



29 July 2018

Marines and Sailors,

The updated National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and Defense Planning Guidance, and the *Marine Corps Operating Concept*, highlight the challenges posed by great-power competition, rogue regimes, non-state actors, and the erosion of the U.S. military advantage. As the Marine Corps adapts to meet these challenges, we must remain the force of choice for dynamic force employment and joint contingency planning. In order to be the force of choice, intelligence professionals will be essential in defining the operating environment and making the force more agile and lethal. The future growth of Marine Corps intelligence, as defined in our Future Force 2025 initiative, will challenge our intelligence capacity as we seek to meet commander requirements. Moving forward, the Marine Corps Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Enterprise (MCISRE) must pursue efficiencies to forestall demand exceeding capacity.

While visiting many units deployed and at home station, as well as our federated intelligence sites at bases and stations in CONUS and overseas, I realize that I owe you more clarity than my previous letter published in this forum last fall. The MCISRE achieved initial operational capability in 2010; however, much ambiguity continues to surround it.

I'd like to concisely define the MCISRE and then share my vision for it.

The MCISRE (pronounced mək-'i-zə-rē), simply put, is the Marine Corps' ISR Enterprise. It is the treatment of all the disparate intelligence capabilities across the Marine Corps—be they Operating Force or Supporting Establishment, G-2s or S-2s—as a single entity, i.e., an enterprise. Federated intelligence support is a method by which the MCISRE unites the disparate parts into a cohesive whole in order to prioritize, focus, and maximize our capabilities. **Federated intelligence support is commonly referred to as “reach-back” support.**

In 2017, I charged us with institutionalizing processes to task and federate MCISRE capabilities to meet commanders' requirements. We have come a long way since first implementing the 1994 Intelligence Plan (the “Van Riper Plan”) in the alignment of intelligence as a warfighting function—training to it, exercising it, evaluating it—before we execute. Now we need to do the same with federated intelligence support, or reach-back, as a critical aspect of the intelligence function.

Train to it. Any program of instruction that discusses intelligence needs to discuss the MCISRE and include the concept of federated intelligence support to forward deployed forces. The training and readiness standards, around which a school develops its curriculum, must inherently, and explicitly, include intelligence, the MCISRE, and federated intelligence support. I ask our colleges and schools across Training and Education Command to take a close look at how we deliver this instruction.

Exercise it. Start with a task. Articulate and prioritize your requirements. A fully institutionalized MCISRE means that your intelligence capabilities and capacity are more than what you have on hand. When establishing deploying units and publishing instructions for their deployments, codify intelligence federation support requirements. When planning exercises that task intelligence capabilities, include federated support as a mission-essential task (MET). Then exercise it within the intelligence cycle—whether you're a battalion or a Marine Expeditionary Force.

Evaluate it. Federated intelligence support should be included in any evaluation of intelligence operations—Marine Corps combat readiness evaluations; predeployment exercises; certification evaluations; and MEF, large-scale, and Service-level exercises. Whether a unit is evaluating itself or has external evaluators, the full scope of intelligence METs should be evaluated, to include federated intelligence support.

Commanders and staffs at all levels, I need your help. I need you to demand that intelligence professionals incorporate intelligence federation requirements into their staff estimates. Demand that they leverage intelligence support and capabilities beyond their respective command organizations. Insert yourselves in the intelligence cycle; after all, the commander owns it, and it drives your plans and operations. You will make us better, and you will get the support your mission demands.

Intelligence professionals—officers, enlisted, civilians—do the detailed planning. Be transparent about what you can do organically and what you can't. If you can't do it internally, you have to communicate that requirement to the next echelon; and if you're sitting at that next echelon, you need to evaluate the requirement and task out or forward up validated requests.

If we fail to train, exercise, and evaluate federated intelligence support, we will not have the SOPs and TTP in place when we need to execute. All we will have is what we bring to the fight—which will not be enough to achieve decisive advantage over our adversaries.

Drive our intelligence efforts hard. Focus your intelligence effort on those areas where we are most likely to deploy. The Commandant has made it clear: the operating environment is not slowing down for us, so let's get to work.

Semper Fidelis,



D. HENRY

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