Why the 0203 MOS is Broken

How to fix it and make ground intelligence great again

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Young officers at TBS are often drawn to the 0203 ground intelligence officer MOS for what appears to be a unique blend of brains and brawn. They see an opportunity to attend the IOC (Infantry Officer Course) and serve as platoon commanders while also doing interesting and challenging intelligence work. Unfortunately, the harsh reality of 0203 officer assignments often fails to live up to these dreams. A newly-minted 0203 is just as likely to be doing security management at a logistics unit as he is to be leading scout snipers. The current system creates expensive inefficiencies for the Marine Corps, frustrates young officers, and produces intelligence officers who are often ill-prepared for service in a non-infantry unit. The 0203 MOS is too widely spread throughout the Operating Forces to achieve the quality of officer needed to be effective, resulting more often than not in misuse or underemployment. To address this issue, the 0203 MOS should either be reformed, have its manning significantly cut, or be eliminated altogether.

Some historical perspective is necessary to understand the current state of Marine Corps ground intelligence. The 0203 MOS, along with the other company grade intelligence officer MOSs—including 0204: counterintelligence/human source intelligence officer, 0206: signals intelligence/ground electronic warfare officer, and 0207: air intelligence officer—was initially developed as part of the so-called "Van Riper Plan" in 1995. Then-MajGen Paul K. Van Riper, the Director of Intelligence, restructured the Marine Corps intelligence community in the wake of perceived tactical intelligence shortcomings in Operation Desert Storm.[1] In the implementing document, *ALMAR 100/95, Program to Improve Marine Corps Intelligence*, new ground intelligence officers were directed to be assigned to billets "located within each infantry battalion (scout/sniper platoon commander) and regimental and division reconnaissance platoons (platoon commanders)."[2] This platoon command time came early in a ground intelligence officer's career, coupled with the requisite graduation from the IOC (Infantry Officer Course), would provide credibility and practical knowledge when serving as staff officers later on.

Gen Paul K. Van Riper restructured the intelligence community in 1995. *(Official Marine Corps photo.)*

In 2017, over two decades removed from the initial implementation of the Van Riper Plan, these directives are not being followed. New 0203s are just as likely to sit on the staff of a logistics or artillery unit as they are to lead scout snipers or reconnaissance Marines. This misallocation frustrates the individual officers, wastes taxpayer dollars through unnecessary and unused training (e.g., IOC and SSULC (Scout Sniper Unit Leaders Course)), and deprives non-infantry units of intelligence officers who are trained in the considerations specific to their mission, be it combat service support, fire support, or otherwise.

At approximately 15 months in the most efficient scenario, 0203s have the longest pipeline of any ground MOS. Once injuries, on-the-job training, and wait times for schools are factored in, it can take over 18 months to produce a new ground intelligence officer. The erratic nature of contemporary 0203

0203 ground intelligence officers may be scout sniper platoon commanders. *(Photo by PFC Abrey Liggins.)*

career progression and assignments highlights the need for change to this lengthy process. Too many 0203s currently sit in LCE or non-infantry billets that have no need for the intensive training that they have received. The case of 2ndLt Justin White illustrates this misalignment. After graduating on the Commanding General's honor roll at TBS and at the top of his class at GIOC (Ground Intelligence Officer Course), he received orders to CLR-2 (Combat Logistics Regiment 2), where he served as regimental intelligence officer as a second lieutenant. A year later, 2ndLt White executed PCA (permanent change of assignment) orders to CLB-8 (Combat Logistics Battalion 8) and deployed with SPMAGTF-Crisis Response-Africa.

Lieutenant White and others like him certainly benefited in various ways by serving with the LCE, but the core of MOS credibility for the 0203 is intelligence support to the infantry and ground reconnaissance and surveillance. Unfortunately, Lieutenant White will most likely never be afforded the opportunity to practice his MOS as it was intended. His path is not unique, and at least he was fortunate to have a deployment opportunity. We could relate countless cases of other ground intelligence officers with volatile lieutenancies, all competing for operational experience, a coveted Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, and the holy grail of the 0203 community: platoon command at an infantry or reconnaissance battalion. We consider ourselves lucky to have deployed as platoon commanders but also have the perspective of lieutenants who are currently serving as staff officers in captain's billets. Having seen both sides of the coin, we firmly believe that a standardization of the process is required to create a more effective product.

Although historical total force structure data is not available before fiscal year 2009, we believe that the number of active duty 0203 billets in the first years of the implementation of the Van Riper Plan was around 35 to 40 based on our research. In the 20-plus years since, the number of billets for active duty 0203 lieutenants has grown by roughly 265 percent to 146, this despite a net reduction in the number of infantry battalions over this time frame.[3] Of the 146 billets on the current fiscal year 2017 tables of organization, 111 are in the Marine divisions. The other 35 billets are in intelligence battalions and Marine logistics groups. Of these 111, 64 are in infantry or reconnaissance battalions, and just 40 of those are scout sniper or reconnaissance platoon commander billets.[4]

With at most 27 percent of current billets (40 of 146) aligning with the original Van Riper Plan directives, the Marine Corps needs to reassess its requirement for officers with the training that the ground intelligence officer pipeline provides. Does the intelligence officer for an amphibious assault battalion really need to be a graduate of the IOC, and why should the intelligence officer for a transportation support battalion require training in scout sniper and reconnaissance unit employment?

Matthew Collins, a former ground intelligence officer who served with 2d Reconnaissance Battalion, the British Army, and the Defense Intelligence Agency, wrote about this phenomenon in these pages in 2006:

> With too many lieutenants competing for too few command positions, new positions were created ... Since many of these units are not employed en masse as maneuver units, few staff officers knew what to do with these lieutenants. Instead of gaining operational experience and credibility, they were put in a lengthy holding pattern waiting for platoon commands and occupying their time with the many collateral duties with which they were often saddled. Many made captain having never commanded anything.[5]

Little seems to have changed in the decade since Capt Collins composed his article. When managing the assignment of intelligence officers to the Operating Forces, 0203s are not necessarily the right fit for a non-infantry ground unit just because "ground" is in their MOS title. There are several reasons for this. Not only are these ground intelligence officers not employed in accordance with their capabilities, but supporting units are also not well-served by having an intelligence officer with little to no understanding of the functions or operations of their respective units.[6] Then-Capt Gregory McSween described this frustration in a 2009 Command and Staff College thesis. He noted that

> a disconnect exists between the type of GCE-focused training that 0203s receive, and the type of tasks they will be required to perform once assigned to the LCE ... Associated LCE intelligence tasks include conducting

The 0203 should be employed solely in infantry units. *(Photo by Cpl Timothy Valero.)*

> route studies and trafficability analysis. Training for one task, then being expected to perform another is illogical. Conversely, should a Marine trained in 'logistics intelligence' then be placed in a unit whose mission required him to employ snipers, gather information on the enemy, and lead Marines in combat, problems would arise.[7]

We would extend this analogy further to include ground combat arms units other than infantry or reconnaissance battalions, such as artillery, combat engineer, assault amphibian, tank, and light armored reconnaissance units.

The necessity of any intelligence officer at most of these units is debatable, with the possible exception of armor (tank and light armored reconnaissance) and potentially artillery units, as they could be employed as independent maneuver units. Many non-infantry units recognize this fact and assign a glut of collateral duties or even other primary billets, like headquarters company executive officer, to their 0203s. As a result, ground intelligence officers in most non-infantry units are overqualified at best and irrelevant at worst.

Coupled with attrition at IOC, the proliferation of 0203 lieutenant billets in the Operating Forces, has led to a manpower challenge in the MOS. As of 1 February, 0203 lieutenants are at 70 percent of target inventory, according to the MAC-2331 website (02XX and 2602 company grade/warrant officer monitor). Contrast this with 97 percent for 0204s, 82 percent for 0206s, 78 percent for 0207s, and 85 percent for 0202 captains.[8] We believe that the issue stems from both the challenging pipeline and career retention. The 0203 MOS requires an officer with both the physical ability to graduate from IOC as well as the mental aptitude to pass the rigorous GIOC curriculum. Additionally, the type of officer who gravitates to the MOS typically wants to put their extensive training in infantry tactics, reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence to good use. The Marine Corps currently fails to properly employ many of these officers in accordance with their capabilities, resulting in widespread frustration by the individual and a diminished product for the units to which they are assigned. While we do not have access to career designation acceptance rates specific to our MOS, the enduring presence of the 0203 and 0202 MOSs on officer retention board precepts, calling specific attention to these MOSs for "due consideration" on the return to active duty sub-board, indicates a structural issue. Additionally, anecdotal evidence suggests that many young 0203s are voting with their feet and declining to remain in the Marine Corps, further contributing to manning issues.

... the current 0203 pipeline causes significant delays and attrition ...

In order to combat these challenges, we contend that the Marine Corps must reform the MOS or consider the nuclear option of eliminating it entirely. A return to the spirit of the Van Riper Plan—making ground intelligence great again—offers what we believe to be the best way forward. This would entail a decrease in the number of 0203s produced, with a higher quality product to be solely employed in infantry units. Additionally, young 0203s would have the opportunity to screen for duty with the reconnaissance battalions. Ultimately, these would be the only two places in the Marine Corps that 0203s could serve.

The other billets currently held by 0203s might then be replaced by a new intelligence MOS altogether. Such "military intelligence officers" would only attend an intelligence MOS school such as GIOC, which could be amended or broadened to include logistics, artillery, and armor considerations. These officers then would serve with non-infantry ground units and could effectively be assigned as junior MAGTF intelligence officers.

While deeply unappealing to us as proud members of the ground intelligence officer "tribe," eliminating the MOS offers the Marine Corps a time and money saving way to streamline the intelligence officer community. As we have previously discussed, the current 0203 pipeline causes significant delays and attrition and produces officers with training that often does not align with their employment. Given this, 0203s might be replaced wholesale by the previously discussed military intelligence MOS. Scout sniper platoons could be commanded by senior 0302 lieutenants who attend SSULC, much as the other weapons company platoon commanders attend advanced training such as

the Army's Cavalry Leaders Course or Mortar Leaders Course.

The Marine Corps Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Enterprise[9] faces substantial challenges, and 0203 satisfaction and retention is far from being most significant. The situation we have discussed, however, is relatively low-hanging fruit and could be easily remedied with negligible time and monetary expenditure. Whether the answer lies in shrinking and refocusing the MOS, creating a new pipeline for service in non-infantry units, or executing the nuclear option of doing away with 0203s altogether, the Marine Corps is well-equipped to solve this issue and make ground intelligence great again.

Note

1. MajGen Paul Van Riper, "Observations During Operation Desert Storm," *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: June 1991), 55.

2. Headquarters Marine Corps, *ALMAR 100/95, Program to Improve Marine Corps Intelligence*, (Washington, DC: 24 March 1995).

3. Twenty-five infantry battalions (including 1/9) grew to 27 (as 9th Marines was reactivated with 2/9 and 3/9) at the height of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. They have since declined to 24.

4. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Total Force Structure Management System*, (Washington, DC), available at https://tfsms.mceits.usmc.mil.

5. Capt Matthew Collins, "Beyond the Van Riper Plan," *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: October 2006), 24–25.

6. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCWP 6-11, Leading Marines*, (Washington, DC: 2016).

7. Gregory McSween. "A Misallocation of Resources: Assigning Second Lieutenant 0203s to the Logistics Combat Element (LCE)," (Quantico VA: thesis, Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, 2009), 12.

8. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MAC 2331 (02XX and 2602)*, (Washington, DC: Manpower and Reserve Affairs, 11 January 2017), available at https://www.manpower.usmc.mil.

9. The Marine Corps Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Enterprise here is not referring to a specific publication, such as the *MCISRE Roadmap* or *MCISRE Plan 2015-2020*, but rather to the enterprise itself. More information available at http://hqmc.marines.mil/intelligence.

Shaping the Future of ISR

Accepting and capitalizing on emerging technology

by Maj Troy E. Mitchell

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Single UASs will be part of ISR operations. *(Photo by LCpl Jesus Sepulveda Torres.)*

Globally, the power of government is weakening with the rise of the middle class. Moving beyond basic needs, they increasingly crave governmental transparency and accountability. When the middle class places increasing demands on their government, however, they become more restless.[1] If fragile states fail to address issues of accountability, it is unlikely that peace agreements will sustain the state. Competition between powerful states increasingly lends a regional or international color to civil wars, rendering their resolution complicated.[2] Thus, the world observes a resurgence of nationalism, with governments displaying short-term national agendas and shifting toward populist behavior while appealing for legitimacy.[3]

The international community continues to accept imperfect peace processes that accompany failed transitions. In a failing global society, weakened and corrupt states set the stage for internal wars with external enablers demonstrating a lack of capacity, leaving their political will open to question.[4] The resolution of fragile states' systems takes time. The World Bank Development Report stated it takes 17 years on average to navigate from war to a peace agreement that includes sustainable institutions and order. In 20 of the fastest-moving countries, it took an average of 17 years to draw the military out of politics, 20 years to achieve functioning bureaucratic quality, and 27 years to bring corruption under reasonable control.[5]

Wars and instability are becoming more geographically concentrated, compounded by a concerning tendency toward violence in countries transitioning toward democracy. Some of the world's most troubling countries are those attempting to transition away from authoritarian rules. Transitioning governments pose dilemmas for domestic and foreign powers.

Weber defines the state as an entity that has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence in a territory.[6] Conflict areas, however, characteristically portray states losing the support of their constituents. In this context, alternative forms of power, control, and coercion develop to fill the void. Nowhere is this void more visible than at the margins of the state, where warlords and nonstate armed groups principally operate.[7] They derive power from their position at the frontiers where states have difficulty extending power. Although they may attack the heart of the state, their source of power remains at the periphery.

All forms of political violence and warfare are social processes and symptomatic of advanced systemic breakdown and societal disintegration based on the injection of a multitude of factors, effectively altering the status quo. In this

sense, ethnic violence is the most insidious form of intra-state political conflict. Ethnic violence presupposes a breakdown in authority structures required to impose measures of control against violence, retains minimal organization and coordination to invoke high levels of mechanized warfare, and characterizes the nature of the conflict in evocative, symbolic terms that are intrinsically non-negotiable.[8] Ethnic conflict is especially volatile when ethnic identities coincide with religious identities.

Stateless groups present a greater threat than nation states because extremists wield weapons and mount assaults that many countries would not dare to attempt. Meanwhile, trends in technology shape the rise of stateless power. Computers, the Internet, cellular and satellite telephones, and satellite television allow extremists unprecedented access to one another. This connectedness enables extremists throughout the globe to organize themselves more efficiently than ever before. Extremist groups assemble C^2 (command and control) structures that previously would have been orchestrated only by wealthy nation states.

The future of warfare lies in streets, sewers, high-rise buildings, industrial parks, and the sprawl of houses, shacks, and shelters that form the broken cities of the world. These "mega-slums" house millions of young, urban poor, where the losers of globalization and stateless warriors are concentrated together in shanties and high-rises. Adding fuel to the fire are the diverse religious, ethnic, and political movements competing for the souls of the urban poor, which serve as volcanoes waiting to erupt.

ISR in 2050

The future of ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) enables a joint, amphibious environment capable of projecting power in the littoral environments against near-peer competitors while supporting national interests as conflicts arise. Whether the conflicts are among the mega-slums described or under the auspice of a hybrid, A2/AD (anti-access/area denial) system, the concepts described serve as enabling actions to support the commander's decision by increasing the applicability of intelligence-driven operations.

ISR Airbasing

As the ARG/MEU remains outside of the near-peer or adversarial system's threat radius, they possess an increased aviation capacity and capability via an airbased platform mirroring the sustainability of an airship. An airship is a type of aerostat or lighter-than-air aircraft that can navigate through the air under its power. Aerostats gain their lift from large gasbags filled with a lifting gas that is less dense than the surrounding air. Internal to the airship are the nuanced maintainers for the UAS (unmanned aircraft systems) aircraft and armed ISR assets, increased C^2 enablers to support the ARG, aviation strike components, and reconnaissance enablers intended to shape the battlespace. The purpose of the ISR airbase is to reside outside of the threat envelope of the adversarial systems capability and enable intelligence capabilities to support the ARG, which set the conditions for targeting systems impeding access for the ARG to maneuver into an adequate operations box, allowing the amphibious force to commence their maneuver ashore. Alongside the center of the airbasing apparatus is a runway to launch and recover UASs and ISR assets to continue to sustain operations and enable targeting to attrite the adversary or provide the necessary effect to enable the ground scheme of maneuver. The runway supports limited rotary-wing aviation capability to insert no more than two infantry reinforced companies. Airbasing allows the commander to bypass obstacles inhibiting the maneuver element to obtain surprise, speed, and tempo. Meanwhile, airbasing provides a top-down raid capability pending the objective.

If fragile states fail to address issues of accountability, it is unlikely that peace agreements will sustain the state.

The initial find phase for shaping operations to commence against the adversaries' system is launching swarms of UASs with an armed asset in support of their aviation targeting. They might act as a "cloud," arriving from various directions. As Clausewitz described such tactics in guerrilla campaigns, the systems would become "a dark and menacing cloud out of which a bolt of lightning may strike at any time."[9] Or the swarm might work as a "vapor," covering a wide area, but never fully congeal in one place. The systems may fix on the target at once to overload the defense of the target. Or they may pulse the target, attacking, dispersing, and re-attacking again and again, aiming to wear the defenses down. "They [the adversary oriented towards the UASs] will feel like they are always watched, that they face a non-human foe that is relentless."[10]

Based on the effect desired, the micro UASs may designate a target for prosecution (finish), continue to loiter and provide information, or provide SIGINT (signals intelligence) payload options to obtain atmospherics. If the targeting cycle of the MEU staff enables prioritization of targets at a precise time for strikes, the micro-UASs cue armed assets to prosecute the nominated strike package, providing opportunities for escort platforms to transit into their fire support areas for naval gunfire support. As high-priority targets are prosecuted or before targeted strikes, reconnaissance enablers launch from the air or seabase via lightweight, all-weather, jet-pack/belt devices supporting small elements of Marines to quickly perform a specialize high-altitude insertion in a contested and convoluted operating environment without audible compromise. The jet-pack/belt devices possess logistical sustainment mediums to support the team as well as GPS locator beacons to initiate a quick response force or personnel recovery actions pending the ability to camouflage their digital signature in a highly-technological environment if compromised. Meanwhile, the low-visibility teams have a one-eyed monocular affixed to a lightweight helmet

adaptor, providing a personalized UAS asset to each Marine to answer specific information requirements for the commander. This capability increases force protection for the reconnaissance element while providing full-motion video and SIGINT capabilities to the MEU afloat. As the GCE commander's staff formulates a maneuver plan, the personalized UASs insert into buildings, sewers, streets, caves, etc. to answer requests for information. Additionally, the teams possess iDevices that enable applications to upload various reports to either the air or seabase.

Handling and sorting information from UAS operations will become more critical to the situational awareness of the commander and his staff. *(Photo by LCpl Jose Villalobosrocha.)*

ISR Seabasing

Either synchronized with the airbase's efforts or as an additional phase, stage, or part, the amphibious readiness shipping commences well deck operations to enable the submerged reconnaissance vessel to initiate their movement by securing the beachhead, allowing the MEU to seize respective objectives. The vessel's attributes encompass a troop compartment for up to six personnel, a dive chamber for diving operations, a limited self-defense capability for subsurface and surface attacks, and a compartment to launch and recover hybrid water and surface UASs. Once the craft enters the water and begins the movement toward the defined beach, the waterborne UASs launch to begin their hydrographic and mine survey, enabling force protection of the ARG. The UASs increase the ELINT (electronics intelligence) capabilities of the ARG/MEU and enable increased accuracy of the beach gradients and obstructions prior to initiating the dive team's operations. Once the UASs provide a level of fidelity relating to the subsurface operating environment, the divers commence their operation to begin securing the beach. As the divers break the surface of the water, their personal UAS broaches above the surface of the water based on timing to serve as the forward element of the intelligence operation. Again, the UAS reports to the Marine through his monocular or goggle. The UAS provides full-motion video and SIGINT capabilities to build the intelligence system for the commander. As the airbased and seabased UASs navigate the various terrain, they obtain MASINT (measurement and signature intelligence) data of atmospherics, which may hinder the echelon of combat power ashore in contested environments. Throughout the operation, the submerged vessel ensures the boat passage lanes are cleared of a mine threat. Finally, the submerged vessel supports extracting the team in the event of compromise with increased sustainment and firepower.

> ***Stateless groups present a greater threat than nation states ...***

As information is fed by the UASs and reconnaissance Marines, data transmits to the landing force operations center and joint intelligence center to continue to increase the situational awareness of the blue-green team. The information resides in a database management server. The hydrographic information uploads itself into the GEOINT (geospatial intelligence) detachment's systems to create and plot images, charts, and maps to continue planning during the shaping phases. Meanwhile, the ELINT and SIGINT data produced downlinks while pairing with NSA (National Security Agency) databases.

Joint Intelligence Center

In both the airbased and seabased ships, there is a JIC (joint intelligence center), although the primary JIC is aboard ARG shipping, collocated with the MEU commander. Within each of the JICs, GEOINT enablers upload the MEU's direct support satellite imagery of the target area, as well as the imagery provided from the UASs via an increased bandwidth capability via the global broadcasting system. In their respective modular production systems, the GEOINT detachments can task the various UASs to obtain vantage points hindered from the weather, shadowing effects, or other obstacles to provide an all-source intelligence product. Meanwhile, the tasking incorporates specific orders and requests to obtain obstruction heights impeding access into landing zones, dimensions of target objective information, and confirmatory reporting on potential descriptors identified by the analysts. Once completed, the GEOINT detachments have three-dimensional printing capabilities to print the operating environment

in support of wargamming, rehearsal of concept drills, and orders delivery. The GEOINT detachment provides a three-dimensional virtual model to depict the rifleman's movement and slant angles from the insertion point through their seizure of the objective. The increased situational awareness supports the rifle companies continuing to "walk the battlespace" similar to today's popular video games for rehearsals and confirmation of execution checklist items, which mitigate risks and exercise repetitions that increase mission success.

Furthermore, within a Wi-Fi amphibious shipping environment, the intelligence analysts utilize a Flipboard-like iOS/Android application to provide instantaneous open-source products to their iDevice. Flipboard applications provide intelligence analysts a tailorable media and periodical interface with information based on specified parameters of interested operational environment topics. The iDevice are approved media outlets that pair with SIPR (secure Internet Protocol router) and JWICS (joint worldwide intelligence communications system) terminals to provide open source media capabilities into classified briefings. The paired and authorized devices provide pictures, movies, perspectives, networks, and articles to augment or cue assets to identify triggers leading to instability or employment of the amphibious force.

Finally, within the intelligence analysts advanced analytics computer systems, the analyst possesses a headset terminal with a Siri-like interface to communicate. The interface has advanced foundational analytical information of the operating environment allowing the intelligence analyst to have a conversation with pictures, movies, and other data to increase the aptitude of the analysts to provide a deeper, more scientific analytical product driven analysis. The user interface improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the intelligence Marine to digest a plethora of information into a useable form for production and dissemination.

Conclusion

The ability to accept and capitalize on emerging technology will be a determinant of success in future armed conflict. Advancing technological shifts enabling intelligence enterprises to drive amphibious operations reduces casualties by mitigating the risk to force, increasing the commander's situational awareness in a usable and digestible form to support accomplishing the mission. In enabling intelligence solutions, the technological revolution forces us to reexamine what is possible and probable based on the future operating environment. Although some of the ideas proposed may challenge contemporary thinking, the purpose remains to instill future acquisition options enabling future operational intelligence concepts to continue to drive military operations.

Notes

1. Council on Foreign Relations (Producer), *What to Worry About in 2015,* (Washington, DC: Audio podcast, January 2015), available at http://www.cfr.org/.

2. J.M. Guehenno, "10 Wars to Watch in 2015," *Foreign Policy*, (Washington, DC: January 2015), available at http://foreignpolicy.com.

3. Council on Foreign Relations.

4. Ibid.

5. World Bank, *World Development Report: Conflict, Security, and Development*, (Washington DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2011).

6. M. Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Press, 1965).

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. P.W. Singer, *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2009).

10. Ibid.

Intel Reachback and the Emperor's New Clothes

The unpublished AAR on *MCISR-E's* OEF failure

by Maj Nicholas R. Nappi

"But he hasn't got anything on!" the whole town cried out at last.

The Emperor shivered, for he suspected they were right. But he thought, "This procession has got to go on." So he walked more proudly than ever, as his noblemen held high the train that wasn't there at all.[1]

Intelligence reachback "support" to RC(SW) (Regional Command (Southwest)) during OEF (Operation ENDURING FREEDOM) was an unmitigated failure, but recorded as a resounding success. RC(SW) was supposed to be the proving ground for the concepts laid out in the *MCISR-E (Marine Corps Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Enterprise) Roadmap 2010*, and intel reachback was going to showcase *MCISRE*'s federated support paradigm. Reachback nodes from the continental United States promised to provide the forward deployed commander the same quality support at a reduced price. The split-basing methodology mirrored *MCWP 2-1* and enabled a reduced "footprint" and less "boots-on-the-ground."[2] It failed in almost all respects, but this assessment will not be found in any official AAR (after-action report) from 2012–2014.

I am writing this article because the future is uncertain, and conflict could be right around the corner. I feel obligated to comment on the failings of intel reachback so that flawed assumptions do not inform any potential contingency plans that are currently underway. I am taking a no-holds-barred approach to this issue, but I will also give recommendations on how its deficiencies can be improved. The frank recommendations given are not meant to demean or criticize those that put their hearts and souls into the reachback mission. All observations will cover my personal viewpoints and do not reflect my previous command, my present command, or the views of the Marine Corps.

>Maj Nappi has deployed four times to Iraq and Afghanistan as a supervisor of all-source intelligence sections. In addition to his primary MOS, MAGTF Intelligence Officer, Maj Nappi is also a Weapons and Tactics Instructor, Foreign Security Force Advisor, and a Foreign Area Officer. He is currently serving as the South Asia and Oceania Country Director, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific.

Have requests for information been adequately handled through the reachback channel? ***(Photo by Cpl Jonathan Boynes.)***

From 2012–2014, I became intimately familiar with intel reachback support to OEF. First as an observer, then as producer, next as the consumer, and finally as one who contributed to the "official" AAR of intel support as we closed down Camp Leatherneck in October 2014. It is my hope that this "unofficial" AAR will spark some informed conversations and force us to

revisit our assumptions with respect to the capabilities that intel reachback advertises.

2012–2013: Observing OEF Intel Reachback

From September 2012 to March 2013, I served as a combat replacement in the C2/G2 (Intelligence) section in Camp Leatherneck in RC(SW). I ran the Stability Operations and Information Center, which focused on the Afghan government and population. I also worked adjacent to the IOC (Intel Operations Center) and had the unique opportunity to observe their processes. As a combat replacement, my tenure in the C2/G2 spanned the RIP/TOA (relief in place/transfer of authority) from one intelligence battalion to another. In this respect, I had a perspective on the continuity of the processes as well.

As a neutral observer to intel reachback, my take-away was that both "consumer" OEF units had disdain and contempt for the quality of products that the reachback nodes produced. No one, however, highlighted the problem because of the high-level visibility that the experiment had in the *MCISRE* roadmap. To say that the emperor was naked would have been politically hazardous. Therefore, it was easier to just accept the products from the rear and figuratively drop them in the "circular file" (trash). I found it humorous to watch the process. It reminded me of when one of my children draws me an unintelligible picture. I have no idea what it is, but I still stick in on the fridge because their efforts are so cute.

Failure to address the deficiencies of intel reachback seemed harmless, expedient, and it gave us something to chuckle over during deployment. This proved disastrous. Not speaking up was essentially moral cowardice and intellectual laziness. Intel reachback Marines were working 24/7 shifts in vain, and they knew it! While we were laughing at reachback's products, the reachback leadership was struggling with an outbreak of illegal drug use, particularly of the drug spice. Based on later conversations with that reachback cadre, cynicism about the reachback mission was a contributing factor behind the drug abuse.

2013–2014: Leading OEF Intel Reachback

In the summer of 2013, I assumed command of the PACO (Production and Analysis Company), 1st IntelBn (1st Intelligence Battalion), in Camp Pendleton, CA. It was a large company, and at 220 Marines, it dwarfed the other companies in the battalion. The main mission of PACO was to once again run OEF intel reachback from Camp Pendleton; the last time that PACO had the mission it also had the spice ring. This time was going to be different. OEF intel reachback was more mature, and lessons were learned from previous mistakes. The new reachback would "fence-off" 114 Marines out of PACO's 220. In theory, this would protect the Marines from being pulled to other billets and give stability to the mission.

... the Marines in reachback did not enjoy the work, and the 24/7 shifts were hurting morale.

The first step in reconstituting 1st IntelBn reachback was to conduct a site survey to 2d IntelBn, who was currently executing the mission. Little over a week before the site survey, one of 2d IntelBn's reachback Marines committed suicide, and the feeling of loss was palatable. 2d IntelBn's commander recognized that the greatest single risk to the reachback mission was human factors. In his opinion, the Marines in reachback did not enjoy the work, and the 24/7 shifts were hurting morale. He stressed the issue that it was hard to maintain regular contact between junior Marines and their NCOs during 24/7 operations. One recommendation was to consider ending the weekend shifts. Perhaps the only success story out of the 2d IntelBn site survey was that the CI/HUMINT (counter-intelligence/human intelligence) Marines were largely on autopilot. The reports that the CI/HUMINT Marines were producing from the rear were compilations of numerous reports sent from forward. In this mission area, he expressed confidence.

With these lessons learned, 1st IntelBn implemented measures to mitigate the effects of 24/7 operations. These involved increased mentorship

It is possible to provide an excellent reachback product, but current AARs need to be more specific and critical of our efforts so far. *(Photo by Cpl Skyler Treverrow.)*

and counseling, increased initiatives from the family readiness officer and generously giving recognition when appropriate. The 114 Marines were an all-source support node, and a CI/HUMINT platoon was chopped from one of the battalion's adjacent companies. 1st IntelBn rear was in direct support of 1st IntelBn (Fwd) and *MCISRE*'s reachback concept was the "shiny penny" of the MEF headquarters group. The first month of reachback operations saw a steady stream of VIPs enter the spaces, and they were regaled with reports from Afghanistan on what a great job reachback was doing.

All the mitigation measures seemed to work. However, as time progressed, motivation became harder and harder to maintain. This problem was only compounded by the Christmas holiday season. Just like the two other iterations of reachback, morale started to fail, and it surfaced in the form of increased alcohol use. The first two incidents came shortly after the CI/HUMINT platoon was chopped to reachback. In the period of one week, two of those Marines got DUIs. By the end of January, there had been a total of four alcohol-related incidents in less than two months. The one consolation during this time frame was that 1st IntelBn (Fwd) was continuing to praise the work of 1st IntelBn's reachback. Or so we thought ...

2014: Customer of OEF Intel Reachback

In May 2014, I deployed to Camp Leatherneck to conduct a RIP/TOA with the 1st IntelBn (Fwd), the Marines who we had been supporting. In the first week of "left-seat/right-seat" turnover, I noticed that none of the products from 1st IntelBn rear (reachback) were being briefed. I asked why and was told that they never used them; it was easier just to accept them, praise them, and then stick them on the fridge for everyone to chuckle at. Nothing had changed in two iterations of OEF reachback since I had originally observed the operation in 2012. It was still politically too dangerous to criticize the concept or tell the emperor that he was naked.

The road to hell is paved with good intentions, and intel reachback's emperor's new clothes problem is a great example of this. Forward units thought that they were helping by giving false impressions of reachback's usefulness. In the meantime, drug outbreaks, alcohol issues, domestic violence, and a suicide occurred. Instead of having the moral courage to do something about the problem, I too gave into pressure and contributed a glowing review for the "official" AAR coming out of Helmand.

Reachback has uses but not as extensive as advertised. It can bring efficiencies to operations and reduce a unit's "footprint," but in order to capitalize on the promise an intelligence planner must have an accurate picture of its constraints and restraints. The following paragraphs will lay those out.

***Original illustration from Hans Christian Andersen's* Fairy Tales Told to Children*, 1837.* (Illustration by Vilhelm Pedersen.)**

What Intel Reachback Does Not Do Well

The weakest aspect of intel reachback is subjective analysis by far. In a deployed environment, the C2/G2 owns the enemy narrative, and his guidance drives the analytical focus. This dynamic between the G2 and the analyst cannot be duplicated from thousands of miles away, via email, or by video teleconference. The C2/G2 requires daily interaction with his analysts in order to prioritize effort, provide focus, and to set cadence. The bottom line is that reachback is weak in the areas of all-source analysis, HUMINT (human intelligence) and SIGINT (signals intelligence).

An example of the untenable dynamic is the following vignette: the C2/G2 is taking his nightly brief from the IOC in Afghanistan before he hits the rack. He has already been working for 18 hours. He has questions on some intelligence reporting that surfaced from the evening brief, so the outgoing shift has sent those RFIs (requests for information) to the reachback element in the United States. The reachback element is completely dependent on the specificity of the RFI because the C2/G2 will be sleeping if they need clarification.

In this vignette, the reachback intel analyst who has been handed this RFI is also trying to handle an angry phone calls from his wife. They live less than one mile away, and she needs him to pick up their child from school. "It will only take 10 minutes!" she yells in the phone. At this point, our intrepid corporal does an internal tactical decision game.

- COA 1: "I put my heart and soul into answering this RFI like my career depends on it." "But wait!" he says. "I've never even met this C2/G2, and he's not the one who does my pro/con marks. So, I guess my career doesn't really depend on it."
- COA 2: "I put my heart and soul into this just because I'm a professional. My wife will kill me when I get home, but while she's screaming at me, I will be content in my professionalism."
- COA 3: "I do the bare minimum to check the box on this RFI and then I go pick up my kid from school. I don't want my wife to kill me!"

In intel reachback, choosing COA 3 is the norm. It's simple risk management on the part of the Marines and the quality of their subjective analysis is … subjective.

This vignette ends with the C2/G2 waking up in the morning to read the barely passible analysis product. The

reachback node has technically supported his requests, so he cannot say that they are unresponsive. However, for him to send the unsatisfactory product back, he would also have to provide further clarification, and he would have to wait another day for the corrected product because the analyst who wrote it is now sleeping. This all takes time that he does not have. Instead he looks to the fusion officer in the IOC and says, "Don't send them anymore RFIs … fix this garbage!" The fusion officer is on a seven-month deployment, and she is thousands of miles away from her sleeping husband and children. She's pretty sure they'll understand if she puts all of her focus on answering the C2's/G-2's RFI.

What Intel Reachback Can Do Well

Intel reachback's strongest potential lies in creating long-term, objective, encyclopedic products. The best example of these would be GEOINT (geospatial intelligence) products such as maps, terrain models, and target packages. These products could also include counter-intelligence products that collate already published analysis. The bottom line is that reachback can be strong in areas of CI (counter-intelligence) and GEOINT.

In the following vignette, our overworked C2/G2 needs a hydrology analysis of an area where the unit may conduct operations in the future:

"Hey, Fusion Officer. We may be doing ops in this area next month. How long would it take to get a hydrology study done?"

"Sir, the imagery analysts in the rear have the same access to those hydrology databases that we have, and they have a faster connection speed. They could probably get us something by tomorrow, and our topographic platoon out here can print it out for you."

This vignette ends with the C2 waking up the next morning to an already satisfactory product. However, he sees a couple additional details he wants displayed. His 100 percent complete product is done by day three.

The weakest aspect of intel reachback is subjective analysis by far.

Conclusion

The efficacy of OEF intelligence reachback support from 2012–2014 has been inaccurately captured in official AARs from the period. This could lead to false assumptions for its capabilities in future conflicts. The implications for this on operations could be severe. This unofficial AAR shows intel reachback through a much more critical lens.

Failure to accurately examine the effects of intel reachback operations also could have severe effects on garrison operations. Every iteration of OEF intel reachback was marked by low morale and hampered by human factors. These ranged from drug rings, to alcohol abuse, to suicide. These negatives do not play well into the *MCISRE* narrative of reachback, but they are its reality.

It is only through an unbiased look at the pros and cons of intel reachback operations that we can truly capitalize on the concept and somewhat deliver on its promise. The key take aways for an intelligence planner is that reachback does not do subjective analysis well, but it can be very effective in delivering long-term, objective, and encyclopedic products.

Notes

1. Hans Christian Anderson, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, (Denmark: originally published in April 1837; translated by Jean Hersholt), available at http://www.andersen.sdu.dk.

2. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCWP 2-1, Intelligence Operations*, (Washington, DC: September 2003), 4–12.

Human Geography

Old discipline, new age: Building a capability for the U.S. Marine Corps

by Courtney D.B. Blackburn

The 32nd Commandant, General Charles Krulak, frequently spoke of the Roman Pro Consul, whose disciplined legions handily defeated Germanic tribes on the northern edge of the empire. Returning some years later when trouble rose again, he was soundly defeated by these same tribes. He lost his legions and he lost his life. Ne cras. Ne cras, *he was heard to mutter—"not like yesterday." An adaptive enemy had learned from its earlier defeat, whereas the Romans had learned little from their success. Our world is full of adaptive threats. Our largest potential vulnerability will be failing to recognize a changing world. Our success will be measured in how much we learn from our past, how well we observe the changing characteristics of warfare, and how well we anticipate the ways our enemies will choose to challenge Marines on the battlefield. These enemies, observant and cunning, have studied our every move. They have adopted Information Age capabilities. They use the tools at their disposal in creative and lethal ways.* Ne cras.[1]

Throughout history, adaptive enemies have learned from their defeats on the battlefield, and as is told in the narrative of the Roman Pro Council, successes on the battlefield will be measured in how much is learned from the past. Historical narratives have always been vital to understanding the systemic shifts that currently influence and affect the globe. Historically, battlefields have been deeply rooted in the human domain. A robust intelligence enterprise, however, is the key enabler to achieving the right effect, in the right place, and at the right time. The intelligence enterprise consists of tools and techniques that guide decision makers and operators to make the best decisions in a world where the dynamics of conflict are constantly changing. Human geography is a term, a tool, and a type of analysis that adds to the geo-literacy of competent leaders and warfighters. Since the Vietnam War, the USMC has recognized that war has changed from battle lines to urbanized warfare stacked against an enemy that is not always visible. Prior to Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, the Marine Corps lacked institutionalized capabilities, such as human geography, for leveraging similar requirements to better understand the impact of human activity and the environment in areas of operation. The Marine Corps is now equipped to understand the spatial and temporal patterns informed by human geography through the development of the MCIA's human geography capability in 2008.

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Why Human Geography?

Human geography is defined as,

> A major field of Geography that is centrally concerned with the ways in which place, space, and environment are both the condition of and the consequence of human activities and human characterization.[2]

Human geography analysis fused with geospatial modeling provides a means to characterize human behavior and understand how adversaries respond to societal, political, geographical, and resource-based pressures. Human geography enables the Marine Corps to be more flexible and anticipatory in its approach to conflict engagement and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief among other strategic, operational, and tactical efforts. It provides a baseline of information that facilitates more complex analysis and is integrated into the traditional processes of intelligence preparation of the operational environment. Human geography analysis impacts the full spectrum of military operations from boots on the ground to commanders and decision makers who must arm our Marines with the tools necessary to face dynamic and complex terrain and cultural environments.

> The growth of crowded, poorly governed, or lawless areas, particularly in and around the world's littorals, will confront future commanders with the need to consider complex terrain. Complex terrain adds informational and human aspects of the battlespace to the traditional geo-physical factors.[3]

How Does Human Geography Work?

The SATs (situational awareness tools) represent a holistic, anticipatory approach to the MCISRE (Marine Corps Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Enterprise) in the military operating environment. SATs are a series of models that combine human and physical geography with geospatial and all-source analysis to support first-level operational planning. SAT's provide the critical foundational layers in order to achieve two end results: visual cues for strategic planners for general planning purposes and prioritization of areas for further analysis at higher fidelity and enabling the identification of patterns and correlations required to perform country-specific deep dives and other advanced analytics for all-source assessments.

> We ask intelligence to describe in detail places we have never seen, to identify customs and attitudes of societies fun-

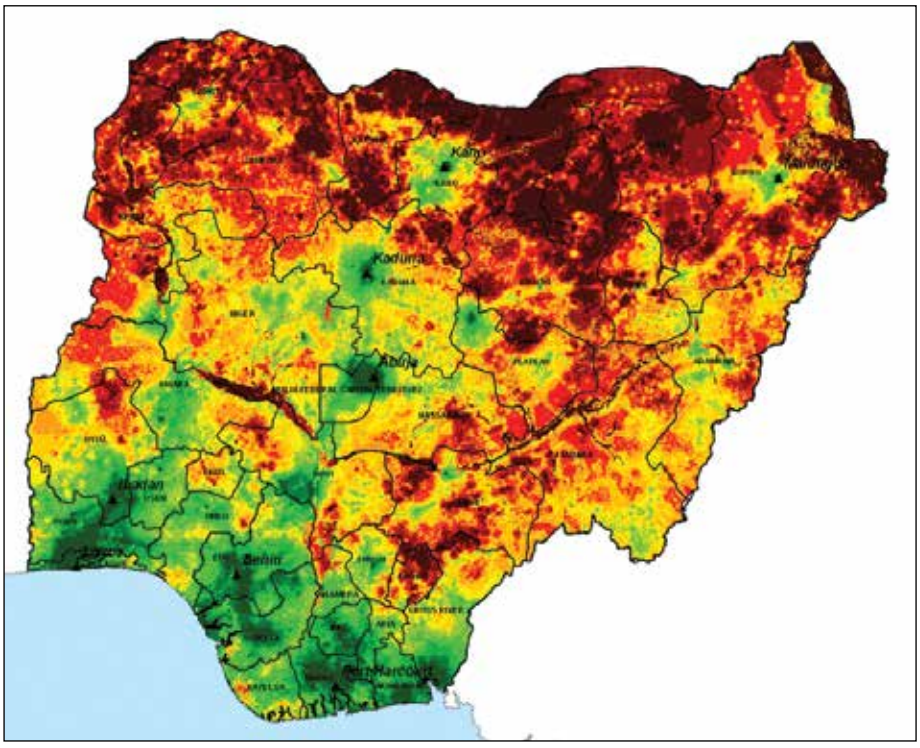

Figure 1. SAT models show the distribution of a country's GDP relative to population and other factors. *(Image provided by author.)*

damentally different from our own, to assess the capabilities of unique and unfamiliar military or paramilitary forces, and to forecast how these societies and forces will act in the future.[4]

The SAT models produce layers of data related to social and cultural topics. These topics include "governance" (used to determine where populations may be more or less vulnerable depending on their access to government services or where nefarious actors may flourish because of little or no effective government presence), "travel time" (used for strategic and tactical "time-phased" planning purposes, which identifies travel time in minutes to cities with populations larger than 50,000), and "societal support" (a summary of the density of factors that provides indicators of where people have or don't have access to support mechanisms in times of distress). Other topics include vehicle mobility, helicopter landing zones, drop zone suitability, aerial concealment, ambush vulnerabilities, flood potential, natural hazards, vulnerabilities, risks, and exposures, remote havens, economic fabric, market access, and access to healthcare. (See Figure 1.) The economic fabric model is designed to estimate the spatial distribution of a country's economy or GDP (gross domestic product). Geographic features representing goods and services are separated into three economic sectors: agriculture, service, and industry.

Exploitation of the SATs is best understood as a component of a larger, multi-INT (multiple intelligence)/all-source analytic framework called the IAH (integrated analytics hierarchy). The IAH places the SATs into an all-source analytical process with the intent of developing a deeper understanding of the human dimension of conflict one phase at a time. Conceptually, the IAH demonstrates how the premise "everything happens somewhere" becomes "everything happens somewhere for a reason."[5] Operationally, the IAH is a roadmap illustrating how to exploit the SATs as a foundation-level product to enable a robust anticipatory capability that provides a broader range of policy options and more decision lead-time to commanders. By leveraging spatial-temporal geographic modeling, the IAH incorporates multi-INT analysis to assess deteriorating atmospherics, anticipate future battlespaces, calculate second and third order effects of actions, and inform operational courses of actions. (See Figure 2.)

The IAH is represented as a pyramid and relies on a foundation of data gathered on the physical, operational, and human components of the operat-

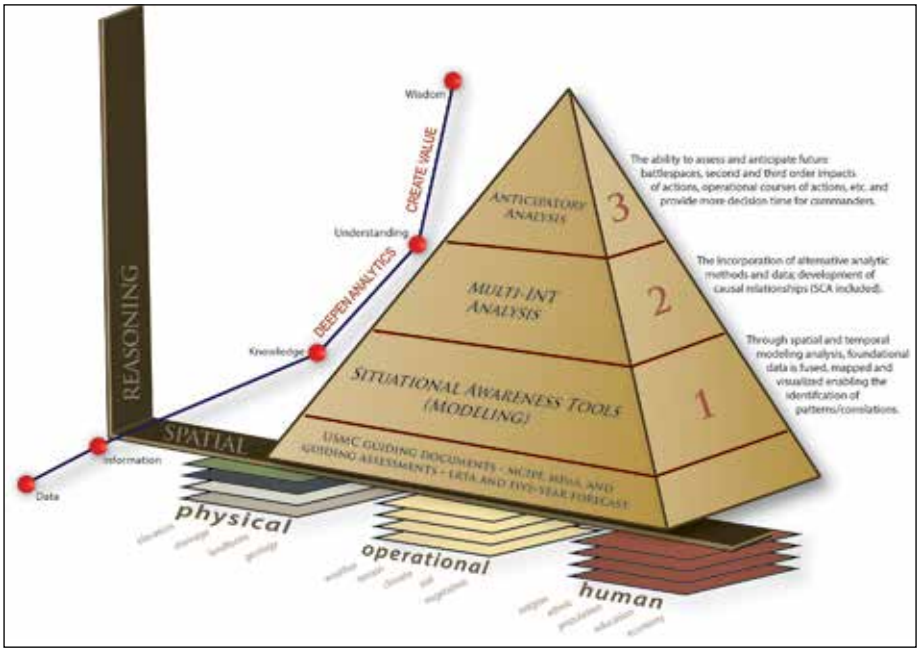

Figure 2. The IAH is a model designed to map and predict changes in the operating environment. *(Image provided by author.)*

ing environment as shaped by doctrine, guidance, and requirements. In Phase 1, spatial and temporal modeling techniques are used to fuse, map, and visualize foundation data to identify patterns and correlations that help analysts prioritize areas for additional study or future collection efforts. In Phase 2, the results from Phase 1 are used to conduct multi-INT analyses on key intelligence questions over areas of interest to the USMC, providing context to observed patterns that define causal relationships, and provide insight into why certain trends may be occurring. Phase 3 identifies the drivers behind specific Phase 2 outcomes, synthesizing information in a non-deterministic way and helping to define an early warning system for future conflict by incorporating a more holistic, all-source approach. In 2015, this concept was tested using the Philippines to identify potential areas of instability to anticipate conditions for conflict, whether a natural disaster would affect that activity, and where populations were most vulnerable.

> In complex terrain crowded with multiple adversaries and disparate threats intermixed with populations of various loyalties and motivations, Marines must be able to understand the battlespace with sufficient clarity to identify the points of advantage and disadvantage.[6]

The SATs and the IAH framework directly support Marine Corps doctrine from both an intelligence and operational perspective. The *Expeditionary Force 21* capstone concept (Washington, DC: HQMC, 2014) describes how the,

> "Marine Corps must transform itself into a force optimized for security operations and crisis response, while maintaining its superior capability to engage in long-term conflicts." Consequently, the *MCISRE Plan 2015–2020* lays out a mission to support this transformation by providing always-on global situational awareness to afford Marines continuous advantage on the battlefield. The SATs provide the baseline information that describes the global condition (providing situational awareness) and enables analysts to exploit that information for anticipatory capability (providing continuous advantage).

Operationalizing Human Geography

The sustainability of human geography within the Marine Corps will depend on continuous implementation at the MEF, MIC (Marine intelligence centers), and SPMAGTF level. These groups are MCIA's customers and practitioners. The SAT data and models have played a critical role in supporting tasking and requirements for the SPMAGTF-AF (SPMAGTF-Africa). Geographic intelligence personnel assigned to the SPMAGTF-AF have used the SAT's to produce analytical products that have helped in assisting commanders and supporting ground units in understanding their areas of operation including ambush, aerial concealment, religion, economics, and tribes. According to a previous SPMAGTF-AF's geographic intelligence chief the use of the SAT's had "opened up new doors and endless possibilities to the analysis of human geography."

Across the spectrum of participants, human geography is carving a place in the bigger picture of defense in response to an ever-changing world.

In addition to Marine Corps assets, the human geography capability has found great partnerships with the FVEY (Five Eyes) community. Collaborative production and analysis with the Defence Geographic Centre in the United Kingdom, the Australian Geospatial–Intelligence Organization in Australia, and GEOINT New Zealand has proven invaluable in institutionalizing socio-cultural research and performing data acquisition in places where data had not previously been available. By providing SAT training to these partners, MCIA has established avenues by which to access stockpiles of valuable data, products, regional expertise, and research, enhancing the impact of international requirements.

In return, these agencies have contributed human geography data and products that aid in building the analytical framework provided by the SATs. These human geography products are typically ethnic, tribal, religious, language, and demographic maps and reports which present a baseline or foundational picture of the characteristics of populations living in areas of interest. This collaborative work has enabled the FVEY community to develop complementary methodologies and approaches to further the development and influence of human geography from a military perspective.

What's the Future?

Human geography is not just about the tools, techniques, and data—it is a sense of understanding that transcends the customer's traditional views of preparation of the battlespace. The warfighter and the decision maker must glean the training, education, and means of understanding to comprehend the future battlespace and make concerted efforts to minimalize the impact of war on both themselves and those they lead. The future Marine Corps includes cross-discipline efforts to integrate and leverage open-source tools, data, and services in an unclassified environment that are needed to ensure wider dissemination to broader audiences, including non-government organizations and other intelligence customers. These cross-discipline efforts include tools that better amass, aggregate, and evaluate diverse types of data; leverage-open source software for dynamically displaying data; and exploiting dissemination platforms like amazon web services in order to reach broader audiences. Reaching broader audiences requires better and faster access to tools and services, Information technology infrastructure that supports advanced software packages, faster processing speeds, better access to unclassified platforms, and less restrictive security constraints.

MTTs (mobile training teams), through refined training materials, training workshops, and operational exercises, are necessary for supporting MEF elements in their use and integration of human geography. MTTs connect analysts with human geography experience and skill sets with Marine commanders and decision makers responsible for responding to operational needs, strategic planning, and tactical support.

History prevails regardless of the lessons learned from it, and the sum of successes will ultimately overcome any failures. Sometimes it is not without a price; a price paid in resources, the lives of those who serve, and past challenges in understanding the complexity of the human domain. Across the spectrum of participants, human geography is carving a place in the bigger picture of defense in response to an ever-changing world that demands success on the part of the decision maker and the warfighter. When the warfighter is faced with the next conflict, further understanding the human domain will help ensure that the outcome is, *"Ne cras."*

Historical narratives have always been vital to understanding the systemic shifts that currently influence and affect the globe.

Notes

1. MCIA, *Future Operating Environment 2015-2025*, (Quantico, VA: 2015).

2. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency definition of human geography, (Springfield, VA).

3. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Operating Concept (MOC)*, (Washington, DC: September 2016).

4. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 2, Intelligence*, (Washington, DC: 1997).

5. Dr. Vanessa Lawrence, former Director-General and Chief Executive, Ordnance Survey, UK. Mr. James Hill, Director of the Geospatial Intelligence Division, MCIA.

6. *MOC.*

The Red, Squiggly Line

Improving Intelligence Training

by Staff, MARDET Dam Neck, Marine Corps Intelligence Schools

Innovation has become a popular concept over the last few years. On the surface, this concept can be difficult to grasp. As explained by the September 2016 *Gazette* article "Marine Corps Innovation: It's Simple. It's About Leadership,"[1] however, innovation is not so much about advancement as it is about creating an environment for Marines to embrace change and share their modernization concepts with one-another. At MARDET Dam Neck (Marine Detachment Dam Neck), we have focused energies not on creating or using innovative concepts but on arming Marine intelligence professionals with an understanding for *how* today's innovative technologies actually work. In other words, we know that today's Marines know how to right click their mouse on the red, squiggly line and select an item from the suggested correct spelling list. Our goal, however, is to ensure that students understand how to use a dictionary and how the program arrived at its recommended spelling. If intelligence Marines know how modern technologies work, they can achieve a relationship with the data being input. Understanding data is much more than gather, filter, and record, and we aim to teach the basis of gather, filter, and record, arming students with an understanding of basic processes so that they are able to embrace innovation in an operating environment that promotes doing so.

Technological advancements, especially in the last 10 to 15 years, have sought to simplify life. Some, however, believe that today's youth are now lacking interpersonal skills. Moreover, social media has removed the need for in-person interaction, creating online environments where individuals can converse without having any personal involvement with one another. We have nurtured an entire generation whose over reliance on the red, squiggly line is their critical vulnerability—a generation who lacks social skills due to an absence of interpersonal communication. This generation is more commonly known as the millennial. Creating a training program to reach the millennial learner is the most critical issue facing entry-level military schools.

We would be remiss, however, by not mentioning that we teach an older generation as well, one whose learning style differs in such a way that they lean toward non-automated work styles that ignore technological advancements. With the high rate of continuous data flow on the 21st century battlefield, under reliance on technological advancements is just as detrimental to battlefield success as over reliance.

MARDET Dam Neck is faced with a multi-facetted challenge in developing curriculum that breaches the generational divide, one that brings the older generation into the technological age without losing the attention of our technologically-driven youth.

The most recent program of instruction for entry-level intelligence students focuses on having them conduct detailed practical application and execution. Marines spend nearly 70 percent of their time engaged in practical application and evaluation with as little as 5 percent devoted to formal lecture. In order to gain and maintain attention, instructors tap into the cognitive domain with auditory and visual aids. The focus, however, is on those kinesthetic learners, those who learn by doing. This focus has yielded the highest success rate for our program, seeing the academic attrition rates plummet from nearly 30 percent to less than 15 percent in the past year alone.

Previously, instructors attempted to introduce advanced-level concepts, such as structured analytical techniques and intelligence support to specific MAGTF elements, in the classroom. What we found, however, is that without organizational experience and prior knowledge to lean on, these concepts were too advanced for students to understand. Students rarely retained information without understanding how the application worked. MISEC 4.0 (MAGTF Intelligence Specialist Entry-level Course, Version 4) teaches basic concepts of filter, record, and research based on the *Training and Readiness Manual* 1000-level events and the 4-steps of *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace*. Structured analytic techniques and support to specific MAGTF elements were removed from the program of instruction to align with this basic concept and structure. MISEC is producing a basically-trained 0231 Intelligence Specialist and placing the burden of education on the fleet chiefs and follow-on schools to teach advanced concepts. By tailoring the program of instruction, we have freed up weeks within the curriculum. Now, instructors can teach and develop curricula that forces students to use both automated and non-automated tools to complete the practical applications, blending academic and vocational training.

Despite blending the two learning styles, MISEC continues to place heavy emphasis on utilizing technology to conduct production and analytic tasks.

With the time gained through tailoring curricula, instructors are now able to implement technology appreciation practical applications, where students are taught and trained to perform analytic tasks utilizing non-automated techniques before being given the same task using analytic systems and programs of record. Although there is a need to maintain manual skill sets, it is important that students leave MISEC understanding that the information flow from and to the battle/cyberspace of the 21st century is fast and continuous. In order to keep up with the demands of tomorrow's data, it is necessary to know and become intimately familiar with multiple programs of record and databases.

The MCISRE's Best of the Best: Intelligence Instructors

Instructors are not only going through the Marine Corps-approved adult learning methods taught in the Curriculum Development Course. Rather, they are expanding beyond PowerPoint-centric lectures, incorporating a variety of guest speakers, hands-on application, site visits to related support facilities, and blended learning techniques in the classroom. Furthermore, instructors bring in guests to receive brief-backs, ensuring that students get feedback from a variety of different senior officers from varying backgrounds/Services.

Instructors are relating material through experience. Providing examples, especially when dealing with entry-level students, structures the lesson, presenting it in a way that is both applicable and understandable. Case studies are employed to provide context to the formulation of doctrinal concepts. Multi-media support is utilized but kept to short clips in order to maintain attention. With senior classes, instructors use the Socratic method to keep students mentally engaged in the learning process.

During classroom instruction, we strive to provide course content in a dynamic manner that incorporates the instructor's experience and allows the student to ask themselves how they would respond in hypothetical situations. Our instruction goes above and beyond what occurs in the classroom, and the majority of learning occurs during practical application in our scenario-based training. Here, students are allowed to "choose their own adventure," so to speak. Because there is very little about the practice of intelligence that is a one-size fits all answer, we encourage students to adopt a free-thinking approach to problem solving. Student attention span and skills retention are greatest when the student is allowed to apply the concepts they are taught, can see the results of their efforts, and learn from successes or failures in a controlled environment.

Instructors at MISEC are always looking for new and innovative ways to get experiential training for students. This is primarily accomplished through field trips to active units, such as SIOC's (Signals Intelligence Officer Course) trips to 2d Radio Battalion; AIOC's (Air Intelligence Officer Course) trips to Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point ordnance and squadron operations; or SIOC radio training at MCSF. Additionally, the focus of much training has shifted from a pure Operation Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom mentality back to a MAGTF/MEU support mentality because of the changing nature of USMC employment.

Our cadre is always working to improve the training provided to our students. We have a vested interest in training the best intelligence professionals in the world as our students will one day be our team members, subordinates, or leaders. In that spirit, our cadre has a strict, no-nonsense approach to training and realism, constantly evaluating our practices for their benefit to the student. We have made significant improvements to our scenario to better incorporate multiple functions of intelligence support to operations in order to provide the best possible support to our end user. While our traditional mission has been tactical in nature, we are increasingly focused on preparing our students for the operational and strategic mission as we go forward.

Instruction remains grounded in the basics, as it must be due to the training and readiness manual. All courses utilize the classic "crawl, walk, run" concept, with instructors presenting material, demonstrating key concepts, and then evaluating students through testing via practical application. Instructors continue to relate key concepts back to support of real-world operations and the ultimate goal of intelligence: reduce uncertainty and aid in decision making.

Training is always our number one priority. We are committed to providing the highest quality intelligence professionals the DOD has to offer. Our instructors give each student every opportunity to master the concepts of the course. They routinely invest their time and energy in order to ensure every students' best chance at success. Our course directors bring in representatives from Palantir, Joint Improvised-Threat Defeat Agency, National Reconnaissance Office, National Geo-Spatial Intelligence Agency, and other organizations who demonstrate software applications that are of use to the modern intelligence professional. Whether leveraging a SharePoint site to provide reach-back for students once they are in the fleet or video teleconferencing to gain access to a greater number of guest speakers who would otherwise be unavailable, technology is one of our greatest advantages, but it is also one of our greatest hurdles.

In a world of status "likes" and 140 character tweets, our youngest generations are increasingly more connected to computers and less inclined to direct personal connection with the world around them. We teach excellence in the basics, and our students are educated on the myriad opportunities to integrate technology into their operations alongside the caution that technology has increasingly become a double-edged sword. After all, that the red, squiggly line can be both your friend and your enemy.

Note

1. BGen Dave Reist, USMC(Ret) and Capt Chris Wood, "Marine Corps Innovation: It's Simple. It's About Leadership," *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: September 2016).