature more complex than conventional warfare and requires new ways of thinking, new processes and new organizations capable of absorbing information and fusing it into understanding that effectively enables comprehensive action.

TRADOC pamphlet 525-5-500 describes an experimental cognitive process to create a shared understanding of complex operational problems. The pamphlet is a response to the need for generating greater understanding of complex problems before embarking on operational design. It is the author's opinion that the concepts and processes described in the pamphlet are as critical to *planning and execution* as they are to operational design and that legacy staff organizations are inadequate toward generating the type of shared comprehensive understanding required to be successful in the Contemporary Operating Environment (COE). This paper will argue that the RC (W) Stability Operations Information Center (SOIC) model is the type of organization that is capable of institutionalizing the concepts and processes described in *TRADOC Pam 525-5-500* toward greater understanding, not just during operational design, but also during campaign planning and the execution of operations in the contemporary operating environment.

II. Information Management in COIN

Information consists of facts, data, or instructions in any medium or form and the meaning that a human assigns to data by means of the known conventions used in their representation. However, not all information is the same. Information has different quality characteristics and must be evaluated before it is utilized. Furthermore, information that is both relevant and timely may not be of value at the moment a commander must make a decision because information has *relative value* when compared to other information.

In the COIN environment information is also interactive, meaning that the context that information resides within must be understood before information can become knowledge and eventually understanding. Unless information is received evaluated and prioritized in a collaborative environment, the relationships between the interactive aspects of information will be lost as will the context required to achieve comprehensive and timely understanding.

Additionally, for a commander to understand the dynamic environment of COIN operations he must have more than a fixed and limited appreciation of the situation; a commander must have a *timely and comprehensive flow of relevant information*. This timely flow is known as feedback. Feedback is the information that allows the commander to adjust his perception of the situation and modify command action as needed. Feedback juxtaposes the commander's goals with the situation as it is currently perceived. Information in the form of feedback may come from any direction and in any form—academic products, Key Leader Engagements (KLEs), surveys, reports from subordinate or adjacent units, battle damage assessments, source operations, or tribal engagements.

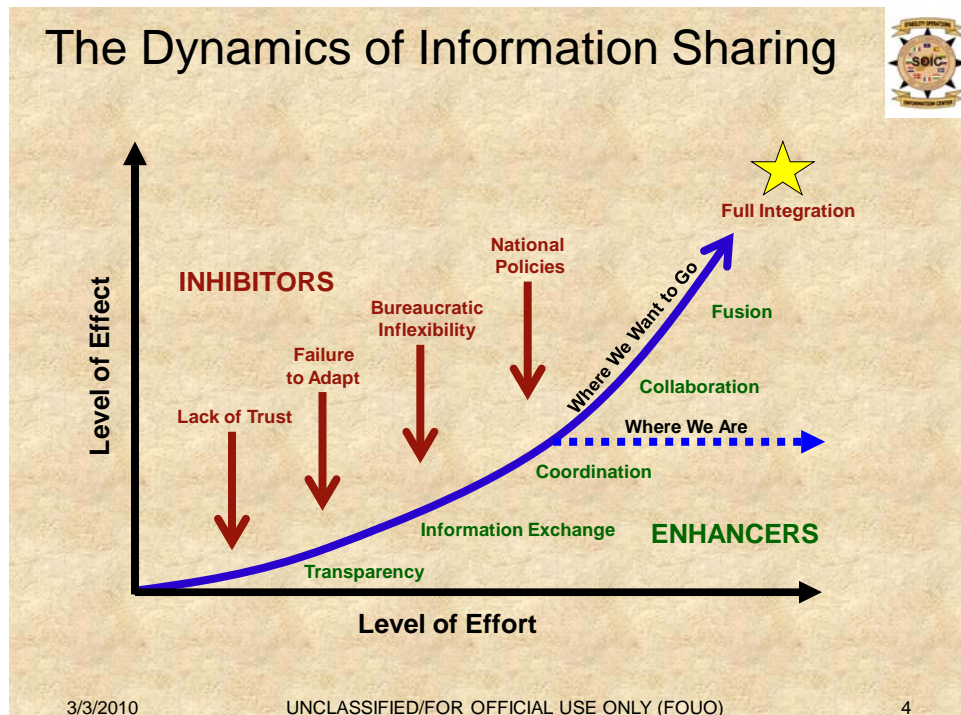
However, there are a number of factors in a COIN environment that inhibit our collective ability to share information while working toward a common goal. Impediments include:

- Language and cultural barriers and the lack of familiarity between partners.
- A lack of trust.
- Failure to Adapt - the inability or unwillingness of an individual or organization to change even in the face of obvious need.
- Bureaucratic Inflexibility - every Nation and every organization has a pre-existing structure that is often slow and change resistant.
- National Policies - some well intentioned national policies impede the routine sharing of information to a degree that harms the collective effort to a greater degree than any protections afforded. An example is our mono-national information classification policies make it difficult to share information rapidly and effectively in a multi-national environment.

On the positive side there are COIN Information Management (IM) techniques that enhance our ability to effectively communicate and achieve comprehensive understanding. Some examples are:

- Transparency - letting our partners see what we are doing.
- Information exchange - setting up functional mechanisms that allow us to pass information between two or more partners. The most common example is the exchange of Liaisons.
- Coordination - between NATO and US units this occurs on a regular basis, but is less common between civilian and military entities or between the coalition and Afghan partners.
- Collaboration – more than coordination, collaboration is working together on a common project and seeking a mutually agreed upon outcome.
- Fusion - the merging of efforts into a single common goal or end state – even if only for a short period of time.
- Full integration would involve the seamless sharing of information on a continuous basis and for an extended period of time in support of fused operations and activities in order to achieve our operational objectives.

Unfortunately, the state of play in COIN IM and information sharing appears to be “flat lined” just above “coordination” in our information sharing continuum. Occasionally we do something collaboratively...but not often or routinely and rarely with the audiences that matter most such as the Afghan population, and our Afghan partners. We must change the status quo if we are to prevail in the COIN environment and with the SOIC concept, along with other COIN campaign initiatives, we are trying to significantly and positively change that dynamic.



III. Why change is needed

The challenges of COIN have laid bare the deficiencies of legacy military processes and staff organizations. The stove piping of information and situational awareness within Napoleonic staff organizations has been a long recognized problem. However, the “fix” to this issue has been illusive. The following 3 “stages” highlight the evolutionary steps taken to address this challenge and to suggest the SOIC may very well be the answer to the real problem.

- a. **Step 1.** In recent years the proliferation of boards, bureaus, centers, cells working groups (B2C2WG) and other manifestations of cross functional teams have attempted to resolve the challenges of achieving informational focus, balance, and responsiveness while retaining the core S/G/J staff organizations.¹ B2C2WG has been effective at establishing connecting files between core “G”

¹ For ease of reference staff functions will be referred to by their “G” and not “S” or “J” designation for the rest of this paper.

shops and bringing together disparate perspectives toward leveling situational awareness and addressing complex problems but the B2C2WG approach is inherently limited. First, most B2C2WG organizations are episodic, not standing, and therefore lack the ability to provide the “intellectual and informational dwell time” that most complex problems require. Second, membership in B2C2WG is usually a collateral duty or secondary task – a battle rhythm event. Membership is normally drawn from the core G-staff organizations and members often bring deep and habitual biases, and most importantly, the “wasta” of their particular specialty to the problem, the plan and eventually the operation. In most traditional military organizations the G-3 shop is the “heavyweight” staff function – staffed qualitatively and quantitatively so, with other B2C2WG members, including the G-2 often simply adding “seasoning” to the course the G-3 was already cooking.

- b. Step 2.** In recognition of the limitations of B2C2WG in COIN, another manifestation of organization evolved. Recognizing the primacy of intelligence in the IW environment, the era of the G-2 really began. The “Deuce” was now on par and in many cases ascendant to the “Three.” Additionally, the elevation of the Deuce exposed the natural synergy of a strong G-3/G-2 fused approach to problem solving and shared situational awareness. From this flowed the creation of Fusion Centers. Fusion Centers unlike B2C2WG organizations were permanent organizations that codified the collaboration of Ops and Intel. The “meat eaters,” Ops and Intel, were now under the same roof addressing the same problems at same time. Intel was no longer a supporting effort. But not everyone was inside the tent. CIMIC activities and other “soft power” oriented disciplines have not been quantitatively, and more importantly, qualitatively represented. Ergo, the “fusing” that takes place may be leavened with soft power perspectives but there is generally a bifurcated approach to fusion - the fully vested “meat eaters” of the G-3/G-2 that work out of the fusion center and the soft power “leaf eaters” that support them in small numbers, often as adjuncts, and often from separate locations. This bifurcated approach most often yields compilations vice “fusion,” uneven situational awareness and incomprehensive approaches to problems that truly require comprehensive solutions. What complex problems require are less meat and leaf eaters and more omnivores. Enter the SOIC.

“If I were given one hour to save the planet, I would spend 59 minutes defining the problem and one minute resolving it.”

—Albert Einstein

- c. Step 3.** In 1972, Dr. Horst Rittel coined the phrase “wicked problem” to described the complex interplay of social, political, and cultural dynamics. Also known as interactive, complex and adaptive problems, wicked problems are exactly what “wars amongst the people” are. A quick review of the characteristics of wicked problems will help conceptualize the challenge:

1. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem.
2. Wicked problems have no stopping rule.
3. Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but better or worse.
4. There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem.
5. Every solution to a wicked problem is a "one-shot operation"; because there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error, every attempt counts significantly.
6. Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan.
7. Every wicked problem is essentially unique.
8. Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem.
9. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem's resolution.
10. The planner has no right to be wrong (planners are liable for the consequences of the actions they generate).

The ten characteristics of a wicked problem are provided to contextualize the following statements. Strong G-3/G-2 fusion is not enough to address this level of complexity. More perspectives and disciplines are required; and most importantly, purposely separating “hard” and “soft” power disciplines into separate Fusion Centers and SOICs does nothing to break down the current bifurcated approaches to information management and perpetuates behaviors that inhibit converting data to understanding and finally to knowledge that enables informed comprehensive action. It should be axiomatic that fusing *all forms and sources* of information as early as possible is far more effective and efficient than attempting to reconcile separate and often calcified views, views that more often than not are formed without the benefit of comprehensive and integrated information. The RC (W) SOIC is organized to fuse as far to the left and as comprehensive as possible in consonance with the principals outlined in General Flynn’s “Fixing Intel” paper. Specifically, the RC (W) SOIC is being organized from the ground up to absorb, organize and disseminate all types of information. This is the third step.

IV. Stability Operations Information Centers

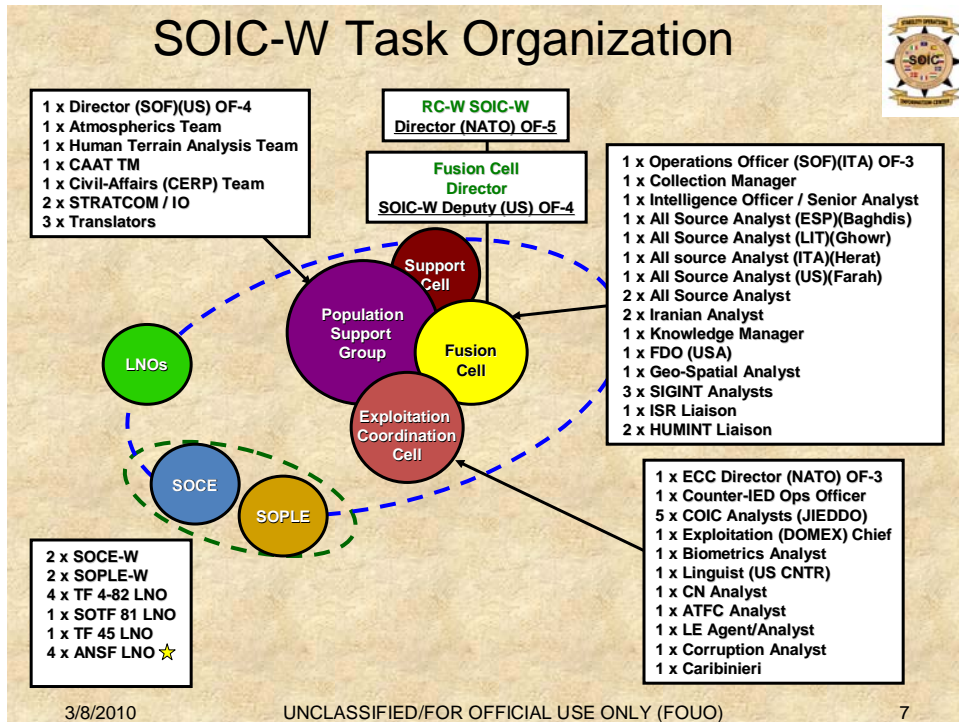
The Stability Operations Information Center - West (SOIC-W) supports the Regional Command Team’s Civilian and Military COIN Unity of Effort by facilitating information sharing between all relevant actors in order to provide effective understanding of the Operational Environment and enable the development of accurate and timely assessments, comprehensive plans, fully informed decisions and appropriate actions.

- *RC West SOIC Mission Statement*

The name “Stability Operations Information Center” (SOIC) is meant to capture the broad Civil-Military information sharing charter, active operations facilitating function and proactive shaping role as part of the theater wide shift in the COIN Campaign strategy from an Insurgent-Centric focus to a Population-Centric focus. This is not the legacy Intelligence or Targeting Fusion Cell / Center many are familiar with. The SOIC still leverages traditional military intelligence disciplines and is also fully capable of performing the same functions; however, that represents only a small portion of the total information environment in which we will routinely operate.

The name (SOIC) also captures the broad Civil-Military information sharing charter, active facilitating function and proactive shaping role as part of the theater wide shift in the COIN strategy to a population-centric from an insurgent-centric focus. When properly organized and staffed SOICs are not the Intelligence or Targeting Fusion Cell / many are familiar with. While SOICs leverage traditional military intelligence disciplines and are also fully capable of performing many of the same functions, this represents only a small portion of the total COIN information environment in which we routinely operate. Because situational awareness (SA) in COIN goes well beyond knowledge of the factors of METT-TSL, tools and processes such as the ASCOPE PMESII crosswalk and the UD3A targeting process (described later in this paper) have been developed in recognition that the COE demands a much broader and deeper level of environmental understanding than can be developed with traditional processes.

In Afghanistan, in their most mature form, SOICs should be in direct support of the RC commanders. Therefore, the SOIC’s emphasis should be on achieving operational level effects. SOICs should be a diverse team of teams with Multi-national links to local, regional and national actors including SMEs. Focusing on full spectrum information sharing, timely assessments, appropriate lethal & non-lethal target development, and support to operational and tactical planning, SOICs should be capable of multi-discipline intelligence and information sharing activities. SOICs should be cross-functional organizations with the widest possible variety of resident analytical tools and skills. SOICs would be of value to and accessible to not only RCs but also PRTs, SOF, HN security forces, governmental organizations, HN governmental organizations, NGOs, PVOs, community and local business organizations, institutions of education, religion and any other relevant actor that has a stake in the operating environment and brings information and perspectives to the SOIC team of teams.



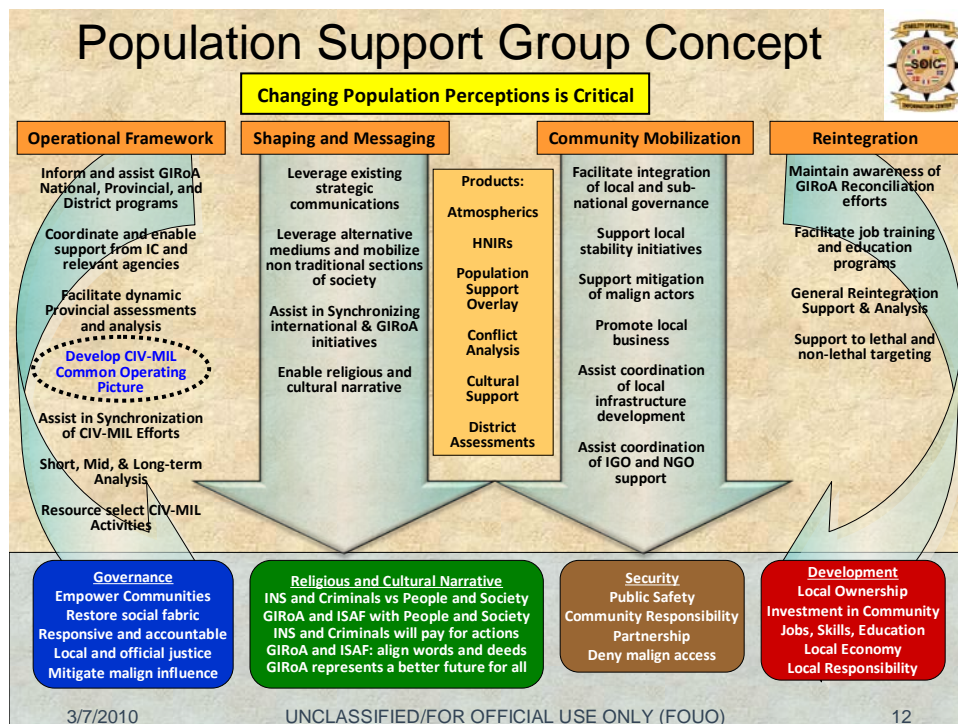
This slide is meant to illustrate how a “Team of Teams” can be task organized and functionally arranged in order to accomplish the broad SOIC mission. It is not a typical military wire diagram because this Civilian / Military hybrid organization doesn’t function as a traditional military linear hierarchy. Rather, it represents a cellular Network with a nucleus or core optimized to share information within the elements of its internal structure and with the larger community of “satellite” associates and partners that it is connected to. The structure is meant to be flexible and can rapidly be modified or readjusted as conditions or the requirements on it change over time.

- a. **Population Support Group.** The Afghan Population is RC (W) SOIC’s “Main Effort” IAW COMISAF’s guidance. All the other cells are in fact in support of the Population Support Group (PSG). Therefore, the majority of the team’s collective energies, efforts and talents directly or indirectly reinforce the PSG function. Deeds match words. The PSG includes the Human Terrain Team, experts from academic disciplines like Sociology and Social Anthropology who add their expertise to the effort to more fully understand the people of this region. The IOATF – also referred to as Atmospherics Program-Afghanistan (AP-A) includes personnel that work within the PSG and help with the collation and analysis of data. Additionally, the AP-A includes small teams of individuals – including hired Afghans – distributed throughout the region, often collocated with the PRTs, and tasked to gather sensings or feedback directly and indirectly on population perceptions and attitudes.

Like the AP-A, the CAAT includes a number of individuals (COIN SMEs) who routinely travel throughout the region, usually collocated with the various CF

and ANSF units, to gather data directly from the sources. The RC (W) CAAT has discovered that “membership” in and co-location with the SOIC yields tremendous informational advantages. The natural location for CAAT members within the SOIC will be the within the PSG. The CAAT requires comprehensive situational awareness to both report on the “operationalizing” of COMISAF’s intent as well as visibility and access to COIN lessons learned or best practices generated by all the relevant actors, the SOIC and the PSG will provide this visibility and access.

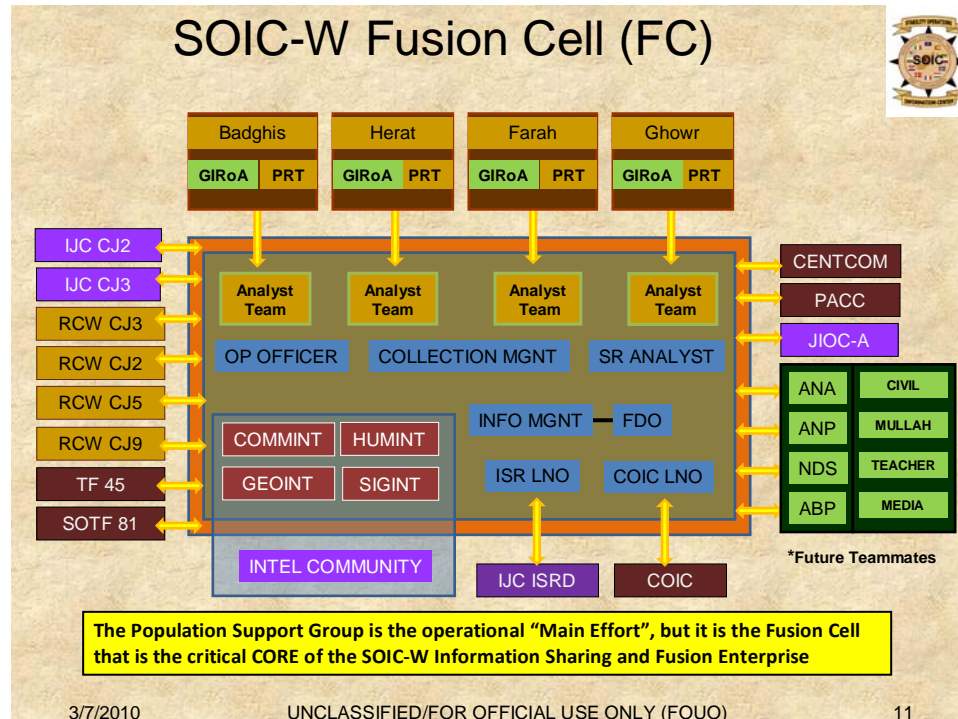
In order to better support all aspects of the PSG function, RC (W) has also added some capability (pending approval) that was not originally part of its structure. First, the RC (W) SOIC has included two US Civil Affairs (CA) personnel primarily to manage and channel US CERP money ISO RC-W SOIC, regional HN officials and the SOIC efforts. It is not RC (W)’s intention to nominate or unilaterally manage CIMIC projects, but rather to facilitate GIROA or locally identified projects that might not otherwise receive timely funding. Second, since shaping the perception of the population is critical to the COIN Campaign’s success we have incorporated two STRATCOM or Information Operations SMEs to assist in addressing that aspect of the problem set. And finally we have added additional Translators / Interpreters to help us communicate more effectively with our Afghan partners and the larger HN population.



The graphic above illustrates some of the key problem areas and opportunities that the PSG will focus their energy on. Helping to generate a reasonably accurate and truly “fused” Civil-Military Common Operating Picture (CMCOP),

will be a critical early step in enhancing our understanding of the operational environment. Eventually this CMCOP will provide adequate clarity down to the district level and in select areas even lower. The PSG will tackle issues related to reintegration and reconciliation; assist in the shaping of public perceptions; and support various governance and development initiatives.

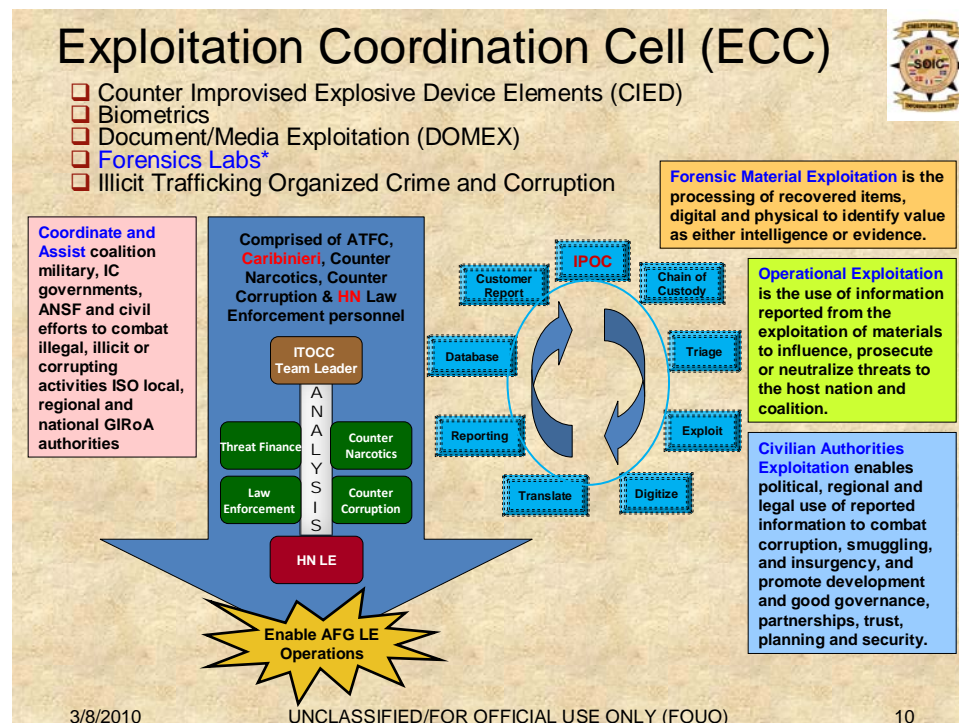
- b. **Fusion Cell.** In the RC (W) SOIC, the Fusion Cell (FC) is a subset of the SOIC. The FC is not the main effort of the SOIC, but does provide the framework and critical hub that the rest of the cells are organized around.



The graphic above represents how RC (W) visualizes the FC's organization for the COIN fight. The teammates may be physically collocated or may participate in the fusion process virtually. In any case, maintaining effective communication and robust collaboration between the people within the cell and the partners outside the "box" is equally important. This framework is inclusive of the subset of the FC that would be called on to support and conduct the INS Kinetic Targeting function as required. Maintaining continuous pressure on the INS and effectively applying Kinetic effects remains a very important aspect of COMISAF's COIN strategy. There are still irreconcilables who need to be relentlessly hounded, disrupted, killed or captured. These individuals will not reconcile unless the very real threat of imminent death or capture and incarceration is clearly their only other alternative.

- c. **Support Cell.** The original RC (W) concept also did not include a Support Cell (top-center of diagram). This was an oversight that quickly emerged and has been rectified. This cell includes communication systems maintainers as well as limited traditional logistics and support functions that have proven vital toward the sustainability of the other SOIC functions and cells.
- d. **The Exploitation Coordination Cell.** The Exploitation Coordination Cell consists of two components: The “CSI” component which involves the forensics exploitation of recovered or captured material, etc., and the ITOCC which has the Law Enforcement or criminal investigative aspects of the equation. The exploitation disciplines include C-IED, biometrics and DOMEX as well as access - currently through “reach back” only - to forensic laboratories, and additional exploitation assets. The ITOCC portion includes multi-discipline Law Enforcement professionals and is designed to support most but not all of the aspects of Rule of Law (currently minus judiciary). They can also leverage reach back to national GIRoA and International Community entities involved in this effort.

By design, the SOIC will routinely form “Cross Functional Teams” to either work specific discrete problems or directed “science projects”. When necessary, the SOIC can project those CFTs to other locations within the region or elsewhere to support the direct exchange of information, detailed planning, efforts, or provide tailored support to specific operations.



Finally, the SOPL is a SOF liaison cell and represents CFSOCC-A (CJSOTF-A forces) or “OEF SOF,” while the SOCE performs a similar function for ISAF

SOF HQ, sometimes referred to as “NATO SOF.” Maintaining robust linkages to **all** the SOF “Tribes” is very important for the SOIC. SOF is a key partner for the SOIC information sharing enterprise. SOF elements are also often the “action arms” of choice for Insurgent Kinetic Targeting. Additionally, SOF is often the primary consumer of the services of a number of assets within the SOIC structure to include ISR and GEOINT. Having the SOPLE and SOCE collocated with the SOIC will pay dividends to all the parties involved.

Just as it is important to define what the SOIC is, it is also important to define what the SOIC is not. SOICs should not duplicate G2 analysis & reporting, G3 operational coordination, G5 planning or G9 planning and CIMIC activities. SOICs are not a separate U.S. intelligence center or C4I Node. If any of the above were to occur, again, the SOIC would be guilty of the very habits SOICs should be breaking – stove piping and the development of operational/environmental perspectives in isolation of other relevant views.

V. SOIC Process

a. **Designing, Planning, Assessment and Reframing**

The SOIC concept is as valid in the pre-operational or the campaign design and operational planning phase as it is during execution. Gaining an appreciation for the operational environment and adequately addressing the complex problem presented to the commander requires a comprehensive understanding of the situation that traditional Operational Planning Teams (OPTs) and contemporary Fusion Centers are not normally organized and manned to provide. SOICs, as the one stop shop for traditional and non-traditional sources of information are uniquely constituted to provide the type of relevant and quality information required to achieve a holistic appreciation of the operating environment. As such, SOICs are instrumental for both campaign design and the operational planning process. But SOICs should be much more than aids to design and planning.

Change in a complex system is a given, so conditions in a COIN campaign will change over time, even if the initial commander’s appreciation was adequate and the goals of the campaign remain fixed. **The situation will change from the one the commander initially framed.** Initial framing of the problem establishes only a starting point that requires reframing as the force operates and the complex system adapts. An acting and learning cycle develops that the SOIC is designed to leverage in a comprehensive manner. **The SOIC’s value in the initial framing of the situation and its role in diagnosing the system’s adaptations (feedback) means that it is at once a planning and C2 organization.** Continuous feedback, assessment and rapid recognition of changing environmental conditions are essential. SOIC assisted assessment of ongoing operations provides opportunities to learn on five levels:

- 1) How to execute a planned course of action to achieve maximum effect.

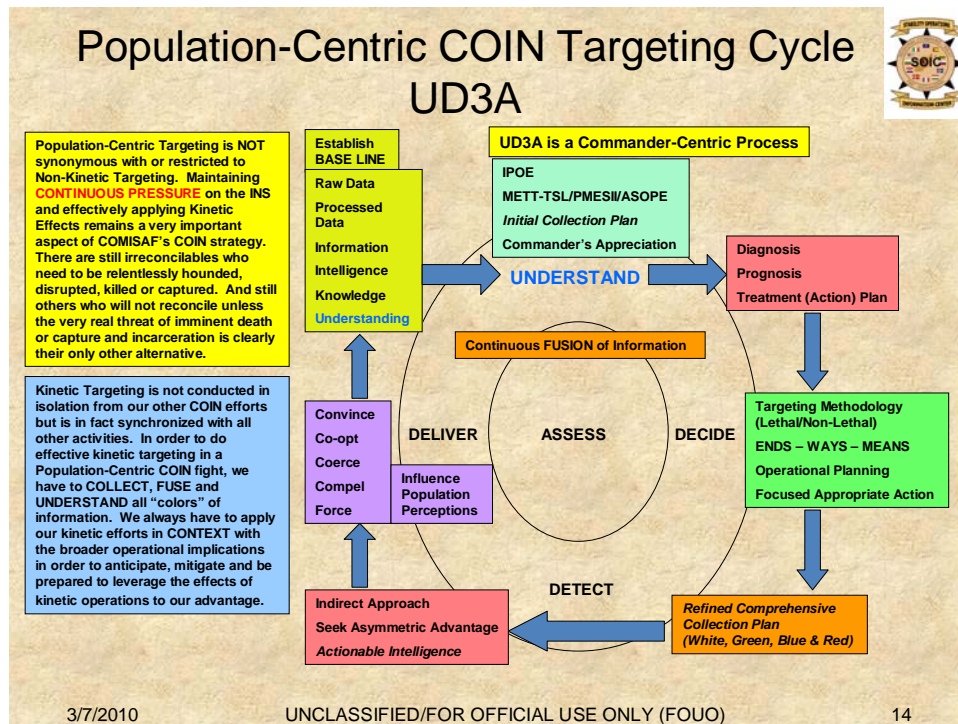
collecting or storing large quantities of information. The SOIC cannot afford to be buried in the enormous volume of data “sand” and must stay focused on finding that less common, but much more valuable, “gold” knowledge. The ideal would be to always have the right information, in the right hands, at the right time so that decision makers can make fully informed choices, seize opportunities, and direct timely effective actions. In the end, the additional comprehension of the environment that the SOIC is intended to help generate is only relevant if it can be used ultimately to achieve the desired operational results. It is also important to remember that the SOIC is not some kind of theoretical think tank. We are engaged in a complex COIN campaign: an information, perception, and understanding “close fight,” not an academic exercise.

VI. **The SOIC and Population Centric Targeting**

A key aspect of the SOIC’s operational methodology and the SOIC Battle Rhythm is the UD3A Targeting Process. The UD3A process is a mechanism to provide situation awareness as well as to ensure that collective energies and high demand low density assets are being employed against the right targets at the right time. It is organized around five interconnected functions: Understand, Decide, Detect, Deliver, and Assess (UD3A). UD3A is a commander’s tool to not only discipline his staff, but to direct the actions of his subordinate commanders. Disciplined Knowledge Management processes like UD3A save time and help to achieve unity of effort and focus. One of the primary advantages of a full spectrum targeting process in COIN is the ability to nest or synchronize operations and knowledge management along multiple echelons and event horizons.

The slide below integrates the two definitions of a target from JP 3-60 (noun and verb) and proposes a different way to consider the inherent linkages between kinetic and non-kinetic actions. From the strategic to the tactical level of war, and across the forms of warfare (IW-Conventional), all commanders are essentially attempting to reconcile the ends (endstate) with the ways (actions - or strategy, design, plans, tactics, techniques and procedures) with the means (resources available). For non-kinetic targeting, we will change the ends or engagement objectives to consent or coercion. Understanding that consent is always a better, but not always obtainable end, these are the two ends that commanders may attempt to achieve through every action in COIN, from strategic to tactical. The ways or effects are changed to convincing, co-opting, coercing, compelling or forcing in order to obtain consent or coercion short of kinetic action. The means or resources for achieving these effects can be any non-kinetic asset the commander has available. Armed with this concept, we can begin to look at targeting in COIN, utilizing the UD3A process.

In Population-Centric COIN, because the majority of targeting – both kinetic and non-kinetic, is tied to the information/intelligence cycle as much as it is tied to the targeting process, it is appropriate to discuss targeting, intelligence, and information together.



a. Understand. Effective COIN targeting requires knowledge and understanding that can not be found in a copy of Janes or an FM. Our military and life experiences often leave us ill prepared for the complexities and nuances we will encounter in COIN. The key is to first admit it, and then fix it. COIN practitioners must leverage the knowledge of others, such as academics and locals, but just as importantly, they must immerse themselves in their operating environment. The history of a particular conflict rarely starts with contemporary events. Rather, the narrative of a conflict may in fact have roots reaching back hundreds or even thousands of years. A clear appreciation of the essential nature of a conflict demands rigorous study of past and current events to understand the motivations or grievances of the population, the motivations, grievances, strengths, and weaknesses of insurgents and the roles of other actors in the AO. **Employing an information omnivore approach, SOICs, through networks of partners, particularly host nation partners, can provide the understanding required to *decide* who should be targeted (kinetic and non-kinetic).**

b. Decide. In both the conventional D3A and COIN UD3A targeting processes, during the decide phase the commander, with the recommendations of his staff, decides on the targets (or people) to be addressed, provides the overall focus and sets priorities for intelligence collection and attack planning. In both processes these decisions are reached in the Targeting Board. The greatest difference between the two processes during the decide phase is that in a conventional environment the emphasis is on *what* should be *attacked* while in the SOIC's COIN targeting process the emphasis is on *who* should be *targeted*. In both processes the Targeting Board is the forum where the High-Payoff Target List (HPTL) is set (in the COIN targeting process the HPTL is often re-named the

High Value Individual List or, HVI List). In determining who should be a target, it is necessary to take a holistic view. For targets that are people, the individual should either be classified as a negative or positive influencer. When constructing the HVI list, do not duplicate the lists of higher and avoid voluminous lists. The purpose of limiting the list is to ensure that dormant or lesser value targets do not consume an inordinate amount of staff and Information collection time.

c. Detect. The inputs to the Targeting Board are inputs and reports from subordinate units and the staff, answers to previous PIRs, updated IPOE and link analysis, as well as reports and other inputs from higher headquarters. The output is the High Value Target List. The next step in the SOIC's COIN targeting process is the Detect phase. After deciding *who* is to be targeted, the next step is to determine *how* the individual is to be detected or found. The forum for determining how to detect HVIs is the SOIC Targeting Meeting. The participants of the Targeting Meeting are generally the same as the Targeting Board except that subordinate commanders are often included to act as advocates for their targets and their preferred method of targeting. One of the most efficient and effective ways to adapt conventional tools is to assign organic units and assets—as well as low-density high-demand Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets—to targeting problem sets in the COIN environment: utilizing the process applied in creating the Intelligence Reconnaissance and Surveillance Collection Matrix is one such application. After all PIRs have been evaluated against each collection asset, a dialogue ensues among the members of the SOIC Targeting Meeting to determine the most effective and efficient means of answering specific PIRs.

d. Deliver. The next step in the SOIC's UD3A process is the Deliver Phase. The Deliver Phase occurs when enough "*actionable intelligence*" is accumulated and or the Commander determines that engaging a target (kinetically or non-kinetically) is the best course of action. Against active insurgents, the typical courses of action are the raid, ambush, or cordon and search. The purpose of these operations is generally to kill or capture the targeted individual (although in many cases the informational component may be the actual desired effect). In COIN, however, the value of a disciplined targeting process does not end with a successful operation. Simply detaining a target is often insufficient. Since COIN often takes place within struggling but not failed states, the evidentiary threshold for matriculating a detainee from tactical detention to long term internment is often a significant obstacle, as the HN's sovereignty must be respected. In AOs with high standards for long term detention of suspected insurgents, those units with relatively higher detention rates often have the most disciplined targeting processes as the professional approach to targeting lends itself to the production of quality evidence.

It is useful at this point to emphasize that the majority of the SOIC's targets are not intended for "kill or capture." The Deliver Phase of UD3A for non-kinetic targets could be a key leader engagement with a local tribal leader and/or

community elder, a contracting meeting with a member of a local trade or governing counsel, engagement with religious leaders, educators, and members of the local security force or any other key influencers within the population. With a bias for “carrots” over “sticks” (rewards over retribution), these targets should normally be delivered, or acted on, with some combination of command level engagement, HET, PSYOPs, CMO, legal engagement (solatia or compensation for claims of damage), engineering support, **or any other means of shaping behavior.**

e. Assess. In COIN, and in the SOIC’s UD3A targeting process, **Assessment** must be continuous due to the wicked nature or complexity of the problem set. As such, assessment is part of and concurrent to the other phases of the UD3A targeting cycle. At the tactical level, the continuous aspect of assessment is often the monitoring and interpreting of actions and events (White, Green, Blue and Red Information aspects), as they occur. However, in addition to the spontaneous or intuitive assessment of events by both commanders, staff, and SOIC members, SOICs should also formalize the assessment process and reconcile the various interpretations of events as part of their Targeting Board or as a distinct battle rhythm event.

Regardless, formal assessment is when events are contrasted with previous weeks and filtered by location, times, and other quantifiable variables to identify patterns and trends. Additionally, patrol de-briefs, after action reports, HET interrogations, PSYOPs surveys and reporting, answers to previous PIRs, Significant Activity Reporting (SIGACTS), interaction and dialogue between SOIC members, interviews with local SMEs, and any other source of information generated by the SOIC’s team of teams is presented to as broad an audience as possible. This process can be repeated as many times as is useful and practical. By soliciting broad and diverse input to the assessment of events and information, the SOIC can assist in leveling situational awareness. However, RC Commanders and above will often determine that their assessment processes and organizations require more rigor and constitute stand alone assessment cells – often for each line of operations.

How long a targeting cycle takes depends on the operational environment and the commander’s preference. Balancing deliberate planning with expeditious and responsive execution is a point of tactical art. The point is to trim the fat from the process without developing a cycle that spins so fast that the staff and subordinate commanders are continually in meetings and the inputs and outputs of the cycle begin to collapse together. It is important to remember that no part of the processes is so calcified that targets cannot be accelerated or deferred.

One of the primary advantages of a disciplined targeting process in COIN is the ability to nest or synchronize operations and intelligence along multiple echelons and event horizons. The UD3A process is a mechanism to provide situation awareness as well as to ensure that high-demand low-density assets are being

VII. Conclusion

“The commander must work in a medium which his eyes cannot see, which his best deductive powers cannot always fathom, and with which, because of constant changes, he can rarely become familiar.”

—von Clausewitz

Situational awareness and understanding of the operational environment allows commanders to anticipate future conditions, formulate concepts of operations, analyze courses of action, and accurately assess risks. For this reason the SOIC is much more than an intelligence tool; it is every bit as much an operations, plans and CIMIC tool. Accordingly, the SOIC is in reality, a commander’s tool. As SOICs develop, tension will develop between the role of the SOIC, traditional Fusion Centers, and legacy staff organizations; this is healthy and will drive us to devote the intellectual energy to the complexity described in TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5-500.

Ultimately, the specifics of how the SOIC is task organized and what it is labeled is less important than the type of person in the SOIC and what the SOIC should actually seek to do. **The SOIC should function as more of a society and less as a bureaucracy.** Accordingly, the SOIC requires intellectually agile, creative and aggressive **thinkers and doers** who are capable of working effectively in a group, as well as individuals, with little guidance. Additionally, the SOIC requires leadership that is at once intellectually agile and ruthlessly mission focused because, as stated previously, the SOIC is not some kind of theoretical think tank. National interests and lives are at stake and this is not an academic exercise – **the SOIC must produce results!**

To a large degree, we are stuck on the second step as outlined in section three of this paper. Compromising courses of action that let a “few leaf eaters” into the tent to season the “meat eaters” course is facile and we all know it – or at least we should. The complexity of the COE requires that we make the next step. We can no longer afford to bifurcate our information, thoughts, processes, and organizations into hard and soft rubrics. The fusing of information as far to the left as possible requires that there be one informational tent, where all relevant parties and information interact and create comprehensive understanding for comprehensive operations.

COIN ADVISORY & ASSISTANCE TEAM (CAAT) HEADQUARTERS

HQ ISAF

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

DSN: 318-237-1958

ISAF_COIN@swa.army.mil