

CCIR: A Tool for Information Dominance

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INFORMATION WILL BE one of our most powerful weapons in the new millennium and on the future battlefield. As with all deployable weapon systems, the United States must work continuously to enhance this capability; specifically, to gather, interpret and disseminate the most critical information. Success on the future battlefield will depend more than ever on information dominance.

Achieving information dominance is a matter of quality more than quantity. In fact, the *less* information there is, the more useful the remaining information can be. To attain information dominance, some clear guidelines must be established to sift through all of the available facts and retain the meaningful items.

To achieve dominance, commanders must direct information acquisition to meet their intelligence needs and then apply combat power wisely and precisely. At the same time, commanders must filter information to ensure they are not overwhelmed with reams of useless data. Commanders can already direct information collecting and filtering by using the commander's critical information requirements (CCIR) that give the essential information to fight and win.

US Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations*, states, "The commander alone decides what information he deems to be critical, based on his experience, the mission, input from the staff, and the higher echelon commander's intent. Two means for deriving the CCIR are war gaming and the production of a decision support template."

Doctrinally, commanders alone are responsible for developing CCIR. However, the doctrinal process for how the commander determines CCIR is not as clearly enumerated. Feedback from combat training centers and leader training conducted by the 16th Cavalry Regiment, Fort Knox, Kentucky, sug-

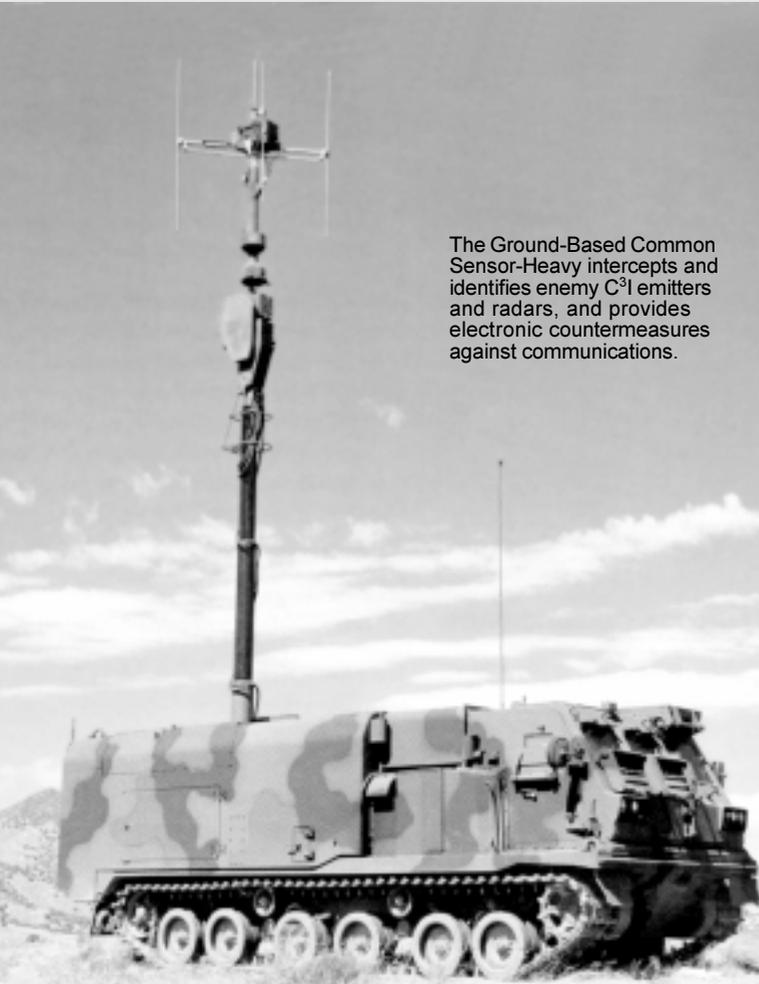
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gest there is confusion about how commanders should formulate CCIR. To simplify this process, CCIR have three components:

- A priority intelligence requirement (PIR) is information commanders must know about the enemy.
- Friendly force information requirements (FFIR) are things commanders must know about their own (friendly) forces.
- Essential elements of friendly information (EEFI) are things commanders know about friendly forces that must be protected.

Visualize the Battle

Successful CCIR development begins with the most important element—how the commander visualizes the fight. If time permits, the staff may perform a detailed analysis to help the commander visualize the battle, or with limited time, the commander might conduct a personal estimate. Regardless, the commander must visualize the terrain on which the battle will occur and project how enemy and friendly forces might act and react as the battle culminates. The commander must visualize the likely branches and sequels during the fight as the uncooperative enemy adjusts to friendly force actions. He must also imagine actions to identify and defeat enemy countermoves.



The Ground-Based Common Sensor-Heavy intercepts and identifies enemy C³I emitters and radars, and provides electronic countermeasures against communications.

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Identify Key Decisions

While visualizing the battle, commanders must identify decisions they will have to make during its course, as well as the decisions the enemy will face. Once this is achieved, a commander has identified productive CCIR. Productive CCIR lead the friendly force commander to make timely battlefield decisions and preclude the enemy commander from the same. For each decision the commander makes, he determines what information he must have and when he needs it. That information comes in two types—enemy intelligence and friendly intelligence.

Priority intelligence requirement. Information the commander must know about the enemy is a PIR and is critical to battlefield decision making. The enemy information a commander must know at

a decision point becomes both PIR and the trigger, or at least a part of the trigger, to make that decision.

Logically, that trigger (PIR) and the corresponding decision should go on the decision support template (DST). The PIR should also go into the tasking matrix that the S2 develops as part of the reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) plan. If the information is important enough to be a PIR, then it is worth specifically tasking someone and providing a backup to find it.

Friendly force information requirements. FFIR is information a commander needs to make decisions about friendly forces. As with a PIR, the commander must ensure that someone collects and reports this information and that redundant collection means are in place. Putting the FFIR in coordinating instructions specifically tasks reporting the information. However, because it is in coordinating instructions, it does not task anyone in particular to collect the information. It is similar to an all-points bulletin tasking: “If you see this happen, report it.” Hence, it may be preferable to also task specific units in the operation order, or in the tasking matrix in the R&S plan, to collect and report this friendly information. The decisions the commander will have to make about friendly forces should also be included in the DST.

Sometimes decisions are made based on a combination of friendly and enemy information. However, the process for including these information requirements in the CCIR remains the same whether the information is needed on its own for a decision or in combination with other pieces of information. Again, the most important element of this process is how the commander visualizes the battle and determines his decisions.

Essential elements of friendly information. The enemy commander also needs information to make decisions. The friendly commander visualizes the fight and determines what decisions the enemy will make during the battle. He attempts to identify enemy and friendly information that the opposing commander will require at his potential decision points.

Information the enemy commander needs about friendly forces to make decisions is EEFI. Units must protect this information and deny it to the enemy to prevent the enemy from making timely decisions and allow friendly forces to retain the initiative. These EEFI are not simply identified in coordinating instructions; specific measures, such as operations and communications security, must be

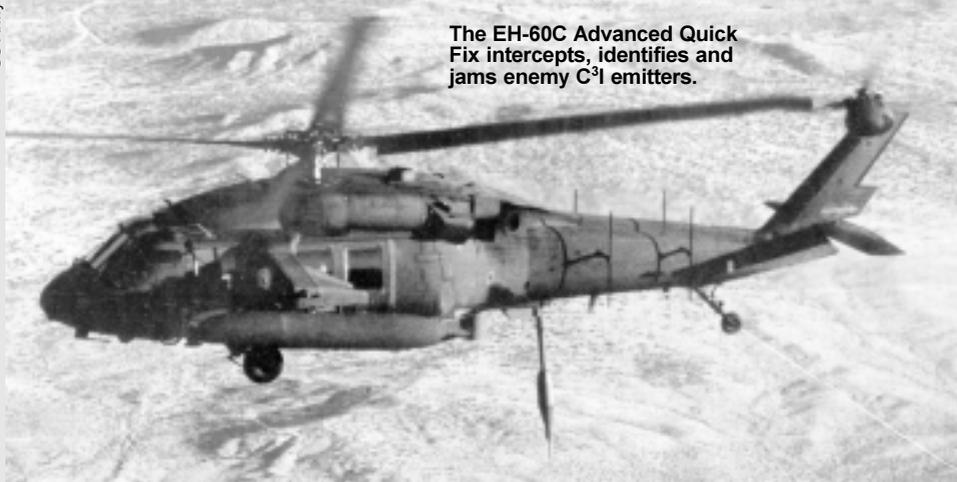
used to protect this information. The commander must ensure that measures and responsibility for protecting this information are delineated. At this point, the commander will have articulated his CCIR and ensured he has a plan to gather the PIR and FFIR he needs while denying the enemy the EEFI he needs.

A New Element of CCIR: Enemy Force Information Requirements

Commanders must consider one other element of battlefield information to achieve information dominance—enemy force information requirements (EFIR). This is the information the enemy needs about his own forces to make decisions. Commanders must deny the enemy EFIR, just as they deny the enemy EEFI. The mission is to attack the enemy’s command and control (C²) to deny him the information he needs and retain our initiative. The commanders’ tools depend on their echelons of command but may include prioritizing targets, jamming, attacking command posts and imitative deception. As before, the commander tasks specific requirements within the means of his operation order to accomplish a C² attack.

The method described oversimplifies what can become a complex and continuous process that constantly changes depending on the stage of the fight.

US Army



The EH-60C Advanced Quick Fix intercepts, identifies and jams enemy C³ emitters.

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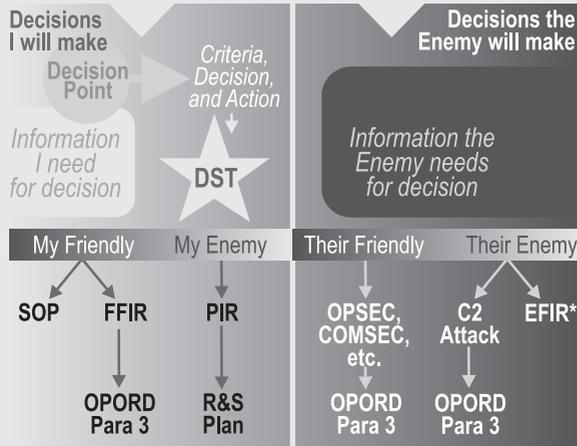
For instance, the definition of CCIR during the preparatory battle stage becomes meaningless once the fight is joined. Also, as the commander’s estimate changes during the fight, so does his CCIR. This example further illustrates a method that commanders can use to identify their CCIR. On the digitized battlefield, where increasing amounts of information are readily available, the commander must create filters that will give him the information he needs without overloading him with useless data. CCIR can direct collection of key information while creating filters to eliminate nonessential material. It also can help deny information to the enemy to retain the initiative.

A Tactical Vignette

Colonel Smith, commander, 1st Brigade, 16th Armored Division, has two tank-heavy and two mechanized-heavy task forces (TFs) in the brigade. His mission is to defend in sector against an attack from the 104th Motorized Rifle Division (MRD).

In his sector, he has two major avenues of approach that eventually split into three avenues, approximately at the point of his forward line of own troops (FLOT). He believes the enemy will task-organize his division into three combined arms regiments and attack with two forward and one in his

Commander’s Visualization of the Battle



*Enemy Forces Information Requirement

second echelon. Smith anticipates the main enemy attack to the south, with a supporting attack in the center. He will then commit his second echelon to the south to exploit the success of the main effort. However, the enemy will retain the option to shift the main effort to the northern avenue of approach if he determines Smith's brigade is weak there.

Smith has visualized how he believes the battle will occur based on war gaming his own course of action. His plan is to defend with a two-company TF in the north as an economy-of-force operation, with a three-company TF in the center and a four-company TF in the south as the main effort. He will

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keep a three-company TF. Initially the reserve will be positioned at the rear of the brigade sector in the north. However, it will move slowly to a position in the south either when the enemy battalion reconnaissance has been destroyed or when the enemy lead battalions cross phase line (PL) Dog. This will be the first of Smith's decisions.

Smith believes he will initially destroy enemy elements during the counterreconnaissance fight. The enemy will attack with two combined arms regiments abreast, using advance guard battalions in the center and south of the sector. However, if the enemy determines 1st Brigade is weak in the north, the enemy division commander will move the main effort to attack on the northern avenue of approach with the supporting attack in the center of the sector. Should the enemy shift his main effort to the north, Smith will commit the reserve to a battle position (BP) near PL Goat (BP north) and reconstitute a new reserve from the southern TF. The last place the enemy can make his decision is at PL Dog. This is the first decision the enemy will make and the second decision Smith will make.

If, as expected, the enemy's main effort is in the south, Smith's center TF will defeat the enemy regiments' supporting attack. The southern TF will de-

feat the enemy's southern first-echelon regiment. Once the enemy commits his second-echelon regiment to the south, Smith will commit the brigade reserve, in conjunction with his southern TF, to defeat the enemy second echelon at an engagement area (EA) near PL Cat. This will be the decisive point of the battle. Committing the enemy's second echelon is the enemy commander's second decision of the fight. Committing his reserve to the south is Smith's third decision.

Smith now gives guidance to his staff. "Gentlemen, my intent for this battle is simple. Our purpose is to defeat the 104th MRD in our sector. Key tasks are to win the counterrecon fight through aggressive security operations in depth to prevent the enemy from observing our defensive preparation; to take risk in the north and weight the main effort—the southern TF—to defeat the enemy's main effort; and to synchronize committing the reserve and concentrating fires into our southern EA to defeat the enemy's second echelon. We will remain flexible to reposition forces north, should the enemy shift his main effort there. Our end state is the 104th MRD destroyed or withdrawn in sector and our forces at 75-percent combat power near PL Cat ready to counterattack.

"I see there are five major decisions that will be made during the fight. First, I must decide to move the reserve from its position in the north to the southern part of our sector. I will do this when the enemy crosses PL Dog with his lead battalions or when his battalion reconnaissance has been destroyed. These are both priority intelligence requirements for me. XO, make sure we include these in the order, that the R&S plan specifically tasks someone to find and report this information, and that we include this in the decision support template.

"The second decision is the enemy's. I believe he will, if he knows we are weak in the north, commit his main effort to the northern avenue of approach. You can see why our counterrecon plan is vital to our success. Our true disposition in the north, specifically our lack of strength there, is an essential element of friendly information. To prevent the enemy from learning this, I want to do several things. First, we will designate our northern task force the brigade main effort during the counterrecon phase. Weight them in the order accordingly. Second, I want the reserve positioned to the north during our preparation so that if the enemy does observe us, he sees five companies in the north. Track this dur-

ing battlefield preparation. Finally, I want to cover the southern task force's move with smoke, so task-organize the smoke with them. Include these actions in the synchronization matrix and in the main body of the order.

"The third decision I see is committing the reserve to the north if the enemy shifts his main effort there. The enemy will have to turn north along PL Dog if he wants to go to the northern avenue of approach. Committing a regiment to the northern avenue is another priority intelligence requirement. XO, make sure the R&S plan has named areas of interest designated with redundant observers to report this information. Successfully repositioning the reserve to BP North is a friendly force information requirement for me. Make sure we specifically task the reserve task force to report when they are set in BP North. Also, designate an observer in the R&S plan to be the backup. Include a visual backup signal in paragraph 5 of the order, and make sure this is in the decision support template.

"The next decision I see the enemy making is to commit his second-echelon regiment to the south. I believe he will do this if he believes he is being successful in the south. I want to encourage him to do that, so our strength in the south is another essential element of friendly information. During the counterrecon phase, I want the southern task force to keep at least two companies in the reserve position so we portray weakness in the south. Also, S3, when you draw the southern EA, be sure it is echeloned to the east of the EA for the center task force. This will portray success in the south to the enemy commander during the early stages of the fight. Finally, the enemy commander's decision depends on what he truly knows of the battle at this point. This is an enemy force information requirement. I want to prevent him from knowing this, so S3, develop a jamming plan that will make it difficult for him to get a true picture of his combat forces during this part of the fight. Include it in paragraph 3.

"The final decision I see in this fight is to commit our reserve once the enemy's second echelon has been committed to the southern avenue of approach. Moving his second-echelon regiment south

at PL Dog is another priority intelligence requirement. Again, be sure we have redundant named areas of interest designated in the R&S plan to ensure I get this information as soon as it happens and it is reflected in the decision support template."

Although this example is relatively simplistic, it illustrates the process commanders can use to determine their CCIR. While by no means the only process available, CCIR provide a logical method for a commander's decision-making task, and it gives the

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staff sufficient planning guidance to identify and designate information collectors for critical material. It all begins when the commander visualizes the battle and analyzes the decisions he and the enemy commander will make. By isolating the decisions that must be made during the fight, the commander can ensure the information he designates as critical supports a useful function and that he has timely, accurate and helpful information throughout the fight.

Information dominance is not the ultimate objective; it is a means by which to achieve battlefield dominance. Although information dominance is becoming increasingly important on the battlefield and is being enabled by enormous progress in technology, we do not need revolutionary products or techniques to achieve it. We can achieve it by using current tools and including EFIR as a new element.

CCIR will enable commanders to determine the key information they need for the fight; ensure information is collected and reported; and deny the enemy information he needs to retain the initiative. If the commander achieves these three things, he is well on his way to achieving information dominance. Combine that with dominant maneuver and fires, and he can achieve battlefield dominance. 🐕

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