OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE U.S. ARMY:
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING OR MISUNDERSTOOD EXCELLENCE? A PRESCRIPTION FOR THE 1990's AND BEYOND

A Monograph
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This monograph examines U.S. Army intelligence doctrine as it relates to operational intelligence in the post-Viet Nam era. Until recent changes incorporated the concept into written doctrine, intelligence writings did not explicitly address this distinct category of intelligence. However, the intelligence community has long been aware of a third and intermediate level of operations and intelligence, and has generally developed organizations and methods to meet the intelligence needs of intermediate commanders.

The monograph attempts to answer the research question: "What is operational intelligence? How is it different from strategic or tactical intelligence and what can it do for the operational commander?" It does this by reviewing basic intelligence doctrine and current writings with an eye towards the differences in levels of intelligence and the intelligence requirements of an operational commander. This is done in both conventional war and low-intensity operations.
II. ABSTRACT

This review leads to an expansion of the definition of operational intelligence and the conclusion that operational intelligence is something the army has done (albeit "as seen") when there has been an operational level commander to support. The conclusion also notes that there have been operational intelligence failures in the past and the possibility will continue to exist as long as intelligence involves the dynamics of human nature. The monograph concludes that intelligence may be a common bond that links policy makers and commanders and notes that when this link is missing, the entire spectrum of policy, planning and execution (the essence of operational art) does not seem to work in consonance.
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ABSTRACT


This monograph examines U.S. Army intelligence doctrine as it relates to operational intelligence in the post Viet Nam era. Until recent changes incorporated the concept into written doctrine, intelligence writings did not explicitly address this distinct category of intelligence. However, the intelligence community has long been aware of a third and intermediate level of operations and intelligence and has generally developed organizations and methods to meet the intelligence needs of intermediate commanders.

The monograph attempts to answer the research question: "What is operational intelligence? How is it different from strategic or tactical intelligence and what can it do for the operational commander?" It does this by reviewing basic intelligence doctrine and current writings with an eye towards the differences in levels of intelligence and the intelligence requirements of an operational commander. This is done in both conventional war and low intensity conflict.

This review leads to an expansion of the definition of operational intelligence and the conclusion that operational intelligence is something the army has done (albeit "ad hoc") when there has been an operational level commander to support. The conclusion also notes that there have been operational intelligence failures in the past and the possibility will continue to exist as long as intelligence involves the dynamics of human nature. The monograph concludes that intelligence may be a common bond that links policy makers and commanders and notes that when this link is missing, the entire spectrum of policy, planning and execution (the essence of operational art) does not seem to work in consonance.
INTRODUCTION

"War is a national undertaking which must be coordinated from the highest levels of policymaking to the basic levels of execution. Strategic, operational, and tactical levels are the broad divisions of activity in preparing for and conducting war."

With these words in the 1982 edition of FM 100-5 OPERATIONS, the U.S. Army reintroduced the concept of the operational level of war into its doctrine. The 1986 edition of FM 100-5 continued the theme with its total integration into Army doctrine. However, this resurgence of the operational level of war has only recently generated much serious thought within the army intelligence community on an equivalent operational level of intelligence.

While current published intelligence doctrine does acknowledge the existence of operational (as distinct from strategic and tactical) intelligence, only recently has it acknowledged that it is more than just a fusion of the two. This doctrine is only now becoming comfortable with a third (and intermediate) level of intelligence. In addition, what little doctrine that exists describes operational intelligence in a conventional high or mid intensity conflict with
almost no emphasis on the various types of low intensity conflict or
military actions short of war that may become the responsibility of an
operational commander. This deficiency is compounded by a distinct
lack of joint and combined emphasis.

Since 1987, a growing number of articles and School of Advanced
Military Studies (SAMS) monographs have been written addressing
operational intelligence. Also, the most recent editions of JCS-6E 1
Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, FM 24-1 Intelligence and
Electronic Warfare Operations, FM 100-5 Operations, FM 100-6 Large
Unit Operations, and FM 100-16 Support Operations: Echelons Above
Corps, and other doctrinal publications have all had definitions or
discussions of operational intelligence. However, all of these have
shortcomings or deficiencies in their discussion of this topic.

The purpose of this monograph is to address operational level
intelligence in the U.S. Army. It will attempt to answer the research
question: "What is operational intelligence? How is it different from
strategic or tactical intelligence, and what can it do for the
operational commander? To do this it will be divided into six sections:
(1) introduction, (2) a background review of basic intelligence
documentation of the post Viet Nam era, (3) an examination of current
writing on the topic to include the notion of operational level IPB, and
indications and Warning, (4) a look at the spectrum of conflict requirements for operational intelligence, (5) a proposition for a new definition of operational intelligence and (6) conclusions. The monograph rests on two assumptions.

1. The recognition of an operational level of war necessitates the recognition of subordinate operational functions to support it. Examples are maneuver, fires, logistics, deception, and intelligence.

2. Previous efforts to understand operational intelligence have been necessary steps in the preliminary examination of this topic. Current efforts such as this monograph will build on earlier foundations and will in turn be refined by subsequent critical thinking and writing.
BACKGROUND

"I would say: As a commander, know the value of accurate intelligence, the methods by which it is produced, the manner in which it is used -- and then insist on getting accurate service. As an intelligence officer, dispose of your crystal ball, know the requirements for information, and then provide your commander with the "military support" he should expect to get from a sound intelligence service."

LTG Norton E. Eddy

During and immediately after the Vietnam era, the Army's key intelligence manual was FM 30-5, Combat Intelligence, which appeared in 1965. Alas, as many as being too simplistic, it served well as a basic intelligence primer and the final version of October 1973 remained in use until replaced in August 1984, by FM 34-1, Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Operations.

FM 30-5 did not recognize an operational level of intelligence but it did train today's senior and mid level intelligence officers in what intelligence was required to do for the combat commander. In recognizing two levels of intelligence, FM 30-5 stated that

"Combat Intelligence is that knowledge of the enemy, weather and geographical features required by a commander in the planning and conduct of combat operations. It may be obtained from within his own command, or from higher, lower, or adjacent headquarters. The objective of combat intelligence is to minimize uncertainty concerning the effects of these factors on accomplishing the mission."
The paragraph concluded by stating that the term "tactical intelligence" has essentially the same meaning as combat intelligence and the two terms are often used interchangeably.

In addressing strategic intelligence, the manual stated that

"Strategic intelligence is intelligence which is required for the formulation of policy and military plans at national and international levels. Oriented on national objectives, it assists in determining feasible national intelligence objectives and in furnishing a basis for planning methods of accomplishing them. Factors which influence the military capabilities, vulnerabilities, and probable courses of action of nations are considered components of strategic intelligence."

From this, what is important for the concept of operational intelligence is that both these definitions include the concept that the mission of intelligence is to answer the basic interrogatives of WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and IN WHAT STRENGTH. These definitions clearly show that both tactical and strategic intelligence are concerned with a knowledge of an actual or potential enemy and with geographical or functional areas of actual or possible military operations. They are also produced by the application of the same fundamental intelligence collection and processing techniques.

FM 30-5 made further contributions to an eventual understanding of operational intelligence as it notes that the distinction between strategic and tactical intelligence is primarily one of scope and that there are the following overlapping interests in intelligence.
operations.

1. Information gathered and intelligence produced for strategic purposes is useful in the conduct of tactical operations. In this category are maps, charts, data on climate and trafficability, order of battle studies etc.

2. Information collected by combat units assists in the production of strategic intelligence. As examples, a POW may reveal strategic political or economic conditions in a hostile denied area, or the physical and technical characteristics of a newly encountered weapon or item of equipment may reveal new industrial or production capabilities.

Other ideas present here that will be useful in later discussions of operational intelligence are (1) the notion that an intelligence database is necessary to answer the interrogatives on a strategic level (while tactical intelligence focuses on the immediate enemy and environment), and (2) much of what would be strategic intelligence in a conventional war becomes tactical intelligence in a counterinsurgency situation. During counterinsurgency operations, political, economic, sociological and geographic intelligence is as important for day to day tactical operations as it is for strategic planning.

The follow-on intelligence manual to FM 30-5 wasn't published until August 1984. This 11 year gap in published intelligence doctrine was due primarily to changes taking place in both tactical army doctrine (1976 and 1982 editions of FM 100-5) and massive changes in
intelligence organizations brought on by the post-Viet Nam Intelligence Organization and Stationing Study (IOSS)\(^9\), and the resulting Combat Electronic Warfare and Intelligence (CEWI) organizational structure. As the Intelligence and Electronic Warfare (IEW) keystone manual, FM 34-1 proposed to expand the doctrine contained in FM 104-5 (1962). However, it did not mention the operational level of war and only indirectly hinted at an operational level of intelligence. This is surprising for three reasons. First, the army intelligence community is acutely aware that to be successful in its mission of reducing uncertainty for the commander, it must speak the language of the commander. In fact, FM 30-5 had a paragraph on the use of jargon and states that every profession has a language of its own and the military is no exception. Words have a specific meaning in a specific context. "Only in this manner will there be a common understanding among the individuals involved.\(^10\)

The second reason is even more startling. Since at least 1976, the Intelligence Center and School has been teaching the operational level of war to its Officer Advanced Course students based on the components of Soviet military art. The specific doctrinal reference for this instruction is the Intelligence and Security Command's, 1978 publication Soviet Army Operations, and is so specific on the
operational level of war that it is worth reproducing it here.

MILITARY ART APPLIES TO THREE LEVELS

GLOBAL, NATIONAL, THEATER

STRATEGIC LEVEL
The general Staff plans and directs two forms of military operations:
* Strategic-global
* Strategic-groupings of operational formations.

STRATEGY In campaigns.
Campaigns are phased by objectives and time.
The objectives of each phase are met by simultaneous and successive operations.

OPERATIONAL FORMATIONS:
Operational Formations are Fronts and Armies. A Front is the basic operational formation. An Army is the basic combined arms formation.

At the level of Fronts and Armies, operational art governs the preparation and conduct of operations in a campaign.

TACTICAL LEVEL
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE FRONT, COMBAT ACTIVITY BY TACTICAL UNITS.
Tactical large units=divisions
Tactical units=regiments
Tactical sub-units=battalions

At division level and below, military tactics govern the conduct of combat actions within an operation.

Strategic success is based on operational results. Operational results are based on the correct application of tactics.
The third reason concerns a paradox that has existed in the intelligence community since the U.S. Army's reintroduction of the operational level of war in 1982. Because of the intelligence community's previously noted focus on foreign actors, it had been aware of the operational level of war for years and had realized the utility of the concept (as seen by the notes on Soviet military art). However, at the same time the community had grown complacent and content with the strict division of effort between the Washington, D.C. (strategic) community and everything else (tactical). The paradox is that numerous intelligence functions and organizations have existed that actually performed or produced an intermediate level of intelligence. These range from the Special Liaison Units of the WWII Ultra distribution system,\textsuperscript{12} to elements of the 525 MI Group and 509th Radio Research Group in Viet Nam,\textsuperscript{13} to more recent examples of the Imagery Intelligence Production Division that existed for years at Ft. Bragg, Indications and Warning Centers at U&S Commands, and National Security Agency/service cryptologic agency field stations.

These reasons seem to indicate that the concept of an operational level of war was understood by the intelligence community. To continue, the definitions of tactical and strategic intelligence found in the 1984 FM 34-1 are identical to those previously found in FM 30-5.
but the indirect hints at operational intelligence come in when discussing corps and EAC activities.

"Tactical intelligence is usually generated and used by EOB and EAC when committed to the theater of operations. Strategic intelligence is generated and used primarily at the departmental and national levels. However, both tactical and strategic intelligence are used throughout the command structure. Strategic intelligence contributes to tactical intelligence needs to fight the close -- and deep battles. Tactical intelligence, reported to successively higher levels, forms part of the input needed to satisfy strategic intelligence requirements.

Generally, tactical and strategic interface occurs at EAC and corps. The corps has direct access to departmental and national capabilities as well as other services and allied forces."

The balance of the section goes on to discuss the corps as an intermediate level of command which integrates and funnels strategic intelligence to divisions and below, and integrates and transmits tactical intelligence to EAC. The strongest hint of an operational level of intelligence is the following diagram which highlights the corps as an intermediary between distinctly tactical organizations and higher levels of command. It should not be taken as meaning the corps is "the" operational level of intelligence.
While this initial FM 34-1 has been extensively criticized for not discussing operational intelligence, it should be remembered that it is "focused at echelons corps and below". Its strength is that it clearly conveys the intent that intelligence is for commanders, and each echelon of command from battalion through unified command needs a dedicated IEW support organization. The emphasis continued to be on reducing a commander's uncertainties by answering the key interrogatives of WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and IN WHAT STRENGTH.
"Intelligence is a difficult profession and an imperfect science at best."

Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, Jr.\textsuperscript{19}

The seed had been sown and the number of articles in professional army journals in 1987, indicated that many people throughout the army intelligence community were beginning to think about a specific operational level of intelligence.

The March 1987 issue of \textit{Military Intelligence}, published articles on the topic as its key feature, and in June 1987, JCS Pub 1, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, listed operational intelligence for the first time. While the definitions of strategic and tactical intelligence note that they differ from each other "primarily in level of application (and) may also vary in terms of scope and detail",\textsuperscript{20} the definition of operational intelligence was inadequate to describe the function:

"Intelligence required for planning and executing all types of operations".\textsuperscript{21}

The definition does not make note of the differences between operational and strategic or tactical intelligence in either context, scope or time. It missed the point of a separate level of war, but at least it was a start.
The formal acceptance of operational intelligence as a separate and distinct level of endeavor came with the publication of the most recent edition of FM 34-1 in July 1967. In it, operational intelligence is defined as:

"that intelligence which is required for the planning and conduct of campaigns within a theater of war. It concentrates on the collection, identification, location, and analysis of strategic and operational centers of gravity. If successfully attacked, they will achieve friendly political and military-strategic objectives within a theater of war."

While this definition is not perfect and requires refinement, it did provide the army intelligence community with a focus in its discussion of operational intelligence. The succeeding paragraphs refined it further, but it still remains incomplete.

"Operational level of war intelligence focuses on the intelligence requirements of theater, army group, field army, or corps commanders. The echelon focus at the operational level is situationally dependent. It reflects the nature of the theater of war itself. It shows the political and military objectives of the combatants (and) ... also reflects the types of military forces which can or may be employed. (While) the planning considerations of the tactical commander will be principally "military" in nature, the campaign planning considerations of the operational level commander will incorporate political, economic, psychological, geographical and military factors on a grand scale."

One of the most important contributions the new FM 34-1 made to doctrine was its conceptual diagram of operational intelligence and
the idea that the focus and definition of each level of intelligence must be tailored to the echelon and type of decision maker to be supported. It also clearly indicates that an item of intelligence may be important at all three levels. This is an especially important concept in unconventional war when the lines between the levels of war are indistinct, or nonexistent.

This "operational" focus should do much to dispel criticism of the initial attempts to define operational intelligence as little more than "a fusion of tactical and strategic intelligence." In addition, FM 3-4-1 (and associated publications) firmly establishes (in an intelligence doctrinal publication) an IEW echelon architecture with "MI commands:
... regionally and functionally tailored to provide multidisciplined IEW support to each theater or contingency force. These units are tailored to fit the mission. This architecture dedicates intelligence collection and analysis assets to operational commanders and should put to rest the notion that "operational intelligence requirements can be satisfied by those organizations and systems that, by definition, are uniquely designed to respond to the needs of either national level decision makers or tactical commanders."

The strength of recent doctrine is that it recognizes that operational intelligence may be clearly different in time, scope and context from strategic or tactical intelligence. It also maintains that dedicated organizations and assets must be available to answer the information requirements and help eliminate the uncertainties of an operational commander. The challenge is that current doctrine demands an analysis system, analysts and a communications system that is almost omnipotent and free from the friction of war. As an example, recommended changes by the Intelligence Center and School to the Coordinating Draft of FM 100-6, Large Unit Operations state that:

"The Army Group Commander ... must be supported by an operational level intelligence system and perspective which continuously works to comprehend all aspects and nuances of not only the enemy, but also of the theater itself."
The current method used to accomplish this task is situation development or IPB at the operational level of war. IPB is a poor descriptive term for the required activities at the operational level. "Battlefield" seems to imply tactical activities in much the same way as "terrain" applies to tactics and "geography" to operations. The argument is not with the intellectual process and organization of techniques in IPB, but with the notion that IPB at the operational level is essentially tactical IPB only expanded to fit the needs of an operational commander. Unfortunately, current publications perpetuate this notion. General William J. Livsey, USA Ret., writing in Military Intelligence (magazine) stated that:

"IPB can drive the entire combat planning process, from tactical planning at battalion and brigade levels to campaign planning at field and theater army level. And, because IPB is so fundamentally rational and understandable, it can become the critical link among joint and combined planners and operators".29

It is not that General Livsey is incorrect, only that he was writing on a theater (Korea) where we have been physically located for 40 years, with which he was intimately familiar, and for which there are more known than unknowns. Given an immature theater or the fog and friction of war, an operational analyst must deal with more intangibles than his tactical counterpart. He must become comfortable working
with imperfect information to an unknown time in the future. For these reasons, the operational level IPB analyst must be sensitive to invisible linkages that may give an enemy force its synergistic power.

If operational level intelligence differs from tactical intelligence in scope and context, then the operational level analyst’s perspective must be broader, his experience richer, and his judgment more seasoned than his tactical counterpart. For these same reasons, IPB is probably the wrong description of this analytic process at the operational level. Since operational art is concerned with activity in a theater of war or operations, perhaps a more appropriate process would be intelligence Preparation of the Theater. This description links the operational process to its basis in tactical IPB, yet denotes that process is conceptually greater in scale, scope and context.

Current intelligence doctrine also specifies IEW tasks for both the tactical and operational levels of war. While the first four are all but identical, operational level intelligence involves a fifth task that distinctly separates it from tactical intelligence and vastly increases the scope of its responsibilities.
The idea that operational level intelligence includes an Indications and Warning (I&W) responsibility can be traced from the failure of the U.S. intelligence system to precisely predict the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, through the German attack in the Ardennes in December 1944, to the Chinese intervention in Korea in November 1950. The I&W task involves the continuous development and refinement of regional or theater based indicator lists which enable operational level intelligence staffs to determine the behavior of a foreign state or military force. This capability allows a theater or major unit commander to anticipate and understand National Command Authority (NCA) actions which may lead to a decision for the employment of military forces. To avoid being caught by strategic surprise, it is essential that a theater or major unit commander (and the NCA) have worldwide and theater based all source intelligence analysis through the operation of the worldwide indications and warning monitoring system.

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A historical example of an operational intelligence failure can be seen in the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) intervention in Korea in 1950. Prior to their intervention, Chinese leaders made a number of attempts to ward off direct confrontation with the United States and there were numerous indications of their seriousness:

1) In late September (1950), using the Government of India as its spokesman, the Chinese Government warned the UN that it would intervene to protect the existence of North Korea.

2) On 3 October, 1950, the Chinese foreign minister, Chou En-lai, called the Indian Ambassador, Y.M. Panikkar, to an extraordinary conference, during which Chou warned that if United States Army units crossed the 38th Parallel, China would enter the war. Chou made clear that it was not the South Koreans he feared, only the Americans. Panikkar immediately relayed this information to the United States Government through the British Foreign Office.

3) A week later, the Chinese repeated their warning in a broadcast over Peking radio.

4) As early as 4 October, an intelligence summary from MacArthur’s headquarters had estimated that nine CCF divisions may have entered North Korea, and had observed that the increasing frequency of these sightings was ominous.

5) In October the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that, “Now that the American forces are attempting to cross the 38th parallel on a large scale, the Chinese people cannot stand idly by with such a serious situation created by the invasion of Korea.”

6) On 20 October, the capture of the first Chinese communist prisoner was reported.
7) On 26 October, what Army chief of staff, J. Lawton Collins, called the “first real brush” with (the) CCF took place.

8) By 4 November, 35 Chinese communist prisoners had been captured and seven separate divisions identified.35

On 28 November 1950, General MacArthur reported in a special communique to the United Nations that “… a major segment of the Chinese continental armed forces in army corps and divisional organization of an aggregate strength of over 200,000 men is now arrayed against the U.N. forces in North Korea… Consequently, we face an entirely new war…”36

The purpose of listing these indicators is not to place blame for an intelligence or command failure, but to illustrate the necessity of an I&W system as an operational intelligence requirement. In addressing the failure to predict the CCF intervention, MacArthur claimed that the Chinese entry into the war resulted from a political decision by the government of a nation not then a belligerent in the conflict, and that information about it was therefore the responsibility of “the Defense Department, the State Department, or the Central Intelligence Agency, (the Far East Command’s) only sources of political intelligence”.37

MacArthur biographer D. Clayton James further states:
"as he (MacArthur) emphasized at the May (Senate) hearings, "The intelligence that a nation is going to launch a war is not an intelligence that is available to a commander limited to a small area of combat. The official Army history agreed with him that "normally, the intelligence evaluation of whether a foreign power has decided to intervene in a war in national force involves political intelligence at the highest level". Field and intelligence commanders could expect such an evaluation to be made by the government in Washington with the advice of the Central Intelligence Agency. But in reality, according to the Army chronicle, of all the intelligence levels of the UN command and the American government, perhaps the most decisive in evaluating the intention and capability of Chinese intervention in the Korean War was that of the Far East Command in Tokyo, because of the default of the CIA and the Defense and State intelligence groups which were either undecided, or whose views apparently coincided with MacArthur's, as evidenced in his unchanged directives for so long.38

James goes on further to state that:

"... it can be concluded that Washington did fail to predict the Chinese intention to enter the Korean War... however, MacArthur and Willoughby (Far East Command G-2) must share some of the responsibility for the intelligence failure, because at this time the CCF was already in North Korea in great strength and within the realm of UNCF field intelligence. Had the Tokyo GHQ leaders been provided with more accurate estimates of the Chinese commitment below the Yalu at that time, they should have realized that the magnitude of the CCF deployment meant imminent military operations.39

This litany of mistakes and miscalculations argues well for an I&W system that provides an operational level commander with all source indicators of events throughout his theater, and links him to worldwide events and possible NCA actions. It further illustrates the
importance of operational intelligence being "tied in" with strategic and tactical intelligence without becoming unduly influenced by either. A distinctly "operational" perspective remains necessary.

The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act strengthened the requirement for I&W to be a component of operational intelligence when it stated that,

"Subject to the direction of the President, the commander of a combatant command -- is directly responsible to the Secretary (of Defense) for the preparedness of the command to carry out missions assigned to the command." (underlining added)

Lieutenant General John H. Cushman, USA Ret., explains that in making the responsibility for preparedness explicit, "they (the U.S. Senate) wanted no excuse available to a commander who failed to have his command ready -- either for the expected (such as an assigned contingency mission), or for the unexpected (such as a Pearl Harbor or Beirut)." Clearly, to carry out the responsibilities given them by the Senate, the commanders of combatant commands must perform an operational intelligence function.
Operational art is the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations. A campaign is a series of joint actions designed to attain a strategic objective in a theater of war. A major operation comprises the coordinated actions of large forces in a single phase of a campaign or in a critical battle. Its essence is the identification of the enemy's operational center-of-gravity -- his source of strength or balance -- and the concentration of superior combat power against that point to achieve a decisive success.

This definition of operational art from FM 100-5, appears to apply more to a conventional war than to an unconventional -- or what is presently known in U.S. doctrine as Low-intensity Conflict (LIC). FM 100-20/AFM 2-XY defines LIC as "... a politico-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and by a combination of means employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments." This definition seems to adequately cover the types of conflict and military operations that have dominated the last half of the twentieth century yet have received negligible interest in current discussions of operational intelligence. Is the reason that operational intelligence simply does not apply to LIC, that it falls into the "too hard" category, or that we just haven't yet thought enough about it?
Part of the difficulty in addressing operational intelligence in LIC is one of terminology. During the SAMS Course 4 study of campaigns and major operations we consistently used the term "unconventional war" to describe guerrilla, revolutionary and insurgent war, when Low Intensity Conflict (or LIC) is the current doctrinal term. Lack of a common definition complicates understanding, and the lack of precise terminology indicates the concept has not been completely thought out. For the purpose of discussion, the term used here will be unconventional war/LIC.

Another difficulty is that "in conventional war the battle is the decisive act. In unconventional war it can be irrelevant."¹⁴ In unconventional war, the main struggle is often in the political, social or economic realm where the support of the population is the object rather than an opposing army. "The application of military force becomes not an instrument of compulsion leading to a victory, but rather it causes disaffection leading to defeat."¹⁵

Attempting to get to the heart of the matter leads to the premise that in any conventional or unconventional war/LIC endeavor, a commander is trying to apply strength against weakness, although in a different context or setting. Just as the advent of nuclear weapons has necessitated a change in the strategic concept for the employment of
operational art, so might the proliferation of unconventional war/LIC. Both nuclear and unconventional war/LIC have imposed constraints on the freedom of action of an operational commander. In the nuclear arena the constraint has been in the context of limiting the escalation of the conflict and preventing the outbreak of strategic thermonuclear war. The limitations imposed on MacArthur in Korea are historical examples of such constraints. In an unconventional war/LIC setting, the military constraints will often manifest themselves in the political or social arena. Israeli rules of engagement in "Operation Peace for Galilee" were extremely restrictive in an attempt to avoid international political hostility and for domestic political and social purposes.

There are two points to this discussion. The first is to note the evolutionary process of the operational art as it relates to the conventional spectrum of conflict. We may eventually expand the concept of operational art to include unconventional war/LIC as we have warfare in the nuclear age. The second point is that in unconventional war/LIC it is likely that we are presently not within the sphere of activity defined by operational art, but rather are engaging in a level of military, political and social activity that frequently links tactical events to a desired strategic outcome. In
unconventional war/LIC, the distinction between strategic, operational and tactical levels is often blurred to the point of being indistinguishable. It follows that the distinction between strategic, operational and tactical intelligence may be equally blurred. Today the issue is further clouded by the inclusion of combating terrorism, peacekeeping operations and peacetime contingency operations as operational categories of LIC. Included in peacetime contingency operations are such diverse actions as disaster relief, certain types of drug interdiction operations, and land, sea and air strikes. While these activities may not fall within the realm of our present concept of operational art, they are certainly within the perspective of an operational level commander. As such, they must be supported by his intelligence system and can be considered within the framework of operational intelligence.

A further distinction is useful. It appears that within unconventional war/LIC, the focus for operational intelligence should not be on levels of war, but on levels of command, and it is helpful to recall an earlier discussion on the levels of intelligence. Much of what would be strategic intelligence in a conventional war becomes tactical intelligence in a counterinsurgency situation. During counterinsurgency situations, political, economic, sociological, and geographic
intelligence is as important for day to day tactical operations as it is for strategic (or operational) planning.\textsuperscript{47} Regardless of the level of war, for the intelligence system the key remains WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE and IN WHAT STRENGTH.

A PROPOSITION FOR EXPANSION

Operational intelligence is "... that intelligence which is required for the planning and conduct of campaigns within a theater of war... (it) concentrates on the collection, identification, location, and analysis of strategic and operational centers of gravity. If successfully attacked, they will achieve friendly political or military -- strategic objectives within a theater of war".

FM 34-148

This definition, which was first published in \textit{Military Intelligence} in March 1967, has provided a focus for the discussions of operational intelligence. However, it is incomplete and needs modification and expansion to adequately describe operational intelligence.

A great deal has been written about the concept of the center of gravity as "... the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends. That is the point against which all our energies should be
directed". There is no need to discuss it further other than to note that in the world today, strategic centers of gravity might include the internal structure of a political or military alliance or the will of a people to support and sustain strategic goals. Operational centers of gravity may include major committed formations, theater or other major reserves, LOC's/SLOC's, support to theater reconstitution and sustainment, or the thought process of the enemy commander. However, it may be most useful to consider an operational center of gravity as the mass of the subordinate maneuver formations, and in modern conventional battles, the vital element has usually been armored formations.

If the intelligence system is to accomplish its mission of reducing uncertainty for the commander, it must do more than just collect, identify, locate and analyze the opponents center(s) of gravity. The intelligence system must find, and recommend to the combat commander, the best ways to attack and defeat the center of gravity whether directly or indirectly. If, as SAMS History Professor Dr. Robert Epstein states, "... the U.S. Army, for the first time its history, must operate from strategic scarcity rather than strength", then "American commanders must seek to rely on maneuver (or the indirect approach) to create a favorable battle situation." The
method by which to accomplish this is not only the identification of the opponent's center of gravity, but also of the decisive points that lead to it. The true test of the operational artist may be the ability to avoid the direct clash of opposing centers of gravity through the use of the decisive point to attack the opposing center of gravity indirectly.

The classical concept of the decisive point comes from Baron Henri Jomini who saw the decisive point as "... (a point) the possession of which, more than of any other, helps to secure the victory, by enabling its holder to make a proper application of the principles of war. Arrangements should therefore be made for striking the decisive blow upon this point." In recent years, SAMS Military Theory Professor James J. Schneider, has modernized the concept of the decisive point and identifies it as "... any objective that will provide a force with a marked advantage over his opponent." Professor Schneider further divides decisive points into three categories, physical, cybernetic and moral. Physical decisive points "... may include key hills, bases of operations, ridges, bridges, towns, a formation, or anything that is physically tangible." Cybernetic decisive points are those which sustain command, control, communications, and the processing of information. (these) might be a communications node, a boundary, a CP, a commander etc." The moral decisive point...
sustains the forces' morale -- their magnitude of will. They might include the "will" of the commander, the commander himself... etc." The utility of the concept of the decisive point, for the practitioner of operational intelligence, is that it may be the most effective means of bringing strength against weakness to defeat an opponent's center of gravity. As Dr. Epstein notes,

"...there usually seems to be a decisive point, usually a weak spot in the enemy line or an avenue that invites a strike into the rear of the enemy array. If the enemy does not have one then perhaps one can create it as Napoleon did at Austerlitz. What does seem to be clear... is that the objective of any operational commander should be the destruction of the enemy mass -- which is like a center of gravity. The most successful commanders... viewed the destruction of the enemy mass as the end result of their movements... What made them outstanding commanders was the identification of the enemy mass and gaining its destruction by indirect means -- strength against weakness".57

This concept might be illustrated by the diagram on the following page where:

A = Successful indirect attack on the center of gravity through a decisive point.

B = Unsuccessful indirect attack on the center of gravity - it failed to locate a decisive point.

C = Unsuccessful direct attack on the center of gravity.
The Falkland Islands Campaign of 1982 can be used to demonstrate the concept as a historical example. The center of gravity of the Argentine forces in the Falklands was the garrison at Port Stanley. A direct attack against Port Stanley could have been made by sailing the fleet into the small harbor, but this would put the British center of gravity (the carriers *Hermes* and *Invincible*) at a distinct risk to the Argentine Air Force. An indirect attack was made at Goose Green (E) for domestic political reasons. (A) represents the physical decisive
point at San Carlos, (D) may represent a cybernetic decisive point, the Argentine commander, (E) a possible physical decisive point at Fitzroy, and (F) the moral decisive point of Argentine will to fight.

The British selected the correct operational center of gravity, the mass of the enemy force, from among a number of options. In addition, they recognized the appropriate operational decisive point (landing and build-up at San Carlos) for an indirect attack (while protecting the friendly center of gravity by keeping the carriers out of range). Graphically the campaign looks as follows:

![Diagram of the campaign](image_url)
Illustrated in this way it is easy to see that it is important for the intelligence system to identify and locate not only the opponent's center or centers of gravity, but also the decisive points that if attacked, can most effectively lead to its defeat. Incorporating the ideas discussed, a new definition of operational intelligence is:

"that which is required for the planning and conduct of campaigns and major operations within a theater of war or theater of operations during conventional war or LIC," concentrates on the collection, identification, location and analysis of strategic and operational centers of gravity and decisive points that, if successfully attacked will lead to the achievement of friendly political and military-strategic objectives within a theater of war or operations. (additional underlined)

The inclusion of "major operations", "theater of operations", "decisive points", and "during conventional war or LIC" is intended to bring the definition more in line with the current concept of the operational level of war and operational art. To be effective, the intelligence system must speak the language of the combatant commander.
CONCLUSION

And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan and said unto them... See the land, what it is; and the people that dwell therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many.

NUMBERS 13:17-18

The research question this monograph set out to answer was: What is operational intelligence and what can it do for the operational commander? The answers must be seen in a number of different ways.

A new definition for operational intelligence has been proposed which expands the scope of previous definitions and brings it more in line with current terminology.

In addition, operational intelligence, by its very nature, is more predictive and anticipatory than either tactical or strategic intelligence. In a 1966 monograph, Preconceptions, Predilections, and Experience: Problems for Operational Intelligence and Decisionmaking, LTC Lanning Porter states that "Faulty predictions of enemy intentions probably has led to more major military failures than any other intelligence shortfall." The intelligence officer should never be put in the position of having to guess. In justification, LTC Porter notes Sir William Slim's attempts to predict Japanese actions and believes "Slim courted disaster time after time by attempting to project enemy actions." LTC Porter is only half right; true, the intelligence officer
should never be made to "guess" on enemy intentions, as his guess is no better than anyone else's. However, if the sole purpose of intelligence system is state enemy capabilities, then it is not doing the job of helping to reduce the commander's uncertainties. The intelligence system must give the commander a baseline from which to begin planning, with the understanding that there will be an inverse relationship between the accuracy of the intelligence estimate and how soon it is needed by the commander and the operations staff.

A contrasting opinion might observe that among Slim's strengths as a commander was that he had an operational perspective, built and used an intelligence system, and had the flexibility to adapt when things went wrong. Slim continually expressed a need for information on enemy intentions and it is difficult to argue with success. The need for prediction and anticipation is echoed in current doctrinal publications and FM 3-4-1 states that situation development
provides "knowledge of the enemy to include... intentions' and... probable reactions", and combat commanders confirm the theme. Writing in Military Intelligence, General Glenn K. Otis, USA Ret., states the result of the intelligence process is "... an assessment of the enemy situation and the identification of the enemy's probable courses of action". Also Major General George P. Stotzer, former commanding the 3rd ID (M), tells intelligence soldiers to "Focus on prediction. Prediction does not mean guessing (but) a carefully reasoned estimate... To be a successful predictor, you will have to learn to deal with uncertainty". These statements of combat commanders indicate that there is a distinct need for operational intelligence to be predictive and anticipatory in nature.

Operational intelligence will also be part of a joint and combined effort. A historical review of U.S. military actions in the twentieth century shows a succession of joint and combined operations and this trend shows no signs of reversing itself. The intelligence product needed to support these operations will also tend to be joint and combined rather than addressing separate air, land, naval or national aspects. The burden on U.S. intelligence organizations will be especially critical since their capabilities are considerably more robust and extensive than those of the allies at both the operational
level and in their link to U.S. national agencies. As FM 34-1 notes,

"A special interdependency exists between a joint force and national level intelligence agencies. Joint forces are dependent on strategic, technical and current intelligence developed by national agencies. National agencies rely on joint force information and intelligence, including that developed by component commands. Joint forces represent a significant part of DOD collection capabilities.

Joint force intelligence agencies, including component agencies, are linked directly with national intelligence agencies for tactical exploitation of national capabilities (TENCAP) and national exploitation of tactical capabilities (NETCAP)."

Fortunately, the Joint Chiefs of Staff appear to be taking the lead in the development of joint doctrine by initiating a comprehensive joint doctrine master plan. The doctrine is intended to be "... broad in scope, addressing the entire spectrum of intelligence and requiring the participation of representatives from all four services and unified and specified commands in its development."67

So far we have described what operational intelligence is. What operational intelligence is not, is a panacea for all intelligence woes. In a 1987 SAMS monograph, Major Ronald L. Burgess identified six shortcomings that have caused intelligence indicators not to be acted upon. These are:
- too much intelligence or the "noise" theory
- preconceived ideas
- overconfidence
- (exaggerated) desire for certainty
- "wolf" theory
- systemic and intrinsic problems of the intelligence system.

As one reviews these shortcomings it becomes evident that five of the six are qualitative in nature and directly involve the human dimension of personality, only the "systemic and intrinsic problems of the intelligence system" tends to be objective and quantifiable. As the intelligence system strives to correct internal deficiencies, the other faults of the system remain within the dynamics of human social and political behavior. Unfortunately, our most erroneous assumption, and one that has been disproven over and over again, is that these dynamics are thoroughly quantifiable. They are not, much of human nature is emotionally, rather than analytically driven, and much of human nature remains practically "incalculable" even in retrospect.

In his conclusion, Major Burgess notes that,

"If one fault is allowed to exist by analysts or decision makers, then it is probable that other shortcomings will not only manifest themselves, but multiply the negative effect of any outcome. Generally, operational intelligence provides the commander with what is known or suspected about his enemy, with trends in his strength and capabilities, with insight regarding the enemy commanders intent, and with the intelligence officers best judgment of his enemy's plans and intentions. When the product presented to the commander is high
in quality and adequate in the amount of detail required, the commander has greater freedom of action in his planning spectrum than he would otherwise have. When the shortcomings are present or allowed to introduce themselves at some point in time during the analytical/decision phase, then even the best planned campaign can be undermined and possibly threatened with failure. 70

Clearly then, operational intelligence is not a panacea for all the woes of past intelligence failures. Hopefully though, the study of past failures (and successes) will increase our sensitivity to, and knowledge of, the quirks of the intelligence system.

In retrospect, it appears that operational intelligence may be a common bond that links policy makers and commanders and assists in insuring a cohesive effort.

\[
\text{POLICY MAKERS} \quad \cap \quad \text{OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE} \quad \cap \quad \text{COMMANDERS}
\]

When they are not linked, the entire spectrum of policy, planning, and execution does not seem to work in consonance. An example of this failure may be that in spite of the many positive aspects of U.S
intelligence operations in Viet Nam (SIGINT, PHOTINT, HUMINT acquisition, and analysis) there was an "ad hoc" system that did not perform its function to the fullest extent necessary.

![Diagram](image)

The existence of these screens prevented operational intelligence from being a bond that linked the policy makers and commanders into a coherent whole.

Finally, operational intelligence is more than "much ado about nothing". It involves the answers to the interrogatives of Who, What, When, Where, and In What Strength that are often the key military uncertainties of a commander. It also attempts to reduce uncertainties in the political, social, economic and geographic realms that concern a commander at the operational level of war.

Has operational intelligence been the victim of misunderstood
excellence? Unfortunately not. There have been, and will probably continue to be, failures in operational intelligence. It is imperfect because it involves the human mind formulating answers to questions about the future without knowing the outcome of current actions or operations. It also involves the human mind attempting to probe the workings of another human mind, the enemy commander.

Operational intelligence is an area that is receiving increasing emphasis within the intelligence community. A prescription for the 1990's and beyond exists in a clear and recognized need for organic intelligence collection assets and analysis organizations at operational levels of command.72 There is also the realization that intelligence may transcend the levels of war and this should result in the revitalization of the TENCAP and NETCAP programs. Most importantly, commanders and intelligence officers are thinking and discussing operational intelligence issues. It does not exist for its own purposes. INTELLIGENCE IS FOR COMMANDERS!
### IEW SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECHelon</th>
<th>PRODUCERS</th>
<th>ORGANIC RESOURCES</th>
<th>ALLOCATED SUPPORT</th>
<th>REQUESTS SUPPLIED FROM</th>
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<td>USAF/USN/USMC</td>
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**NOTES:**
1. ACR/separate brigade organic MI company provides support similar to divisional MI battalion adjusted to scale based on the mission.
2. Some resources are further allocated to the battalion.
3. IEW support element provides interface between MI assets and brigade S2/S3.
4. When corps augmentation is available.

FM 3-41
Pg. 2-46.

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APPENDIX B

DIFFERENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE</th>
<th>OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE</th>
<th>TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Base</td>
<td>Data Base</td>
<td>Focus is on immediate enemy and environment. The only data base is in tactical IB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&amp;W</td>
<td>1&amp;W</td>
<td>Rely on organic assets for tactical combat information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning generally not time sensitive. National intelligence estimates (NIE's) on capabilities and intentions.</td>
<td>Planning focus on unknowns to an unspecified time in the future. Non-specific information must provide a basis for planning.</td>
<td>Do or react to tactical actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on strategic center of gravity and decisive points.</td>
<td>Focus on strategic and operational center of gravity and decisive points.</td>
<td>Probably not applicable at this level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of &quot;commercial&quot; intelligence.</td>
<td>Probable availability of &quot;commercial&quot; intelligence</td>
<td>Don't have the time or space for the analysis and storage of &quot;commercial&quot; intelligence.</td>
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</table>

"Commercial" intelligence includes such things as LANDSAT imagery, commercial country studies, public access economic studies and many items common to public libraries.
### APPENDIX B (CONTINUED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIMILARITIES</th>
<th>STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE</th>
<th>OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Same</td>
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<tr>
<td>What, When, Where and</td>
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<tr>
<td>In What Strength.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concerned with reducing commanders uncertainties</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>Same</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
NOTES


2. Examples of these are Military Intelligence (magazine), Military Review, and Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence (DCS/INT) briefings.


4. FM 30-5 Combat Intelligence. Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., October 1973, pg. 211.

5. Ibid, pg 2-1.

6. "Why" is an interrogative that is often included here. However, in twenty years of experience with the intelligence community, I have come to believe that "why" is a "nice to know" that is often beyond the capability of the intelligence system.

7. FM 30-5, op. cit., pg. 2-2.

8. Ibid, pg. 2-2.

9. U.S. Army Intelligence Center and School, SIS 02607 Intelligence Organization and Stationing Study (I0S5). 1977. Following the Vietnam War, the I0SS was conducted by Major General Ursano, director of management for the DA staff, with two main objectives:

1) To look at the Army's total organization for the conduct of intelligence to include EW, where this is specifically related to intelligence functions

2) To evaluate the missions, functions, organizations, command and management relationships, and stationing of intelligence organizations.
10. FM 30-5, op cit., pg. 2-1


14. FM 34-1, Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Operations. Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., August 1984, pg 2-8, 2-9

15. Ibid, pg 2-9.

16. In addition to the reasons for the surprising omission of the operational level of war, see also Lieutenant Colonel Lanning M. Porter, Preconceptions, Predilections, and Experience: Problems For Operational Level Intelligence and Decisionmaking. School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S., Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, May 1986, pg. 5 and 6.

17. FM 34-1, op cit., pg. V.

18. Ibid, pg. 2-21 thru 2-47.


20. JCS PUB 1, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, D.C., 1 June 1987, pg. 349 and 362.

21. Ibid, pg 263.

22. FM 34-1, Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Operations.
Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., July 1987, pg 2-10

23. Ibid, pg 2-10

24. Ibid, pg 2-9

25. Lieutenant Colonel Lanning M. Porter, op cit., pg 6

26. FM 34-1, op cit., pg 2-45


28. Captain Larry V. Euel, Memorandum, Subject: "Recommended Changes to FM 100-6, Large Unit Operations, U.S. Army Intelligence Center and School, Ft. Huachuca, AZ, 22 February, 1988, pg 3.


30. Ideas and phrases used in this paragraph come in part from Captain Ralph Peters, "Wanted, Analysts", Military Intelligence, March 1987, pg 15-17.


32. FM 34-1, op cit., pg 2-10, FM 34-25 Corps Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Operations, Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., pg 2-10 and 2-11 and FM 100-6, Large Unit Operations (Coordinating Draft), U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 30 September 1987, pg 3-12.

33. The purpose here is only to illustrate a number of significant events that are generally regarded as failures of either:

A The intelligence system to collect indicators
B The intelligence system to correctly analyze indications

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C. The intelligence system to transmit this information, in a timely manner, to the concerned command.
D. Or the commander, to believe and use the warning.

34. FM 34-25, op. cit., pg. 2-11.


37. James, op cit., pg 563.

38. Ibid, pg 563-564.

39. Ibid, pg 564.


41. Ibid, pg. 6.

42. FM 100-5 Operations Headquarters, Department of the Army Washington, D.C., May 1986, pg. 10.

43. FM 100-20/AFM 2-XY Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict (Final Draft) Headquarters, Department of the Army, Department of the Air Force June 1988, pg. 1-1.

45. Ibid, pg. 15.

46. FM 100-20/AFM 2-KV, op. cit., pg. 1-10, 1-11.

47. FM 30-5, op. cit., pg. 2-2.


50. Major General Julius Parker, Jr., "From the Commander", *Military Intelligence*, March 1987, pg. 2 and FM 100-5 Operations (1986) op. cit., pg. 179.


52. Epstein, op. cit., pg. 2.


54. Schneider, op. cit., pg. 28.


57. Epstein, op. cit., pg. 4-33-1 and 4-33-2.

58. Idea for conceptual diagram is from Major Oliver Lorenz, USAF, SAMS AY 88/89.

59. Porter, op cit., pg. 33.

60. Ibid, pg. 33.
61. Sir William Slim. *Defeat Into Victory*. London, Cassell and Co. Ltd. See pg. 31 for his emphasis on building an intelligence system as a primary requirement, pg. 210 as an example of his use of the system, and pg. 437 for his flexibility to adapt when things go wrong.


70. Burgess, op. cit., pg. 32, 33.


72. FM 34-1 (1987) op. cit., pg. 2-21 to 2-47, and DCSINT briefing, op. cit.,

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SAMS MONOGRAPHS


