Most people outside of military intelligence (MI) refer to MI Soldiers as intelligence analysts, but many MI Soldiers consider themselves collectors not analysts. There is an element of truth to both ways of thinking; however, in reality, MI Soldiers are indeed intelligence analysts. Basic analysis is the responsibility of every intelligence professional. It is also accurate to recognize that all-source intelligence analysts (military occupational specialty [MOS] 35F), signals intelligence analysts (MOS 35N), and geospatial intelligence imagery analysts (MOS 35G) have unique skills to analyze collected information. When you look at it, to be a good collector you have to have some level of analytical skills. The need for MI professionals to hone their analysis skills will be far more important in order to maintain a relevant pace as our Army transitions to performing multi-domain intelligence in support of large-scale ground combat operations and joint all-domain operations against a peer or near-peer threat.

We have a battle-hardened force that has been at war for many years conducting counterinsurgency and stability operations. Now we must look at how we will fight in large-scale ground combat operations against a threat with many of the same capabilities as our military. This requires us to grapple with the implications of operating in an environment with degraded, intermittent, and limited (DIL) communications. We must update our doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures to account for these challenges. This dynamic is not completely new, as our oldest generation of Soldiers remembers preparing for large-scale combat against the Soviet Union. The primary differences are the new capabilities available on the battlefield and the likelihood a peer or near-peer threat will employ hybrid capabilities. The information environment, electromagnetic spectrum, and robotics, to name a few, have significantly affected how we must train intelligence Soldiers across the myriad aspects of all of the domains. Fighting in ground combat operations no longer means an analyst can only consider ground capabilities.

Since there may be periods of time when we will not have ready access to some communications or information collection capabilities, we need to plan how we as intelligence professionals will continue to provide relevant information to commanders, no matter what the circumstances. Most understand that establishing a primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency or PACE plan is key to ensuring redundant methods of communication are in place. What if we apply a similar construct for intelligence? Understanding the enemy and conducting analysis with last known intelligence are a big part of the answer.

Fundamental to intelligence is the requirement to provide the commander with the most accurate, relevant, and predictive intelligence on the threat’s course of action. When there are gaps in our data due to the uncertain nature of the operational environment, we must accept and embrace ambiguity, utilize critical thinking, and apply our analytic techniques to the information we have. Through these actions, we can provide the commander with the best analytical determination of what is relatively certain and what is unknown.

It almost seems unreal, but there was a time when intelligence was produced without the sophisticated capabilities we have today. And we did it well. It may be helpful to dust off some of those manuals and relook at the tactics, techniques, and procedures from the past to plan for some of our future contingencies. In this issue, the article by 1LT Christopher Counihan presents an analog methodology for comprehensive analysis with similarities to these “old school” procedures. Regardless of what capabilities are available, every intelligence discipline has something to bring to the fight based on its collection and analytical capabilities.

Finally, my thoughts turn back to training. Training is everything and everything is training. It is up to commanders to provide the resources and schedule the time to train Soldiers to standard. Officers, warrant officers, and noncommissioned officers must carefully plan training. Noncommissioned officers conduct training that will allow our Soldiers the “sets and reps” necessary to analyze data in both old and new ways. We cannot afford to get too comfortable; we must get this right! 🌟