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## THE ROLE OF INTELLIGENCE FROM HUMAN SOURCES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

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**Abstract:** In recent years, a series of terrorist attacks have been carried out on European soil against state institutions, diplomats, foreign armed forces and civilians. With the new security challenges, there is a need for strong intelligence services, which will function in every aspect of the threats and will use all human and technical capacities. However, the use of these capacities as well as the results that will arise will depend on their operational capabilities. This means that human resources will have to be upgraded and directed deep into the root of this type of hybrid threat. If previously it was thought that the front of terrorist organizations is in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc., now the front has moved to Western European capitals and the United States. The ideology under which these attacks were carried out, defined as terrorist, is the driving force behind the emergence of hybrid threats. After facing such phenomena, the need to study them and obtain as much information as possible that will help for prevention in the future is inevitable. Intelligence with all its disciplines is central to the modern world, which faces hybrid and unconventional wars. Today in the age of modern and highly sophisticated technology, the importance of information is crucial in the fight against these phenomena. By changing the trends of warfare, the trends of intelligence are also changing. But the purpose and principles of intelligence always remain the same. At the global level, an important factor in dealing with terrorism is the coordination and cooperation of related and partner services that have information obtained with the help of intelligence disciplines, and mostly through intelligence with human sources - HUMINT. Human intelligence (HUMINT) is defined as any information that can be gathered from human sources. Intelligence operations using human sources are extremely complex and risky and therefore require prior detailed preparation based on established rules and procedures. Any deviation in the work of the intelligence services from the concept of dealing with these threats, will contribute to reducing the success of prevention and elimination of threats. HUMINT is an imperative for successfully dealing with modern terrorist organizations and their influence in the world. Detailed planning and coordinated action of the intelligence services, through cooperation, dissemination and exchange of information, is necessary to deal with the emergence of modern hybrid threats. HUMINT is a crucial element in the process of preventing and dealing with terrorism, and its successful implementation will reduce or completely neutralize terrorist threats.

**Keywords:** intelligence, terrorism, security, HUMINT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The world is not getting any safer, and espionage remains our first line of defense.<sup>6</sup> Intelligence is the process by which specific types of information important to national security are requested, collected, analyzed, and provided to policymakers; the products of that process; the safeguarding of these processes and this information by counterintelligence activities; the carrying out of operations as requested by lawful authorities.<sup>7</sup> Information is much more valuable. The U.S. Intelligence Community uses the term ‘All-source Intelligence’ (synonymous with ‘Fusion Intelligence’), which means use of as many sources as possible (HUMINT, GEOINT, SIGINT, MASINT, and OSINT) to prepare the final intelligence product.<sup>8</sup> The history of HUMINT is well documented over time by great civilizations around the world. Ancient Chinese and Indian military theorists (Sun Tzu - The Art of War and Chanakia - Artasastra) wrote the basics of intelligence. Chanakia student Chandraguptra Maipsa (founder of the Maipsa Empire) used secret methods and operations to expand and survive his empire. The ancient Egyptians developed a system for gathering information. Their Hebrew rivals also used spies, which is even documented in the Bible. There are other examples in the Torah and the Qur'an, which describe the idea of practicing HUMINT that

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<sup>6</sup> Hayden, M. V., *Playing to the Edge*, Penguin Books, February 23, 2016

<sup>7</sup> Lowenthal, M.M., *Intelligence. From secrets to Policy*, seventh edition, Thousand Oaks 2017

<sup>8</sup> Committee on National Security Systems, Instruction 4009. Committee on National Security Systems (CNSS) Glossary, 2015

exists and appears in all civilizations, cultures and histories around the world. The ancient Greeks and Romans developed spy networks in order to gain an advantage over rivals and maintain control over empires. The Athenians used the trade to gather information about the Aegean Sea. Even Alexander the Great used Greek merchants and adventurers in Persia as sources to plan his expedition to Asia Minor and the Middle East. The Romans relied on their diplomats and merchants to gather information from various parts of the Mediterranean. It is important to note that the use of information from sources in different professions was not relatively new. The HUMINT intelligence discipline in the 21st century has changed dramatically from the time of the world wars. The Cold War is a period of revolution in industry, with new opportunities for information gathering. One of the main obstacles facing HUMINT is the technological development in communications, surveillance, satellites, information age, etc., which makes HUMINT obsolete. Intelligence analysis is the process by which collected information is evaluated and integrated with existing information to facilitate intelligence production.<sup>9</sup>

## **2. HUMINT - Intelligence from human sources**

HUMINT is a type of intelligence that arises from information gathered and provided through human sources. As one of the ways to collect intelligence, HUMINT is always available, allows easy assignment and reassignment of questions and has a low level of demand for technical and financial support. HUMINT is an organized and focused process that encompasses a wide range of intelligence disciplines. Most HUMINT activities are performed outdoors and covertly. HUMINT is fused, controlled, and coordinated with other ways of gathering intelligence. The reliability of intelligence obtained from a HUMINT source is verified through other means of gathering intelligence. HUMINT confirms and expands the intelligence obtained with IMINT and SIGINT. Technology cannot always provide a complete understanding of the environment: local attitudes, opinions, identities, the importance of key people in the environment, their interconnectedness, and so on. HUMINT supports counterintelligence data collection activities by supplementing and supporting its functions. HUMINT is a planned and organized activity that is realized through designated and non-designated HUMINT operations. HUMINT operation is a set of procedures and activities undertaken in order to collect data of intelligence significance. The HUMINT operation is planned, organized and carried out by the operating agents and arises from the Primary/Priority Intelligence Requirements of managers at all levels. HUMINT operations involve the controlled and coordinated deployment of intelligence-gathering personnel. Agents who plan and implement HUMINT operations in the scope of their work use authorized and prescribed operational technical means and methods. Sources used to gather intelligence during the implementation of HUMINT operations are:

- Allies;
- Prisoners of war;
- Deserters;
- Refugees;
- Civil officials;
- The local population;
- Persons with whom organized cooperation has been established and who knowingly, without any coercion provide certain information;
- NGOs involved in activities in areas of interest to intelligence services;
- All other sources, which will be assessed that can provide intelligence.

## **3. A MODERN APPROACH TO HUMINT INTELLIGENCE**

While the setting for the 9/11 Twin Towers attacks has focused on significantly improving the US intelligence community's HUMINT capabilities, implementation of concrete changes has remained limited. At the institutional level, the establishment of specific HUMINT units within the CIA and DIA has further strengthened the position of HUMINT intelligence in the US intelligence community as a key method of gathering intelligence. U.S. intelligence services have shifted the focus of their engagement from state to non-state actors, such as terrorist groups and insurgent organizations. In that regard, this step was taken to favor the growing implementation of HUMINT.<sup>10</sup> Within the Ministry of Defense, activities were initiated aimed at greater use of HUMINT, which resulted in the application of tactical and operational intelligence by HUMINT, from military personnel on the front line. However, the dependence of the US intelligence community on technological means of gathering intelligence has made the above improvements insignificant. This is especially true of the CIA, due to their preoccupation with conducting covert operations, carried out by drones against foreign targets, which does not mean that the Agency has given up

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<sup>9</sup> Department of the Army, Army doctrine publication, Washington DC, 31 July, 2019

<sup>10</sup> Wilkinson, K.R., Unparalleled Need: HUMINT Collectors in the United States Army, 2013

on gathering strategic intelligence through HUMINT. Eventually, the US intelligence community came to the point where there was a desperate need for operatives with appropriate language skills. Given the fact that the United States has a huge selection of potential candidates with such abilities, the problem is probably in the strict procedures for obtaining security certification and security checks that potential candidates undergo, such as pre-screening, favoring candidates from certain demographic groups. Given all the capabilities of the US intelligence community (technical, logistical and financial), the role of HUMINT is expected to gradually diminish.

Agencies in the UK had hoped that with enough data, they would pave the way for better intelligence analysis to avoid a "strategic surprise" and provide early warning and scanning of potential threats. Detailed analysis of the situation and available intelligence, aim to detect early indicators of political and social crisis, unrest, signs of growing economic instability or lack of resources. The new Alan Turing Institute at the British Library has partnered with industry, government and academia to work on data-driven solutions to a variety of challenges, including national security. Here, the intelligence community in the UK raises the question, given the volume of data and the unpredictability of human behavior, whether it is possible for intelligence agencies to conduct a realistic predictive analysis. In the UK, GCHQ and MI6 operate covertly and with maximum coordination. The collected data is used for what is called "targeted discovery" - targeting individuals based on their online data traces - which could use more specialized recruitment techniques and methods.<sup>11</sup> In the past, one GCHQ analyst could pursue a dozen goals; now it may take dozens of analysts to pursue a goal that is well-trained and well-known. This means that HUMINTIMA plays a very important role. A well-concealed and infiltrated spy in a group like Al Qaeda or IS can provide very precise and specific information and details about a person who is of interest to MI6, even if that person practices and has a good security culture. The UK intelligence services<sup>12</sup> target individuals through the use of both HUMINT and technical information. GCHQ analysts can identify patterns and habits in online activities, while MI6 operatives recruit field agents. In joint coordination and cooperation, it was concluded that GCHQ and MI6 give significantly more results, and the effectiveness is far greater. In any case, the UK intelligence community confirms the fact that there is information that an operative is unable to provide. As in the United States, the balance is shifting in Britain's intelligence services. GCHQ is almost twice as big as MI6, and because of this, MI6 understands that they will need to adapt and develop new HUMINT capabilities, requiring all operatives to have digital skills.

In the period since the founding of the state of Israel, all organizations in the Israeli intelligence community have relied mainly or perhaps solely on HUMINT intelligence. The effect of HUMINT at that time was enormous, and its contribution to gathering information on the capabilities of the Arab armies was crucial to maintaining the positions. Eli Cohen (Damascus), Wolfgang Lotz (Egypt - known as the Eye of Tel Aviv in Cairo), Max Binet and Sylvia Raphael in many Arab and non-Arab countries were considered historical examples of Israel's intelligence community at that time.<sup>13</sup> Even before the Yom Kippur War, the Mossad hired Marwan Ashraf, the son-in-law of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, as a top source who ceded Egyptian military capabilities and intentions to the Mossad with great accuracy and credibility. Even King Hussein, although not an Israeli spy or agent, issued an early warning of the possibility of war in 1973, which could also be treated as a source of HUMINT. However, even before the start of the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the Israeli intelligence service<sup>14</sup> relied heavily on technical intelligence, which at the time included only SIGINT. The 8200 unit, which was part of Israel's military intelligence, is considered one of the best SIGINT agencies in the world, perhaps with the same status as the National Security Agency (NSA), although far smaller in terms of budget and manpower. Israel, although a small country, is one of the pioneers in IMINT, having developed and put into use some of the most modern intelligence satellites. Mossad is considered one of the world's leading intelligence agencies in the field of high-tech electronics, implemented for intelligence purposes. It has developed a powerful computer database, known as PROMIS, that can store and retrieve vast amounts of information. The technology has even been sold by Mossad to foreign intelligence communities. Although due to the imposed needs, the Israeli intelligence community has developed HUMINT to perfection, still with the change of threats and challenges, they have quickly and effectively adapted to the new trends. In those tendencies, HUMINT is used in combination with several techniques and methods of intelligence, where high-tech equipment is implemented. The vision for a modern operative is seen in the use of highly trained operatives, equipped with high-tech operational-tactical means, simultaneously using several intelligence methods

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<sup>11</sup> Sano, J., *The Changing Shape of HUMINT*, Guide to the Study of Intelligence, AFIO, 2015

<sup>12</sup> Davies, [P.H.J.](#), *A Critical Look at Britain's Spy Machinery*, Collection and Analysis on Iraq, CIA, 2008

<sup>13</sup> Nimmons, [S.](#), *Mossad, realities and myths of Israel's national intelligence service*, [Consulting Ltd](#), London, January, 2018

<sup>14</sup> Rodman, D., *Israel's silent defender: an inside look at sixty years of Israeli intelligence*, [Israel Affairs](#), Volume 19, 2013

and techniques, coordinated by operational centers. As a common feature of modern intelligence services, which in their history of operational activities were known for outstanding HUMINT operatives, is the technological advancement and implementation of technical intelligence in every operational segment and method of HUMINT intelligence. The development of the intelligence services depends on their ability and capacities (personnel, financial, political) to follow the new current trends and to adapt to the new challenges, threats and methods of intelligence.

#### 4. HUMINT IN THE PREVENTION OF TERRORIST THREATS

With the help of HUMINT, the main intelligence was provided, which ultimately led to the elimination of Osama bin Laden and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (leaders of al-Qaeda and Islamic State). When we rely on one aspect of technology above all others, we greatly reduce our accuracy in the intelligence we collect. Collecting large amounts of data in the form of high-resolution images or intercepted radio-telecommunications connections will not in itself reveal the intent of the enemy about whom we collect information. However, in the context of that data, in the form of images or intercepted radio-telecommunications links, by implementing and incorporating HUMINT, a more detailed and comprehensive assessment of the situation can be made for the end user or decision maker. Even in the case when an intelligence operation is carried out using HUMINT, from the aspect of visual or audio access, the vague details additionally impose the necessity of the use of technical operational means. However, technology can only give us insight into what is happening in the present, but without the human factor, we lose the predictable aspect.

This incorporation of multiple disciplines for gathering intelligence is called cross-referencing and this application contributes to the creation of a precise end product.<sup>15</sup> In uncovering certain conspiracies and plans to carry out terrorist attacks, intelligence is gathered through investigations of suspects and indicative persons. However, what is secretive and extremely conspiratorial in carrying out such HUMINT operations is infiltrating or recruiting members of certain terrorist groups. Infiltration into terrorist cells helps intelligence workers gain good intelligence about counter-terrorism activities and group membership, as well as direct executions of terrorist leaders. One of the more serious problems when using HUMINT sources is the difficulty in infiltrating the terrorist organization, primarily due to the obvious fears of discovering and liquidating the source. Infiltrating an undercover agent into a terrorist cell or larger group is particularly difficult because of their loyalty to a larger faith-based community. For example, when a member of a pan-Islamic jihadist group is extremely loyal to the Islamic community and outside the group, under these circumstances, its recruitment becomes almost impossible. However, when engaging HUMINT in the prevention against terrorism, it is necessary to gather information primarily about its own population, the conditions in its country, the perceptions of the population.<sup>16</sup> In the process of processing information obtained through HUMINT, the most important thing is to determine the reliability of the information and the credibility of the source.<sup>17</sup> In the current and practical application of intelligence terms, a clear distinction is made between the terms "official" and "unofficial" cover-up. "Official" cover-up refers to the cover-up of an intelligence officer / operative, such as a diplomat or other type of officer, who would be sent abroad, usually to the embassy of the country of origin. The "unofficial" cover-up refers to any other way that the operative uses in his engagement (businessman, journalist, tourist, etc.). An unofficial operative can conceal his nationality, ie present himself as a citizen of another country, as well as present himself as a migrant. The use of official cover-up has several advantages, and diplomatic immunity is one of the most important benefits. If his intelligence activities are detected by domestic services, international law restricts the host country from declaring him a "persona non grata" and expelling him from the country. In addition, posing as a diplomat gives the operative an advantage for easier access to potential sources. As a diplomat, the operative will no doubt meet with government officials from the host country, without raising any doubts about himself. In fact, since other countries with their embassies will also use official cover-ups for their intelligence, the operative will have justified meetings with all of them. Finally, official cover-up has some administrative benefits. The operative can be paid, his personal needs can be regulated officially, and he will be provided with secure communication with his service. At the same time, the official cover-up has several disadvantages. Due to the small number of representatives sent to a particular host country, domestic

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<sup>15</sup> Richard, L., How can human intelligence enhance collection in an era of un-manned technology and reduced personnel?, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2014

<sup>16</sup> Ulrich, M., Cutting the Gordian Knot, The Counterguerrilla's Guide to Defeating Insurgencies and Conducting Populist Centric Operations, in Special Warfare: The Professional Bulletin of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare, Center and School, 2012

<sup>17</sup> Naught, K.M., Representing Variable Source Credibility in Intelligence Analysis, Australian Security and Intelligence Conference, 2012

counterintelligence will be able to pinpoint which "diplomats" are intelligence and which are not. This can be done through methods of maintaining the supervision of each official, during which all their movements, contacts or meetings will be documented, as well as through wiretapping of telephones and apartments. In addition, while official cover-ups may provide easy access to potential sources (other diplomats and domestic security officials), they may also impede access to others who would be reluctant to cooperate with foreign officials. In any case, potential targets are immediately informed that they are facing a foreign representative on a diplomatic mission, who is likely to be part of the country's intelligence community. In addition, if diplomatic relations are severed (which is most often the case in crisis / war, when good intelligence is needed), officials must leave the host country, thereby disrupting the functioning of all established intelligence networks. Unofficial cover-up, on the other hand, has very clear drawbacks. The costs and administrative difficulties that arise with informal cover-up are much higher than with official cover-up. One method of unofficial cover-up is to persuade a corporation or other private company to allow an intelligence officer to become part of their staff. Alternatively, the intelligence officer may start his own business or engage in activities that provide credible explanations for his presence in the target countries. This method is very expensive and also takes a lot of time to implement.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Some violent extremist groups will continue to take advantage of these sources and drivers of instability to hold territory, further insurgencies, plan external attacks, and inspire followers to launch attacks wherever they are around the world.<sup>18</sup> In an effort to reduce uncertainty and provide timely warning and prevention of potential threats to national security, the intelligence community faces increasing demands for information and analysis that are accurate, genuine, and appropriately qualified. At a time when new threats are emerging, providing this information and analysis requires great institutional and intellectual agility, with different types and combinations of expertise. The rapid change of trends and conditions in the practice of HUMINT, with the application of modern operational and technical means, has created new opportunities for gathering information. In order to fulfill its mission, the management of the intelligence community must successfully train, motivate and direct the operational staff, as well as continue to recruit and select new operational intelligence officers with appropriate skills. In this regard, the management of the intelligence community should ensure the application of the principles, operational standards and findings of analytical methods, workforce development, cooperation and communications. Success will require strong leadership, active engagement with the academic community, and the creation of a robust reporting mechanism to identify remaining issues and plans to address them. Good examples of intelligence cooperation include intelligence support in the decision-making process of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which is carried out by national intelligence agencies of member states, NATO Headquarters institutions, and integrated military structures. Another example is the cooperation of American, British, Australia, Canadian, and New Zealand's civil intelligence agencies in the framework of the Five Eyes initiative.<sup>19</sup> The reality is that in the future we will see more and more a combination of all the threats at once, which will be treated through the activities of HUMINT operatives, at the same time ready and responsive, applying all available methods and intelligence disciplines. A new perception of an operative is on the horizon, capable and trained to simultaneously apply multiple operational-technical means, intelligence techniques and disciplines. What is essential for the creation of such an operative is the training of the staff selected for that purpose. The training should be implemented from the basic level, by raising the awareness of the youth and building the necessary level of security culture, up to special specialized educational modules for intelligence at the faculty level.

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