INTELLIGENCE SHARING AND DISSEMINATION IN COMBINED JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS

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The vast majority of military strategists agree with the importance of intelligence as a decisive factor during the planning and execution of successful military operations. The intelligence process consists of five phases: Planning and Direction, Collection, Processing and Exploatation, Analysis and Production, and Dissemination and Integration. All these stages are of equal importance in the effort to provide intelligence in support of military operations. However, most analyses concerning the modernization of procedures and technologies required to improve the intelligence process mainly focus on the collection phase of the intelligence cycle. Perhaps the most disadvantaged phase of the intelligence process, in terms of methodological progress, is the intelligence dissemination phase. The purpose of this article is to stress the importance of the intelligence dissemination phase of the intelligence process and to identify the difficulties encountered in this phase during the planning and execution of CJSO (Combined Joint Special Operations).

Key words: *intelligence, intelligence sharing, Combined Joint Special Operations, planning, execution.*

> *"If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle".*
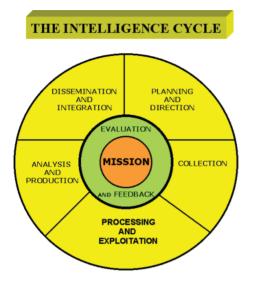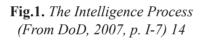>
> Sun Tzu

1. INTRODUCTION

The vast majority of military strategists agree with the importance of intelligence as a decisive factor during the planning and execution of successful military operations. As shown below in Figure 1, the intelligence process consists of five phases: Planning and Direction, Collection, Processing and Exploatation, Analysis and Production, and Dissemination and integration (DoD, 2007, p. I-7).

All these stages are of equal importance in the effort to provide intelligence in support of military operations. However, most analyses concerning the modernization of procedures and technologies required to improve the intelligence process mainly focus on the collection phase of the intelligence cycle. Perhaps the most disadvantaged phase of the intelligence process, in terms of methodological progress, is the intelligence dissemination phase.

THE INTELLIGENCE CYCLE

Fig.1. *The Intelligence Process
(From DoD, 2007, p. I-7) 14*

The purpose of this article is to stress the importance of the intelligence dissemination phase of the intelligence process and to identify the difficulties encountered in this phase during the planning and execution of CJSO (Combined Joint Special Operations).

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF INTELLIGENCE SHARING AND DISSEMINATION

No matter how well planned and targeted the intelligence collection effort is, it becomes inefficient if the means and methods of collecting information are inadequate, insufficient or obsolete. Regardless of how much qualitative information

is collected, it loses much of its value if it is not properly processed. No matter how well processed the collected information is, it can become a double-edged sword either if it is not properly analyzed, or if the analysis is not transformed into finite and qualitative intelligence products. More importantly, even if all four of the phases above have been successfully carried out, the whole intelligence process will be for naught if the final products of the intelligence process do not reach the final users. To fail during the dissemination phase of the intelligence process means, in fact, to miss the purpose of the entire intelligence cycle (DeConde, 2002, pp. 225-226).

The risk of failure during the intelligence dissemination phase may be emphasized by one psychological element in the intelligence analyst's way of thinking. Once the pressure during the information collection and analysis has passed, and the intelligence products are completed, the intelligence analysts may have a tendency to partially lose their focus, which may affect the intelligence dissemination phase (Maltz & Kohli, 1995).

Moreover, the information/intelligence sharing among various elements of a Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force — which is actually a more difficult case of intelligence dissemination — affects the intelligence process starting with the collection phase. Vanotten (2005) observed that, "anytime people from different cultures come into contact

with one another, there is the potential for tension and misunderstanding" (p. 32). He suggested that a psychological premise might slow down the information/intelligence sharing process. Such a premise may arise because of differences between the intelligence cultures of the CJSOTF (Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force) members. Moreover, it may arise because, at times, some CJSOTF members might consider themselves superior to the other members.

The processes of intelligence dissemination and intelligence sharing, which are quite similar from the methodological point of view, are extremely important, interoperable elements of a military coalition (Neagoe, 2009:25).Therefore, intelligence dissemination must be treated with the same attention as any other phase of the intelligence process.

3. INTELLIGENCE IN COMBINED JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Perhaps the most complex environment in which information/ intelligence is disseminated and shared is the combined joint environment. The globalization of threats requires the globalization of efforts to eliminate these threats. CJSO represent one of the ways in which militaries respond to these threats.

CJSO are characterized by a few elements that differentiate them from traditional military operations. In essence, the CJSO involve the joint action of two or more special services, belonging to two or more states, in order to eliminate a threat to the security of those states (DoD, 2008, p. 108). In terms of intelligence, the following features characterize the CJSO environment:

- Different intelligence cultures, from country to country;
- Different intelligence cultures, from service to service;
- Differences between special operations forces' intelligence requirements and conventional forces' intelligence requirements;
- Different systems, technologies, methods and regulations used by the CJSOTF members during the intelligence process;
- Differing individual country security issues.

4. ISSUES IN INTELLIGENCE SHARING AND DISSEMINATION DURING COMBINED JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Traditionally, Special Operations may be classified into two main categories: commando type and unconventional type (Lamb, 1995, p. 4). CJSO are not an exception to th is general classification.

1. Commando Type - Combined Joint Special Operations

Commando type operations are characterized by high physical risk for the performers in the field, high

political risk for the planners, short execution time and high strategic stakes for the operations. In terms of intelligence dissemination and sharing during the CJSO, there are a number of issues that may reduce the efficiency of the intelligence cycle.

These problems may arise even from the beginning of the planning process due to the high strategic stakes of these operations, which sometimes involve highly sensitive intelligence held by one or more of the states engaged in operations. In this respect, the suspicions and hesitations of some countries to share intelligence - sometimes because of the higher price for which the intelligence has been obtained, or the desire to protect the country's sources - have become the main elements that slow down the process of intelligence dissemination and sharing during the CJSO.

Moreover, because the available time to prepare the commando type-CJSO is limited, it is difficult to build an efficient intelligence architecture that is able to facilitate the intelligence sharing and dissemination (Walsh, 2007, pp. 151-181).

Another limitation in terms of intelligence sharing and dissemination is sometimes represented by the high degree of the information's sensitivity. Sometimes this situation limits the access to certain information for the particular members of the CJSOTF.

An example of how information sensitivity affects the intelligence sharing process exists when special operation forces are involved in the execution of a mission with conventional forces, or when NATO states are involved in the execution of a mission with non-NATO states.

In the latter case, NATO members may have access to some sensitive information but, due to the information's degree of confidentiality, the members cannot disclose this information to nonNATO states.

2. Unconventional Type - Combined Joint Special Operations

Since the commando type-CJSO are usually short operations, unconventional type-CJSO are long duration operations. Because of their protracted character, the volume of information is typically very large in unconventional type-CJSO.

In their study focused on the general dissemination of market intelligence, professors Maltz and Kohli (1996) discovered that the receiver's perception of the quality of the intelligence might be diminished by a very large amount of information. Moreover, they found that *"if new information is transmitted at a rate that goes above the receiver's capability to process it, the receiver might perceive the information to be uncertain, incomplete, or contradictory"* (pp. 49-50).

There is no reason to assume that in the case of military intelligence the situation would be different. This circumstance calls for the creation of an intelligence infrastructure with a complex and flexible architecture capable of dealing with a huge volume of information. Although a

technical infrastructure is essential to facilitate the intelligence sharing and dissemination process, paradoxically this infrastructure may sometimes alter the process (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2008, pp. 3-4).

This situation may arise due to the following reasons:
- the need for an accommodation period for the new staff to learn operating rules and characteristics of the technological infrastructure and the intelligence architecture;
- the existence of an enormous intelligence database not managed well enough through efficient software;
- the lack of technical and operational knowledge necessary to work with the intelligence for some CJSOTF's staff personnel.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In combined joint operations, each allied nation has, more or less, a different set of regulations regarding intelligence sharing and dissemination. This situation affects the CJSO and requires that a method to coordinate and harmonize these regulations be found.

Recently, referring to coalition operations in Afghanistan, Maj. Gen. Gratien Maire (2008), the French embassy's defense attaché in Washington, highlighted the necessity to find a solution for this issue. Military officials must *"find the way either to adapt the regulations or to find a way to make sure that because*

of a regulation, we would not be in a situation where some commander in the field will not be able to provide some intelligence for the troops that could perhaps save lives", he stated.

The issues in sharing and disseminating intelligence within CJSO cannot be solved by a universal formula. The intelligence sharing and dissemination process' optimization can be achieved on a case-by-case basis by using different methods. However, a few general conclusions can be highlighted in order to guide this optimization process by focusing the efforts on the following areas:
- the creation of an intelligence architecture capable of providing effective and well-defined channels through which to achieve the intelligence sharing and dissemination;
- the implementation of simple and efficient standard reporting procedures;
- the creation of a proficient Combined Joint Intelligence Team capable of managing the intelligence flux during the short or protracted combined joint special operations;
- the use of simple and efficient software for intelligence management in order to facilitate the categorization and dissemination of intelligence;
- the establishment of a clear policy regarding the sharing and dissemination of classified information.

Moreover, Lowenthal (2006) identified the following questions

that must be taken into consideration during the intelligence dissemination phase of intelligence cycle:

- Among the large mass of material being collected and analyzed each day, what is important enough to report?
- To which policy makers should it be reported - the most senior or lower-ranking ones? To many, or just a few?
- How quickly should it be reported? Is it urgent enough to require immediate delivery, or can it wait for one of the reports that senior policy makers receive the next morning?
- How much detail should be reported to the various intelligence consumers? How long should the report be?
- What is the best vehicle for reporting it-one of the items in the product line, a memo, a briefing (pp. 63-64)?

Those questions are applicable for the intelligence dissemination phase of the CJSOTF's intelligence cycle as well.

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