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Intelligence in Three Dimensions: The Intelligence Staff Officer in an Air Defense Brigade

by Major Aaron Lawless

Soldiers from the 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade prepare for their culminating field training exercise at Fort Sill, OK. (U.S. Army photo)

Lessons for a Three-Dimensional Battlefield

For many of us who entered service in the mid-2010s, counterinsurgency ruled the day. Our first tactical experience as intelligence professionals came against the Taliban in Afghanistan, al-Qaeda in Iraq, or other similar adversaries across the globe. We faced decentralized cells of insurgent fighters equipped with rifles, rockets, mortars, and improvised explosive devices; our higher headquarters defined our area of operations; and our planning took place primarily in two dimensions.

Now, nearly 15 years later, the fight has changed. Army doctrine has changed the primary focus from contingency operations to large-scale combat operations against another major military force. The battlefield is now an operating environment, and it is a three-dimensional fight.

Large-scale combat operations mean more than tanks, artillery, and long-range precision fires targeting enemies in their division or corps rear area. It also means potentially being on the receiving end of enemy long-range precision fires and airstrikes. It means intelligence professionals must adapt to a three-dimensional operational environment stretching 2,000 kilometers or more.

This article seeks to provide insights and lessons learned from recent operational experiences to help prepare military intelligence (MI) Soldiers for service with air defense units. While this article is written with air defense artillery in mind and draws on recent experience with the 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade, analysis of missiles and other enemy long-range fires may fall to any analyst at any deploying unit. In these paragraphs, I hope not only to offer some developmental pointers to MI Soldiers heading to air defense units but also to provide some general lessons learned for any analyst supporting multidomain operations.

Understanding Contemporary Threats

Before we begin, we need to understand the scope and dimensions of the threat by looking at recent events. In April 2024, Iran launched hundreds of medium-range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and one-way attack unmanned aerial vehicles targeting Israel. Iran repeated the attack later that year, and in June 2025, it launched an extended missile campaign against Israel lasting several days.

First-person view drone warfare and Russian missile barrages in Ukraine further demonstrate the three-dimensional nature of the modern operating environment. The threat is no longer a doctrine problem or a training exercise; it is a fact of life for land component units across the globe. A three-dimensional battlefield requires a mental adjustment—intelligence professionals must embrace new skillsets, novel systems, and gain a broad understanding of the new threats to be successful.

Developing Technical Expertise in Missile Defense

Intelligence support to missile defense demands increased technical understanding. MI leaders need to learn ballistics, materials, the operational differences between solid- and liquid-fueled weapons, indicators of missile launch preparation, and more. In short, they must become junior rocket scientists.

The Ballistic Missile Threat Intelligence course, offered by the Space and Missile Defense Command at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, is a great initial training opportunity to boost technical knowledge. For those unable to attend the course, air defense artillery fire control officers are a valuable source of information and mentorship. Seek out their expertise to glean an understanding of friendly and enemy systems, tactics, and operations.

Turn technical knowledge into practical application. Understanding unit operations will enhance the effectiveness of any intelligence professional; this is doubly true for air defense intelligence professionals, who should take every opportunity to become more familiar with the equipment, talk to systems operators, absorb "war stories," and learn the capabilities of friendly air defense systems. Just as in armor, aviation, or cyber formations, familiarizing yourself with friendly capabilities will help you gain insight into potential enemy courses of action. Learning how friendly forces operate, understanding their capabilities, and recognizing their limitations makes your red team analysis of the enemy much more potent and effective. For additional guidance on conducting intelligence preparation of the operational environment for air defense, consult ATP 3-01.16, *Air and Missile Defense Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield*.[1]

Training Insights and Best Practices

Prior to a short-notice deployment, full participation in training events and staff exercises made the 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade S-2 section an effective force multiplier and built trust between MI Soldiers, the commander, and the rest of the brigade staff. Demonstrating the capabilities and insights that the S-2 provides helped the staff understand how to shape requests for information and get the most out of the S-2 support. The training also created an environment for building professional interpersonal relationships and taught the S-2 how to provide the commander and S-3 with the information and assessments that best meet their needs. MI Soldiers assigned to air defense units should take every opportunity to attend training events, integrate with battle desk crews, and be present, even when there may not be a direct intelligence involvement role.

Just as large-scale combat and multidomain operations are joint endeavors, missile defense is a joint fight. For example, the U.S. Air Force provides defensive counter-air capabilities through its Red Sea fighter patrols and relies on media reporting from counter-Houthi operations to confirm successful shoot-downs of enemy unmanned aerial vehicles. The U.S. Navy operates the Aegis Combat System,[2] a network of radars and interceptors carried aboard ships. Our allies and partner nations have similar systems and use their own terminology and tactics. To successfully integrate, intelligence professionals must learn a new language of joint shorthand and brevity terms unique to the air defense community. Likewise, the ability to communicate with the operators of our sister services' defensive capabilities in their own language pays dividends and shortens response times. Just as the Army maintains doctrinal terminology for unified land operations, the Navy and Air Force do the same for their domains. If we play in other services' sandboxes, being "bilingual" is an asset.

The USS Lake Erie (CG 70), an Aegis guided missile cruiser, launches a Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) at a non-functioning National Reconnaissance Office satellite as it travels through space at more than 17,000 mph over the Pacific Ocean on February 20, 2008. The SM-3 is a component of the U.S. Navy's Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System, unique for its ability to operate in the vacuum of space. (DoD photo by U.S. Navy)

That said, the units most often threatened by missiles and enemy unmanned aerial vehicles are on the ground. While conducting intelligence preparation of the operational environment, the intelligence section cannot afford to hyperfixate on the air threat. It is not a question of ground or air; both are equally important. While the primary threat may come from the air, ground threats are still a factor. A ground attack from small arms fire, for example, can still put an air defense radar out of commission and pose a threat to friendly personnel. While contributing to the military decision-making process, account for threats from the air, certainly, but do not neglect the ground. Repair parts, ammunition, fuel, food, and water—all these things move by ground from the air or seaport of debarkation. Road conditions, restricted terrain, bridges, and water features still matter and should be considered in assessments. Be prepared to determine the line-of-sight for radar coverage and to evaluate how terrain may mask air avenues of approach.

Your other heavy-hitter analysis product will be a trend and pattern analysis. Upper- and lower-tier air defense assets take time to reorient and adjust to new threats. This is not a rapid or dynamic process, so your analysis of threat courses of action needs to be as predictive as possible. Air defense equipment requires periodic maintenance during which it may have to be shut down completely, rendering it unavailable for air defense. Avenues of approach, time of day for attacks, and the enemy's preferred weapons systems are all vital aspects when designing an air defense plan and when scheduling maintenance. The S-2 must be directly connected to the air defense planners, providing a steady flow of updated predictive analysis for the planned defense to be effective.

If you find yourself in an air defense unit, one of the first things you may notice is that battalion and brigade intelligence sections are probably relatively small, and your modified table of organization and equipment does not include organic collection assets. Expect the unit to operate widely dispersed, with battery commanders spread across an entire combatant command in some cases. Plan to support multiple air defense sites with assessments of air avenues of approach, line of sight, ground threats, and road conditions to move large pieces of delicate equipment. Establish a format beforehand so the assessments can be somewhat plug-and-play, while also leaving room to tailor support to unique needs.

Another option to boost a unit's intelligence capacity is to look at the company intelligence support team concept. Formalized in 2007 from concepts developed during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, company intelligence support teams are essentially a way to task-organize intelligence Soldiers with varying specialties within a unit to provide direct support to companies operating independently. Even when there are not enough MI Soldiers available to provide direct support to each air defense battery, the company intelligence support team concept can be adapted to provide familiarization training for your air defenders. This can enhance their understanding of the intelligence disciplines, information collection and its operations, the foundations of your assessments, and your methods for gauging probability in threat courses of action assessment. During operations other than large-scale combat, air defense batteries tend to deploy and operate in a dispersed manner from the battalion or brigade headquarters, so there is some benefit to having Soldiers in the battery headquarters who are familiar with intelligence terms and material in the absence of a dedicated S-2 section.

Without organic assets, understanding how to network and leverage non-organic enablers, up to the national level, for information collection and targeting is an essential task, although it is often an implicit one. Get creative. For example, think of your unit's air defense radars as organic collection assets and handle their reporting accordingly. Use radar data to assess patterns of activity, preferred air avenues of approach, or enemy operating areas. With experience, it is possible to assess enemy actions in real time, helping air defense commanders make defense decisions in a very short window of opportunity.

When all this preparation, training, and development come together, it might look something like the following: Based on threat reporting, patterns of activity, and experience, the S-2 maintains assessments of the threat's preferred times, places, and systems for use against friendly forces. These assessments inform the defense design for air defense assets, which is postured against the most likely enemy course of action. When the enemy launches a missile, the intelligence section uses available data to provide updates on the threat, calling out the point of origin and threat type to describe the threat's anticipated capabilities. The radar data provides real-time fidelity on a possible point of impact and threatened friendly assets. The commander now has the best information to decide whether to commit or preserve air defense assets.

Preparing for Future Challenges

Intelligence support to air defense requires robust self-directed study and training, close integration with the operations staff and the rest of the unit, and an ability to adapt to the three-dimensional nature of the current operating environment. Intelligence plays a significant role in support to air defense, and equipping the right MI Soldier with the right training and preparation will pay substantial dividends. These tools and a willingness to adapt can help MI Soldiers succeed on an air defense staff, supporting a ready, vigilant defensive fires capability to protect critical assets. ✴

Endnotes

1. Department of the Army, Army Techniques Publication 3-01.16, *Air and Missile Defense Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (AMD IPB)* (Government Publishing Office, 2016).

2. "Aegis Combat System," Products, Lockheed Martin, last updated November 18, 2025, https://www.lockheedmartin.com/en-us/products/aegis-combat-system.html.

MAJ Aaron Lawless is the 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade S-2 at Fort Sill, OK. His prior assignments include deputy geospatial intelligence mission manager at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System deputy mission crew commander, and detachment commander. He holds a bachelor of arts in history from Tarleton State University and a master of arts in history from Sam Houston State University.

What's in a Narrative? Techniques for Developing Engaging Briefs to Maintain Shared Understanding of the Enemy

by Lieutenant Colonel Matthew J. Fontaine

Introduction

Senior intelligence officers and their intelligence cells owe their commanders and units an engaging, easy-to-understand, and relevant visualization of the enemy. However, even perfect enemy narratives are meaningless if they do not lead to a shared understanding of the threat across the formation.[1]

Unfortunately, large-scale combat operations present three key problems that significantly complicate the production and shared visualization of a quality enemy narrative. The first problem is the scope and dynamism of large-scale combat operations, which challenge even the best intelligence cells to make sense of the operating environment. Compounding this issue is the second problem; namely, how to maintain a common enemy narrative when the senior intelligence officer is often geographically separated from the analysis and control element (ACE), brigades increasingly do not have a brigade intelligence support element, and the continuous upper tactical infrastructure's connectivity that once supported unlimited voice and video conferencing can no longer be assured. The third problem also concerns communication; however, it is not related to intelligence architecture, nor does it result from tactical dispersion. The intelligence cell must find a way to reduce the inherent complexity of large-scale combat operations into a succinct brief that is immediately understandable and useful to time-constrained, exhausted commanders. These three problems place a heavy premium on intelligence assessments that deliver the right intelligence at the right time in easily digestible formats that speak to the commander and staff.[2]

This article describes the technique used by the 1st Infantry Division in large-scale combat operations training environments to keep the enemy narrative current, widely understood across the formation, and relevant to the commander. This technique is not described in doctrine, but its recommendations touch upon the fundamental role of the senior intelligence officer: to keep everyone—commanders, staff, subordinate S-2s, and their intelligence sections—engaged and to foster a shared understanding of the enemy narrative in high-paced, dynamic environments. If implemented, this technique will pay significant dividends for your unit.

This article is presented in three parts:

- ✦ Part I demonstrates why the senior intelligence officer is central to constructing an engaging enemy narrative in large-scale combat operations.
- ✦ Part II identifies the four questions an effective narrative addresses, along with four guidelines to ensure the narrative is maximally engaging for the commander and staff.
- ✦ Part III describes the 1st Infantry Division's technique to construct its enemy narrative. The 1st Infantry Division G-2 developed this technique during Warfighter Exercise 25-02 and later refined it during its division-in-the-dirt rotation. The method ensured the unit maintained a common understanding of the enemy while operating across the battlefield in tactically dispersed nodes.

PART I: The Senior Intelligence Officer as Narrator

During large-scale combat operations, senior intelligence officers must personally draft the outline of the enemy narrative and often brief it during key battle rhythm events. Retired Lieutenant Colonel Terry R. Ferrell, a mentor from the Mission Command Training Program, noted that a unit's battle rhythm does not always coincide with the battle's rhythm and, therefore, units must adapt their meetings and boards to the dictates of the operational environment.

For some senior intelligence officers, this central recommendation will come as no surprise; it's how they do business now. However, please read on for ideas on the essential elements of an engaging enemy narrative in Part II, along with

how to organize and direct your intelligence cell to fill in the supporting details (thereby allowing the senior intelligence officer to get some rest!) in Part III. For other senior intelligence officers who take a more managerial approach to running their intelligence sections, the technique described here might push them out of their comfort zone. That's okay. The demands of large-scale combat operations require change, but the benefits of this technique far outweigh any discomfort. Even if you're not a senior intelligence officer, this article will provide you with valuable knowledge to better support your cell's senior leadership and, as a result, the commander, influencing decision making and achieving the desired results.

Why is it necessary for the senior intelligence officer to personally construct the narrative outline and brief, as opposed to, say, a senior member of the ACE? With its more robust staffing and network connectivity, the intelligence cell excels at describing the enemy situation. Where they may fall short, however, is in their understanding of what friendly forces are doing or will do. In environments requiring tactical dispersion, only the senior intelligence officer has access to situational intelligence from over-the-horizon cells and to emerging developments near the forward edge of battle that will shape future actions. While the forward staff can relay developments to the intelligence cell as conditions permit, there is no substitute for the understanding that develops during the face-to-face dialogue between the senior intelligence officer and senior leaders at or near the area of danger.[3]

A unit can form a complete enemy narrative only by understanding what the threat is doing now and what the friendly force will do against them in the future. A complete narrative *predicts* the enemy's next likely moves based upon the friendly forces' intended actions by *retrospectively* examining how the threat and friendly forces arrived at their current situation.[4] In the language of wargaming, the intelligence cell has the *action* but not the current or developing friendly *reaction* that directly impacts what the enemy will do in the future.

That's where the senior intelligence officer comes in. The senior intelligence officer's unique access to the commander and senior staff provides the insights needed to understand what friendly forces are doing and intend to do against the enemy. A compelling enemy narrative conveys the threat's *counteraction*—how the enemy could achieve its end state given its current disposition and actions in light of the expected friendly response. In large-scale combat operations, the senior intelligence officer's mind is a continuously running wargame simulation, examining, from the enemy's perspective, what the friendly force will do next, given the battlefield realities and the enemy and friendly commanders' desired aims.[5]

For a deeper discussion on the challenges of the future battlefield for the intelligence warfighting function and the unique role of the senior intelligence officer, see the author's two-part 2024 article, "A Mission Command Meditation."[6]

PART II: Developing Effective and Engaging Narratives

So, what's in an enemy narrative anyway? A compelling narrative answers four key questions and forms an essential component of the intelligence running estimate. However, before discussing the four questions, it will be helpful to review general guidelines for boosting a narrative's digestibility and engagement.

Guidelines for Constructing the Enemy Narrative. Senior intelligence officers must maximize the limited time and mental energy available to the commander and staff during battle rhythm events or as the battlefield situation dictates. The following guidelines ensure the unit gets the easily digestible, engaging visualization of the enemy they need to make decisions in complex operating environments. (See figure on the next page.) The four guidelines are:

✦ Be familiar enough.

✦ Harness your inner historian.

✦ Spin a golden thread.

✦ Speak in the "commander's language."[7]

Be familiar enough. The enemy narrative brief should always follow the same general structure, but it need not conform to a precise format—it should be *familiar enough*. This simple guideline lets the audience digest information more quickly because they know what to expect. Examples of being familiar enough include always starting the brief with the overall assessment or always describing the enemy disposition within the area of interest first, followed by the area of operations using the deep, close, and rear framework. However, briefers should refine the brief based on battlefield developments.[8] For example, a possible adjustment might include spending more time than usual on enemy disposition or future action, particularly if the latest information conflicts with previously held assessments. It might also include detailed combat power slant reports on enemy forces for specific objectives, but none for others. Following a general format is helpful, but always brief about what the audience needs to know now. Whatever you do, though, *always* start with an overall assessment of what course of action (COA) the enemy is taking or about to take.

Harness your inner historian. The second helpful guideline to improve ease of understanding and engagement is to harness the tools historians use. Author John Lewis Gaddis believes that

> *historians have the capacity for* selectivity, simultaneity*, and the* shifting of scale*: they can select from the cacophony of events what they think is really important; they can be in several times and places at once; and they can zoom in and out between macroscopic and microscopic levels of analysis.*[9]

The Enemy Visualization Must be Engaging, Easy to Understand , and Relevant

The Senior Intelligence Officer Personally Constructs and Delivers the Enemy Narrative

The Enemy Narrative Answers Four Questions

- What course of action will the enemy execute?
- What is the current enemy situation?
- What is the enemy doing now to overcome their dilemmas?
- What are the enemy's decision points?

Follow These Four Guidelines When Constructing the Enemy Narrative

1. Be Familiar Enough
2. Harness Your Inner Historian
3. Spin a Golden Thread
4. Speak in "Commander's Language"

Figure. Crafting an Engaging Enemy Narrative (Figure by author)

Like historians weaving a historical narrative in a work, senior intelligence officers must leverage the concepts of selectivity, simultaneity, and the shifting of scale when discussing the enemy narrative. I have argued previously that competent senior intelligence officers are adept curators of information, selecting reports or pieces of essential information with outsized impact on the current understanding of the enemy situation.[10] In Gaddis's terms, by curating information—choosing only information that the commander and staff *must* know to support effective decision making—the senior intelligence officer demonstrates their capacity for selectivity.

Senior intelligence officers also highlight specific information across the division's battlefield framework (rear, close, deep areas) and within the area of interest. The selection of necessary information across the battlefield demonstrates a senior intelligence officer's capacity for simultaneity by nesting enemy actions within the unit's rear, close, and deep fight in relation to the broader context of the enemy's higher echelon operational COA.

Finally, senior intelligence officers must be masters of the shifting of scale. In the span of a few briefing points, the senior intelligence officer could, for example, describe the actions of an enemy corps in the area of interest, the task and purpose of an enemy division about to enter the unit's deep area, and the suspected location of a single vehicle on the high-payoff target list. The senior intelligence officer's challenge is to leverage Gaddis's concepts without confusing the audience or muddying the main message, which is where the next guideline comes in.

Spin a golden thread. The third guideline calls for the senior intelligence officer always to weave a golden thread into the intelligence brief. A golden thread brings coherence to your story: "It's the theme that takes you from beginning to end."[11] A discussion of golden threads starts where the first guideline left off. Senior intelligence officers must always begin the brief with the key analytical judgment (anticipated enemy COA),

which serves as the central golden thread around which the senior intelligence officer will organize the remainder of the brief, employing Gaddis's concepts of selectivity, simultaneity, and the shifting of scale. Here is an example of a central golden thread:

> **The 11 DTG [division tactical group] will attack to destroy YOUR UNIT no later than 2400 hours to enable the seizure of OBJ [objective] DOG by the 12 DTG.**

The golden thread—the 11 DTG attack to enable the 12 DTG—should resonate throughout the intelligence update, including the enemy situation and anticipated future actions. It should also *connect* with what other intelligence personnel discuss in the intelligence estimate's components, including weather, collection management, and battle damage assessment updates.[12]

The weather update, for example, should discuss how the conditions will help or hinder the attacker. The collection manager should brief on how assets will detect the axis and the weighting of the 11 DTG attack, and the entrance of the 12 DTG into YOUR UNIT's deep area. The targeting officer should brief the remaining strength of the critical 11 DTG assets needed to suppress, obscure, secure, reduce, and assault friendly defenders during its predicted breaching operations and the targeting efforts ongoing to reduce those specific forces.

Too often, intelligence briefings lack synchronization or fail to present a more compelling argument for what the enemy is doing or will do next, and what it means for the friendly force. Without a strong golden thread—a persuasive, easily understood central argument—the brief can become a "confusing mess: tangled balls of string floating in murky soup."[13] You can read more about the need for precise intelligence assessments and how to improve them in the author's 2022 article, "Stating the Obvious: The Three Keys to Better Intelligence Assessments."[14]

True success, however, comes when the golden thread introduced during the intelligence update carries into the operational update, providing a seamless narrative of how the friendly force will mitigate risks or seize opportunities presented by the threat commander.

Speak in the commander's language. Finally, members of every military community, including the intelligence community, speak to each other using jargon familiar to all community members (for example, any discussion, ever, on the Distributed Common Ground System-Army). When briefing the enemy narrative, however, it's the senior intelligence officer's job to speak primarily in the language of commanders. This is simply because the commander does not have the time or energy to translate the senior intelligence officer's brief into the information needed to make sense of the environment or to make decisions.[15] It's also the briefer's job to engage their audience, and how better to do this than to use the language already esteemed by commanders?

What language do commanders use when speaking to one another? Commanders rightfully focus on the decisions they must make and on transitions. Therefore, it is no surprise that commanders' narratives center on "decisions (what and when), risks, opportunities, options, transition points, condition setting, and resource shortfalls (to request from a higher headquarters)."[16] Senior intelligence officers should make maximal use of these concepts and language throughout their updates, especially when describing the enemy narrative from the enemy commander's perspective and discussing the "so what" of their assessments from the friendly commander's perspective. By using the language of commanders, senior intelligence officers can provide intelligence that is directly relevant to the unit's decision-making process.

Let's return to the golden thread assessment to illustrate these points:

The 11 DTG will attack to destroy YOUR UNIT no later than 2400 hours to enable the seizure of OBJ DOG by the 12 DTG.

To leverage the language of commanders while briefing this enemy narrative, the senior intelligence officer could discuss enemy *decisions* related to the 11 DTG attack—say, a weighting of its main effort along one avenue of approach or another. The senior intelligence officer could examine the *conditions* the enemy would need to set for this decision (for example, neutralizing a friendly screen), thus highlighting the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance options available to detect the enemy COA, or the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance *resources* YOUR UNIT needs to request from your higher headquarters. The senior intelligence officer could then discuss the risks of the 12 DTG attacking through YOUR UNIT's area of operations to seize OBJ DOG while highlighting friendly *opportunities* to destroy critical 12 DTG equipment or formations at canalizing terrain with attack aviation. Finally, the senior intelligence officer could conclude by predicting the enemy failure option, describing how the enemy might *transition* to a defense when its attack to defeat YOUR UNIT fails.

The Four Questions of the Enemy Narrative. So, now that we have reviewed the prerequisite guidelines, let's return to the four questions of the enemy narrative. The four questions are:

✦ What COA will the enemy execute?

✦ What is the current enemy situation?

✦ What is the enemy doing now, given the current or anticipated dilemmas it faces?

✦ What are the enemy's decision points?

What COA will the enemy execute? Every battle update brief and commander's update brief must begin the same way, with the senior intelligence officer answering the question: What COA will the enemy execute? The answer—the golden thread of the brief—might discuss the COA the enemy is executing now or an upcoming one. Leveraging Gaddis's concepts of shifting of scale and simultaneity, the senior intelligence officer's answer could also include the operational-level COA of the enemy headquarters one to two echelons higher, especially if this COA had a substantial likelihood of influencing the unit's operations or, just as importantly, if a divergence between the division's and the higher headquarters' read of the enemy was emerging. Returning to the discussion tied to the familiar enough guideline and Gaddis's concept of selectivity, the senior intelligence officer presents only the COAs the commander and staff need to know. Alternatively, speaking in the language of commanders, the senior intelligence officer could brief the conditions the enemy must meet before executing a particular COA, the opportunities and risks of implementing it, and how the enemy will transition to a failure option if they do not achieve the desired end state.[17]

What is the current enemy situation? With the golden thread now identified, the next question for the senior intelligence officer to answer is: What is the current enemy situation? The answer to this question provides the commander and staff with a description of the enemy's composition, disposition, strength, and, most notably, how we got here. In large-scale combat operations, the battlefield will be awash with information, sometimes making it difficult to present the enemy situation succinctly. To tackle this problem, the senior intelligence officer should describe the enemy disposition using the same structure during every brief (the "familiar enough" guideline). A practical framework for explaining the enemy situation is to start with the enemy formations furthest from your unit and work your way into the close area, or vice versa. With a familiar framework in place, the senior intelligence officer can once again leverage the historian's tools to keep the narrative flowing and use the language of commanders to keep it relevant.

For example, the senior intelligence officer could begin this portion of their narrative by identifying the combat power of a unit in the area of interest that is most likely to influence the friendly force, expressed as a percentage. The senior intelligence officer could then list the combat slant for formations in their unit's deep area, plus an even more detailed slant, task, and purpose, and the assessed decision points by objective in the unit's close area (a technique recommended by cadre at the National Training Center). All this occurs in a few minutes thanks to careful use of simultaneity, shifting of scale, and selectivity. Throughout the brief, the senior intelligence officer notes the opportunities and risks presented by the enemy situation to the commander and staff for keeping the friendly force engaged.

What is the enemy doing now, given the current or anticipated dilemmas it faces? In about 3 to 5 minutes, the senior intelligence officer has identified the central argument (selected enemy COA) and described how the enemy has positioned itself (enemy situation) to accomplish its mission. The senior intelligence officer must now explain what the enemy will do next to overcome the friendly force situation and actions, along with the ever-present challenges of limited time, rugged terrain, finite resources, and many other considerations.[18] These factors—the enemy's dilemmas—are essential to a compelling narrative.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a dilemma as "a problem involving a difficult choice."[19] Dilemmas are a constant feature of large-scale combat operations for enemy and friendly forces, even when things are going well. There are never enough resources, time, or a pliant opposing force in war. Few decisions in war are easy, and most require less-than-ideal tradeoffs that the commander must grudgingly accept to accomplish the mission.[20]

Given that dilemmas are central to military operations, the senior intelligence officer must identify the enemy's dilemmas and determine how to overcome them (thereby creating new dilemmas for the friendly force). Describing the enemy's dilemma is, in fact, the "heart" of the intelligence brief, and by exploring it, the senior intelligence officer helps "distill" a complex situation—what an enemy formation will do given friendly forces and their actions—into its "clearest meaning."[21]

The senior intelligence officer starts by retrospectively reviewing the enemy's progress along their assessed line of operations to explain how the enemy reached this point. Next, they describe the objectives (condition-setting) the enemy must fulfill over the next 12 to 24 hours, either to achieve an end state or to progress toward it. The senior intelligence officer then discusses what is preventing the enemy from achieving their objectives and what they will do to overcome the obstacles, using the language of commanders, such as opportunity and risk.[22]

Discussing the enemy's dilemmas and their actions to overcome obstacles is one of the most straightforward yet powerful tools a senior intelligence officer can use when briefing a narrative. This addition to the narrative compels the friendly command and staff to view the commander empathetically and create effective countermeasures and counteractions. Use it!

To illustrate these points, let's go back to the golden thread assessment. The senior intelligence officer assesses:

The 11 DTG will attack to destroy YOUR UNIT no later than 2400 hours to enable the seizure of OBJ DOG by the 12 DTG.

When discussing what the enemy is doing now, given the current or anticipated dilemmas they face, the senior intelligence officer may begin by stating how the 11 DTG got to its current position retrospectively, listing the objectives along a geographic line of operations they previously seized and noting advantageous terrain they are likely to seize next to ensure a successful attack. The senior intelligence officer could then describe the enemy dilemma, noting, for example, that the enemy must destroy YOUR UNIT by 2400 hours without the benefit of overwhelming combat power. Next, the senior intelligence officer could describe how the enemy corps (shifting of scale) could use enablers, such as its Multiple Launch Rocket System or attack aviation assets, to create a more favorable situation for the 11 DTG commanders. Notably, the senior intelligence officer includes intelligence (selectivity again) that supports this assessment or recommends options for changing the collection plan to uncover indicators that the enemy is or is not mitigating its unfavorable combat power ratios in this way. In response, the friendly commander approves the collection tasks (perhaps as a new priority intelligence requirement) and offers other guidance to mitigate or, preferably, exploit the threat's latest actions (risks and opportunities).

What are the enemy's decision points? At this point, the senior intelligence officer has conveyed the assessed enemy COA, the enemy's current situation, and the problems the enemy must solve to continue its line of operations. The senior intelligence officer now concludes the brief by describing the decision points available to the threat commander and, as necessary (selectivity), the location, time window, and conditions for each decision. The base product for this portion of the brief is the event template.

Senior intelligence officers also use estimative language when describing how likely a threat commander is to make or not make a particular decision and how confident they are in that assessment. In the language of storytelling, low likelihood decision points are like plot twists, feasible actions that the enemy could take but would be surprising if executed.[23] Conversely, decision points with a higher assessed probability

of occurrence are more like subplots that add color to the storyline (the assessed enemy COA) but don't change its overall essential features.[24]

Either way, all decision points relate to the golden thread woven throughout the brief and summarize key points in the commander's language. This portion of the brief also provides another opportunity to confirm that the collection is aligned to detect the enemy decision points and ensure that the friendly force plan can mitigate or exploit the decisions the enemy makes.

To illustrate these points using the 11 DTG attack on YOUR UNIT, the senior intelligence officer identifies two decision points. One decision point concerns the avenue of approach the 11 DTG will use to weight its main effort. It could read as follows: Decision Point 1: Weight the 11 DTG main effort along Avenue of Approach 1 or 2. The other decision point is a plot twist, the 11 DTG commander's decision not to conduct an attack but to transition to defensive operations. The senior intelligence officer discusses the likelihood of either occurring and the relevant points regarding time, location, and conditions.

PART III: Maintaining Shared Understanding

The final part of this article describes the technique the 1st Infantry Division G-2 used to maintain shared understanding while tactically dispersed.

Organizing the Intelligence Cell. The 1st Infantry Division took a leadership-forward approach to organizing its intelligence cell for large-scale combat operations. While the purpose of this article is not to discuss the most effective ways to task-organize the intelligence cell during large-scale combat operations, it may be useful to understand the general location of the 1st Infantry Division's military intelligence leaders on the battlefield. This information will illuminate how this organization influenced the construction of a definitive narrative twice daily. The 1st Infantry Division organized two primary mission command nodes during its division-in-the-dirt NTC 25-03 rotation in January 2025. The main command post had the following key personnel:

- ✦ G-2.
- ✦ Collection manager.
- ✦ Targeting officer.
- ✦ Current operations day and night officers in charge.
- ✦ G-2 planner.
- ✦ Chief fusion officer.
- ✦ ACE production manager.

The primary benefit of having intelligence leaders forward in the main command post was the face-to-face dialogue that was possible between these leaders, the commander and staff, and the G-2 and primary subordinates.

The rest of the Division ACE, along with the ACE Chief, was co-located with the rear command post. Stationing the ACE rearward on the battlefield, with the rear command post, ensured connectivity due to fewer required jumps. This allowed the ACE to provide near-uninterrupted support to targeting and to develop detailed analytic products.

Drafting the Narrative. Separating the ACE from the main command post led to a familiar problem: maintaining a shared enemy narrative in an environment that requires tactical dispersion. The 1st Infantry Division senior intelligence officer briefed a formal enemy narrative twice daily, as battlefield conditions permitted, first during the battle update brief in the early morning and again during the commander's update brief in the evening. Both briefs provided similar information, answering the four questions of an enemy narrative. However, the battle update brief was often a more extensive update, covering all elements of the intelligence running estimate, including the weather, collection plan, significant activity, targeting, updates to battle damage assessments, and an overview of the event template. The commander's update brief focused solely on the enemy narrative and collection plan. The respective cell leadership, such as the staff weather officer or targeting officer, briefed the other components of the running estimate outside the narrative.

The 1st Infantry Division senior intelligence officer drafted the narrative for the battle update brief immediately following the commander's update brief, leveraging the understanding that emerged during the commander's dialogue to craft initial responses to each of the four questions. Once drafted, the senior intelligence officer at the main command post digitally sent the narrative to the ACE in the late evening and, on a good night, got some rest. The ACE night shift then completed the draft, filling in critical details and updates as the evening progressed, confirming, denying, or providing wholesale new components to the narrative as the battle continued throughout the night.
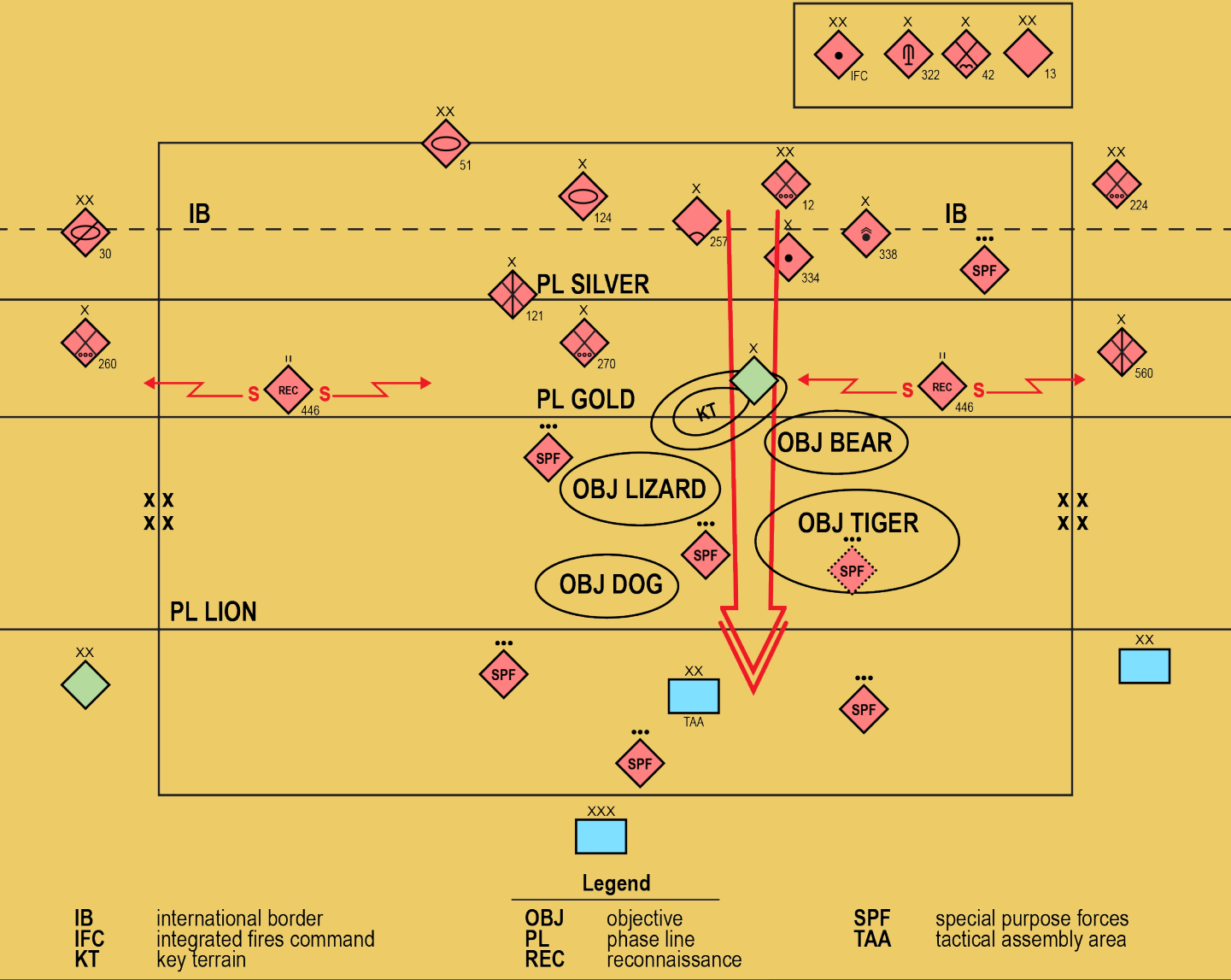
Early the following morning, the senior intelligence officer returned and reviewed the newly completed narrative. Soon thereafter, the senior intelligence officer and G-2/ACE leadership discussed and rehearsed the narrative, making changes or adjustments as necessary. Often, this dialogue spurred new insights that the senior intelligence officer incorporated into the narrative. This dialogue also allowed the other intelligence briefers to include the golden thread in their portions of the overall battle update brief. Before briefing the commander, the ACE distributed the narrative script throughout the unit via intelligence channels to provide the basis for subordinate unit S-2 briefs to their own commanders, ensuring a shared understanding of the threat.

Later in the morning, the senior intelligence officer briefed the commander and received guidance. The senior intelligence officer also noted changes in the friendly situation and plan that could impact future enemy activity during the other staff updates. That evening, immediately following the battle update brief, the narrative drafting process repeated with information updated as appropriate. Once again, the senior intelligence officer drafted new or updated answers to the four questions, using information gleaned from the battle update brief, battle rhythm events, intelligence reports, and battlefield updates throughout the morning. Once complete, the senior intelligence officer sent the draft to the ACE for fine-tuning and completion. In the early evening, the senior intelligence officer and ACE met again to review the completed narrative draft in preparation for the evening commander's update brief.

Battle Update Brief Script

For the following script, imagine a situation where a friendly force is building combat power to deter an enemy aggressor from violating the borders of an ally. The friendly force, YOUR UNIT, is located south of the international border at Phase Line LION and has the mission to prevent the 12 Motorized Division from penetrating there. YOUR UNIT has an allied force, YOUR ALLIES, to its west, and an adjacent unit, YOUR ADJACENT UNIT, to its east. Additionally, YOUR ALLIES have a small border force defending the international border north of Phase Line GOLD to disrupt the initial entry of enemy forces. The allied border force is situated well outside the direct and indirect fire support of YOUR UNIT. Enemy special purpose forces have already infiltrated YOUR UNIT's area of operations. The terrain north of Phase Line LION and south of Phase Line SILVER contains canalizing key terrain, especially at Objectives BEAR, TIGER, LIZARD, BIRD, and DOG.

[military situation diagram with symbols including units labeled IFC, 322, 42, 13, 51, 124, 12, 257, 334, 338, SPF, 224, 30, 121, 270, 260, 560, REC 446, IB, PL SILVER, PL GOLD, PL LION, KT, OBJ BEAR, OBJ LIZARD, OBJ TIGER, OBJ DOG, SPF, TAA]

Legend

IB	international border	OBJ	objective	SPF	special purpose forces
IFC	integrated fires command	PL	phase line	TAA	tactical assembly area
KT	key terrain	REC	reconnaissance		

Sir or Ma'am, I will first start with the overall assessment. [answer to question one: What course of action is or will the enemy execute?]

We assess that the enemy Operational-Strategic Command (OSC) is executing a three-division assault across its breadth to defeat YOUR UNIT's Corps.

In the YOUR UNIT area of operations. [shifting of scale and simultaneity]

We assess that the 12 Motorized Division will most likely execute its HEAVY CENTER—EAST, with its primary penetration effort at Objective DOG along Phase Line LION. The 121 Motorized Brigade will lead the attack with the 124 Tank Brigade in a follow and assume role on or about D+6.

In the opening phase of the invasion, the 12 Motorized Division will attack to rapidly seize key terrain along its avenue of approach, setting the conditions for the penetration at Phase Line LION by D+6. [golden thread]

Sir or Ma'am, I will now describe the enemy situation in the area of interest. I will start with those units furthest north and work my way south. [answer to question two: What is the current enemy situation?]

The 51 Tank Division (Strategic Reserve) is fully mobilized and preparing to move towards the international border.

The 13 Division Tactical Group is the assessed OSC exploitation force currently in assembly areas 10 to 15 kilometers north of the international border.

The OSC Integrated Fires Command and key enablers are north of the international border, and we assess the following key elements will be in support of the 12 Motorized Division [selectivity]:

- ✦ 334 Field Artillery Brigade.
- ✦ 338 Multiple Rocket Launcher Brigade.
- ✦ 257 Air Defense Artillery Brigade.

The 322 Surface-to-Surface Missile Brigade will support in an operational role.

The 42 Airborne Brigade is currently mustering forces at airfields in Southern Donovia.

Sir or Ma'am, now moving to the enemy situation in the area of operations. [shifting of scale and simultaneity]

The OSC's main body force consists of three divisions. Its task is to defeat YOUR UNIT Corps and penetrate Phase Line LION.

From west to east:

- ✦ 30 Mechanized Division (WEST) aligned against YOUR ALLIES.
- ✦ 12 Motorized Division (CENTER) aligned against YOUR UNIT.
- ✦ 224 Motorized Division (EAST) aligned against YOUR ADJACENT UNIT.

In the opening invasion, the enemy has arrayed three separate brigades to clear YOUR ALLIES border forces to Phase Line GOLD.

From west to east [be familiar enough]:

- ✦ 260 Motorized Brigade (WEST) YOUR ALLIES.
- ✦ 270 Motorized Brigade (CENTER) YOUR UNIT.
- ✦ 560 Mechanized Brigade (EAST) YOUR ADJACENT UNIT.

The 446 Reconnaissance Brigade is in a screening line to the front of the separate brigades and is preparing to attack south of the international border.

Already infiltrated are multiple special purpose forces teams located in observation posts along Phase Line LION, overwatching Tactical Assembly Area YOUR UNIT and in safe houses training insurgent forces. [selectivity]

We assess that insurgent forces, leveraging smuggled military hardware, have organized a strongpoint at Objective TIGER with a strength of 25 to 30 fighters, 2 to 4 antitank guided missile systems, and 1 to 2 Man-Portable Air Defense Systems. [selectivity and shifting of scale] The insurgent task is to disrupt YOUR UNIT reconnaissance to prevent the identification of high-value 446 Reconnaissance Brigade weapon systems. The insurgent strongpoint presents a risk to our reconnaissance forces, and we must neutralize it. [commander's language] If detected, the insurgent forces have the decision point to go to ground or occupy Objective BEAR.

Sir or Ma'am, I will now discuss the enemy dilemma and actions over the next 24 hours. [answer to question three: What is the enemy doing now, given the current or anticipated dilemmas he faces?]

The enemy lacks overwhelming combat power to guarantee their success during the penetration of Phase Line LION. They will also be exposed to YOUR UNIT shaping once they cross south of the international border, providing an opportunity to reduce their forces further as they navigate the canalizing terrain in the area of operations. [commander's language; enemy dilemma] Therefore, they must rapidly clear the defending border forces and seize the key terrain controlling the movement of forces toward YOUR UNIT with limited losses.

Speed and the piecemeal destruction of coalition forces will be critical to their success.

The enemy will execute three actions [selectivity] to ensure they gain control of key terrain as rapidly as possible, with minimal loss of combat power.

First, the enemy commander must degrade YOUR UNIT's operational reach and long-range fire capability to (1) disrupt YOUR UNIT's fires and resources supporting YOUR ALLIES' defenders south of the international border to enable their piecemeal destruction, (2) enable his rapid movement of combat power, (3) prevent the establishment of a deliberate defense in depth north of Phase Line LION. To that end, the enemy will—

- ✦ Leverage special purpose forces already positioned in the YOUR UNIT's area of operations to provide terminal guidance to the Integrated Fires Command long-range shooters from the 332 Surface-to-Surface Missile Brigade in the opening phases of the OSC attack. I see the primary risk being to our attack aviation assets. [commander's language] We will need additional corps resources to mitigate the risk of a tactical ballistic missile strike. [commander's language]

- ✦ Leverage irregular forces to execute surveillance, harassing attacks, and sabotage against YOUR UNIT, with the most significant risk to sustainment convoys along Route MERCURY. [commander's language]

The aim is to disrupt YOUR UNIT's response to its attack on YOUR ALLIES border defenders and enable the seizure of key terrain.

Second, they must completely neutralize YOUR ALLIES' border defenders along the international border while they are physically isolated from YOUR UNIT. The enemy attack will begin with establishing a 446 Reconnaissance Brigade screen south of the international border. Once set, the 270 Motorized Brigade will attack to clear YOUR ALLIES' border forces to Phase Line GOLD and, if possible, destroy YOUR ALLIES' border force in total. The most significant risk is taking advantage of the border forces' physical isolation and the special purpose force. The 270 Motorized Brigade will also aid disruption to mass ground, divisional, and OSC-level enablers. [commander's language] The 12 Motorized Division commander will aim to prevent the border force's orderly withdrawal so it cannot reinforce YOUR UNIT, or perhaps more dangerously, the opportunity the border forces would have to seed strongpoints at canalizing key terrain as it withdraws along the 12 Motorized Division's route of march. [commander's language]

Third, they must leverage the 42 Airborne Brigade to seize key terrain along their approach with up to two battalions at Objective LIZARD. Once the enemy commits their airborne forces, the 446 Reconnaissance Brigade will move rapidly—reinforced by additional fires and air defense—to project firepower and protection assets south of Phase Line SILVER to support 42 Airborne Brigade strongpoints. Preparing pre-planned targets against likely landing zones and along the route of the 446 Reconnaissance will allow us to destroy critical OSC-level enablers and prevent the link-up of enemy forces, ensuring the conditions are set when we transition to offensive operations. [commander's language]

Sir, enemy decision points for the next 24 hours [answer to question four: What are the enemy's decision points?]:

- ✦ We have high confidence that the enemy will commence its ground assault across the international border. [commander's language and selectivity]
- ✦ We have medium confidence that the enemy will execute an air assault at Objective LIZARD.
- ✦ We have medium confidence that the insurgent strongpoint will occupy Objective BEAR if detected.

The preceding vignette is an example of a completed, "brief ready" script that a division senior intelligence officer might brief before an anticipated enemy invasion or command post exercise starts. The script is modeled after those developed by the 1st Infantry Division during its Warfighter exercise and division-in-the-dirt rotation. Generally, the narrative should take about 5 to 7 minutes to deliver, but this example is longer than a typical script to include more examples of the four guidelines. While there are no fixed rules regarding script length, the bottom line is to say no more than necessary and certainly not less. The blue words in brackets highlight both answers to the four questions and callbacks to the four guidelines. Importantly, though the word "script" is used here, the senior intelligence officer should use it only as an outline in face-to-face briefings, never reading it verbatim to the commander unless providing a distributed update via electronic communication.

The 1st Infantry Division found this method to be the most efficient and effective way to maintain shared understanding. It leveraged the senior intelligence officer's access to the senior staff, commander, and information at the edge of the battle to develop a strong framework response to each of the four questions. Armed with that framework and the direction it provided, the ACE found it easy to complete the narrative, enabling it to expend more energy on other activities such as support to targeting, analytical deep dives, and support to information collection without having to "guess" what was in the mind of the senior intelligence officer or commander.

Conclusion

It is the senior intelligence officer's job to ensure everyone has the same understanding of the enemy. This is a formidable task given the inherent complexity, the physical and mental tolls, and the requirement for tactical dispersion of large-scale combat operations. The senior intelligence officer must draft engaging, easily understandable narratives in this environment, often for exhausted and combat-stressed leaders. Intelligence cells accomplish this challenging task by creating briefs that provide clear responses to the COA the enemy commander selected, the current enemy situation, projected enemy activity given their assessed dilemmas, and their decision points. The senior intelligence officer makes these responses more compelling and digestible when their brief uses a familiar structure and leads with a central argument that threads throughout. The enemy narrative gains greater appeal when the senior intelligence officer speaks in the language of commanders and skillfully communicates using the historian's tools of selectivity, simultaneity, and shifting of scales between enemy echelons. Senior intelligence officers use their access to senior leaders and battlefield proximity to frame their conceptual understanding of the four questions and submit narrative drafts to their intelligence cell to fill in the details. In this way, senior intelligence officers lead their intelligence cells, ensuring unity of effort and complete narratives.

When visualizing the enemy, use these techniques to strengthen your narratives. It may improve decision making in your unit, as it did for the 1st Infantry Division. It may even allow the senior intelligence officer to get some rest! ✴

Endnotes

1. I gratefully acknowledge the many people with whom I work and throughout my time attending professional military education who influenced the content of this article. I want to recognize Major General Monté Rone for his ideas on leveraging commander's language when briefing and Major General John Meyer for his thoughts on conveying information to busy senior executives. I also want to thank Brigadier General (retired) Mark Odom for his mentorship across multiple exercises (command post exercises, a Warfighter, and a division-in-the-dirt rotation at the National Training Center). BG Odom's feedback significantly improved the G-2 section's performance, including mine. He positively influenced my thinking on the senior intelligence officer's role in personally briefing the commander on the narrative during large-scale combat operations. Finally, this article continues to build upon ideas I previously developed, and I am thankful to have previously appeared in the *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*. I cite my earlier works throughout this article. All errors are my own.

2. Matthew Fontaine, "A Mission Command Meditation: Intelligence Intent and Guidance," *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin* 50, no.1 (2024): 2–7, https://mipb.ikn.army.mil/issues/jan-jun-2024. In this article, the author discusses the unique role of the senior intelligence officer in greater depth, focusing on the challenges of large-scale combat operations.

3. Matthew Fontaine, "A Mission Command Meditation: Building Intelligence Intuition," *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin* 50, no. 1 (2024): 8–19, https://mipb.ikn.army.mil/issues/jan-jun-2024. For an excellent discussion of the power of dialogue, see William Issacs, Dialogue: The Art of Thinking Together (Crown Currency, 1999).

4. Karl E. Weick, Kathleen M. Sutcliffe, and David Obstfeld, "Organizing and the Process of Sensemaking," *Organization Science* 16, no. 4 (2005): 409–421, https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0133. The authors discuss the role of retrospection in sensemaking. Also, for a deeper discussion of how the author's sensemaking model applies to military operations, see Fontaine, "Meditation: Building Intelligence Intuition,"11–15.

5. Matthew Fontaine, "Get Your Red Pen Ready," *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin* 50, no. 2 (2024): 40–53, https://mipb.ikn.army.mil/issues/jul-dec-2024. The author discusses the dynamism of action, reaction, and counteraction in greater depth.

6. Fontaine, "Meditation: Intelligence Intent and Guidance" and "Meditation: Building Intelligence Intuition."

7. I acknowledge MG Monté Rone for offering "commander's language" as a narrative guideline.

8. I acknowledge MG John Meyer for his dictum on the need to always present information the same way for busy senior leaders, thereby better enabling their ability to digest information quickly.

9. John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 22 (emphasis mine). I gained an appreciation for Gaddis's concepts of selectivity, simultaneity, and the shifting of scale as a student in the School for Advanced Military Studies Program.

10. Fontaine, "Meditation: Building Intelligence Intuition," 10.

11. Charles Burdett, "How to Make Your Story Coherent With the 'Golden Thread'," Pip Decks, accessed May 7, 2025, https://guides.pipdecks.com/storyteller-tactics/how-to-make-your-story-coherent-with-the-golden-thread/.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Matthew Fontaine, "Stating the Obvious: The Three Keys to Better Intelligence Assessments," *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin* 48, no.3 (2022): 44–51, https://mipb.ikn.army.mil/issues/jul-dec-2022.

15. Here is MG John Meyer's influence once more.

16. I acknowledge MG Monté Rone for describing "commander's language" and imploring the staff (and often subordinate commanders) to speak in these terms. See also, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Campaigns and Operations* (Joint Staff, 2022), IV-17. For a discussion on the primacy of transitions as it relates to the commander. See also, Fontaine, "Meditation: Building Intelligence Intuition," 9–10.

17. Fontaine, "Get Your Red Pen Ready," 42–48. The author discusses operational enemy courses of action and transition enemy courses of action, like failure options, in greater depth.

18. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton University Press, 1976), 102. Clausewitz makes this point with his concept of friction.

19. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, "dilemma," accessed May 7, 2025, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dilemma.

20. Clausewitz, *On War*, 119–123. Clausewitz discusses how everything in war "looks simple" on the surface, but once experienced, the "difficulties accumulate" to produce an "inconceivable friction."

21. Alan Watt, "Dilemma: The Source of Your Story," *Janice Hardy's Fiction University* (blog), December 31, 2013, http://blog.janicehardy.com/2013/12/guest-author-al-watt-dilemma-source-of.html.

22. Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld, "Process of Sensemaking." This is sensemaking in action. The process I describe is no different from the Army design methodology, specifically in developing an operational approach. For more information, see Department of the Army, Army Techniques Publication 5-0.1, *Army Design Methodology* (Government Publishing Office, 2015), 5-1—5-7. Incorporating Change 1 dated September 18, 2025.

23. "Plot Twist," Literary Devices: Definition and Examples of Literary Terms, accessed May 7, 2025, https://literarydevices.net/plot-twist/.

24. Fontaine, "Stating the Obvious," 47–48. This article discusses the value of estimative language.

LTC Matthew Fontaine is the senior intelligence observer coach/trainer for the Joint Readiness Training Center, Operations Group, Fort Polk, LA. He previously served as the G-2 for the 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, KS. His deployments include two tours to Iraq and two to Afghanistan, during which he served as an executive officer, platoon leader, battalion S-2, military intelligence company commander, and analysis and control element chief. He holds two master's degrees in military art and science, one in general studies and the other in operational art and science, from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.