PLANNING AND EXECUTING DIVISION INTELLIGENCE REACH CELL OPERATIONS

by Major Franklin Peachey, Captain William Lairson, and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Erik Wickham

U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to 3rd Infantry Division move equipment into a building during Austere Challenge 2024 at Forward Operating Site Bolesławiec, Poland. (U.S. Army photo)

Recognizing the Requirement

The problem of meeting mission requirements with limited organizational capabilities is an inherent leadership challenge that spans services, branches, and echelons. Conducting intelligence operations in an active theater is no different. Meeting mission requirements entails the routine and collaborative efforts of intelligence personnel across echelons and, potentially, over significant geographic distances. During the 3rd Infantry Division's (ID's) recent deployment to Victory North, V Corps' area of operations (AO) in Poland and the Baltics, the division G-2 met this leadership challenge by establishing a federated intelligence reach relationship with its direct support intelligence and electronic warfare (IEW) battalion (BN), the 103rd, in Fort Stewart, Georgia. Establishing this type of relationship falls doctrinally within the task of conducting intelligence reach and its various subtasks as outlined in Appendix B of Field Manual 2-0, *Intelligence*.[1] By going one step further and federating the intelligence reach cell, 3rd ID G-2 established a command and support relationship with the cell that ensured some capabilities remained dedicated to the mission for the duration of the deployment. The success of this approach required identifying intelligence requirements and allocating capabilities, deliberately leveraging the operations process, and actively involving leaders across organizations.

Intelligence Reach

Intelligence reach is "the activity by which intelligence organizations proactively and rapidly access information from, receive support from, and conduct direct collaboration and information sharing with other units and agencies, both within and outside the area of operations, unconstrained by geographic proximity, echelon, or command.[2]

Identifying the various mission requirements and the necessary capabilities was a crucial component of the 3rd ID G-2's mission analysis more than three months before deployment. To ensure proper identification, the G-2 team completed a pre-deployment site survey and conducted routine working groups with the outgoing 4th ID G-2. From this mission analysis, the 3rd ID G-2 analysis and control element (ACE) identified the following mission requirements:

✦ Partner nation intelligence support through the Security Assistance Group–Ukraine.

✦ Exercise support leading up to and during European Command's Austere Challenge 2024.

✦ Intelligence support to NATO regional defense planning.

✦ Intelligence security cooperation activities.

✦ Steady-state intelligence production to include maintenance of a common intelligence picture for an assigned area of responsibility from the V Corps G-2.

✦ Maintenance of a G-2 home-station mission command presence to provide intelligence support to one remaining brigade combat team.

Once the G-2 team assessed the capabilities necessary to meet these requirements, it determined that staffing for the division ACE, supplemented by augmenting capabilities from across the brigade military intelligence companies, was insufficient to meet all requirements.

The inability of a division ACE to meet its expected intelligence requirements in an active theater is a known capability gap for the Army; consequently, the Army allocates a direct support IEW BN to divisions. However, the 3rd ID's request for the 103rd IEW BN to deploy in support of the mission in Europe was not granted because of other operational requirements. To meet the division's mission needs the 3rd ID G-2 team developed a course of action employing part of the 103rd IEW BN through intelligence reach to support the division G-2's forward deployment to Poland. Developing this course of action required determining whether the intelligence requirements could be executed through intelligence reach and, if so, whether the resulting intelligence products would be suitable

for the mission. Because most intelligence requirements necessitated proximity to the source, intelligence reach support from the 103rd IEW BN would be limited primarily to significant augmentation of steady-state intelligence production, with only minor support for other requirements. With this assessment, the 3rd ID G-2 ACE developed a detailed analysis of steady-state production requirements and the capabilities necessary to support them.

Establishing the Intelligence Reach Cell

To answer the 3rd ID Commanding General's priority intelligence requirements, the 3rd ID G-2 ACE developed a weekly production cycle. The 103rd IEW BN then completed a feasibility assessment based on this production requirement to determine the specific military occupational specialty roles, equipment, and facilities required to support the schedule. The assessment results indicated that the battalion could provide the necessary support with a cross-intelligence discipline reach cell comprising approximately 19 to 21 individuals while still maintaining their other operational requirements (Figure 1).

Based on the assessment, the 3rd ID G-2 ACE determined that by leveraging the intelligence reach cell to complete most of its steady-state production requirements, the ACE could then surge to meet its other intelligence requirements in theater. As these requirements would persist throughout the division's deployment, it was necessary to formalize this direct support relationship to allow portions of the division ACE to remain fully dedicated to other mission requirements.

The 3rd ID G-2 and the 103rd IEW BN collaborated on a fit-for-purpose request for support that enabled the 103rd IEW BN to keep its necessary capabilities. The request was submitted through G-3 channels to the XVIII Airborne Corps for tasking the 525th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade (E-MIB) with the requirement to support. The 103rd IEW BN, a subordinate headquarters of the 525th E-MIB, was then formally tasked with directly supporting the 3rd ID G-2 for the duration of its deployment using an intelligence reach cell with the capabilities to facilitate the weekly intelligence production. By leveraging this operations process, the 3rd ID G-2 employed federated support from an intelligence reach cell and met its mission requirements.

As the 103rd IEW BN assembled the intelligence reach cell to support the 3rd ID G-2, leaders from both organizations began positioning the cell to enable its long-term support. The battalion determined which personnel and equipment would provide the support. At the same time, the 3rd ID G-2 ACE identified space adjacent to its home-station mission command personnel from which the intelligence reach cell would operate. Once established, the intelligence reach cell leadership developed a battle rhythm nested with that of the 3rd ID G-2 ACE, training their personnel and gathering the necessary tools to begin production. Approximately one month before the 3rd ID G-2 advance elements deployed, the intelligence reach cell acquired the necessary equipment and trained personnel to achieve initial operating capacity
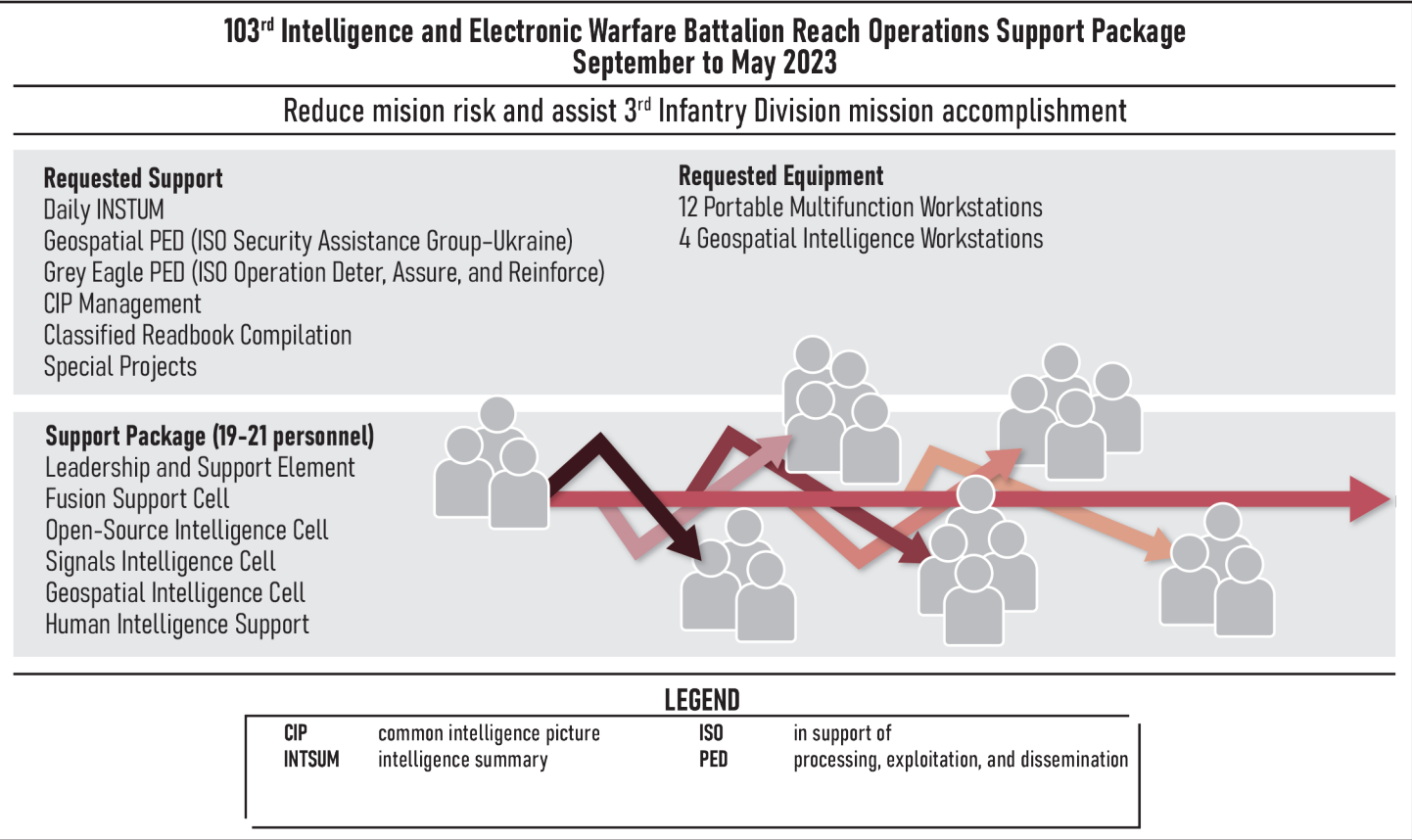

103rd Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Battalion Reach Operations Support Package
September to May 2023

Reduce mision risk and assist 3rd Infantry Division mission accomplishment

Requested Support
Daily INSTUM
Geospatial PED (ISO Security Assistance Group–Ukraine)
Grey Eagle PED (ISO Operation Deter, Assure, and Reinforce)
CIP Management
Classified Readbook Compilation
Special Projects

Requested Equipment
12 Portable Multifunction Workstations
4 Geospatial Intelligence Workstations

Support Package (19-21 personnel)
Leadership and Support Element
Fusion Support Cell
Open-Source Intelligence Cell
Signals Intelligence Cell
Geospatial Intelligence Cell
Human Intelligence Support

LEGEND

CIP	common intelligence picture	ISO	in support of
INTSUM	intelligence summary	PED	processing, exploitation, and dissemination

Figure 1. 103rd Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Battalion Support[3]

and began executing its mission. As the 3rd ID G-2 advance elements transitioned with the 4th ID G-2 in theater, the intelligence reach cell became fully operational and published its first weekly production requirement of three open-source summaries, two intelligence summaries, and one graphical intelligence summary.

Operating an Intelligence Reach Mission Team

Continued leadership engagement and routine production of after action reviews proved crucial to developing the final intelligence reach cell's structure in a way that used talent most efficiently to meet all mission requirements (Figure 2). Throughout the intelligence reach cell's support mission, the 3rd ID G-2 ACE's leadership and the intelligence reach cell's officer in charge maintained an open dialogue about production requirements and refinements, which included a weekly synchronization meeting. Additionally, both the IEW BN commander and the intelligence reach cell officer in charge briefly joined the G-2 team at the forward-deployed location to assess the effectiveness of their support and make necessary adjustments.

The G-2 leadership provided guidance and implemented weekly production requirements for the intelligence reach cell. The schedule developed around these requirements had the team working Sundays through Thursdays. The daily battle rhythm of the intelligence reach cell included completing and sending products by 1700 on the day prior to the "required by" date because of the 6-hour time difference between their location in Fort Stewart, Georgia, and the forward-deployed G-2 in Europe. This allowed the 3rd ID G-2 ACE to review and refine the products the following morning before publishing them. Once the forward team published the products, the intelligence reach cell reviewed any changes and used them to inform the development of subsequent products. The intelligence reach cell's product schedule remained flexible to account for forward training exercises and leadership requests for information that required the intelligence reach cell to develop deep-dive products.

Lessons Learned

During the mission, several lessons and best practices contributed to the evolution of better processes, management, and structure of the intelligence reach cell.

Planning. Implementing an in-depth road-to-war discussion focused on the AO's political, military, economic, and civil considerations will enable analysts to understand the context in which the forward team operates and help determine the best way to support it. To maintain contextual understanding, the intelligence reach cell analysts must remain synchronized with the division's weekly operations through attendance at commander updates and routine review of the situation reports, the long-range training calendar, and the commanding general's executive calendar. This synchronization enables a responsive intelligence reach cell to be more proactive in its production.
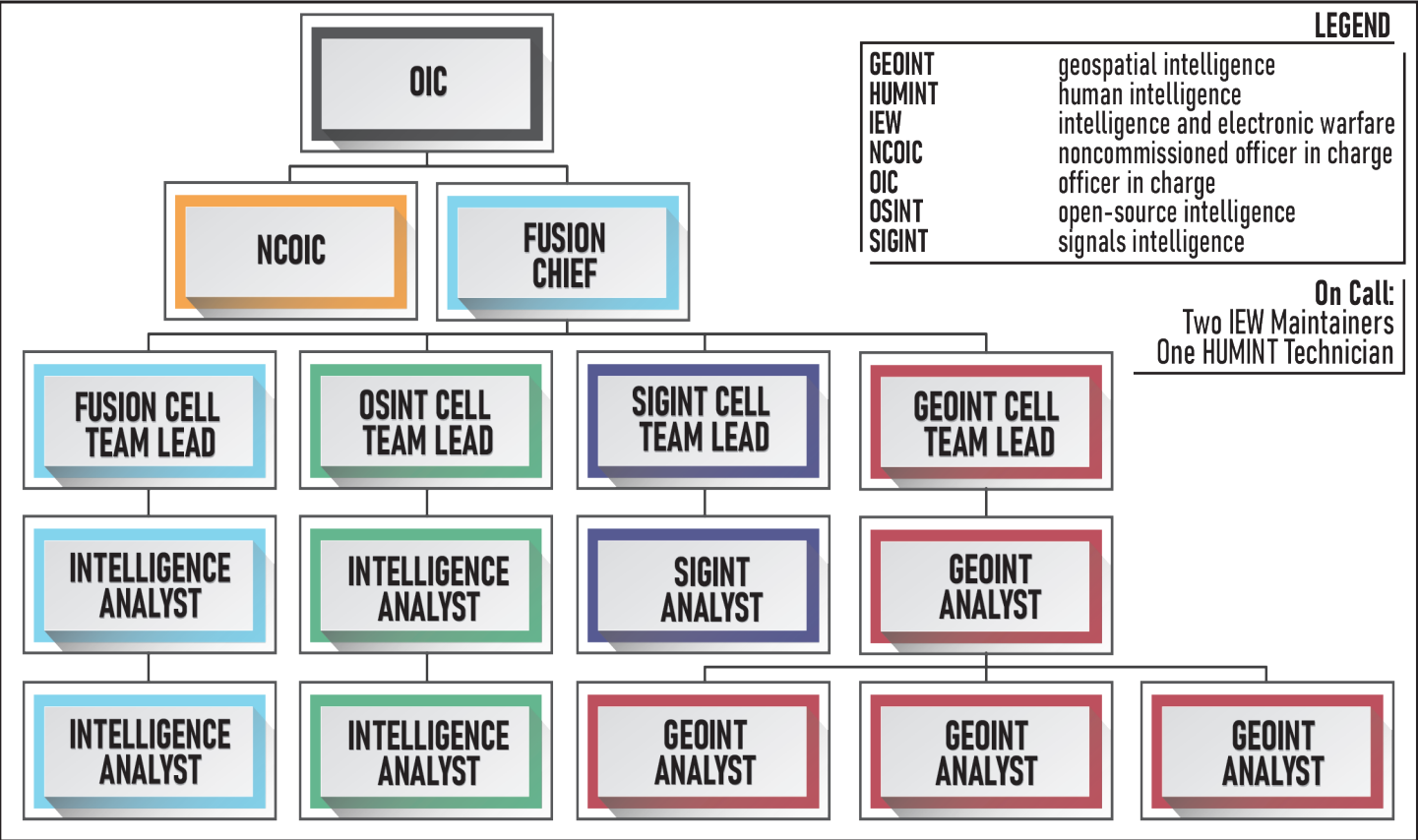

Figure 2. Intelligence Reach Cell Structure[4]

Staffing. Assigning a warrant officer or fusion noncommissioned officer to the team provides the experience and expertise necessary to orient and drive production.

Training. Planning should include courses on report writing, analytical research, product classification, command post computing environment, and specific courses for individual intelligence disciplines. This training enables intelligence reach cell analysts to work more efficiently with their division G-2 counterparts.

Equipping. Maintaining active accounts across the SECRET Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET), the tactical SIPRNET, the mission partner environment, and the battlefield information collection and exploitation system will ensure that all necessary systems are available.

Division Focused Open-Source Intelligence

Open-source intelligence (OSINT) has taken many forms throughout its employment in the Army, changing through litigation, nascent capability, and organizational redesign. Employment at the division level can quickly become redundant with theater (66th Military Intelligence Brigade-Theater) and forward-deployed theater-servicing (519th IEW BN/525th E-MIB) OSINT. The 103rd OSINT team, however, operated under U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) and XVIII Airborne Corps authorities, solely supporting the 3rd ID. To deconflict reporting and provide the best service to the division, the 3rd ID G-2 provided AO-oriented geographic focus areas from which the 103rd OSINT team provided reports. By focusing on open-source reporting in Poland and the Baltics, the OSINT team directly supported 3rd ID's priorities and operations, filling intelligence gaps where other intelligence disciplines lacked authority or international permissions to collect.

OSINT Stand-Up. In tandem with the stand-up of the intelligence reach capability, the 103rd IEW BN established an OSINT program in support of and under the authorities of the 3rd ID. The preconditions for conducting OSINT activities included:

- ✦ OSINT standard operating procedures (signed by the division G-2).
- ✦ OSINT collection plan (signed by the division G-2).
- ✦ OSINT risk assessment (signed by the division G-2).
- ✦ Authority to collect (FORSCOM and XVIII Airborne Corps memorandum signed by the respective G-2s).

- ✦ OSINT Basic Course mandated for all collectors.
- ✦ Army OSINT office memorandum with collection identification numbers for each collector.
- ✦ Compliance with Army Directive 2016-37, *U.S. Army Open-Source Intelligence Activities*; Department of Defense Manual 5240.01, *Procedures Governing the Conduct of DoD Intelligence Activities*; and Executive Order 12333, *United States Intelligence Activities* (as amended by Executive Orders 13284 [2003], 13355 [2004], and 13470 [2008]).
- ✦ Responsibility to publish to the entire intelligence community.

OSINT Outputs. OSINT production consisted of three weekly open-source summaries and infrequent OSINT reports driven by requests for information. As a fluid, rapidly changing intelligence discipline, OSINT has unique educational requirements for staff that may be unfamiliar or no longer keep abreast of emerging OSINT tools, limitations, and regulations. OSINT leaders have a responsibility to actively seek opportunities to inform leaders and commanders about the updated regulations and current suite of available tools that will satisfy requirements most effectively. The 103rd OSINT products were among the most well-received products provided by the intelligence reach cell because of their timeliness and value in understanding public perceptions and the atmospherics within a given focus area.

Maximizing Collaborative Intelligence

The 3rd ID G-2 met its mission requirements by developing a fit-for-purpose, federated intelligence reach cell in coordination with the 103rd IEW BN. This federated intelligence reach cell resulted from a collaborative mission analysis with numerous stakeholders to identify mission requirements and allocate the appropriate capabilities. The formalization of this team through the operations process ensured its support to the 3rd ID G-2 and enabled the massing of organic intelligence resources elsewhere within the division. Finally, the routine involvement of leaders from both organizations throughout the planning and operating of the intelligence reach cell ensured that it not only met mission requirements but continued to improve throughout its direct support to the division. This experience exemplifies leveraging external intelligence elements remotely while ensuring maximum collaboration to meet mission requirements. ✴

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Endnotes

1. Department of the Army, Field Manual 2-0, *Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office [GPO], 01 October 2023), B-9.

2. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication 2-0, *Intelligence* (Washington, DC: GPO, 31 July 2019), 3-5.

3. Figure adapted from original by CW2 Wickham.

4. Figure adapted from original by CW2 Wickham.

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CPT William "Bill" Lairson most recently served as the multidomain officer for the 103rd Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Battalion (IEW BN), 525th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade located in Fort Stewart, GA. He served as an infantry platoon leader, mortar platoon leader, and company commander for the 1st ID in Fort Riley, KS while deploying to Germany and Poland. He holds a bachelor of science in education from the University of Akron.

CW2 Erik Wickham is an Army operations and integration technician who manages all-source intelligence training requirements and synchronizes 103rd IEW BN operational requirements in support of 3rd ID. His previous assignments include open-source Intelligence team chief for the 103rd IEW BN; intelligence sergeant, 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command; South America noncommissioned officer in charge, 470th Military Intelligence Brigade; and intelligence sergeant, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment.