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SGM Anthony D. Naste

United States Sergeant Major Academy

Class # 35

SGM Gary L. Ortega

31 July 2009

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Abstract

Military leaders at all levels need to obtain actionable intelligence. Throughout history we see how obtaining actionable intelligence has changed the courses of many conflicts. These days the United States is engaged in a war unlike any other in its history. This worldwide conflict directly challenges the United States homeland, requiring constant engagement throughout the world, and it threatens to last for generations. It is a war in which information is the critical enabler for decision makers, commanders and Soldiers, not just for information's sake, but timely actionable intelligence provided to the right person at the right time and place. Actionable intelligence provides commanders and Soldiers a higher level of shared situational understanding, delivered with the speed, accuracy and timeliness necessary to operate at their highest potential and conduct successful operations.

To defeat these more complex threats, the Army must transform its intelligence collection techniques of reporting, analyzing and dissemination capabilities in the production of improved actionable intelligence. Army intelligence must capitalize on HUMINT (human intelligence) techniques to achieve as accurate and true picture as possible. Some techniques that fall under HUMINT would be espionage, routine patrolling, refugees, interrogation and or any other form that is mainly derived from getting information through another human being. Throughout history HUMINT has been one of the leading techniques in gathering actionable intelligence.

During the Civil War, in 1863 "Lee's superb intelligence and reconnaissance, based largely on his expert Cavalry scouts, they provided him with accurate and timely intelligence so Hooker's every move was known to him while his own were hidden from Hooker."

(AMERICAN MILITARY HISTORY Vol. I, 248-252)

In this instance Gen Lee used HUMINT to keep a close eye on his adversary Gen Hooker. In doing so Gen Lee was able to make decisive decisions using actionable intelligence gathered by his Cavalry scouts to win the battle for Chancellorsville.

In early August of 1998, President Clinton was faced with terrorist attacks at two United States embassies, Kenya and Tanzania, with a collective total of wounded individuals topping more than 5, 000 and killing over 200. Faced with this tragedy President Clinton ordered a missile strike of a chemical weapons factory located inside the borders of Sudan on the 20th of August that same year.

The president's actions came from actionable intelligence gathered and analyzed through HUMINT sources. During the 9/11 hearings, William Cohen testified that the manager of the chemical plant went to Iraq to meet with one of Iraq's top Nerve gas experts. The funding was

found to have come from one of the United States top ten poster boys, Osama bin Laden who was to blame for the embassy bombings.

This was not the only link there was, reports of Emad al-Ani, Iraq's top leader of their chemical weapons program and known as the "father" of Iraq's VX program, and other Iraqi scientist attended the opening of this very same chemical plant located in Sudan some two years earlier. (CNN.com, 1)

In that instance HUMINT techniques helped intelligence analysts pieced together who had funded the chemical plant and who in turn was also behind the Embassy bombings in August of 1998.

In today's war "Iraqi Freedom" the HUMINT technique is widely used to gather actionable intelligence. In cities throughout Iraq there are thousands of "Sources" as they are called, feeding information on almost a daily bases. These individuals will pick up their cellular phones and let you know, who, when and where the "individuals of interest" are at any moment. This is an invaluable asset in the cat and mouse game being played day in and day out. It is just one more affirmation example of why I believe HUMINT techniques to be so significantly vital in today's Army and indeed actionable.

Now on the down side there are legal aspects and obstacles in gathering actionable intelligence using HUMINT techniques. The rule of evidence, strictly limits the admissibility of information. Photographs as well all documents have got to be authenticated. Hearsay is not allowed and stolen document (or one intercepted by electronic means) often cannot be verified. Often the principal, most actionable intelligence information gathered cannot meet these legal requirements. Confronting prisoners using interrogation methods has become a touchy subject.

Practically every practitioner of interrogation maintains that one of the most successful means of productive interrogation is isolation.

In today's news the controversy over water boarding lingers in the public's eye as inhuman and over the top. There is a general argument that interruption of the interrogation process could have devastating effects on the ability to gather actionable Intelligence information from those who have been captured. However, isolation of a terrorist suspect is inconsistent with existing practices. The inability to gather information of this sort could well result in future attacks. These are but a few examples of the ways in which the actionable intelligence-gathering function does not mesh with our conception of law enforcement and the legal system. (Legal Memorandum , 1)

Even though these legal issues will arise, there just isn't a substitute for the HUMINT technique. Other techniques will work, but only to a certain extent. SIGINT (Signal Intelligence) technology changes so much so fast, what you download today you might not be able to read tomorrow. IMINT (Imagery Intelligence) is another technique utilized in today's fight, but there again, it is just not always as feasible to use as HUMINT.

Time and time again throughout history HUMINT techniques have done much more for this country then not. In today's high pace world of intelligence gathering HUMINT is at the forefront. HUMINT capabilities are essential to success across the full spectrum of military operations, but are especially critical in irregular warfare and stability operations, where understanding the "human dimension" is essential to achieving operational success. As experiences in Iraq demonstrate, a robust HUMINT capability enables leaders and Soldiers to understand their operational environment, take advantage of tactical opportunities, and mitigate risks with actionable intelligence.

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