

**Some Principles of Human Intelligence and Their
Application**

A Monograph

by

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14. ABSTRACT

Human intelligence (HUMINT), which is the oldest of the intelligence disciplines, has through the course of the twentieth century, been less emphasized by the U.S. Army relative to the technical disciplines of signals intelligence (SIGINT) and imagery intelligence (IMINT). HUMINT should remain a key component of an intelligence system, as it can cue and be cued by the other disciplines and combine with them to be more effective than any of them would be by itself. Additionally, the Army is involved in low- and mid-intensity campaigns around the world and Army doctrine for these types of operations identifies the importance of HUMINT in their conduct. Army leadership has expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of Army HUMINT and stated that it needs improvement. In order to make such an improvement, principles of HUMINT are necessary so that the HUMINT system and its components--including the individual HUMINT collectors--may be properly designed or trained. Such principles may be derived from writings of theorists and practitioners of HUMINT. All of the civilizations of the ancient world practiced HUMINT in one form or another, and many of them left behind extensive writings on the theory and practice of HUMINT. This was particularly true of the ancient Chinese and Indians, for whom HUMINT in its various forms was integral to their statecraft. The civilizations of the ancient Near East and classical period in the Mediterranean also engaged in HUMINT and left behind a record of it. Governments and militaries also employed HUMINT throughout the twentieth century, and there is an extensive body of both history and theory from twentieth century practitioners and theorists. From all of these writings, which almost completely agree, one can see that HUMINT collectors should be people of the best personal quality, mature and experienced, and with good knowledge of the areas on which they are collecting. Other writings on leadership, business, and training practice and theory can be added to demonstrate what HUMINT organizations should be like and what ought to be expected from HUMINT leaders. Other HUMINT organizations can serve as models for improvement of Army HUMINT, particularly the British Army, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the U.S. Army Foreign Area Officer Program. All of these in one way or another ensures that their HUMINT collectors have the appropriate personal qualities, are conversant in the subjects on which they are asked to collect, and have the leaders and organizations that they need to succeed.

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Abstract

SOME ASPECTS OF THE THEORY OF HUMAN INTELLIGENCE AND THEIR APPLICATION

by MAJ Robert A. Sayre, Jr., U.S. Army, 50 pages.

Human intelligence (HUMINT), which is the oldest of the intelligence disciplines, has through the course of the twentieth century, been less emphasized by the U.S. Army relative to the technical disciplines of signals intelligence (SIGINT) and imagery intelligence (IMINT). HUMINT should remain a key component of an intelligence system, as it can cue and be cued by the other disciplines and combine with them to be more effective than any of them would be by itself. Additionally, the Army is involved in low- and mid-intensity campaigns around the world and Army doctrine for these types of operations identifies the importance of HUMINT in their conduct. Army leadership has expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of Army HUMINT and stated that it needs improvement. In order to make such an improvement, principles of HUMINT are necessary so that the HUMINT system and its components--including the individual HUMINT collectors--may be properly designed or trained.

Such principles may be derived from writings of theorists and practitioners of HUMINT. All of the civilizations of the ancient world practiced HUMINT in one form or another, and many of them left behind extensive writings on the theory and practice of HUMINT. This was particularly true of the ancient Chinese and Indians, for whom HUMINT in its various forms was integral to their statecraft. The civilizations of the ancient Near East and classical period in the Mediterranean also engaged in HUMINT and left behind a record of it. Governments and militaries also employed HUMINT throughout the twentieth century, and there is an extensive body of both history and theory from twentieth century practitioners and theorists. From all of these writings, which almost completely agree, one can see that HUMINT collectors should be people of the best personal quality, mature and experienced, and with good knowledge of the areas on which they are collecting. Other writings on leadership, business, and training practice and theory can be added to demonstrate what HUMINT organizations should be like and what ought to be expected from HUMINT leaders.

Other HUMINT organizations can serve as models for improvement of Army HUMINT, particularly the British Army, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the U.S. Army Foreign Area Officer Program. All of these in one way or another ensures that their HUMINT collectors have the appropriate personal qualities, are conversant in the subjects on which they are asked to collect, and have the leaders and organizations that they need to succeed.

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Introduction

The Contemporary HUMINT Environment

Human intelligence (HUMINT) is the oldest of the intelligence disciplines, and has even been described as the second-oldest profession. Before the advent of photography and of communications technologies such as telegraphy and radio--which led to the other disciplines of imagery intelligence (IMINT) and signals intelligence (SIGINT)--HUMINT was the only intelligence discipline. Through the course of the twentieth century, and especially during and after the Second World War, the emphasis the U.S. Army accorded HUMINT relative to the other disciplines declined. This was due in part to the concern with mid- to high-intensity conflict, in which HUMINT is less important, and also to the American orientation towards technological solutions to problems, including intelligence problems.¹ During the Cold War the primary concern of the Army was the large, conventional forces of the U.S.S.R. and Warsaw Pact that it faced in Central Europe. The intelligence questions posed by this situation could be largely answered by the technical disciplines of IMINT and SIGINT; as a result those disciplines were emphasized.

Though impressive capabilities have been fielded in the technical intelligence disciplines, there will always be a need for the maintenance of HUMINT capabilities. Reliance on purely technical intelligence--or on any one intelligence discipline--opens the intelligence system to manipulation and deception. For example, physical decoys at a particular location and dummy radio traffic associated with the decoys might fool IMINT and SIGINT sensors, but direct human observation of the targeted site would easily expose the attempt at deception. One discipline can direct one or both of the others; a HUMINT report, for instance, on adversary plans for a military operation can be used to precisely direct IMINT systems. Each discipline can also facilitate the

¹ James Sherr, "Cultures of Spying," *The National Interest* 38 (Winter 1994/1995): 57; Greg Jaffe, "Between the Lines: Army Finds Good Information in Short Supply in Guerrilla War," *Wall Street Journal*, October 6, 2003, A1.

others. The famous Polish successes against German cryptographic systems before the Second World War were aided by HUMINT operations that obtained documents on the systems for use by cryptanalysts; similar help from HUMINT aided some American cryptanalytic efforts against the Japanese at around the same time.² The three disciplines in concert complement and enhance one another, can cue one another, and make the intelligence collection system more resilient and harder to disrupt or deceive.³

In addition to the need for HUMINT to work alongside the other disciplines, the situation presented the U.S. Army since the end of the Cold War also makes HUMINT capability of great importance. The greatly increased threat from terrorism since the end of the twentieth century and the nature of military operations conducted by U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq have presented the U.S. Army with an environment and threat quite distinct from that presented by the former Soviet Union and its allies. In this environment, commanders and intelligence officers in the field face an intelligence problem of a fundamentally different nature than that of the Cold War. This difference is accounted for to a large degree by Army doctrine, as the need for increased HUMINT in lower-intensity military operations of every variety is clearly identified.⁴ Doctrinal and other writings discuss this need in some detail. Stability and support operations (SASO), such as those conducted in Bosnia and Kosovo, are described as requiring detailed intelligence on local political, economic, and cultural conditions that can only be acquired through HUMINT.⁵ This also applies to the SASO and low-intensity conflicts taking place after

² Stephen Budiansky, *Battle of Wits: The Complete Story of Codebreaking in World War II* (New York: Touchstone Books, 2002), 83, 101.

³ Anthony H. Cordesman, *Intelligence Failures in the Iraq War* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 16, 2003), 19; Major John A. Hurley, "HUMINT Revitalization," *Military Review* 61, no. 8, August 1981: 26.

⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-07.3: Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Peace Operations*, 12 February 1999, II-20; Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 90-8: Counter guerrilla Operations*, 29 August 1986, 3-6, Appendix H; Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 100-23: Peace Operations*, 30 December 1994, 4-12. These are only a few of the doctrinal publications that discuss the need for HUMINT in operations at the lower end of the conflict spectrum.

⁵ LTC (P) Michael W. Pick, "What the Joint Force Commander Needs to Know About CI and HUMINT Operations," National War College Paper, 2002.

the winding-down of major combat operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as to other, similar operations elsewhere in the world.

Operations against terrorism and terrorists also demand high-quality intelligence from HUMINT. Terrorist organizations frequently employ low-technology means for communications that defy collection by SIGINT assets; the nature of terrorist operations often renders IMINT irrelevant. HUMINT is not only the best but also frequently the only means by which terrorists may be identified and their organizations understood and located. Direct-action against terrorist personnel or cells, in order to be effective, must be directed precisely by intelligence information; the sort of information needed for this is best gathered by means of HUMINT.⁶ But though SASO, counter-terrorist operations, and low-intensity operations in general require a more robust HUMINT capability, even in mid-intensity combat operations such as those conducted in the spring of 2003 by the Third Infantry Division (Mechanized) in Iraq, HUMINT was identified as an important contributor.⁷

These factors have focused attention on the HUMINT capability of the U.S. military, including that of the Army, and Army leadership has identified the need for improving this capability. The former U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Lieutenant General Robert Noonan, stated the need to improve HUMINT capability in terms of both quantity and quality.⁸ Many involved in operations against terrorists and insurgents around the world have also noted the shortfall in Army HUMINT capability. As described by one commander involved in the struggle after the end of major combat operations associated with Operation Iraqi Freedom, while intelligence in a high-intensity conflict is a science that the Army has perfected, that

⁶ Nathan Hodge, "Anaconda Commanders: Sensors No Substitute for HUMINT," *Defense Week*, April 1, 2002, 1; Rob de Wijk, "The Limits of Military Power," *The Washington Quarterly* 25, no 1 (Winter 2002): 79-80, 91.

⁷ Headquarters, Third Infantry Division, *Third Infantry Division (Mechanized) After-Action Report: Operation Iraqi Freedom*, July 2003 [book online], accessed 4 December 2003, available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/3id-aar-jul03.pdf>

⁸ "More SIGINT, UAVs, and HUMINT Top Army Intel Needs From Afghanistan," *C4I News*, April 25, 2002, 1; Noonan remarks at U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, September 10, 2002.

associated with post-conflict operations is more of an art. Some Army intelligence leaders believe that this art may have been lost. In the words of Brigadier General John Custer, the J2-Intelligence officer for U.S. Central Command responsible for intelligence support to Army operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, "We haven't fought a war where human intelligence was the coin of the realm for decades."⁹

Research Intent and Design

In order to make desired improvements in HUMINT capabilities, it is important that there be a fundamental understanding of the principles of the HUMINT discipline; providing such an understanding is the intent of this paper. Designers of technical intelligence systems employ their understanding of the nature of optics or of the propagation of radio waves to construct technical sensors and systems. The task of designing a technical collection system is relatively straightforward insofar as elements of physical science involved are combined with the state-of-the-art in engineering to produce a system. Only the state of scientific knowledge, the ingenuity of engineers, and the resources available for construction of the system limit a technical system. Similarly, designers of HUMINT systems should ideally proceed from an understanding of the basic nature of the HUMINT problem to the design of the best possible sensors and system. What distinguishes HUMINT from the technical disciplines is that the sensors are not mechanical-electrical devices but people, and the systems are groups of people rather than networks of devices.¹⁰

The problem for improvement of U.S. Army HUMINT is that, unlike for engineering and the physical sciences, there is not a readily available body of principles on the desired characteristics of HUMINT sensors. The 'HUMINT sensors' are the people who work as HUMINT collectors; the principles needed would concern what kind of people ought to be

⁹ Jaffe, *Between the Lines*.

¹⁰ Technical systems, of course, are networks not only of devices, but also of people such as analysts and technicians. The point is that the nature and major challenges of the technical disciplines are basically different from those of HUMINT.

collecting HUMINT and how they should be trained, prepared, and employed. This paper will examine the nature of HUMINT to derive some of the principles of the discipline and make recommendations on how to achieve the improvements desired. This examination will employ two types of materials. The first will be historical examples of HUMINT drawn from a range of eras and cultures and analyzed to determine what common themes can be seen that might point to a principle of contemporary applicability. The second type of material will be the writings of theorists of statecraft and intelligence that examine the conduct of HUMINT and discuss what is necessary for its success. Theory used, like historical examples used, will be drawn from across various eras and cultures. In some cases, related theory from the worlds of business or other professions will also be used.

In order to discuss HUMINT, it is first necessary to provide a definition of the subject. For the purposes of this paper, HUMINT will be the collection of intelligence by a human being directly from another human being by means of personal interaction. In practical terms this covers a wide range of collection activities. Those from which historical examples will be taken in this paper will include agent operations, prisoner interrogation, attaché operations, debriefing of friendly travelers, and overt source operations. One type of collection activity that the U.S. Army defines as HUMINT, the collection of intelligence from open sources such as newspapers, television, radio, and other electronic and print media (OSINT), does not involve human interaction and will not be considered.

Each of the HUMINT collection activities mentioned is unique in the method used to gain access to the source--to put the collector 'on target.' Agent operations require the collector to use espionage tradecraft, interrogation of prisoners only that the collector walk into the interrogation room. Attachés gain access to targets through a variety of means, including social or diplomatic events, visits to military units, and the cultivation of people met on a casual basis. Debriefers of friendly travelers make an appointment with their source and often perform their work in the source's home or workplace. Collectors in overt source operations go into

communities in the area of operations and, not only openly but often in uniform, seek information from the local population.

The concern of this paper, though, is not the differences between these activities, but rather what they have in common. All of them, when successful, have a common outcome: a HUMINT collector talking to a source. The differences between the HUMINT collection activities correspond to the differences between mounting a SIGINT collection system in a vehicle, an aircraft, a ship, or a fixed ground station. Though each of these will put particular constraints on collection equipment in matters of weight, size, or power consumption, what remain constant are the physical principles governing the propagation of radio waves and the design of the SIGINT sensor (an antenna). Likewise, in some aspects different HUMINT activities may require differing skills from collectors in order to get a collector to a source, but all of them rely on a human being interacting with another human being to collect intelligence. This sort of interaction is the central concern of this paper, and its goal is to lay out some principles determining the ideal characteristics of the HUMINT sensor, the human collector.

In addition to discussing the individual HUMINT collector, this paper will also discuss two aspects of the organizations in which HUMINT collectors work. The first of these will be what abilities the leaders of HUMINT organizations in particular ought to possess as opposed to those that leaders of all organizations should. The second organizational topic discussed will be how to best ensure that a system is in place to prevent unreliable or deceptive information from being disseminated from the HUMINT collector to the larger organization.

The Collector

The Nature of the Collector

The Desired Characteristics of a Collector - The Theory from Antiquity

The history of nearly all of the ancient civilizations includes the practice of HUMINT. The Bible records that Moses, who scholars estimate lived around 3,400 years ago, sent HUMINT collectors into the land of Canaan under divine instructions:

And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, "Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them."

When the men had been selected, Moses gave them detailed instructions as to what they should look for in Canaan; after their mission they reported to Moses on their observations of the land, its inhabitants, their culture, and the prospects for successful conquest.¹¹ Moses' instructions specified that each of the collectors must be one of the rulers of his tribe. The Lord's reasoning for this is not given, but what is clear is the central concern with the characteristics of the Israelites' HUMINT collectors in Canaan.

That divine care would be taken in this instance is a reflection of the importance of the matter. As the nature of the SIGINT problem determines the characteristics of a SIGINT sensor, so the nature of the HUMINT problem should determine the characteristics of the HUMINT collector. A collector, whether human or technical, whose characteristics are inappropriate will not be successful. Some of the ancient cultures took exactly this approach and made detailed, sophisticated studies of the HUMINT problem with a view to determining what characteristics their collectors ought to have.

Of those cultures that studied the HUMINT problem, the Chinese made by far the greatest and most systematic effort; they are said to have over the centuries practiced and

¹¹ Num. 13 AV

theorized about HUMINT more than any other nation.¹² Good intelligence in Chinese military practice was vital, and good intelligence in pre-industrial cultures was good HUMINT. Sun Tzu, the most famous and influential of the Chinese military writers, advocates a brand of warfare that emphasizes avoiding strengths and seeking out weaknesses (including those that might not be strictly military), deception, psychological warfare, and attacks on strategy and alliances. Sun Tzu says that success in the realm of war relies on 'foreknowledge', which in turn requires intelligence of a very sophisticated nature, not merely information of the physical disposition and capability of enemy forces, but understanding of personality, motives, and psychology. While basic information on enemy forces might be gathered by a simple observer with materials to make a sketch, the sophisticated intelligence required in the subtle military art of Sun Tzu must often be found in the mind of an enemy leader.¹³ Gaining access to the mind of an enemy leader obviously requires a collector of a very high order, and, given the central role of foreknowledge, Sun Tzu rates the subject of HUMINT collectors as amongst the most important, calling them 'the treasure of the sovereign' and stating that they must be very generously rewarded.¹⁴

Chinese practice was that HUMINT sources dealt directly with a very senior officer, often even the general or head of state. In this situation, the general was in effect his own HUMINT collector, while his source was also a HUMINT collector when he was in the enemy's territory. The Chinese paid great attention to what qualities and characteristics the general and the source needed to be good collectors. Sun Tzu says that in order to conduct HUMINT, the general needed to be "sage and wise, humane and just,...delicate and subtle...." Ancient Chinese commentators on Sun Tzu added that he must be able to estimate the character of the source as to his sincerity, truthfulness, and intelligence, and that in turn the general's source must be able to communicate reports, wise, intelligent, strong of heart, vigorous, and able to endure the danger

¹² Ralph Sawyer, *The Tao of Spycraft* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), xiii.

¹³ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 145.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 147, 145.

and privations of his job. He must also be able to gain access to those of the enemy who are intimate with the leadership. Sun Tzu himself described these matters as "Delicate indeed! Truly delicate!"¹⁵

The Chinese practice of HUMINT as described by Sun Tzu and other ancient writers is an extremely complex business, with various types of agents employed in collection, sowing confusion, transmitting false information, or finding out the agents of the enemy. It seems as though Chinese generals and leaders must have sent swarms of agents out to secure the foreknowledge they sought (and to spoil the enemy's foreknowledge), a situation that certainly had the potential to create confusion and opportunities for deception by way of planted or false information, or even through simple misunderstanding. The Chinese, though, recognized this problem, and saw the key to successfully practicing HUMINT as the ability to reliably evaluate men. Reliable evaluation of men gives the ability to select those men best able to carry out HUMINT missions and, just as importantly, to evaluate their truthfulness when they return with their report. A great deal of effort was put into the study of men and their reliability. Some Chinese writers advocated techniques of observing expression, body language, or demeanor, others the close analysis of reports for contradictions and conformity with other information.¹⁶ The writings on this subject show great awareness of the complexity of human reliability and motivation; the Chinese believed that the conduct of HUMINT required "sagacious wisdom", that extreme sophistication and arduous study were necessary to master the art of evaluating men, and that only a very few would ever do these things well.¹⁷

Another ancient culture that studied and practiced HUMINT extensively was that of India. The importance they gave to their intelligence system and its pervasiveness in their political and military activities indicates that they also must have given HUMINT a great deal of

¹⁵ Ibid., 147.

¹⁶ Observation of demeanor to determine deception is still practiced today, often as a technique to complement the polygraph. John E. Reid and Fred E. Inbau, *Truth and Deception: The Polygraph ("Lie Detector") Technique*, 2d ed. (Baltimore, MD: Williams and Wilkins, 1977), 13, 17.

¹⁷ Sawyer, *Tao of Spycraft*, 150, 312 passim.

thought; however, the only work of theory on the subject translated from the original Sanskrit is the *Arthashastra*. Kautilya, who is said to have been an advisor to an Indian ruler of the 4th century B.C, composed the *Arthashastra* as a guide to politics and statecraft. In it, he advocated a very high degree of state control and that this control be ensured by a robust intelligence system. Because of the central place given to intelligence, the workings of the system advocated are laid out in some detail.

Kautilya expressed many of the same concerns with the assessment of reliability of HUMINT sources as the Chinese, though he did not go into the specifics of methods in this area. What Kautilya did write on at some length was the necessity for HUMINT collectors to have the ability to assess the personality of their sources so as to choose the approach that would most likely induce the source to give the collector the desired information. He describes the practice of HUMINT as the gathering of information by judging and exploiting people.¹⁸ The *Arthashastra* contains a list of personality types, such as angry, greedy, diligent, or easily insulted, matching each with a suitable approach. For example, Kautilya recommends suborning the greedy by telling them that their leaders only reward the unworthy and that the collector and his leaders recognize worth and reward it accordingly.¹⁹

Like the Chinese theorists of HUMINT, Kautilya recognized that the qualities and characteristics of the HUMINT collector are of extreme importance. He wrote that HUMINT collectors ought to be courageous, sharp, and intelligent, and that they must above all have great integrity. In order to carry out their duties they need knowledge of physiology and sociology and of the arts of men and society.²⁰ Kautilya further specifies that they must have all the same qualifications as the king and his counselors. Though he does not charge the ruler or general with

¹⁸ Kautilya, *The Arthashastra*, ed. and trans. L.N. Rangarajan (New Dehli: Penguin Books India, 1992), 577-578.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 519-522.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 503-507.

the direct conduct of HUMINT as the Chinese do, like the Chinese--and the Bible--Kautilya closely associates HUMINT with political and military decision makers.²¹

Other ancient civilizations practiced HUMINT as well, and though any theoretical writings on the subject they may have done have not survived, their practice of HUMINT shows that they identified many of the same concerns with the nature of the collector as the Chinese and Indian theorists. All the HUMINT disciplines were used in the ancient world, including overt collection, interrogation of prisoners, agent operations, collection by attachés or diplomats, and the debriefing of friendly travelers and merchants. The latter two were especially prevalent and employed by nearly every ancient state, as were agent operations. Surviving records of the one of the earliest intelligence services known in the ancient Near East, that associated with the Babylonia king Hammurabi, include a discussion of personality types and the motives of sources somewhat similar to that in the *Arthashastra*. This intelligence service used a wide range of HUMINT collection techniques, exploited captured documents for intelligence purposes, included a section dedicated to analysis, and even debriefed the queen for information of value. The traces of this organization that survive also include the earliest known classified document.²²

Civilizations in the ancient Mediterranean also employed HUMINT. Alexander the Great and Hannibal, who both brought large military forces into distant foreign lands, both employed HUMINT collectors who combined knowledge of these foreign lands, their cultures, and peoples with the ability to go among those peoples and obtain the information needed to achieve their remarkable successes. Alexander, whose conquests encompassed a large and various range of cultures, began his practice of HUMINT as a teenager questioning Persian visitors to his father's court regarding the road system in their empire.²³ Interrogation of prisoners in much of classical

²¹ Ibid., 576.

²² Rose Mary Sheldon, "Spying in Mesopotamia," *Studies in Intelligence* 33, no. 1, Spring 1989: 9-10.

²³ Donald Engels, "Alexander's Intelligence Service," *Classical Quarterly* 30, 1980; Rose Mary Sheldon, "Hannibal's Spies," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 1, no. 3, Fall 1986.

Greece was quite organized and subtle, using some of the same techniques taught to interrogators in the present day.²⁴ The Byzantine Empire employed *agentes in rebus* (conductors of affairs), selected for their native ability and moral behavior, trained, and then employed on a trial basis for five years. Other civilizations that engaged in sophisticated HUMINT practice included the Persian Empire, Mongols of Jenghiz Khan, and the Abbasid Muslim Empire; in all of these, as in the others discussed, much thought was given to HUMINT and to the attributes of a good HUMINT collector.²⁵

None of the ancients aside from the Chinese and Indians left behind their theory of the practice of HUMINT. However, it is clear both from those theoretical writings and the record of the practice of HUMINT in all the ancient cultures that from the very beginning there was an awareness that successful HUMINT required HUMINT collectors with certain characteristics. There is across the records from all of them a consistent belief that the collector should be intelligent and wise, subtle, sophisticated, courageous, and possessed of great integrity. Above all, the ancients agreed, the collector of HUMINT must be a good judge of character with the capability to assess motivation, approach a potential source based on that assessment, and evaluate the source and the information provided with regard to truthfulness and reliability.

Personal Characteristics of the Collector - Modern Theory

Intelligence practice in the twentieth century was in some ways very similar to that of the time of the ancient empires. Military and political conflict in all ranges of intensity between large states or blocs of states spread over enormous geographic areas had by the end of the century

²⁴ An example of this is the use of the 'show of knowledge' technique, in which the subject of interrogation is asked a question and then told that he could not possibly know the answer, provoking him to answer to prove that he does indeed know. Frank S. Russell, *Information Gathering in Classical Greece* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 170.

²⁵ Francis Dvornik, *Origins of Intelligence Services: The Ancient Near East, Persia, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, the Arab Muslim Empires, the Mongol Empire, China, Muscovy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1978). The consistent emphasis in the ancient world on intelligence in general and HUMINT in particular is likely due in large part to the despotic nature of ancient states and the need for good information to ensure both the survival of the regime and the personal survival of the ruler.

given rise to large intelligence organizations, as well as to a body of literature on the theory of intelligence produced both by academics and practitioners. Though technical intelligence disciplines would have been a matter of wonderment to them, the ancients would have recognized the outlines of both the organizations and the theory as a products of the same desire for foreknowledge expressed by Sun Tzu and of the need bureaucratic states have for intelligence. In particular, they would have immediately recognized the swarms of collectors fielded against both foreign and internal targets by totalitarian states such as the Soviet Union anxious to ensure their own survival.

The concern shown by the ancient writers on HUMINT for the qualities and characteristics of HUMINT collectors was also shown in the writings on the topic of the twentieth century, which stressed the importance and difficulty of finding good people to work in the HUMINT field. What is quite striking is the great similarity between the characteristics valued by both the ancients and the modern writers.

Modern writers on HUMINT, like the ancients, placed great value on a group of characteristics that can be grouped together under the general heading of 'character.' Allen Dulles, a HUMINT officer during the Second World War and later the U.S. Director of Central Intelligence, believed that HUMINT collectors ought to have great integrity, be receptive to and understanding of foreign points of view, and be able to work well with people under difficult conditions.²⁶ Another writer stated that "what matters in the final analysis is that an intelligence agency has people of competence and integrity available," and added that, just as in earlier eras, good HUMINT required collectors of discretion, patience, tact, calmness, subtlety, force of mind, and prudence. The collector would also often be required to adapt himself to the character of his sources, though it required he do violence to his own.²⁷

²⁶ Allen Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 173-175.

²⁷ Walter Laquer, *The Uses and Limits of Intelligence* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1993), 37, 320.

The importance of issues of personality and character was recognized by the agency with which Allen Dulles was originally employed as a HUMINT collector during the Second World War, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the predecessor agency to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The director of the OSS, William Donovan, stated that it was his highest priority to find people of quality, and the OSS put a great deal of effort into this search.²⁸ This was not the case from the beginning of the OSS, however. The assessment of potential OSS officers that began in 1941 was relatively cursory, and led to complaints from overseas OSS offices about incompetent personnel and the operational problems they caused. This led to the development of a formal assessment process for OSS officers, one intended to find men and women of "guts, *savoir faire*, and intelligence."²⁹

The resulting assessment process aimed for a total picture of the potential officer. To gain the necessary insights, the OSS constructed an elaborate system of situational and written testing combined with interviews, designed to provide the deepest possible understanding of the recruit's personality. The system made specific evaluations of each candidate in several areas, including intelligence, emotional stability, social skills, observation skills, communications skills, and initiative. Additionally, the evaluators made personal judgments of sense of humor, basic honesty, and well-rounded competence.³⁰

This approach was not limited to Western HUMINT practice. The Soviet military intelligence agency, the GRU, put great emphasis on the same sort of personality assessment as the OSS, selecting as potential officers the cream of Soviet military academies. These officers were subjected to intensive personality evaluations, in both formal and informal settings, and judged for their effectiveness in forming close relationships with non-Soviets.³¹ The KGB, the Soviet national intelligence agency, used a similar approach. The best graduates of the top Soviet

²⁸ "A Good Man is Hard to Find," *Fortune*, March 1946, 223.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 92.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 218.

³¹ Richard Framingham, "Career Trainee Program, GRU Style," *Studies in Intelligence* 10, no. 3 (Fall 1966): 48, 53-54, 57.

institutions of higher learning were selected and put through a battery of assessments similar to that used by the GRU.³²

The modern theory and practice discussed above specifically concern the practice of agent operations. Interestingly, writers on the practice of prisoner interrogation say that interrogators require similar qualities. Hans Scharff, the top prisoner interrogator of the German Air Force during the Second World War, said that the key to his method was to use the best psychological approaches of statesmanship, combined with some of the talents of an actor. He believed that a good interrogator needed what he summed up with the German words *Ehr*, *Lehr*, and *Wehr*. *Ehr* meant honor in the broadest sense, a total range of moral and social values. *Lehr* meant education and knowledge, the refinement of heart and mind acquired by time and learning. And *Wehr* signified the mental and moral virtues. Scharff added that a "deep well of personal resourcefulness" was needed. These qualities, he believed, along with great experience and maturity, were especially necessary when interrogating more senior prisoners. They also proved important in dealing with the extremely complex human and intelligence problem of prisoner of war camps, in which resistant prisoners might develop their own intelligence and resistance networks that interrogators might be required to penetrate and unravel.³³

William R. Johnson, an interrogator and HUMINT collector for the CIA for many years, wrote that "only people of the cleanest character" should practice interrogation. Amongst the talents and traits of character he held that a good interrogator must have were self-understanding and control of the emotions, some acting ability and an actor's sense of timing, and patience. These should be combined with a talent for empathy and for establishing rapport with others. The talents for empathy and rapport in turn are based on a high degree of personal

³² Sherman W. Flemer, "Soviet Intelligence Training," *Studies in Intelligence* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1959): 46.

³³ Raymond F. Tolliver, *The Interrogator: The Story of Hans Scharff, Luftwaffe's Master Interrogator* (Fallbrook, CA: Aero Books, 1978), 276, 183; John Joseph Kelly, "Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence in German Prisoner of War Camps in Canada During World War II," *Dalhousie Review* 48 (Summer 1978).

communications skills and a sensitivity for what 'makes others tick,' an appreciation of human emotions such as pride, fear, or shame.³⁴

Accounts of collection by attachés also show the importance of the characteristics of character and personality. Military and naval attachés in the Orient before the Second World War used their ability to establish personal relationships with foreign military officers to gather valuable intelligence on Japanese military capabilities, particularly that of their naval air arm. A U.S. Naval Attaché in China during the 1930s and early 1940s, Marine Corps Major James H. McHugh, developed close personal relationships with Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek and, through these and other relationships with Chinese and third-country nationals, had excellent access to the inner circles of the Chinese Nationalist government and military. McHugh and other attachés used this access to produce political, military, and technical intelligence of great value, including detailed information on the performance of Japanese aircraft and air tactics, and the quality of Japanese pilots.³⁵ In eastern Europe at around the same time, attachés using their access to and personal relationships with Soviet and other officers provided detailed intelligence from within the Soviet Union, including the first accurate accounts of the Soviet purges and the development of deep battle doctrine.³⁶

In addition to the possessing the character to form personal relationships and develop rapport with others from an alien culture, attachés also required the same communications skills practitioners of the other HUMINT pursuits do. A U.S. Army G-2 explained in 1923 that reports submitted by attachés ought to be coherent, concise, and thorough and that they should have the "ability to paint a brief pen picture of a situation and not to clutter it up with details and data as to

³⁴ William R. Johnson, "Tricks of the Trade: Counterintelligence Interrogation," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 1, no. 2, Summer 1986: 104-105.

³⁵ William Leary, "Assessing the Japanese Threat: Air Intelligence Prior to Pearl Harbor," *Aerospace Historian* 34, no. 4, Winter/December 1987: 273.

³⁶ David M. Glantz, "Observing the Soviets: U.S. Army Attachés in Eastern Europe During the 1930s," *The Journal of Military History* 55 (April 1991).

make it unintelligible."³⁷ Another writer states that attachés and other diplomats must be able to "observe sharply...and to convey their findings to their superiors in clear, objective, and succinct reports."³⁸

Other modern practitioners and writers on HUMINT also stress the human qualities a HUMINT collector ought to have, stating that HUMINT requires good, smart people for complex situations; that a HUMINT collector ought to portray confidence, persistence, and a high level of craft; that it is better to have a few people with the right attributes than many who are unsuitable; and that their the ability to perform sophisticated, skeptical analysis of other people is critical.³⁹ The modern view is notable in its close consistency with the views of the theorists of the ancient world. The ancient idea that HUMINT collectors must be possessed of integrity, intelligence, wisdom, subtlety, sophistication, and the ability to judge character as to motivation, truthfulness, and reliability is completely validated in the writings of modern practitioners and theorists.

The Nature of the HUMINT Relationship

The consistency of the ancients and moderns writing and practice in HUMINT is a result of the nature of the HUMINT problem. At its root, this is a matter of the relationship between two human beings, one of whom wants the other to provide information when doing so might not be in the latter's best interests. There is no reason to believe that either the basic nature of HUMINT or of relationships between people has changed in its fundamentals from the time of Hammurabi to the present day. These relationships, then as now, require at least a small degree

³⁷ Scott A. Koch, "The Role of U.S. Army Military Attachés Between the World Wars," *Studies in Intelligence* 38, no. 5 (1995): 113. This observation was made as part of a lament that many attachés did not have this ability.

³⁸ Laquer, *The Uses and Limits of Intelligence*, 321. The author served as an attaché and can attest to the absolute necessity that an attaché have the ability to form personal relationships, establish rapport with a wide range of people, and compose concise, informative reports.

³⁹ Stephen J. Cimbala, "Counterintelligence: The Necessary Skepticism," *National Defense* 69, no. 402 (November 1984): 61; Nigel West, "The Defector Syndrome: A British Perspective," *American Intelligence Journal* 8, no. 2 (May 1987): 3; Larry Pavlicek, "Developing a Counterintelligence Mindset," *Security Management* 36, no. 4 (April 1992): 55; Peter F. Kalitka, "Counterintelligence Myths Compromised! No Surprise," *American Intelligence Journal* 9, no. 1 (March 1988) 27; Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe," *The New Yorker*, October 27, 2003, .

of rapport between two people. In some cases--for example, when the provision of information to the collector might endanger the source--a collector's success may require development of a close, trusting relationship. People of low integrity and character who are not highly sensitive to others with whom they interact are unlikely to be able to successfully cultivate sources in this way. This applies to all varieties of HUMINT practice: as rapport is necessary in any relationship, the agent handler, diplomat or attaché, interrogator, and overt debriefer all require the personal ability and qualities needed to establish it.

Once the needed relationship is established, the collector must be able to control it. A source will always have some sort of stake in the relationship reflecting his motive for entering into it. This motive may be adventure, esteem for the collector, the desire for revenge on someone, or almost any other human motive. The context of the source's motive will inevitably have some influence on the information he provides since the source may be attempting to accomplish something through the collector. For example, if the source provides information from his workplace out of anger at a co-worker, that information may be twisted or edited to have a particular effect on that co-worker, or may even be false. The context of the source's motive can be particularly important when the information provided is of a political nature and the source is involved in the political activity concerned.⁴⁰ This problem inherent to HUMINT is the reason collectors are said to need sophistication, wisdom, subtlety, and the ability to judge and assess people as to their character, motivation, reliability, and truthfulness. These characteristics and abilities allow the collector to properly weigh the information provided against the context of the source and his motivation. The better the awareness of the context, the less ability the source has to accomplish his ends through an unwitting collector, and the more control the collector has of the relationship. Again, the common and central concern with this aspect of the HUMINT problem shown in both ancient and contemporary times demonstrates its overriding importance.

⁴⁰ Christopher Felix, *A Short Course in the Secret War* (New York: Madison Books, 1992), 58-60.

The Background of the Collector

Area Knowledge

Writers on HUMINT from both ancient and modern times, while placing great emphasis on the personal qualities of collectors, have also always believed their professional and educational characteristics to be very important, specifically their background, experience, knowledge of the world, and in particular knowledge of the part of the world in which they and their sources work, or area knowledge.⁴¹ There are two main reasons for this. The first is to aid the collector in the establishment of rapport with sources, to supplement the personal qualities needed with the ability to do so across a cultural divide, and to help him navigate the environment in which sources must be sought. The second is to provide an advantage to the collector in the effort to control the relationship with the source by ensuring that the collector knows at least the cultural and political basics of the area in which he is working, thereby making the collector harder for the source to deceive and aiding the collector in the assessment of both the information and the source.⁴²

In ancient times, one particular professional group was prized as HUMINT collectors, the class of merchants. All ancient intelligence services seem to have employed traveling merchants directly, or at least debriefed them upon their return home. Kautilya mentions that Indian merchants were excellent gatherers of information.⁴³ The ancient Greeks were very aware of the potential of merchants as HUMINT collectors and made extensive use of them against each other as well as against their Persian enemies, while the Persians in turn used the same methods against

⁴¹ Both the ancients and moderns also greatly valued the mastery of foreign languages for HUMINT collectors, for obvious reasons.

⁴² There is a third reason, which is to enable collectors to assume a notional background or profession. The purpose of this is to provide a pretext for the collector to be somewhere potential sources might be found and for access to them, an idea known as cover. Cover will be discussed only in passing in this paper. U.S. Army HUMINT collectors make very little use of this as they primarily engage in overt collection, prisoner interrogation, or debriefing of friendly travelers, activities that do not ordinarily require cover.

⁴³ Kautilya, *Arthashastra*, 509-510.

the Greeks.⁴⁴ Alexander the Great questioned merchants and traveling artisans in great detail who were familiar with areas and peoples of interest. The Roman Empire actually formalized their employment of merchants as collectors. The Roman intelligence service recruited the merchants who furnished supplies to their legions--called in Latin *frumentarii*--and employed them in an organized network throughout the Empire as collectors of both HUMINT and taxes.⁴⁵ Jenghiz Khan, whose fast-moving, fluid style of war and conquest required accurate intelligence regarding both his enemies and their lands, made extensive use of merchants as both HUMINT collectors and sources.⁴⁶

A primary reason that merchants were seen as suitable for HUMINT was that their travels and business dealings provided them excellent cover, but this was certainly not the only reason. Merchants were very often extremely valuable sources of area knowledge; the success of their business enterprises often depended on their familiarity with the people, language, and culture of an area in which they wished to do business. Jenghiz Khan, for example, sought merchants out not only for the specifics of an area such as roads or logistics, but also because they were highly cultivated, worldly, and able to provide advice in areas such as diplomatic or psychological approaches.⁴⁷

Area knowledge of this kind has always been recognized as valuable, especially for those conducting military operations in foreign lands amongst alien cultures; the campaigns of Alexander the Great provide an excellent example of the collection of this kind of information and its use. Alexander's operations against the Persians and others in Asia would have failed if he had not been able to obtain information about supplies, roads, terrain, climate, and the fighting ability of his enemies. A wrong turn by his army might have put them in country that could not

⁴⁴ Russell, *Information Gathering in Classical Greece*, 92; Engels, "Alexander's Intelligence Service," 333.

⁴⁵ Rose Mary Sheldon, "The Roman Secret Service," *The Intelligence Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (July 1985): 1.

⁴⁶ Dvornik, *Origins of Intelligence Services*, 274.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 275.

feed them or in terrain that presented tactical problems, and thereby lead to defeat. His accumulation of area knowledge required a sophisticated effort. Potential sources for this kind of intelligence were not hard to find, but Alexander and his staff were faced with the problem of evaluating sources and the information provided to guard against being deceived. The process started with the gathering of area knowledge from merchants and others who had traveled through Asia. Then, while on campaign in Asia, the solid base of area knowledge made it much more difficult for local sources to provide false information and enabled the intelligent evaluation of sources and information; this fresh information, in turn, allowed the assessment of still more sources and information.⁴⁸

Another group capable of providing excellent area knowledge was diplomats and envoys. Nearly all the ancient states of every culture and era exchanged envoys. While the most prominent role of a diplomat is to represent his country in a foreign capital, diplomats have also always served the function of information gatherers. The Mesopotamians, Chinese, Indians, Greeks, Romans, Persians, Byzantines, and Abbasid Muslims, amongst others, all used diplomats and envoys as important sources of area knowledge and other information.⁴⁹ The Greeks in particular took great care in the selection of their envoys, who they selected on the basis of their area knowledge and their ability to understand their potential targets. One famous example was Aristotle, who while serving as a tutor to Alexander the Great, was said to have been sent to Greece by Alexander's father Philip as an envoy and collector, based on his knowledge of his native land.⁵⁰

The employment of diplomats in this manner--including military diplomats, or attachés--has hardly changed. A modern author has described the attaché's role as a HUMINT collector as observing and reporting political, sociological, psychological, and economic information of

⁴⁸ Engels, "Alexander's Intelligence System," 328-332.

⁴⁹ Dvornik, *Origins of Intelligence Services*.

⁵⁰ Russell, *Information Gathering in Classical Greece*, 65.

potential value in assessing military intentions as well as the military situation as a whole.⁵¹ The importance of an attaché's ability to establish personal relationships with his potential sources has already been noted; what is nearly as important is the area knowledge that an attaché who lives and works in a country, speaks the language, and understands the people and culture can provide to his government. This sort of understanding--in combination with the vital personal qualities noted earlier--is obviously of great use in the establishment of rapport with sources. Area and cultural knowledge also allows the collector to move more comfortably in the target society, to be more discreet when necessary, and to more easily find those who might become sources. Further, it enables the collector to make more intelligent and accurate observations. An important reason for the success of American attachés in Japan and China in the period before the Second World War was that their area and cultural knowledge enabled them to present the intelligence they collected to their superiors free of the racial stereotypes of Orientals common amongst Americans at that time.⁵² This was true as well of their counterparts serving in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and other parts of the world; in fact, the archive of their reports shows that by both volume and quality, attachés were the most productive U.S. collectors of intelligence during the years before the Second World War. Their important role continues to this day.⁵³

The importance of area knowledge can be shown by demonstrating the effect that its lack can have. A famous example is that of the Athenian expedition to Sicily during the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides relates that, although the Athenians knew little of basic facts such as the size of the island or of the people who inhabited it, they committed a large part of their power to an eventually disastrous campaign. The Athenian mistake is in great part due to their failure to correctly assess their sources of information on the subject. The members of the

⁵¹ Jeffrey T. Richelson, *The U.S. Intelligence Community* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 246.

⁵² Leary, "Assessing the Japanese Threat," 277. The reports of these attachés, notwithstanding their accuracy, were often ignored. Most in the U.S. military (though not all) thought that their reports on the high proficiency of Japanese pilots and the quality of their aircraft were improbable based on preconceptions of Japanese backwardness relative to the West.

⁵³ Glantz, "Observing the Soviets," 154, 183; Richelson, *The U.S. Intelligence Community*, 246.

Athenian assembly--who had the responsibility for the decision to undertake the expedition--had little area knowledge of Sicily upon which to base their decision. They were forced to rely on their sources for that information; these sources were their own political leadership. In assessing the information their political leaders provided on Sicily, they failed to remember that their leaders had a personal political stake in the mounting of the expedition (and no more area knowledge of Sicily than anyone else), and to assess the information they provided accordingly.⁵⁴

Another illustration of the effect of a lack of area knowledge is provided by the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest. In A.D. 9, three Roman legions of the Emperor Augustus led by Quintilius Varus were destroyed by rebellious Germans led by the tribal leader Arminius in a battle that marked the final limit of the expansion of the Roman Empire in that part of Europe. This was in large measure attributable to lack of information of two kinds. First, a lack of understanding of the culture of the Germanic tribes--particularly that of Arminius, which had a long tradition of resistance to Roman rule--prevented Varus, who like other ancient leaders served in part as his own HUMINT collector, from comprehending the degree of dissatisfaction with Roman rule in that part of Germany. Based on his personal interactions with Arminius and other Germans, Varus, who was not knowledgeable of the culture of his enemy, believed the problem to be a dispute between Germans that did not directly involve the Romans. This led him to underestimate the threat and discount information that the German discontent was not with other Germans, but with the Romans. Second, an incomplete understanding of the terrain combined with the underestimation of the threat led the Romans to march into an ideal ambush site, in which the Germans were able to trap and kill approximately 12,000 Roman legionnaires, a defeat amongst the worst ever suffered by the Romans.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. Walter Blanco (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), 233, 236-242.

⁵⁵ Rose Mary Sheldon, "Slaughter in the Forest: Roman Intelligence Mistakes in Germany," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 12, no. 3 (Autumn 2001).

Modern writers and practitioners also recognize the importance of area knowledge. Allen Dulles pointed out the necessity that collectors be understanding of foreign ways of thinking, William Johnson that collectors be able to apply cultural insights to the subjects of both interrogation and the close relative of interrogation, the polygraph examination.⁵⁶ Other writers also describe regional and area knowledge as vital and refer to the need for knowledge of the character of the natives and ignorance of the outside world as dangerous.⁵⁷ The intelligence agencies of the former USSR shared this concern. One of them, the GRU, provided their HUMINT collectors with a Western-style liberal arts education to give them a deeper understanding of their targets.⁵⁸

Of the reasons discussed earlier for the importance of area knowledge, the provision of an advantage to the collector in his efforts to control his relationships with his sources is vital. A collector with attractive personal qualities and a friendly disposition may well be able to establish the needed rapport with an individual from an entirely foreign culture, learning what he needs about that culture along the way. The collector may even be able to turn the need to learn the culture to advantage, cultivating talkative and proud natives by inviting them to talk about their country, its culture and politics.

But a collector without area knowledge is vulnerable to misunderstanding what his sources tell him, or even to deception. The state-run media of China recently furnished an amusing, though instructive, example of how a lack of area knowledge can lead to misunderstanding. The *Beijing Evening News* reported in its May 29, 2002 edition that the U.S. Congress had threatened to move from Washington unless the Capitol building was upgraded to include a retractable dome and luxury boxes. This story was picked up from the satirical U.S.

⁵⁶ Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence*, 174; William R. Johnson, "The Ambivalent Polygraph," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 1, no. 2, Summer 1986: 73; Johnson, "Tricks of the Trade," 105.

⁵⁷ BGen James D. Beans, "Marine Corps Intelligence in Low-Intensity Conflicts," *Signal* 43, no. 7, March 1989: 30; Laquer, *Uses and Limits of Intelligence*, 320, 322.

⁵⁸ Framingham, "Career Trainee Program," 53.

newspaper *The Onion*. The basis of the mistake was a lack of area knowledge, specifically that the demands of professional sports teams for subsidized stadiums were becoming a significant political issue in some U.S. cities. But even a basic familiarity with the U.S., its government, and its culture would probably have prevented this gaffe.⁵⁹

While mistakes resulting from misunderstanding can cause problems, purposeful deception can cause total failure. A collector with no area knowledge can come to consider a source who explains the local environment as indispensable; the source in such a situation will likely sense the collector's dependency and gain more control over the relationship from the collector.⁶⁰ In addition, the collector will have little or no ability to assess the credibility of the source's information. This can be especially difficult if a source provides information on an unimportant topic that is shown to be reliable, and then offers information in an important area on which the collector has little knowledge.⁶¹ This combination of circumstances makes the collector and the intelligence system very vulnerable to deception, as the source has control of both the relationship and the information and can use this to influence the collector's belief in the credibility of source and information.

Deception, though, need not be deliberate. In 1961 the U.S. government believed reports from Cuban exiles that said the Cuban people would rise against the Castro government if a U.S.-sponsored invasion took place. These reports were deceptive, though not purposefully so. The collectors involved did not have the area knowledge necessary to understand their sources' deep emotional stake in the matter, nor that it was their fondest hope that this would be the case. They therefore judged these reports as credible, contributing eventually to the failure of the landing at

⁵⁹ Henry Chu, "Reeled In By A Spoof, Chinese Daily Shrugs Off Its Capitol Error," *Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 2002, A3.

⁶⁰ Peter F. Kalitka, "Back to the Future (Note 1)," *American Intelligence Journal* 9, no. 1, Fall 1988: 15. This was the problem faced by the Athenian assembly described earlier.

⁶¹ Bruce L. Pechan, "The Collector's Role in Evaluation," *Studies in Intelligence* 5, no. 2, Summer 1961: 39. This problem can easily occur, as the most valuable information will not be common knowledge, but, as it is not common knowledge, its credibility will be that much harder to evaluate.

the Bay of Pigs.⁶² The important point is that the less collectors know about their target area, the more vulnerable they and the operational elements they support are to being deceived by their enemy, intentionally or otherwise. This can, in the worst case, lead to defeat.

Professional Background

Another area of concern in HUMINT theory and practice throughout all eras has been the collector's profession outside of his work as an intelligence collector. The earliest writers on the subject believed that under ideal circumstances the collector should be matched as closely as possible to his target. *The Arthashastra* recommends that collectors should be of similar personal and professional backgrounds as their potential targets, and specifies that merchants should be employed as collectors against commercial interests, householders against small towns, and so forth. The intent of this was that the collectors be able to bring their expertise in a given area to the problem as an aid to intelligent collection.⁶³ The Chinese followed a corresponding practice for reasons similar to those given in *The Arthashastra*, believing that those from related backgrounds know each other best.⁶⁴ In the current day, this idea is a part of the rationale for attaché collection operations, which deploy military officers as collectors primarily against other military officers.

Properly matching a collector to a target or group of targets in this way provides two advantages. These are somewhat similar to the advantages gained by area knowledge in establishing rapport and evaluating sources and information. First, a collector will have a much easier time establishing rapport with a source with whom he shares a profession. All professions have broad elements in common throughout the world, and many have a professional jargon or technical aspects that only a member of that profession would understand. The essentials of being a merchant, doctor, politician, or many other occupations are largely the same everywhere,

⁶² Felix, *The Secret War*, 102-103.

⁶³ Kautilya, *Arthashastra*, 468, 509-510.

⁶⁴ Sawyer, *The Tao of Spycraft*, 324.

and members of the same profession will not have difficulty finding common ground or the basis for the beginnings of a personal relationship. Conversely, sending a mechanic to establish a relationship with and collect from a politician will usually not be productive. As one writer stated, "Because it is...a waste of time to press people who habitually talk to farmers to talk to scholars, and vice versa, the notion of an all-purpose intelligence collector is silly." Collectors, he adds, should ideally be as diverse as their targets.⁶⁵

The case of attachés provides a good example of this principle. Military officers around the world, in addition to the common technical aspects of the profession, nearly all share a slight degree of disdain (at the very least) for civilians. An attaché who meets a foreign officer at a social function can use this as the start of a conversation with that officer, a pretext for talking to the officer about his government, and even a motive for the source to provide information.⁶⁶

The second advantage provided by a proper match of collector to source is in the assessment of sources and information, thoroughness of debriefing, and speed of collection. Where the similar advantage gained through area knowledge can aid in the evaluation of a source and his information in relation to the general context of the situation, the specific knowledge of a collector seeking information in an area of personal expertise will provide the ability to evaluate the source and his information in more detail. It would be very easy, for example, for a proficient aeronautical engineer to assess the truthfulness of a source providing information on the design of an aircraft, or for an artilleryman serving as an attaché to evaluate the credibility of information obtained on a fire direction system.

A collector well matched to a source will also have the ability to debrief sources more thoroughly and efficiently, making the best use of what may be scarce opportunities to collect from a given source and obtaining information more quickly. The aeronautical engineer or artillery officer could, for instance, do an on-the-spot analysis of the information provided and

⁶⁵ Angelo Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft: Intelligence for a New Century* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 303, 441.

⁶⁶ The author's personal experience as an attaché bears this out completely.

ask intelligent follow-up questions immediately to clarify, amplify, or expand on the material provided. This capacity to bring expertise to bear and analyze information immediately can eliminate the possible need for the collector to submit the information to his organization, await feedback, and then arrange another interview to fill in gaps identified. This understanding of the subject matter of the information, along with generic communications skills, is also needed for the collector to be able to produce useful reports. If a collector cannot be specifically matched to a source in this way, the collector should at least have a respectable store of knowledge on the subjects upon which sources provide information to allow for follow-up questions, some degree of immediate evaluation, the composition of intelligent reports that include commentary from the collector.⁶⁷

Consistency of Ancients and Moderns on the Collector's Background

In the question of the ideal educational, cultural, and professional background of HUMINT collectors, as in matters of their character and personal qualities, we again find that writers and practitioners of every era are in fairly close correspondence. All are in agreement that HUMINT collectors need to have a good amount of area knowledge, that individual collectors should be matched as closely as possible to their possible sources, and that every collector ought to have a decent grounding in the subject in which information is sought. The combination of all these can be incredibly effective. Area knowledge can help the collector move through the society he is working in and more efficiently find those who have the information he seeks; it can also prevent mistakes based on a poor appraisal of the social and cultural context of the source. Collectors deployed with a view to matching up with a particular sort of source, having found and made a general evaluation of a potential source based on their area knowledge, then have a head start in beginning and building the relationship necessary to obtain the desired information. Finally, the expertise of a collector properly matched to a source facilitates the best and most

⁶⁷ Pechan, "The Collector's Role," 40, 44-46.

efficient use of the source and his information, and produces the most intelligent, useful reports possible by the collector.

The HUMINT Organization

Leadership

Where ancient HUMINT practice was usually (though not always) carried out by a few collectors working directly for a general or king, modern HUMINT, while still used at the national level, is also practiced at a much lower level and may support very small units, particularly in SASO or counterinsurgency operations.⁶⁸ In the U.S. Army today collectors are found in dedicated collection units of company or platoon size located at the corps and division levels, as well as in the armored cavalry regiment and special forces group.⁶⁹ Other militaries also have HUMINT capabilities that operate at similar levels.⁷⁰ The size and complexity of modern military organizations makes it impossible in nearly all circumstances that a senior officer would be able to directly supervise a HUMINT collector in the way that his predecessors in the time of Sun Tzu might have. As specialist intelligence officers rather than senior commanders now supervise collectors and, as we have seen, the practice of HUMINT is a subtle art requiring a particular set of characteristics, the characteristics of the person who would lead HUMINT collection units is worthy of consideration.

HUMINT leaders, like leaders of other organizations, must possess integrity, character, and the ability to communicate with and motivate their subordinates.⁷¹ What are of interest here, though, are the characteristics and abilities that would be unique to a leader and supervisor of HUMINT collectors.

⁶⁸ See page 3 above. This is not completely new; the U.S. Marine Corps advocated doing this in its small-war doctrine in 1940, which allowed for the practice of HUMINT down to the individual patrol level. U.S. Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1940), Chapter 6, 39.

⁶⁹ Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 22-7*, Chapter 2.

⁷⁰ Interview with and email from LTC J. R. Hockenull. LTC Hockenull is a British exchange instructor with the U.S. Army Command and Staff College who has direct and extensive experience of British HUMINT operations and practice.

⁷¹ Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 22-100*, 31 August 1999. It is interesting that the description of desired leadership traits in this manual, as well as in civilian academic writing on leadership, bears great similarity to the desired traits of a HUMINT collector discussed earlier.

What must make a HUMINT leader different from other leaders is the requirement that all leaders have to be competent in the basic skills of the organization they lead. Leadership paradigms and expectations not only across various sorts of organizations but across cultures give an important role to competence, to the ability of the leader to not only perform basic tasks, but to excel in them.⁷²

What distinguishes the leader of a HUMINT organization from a leader in another intelligence discipline or, for that matter, from a leader in another walk of life, is skill in the basics of the HUMINT discipline. One academic study has stated that positions of leadership in the best organizations will be held by those who are perceived by members of the organization as extremely proficient in the organization's basic activity. In particular, the initial impression of members of the organizations as to the leader's expertise will have a strong influence on the status, influence, credibility, and prestige of the leader in the organization. Leaders in these organizations will tend not to be generalists, i.e. continue to be fully expert in performing basic tasks in spite of their more senior position and added responsibilities.⁷³ The presence of an extremely competent leader can be a huge benefit for an organization. One writer describes a restaurant kitchen in which the "esprit de corps" of the staff "would have done credit to the marines." This was in spite of the fact that the head chef was extremely demanding, intolerant of mistakes, boasted that he made more money than everyone else, micromanaged to a great degree, and seldom praised anyone for anything. Remarking that many aspects of this leader's style were not at all what one might wish for, the writer states that the critical factor in this situation was that the leader was by far the most proficient in the basic skill of the organization--cooking--and

⁷² David M. Rosen, "Leadership in World Cultures," in *Leadership: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Barbara Kellerman (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1984), 47-60.

⁷³ Peter B. Vaill, "Toward a Behavioral Description of High-Performing Systems," in *Leadership: Where Else Can We Go?*, ed. Morgan W. McCall, Jr. and Michael M. Lombardo (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1978), 111.

everyone in the organization knew it.⁷⁴ While it seems clear that competence cannot mask abusive or overbearing behavior forever, the special value of leader competence is also evident.

U.S. Army leadership doctrine agrees that leaders must possess a high degree of technical skill and competence, and that in every organization there are skills in which all members, including leaders, must be competent.⁷⁵ Direct leaders--those who are the first-line supervisors of individual soldiers--should be the Army's technical experts. This not only engenders respect for leaders, but enables them to serve as trainers and mentors for their subordinates, to properly employ their organization's capabilities, and to make decisions.⁷⁶

What makes the challenge facing the leader of a HUMINT organization unique is the nature of the work his subordinates perform. A special problem HUMINT leaders face is that of assessing their subordinates' personal relationships with sources when quite often the leader, for reasons of practicality or security, will never be present at a meeting with the source. Quite aside from the necessity for a leader to establish his status by means of his competence in the basic skills of the HUMINT discipline, the leader also needs some degree of HUMINT skill to effectively interact with his collectors to determine the true state of their collection operations. As the collector more than likely has at least a small personal stake in the relationship with the source, he may shade his account of the relationship and the source's performance to his supervisor, even if only unwittingly. To effectively supervise subordinates in their conduct of operations, the leader must assess the reliability of the collectors' accounts of their sources in much the same way as the collector assesses the reliability of the source's information. The ability to do so requires the establishment of a working rapport with the collector and many of the same skills that collectors use in the course of their work; in fact, since HUMINT collectors exercise these skills on a routine basis, the supervisor's skills ought to be of a higher order to

⁷⁴ D. Ogilvy, "The Creative Chef," in *The Creative Organization*, ed. G. Steiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 114.

⁷⁵ Department of the Army, *FM 22-100*, 4-14.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 2-25, 4-14; Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Development and Career Management*, 1 October 1998, 1.

ensure that the supervisor-collector relationship is conducted in the best interests of the organization.⁷⁷ Without such skills, the leader will be able to neither effectively supervise his subordinates nor make intelligent decisions on their proper employment.

An interesting and useful analogue to the situation of a leader of HUMINT collectors is that faced by supervisors of psychoanalysts.⁷⁸ Like a HUMINT collector, an analyst must establish a personal relationship with a source. In the case of the psychoanalyst, the source is a patient from whom the psychoanalyst collects information; the information collected in this case is an account of the patient's own mental state. In working with the patient, the psychoanalyst must make an assessment of the information the patient provides with a view towards having a therapeutic effect on the patient largely through the vehicle of their personal relationship. In the case of both the analyst and the HUMINT collector, there is inevitably a very strong interpersonal aspect at the core of the matter.⁷⁹

The highly interpersonal nature of psychoanalysis presents the teacher or supervisor of psychoanalysts with a problem in that the supervisor must rely on the analyst's account of the personal interaction with the patient in order to evaluate both the subordinate psychoanalyst and the patient. To do so, the supervisor establishes a relationship with the analyst that is quite similar to that which the analyst establishes with the patient. The supervisor often functions as a coach to the analyst, helping the analyst learn through overt instruction, by actually practicing the skills of psychoanalysis with the patient, and also by way of being a participant in the relationship with the supervisor. Analysts, as well as students in many other professions, learn best by doing,

⁷⁷ This is not to say that the supervisor-subordinate relationship should or must be adversarial. The subordinate will have an interest in presenting his work in the field in the best possible light, and the supervisor must be aware of and account for this.

⁷⁸ The description of psychoanalytic practice and the supervision of psychoanalysts that follows is drawn from Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 105-127; and especially Donald A. Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987), 217-254. This paper makes no claim as to the efficacy of psychoanalysis, but is interested in the field as one in which personal relationships are central to its practice.

⁷⁹ There is a similar element in many other professions, such as teaching, management, social work, or sales. Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, 220.

and the role of coaching by a senior and expert analyst is the best way to nurture talent and create skill. It is, in effect, a very personal form of leadership and mentoring by example. This is especially important in professions such as psychoanalysis--or HUMINT collection--in which the situations faced by the professional will be endlessly various and call for the exercise of informed judgment in the face of a multitude of unique situations.⁸⁰ What is important for effective coaching and mentoring in such an environment is that those who are learning the profession have access to experts who are capable of filling the role of coach and mentor and whose proficiency is such that there would be no question of their qualifications to do so.

While it is evident that any leader of any organization must be skilled in the basics of the function of the organization, it is especially true that this be the case with the leaders of HUMINT organizations. The leader's place at the head of the organization can be cemented by the realization on the part of its members that the leader is amongst the best of them in their profession. The leader will also require HUMINT proficiency in order to make decisions on the proper employment of his collectors, to translate the information requirements of those the organization supports, whether military or civilian, into specific instructions for the individual collectors.

Finally, and most importantly, the leader must possess the skill to establish a relationship with subordinate collectors similar to that which collectors establish with sources. This is necessary to enable the leader to intelligently assess his subordinates' performance and the value of the information they have gathered from sources who the leader will never meet, and is the most important method by which the leader may present himself as an example and fully develop the skills of subordinates.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 6, 16-17.

Quality Control

The central aspect of the HUMINT problem, as we have seen, is the personal relationship and rapport between the collector and the source. This relationship may only be of a few minutes length, but it might also be of far longer duration. What is important is that it furnishes the collector an opportunity to gather information from the source, and provides the source the motivation to give the collector the information he seeks. This relationship obviously requires some personal investment by the source, but it also requires a return on that investment by the collector; this return can be as simple as praise or as involved and collaborative as friendship. Whatever the duration or nature of the rapport between the collector and a source, it is vital that the collector maintain control of the relationship and ensure that it continues to primarily serve his purposes rather than those of the source or some third party. Failure of the collector to control relationships with sources can result in a source using the collector to accomplish his purposes. These purposes may be relatively innocent; for example, a source's purpose may be only to continue to meet with the collector for the excitement. However, a source may use control of the relationship for more malign reasons, such as using the collector as a conduit for misleading or deceptive information. But even in the innocent seeming instance, a collector who is not in control and does not realize that the source's main goal is to continue the relationship can have a serious problem. The collector, not understanding that the source manipulates the information he provides with the goal of maintaining the collector's interest, may well accept distorted information as genuine and report it as reliable intelligence.

The problem of controlling relationships with sources can be, due to the personal stake that both sources and collectors might have, a difficult one. The establishment of rapport with a source requires a degree of personal commitment and engagement on the part of the collector. This engagement can make it difficult for a collector who has cultivated a source over a period of time to objectively and rigorously examine the relationship with the source with a view to

determining as best as possible who truly controls the relationship. A collector who has a strong personal relationship with a source has, due to his personal involvement, something of a conflict of interest in the matter.

A different variety of problem can develop for collectors with their sources who are considered particularly good. The relationship with a source who provides good information can also become difficult if the source is told or comes to understand that he is important.⁸¹ The need to praise and encourage sources to strengthen relationships must be balanced with the imperative of retaining control over sources. Striking this balance is amongst the most difficult things for a collector.

Theorists of HUMINT recognize this issue and the difficulties inherent in deciding which sources are properly controlled and which are not. The solution to these problems is the provision of good counterintelligence (CI) support to HUMINT operations. The role of CI support is to guard the integrity of collection operations and to protect against both purposeful manipulation and inadvertent confusion by evaluation of both the source and the information provided. The goal of CI support to HUMINT should be to help determine who controls a relationship with a source--the collector, the source, or someone else--and how reliable the information a source provides is.⁸² This is done through continuous evaluation of the source's motives and general truthfulness, as well as through particular attention to the reliability and veracity of the information provided.

Proper use of CI in support of HUMINT is vital in an environment in which an enemy purposefully attempts to deceive by putting ostensible sources where friendly collectors might find and begin to use them. This can be especially important in a low-intensity conflict against an opponent who does not have the capability to deceive via technical means. During the Vietnam War, for instance, U.S. units employed 'Chieu Hoi' scouts as guides and sources of information on

⁸¹ Kalitka, "Back to the Future," 14-15.

⁸² Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft*, 26-28.

the local area and personalities. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese frequently attempted to plant people under their control with the Chieu Hoi in order to deceive, or even to lead U.S. units into ambushes. Good CI support, particularly the detailed review of every case with a view towards establishing truthfulness, reliability, and motivation, prevented most of these planted Chieu Hoi from having any effect.⁸³

What is crucial is that CI serve as an honest evaluator of every HUMINT source, and that it be allowed to do so independently of the HUMINT collector. As noted earlier, the HUMINT collector has a stake in the validity of his source's information. So do the collector's superiors, who may have some reluctance to go to the commander they support to say that intelligence previously believed excellent was in fact bogus. CI in this role is in fact much like quality control in an industrial organization and, like quality control, can be unpopular.⁸⁴ The practice of quality control in the commercial world recognizes this problem and accounts for it by ensuring that the director of production does not supervise the individual responsible for quality control. The director of quality control instead is generally a peer of the director of production, both of whom usually answer to a common superior.⁸⁵ CI elements supporting HUMINT collectors should likewise be independent of those collectors and their superiors so that their objectivity is unimpaired. In fact, this is the way that CI, so as to allow hard, independent examinations of HUMINT operations, supports many HUMINT organizations.⁸⁶

⁸³ Joseph C. Liberti, "Counterintelligence in Direct Support," *Infantry* 64, no. 2, March-April 1976: 42.

⁸⁴ Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft*, 447.

⁸⁵ Richard E. DeVor, Tsong-how Chang, and John W. Sutherland, *Statistical Design and Quality Control* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992), 11. In some industries the current approach is now to spread quality control throughout an organization and its processes, including the product design process. This is especially true in non-industrial activities like software design or service industries. However, in many industries such as construction and heavy manufacturing, the traditional separation of quality control from production continues as it is more suited to the nature of those industries. Email from Mr. Ricardo R. Fernandez, November 23, 2003. Mr. Fernandez is the president of Advent Group, a quality assurance consultancy.

⁸⁶ Cimbala, "Counterintelligence," 63; Email from Mr. William M. Edwards, 10 October 2003. Mr. Edwards is the Chief of CI Support for HUMINT Operations in the Defense Intelligence Agency.

What is at stake in the HUMINT quality control effort is the control of sources and, ultimately, the control of information. It is for this reason that Sun Tzu, for whom knowledge and information were central, puts such emphasis on the identification of enemy HUMINT sources, and that the Chinese theorists were so concerned with the assessment of the reliability of sources and information.⁸⁷ Likewise, *The Arthashastra* says that sources and the information they provide should always be tested.⁸⁸ To fulfill this quality control function, CI should employ what one writer describes as a 'sophisticated skepticism,' examining every HUMINT source with an eye to what could be wrong, being especially wary of those sources who might be becoming 'important' or 'indispensable,' and not being deterred by HUMINT collectors who insist that their sources are excellent and do not merit the attention of CI support.⁸⁹ At the same time, though, HUMINT operations cannot be paralyzed by an excess of mistrust. The idea is to examine operations thoroughly, employing a reasonable degree of prudence, so that an intelligent decision on each source can be made. Failure to succeed in this may lead to a successful enemy deception and all the consequences that implies. As a theorist of intelligence has stated, "...when one side's intelligence loses the contest in quality control, it becomes a net liability."⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, 146, 148, 149. Sun Tzu also advocates giving identified enemy HUMINT sources false information as a means to deceive.

⁸⁸ Kautilya, *Arthashastra*, 381.

⁸⁹ Kalitka, "Back to the Future," 13-14; Kalitka, "Counterintelligence Myths," 27.

⁹⁰ Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft*, 37.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Nature of the Problem for the U.S. Army

As noted at the beginning of this paper, the intelligence leaders of the U.S. Army have identified the need for improvement of the Army HUMINT capabilities. What is disturbing is that the current generation of leaders is not the first to identify this need. In fact, the deficiency and need for improvement in Army HUMINT capability has been noted in publications at least as far back as the end of the Vietnam War, and periodically since then up to the present day.⁹¹

While HUMINT is as old as civilization and conflict and has been practiced in every era by virtually every variety of human group, understanding of and aptitude for HUMINT has varied greatly. Americans would not seem to have been amongst the most effective or apt practitioners of HUMINT. This has been variously put down to the American preference for technical solutions, dislike for what is seen as an underhanded practice, deficiency of cross-cultural skills and empathy, and the absence of a tradition of intelligence and intrigue.⁹² This is something that we share with our cultural predecessors, the Romans, who during the period before the Caesars found a vigorous intelligence service to be incompatible with the principles of their republican government. Instead, the Romans sought direct military confrontation, were generally stronger than their opponents, and therefore preferred to employ means that made use of their strength and demonstrated dominance.⁹³ As we have seen, the Roman lack of sophistication in this area in one instance cost them three legions and checked the expansion of the Roman Empire in Central Europe.

⁹¹ Hurley, "HUMINT Revitalization;" Liberti, "Counterintelligence in Direct Support." These two articles are only the oldest found in the course of research for this paper; there are many others. What is interesting is that have been surges in production of papers calling for improved HUMINT at the beginning of each decade with titles such as "HUMINT for the 80s," or whichever decade impends.

⁹² Sherr, "Cultures of Spying," 56-60; Robert Bryant et al., "America Needs More Spies," *The Economist* 368, no. 8332, 12 July 2003: 30. HUMINT is often a tool employed by the weak or poor against the strong or rich, and this may also be a factor in the American preference for other means. The most famous and proudly recounted instance of American HUMINT, that of Nathan Hale, comes from the era of the American Revolution, when American power was at its weakest and most vulnerable.

⁹³ Sheldon, "The Roman Secret Service," 2.

The result of this for the U.S. is that there is little in American writing on statecraft, power, and the military to compare with the extensive discussions of the theory and practice of HUMINT found in Chinese or Indian thought, and therefore little accessible work on the subject useful for American HUMINT thinkers or practitioners. What work does exist rarely discusses the human aspect of the problem, but more often discusses organizational or administrative issues, or attempts at technical solutions to HUMINT inadequacies.⁹⁴ While it would seem self-evident that the nature of the individual collector as far as his personal characteristics and interpersonal skills would be central to HUMINT, what is striking in U.S. Army writing on the subject, both in doctrinal publications and journal contributions, is the lack of consideration of these topics. This is in marked contrast to much of the literature of other cultures, which often goes into great detail on questions of personality and the suitability of individuals for HUMINT.

Application of HUMINT Principles

What has been lacking in the Army's efforts to improve HUMINT capability to date has been the application of principles of HUMINT to the problem in the same way that principles of, say, the propagation of radio waves are applied to the SIGINT problem. In fact, a great deal of time and financial resources are put into the design and matching of SIGINT and other technical sensors to their targets, while nearly no similar effort is put into a similar effort for HUMINT. What is necessary to improve HUMINT is attention to the 'design' of the HUMINT sensor, the individual collector, in relation to HUMINT targets, and to support HUMINT collectors with the right leadership and organizations. Through an examination of the historical and theoretical literature, this paper has derived some principles of the HUMINT discipline. These principles are that collectors must have certain personal characteristics and a good degree of area knowledge;

⁹⁴ David D. Perkins, "Counterintelligence and Human Intelligence Operations in Bosnia," *Defense Intelligence Journal* 6, no. 1, Spring 1997; Lieutenant Colonel Peter J. Dillon, "A Theory for Human Intelligence Operations," U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project Paper, 1999; LTC (P) Michael W. Pick, "What the Joint Force Commander Needs to Know About CI and HUMINT Operations," National War College Paper, 2002. It is interesting that in these articles, the examples given from operations are of collectors taking photographs of or observing facilities, not of collectors interacting with sources.

that they ought to be as closely matched to their potential sources as possible; that they need a decent familiarity with the subject matter upon which they are collecting; that their leaders must be extremely skillful in the basics of HUMINT collection; and that they need independent support from CI. These will now be compared with current Army HUMINT with a view to pointing the way to the improved capability that has been sought for so long.

As one cannot design and build a HUMINT collector--unlike an antenna or camera--from the ground up, one must instead put a corresponding effort into the selection of collectors. Selection of HUMINT collectors is the counterpart of the design of technical collectors. Practitioners and theorists throughout history are in agreement as to the criteria that should be used to select HUMINT collectors. The first of the principles of HUMINT is that collectors must have certain personal qualities: they must possess a high degree of integrity; they must be able to effectively relate to people and establish rapport; they must be able to communicate effectively; they must be sophisticated, subtle, and wise; and they must be good judges of character, motivation, and reliability. All sources also agree that people of this quality are not common.

Current Army selection of HUMINT personnel takes none of this into account. Soldiers enter the two HUMINT-related Military Occupational Specialties (MOS), 97B - Counterintelligence Agent and 97E - Human Intelligence Collector. Soldiers in the 97B MOS "collect information from human sources to better understand the adversarial intelligence and international terrorist threat," while 97E soldiers' mission will be to "gather information from human sources...that address local and national intelligence requirements." Soldiers are currently recruited into both of these MOSs by U.S. Army Recruiting Command recruiters along with soldiers of other MOSs, and are not assessed for their potential as HUMINT collectors. The Army does plan to change the recruitment process for the 97B MOS and accept only second-term enlistees from the 97E MOS into it, contingent on an assessment of their suitability for the MOS that does take into account some of the needed characteristics. 97Es, though, will be able to continue on in the MOS with no assessment of their suitability for duty as a HUMINT collector.

For reasons that are not clear, more careful assessment and selection of 97E soldiers is considered unnecessary.⁹⁵ What this system will produce will be HUMINT collectors of sometimes inadequate or inappropriate personal qualities. Except in the 97B MOS, when it does produce collectors of good or high quality, it will do so by happenstance.

Another principle of HUMINT is that the collector should have a high degree of area knowledge, an understanding of the culture and politics of the region in which he is working. This aspect of a HUMINT collector can be 'designed' into the collector by way of education and training. While natives of an area employed as collectors will obviously have the best area knowledge, it is possible through education and in-country experience to bring a non-native to a very high degree of area knowledge. This area knowledge makes a collector able to work much more readily with the people of the region, makes the collector a much better judge of those people, and makes deception of the collector much more difficult. The Army addresses the issue of area knowledge for the two HUMINT MOSs only insofar as it provides the opportunity for some individuals to receive language training and notes that units should maintain up-to-date country studies for use by collectors.⁹⁶

A further principle of HUMINT is that a collector should be matched as closely as possible to the intended source, in particular as regards professional background. Doing so gives the collector a better chance of establishing commonality and rapport with the source, enables the collector to better assess the source and the information provided, and helps the collector to ask more intelligent questions concerning the information of interest. This principle is not addressed by Army HUMINT practice at all. An Army collector generally starts in a HUMINT MOS in his first-term enlistment and has the knowledge of another occupation or walk of life only by chance.

⁹⁵ Headquarters, Department of the Army, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence Directorate of Counterintelligence, Foreign Disclosure, and Security, "CI and HUMINT Transformation," internal memorandum dated 26 November 2001.

⁹⁶ Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, "CI and HUMINT Transformation" memorandum; Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 34-60: Counterintelligence*, 30 October 1995, 1-12; U.S. Army Intelligence Center and School, *FM 34-7-1: Tactical Human Intelligence and Counterintelligence Operations*, April 2002, 7-14.

Plans to initiate an assessment process for the 97B MOS are designed to take the large majority of those assessed from the 97E MOS rather than other MOSs throughout the Army.⁹⁷

The organizational questions of leadership and quality control are also problem areas. Just as there currently exists no real assessment process for the enlisted HUMINT career fields, there is also no assessment process for HUMINT officers. There is such a process for HUMINT warrant officers, who nearly always come from the enlisted HUMINT career fields, and these warrant officers are usually apt, experienced, and well-trained. Company-grade officers, however, undergo no screening before they are admitted to HUMINT training. Further, this training is not HUMINT-specific, but rather a portion of a CI course that mainly covers CI investigations and operations and touches on HUMINT mostly as it relates to CI operations. One thing that these officers do not receive is hands-on experience in HUMINT operations. Warrant officers and enlisted HUMINT collectors train for HUMINT collection operations and actually meet sources in operational settings, but commissioned officer leaders do not. This makes it very difficult for a company or battalion commander to truly command his HUMINT collectors. As commanders have usually never conducted source meetings or other aspects of HUMINT operations personally, it is very difficult for them to lead their units by example, assess the operations of their subordinates, or coach and mentor them.

One of the root causes of the HUMINT problems consistently identified by Army leadership is that the Army deploys young collectors who may or may not have suitable personal characteristics, area knowledge, professional background of any kind, or indeed much in the way of life experience. One writer on HUMINT says that in this intelligence discipline "using young recruits...is wasteful, if not pernicious. They are unlikely to know their own minds sufficiently,

⁹⁷ Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, "CI and HUMINT Transformation" memorandum.

nor is it easy to assess someone accurately before he [the collector] has been exposed to the turbulence of 'real life'; it is unlikely that his character has already been fully formed."⁹⁸

The general nature of the HUMINT problem as discussed in this paper is challenging; the challenge Army HUMINT collectors face can be even more daunting. They may be deployed to a region in which the U.S. had not expected to become involved and therefore have little time to study the area. In many areas, such as Eastern Europe, the Orient, or the Middle East, they will interact with people who either have a long cultural tradition of intrigue and spying; a recent necessity to contend with a pervasive, efficient, and vicious domestic intelligence service; or both. People who have grown up in a culture that does not value personal straightforwardness and that presents a counterintelligence problem of a very personal nature on a daily basis will be amongst the most difficult sort of potential sources. The problem of establishing and assessing relationships with people in these kinds of areas and collecting reliable, useful information will be quite challenging. Further, low-intensity conflicts such as counter-insurgencies and other stability operations may require collection of information from sources with whom young soldiers have little or nothing in common, such as local politicians, businessmen, tribesmen, or criminals, and may also present a myriad of cultural, political, and economic complications. Given that the Army does little to ensure that suitable people are put into these situations, it is not surprising that leaders would be dissatisfied with Army HUMINT.

The Army's HUMINT organization also does not provide for independent CI review of HUMINT operations. This independent review is needed to provide HUMINT collectors with an objective look at their sources by someone who has no personal stake in the relationship with the source. Army HUMINT doctrine addresses this problem to some degree, specifying that the HUMINT Analysis Team (HAT) at the division or corps level Analysis Control Element (ACE) should analyze source reliability and credibility as reflected in the information reported. The HAT is independent of tactical HUMINT collection teams. The HAT, however, only looks at

⁹⁸ Laquer, *The Uses and Limits of Intelligence*, 321.

reporting, not at the other aspects of the relationship with the source--such as the source's motivation for meeting the collector and providing information--that might bear on the reporting or indicate problems. This is left to the collector himself and to his superiors, who both have some incentive to present each source in the best possible light.⁹⁹

Models

There are other organizations that the Army might use as models to improve its HUMINT capabilities. The first of these are the British Army and the U.S. Marine Corps. The British Army selects its HUMINT collectors from amongst the entire force, as well as from members of the naval and air forces. The qualities desired in British Army HUMINT collectors are much the same as those desired throughout history, including integrity, honesty, resourcefulness, ability to empathize, and judgment. What the British Army seeks overall are high-grade soldiers who enjoy personal interaction. The British also look for maturity, for people who have sufficient experience of life to be able to easily engage with others. Approximately one in nine who start the selection process end by completing it. Officers involved in HUMINT undergo the roughly the same selection, assessment, and training process.¹⁰⁰

The selection system for HUMINT collectors in the U.S. Marine Corps is similar to that of the British Army, though shorter and less rigorous. The Marine Corps accepts applicants for their CI/HUMINT MOS from those completing their first enlistment in any Marine MOS. Like the British Army, the Marines seek out those with the qualities that have always been desirable in HUMINT collectors, amongst them character professionalism, experience, appearance and bearing, speaking and writing ability, and general knowledge of world affairs. Marines who complete the initial screening process are then assigned to limited duties in a CI/HUMINT unit under the supervision of trained personnel. This probationary period is intended as a further

⁹⁹ See page 39 above.

¹⁰⁰ LTC Hockenhull interview and email. Interestingly, the British Army also requires a high degree of physical fitness and skill in combatatives, largely due to the hazards of operations in Northern Ireland.

assessment over an extended time of the suitability of Marines as HUMINT collectors.¹⁰¹ As in the British system, the selection and assessment process for all involved in Marine HUMINT--enlisted, warrant officer, or commissioned officer--is the same, which has the effect of training HUMINT leaders as well as HUMINT collectors.¹⁰²

An advantage of both the British and Marine Corps systems is that all HUMINT collectors in both systems have had training and experience in another career field. Marine HUMINT collectors may well have been aircraft maintainers, artillerymen, communications technicians, or any one of a multitude of other job descriptions; the British system adds the additional career fields of the naval and air services to the possibilities. This can be especially advantageous when HUMINT collectors are gathering information on the intentions or capabilities of an enemy's military. Collectors who have military experience of a broader nature will be able to ask better questions, separate the important from the unimportant, and be less susceptible to deception.

Another excellent model for improvement of Army HUMINT is the U.S. Army attaché system. Attachés are generally selected from the Army's Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program. This program trains selected officers in foreign area studies and languages with the intention that they become expert on their region of interest. This training includes graduate-level study of the target region at a civilian university, intensive language training, and a year of study and travel in the region. From the pool of FAO officers, the Defense Attaché Service then conducts interviews with and reviews the records of candidates to determine their suitability for service as an attaché. Those who are suitable are then given attaché-specific training, including in the overt collection and reporting that attachés, like all diplomats, have as a part of their duties.¹⁰³ One of the main

¹⁰¹ Commandant of the Marine Corps, Marine Corps Order 3850.1H "Policy and Guidance for Counterintelligence Activities," 27 June 1995.

¹⁰² Email from U.S. Marine Corps Captain Vincent H. Bridgeman. Captain Bridgeman is a Marine intelligence officer serving at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps.

¹⁰³ Author's personal experience. The author went through this process and eventually served as an attaché in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

reasons for the effectiveness of the Army attaché corps is that its members are drawn from across all Army career fields. This provides officers who are highly capable of engaging with officers from other nations based on their common profession, and puts collectors in the field who possess a great deal of professional expertise.

A possible model for the proper organization of CI support to HUMINT operations would be that of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). Attachés and other DIA collectors come under the control of the DIA Directorate of Operations (DO). Dedicated CI officers assigned to the Directorate of Administration (DA) provide CI support to those collectors. Those officers have complete access to all HUMINT operations they support and work very closely with collectors to ensure that HUMINT operations provide reliable information. The DA's main responsibility, as its title implies, is to provide administrative support in the personnel and finance areas. CI officers are assigned there solely to put them under a separate supervisory chain from the collectors they support.¹⁰⁴

Recommendations

What would be appropriate for improving Army HUMINT at the tactical level--corps level and below--would be a mixture of the selection processes of the British Army and U.S. Marine Corps (for collectors of every rank), the training given Army attachés, and type of CI support provided DIA HUMINT collectors.

HUMINT collectors of both Army HUMINT MOSs should not be allowed to enter the MOS on their first enlistment. Allowing recruits to enter the MOS at the recruiting station prevents any sort of assessment of their potential and suitability as a HUMINT collector. HUMINT collectors should be selected from amongst first and second term enlistees of any MOS who have already been successful in another career field, and who are older, more mature, and have a more fully developed and settled character. This kind of selection process, in addition to

¹⁰⁴ Edwards email.

ensuring the overall suitability of HUMINT collectors, would have the additional benefit of producing a group of collectors with a wide range of military experience and expertise. Commissioned officers who will lead HUMINT units should undergo a similar screening and training process and be given the opportunity to participate in HUMINT collection operations. In addition to honing their proficiency in preparation for command of HUMINT units, commissioned officers will be a better match with many sources than enlisted soldiers, such as mid-level politicians or foreign military officers.

After the selection process, new HUMINT personnel should then be given area and language training as a part of their training as collectors. This training in its initial stages ought to be a shorter, less involved version of the training given to foreign area officers. First-term HUMINT soldiers should concentrate on language mastery. When language skills are sufficiently developed--and when the soldier's suitability as a collector is more certain--more advanced language training and area study would be appropriate, including study or travel in the region of interest. The prospect of this kind of training could be used as an incentive for soldiers to enter and continue in the MOS, as well as for a reward for achievement. While it would seem that giving soldiers a regional specialty in this manner might limit their utility in other parts of the world, in reality the understanding of and immersion in a foreign culture, especially those that are far different than one's native culture, tunes the ability to understand all foreign cultures and gives a head start in doing so.¹⁰⁵ As with the selection and screening process, this training should also be extended to commissioned and warrant officers.

Finally, HUMINT organizations must make provision for independent CI review of HUMINT collection operations. What is important is that the CI Support must be a part of a different chain-of-command than the HUMINT collectors. For example, in a U.S. Army division

¹⁰⁵ The author, after completing nearly three years of service in the Balkans, went directly to Afghanistan to serve in a similar position. Though the cultures are dissimilar, the intimate familiarity with the culture of Bosnia created a sensitivity to simple things, such as manners at table and proper modes of greeting, that made the transition to Afghanistan much easier than it would have been otherwise.

HUMINT collectors are a part of the division's Military Intelligence (MI) battalion. CI personnel supporting those collectors must be in a chain-of-command that does not include the MI battalion commander, but they also must have full access to the details of HUMINT operations in order to ensure effective quality control. One possibility would be that CI support to HUMINT fall under the division G-2 (Intelligence) officer, who does not work for the MI battalion commander, but rather for the division chief-of-staff.

Implementation of a selection and training process for HUMINT collectors of this nature, as well as of the organizational changes recommended, obviously has important implications for personnel policy and manning, resources, and a myriad of other areas. These considerations may keep any program from being ideal. However, it is beyond question that the Army HUMINT program must begin some kind of selection and assessment process for its personnel beyond that done at the recruiting station, and also that it should begin to take advantage of the pool of potential HUMINT collectors in the rest of the Army. Further, the capability to make a sophisticated, independent CI review of HUMINT operations is necessary in order to guard against the possibility of HUMINT becoming a net liability through willful deception or inadvertent misunderstandings. These changes are the keys to resolving the Army's long-standing dissatisfaction with its HUMINT capability. The result of this kind of program would be a force of well-led and productive HUMINT collectors selected, trained, and employed in keeping with sound principles of HUMINT, and some result in the long search for improved Army HUMINT capability.

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