

# Cultures At and In War: 172<sup>nd</sup> SBCT TF COIN Operations in Mosul, 2005-2006

Presentation to

**Culture and Conflict Studies Conference on Culture, Cultural Modeling,  
Counterinsurgency and Conflict Behavior**

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# Research Focus

- Book on military innovation in war.
  - Innovation: development of capacities not initially present when organization arrives on battlefield.
- What happens to US ground force in Iraq COIN without joint doctrine to guide operations; no initial plan for post-conflict; confused national level leadership; broken interagency process; lousy civil-military relations?
- In Iraq, organically generated innovation produced tactical and operational success in spite of, not because senior leadership; Process not top-down.
- Series of battalion/brigade studies of tactical operations starting in the Fall of 2005-Spring 2007.
- Inductive analysis – inferences from cases.
- Primary source data -- commander interviews, unit products, plus secondary source reporting.

# Units Covered in Study

## Unit Locations

172<sup>nd</sup> SBCT,  
Ninewa  
Province  
/Mosul, 2005-  
2006

3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 6<sup>th</sup>  
Marine  
Regiment; 1<sup>st</sup>  
Marine  
Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup>  
Marine  
Regiment, Al  
Qaim, 2005-  
2006

4-14 Cavalry  
Group, Rawah,  
Western Anbar,  
2005-2006

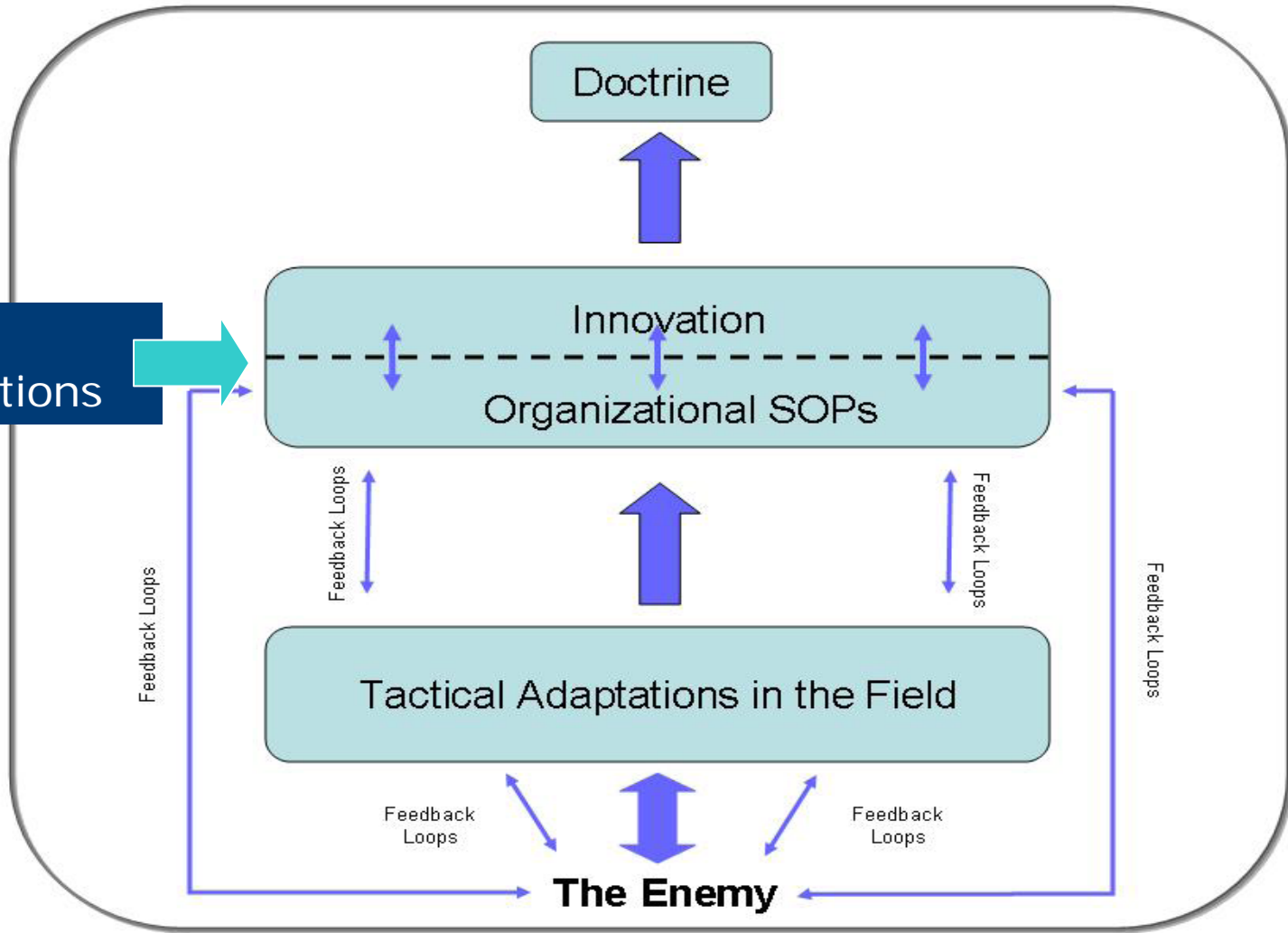


2/28 Brigade  
Combat Team;  
1/1 Brigade  
Combat Team,  
Ramadi,  
Anbar, 2005-  
2007; 1<sup>st</sup>  
Battalion, 37<sup>th</sup>  
Armored  
Regiment; 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup>  
Marine  
Regiment  
(both attached  
to 1/1 in  
Ramadi, 2006-  
2007)

# A Process?

*Model of Bottom-Up Military Innovation in Iraq*

Learning Organizations



# Framing Thoughts

- Process of strategic interaction in war is operationalized through organizations -- ours and theirs.
- We have our cultures; they have theirs. Theirs aren't unified; neither are ours.
- Military operations consist of a diverse array of organizational competencies – an array that seems to keep growing.
- In Iraq COIN, units designed to kill bad guys also had to master CMO, fuse intell-ops cycles; master THT skills, build tailored host nation military capacities; craft IO; develop governance capacities.
- One size doesn't fit all; organizational competencies will differ due to ToE; Org structure; personality, leadership styles, service predispositions, service competencies – Marines vs. Army, SBCT vs. Army legacy, for example.
- Also true in AOR – Iraq. What worked in Mosul might not in Tal Afar or in Christian villages east of the Tigris.
- Organizational cultures exhibit themselves in dissimilar learning styles that in turn produce different innovation processes that manifest themselves in combat over time.
- Organizations can only process so much information, i.e., you can't make everyone a cultural or linguistic expert.

# Relevance to Conference

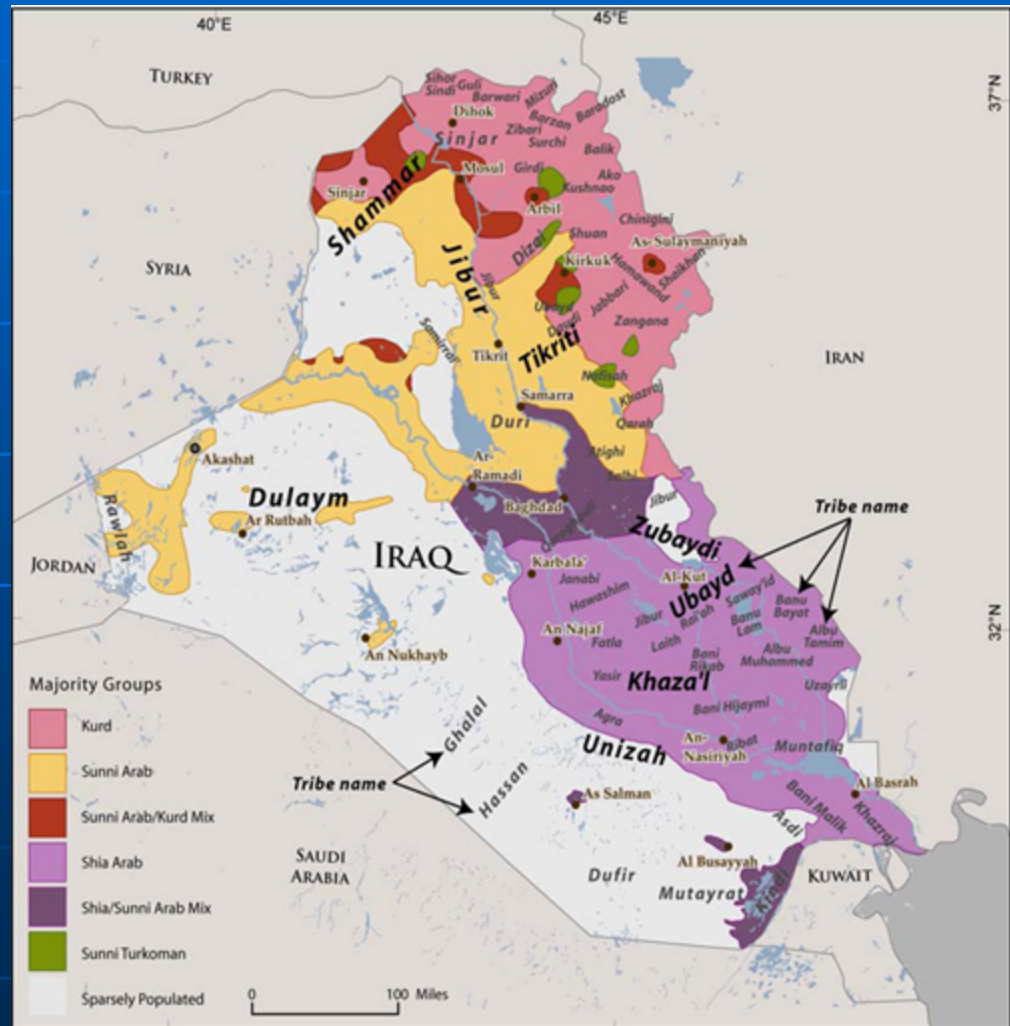
- Is culture a significant independent variable in the innovation process?
  - Foreign national
  - Organizational
- Role played by accumulated knowledge of operational environment
- Ability of organizations to process knowledge and operationalize to leverage capacity
- Where and how does it fit?

# Why Is this An Interesting Case?

- US organizational background – legacy Army units vs. new brigade structure.
- Strykers built for NCO; enabled by new wheeled vehicle and complex digital/satcom systems.
- 172<sup>nd</sup> one of first units in army to move to new manning system to keep leaders in units for 36 months.
- SBCT doctrine and training in its infancy; clearly a force designed for conventionally-oriented operations.

# All Iraq Is Complex, But Mosul Particularly So

- Mosul sits astride one of many ethnic, tribal, and religious fault lines in Iraq
- Kurds to the north and east; Sunni Arabs to the west; mixed Christian communities to east.
- City is divided; many mixed neighborhoods, although Sunni Arabs and Kurds live on different sides of Tigris river.
- Kurd-Sunni Arab tensions immediately after invasion.
- Tal Afar w/70 sub tribes alone.
- Insurgency divides along similar fault lines in north with regional twists.



# 172<sup>nd</sup> Mission in Mosul

172<sup>ND</sup> SBCT BUILDS CAPABLE ISF  
AND CONDUCTS COUNTER-  
INSURGENCY OPERATIONS TO  
NEUTRALIZE AIF IN ORDER TO  
TRANSITION THE SECURITY LEAD  
FOR DEFEATING THE  
INSURGENCY TO ISF AND THE  
NINEVEH GOVERNMENT



172<sup>nd</sup> SBCT on  
patrol in Mosul,  
2005-2006. Not  
many roads,  
dense urban  
terrain.



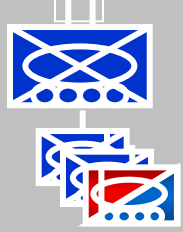
# AO WOLF

TAL 'AFAR

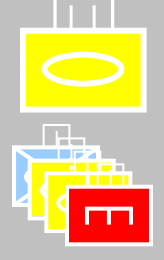


SYRIA

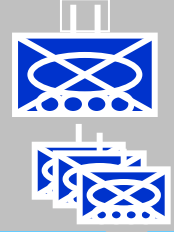
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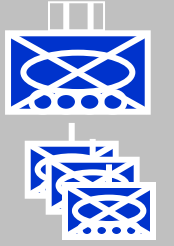
2-37AR



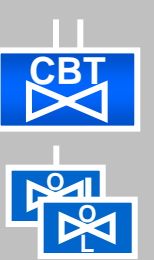
1-17 IN



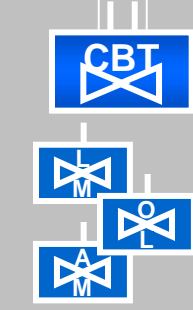
2-1 IN



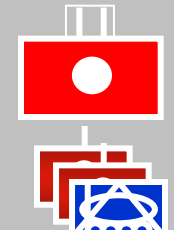
1-10 AV



1-101 AV



4-11 FA



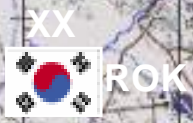
DAHOUK

TURKEY

403 CA

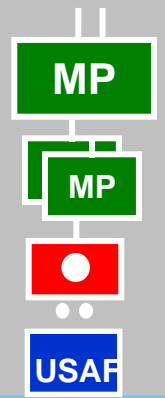


IRAN



IRBIL

709 MP



MOSUL

FOB COURAGE

FOB FORTITUDE

LSA DIAMONDBACK

AS OF 19 MAY 06  
POPULATION: 3.85 MILLION  
18,954 SQ MILES  
MASSACHUSETTS  
AND CONNECTICUT  
TOGETHER

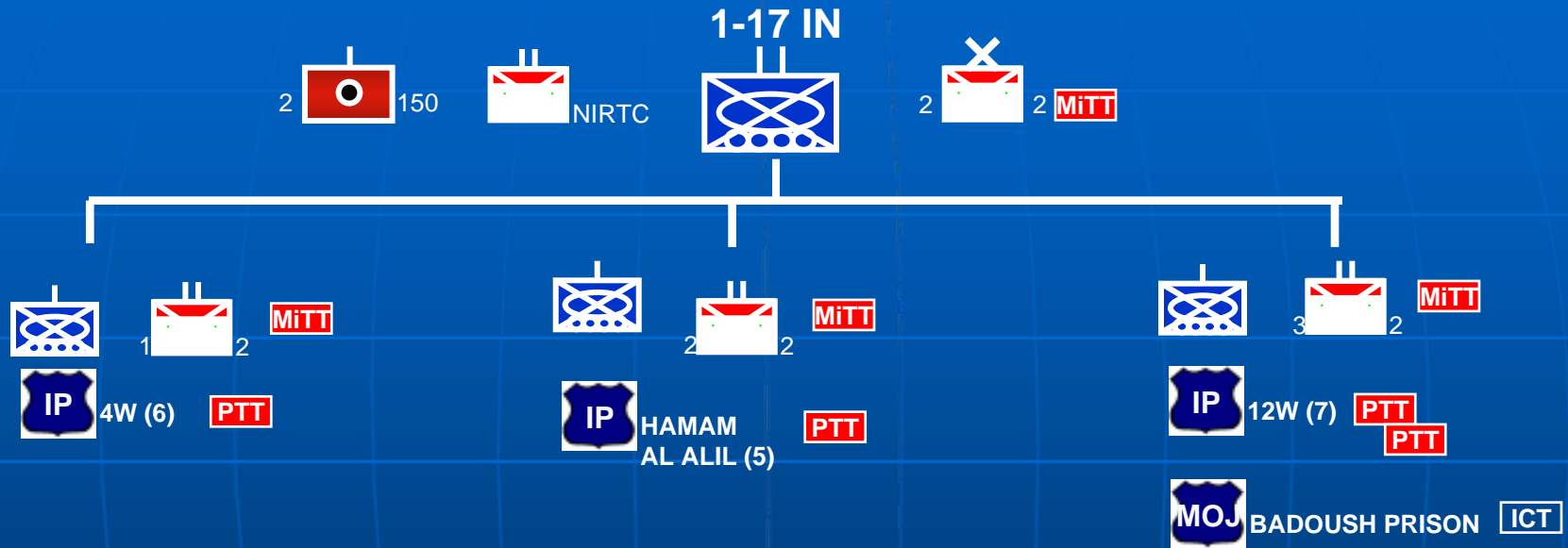
# Story Has Many Threads

- Unit realized it was deploying into COIN environment; replacing 1/25 SBCT; started virtual collaboration a year in advance; built TTPs based on 1/25 LL.
- Created junior leader program to promote learning, COIN theory and history; reached out to experts to create awareness of Iraqi history, culture, basic language skills.
- Company commanders spent month in Jordan in immersion program.
- Balanced need to build CMO, IO, fire and maneuver capacities, intell collection and targeting in the midst of fielding new equipment.
- Organization built w/understanding that junior leaders make tactical decisions with strategic consequences – don't run from that responsibility – embrace it!
- War flattens the organizational structure.

# 172<sup>nd</sup> Partnering Program

- Brigade found itself trying to build host nation capacities, two Iraqi divisions; seven brigades, 22 battalions and three emergency response battalions.
- The police force in the province totaled approximately 18,000, with 8,000 in Mosul and 2,000 in Tal Afar. The police force was divided between 17 different districts and 114 different police stations.
- 172<sup>nd</sup> faced shortfall – lacked local capacities to build readiness demand.

# Integrated ISF/IA/IP Partnership



The basis of 172<sup>nd</sup> partnership was the “Coalition Company,” partnered with an Iraqi Army Battalion, a Police district and their corresponding Transition Teams.

# IA/IP TRAINING

TAL 'AFAR

SYRIA

TURKEY

IRAN

KISIK:  
COUNTER  
INSURGENCY  
CLASS, DRVS TNG,  
LEADERS RECON  
CLASS, IA NCOA

AL KINDI: HSC TNG  
CRS, IA PLT/2-1 IN  
Partnership TNG

TAL 'AFAR: IA  
PLT/2-37 AR  
Partnership  
TNG

MAREZ: LOW  
VIS RECEE,  
IBAMC,  
IA PLT/1-17  
IN Partnership  
TNG

SYKES:  
CRIME  
INVESTIGATION  
PROCEDURES, IA  
INTERNAL AFFAIRS  
INVESTIGATION

NIRTC:  
SLC, PSC,  
JODC, CBT  
MEDIC,  
IPBSC

Q-WEST:  
IA NCOA,  
IPBSC

MOSUL

FOB FORTITUDE  
FOB MAREZ  
FOB SPEAR

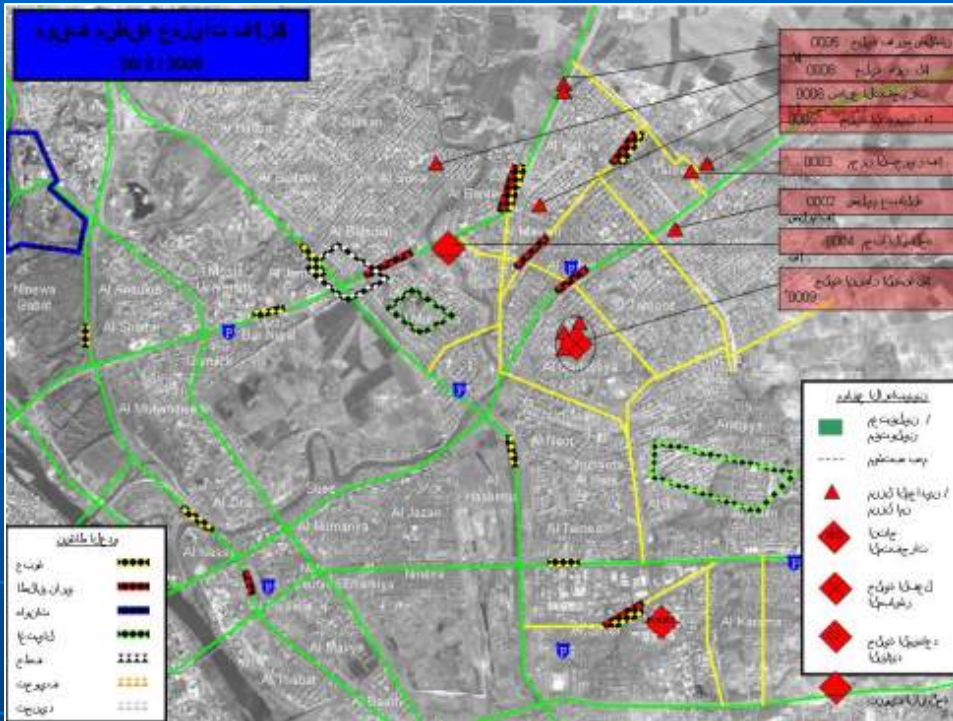
# 172<sup>nd</sup> Partnering Issues

- Helped stand up NIRTC in southern Mosul for IA/IP; Training for IPs/IA/civil authorities throughout northern Iraq:
  - Junior officer training; NCO academy; marksmanship course; trained small unit tactics; logistics, CSS; medics ;crime scene exploitation; mayor and town council basics; built MOUT facility.
- Org culture clash – US push to decentralize vs. IA centralize tendency.
  - National culture issues – US military organizational task oriented outlook.
- Train the trainer – both IP/IA training facilities at NIRTC turned over to Iraqis.

# Story Line 2 -- Operations

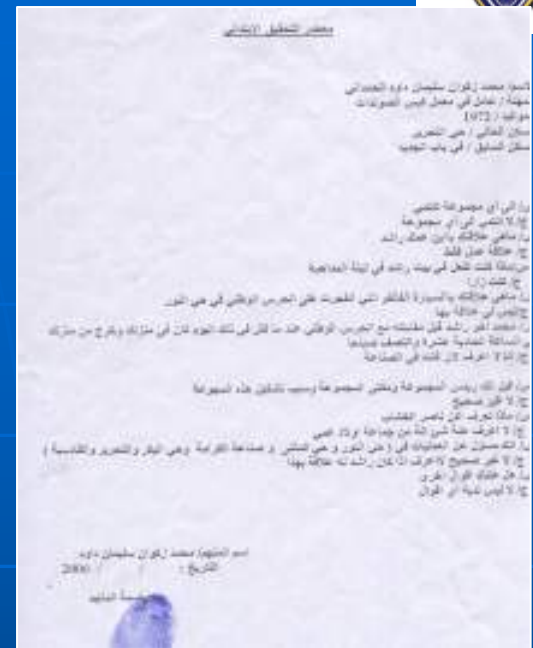
- Shortfall in THT capacities due to lack of cultural experience; brigade-wide problem – THT teams increased early out of hide; SBCT formed cell to coordinate interrogation strategies.
- Case of 2-1: Limited useful intell in first three months of deployment through October.
- Changed THT management; new detainee questioning methodology; new interrogators.
- Involvement of IA/IP in questioning.
- Building an integrated intell/targeting cycle.
- Flattened USG org. structure; integrating strategic/national/local intelligence fusion to drive operations.
- Progressive constitution of Humint networks increasingly drove operations.





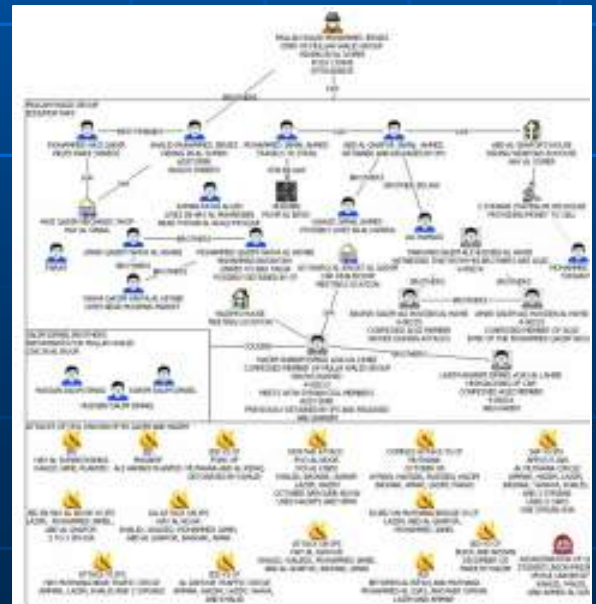
## COMBINED INTELLIGENCE

- **COMBINED WORKING GROUPS WITH IA, IP, SWAT, COMMANDOS, & ERB**
- **CREATES AN “ALL EARS” ENVIRONMENT**
- **EVERYONE BRINGS SOMETHING DIFFERENT TO THE TABLE**

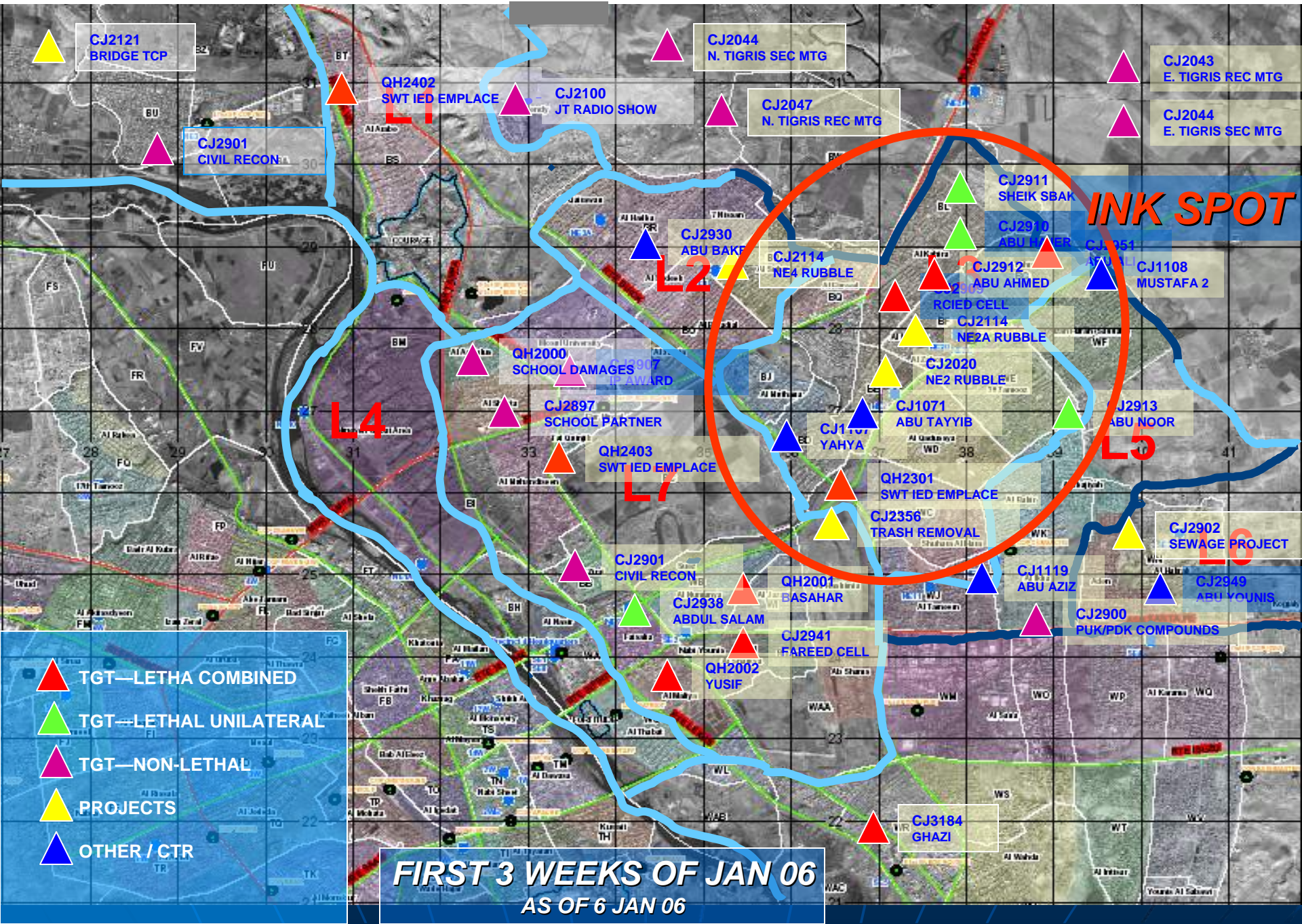


## COMBINED INTELLIGENCE EXPLOITATION

- ISF leveraged HUMINT networks.
- ISF had experienced interrogators.
- CF brought capability to exploit evidence
- Exploited information is made to be releasable to Iraq
- SOF/OGA involvement



# Integrated TARGETING FOCUS: 2-1 in Mosul Jan06



CJ2121  
BRIDGE TCP

CJ2044  
N. TIGRIS SEC MTG

CJ2043  
E. TIGRIS REC MTG

QH2402  
SWT IED EMLACE

CJ2100  
JT RADIO SHOW

CJ2047  
N. TIGRIS REC MTG

CJ2044  
E. TIGRIS SEC MTG

CJ2901  
CIVIL RECON

CJ2911  
SHEIK SBAK

**INK SPOT**

CJ2930  
ABU BAKR

CJ2114  
NE4 RUBBLE

CJ2910  
ABU HAFER

CJ1108  
MUSTAFA 2

CJ2912  
ABU AHMED

CJ2114  
NE2A RUBBLE

CJ2020  
NE2 RUBBLE E

QH2000  
SCHOOL DAMAGES

CJ2897  
SCHOOL PARTNER

CJ1071  
ABU TAYYIB

CJ2913  
ABU NOOR

QH2403  
SWT IED EMLACE

QH2301  
SWT IED EMLACE

CJ2356  
TRASH REMOVAL

CJ2902  
SEWAGE PROJECT

CJ2901  
CIVIL RECON

QH2001  
BASAHR

CJ1119  
ABU AZIZ

CJ2949  
ABU YOUNIS

CJ2938  
ABDUL SALAM

CJ2941  
FARED CELL

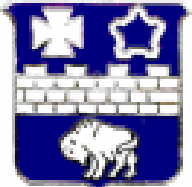
CJ2900  
PUK/PDK COMPOUNDS

QH2002  
YUSIF

CJ3184  
GHAZI

- ▲ TGT—LETHA COMBINED
- ▲ TGT—LETHAL UNILATERAL
- ▲ TGT—NON-LETHAL
- ▲ PROJECTS
- ▲ OTHER / CTR

**FIRST 3 WEEKS OF JAN 06**  
AS OF 6 JAN 06



OPS-Intell Cycle Example:  
 C/1-17 IN (LOS DIABLOS) AND 2/2/2 IA  
 COMBINED AIR ASSAULT RAID IN  
 AL-MAWALI VILLAGE  
 TARGET: QH3076  
 170200JUN06 (H-HOUR)

38SLF058225  
 3 X TARGET HOUSES

LZ  
 EAGLE

OBJ BADGER 2 (3/C/1-17 IN)  
 IBRAHIM HAMISH RAMADAN  
 38SLF0559622290

OBJ BADGER 1 (1/C/1-17 IN)  
 HAMID "THE LION" OBEIDI  
 38SLF0606922534

PID'd HOMES  
 HAMID "THE LION" OBEIDI  
 38SLF0606922534

LZ  
 HAWK

OBJ BADGER 3 (2/C/1-17 IN)  
 MAHMOUD YUNIS KHALIF  
 38SLF0572422150



# Storyline 3: Non Kinetic Effects

- Integration of IO and CMO into campaign plan.
- Embedded Iraqi journalists.
- Controlling local media outlets.
- Working local leadership tirelessly at senior levels.

# Mosul Most Wanted

Feb 06 – Mosul Most Wanted



Mar 06 – Mosul Most Wanted



Apr 06 – Mosul Most Wanted



May 06 – Mosul Most Wanted



Jun 06 – Ninewah Most Wanted



# JUSTICE SERVED “RULE OF LAW”

IZXB08zaalHB3501

## JUSTICE SERVED!

<p><b>Salah Al-Shafie Saleh</b> Joining Armed Groups Sentenced to life in prison (Mosul)</p> 	<p><b>Adel Salam Mohammed</b> Joining Armed Groups Sentenced to life in prison (Mosul)</p> 
<p><b>Zaher Fayes Mohammed</b> Joining Armed Groups Sentenced to life in prison (Mosul)</p> 	<p><b>Majid Abdulla Su'od</b> Joining Terrorist Groups Sentenced to life in prison (Mosul)</p> 
<p><b>Amer Mohammed Jasim</b> Attacking the Population to Unsettle the Stability and Security of Iraq Sentenced to ten years in prison (Mosul)</p> 	<p><b>Ahmed Mohammed Sheet</b> Possession of illegal special weapons Sentenced to fifteen years in prison</p> 
<p><b>Aqheel Mohammed Rakan</b> Possession of illegal special weapons Sentenced to fifteen years in prison</p> 	

IZ06B08zaalHB-4131F

## JUSTICE SERVED!

<p><b>Ahmed Atiya Ahmed</b> Illegal Border Crossing Sentenced to life in prison</p> 	<p><b>Rawal Najim Abdullate</b> Possession of Illegal Weapons Sentenced to life in prison</p> 	<p><b>Saoud Nazari Kifah Ibrahim</b> Possession of Illegal Weapons Sentenced to ten years in prison</p> 
<p><b>Foad Sirhan Mureb Al-Murafai</b> Possession of Illegal Weapons Sentenced to ten years in prison</p> 	<p><b>Adil Abdallah Muhammad Mohamed</b> Illegal Border Crossing Sentenced to fifteen years in prison</p> 	<p><b>Hamza Ahmed Khatir</b> Illegal Border Crossing Sentenced to fifteen years in prison</p> 
<p><b>Drusaid Nizar Abid</b> Possession of Illegal Weapons Sentenced to life in prison</p> 	<p><b>Saidaddin Abulula Aziz Aqlash</b> Illegal Border Crossing Sentenced to life in prison</p> 	<p><b>Salih Massan Ashir</b> Possession of Explosives Sentenced to six years in prison</p> 
<p><b>Farhan Abid Najeif</b> Possession of Illegal Weapons Sentenced to life in prison</p> 		

The sequel to the Mosul Most Wanted was “Justice Served.” This product was well received by most local nationals who were not aware of any punishment being imposed by the Iraqi Court System. Most local national comments relayed their approval of seeing those being convicted for their crimes; however, some stated they preferred to see all the terrorist receive the death penalty.

# AO WOLF

TURKEY

DAHOUK

IRAN

## Rabiyah

- Agriculture, Ag Wall, \$69.8k
- Water
  - Water Office, \$32.8k
  - Well Repair, 3 Repairs, \$48.5k
- Civic
  - Trash Cleanup, \$28.9K
- Transportation
  - 2 Roads, \$34k

## Tal'Afar

- Education, 6 School Proj, \$165k
- Civic, Computer Center, \$300k
- Water, 4 Water System Repairs, \$245k
- Transportation, 2 Route Upgrade, \$126k
- Civic Facility, Youth Center, \$390k

## Mosul

- Trans, Mosul Air Tower, \$10.3M
- Electrical, Substation Rehabilitation, \$28M
- Education, 83 Public Schools, \$3.4M
- Healthcare, 8 Public Health projects, \$6M
- Water, Pipelines, pumping stations, and wells, \$2.8M

## TRV

- Water, 5 Water Pipeline Improve, \$94.3k
- Trans, 2 roads, 1 bridge, \$67k
- Schools, 6 Improvements, \$162.35

## Sinjar

- Water, 8 Wells, \$167k
- Healthcare, Maternity Clinic, \$92k
- Transportation, 2 Roads, \$200k
- Agriculture, Greenhouse, \$331k

## Ba'aj

- Trans, 11 Road Repair, \$834k
- Education, 4 Repairs, \$101.4k
- Water, 4 Wells, \$79k
- Civic, 3 Projects, \$157k
- Healthcare, 4 clinics \$25k

# COMBINED EFFECTS PARTNERSHIP

## WEEKLY COMBINED RADIO/TELEVISION PROGRAM “ THE COMMANDERS REPORT ”

### GOALS:

1. PROVIDE THE CITIZENS AN UPDATE TO THE CURRENT SECURITY SITUATION
2. INCREASE VISIBILITY AND ADD LEGITIMACY TO ISF
3. RELEASE COMMAND INFORMATION
4. OBTAIN FEEDBACK/TIPS FROM LOCAL CITIZENS

### ATTENDEES:

ALL ISF COMMANDERS ON A ROTATING BASIS EVERY TUESDAY AT 1300.

AN IMN REPORTER GOES OVER LAST MINUTE SHOW NOTES WITH BG MUTHAFER BEFORE AIR-TIME



CDRS PREPARE FOR THE NEXT SEGMENT DURING A STATION BREAK



COL KALIF AND BG MUTHAFER APPEAR REGULARLY ON THE SHOW

# Conclusions

- Iraqi culture powerful dependent variable in 172<sup>nd</sup> SBCT organically-generated innovation.
- Designed programs to make Iraqis own it.
  - Combined cultural sensitivity with pragmatism and common sense. Dignity and respect go a long way.
- Leveraging host nation knowledge critical component of building an integrated targeting cycle; integrating kinetic and non-kinetic targets.
- Intelligence collection/OGA-strategic-local fusion drove operations in compressed ops-intell cycle.
- US intra and inter-organizational barriers come tumbling down in war – at least in this case.
- Flexible organizational structure/leadership and command atmosphere pre-requisites.
- It doesn't mean you win the war...but...



# Questions?

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