

ARGUMENTATIVE PAPER ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE

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Thesis

Using various examples of Military history, this paper will analyze the success and failure of various units and leaders and their use of actionable intelligence in combat. The research will show how both technical and nontechnical collection means have been important in military operations. The paper will highlight how leaders and commanders have used or failed to use intelligence have often suffered devastating defeats in history. The paper will then site some instances from the H100 series and other historical examples and address the use of actionable intelligence and the outcome of battles. The conclusion of this paper will identify how Actionable Intelligence helped frame past successes and will aid commanders in future battlefields.

Actionable Intelligence (AI) became an important buzzword in the modern military vernacular since 9/11 when the Global War on Terror (GWOT) began with Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). In the conduct of the war commanders used this the term Actionable Intelligence to clarify how and why actions had been conducted. In 2004 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJS) ordered a panel to study strengths and shortfalls in the acquisition of Actionable Intelligence. The panel came up with this definition of AI as , "Actionable Intelligence"--Product developed for commanders and Soldiers to provide shared situational understanding allowing commanders and Soldiers to operate with the speed, accuracy, and timeliness necessary to conduct successful operations".

The Panel came to a logical conclusion that timely and accurate asymmetric information is vital to mission success. The report further stated the CJS's intent to instill the mindset that "every Soldier is both a collector of information and a consumer of both information and intelligence. We must imbue the mindset that every Soldier is a Sensor within the entire Army. Our Soldiers on the battlefield, walking the ground and interacting with locals, have always been the best collectors of information; the challenge has been getting the information into the reporting system. We must ingrain within all Soldiers (drivers, Aviators, Infantry) that what they see, hear, or smell could be the critical piece of information required. With this crucial concept, we must develop a structure that eases the ability of each Soldier to receive and report information within the overall battle command framework".

The gaining of accurate intelligence is one area the military has at times fallen short. Too many missions go without a proper debriefing or AAR written. Reports

written by Military Intelligence (MI) and other collectors often go unread or buried in huge databases. Worse is the failure of leaders, commanders and staffs to properly evaluate intelligence which at times has been catastrophic in military history.

Richard K. Betts analyzes surprise attacks during the mid-twentieth century to illustrate his thesis: "surprise attacks occur, not because intelligence services fail to warn, but because of the disbelief of political leaders. An example of this failure is the denial of intelligence indicators which occurred pre and post World War II. Long before Germany's blitzkrieg swept the West, European leaders had received many signals of its imminence. Stalin, too, had abundant warning of German designs on Russia but believed that by avoiding "provocative" defensive measures he could avert the attack that finally came in June 1941. And the stories of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Korean War, and three Arab-Israeli conflicts are replete with missed opportunities to react to unmistakable warnings". The US did ignore aggressive indicators by communist North Koreans in the late 1940s. The Army had drawn down after World War II; its occupation forces in Japan were under equipped and not trained to standard. Commanders believed that the presence of Americans on the Korean peninsula would give the attacking North Koreans pause and the US forces would send them back to the 38th parallel. Task Force Smith's failure was due to the US failing to assess real intelligence in Korea, failing to prepare for the threat and not giving actionable intelligence to the units going into the peninsula. This failure resulted in an embarrassing defeat which took three years to return to lines along the 38th parallel and the DMZ.

An example of a leader gaining AI and acting accordingly is Admiral Nimitz prior to the Battle of Midway in World War II. Navy cryptanalysts had broken the

Japanese radio code. Analysts were able to confirm Midway as the target of an impending Japanese strike, determine the date of the attack as either 4 or 5 June, and to provide Nimitz with a complete order of battle of the Japanese Fleet. As a result, the Americans entered the battle with a very good picture of where, when, and in what strength the Japanese would appear. The Navy did not fall for the attack on the Aleutian Islands, the tactical diversion by the Japanese. The US carriers were able to interdict the enemy's carriers and inflict great losses on the Imperial fleet changing the tide of the Pacific War.

Conversely in the Battle of Dien Bien Phu the French Army failed to gather accurate intelligence about the Viet Minh's movements and firepower on the Laos border of northern Vietnam. Additionally the French also fell for the elaborate Viet Minh deception plan and failed to gather intelligence on the forces surrounding them. The Viet Minh controlled much of the high ground around the valley and their artillery far exceeded French expectations, they outnumbered the French by a ratio of four-to-one. Vietnamese General Giap would spend months stockpiling ammunition and emplacing heavy artillery and anti-aircraft guns before making his move. Teams of Viet Minh volunteers were sent into the French camp to note the disposition of the French artillery. Wooden artillery pieces were built as decoys and the real guns were rotated every few salvos to confuse French counter battery fire. As a result, when the battle began, the Viet Minh knew exactly where the French artillery was while the French were not even aware of how many guns Giap possessed. The Viet Minh commander showed his understanding of intelligence assets by utilizing HUMINT on the French along with a well thought out deception plan to confuse intel. His collection plan along with an understanding of his enemy's plan to resupply by air shaped his battle plan. Giap's use of actionable

intelligence suppressed the French air assets and his ability to move artillery without the French knowing negated any counter battery artillery fire. The outcome in the end was catastrophic for the French who never recovered from the defeat. In relation to the H100 series, Col. Hal Moore had studied General Giap's tactics and that along with some intelligence of the North Vietnamese Army in the Ia Drang Valley. His air assault while tactically was a stalemate could have been disastrous if he would have ignored the AI and did not plan for proper air and artillery support.

Another example of a missing piece of the intelligence picture, which prevented a mission's success, is Operation Eagle Claw (also known as Desert One), the mission to free the US hostages held in Iran in 1979. While the ground operation had surveillance on the US Embassy in Tehran, the planners did not take into account weather and equipment intangibles when presenting the plan to the JCS and President. The ground assets in place were a Tehran CIA team led by noted Special Forces legend Richard Meadows, which was in place for two purposes: to develop intel on the hostages and the embassy grounds (most important intel came from an embassy cook who was released by the Iranians and discovered on a flight from Tehran at the last minute by another CIA officer) and ground transportation to the objective; The mission fell apart due to unformatted sand storms which forced some USMC helicopters to abort. Planners did not have historical weather data or any indigenous assets who could inform them on the huge dust storms were prevalent at this time of year in Iran. The aircraft were not equipped with the proper dust filters or navigation aids. At the HLZ the mission was further compromised by unexpected civilians in the area and a two aircraft collision. This along with the lack of Joint training and intelligence fusion added to the catastrophe. Do to the failure of this

mission; the entire Special Operations community was born. Much of the success in the early OEF in Afghanistan resulted in Joint Operations. SOF today and JSOC specifically uses, and exchange all assets to include intelligence to ensure mission success.

After Vietnam laws and presidential executive ordered that Human Intelligence (HUMINT) to be delegated to the CIA for oversight. The US military leadership moved away from covert collection due to the amount of manpower, money and legal oversight it entailed. They focused on technology to gain intelligence. This was not identified as a weakness during the combat actions in the 1980s and 90s. Those conflicts were usually over quickly and so there was not a clamor from planners for actionable information from assets on the ground beyond what the CIA and satellites could produce. It was not until Operation Joint Guard during Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia that the military and primarily SOF became reengaged in serious HUMIT activities. In turn, these operations were highly successful. In OIF and OEF commanders and units had access to many technological systems. However in the asymmetric battlefield in the conduct of COIN operations, US forces needed more HUMIT. It really wasn't until 2002 that the Army as a whole identified the need for HUMIT this was identified. However this was not the first time this was addressed in a War College paper in 1984 COL H. Burke stated correctly that; "no matter how advanced US technology becomes, there will always be a need for men to report on items of intelligence interest that cannot be collected through the electromagnetic spectrum or photo-intelligence." The colonel was forward thinking which was evident to present commanders in OIF and OEF that the need for HUMIT is not exclusive to SOF. This was further elaborated by COL Booth CDR of the 2nd BCT in Iraq stating, "HUMINT-centric operations target the insurgent and the terrorist, but in

doing so they produce precise and timely information that allows our Soldiers to locate and attack insurgent forces with surgical precision, minimum violence, and minor collateral damage. A corollary benefit is that our actions result in minimal harm and inconvenience to the local population, helping us to convince them that we have the intent and capacity to improve their security and daily lives by eliminating the insurgent threat". Accurate HUMINT is a great asset and the fusion of it along with the new intelligence technologies such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and Signal intelligence (SIGINT), the commanders on the ground have a vastly enhanced AI ability.

As part of our Army's mission which changes from combat operations to support and stability operations in OIF and OEF. Actionable Intelligence is as important in targeting a MEDCAP as it is in targeting a raid. In the past we have failed at missions because we either failed to gather or ignored actionable intelligence. On the other hand many of our country's greatest victories have come from the proper use of actionable intelligence. From Paul Revere's ride to the Intel of Saddam Hussein hiding in a spider hole near Tikrit, early warning and proper intelligence give the US Warfighter an edge in battle.

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