

Running Head: OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Operational Intelligence

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Outline

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

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II. History

A. Eighteenth Century

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Abstract

Operational Intelligence has been proving throughout history to provide critical information that is essential in planning combat operations. The most consistent form of intelligence has been human intelligence gathering. When you combine human intelligence gathering with today's technology you have a robust package that can accurately provide the combatant commanders with real-time data to help them fight and win on today's battlefield.

Operational Intelligence

Operational intelligence refers to the collecting of information, analysis of that information, and the distribution of information that is relevant to the national security strategy. During the early eighteenth century, our military leaders understood the importance of operational intelligence but lacked the technological advances to effectively gather, process, and distribute the information that they were receiving. During the Revolutionary War George Washington gathered intelligence in the form of covert actions, counterintelligence and even espionage using a committee that would secretly exchange letters with citizens in Europe and Britain that were sympathetic to the American cause. Most of the information collected through espionage proved to be inaccurate and the information received through actions on the battlefield was often received too late to serve any useful purpose. However, George Washington acknowledged the importance in the intelligence gathering process and found fragments of information that proved to be useful and that developed trends in operational techniques. George Washington, having seen the significance of accurate intelligence knew that it would shape the war and established the Secret Service Fund, which would receive 12 percent of the federal budget.

George Washington established the first intelligence unit in 1776 commanded by Thomas Knowlton that later became known as the “Knowlton Rangers”. The unit was responsible for gathering information through reconnaissance missions that were considered too dangerous for conventional forces. Knowlton’s Rangers proved to be an invaluable source for gathering reliable and providing current information that could be processed and used on the battlefield. The Army’s intelligence seal of today bears the date 1776 in honor of Knowlton’s Rangers. Other intelligence outfits were forming and providing valuable information that would influence

the outcome of the war. One of those groups known as the “mechanics” which meant skilled laborers and artisans, gathered information on British troop movements and even destroyed and stole equipment belonging to the British. Their patriotic acts were not overlooked and the American people often referred to them as the Liberty Boys. The most legendary member of the Liberty Boys was Paul Revere who served as a courier for the group and later became famous for the infamous “midnight run”.

In the early nineteenth century during the Mexican War, what little intelligent information that was gathered often came from tactical reconnaissance. The Civil War however did utilize spies but with no impairing effect on the either side proved to be unpretentious. Union forces were the first to employ the use of aerial reconnaissance by means of balloons in 1861 but the technological break-through proved to be brief due to funding issues. Many Union Soldiers and senior leaders felt that using the balloons because of their explosive hydrogen was reckless and foolishly putting their military men in harm’s way. President Lincoln and other military leaders had the foresight to see the usefulness of aerial intelligence gathering on the battlefields by providing accurate and timely information on the enemy’s location. However important the president considered the program to be he could not continue to fund it and it met its demise in 1863. Unknown by the Union forces the Confederate leaders considered the balloons a huge frustration and a very effective discouraging tactic when it came to troop movement ultimately causing delays in their tactical strategy.

The Bureau of Military Intelligence was established in 1863 to provide an accurate depiction of the Confederates movements, troop strength, and equipment. Headed by Major General Joe Hooker commander of the Army of the Potomac and more commonly known as

“Fighting Joe” among his colleges was renowned for his ability to quickly gather and disseminate accurate intelligence information. In regards to his promotion to this position, Hooker told Lincoln “the country at war would best be served by a dictator” (Wikipedia, Army of the Potomac, ¶ 1). Lincoln’s reply was,

I have heard, in such way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the Army and the Government needed a Dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain success can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship (Wikipedia, Army of the Potomac, ¶ 2).

With the amount of information being gathered abroad and in the absence of an agency to collect and analyze the information the first U.S. intelligence agencies were stood up. The first was the office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) in 1882 and then the Army’s Military Intelligence Division (MID) in 1885. Though both agencies were lightly manned, they were tasked with gathering information that might be relevant in a time of war. Eventually the importance of the intelligence information that they were gathering became apparent and the need for a more robust and better-trained staff quickly followed.

With the technological advances of the twentieth century also came a new era of collecting and processing operational intelligence. When the U.S. entered the First World War in 1917 it realized that its intelligence organization needed restructured to cope with the technological advances in the communication platforms currently in use. Intelligence gathering now had to contend with a wireless communications system that could rapidly pass real time information. Unfortunately, for the intelligence community these messages were often encrypted

and provided little to no valuable information until the message could be deciphered. This created a need for code breakers and the U.S. stood up a code and cipher unit commanded by then 2LT Herbert Yardley, which became the first U.S. signal intelligence (SIGINT) organization. Yardley was tasked with the development and training of signal individuals in the decryption of enemy codes that became known as the eight section of military intelligence (MI-8). The MI-8 was the foundation for an organization known as the Cipher Bureau commonly referred to as the Black Chamber that became the first peacetime cryptanalytic organization. The state department and the U.S. Army funded the organization under the premise that the company made commercial codes for U.S. businesses. The company was actually charged with breaking the codes of different foreign nations and was quite successful in their endeavors. This eventually led to the creation of the Central Intelligence Division (CID) and proved to be the forerunner for the creation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Often the attack on Pearl Harbor is referred to as an intelligence failure. U.S. intelligence agencies were not communicating with each other ultimately creating an illogical analysis of the Japanese military capability and objective. After the attack the U.S., inherently notice a flaw in the information dissemination process and took immediate actions to resolve it. Prior to the attack William Donovan was appointed Coordinator of Information (COI) by President Roosevelt. Donovan's job was to act as a central collection agency, gathering and analyzing intelligence information that applied to national security. Donovan's efforts for a peaceful alliance with the existing intelligence agencies came with stiff resistance particularly from the military. The intelligence agencies arrogance and noncompliance to share information formed the catalyst that led to the intelligence failure associated with Pearl Harbor. Though the

government may not have been able to stop the attack, had the intelligence agencies collaborated they would have had a better idea of the Japanese's intent.

In the mid twentieth century, President Truman found it difficult to decipher the conflicting intelligence reports and created the Central Intelligence Group under the care of the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI). The DCI was charged with improving the coordination between dissimilar groups. However, not having an institutional base the DCI found this objective almost impossible to complete. In 1947, the National Security Act became law establishing a National Security Council (NSC) charged with the coordination of military and civilian strategy, assigned the DCI to the NSC, and assigned the CIA to the DCI to manage intelligence. The military insisted that each branch of service sustain its own intelligence agency and to accommodate this, the Defense Intelligence Agency stood up.

The modern intelligence community has an imposing composition of operational intelligence tools that effectively collect, analyze, and disseminate information on today's battlefield. The technological advances of today's intelligence gathering result in a more accurate, reliable, time efficient, and robust range of information that has not been possible in previous conflicts. Some common intelligence gathering practices that were available in the eighteenth century and are commonly used today consist of human intelligence (HUMINT) such as newspaper articles, espionage, reconnaissance, and interrogation. With the technological advances of today, the government has the ability to view the internet, do phone tapes, intercept wireless transmission, and provide imagery via live video feed from unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and satellites. This streamed-lined information processing can help eliminate casualties and provides an enhanced strategic picture to the combatant commanders by providing an in-depth and current look at the battlefield.

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