Human Intelligence

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Human Intelligence

# *Introduction*

The intelligence that is collected via interpersonal and relational contacts contrary to how other intelligence is gathered is known as Human Intelligence which is mostly abbreviated as HUMINT. In accordance with NATO, HUMINT is basically the information that has been collected via human sources. The Central Intelligence Agency is a civilian foreign intelligence service of the federal government of the United States. CIA is given the task to gather, process and analyze national security data from all over the world. It mainly uses HUMINT to carry out a lot of its activities. A standard HUMINT activity consists of the information being taken from a human being via conversations and interrogations. Another task is to reach the right individual who has the information that is required[[1]](#footnote-1). The manner in which the HUMINT activities are carried out is mainly verbalized by the source and nature of the information and as well as the official protocol. Amid the context of the United States Military, the majority of the HUMINT activity is not inclusive of clandestine activities, while both HUMINT and counterintelligence are inclusive of the clandestine HUMINT operational techniques and clandestine HUMINT. There is a plethora of information that can be provided by HUMINT, inclusive of data collected by observing people travel, noting escaped friendly POWs, refugees and so on. Through this medium data and information can be collected about a certain subject, that subject can be another human as well. In certain cases, the subject can be the spies or defectors who might carry or have access to sensitive information. Lastly, HUMNIT can help get information on networks of interests and interpersonal relationships. It should also be kept in mind that HUMINT plays as a source of getting positive information but at the same time data of powerful counterintelligence can also be obtained via it. The interviews that are taken out to collect information should be done in the light of the requirement of intelligence collection guidance and counterintelligence.

***Discussion***

*The Intelligence Services that use HUMINT*

Since Human Intelligence has proven to be vital over time, many agencies all over the world make use of it. Agencies like Australian Secret Intelligence Services (ASIS), Canadian Security Intelligence Services (CSIS), Service canadien du renseignement de sécurité, (SCRS), Agência Brasileira de Inteligência (ABIN) Brazil, Intelligence Directorate, formerly Dirección General de Inteligencia (DGI) Cuba, Ministry of State Security of the People's Republic of China, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) India, Cabinet General Intelligence Bureau Korea, Direction générale de la sécurité extérieure (DGSE) or Directorate-General for External Security France, Mossad (HaMossad leModi'in uleTafkidim Meyuhadim or Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations) Israel, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Intelligence Bureau (IB) Pakistan, Foreign Intelligence Service (Romania), Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND) or Federal Intelligence Service Germany, Directorate of Operations (DO), part of the Central Intelligence Agency; Defense Clandestine Service (DCS), part of the Defense Intelligence Agency United Kingdom, National Intelligence Service (South Korea), Foreign Intelligence Service, Main Intelligence Directorate ,Russia, Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), commonly known as MI6 and South African Secret Service (SASS) are significant HUMINT organizations.

*The Uniqueness of HUMINT over other Information-Gathering*

There are many aspects which make HUMINT unique as opposed to other ways to collect intelligence. The energy efficiency might not be as good as other intelligence but there are certain aspects which give human intelligence an edge. For starters, humans find a way to learn a variety of skills over the course of time. In fact, there are certain skills that humans are capable of learning on their own[[2]](#footnote-2). On the contrary, other intelligence like AI (Artificial Intelligence) might consume heaps of energy and at the same time is only designed to manage a certain amount of tasks. The same is the case with Imagery Intelligence, there are satellites that are responsible for taking images, but it is not necessary that the image taken will depict everything. Humans, on the other hand, remember the whole scenery and remember things vividly instead of just having a mere image.

Further, it is also a fact that the human brain notices details like body language and the nature of the meeting between two subjects and what not. These kinds of details cannot be provided by images. Next up, humans were built by nature to multi-task. On the contrary, it takes a lot of effort and time to teach other intelligence to multi-task. Decision making is another well-developed trait that human beings have. No other intelligence has the ability of decision making on such a high scale. Human intelligence is based on adapting, they have the ability to improvise in regards to the environment by using countless cognitive processes. Majority of other intelligence are mainly based on mimicking human intelligence and advancing it, but there are many areas where they have not reached the HUMINT. Lastly, there are many layers and complexity to human intelligence that no other intelligence has, other intelligence are manmade, they have still not surpassed how established human beings are. Yes, there are areas like data storage and retrieving where other intelligence have an edge and there is no doubt in that. However, regardless of the technological boom HUMINT is still one of the intelligences which can provide certain data or information that no other intelligence can. Things like compartmented data and internal memoranda can only be provided by Human intelligence. Humans can aid in providing key insight on certain aspects which most intelligence are not capable of doing.

*Different Ways of Collecting Intelligence and their Advantages and Disadvantages*

1. Human Intelligence – This intelligence is basically collected by the help of humans as mentioned above. It is basically used by the CIA but there are other agencies which also make use of the HUMINT. There are some clear advantages and disadvantage of collecting data from this kind of intelligence[[3]](#footnote-3). First, reflecting on the advantages, humans are capable of adapting and there is still certain internal information that can only be provided by them. Other technological intelligence cannot tap certain areas where physical presence is required to asses and monitor a certain situation and adapting n regards with the circumstances. Now, looking at the disadvantages, humans cannot process and store information as artificial intelligence can. There is always a possibility that certain details might be left out. Further, humans can be biased and might leave out information based on personal choices. Other than that, the more the information is passed the more are the chances of it getting altered. That is why human incorporation with artificial intelligence is said to be the best possible way to study a subject.
2. Signal Intelligence – These are the electronic signals that are collected by satellites, ships, planes or ground sites. COMINT communication intelligence is also a kind of Signal intelligence. Like every other intelligence, it has its advantages as well. One of the biggest advantages is the fact that they can be used to detect the activity of rogue groups. Further, they can be crucial for military, diplomatic, scientific, economic and other plans of a country. There are cons to Signal intelligence as well. The cons are based on human error, the message sent can be misinterpreted or misread based on cultural or language differences.
3. Imagery Intelligence – it is also referred to as photo intelligence. It is the intelligence which is based on collecting data with photos. Satellites are used in order to take photos to seek certain data. The pros of this kind of intelligence are the fact that no human life is lost and there are lesser chances of detection in the process of collection. Unnamed aerial vehicles and more advanced aircraft have also given the advantage of collecting data through photos in a more advanced way[[4]](#footnote-4). The pictures collected nowadays are clearer and have better detail. One can get information about the required target without any fuss and it is overall convenient. Coming to the disadvantages, at times the photos received are delayed and there are chances that the subject has moved over the course of time. This fact also hampers the whole concept, since the concerned departments will be delayed and the troops that they place will be on the wrong and old position of the subject. Further, at times the management is not able to read the pictures properly. This causes an issue, as well as the actions, are taken can be of no use due to misinterpretation.
4. Measurement and Signatures Intelligence – this is an organization of distinctive collection activities. The pros of this intelligence are that it is good for both the tactical and strategic applications and further, the fact it uses sensors is another plus. It can aid in building models to asses a certain situation as it is based less on the collection of intelligence. Further, it also aids in putting the collected data into categories. The disadvantages of this intelligence are the fact that the collection process is restricted, additionally, this data is technical and hard to apply.

*Notable Intelligence Failures and Successes*

1. Starting with one of the most prominent intelligence failures, The Peral Harbor attack. The naval base was not prepared for the attack that was ahead[[5]](#footnote-5). The code that was sent by the Japanese Diplomats was finally broken down, but it was too late for that. The reason for that was the signals not being able to come across due to bad weather. So, the signal intelligence faced a major glitch causing many people to lose their lives including civilians.
2. Another example of the failure of intelligence would be when the CIA could not figure out India's clear purpose of setting several underground nuclear blasts. Later, it was reported that a US satellite was able to collect clear evidence of what India was meaning to do. This was a fail of the Imagery Intelligence.
3. A success followed right after the Indian mishap. The CIA was able to gather information about Pakistan preparing to carry out nuclear tests of its own via a combination of intelligence. This shaped to reality and Pakistan did Nuclear testing on 28th May 1998.
4. Another notable CIA success would be SR-71 Blackbird.
5. Further, the CIA has seen great success by arming Mujahideen via HUMINT when they were fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan.

*HUMINT a Qualitative Discipline*

Apart from expanding HUMINT, the army has also worked on increasing quality. They have been working left, right and center to produce well trained and robust HUMINT force. The reason behind that was the sudden increase in the quantity of the force, this made the army work twice as hard to maintain the quality. HUMINT, in general, is a qualitative discipline because of the nature of the job. If the force is not well qualified and given quality training they cannot nail down the requirement of the project and bring back the required information. HUMINT is all about gathering quality and useful information, that can only be done if the force behind is given enough awareness to tell what piece of information can be useful[[6]](#footnote-6). There are certain force members who are fluent in various languages which helps them travel across the world for various missions and projects. Further quality is necessary as it aids in enhancing the military part of the agency for instance DIA. Further, even the IC requires to have quality HUMINT, which proves that this discipline depends on the quality of the collectors.

*Challenges Associated with HUMINT Recruitment*

The problems that are associated with HUMINT recruitment are on the basis of many problems. For starters, the US has started to rely on technical intelligence more[[7]](#footnote-7). Second, the people they want to hire need to have cultural awareness and linguistic edge as well. Third, in accordance with an investigation that was carried out in 1995, an American was tortured and under the orders of a paid CIA agent. Since this act was against human rights, CIA started becoming more refrained and restricted when it came to recruiting new agents. Further, the United States HUMINT stuck to using cold-war style to cover up their tracks which further hampered the recruitment process. In general, finding all-rounder individuals has been difficult because not everyone can be well aware of all cultures and linguistics.

*HUMINT Agent Recruitment Cycle*

The recruiting of new agents is mainly the responsibility of a case editor. The first step of the recruitment process is known as "Spotting." In this step, the case officer looks up information that is openly available on the internet and look for a potential candidate. Then comes the step of "Assessment," in this step the officer tries to get insight on the potential recruits. They try to find out everything about the individuals personal and professional life. All this is usually done anonymously, without letting the potential recruit know. Then if things go positively the recruit is taken into the development phase. In this phase, more information is gathered about the possible recruit[[8]](#footnote-8). This is the step when confidence is formed between the case officer and the possible recruit, more information surfaces and potential vulnerabilities surface. Then comes the stage which is known as “Pitch,” in his stage the case officer finally makes a proposal that protection will be provided in return of some kind of benefit and remuneration. After Pitch, the operation move into the “Handling Phase,” in this stage the case officer formalizes the recruitment and a kind of secrecy. Over the course of time, the case officer can assess if the agents reporting is accurate or not. Then comes the final phase, which is called "Termination." There can be a plethora of reasons why the relationship between an agent and case officer might end. Regardless of the controversy surrounding termination, it just means that the agreement to provide protection has ended.

*HUMINT Collection Easy and Difficult based on the International Environment*

Over the course of time collecting HUMINT has been made easy due to the progression of social media. They can help the agents narrow down where their subject might be and they can observe their daily routine just by going through their social media pages. Further, the international environment in regards to social media is pretty similar worldwide which makes things easier. Now coming to the difficulty, people have become more paranoid over time. Current awareness regarding a lot of worldly activity has made things more difficult. People since are more aware have become more cautious and difficult to extract information from. Even the youth is more aware now[[9]](#footnote-9). Further, there is more cultural awareness as well, in order to converse with another ethnicity one has to be very aware.

*Pros and Cons of HUMINT*

In this case, some strengths of HUMINT can also be called weaknesses. The agents can at times bring false information and their behavior cannot predict if they are telling the truth or not. Further, the agents can be biased as well based on who they are dealing and conversing with. Other than that, there are chances that the information might travel from a few agents to finally get to the agency. Here lies a big problem as the information can be altered mid-route. When it comes to the success of HUMINT, it can prove to be valuable in demonstrating real-world views of situations and the cultural factor helps look at the intelligence from an applied perspective.

*Excelling in Technical Intelligence in relevance to HUMINT*

The United States has started investing more in the proven technical platforms to collect intelligence. The reason behind that is the fact that the world has become volatile. There are certain places where sending agents is nothing less than signing their death certificate. Further, in certain areas, the technical intelligence collecting platforms are just more convenient and the chances of getting caught are lesser.

*Why Cannot Open Sources and the US Embassies Provide all the HUMINT*

As time is passing intelligence agencies from other countries have also become quite advanced, they have found ways to hack into systems[[10]](#footnote-10). So passing human intelligence over open sources and even through the agencies is not safe.

*Espionage* When it comes to espionage, it usually means that a person has been sent somewhere to spy, in short, keep an eye on things. In this case, spies are sent in different countries to keep a check on world affairs. It is usually done when the military or the government have a concern which might pose a threat on a national level or for the country. It can be done for potential threats concerned with the military as well. Espionage is usually done by a HUMINT agent, who is willing to risk their lives for the sake of their country. One of the recent examples of espionage is former CIA officer Kevin Mallory case, who has been pleaded guilty for espionage against China.

*Operation manager*

When it comes to becoming an Operation manager of the CIA, there are certain aspects that a person needs to cover in order to do the job. They need to be well aware of the recruiting process, further, they should be strong-minded and patient enough to form relations with people within as well as outside the country. Since their job also requires overseas travel they need to be diverse in order to deal with people of various ethnicities. They should also be well aware of cultural differences and different languages.

*People the United States Agencies Deal with Abroad*

It cannot be said that there should be restrictions, but there should be certain precautionary measures that the agencies should take when dealing with different types of people aboard. They need to be wary of their backgrounds, and if the person seems dubious a link should not be formed.

*Ethical Dimensions*

Regardless of whatever the nature of the situation, if the laws have to be broken, it is necessary that no further information is leaked or given to the intelligence agencies in the other country[[11]](#footnote-11). Under no condition can the agent expose or tell what kind of methods of collecting intelligence the United States uses. Secrecy is of top priority and should be kept no matter what. It is a myth that leaks do not do harm, they can cause a butterfly effect in a small period of time.

*Should there be Spies?*

This is a tricky question as the world has come to a place where certain things are necessary to get by. If one is to eliminate the concept of spying it needs to be done worldwide. Further, today it is necessary as the military of every country keeps itself prepared for any mishap if there is a possibility of something going down. It also aids the agencies in saving the lives of the people.

***Conclusion: HUMINT***

If we talk about HUMINT, it is one of a kind and has a place of its own even after the release of countless technologies. Having said that, HUMINT and all technical intelligence complement each other[[12]](#footnote-12). The validation of the truth behind the reporting done by HUMINT can be verified with the help of imagery intelligence and signal intelligence as well. Both Human Intelligence and Technical Intelligence in combination with one another can help get all the information that is required to study and observe the suspect or subject. In a way, Technical Intelligence is also there to aid human intelligence.

# End Notes

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2. Mayer, Matt A. "Enhanced Human Intelligence Is Key to Defeating Terrorists." *AEI Paper & Studies* (2016): B1. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Yadav, Mayank, and Shailendra Narayan Singh. "Object Surveillance Through Real-Time Tracking." In *Progress in Advanced Computing and Intelligent Engineering*, pp. 461-471. Springer, Singapore, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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