Human Intelligence can Prevent Future Terrorist Attacks

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Abstract

Human Intelligence (HUMINT), provides the most reliable and actionable form of Operational Intelligence on today’s battlefield. Over the past couple of decades, the United States lack of military intelligence has enabled terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and al-Qaeda to attack us abroad and on American soil. One reason for this was a lack of human intelligence. The use of human intelligence, will enhance the United States intelligence capability to identify terrorist organizations, figure out what they are planning, and prevent there next act of terror. The use of human intelligence will also have the ability to attack the terrorist wherever they are hiding.
Outline

Thesis: Human Intelligence provides the most reliable and actionable form of Operational Intelligence on today’s battlefield.

IV. Examples of Human Intelligence and Technological Intelligence failures

A. Why the United States stopped using human intelligence
   1. End of the Cold War and perceived global threat
   2. The result of not using human intelligence

B. Terrorist attacks on the United States
   1. World trade center
   2. Khobar towers military complex
   3. USS Cole
   4. 9/11/2001

C. Types of military intelligence
   1. Technological intelligence
   2. Human intelligence

D. Invasion of Iraq
   1. Technological intelligence used
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E. Future trends of Terrorism
   1. Attempts to acquire WMD
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Human Intelligence can Prevent Future Terrorist Attacks

Over the past couple of decades, the United States lack of military intelligence has enabled terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and al-Qaeda to attack us abroad and on American soil. One reason for this was a lack of human intelligence. At the end of the Cold War, American leaders did not believe there was a global threat anymore. They did away with all of our clandestine organizations, operatives, informants, and spies. American leaders believed technology was the way military intelligence would operate in the future. They argued that if you have to rely on information from terrorist and informants who are associated with the very people we are trying to spy on, how can you trust the information they are giving us. American leaders believed there money would be better spent on technology, which we could use to spy on our enemies instead of paying money to the very people who are attacking us. We will review some examples of terrorist attacks, our lack of human intelligence, and our over reliance on conventional intelligence collection systems.

A bomb explodes in the basement garage of the World Trade Center on February 26, 1993. Six people are killed and over a thousand injured. Military intelligence believes Al-Qaeda terrorist committed the attack. Two years later, 1995, Islamic Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman and nine other Islamist Jihadists are convicted for conspiring to blow up the World Trade Center. In 1998, Ramzi Yousef, who is thought to be the architect behind the bombing, was charged with and convicted for the bombing. The United States military intelligence believe the terrorist group Al-Qaeda was involved. (Berry, Jones, Powers, Savada, and Library of Congress, 1999)

On the morning of June 25, 1996 in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, a fuel truck loaded with three to five thousand pounds of explosives pulled up to the entrance control point at Khobar Towers military housing complex and was denied access by the guard on duty. The truck then turned
around and drove to a parking lot adjacent to the complex. The terrorist abandoned the truck and left in another vehicle. The guard on duty witnessed this, recognized it as a threat, and alerted security. Three to four minutes later the truck exploded, killing nineteen American service members and injuring over four hundred others. Thirteen Saudis and a Lebanese national all suspected members of the terrorist Hezbollah were convicted on charges linking them to the attack in June 21, 2001. (Library of Congress, 2002)

The USS Cole pulled into the Aden harbor in Yemen on October 12, 2000. While waiting to finish a scheduled fueling stop a small boat approached. The crew that was on watch at the time thought the captain of the small boat was confused and was bringing them a mooring line which they had already gotten when they first pulled into the harbor. They attempted to wave the small boat off, but their efforts failed. When the small boat pulled up alongside the USS Cole, it blew up killing seventeen sailors and wounding thirty-nine other sailors. The United States Military Intelligence believes members of the Qaeda terrorist network conducted the attack, and that Osama bin Laden was the architect behind the attack.(Library of Congress, 2002)

September 11, 2001, nineteen terrorist hijacked four commercial jetliners and conduct a series of coordinated attacks. Two of the hijacked jetliners were flown into the World Trade Center, New York City. The first jetliner crashed into the north tower at 0900; seventeen minutes later the second jetliner hit the south tower. The total number of people killed numbered 2,992. The third jet slammed into the Pentagon at 0910 killing one hundred eighty-nine people. The fourth jet crashed in a field in Shanks Ville, Pa., killing forty-four people. The United States Military Intelligence believes Osama bin Laden and the Islamic al-Qaeda terrorist group are behind the attack. (Library of Congress, 2005)
What ever thought you have on the events leading up to these terrorist attacks, it is reasonable to conclude that our lack of human intelligence played a big role in the militaries failure to identify and prevent them. If United States had operatives, informants, or spies imbedded in the terrorist networks, they would have had an early warning. The military would have been able to prevent these attacks from happening. American leaders failed to recognize the most important dimension of any battlefield, the human one. Reliance on technological intelligence such as satellites, intercepting signals and images, rather than human intelligence, which involves interrogations, informants and spies proved to be a weakness the terrorist capitalized on.

On March 20, 2003, our justification for invading Iraq was based on weapons of mass destruction, which threatened world peace. America’s technological ability enabled us to produce evidence such as real time video surveillance of Iraqi soldiers. The video showed a pattern of activity designed to conceal movement of material from places where chemical weapons had been stored in the past. We also had photos taken from a satellite of new construction on multipurpose facility previously used for biological and chemical weapons. We intercepted signals such as phone calls, e-mails, and radio transmissions where Iraqi soldiers were being told, make sure it is not there when the inspectors show up. We even tried to justify our invasion based on the history that Saddam Hussein had used chemical weapons on Iran and on his own people. All of this technology and we still could not convince the United Nations to support the war in Iraq.

When America invaded Iraq, our intelligence was lacking. The commanders on the ground new the location of enemy forces, equipment, and there activity but the lack of human intelligence made the opposition commanders a mystery. What was the opposition commander’s
education, traits, past experiences, and decision-making process? Would they surrender if given a chance? Would the opposition commanders use weapons of mass destructions? This kind of intelligence information cannot be gathered by satellite images, aircraft, and signals intercepts. This type of intelligence can only be gained by having human sources within the enemy’s ranks.

There are numerous reports that say terrorist are attempting to acquire nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. According to the Library of Congress, there is an “increasing likelihood that terrorists will use weapons of mass destruction (WMD), particularly against the United States” (Berry et al, 1998, preface ¶ 1). The terrorist goal is to make the cost of peace and democracy so high that America’s will stop promoting their way of life around the world and go home. We know that in the end terrorist will fail, but we also know that as long as the United States is promoting peace and democracy around the world they will keep on trying.

The best way to fight terrorism and prevent another attack is to re-humanize the intelligence agencies. Throughout history clandestine operatives, spies and informants have been our best source for early warning of attacks and detecting those responsible. The use of human intelligence (HUMINT), will enhance our capability to identify terrorist organizations, figure out what they are planning, and prevent there next act of terror. We will also have the ability to attack the terrorist wherever they are hiding. The American people deserve nothing less.
References


