

Role of the Chemical Officer in the BCT Targeting Cycle (MDMP for Full-Spectrum Operations)

By Major Donald R. Twiss

Full-spectrum operations require that brigade combat team (BCT) staffs continually execute the military decision-making process (MDMP). The important role of the BCT Chemical officer in this targeting cycle can be overlooked if it is not actively advocated by the chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) staff section. As an observer/controller at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, I witnessed several methods of integrating Chemical officers into each phase of the targeting cycle.

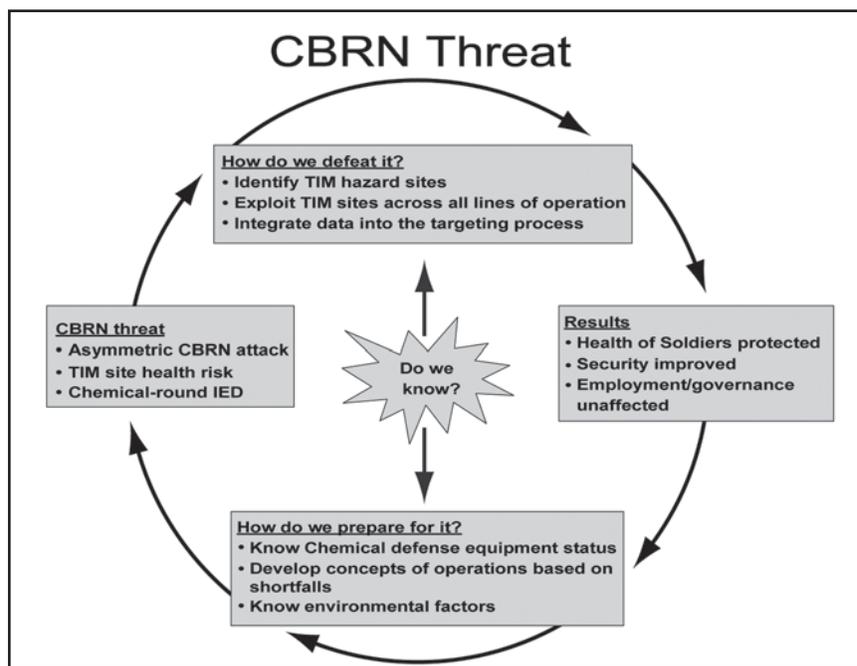
The targeting cycle is nothing more than an enduring MDMP. With an existing campaign plan, lines of operation, and the commander's guidance, it begins with a bottom-up assessment of the last targeting cycle—with each staff section or warfighting function developing a running staff estimate, which is a tool used to conduct initial mission analysis. For effective CBRN mission analysis, you—as the Chemical officer—must develop a solid running staff estimate for the BCT operating environment. Include current CBRN threats such as weaponized CBRN material, toxic industrial material (TIM), nonweaponized biological material, and estimated templated CBRN strikes (including improvised explosive devices and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices with chemical accelerants or conventional attacks against a TIM facility). As required, identify terrain and weather conditions in the operating environment. The completion of the running staff estimate leads to a mission analysis (MA) brief to the BCT commander.

After the running staff estimate has been consolidated, include one or two slides in the MA brief to the BCT commander. During the brief, the BCT commander's wishes should become apparent, and you can tailor the presentation accordingly. For example, if the BCT commander mentions a governance compound within the district capital, discuss and emphasize TIM locations with a sphere of influence encompassing that capital. TIM facilities affect employment, governance, and security. Discuss other key information, such as that obtained during recent discoveries of mustard gas rounds or chlorine caches. Remember—be precise, be brilliant, and be gone. Have your running

staff estimate ready, and be able to answer questions about it. Have systems in place to get answers that you do not have.

Following the MA brief, the BCT commander issues guidance to the staff. Develop a course of action (COA) to support the guidance. This requires refining the initial staff estimate to focus on supporting the commander's intent. For example, suppose that the BCT commander's guidance is to protect the provisional governor and improve local economic conditions. A state-operated fertilizer plant in the governor's hometown can directly affect the BCT commander's goals. Consolidate information about the fertilizer plant, develop the required additional information, and determine steps that can be taken to support the commander's intent.

After the running staff estimate has been refined and the COA has been developed, the working groups convene. Working-group sessions are conducted according to an established battle rhythm. The naming conventions and proponents of the working groups change based on a host of issues. As a Chemical officer, you should attend the working group(s) that allows the most efficient presentation of your COA. I generally recommend the counter-improvised explosive device working group, but this is a



Sample COA process

very unit-centered decision. During the working-group sessions, present data and make recommendations for further action. In our example, you might recommend that the reconnaissance platoon conduct a survey of the fertilizer plant. The platoon would ascertain the condition of the facility, collect site samples, and determine the type and nature of chemicals present at the site. In addition, it would note the political and social views of the plant manager.

Working groups should provide an environment for open discussions, where all subject matter experts are encouraged to provide input from their warfighting function perspectives. COAs should be brought to the table and discussed by relevant parties, and then recommendations should be made. So, be prepared to provide input to COAs developed by other staff sections. For all of this to work, you must have the moral courage to be a proponent for the CBRN warfighting function.

The number and type of working groups depend on the BCT mission and staff personalities; however, the goal should be a consolidated working group that synchronizes resources and combat multipliers, brings developed COAs together, and deconflicts the plan. Attend the consolidated working-group meeting, and be ready to discuss and defend your COA if required. This is sometimes difficult because you may be the lowest-ranking officer at the meeting, and the senior officers may or may not recognize or appreciate the importance of CBRN issues. But, if you are intelligent, articulate, and well-informed, you can successfully stand up for your branch.

Following the consolidated working-group meeting, a refined COA brief is presented to the BCT commander, who approves, disapproves, or modifies the COA. After the commander has approved the release of the COA, the BCT issues an order. Once the order is received and executed, data collection for the next cycle begins. In the fertilizer plant example, the information request should generate further action such as the submission of a business grant to improve production or an increase in the level of security. Carefully craft the information request to answer the critical information requirement; simply instructing the BCT to conduct sensitive-site exploitation will not necessarily yield the critical information that is needed. Add any additional information that you collect to the running staff estimate, which is a living tool that must be continually updated. The updated running staff estimate prepares you to start the next targeting cycle.

As a Chemical officer, you play an important role in the BCT targeting cycle. When the process is carried out correctly, you become an additional staff officer, rather than an officer who has additional duties.

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Situation	Weather effects: How the current/projected weather will affect chemical agents and assets						
	Terrain effects: How the current/projected terrain will affect chemical agents and assets						
	Enemy capabilities:		Chemical agents:		Delivery systems:		
	Templated strikes: (location, type, time)						
	Known strikes: (location, type, time)						
MOPP	TIC/TIM facilities	Industry	TIC/TIM	Location	Hazard		
	Brief updated information on security and site assessments						
	Map of AO with chemical-related graphics						
						Decon Task Purpose Commander's intent	
						Linkup points Vehicle decon Chemical casualty collection point	
Chemical assets	Recon Task Purpose Commander's intent		HRT Task Purpose Commander's intent		Smoke Task Purpose Commander's intent		
	Constraints/issues/RFIs Highlight areas that need command emphasis			Host nation CBRNE asset support			

Sample CBRN running staff estimate