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THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY'S CHALLENGE IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM

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"I certify that this is my original work, and it has not been previously been accepted for publication."

ABSTRACT

America's Intelligence Community faces continued criticism and increased challenges in the fight against terror. The 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon have forever altered the intelligence collection effort concerning the terrorist activities. These attacks have highlighted a continuing shortfall on the part of the United States (US) Intelligence Community to provide current, credible, and actionable intelligence to defeat terrorist attacks on US assets. This paper serves to examine some of the perceived shortfalls within the Intelligence Community. I will address the lack of covert Human Intelligence sources in penetrating terrorist organizations worldwide, the lack of experienced intelligence analysts focusing on terrorism, and finally, the lack of sharing of raw intelligence data within the US Intelligence Community. My solutions are simple. The recruiting of terrorist sources is paramount in order collect credible intelligence in the war on terrorism. The Intelligence Community must shift focus from the old Cold War threat to a forward looking organization capable of providing the necessary intelligence to defeat the asymmetric threat facing US interests worldwide. The Intelligence Community must make greater use of the electronic collaborative environment to ensure the sharing of critical intelligence. My purpose in writing this paper is to improve awareness of this issue among members of the Army's sustaining base and generate debate as a means to affect a positive change within the Intelligence Community.

THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY'S CHALLENGE IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM

The primary mission of the Intelligence Community in the current war on terrorism is providing actionable intelligence to prevent or neutralize future attacks. The Intelligence Community is our first line of defense in this war. Refocusing the intelligence collection effort toward the asymmetric threat enjoys growing consensus within the Defense and Intelligence Communities (Metz, 2001, p. 29). The National Security Strategy (NSS) cites the importance of intelligence in its efforts to defeat terrorism directed against United States (US) interests worldwide (NSS, 2000, p.22). Further, the NSS addresses the need for enhanced intelligence collection efforts as part of that strategy. Since the Intelligence Community's mission in the war on terrorism centers on providing current, credible and actionable intelligence to defeat the threat, it must reorganize from its current Cold War focus to a forward looking organization focused on defeating the asymmetric threat facing US interests worldwide. In preparing this paper, I collected previous reports, documents, and open source reporting relevant to intelligence shortfalls in the war on terrorism. I then analyzed and synthesized the information to formulate my conclusions outlined in this paper.

Intelligence Shortfalls in the War on Terrorism

Based on analysis of the information collected, the most significant shortfall in the war on

terrorism is the lack of Human Intelligence sources collecting and reporting information on terrorist groups. There can be no intelligence analysis without collecting information. Without analysis, there is no sharing of intelligence information.

Decision makers and the public view the attack on Khobar Towers, the first World Trade Center attack, the bombing of the USS Cole, the simultaneous attacks on the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; and the 11 September attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon as intelligence failures. The perception is that the Intelligence Community failed to provide sufficient warning to detect, prevent, and neutralize these attacks on US interests.

The Lack of Human Intelligence Information

" … what enables the wise commander to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond the reach of ordinary men, is foreknowledge. Now this foreknowledge cannot be elicited from spirits; it cannot be obtained inductively from experience, nor by any deductive calculation. Knowledge of the enemy's dispositions can only be obtained from other men. The end and aim of spying…. is knowledge of the enemy; and this knowledge can only be derived, in the first instance, from the double agent. …Spies are the most important asset, because on them depends an army's ability to march." - **Sun Tzu, The Art of War**

Human Intelligence (HUMINT) uses overt or covert human sources to obtain information. The first line of defense in the war against terrorism is current, credible intelligence reporting derived from covert sources who have successfully penetrated terrorist organizations. Terrorist groups are aware of the full spectrum of the Intelligence Community's collection capabilities (Signals Intelligence, Imagery Intelligence, and other intelligence disciplines). These groups have adapted their security practices to reduce the effectiveness of US collection efforts against them. HUMINT operations are key to penetrating terrorist groups. HUMINT reporting is key to winning the fight against terrorism. Without such sources, the Intelligence Community lacks the ability to obtain specific, credible information concerning terrorist operational planning. Without this reporting, the Intelligence Community cannot provide the necessary predictive analysis to prevent the next terrorist strike.

Responsibility for carrying out covert actions rest with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Covert sources infiltrate a terrorist organization in order to obtain information on that group's activities and plans. In 1995, the CIA came under public scrutiny when evidence emerged that it employed a Guatemalan informant who was allegedly involved in the murders of an American innkeeper and the Guatemalan husband of an American lawyer. In response, then Director John Deutch issued a directive requiring central approval before recruiting any person accused of criminal or human rights abuses. A simple balancing test determined approval: "Is the potential gain in intelligence worth the cost that might be associated with doing business

with a person who may be a murderer?" (Hersh, 2001). This directive set up complex procedures for obtaining approval to recruit informants involved in human rights violations. Review boards led to the termination of hundreds of HUMINT sources from the CIA payroll. These actions devastated Middle Eastern anti-terrorist operations, and led to the closing of the CIA's agent network with links to the Taliban and Osama bin Laden. The lack of US controlled covert HUMINT assets targeting terrorist organizations cripple the Intelligence Community's information collection efforts and consequently minimize its ability to counter the threat.

Because of the review process, the US depends on reporting from Foreign Intelligence Services terrorism reporting (National Commission on Terrorism, 2000). Without having control of the asset, the Intelligence Community cannot assess reliability of the source and the accuracy of the information provided. Dependence on Foreign Intelligence Services prevents US vetting of the source. We cannot directly task the source or redirect the collection effort of that source in a timely manner to meet our needs.

To facilitate collection of valuable anti-terrorist information, The Director, Central Intelligence (DCI) must remove all perceived restrictions that impede the HUMINT source recruitment effort. The DCI must emphasize recruitment as one of the Community's highest priorities. The Intelligence Community cannot learn of terrorist plans and operations without sources inside the network. The sources must be terrorists. Successful penetration of a terrorist organization's inner circles demands that a potential HUMINT source be of the same ethnic or religious group as the target terrorist organization. The cellular nature of terrorist groups promotes tight operational security. A covert HUMINT source faces death if discovered. Recruiting informants is not condoning past behavior. The vetting process, by which a case officer determines the reliability of a source, in place before 1995 provided case officers with the appropriate guidance to judge the risks of going forward with a particular recruitment. Classification constraints on the vetting process prohibit discussion in this document.

Recruiting a terrorist to spy on terrorists will lead to victory in the war on terrorism. Reporting provided from such covert operations will give the Intelligence Community insight into the inner operations and planning of the target group. Intelligence analysis based on this type of reporting will provide decision-makers the predictive intelligence necessary to defeat the terrorist threat.

The Lack of Experienced Intelligence Analyst

On 25 June 1996, a vehicle borne improvised explosive device detonated at Khobar Towers, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, a facility housing US forces supporting Operation Southern Watch. The blast killed nineteen airmen and injured over 500 personnel. On 28 June 1996, the

Secretary of Defense appointed retired General Wayne Downing to investigate the Khobar Tower bombing. The Downing Commission assessed the extent that inadequate security policies, infrastructure, or systems contributed to casualties and damage sustained at Khobar Towers. One of the areas under investigation concerned the "… sufficiency and effectiveness of intelligence about terrorism in the Area of Responsibility." (Downing, Sep 96). Finding 9 of the Downing Report states the "… ability of the theater and national intelligence community to conduct in-depth, long-term analysis of trends, intentions, and capabilities of terrorists is deficient." The Downing Report also cites the lack of assigned terrorist analysts at the national and service component level and recommends allocating "sufficient analytic resources to conduct in-depth, detailed analysis of trends, intentions, and capabilities of terrorist." It further states that such analysis is essential to providing predictive intelligence to defeat the terrorist threat.

On 12 October 2000, terrorists attacked the USS Cole in the Port of Aden, Yemen. The USS Cole Commission report states the "Department of Defense (DoD) does not allocate sufficient resources or all-source intelligence analysis and collection in support of combating terrorism (Cole Commission, 2001, p. 1)." The report recommends reprioritization of "all-source intelligence collection and analysis personnel and resources so that sufficient emphasis is applied to combating terrorism."

The intelligence architecture created more than fifty years ago in response to the Soviet threat remains in place, focusing on the gathering and processing of intelligence information on the standing armies of our adversaries. The Community faces increasing challenges in collecting intelligence information in the war on terrorism. The demand for accurate, relevant, and timely intelligence strains Community resources available to monitor, process, and report on the terrorist threat. The lack of experienced intelligence analysts focusing on terrorism is hampering the ability of the Community to provide the necessary predictive analysis its customers demand.

The Downing Commission and the Cole Commission reports address the lack of intelligence analysts dedicated to monitoring and reporting on the terrorist threat. The shortage of skilled intelligence analysts will continue to hinder US anti-terrorist operations. The job of the counter-terrorism analyst is to protect US interests by providing timely, accurate, high-quality analysis to decision-makers to neutralize the terrorist threat.

The Intelligence Community must rectify these personnel shortfalls. Within the US Army, the Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) must revisit mission priorities and shift analytical assets from those of the old Cold War targets to the counter-terrorist arena. INSCOM must ensure sufficient manpower exists to cover the global terrorist threat; identify existing gaps in expertise; and revamp its recruitment, resource allocation, and professional development programs to ensure that they address priority needs. This process will ensure that sufficient counter-terrorist analysts are on hand to accomplish the mission.

Sharing of Intelligence Information

Although analysts share the same clearance levels and the same special accesses, agencies within the Intelligence Community resist sharing intelligence information across the board. Analysts hide behind code words and special intelligence caveats and seem to enjoy a perverse pleasure in not sharing intelligence information with other analysts. Since the terrorist threat targets US interests worldwide, inter-agency sharing of pertinent information is key to achieving a common operational picture of the terrorist threat. Increased information sharing is essential for the Community to capitalize on its aggregate strengths and effectively tackle the challenges in intelligence collection, analysis, and reporting. Intelligence information sharing will provide intelligence analysts a better understanding of the terrorist threat. The Intelligence Community is working at sharing intelligence through the use of Communities of Interest (COI). This is a restricted access program containing relevant reporting on terrorism. This collaborative initiative will lead to more thorough, comprehensive analysis that can provide long-term predictive analysis of the terrorist threat and reporting to neutralize the threat.

CONCLUSIONS

Refocusing the intelligence effort on terrorism to prevent future attacks will lead to victory in the war on terrorism. The challenge for the Intelligence Community is to adapt to the new threat facing America. As the first line of defense against terrorism, the Intelligence Community must provide the critical intelligence necessary to deter and defeat threats to our country and our interests.

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