Chapter 3

Creating Effective Intelligence

"To lack intelligence is to be in the ring blindfolded."[1]

—David M. Shoup

"It is refreshing to see things in their proper order—intelligence driving operations, instead of operations driving intelligence . . . As a consequence, we have been able to maintain a constantly high tempo of productive operations."[2]

—Charles E. Wilhelm

Having reached a common understanding of the nature of intelligence and having laid out the main elements of intelligence theory, we can describe the characteristics of effective intelligence. How do we create it within in the Marine Corps?

THE CHALLENGE TO INTELLIGENCE

Before discussing our approach to intelligence, it might be helpful to review the challenges that intelligence faces. What obstacles must intelligence overcome, and what must it accomplish?

Our fundamental premise is that intelligence is not knowledge for its own sake, but instead knowledge for the sole purpose of supporting the commander's decisionmaking needs. Knowledge that cannot be acted upon or that commanders choose to ignore is of little value. Consequently, the Marine Corps recognizes that because intelligence is directly connected to action, it is therefore inseparable from command and operations.

Intelligence attempts to reduce uncertainty about a particular hostile situation. Intelligence is fundamentally an imprecise activity, dealing in estimates and probabilities rather than cer-

tainties. Intelligence must extract meaning from information that is ambiguous, unclear, and sometimes of unknown reliability. It must synthesize disparate information, attempting to create a coherent picture of the enemy and the area of operations. Intelligence should strive to identify enemy centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities that commanders can exploit. At the same time, it should provide warning of threats to friendly forces.

Intelligence not only provides knowledge of quantitative factors but also, more importantly, affords insight into intangible aspects of the enemy situation such as his goals and motivations. It should not only describe existing conditions and identify enemy capabilities but should also attempt to estimate likely future conditions and enemy intentions. In addition, it should present that knowledge in the form of coherent, meaningful images that are easily assimilated rather than in the form of accumulated lists or texts.

Intelligence strives to answer three basic sets of questions. The first relates to current capabilities and conditions: "What *can* the enemy do? What conditions currently exist?" The second relates to intentions or future conditions: "What *might* the enemy do? What is the enemy *likely* to do? What is the most dangerous thing he may do? What conditions might or are likely to exist in the future?" And the third—and most important—relates to any implications: "What effect might all of this have on our ability to accomplish the mission?"

In short, intelligence must provide the commander with the *practical knowledge that offers exploitable advantages* over the opposition.

INTELLIGENCE IS A COMMAND RESPONSIBILITY

Creating effective intelligence is an inherent and essential responsibility of command. Intelligence failures are failures of command—just as operations failures are command failures.

The Marine Corps' approach to intelligence demands that commanders be personally involved in the conduct of intelligence activities. The commander must specify requirements and provide guidance to ensure a timely and useful product. Commanders must develop an appreciation for the capabilities and limitations of intelligence. This awareness does not mean just an understanding of concepts and theory, but an understanding of the *practical* capabilities and limitations of intelligence personnel, systems, procedures, and products.

The commander begins the process by providing the guidance and direction necessary for the effective conduct of intelligence operations. The commander establishes the priority intelligence requirements that drive collection, production, and dissemination operations. If a commander does not effectively define and prioritize intelligence requirements, the entire effort

may falter. The commander is also required to make the final synthesis of intelligence, arriving at the estimate of the situation which, in turn, serves as the basis for the decision. This is the responsibility of the commander and no one else; while the intelligence officer will provide a recommendation, it is the commander who ultimately determines the meaning of the intelligence provided and how to use it. Additionally, the commander supervises the overall intelligence effort to ensure that the product is timely, relevant, and useful.

Importantly, the commander ensures that intelligence activities support not just the intelligence requirements of the parent unit but the requirements of subordinate commanders as well. The commander should intervene personally when the unit's collection requests or other intelligence support requirements go unsatisfied. Finally, the commander must view the intelligence training of all personnel as a personal command responsibility. This training includes the intelligence awareness of all members of the command as well as the professional development and training of intelligence personnel.

THE COMMAND-INTELLIGENCE CONNECTION

The relationship between the commander and the intelligence officer should be as close as that between the commander and operations officer. Personal involvement in intelligence does

not imply that the commander micromanages the intelligence section or assumes the job of the intelligence officer any more than involvement in operations means that the commander takes over as operations officer. Instead, commanders must provide the guidance and supervision necessary for the intelligence officer to support them while at the same time allowing the intelligence officer sufficient latitude for initiative.

In reality, however, the relationship between a commander and intelligence officer is often more difficult to establish and maintain. One reason is that the commander and operations officer usually have more in common in terms of grade, military occupational specialty, age, and experience. In the perspective of some officers, an operations billet is a prelude to command, and many commanders have previously served tours of duty as operations officers in the very same type of unit they now command. Commanders rarely have had the same sort of practical experience in intelligence billets. Consequently, commanders must promote an environment of cooperation, professional support, and mutual respect between themselves and their intelligence officers in which operations and intelligence officers can work together to execute their commanders' intent.

Intelligence requirements are the commander's requirements and not those of the intelligence officer. The commanding officer must provide early and adequate guidance and revise it when necessary. The commander identifies what intelligence is needed while the intelligence officer helps in stating the priority intelligence requirements to meet those needs.

The intelligence officer is not simply a researcher waiting for a task from the commanding officer. *An intelligence officer is an operator who understands the intelligence needs of the unit.* The intelligence officer is knowledgeable of the tactical situation and can anticipate the commander's intelligence requirements based on an understanding of the com- mander's intent and the commander's thought processes. The intelligence officer actively advises the commander on just what intelligence may contribute to success and aggressively carries out intelligence operations to fulfill the intelligence needs of the command.

While the relationship between commander and intelligence officer should be close, they must be careful not to lose their objectivity. The commander and intelligence officer may not always agree on their respective estimates of the hostile situation—this is natural and to be expected. Once the intelligence officer has provided a candid, objective estimate, the commander will assess it and make an independent judgment. Once the commander has made a decision, the intelligence officer must support it fully—while maintaining the detachment necessary to advise the commander if the situation changes or if new evidence indicates that the commander's estimate appears wrong.

During planning and wargaming, the commander will often instruct the intelligence officer to assume the role of an adversary—to attempt to think like the enemy commander—as a

means of gaining insights into possible enemy intentions, actions, and reactions. Thus, the intelligence officer often plays the role of devil's advocate, identifying possible ways that the enemy or the environment may interfere with or even defeat friendly plans. In this manner, the intelligence officer helps the commander analyze possibilities and prepare responses to possible developments.

Commanders must exercise caution so as not to judge the effectiveness of intelligence by how accurately it has predicted reality. Commanders must realize that intelligence is the business of estimates, not certainties. A commander harboring unrealistic expectations may discover that the intelligence officer is reluctant to risk any predictions for fear of being wrong. The commander must encourage the intelligence officer to estimate enemy possibilities frankly and not merely provide "safe" facts and figures. Far from being merely a provider of facts and figures—or even a provider of estimates on enemy courses of action—*the intelligence officer should offer trusted advice on friendly courses of action based on knowledge of the hostile situation*.

THE INTELLIGENCE-OPERATIONS CONNECTION

The relationship between intelligence and operations should be as close and direct as that between intelligence and command. In addition to intelligence's influence on the conduct of operations by identifying enemy capabilities and estimat- ing enemy courses of action and possible reactions to friendly courses of action, intelligence also provides important support to operations by helping to identify *friendly critical vulnerabilities* that the enemy may exploit. Thus, the intelligence and operations sections must function in close cooperation throughout the planning and execution of an operation. Neither section can perform effectively without the continuous cooperation of the other.

As in the relationship with the commander, the intelligence officer should cooperate fully with the operations officer but should not develop a personal stake in a particular course of action. Based on knowledge of the hostile situation, the intelligence officer must maintain the freedom to offer advice which disagrees with the advice of the operations staff.[3]

Intelligence officers are themselves operators. The intelligence officer does everything the operations officer does, only in red ink—meaning from the enemy, rather than friendly perspective. The intelligence officer must possess an intimate knowledge of the enemy's methods, capabilities, organizations, and tendencies. At the same time, in order to effectively plan,

coordinate, and execute intelligence opera- tions, the intelligence officer requires an in-depth understanding of friendly tactics, capabilities, and intentions.

The relationship between operations and intelligence necessitates mutual support. Just as intelligence identifies opportunities for exploitation through operations, so can operations provide the stimulus for intelligence. Regardless of the primary mission, all operations have an additional object of gaining information about the enemy and the environment. Some operations possess this goal as the primary mission. For example, the objective of a tactical maneuver such as a reconnaissance in force may be to learn more about enemy capabilities and disposition or to solicit the enemy's reaction to a specific situation.

The importance of the intelligence-operations connection is seen in the contrasting approaches to intelligence used by the Luftwaffe and the Royal Air Force (RAF) during the Battle of Britain. The RAF placed intelligence officers throughout the organization down to the squadron level. Thus aircrews received the latest intelligence during tailored pre- mission briefings, and information collected during combat was immediately available for analysis, dissemination, and utilization. In contrast, the Luftwaffe placed intelligence officers at the wing level only. Intelligence support to flying groups and squadrons was marginal throughout the battle, and its lack contributed to the German defeat.[4]

The direct connection between intelligence and operations results in intelligence shaping or even driving the course of operations. Intelligence operations seek to uncover enemy vulnerabilities we can exploit. Opportunities identified by the intelligence effort are used to develop the concept of operations during planning and to initiate specific tactical actions during execution. Effective intelligence guides us towards enemy weaknesses rather than forcing us to operate against an enemy strength.

The invasion of Tinian during World War II provides an illustration of how intelligence shapes operations. Initial intelligence studies of Tinian identified only one suitable landing area for the amphibious assault. This area was located immediately in front of the island's major settlement, Tinian Town, and was heavily defended by the Japanese. The studies noted the existence of two small inlets on the northern tip of the island but discounted their suitability for a major landing (see figure 5). As planning progressed, new intelligence identified major disadvantages in attacking across the Tinian Town beaches. At the same time, additional studies indicated that a landing on the undefended northern beaches was a viable option. Preassault reconnaissance confirmed the suitability of these beaches. The concept of operations called for regimental-sized landings to be conducted on two small northern beaches (White 1 and White 2) that totaled in width only about 220 yards. The main landing would be supported by an amphibious demonstration conducted near Tinian Town.

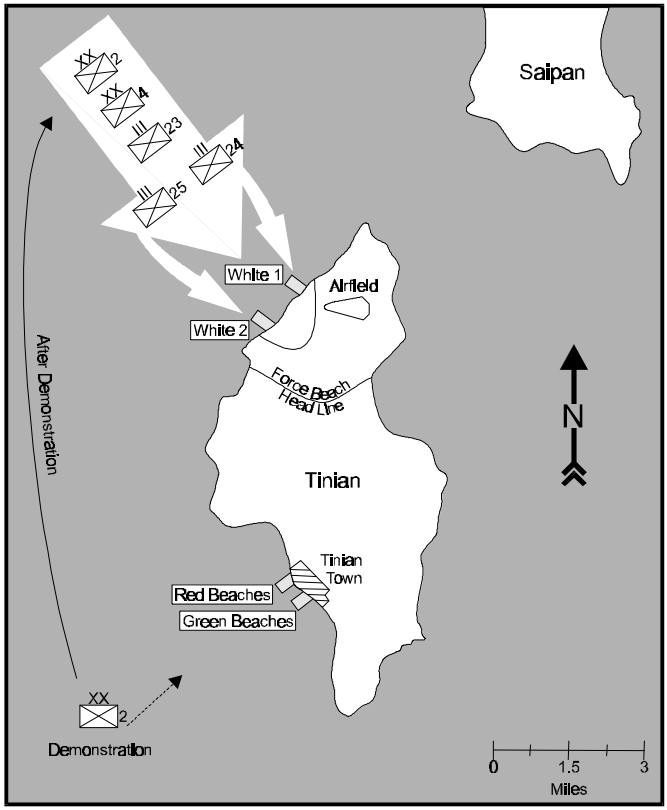

Figure 5.

The amphibious assault achieved complete tactical surprise. Landing against minimal opposition on the northern beaches,

the entire 4th Marine Division was established ashore by the end of the first day. The island was secured in 9 days with minimal casualties suffered by the landing force. The Tinian operation was described by Admiral Raymond Spruance as, "probably the most brilliantly conceived and executed amphibious operation in World War II." Intelligence contributed significantly to the success of this operation, providing commanders with knowledge of a critical vulnerability—the undefended northern beaches—which they exploited to achieve success.[5]

INTELLIGENCE AS A TEAM EFFORT

Intelligence is the commander's responsibility and the intelligence officer's primary duty, but it is also definitely the concern of every Marine. All Marines in the command contribute in one way or another to the intelligence effort. Nearly every Marine, regardless of occupational specialty, has occasion to observe significant facts about the enemy or the environment. Units in contact with the enemy are a particularly valuable source of information. All Marines should consider themselves as potential intelligence sources and, equally important, as counterintelligence assets. Everyone on the battlefield should be alert for important information and bring that information to the attention of the person who needs it by the most direct and expeditious means available.

INTELLIGENCE IS A PRODUCT, NOT A PROVISION

Intelligence is something generated through our own efforts, rather than something provided by some outside source. While we may say that in principle we should have ready access to external sources like satellite imagery, basing our actions on the timely availability of such information is dangerous. Commanders should aim, to the greatest extent possible, to become self-sufficient in satisfying their own intelligence requirements. This approach is particularly important once an operation has commenced. Before operations begin, intelligence from higher echelons may appear to be available in unlimited quantities. However, once execution starts, our organic intelligence and reconnaissance assets generally provide the most reliable and responsive support to Marine units. Marines cannot forget that intelligence is the result of solid headwork and legwork, and it is not provided from some omniscient source of knowledge. Requirements for critical intelligence should be satisfied through organic means whenever possible.

A BALANCED APPROACH

The approach of the Marine Corps to intelligence calls for balance in a number of areas. First is the capability to gather information from a variety of sources. Each source provides a different type of information. These different sources can com-

pensate for, complement, and confirm one another. Depending on the situation, certain sources will be more valuable than others. Which source we most depend upon in a particular situation is less a matter of our own preference than a matter of the nature and sophistication of the enemy.

Next, balance means that commanders emphasize equally all phases of the intelligence cycle. For example, an overemphasis on collection may result in an overload of information that overwhelms processing and production capacity, thus preventing rapid dissemination. Balance also means that commanders emphasize the development of both classes of in- telligence—descriptive and estimative. Balance requires that intelligence personnel work at uncovering both the enemy's capabilities and the enemy's intentions. Balance means that we take into account both quantitative factors—such as numbers, locations, equipment specifications—and qualitative factors—morale, motives, leadership, and cultural values.

Finally, our approach to intelligence should achieve balance in its support to commanders at all levels. At any particular level, the intelligence officer's first duty is to serve the commander's intelligence requirements. However, since questions about the enemy situation and area of operations are practically limitless, an intelligence section can easily spend all its time satisfying intelligence requirements of its own staff or higher headquarters—to the neglect and detriment of subordinate commanders' intelligence needs. Commanders must provide the necessary guidance to ensure that balance is achieved.

Intelligence personnel must remain conscious of the intelligence requirements of all elements of the force with the objective of creating satisfactory intelligence for all supported commanders.

FOCUSING THE INTELLIGENCE EFFORT

Focus, as embodied in the concept of main effort, is central to maneuver warfare. It is particularly critical for intelligence since possible questions about the enemy situation are nearly infinite, while intelligence assets are limited. Commanders must concentrate intelligence operations on those critical requirements upon which mission success depends and prioritize accordingly. *The intelligence effort must support the main effort.* In fact, intelligence is responsible for identifying the enemy's centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities that are used to determine the main effort.

Focus is a product of direction, which means it is a function of command. The commander provides focus to the intelligence effort by prioritizing intelligence requirements. These requirements establish priorities for all intelligence activities—not only for collection but also for processing, production, and dissemination. The earlier the commander establishes this guidance, the more focused, timely, and complete the final intelligence product will be.

GENERATING TEMPO THROUGH INTELLIGENCE

Tempo is central to maneuver warfare and our command and control doctrine. We seek to generate a higher operating tempo than that of the enemy. Effective intelligence supports this accelerated tempo. We help create this rapid tempo through a variety of techniques.

First, we generate tempo through *prioritization*. We establish a limited number of priority intelligence requirements that are understood clearly throughout the force. Collection, processing, production, and dissemination operations are conducted in accordance with these priorities. By concentrating on the truly essential requirements, we avoid diluting intelligence operations and clogging dissemination channels with nonessential intelligence.

Another way we use intelligence to accelerate tempo is through *decentralization*—establishing command relationships or task-organizing intelligence assets to directly support subordinate commanders. Decentralizing intelligence re- sources applies not only to collection assets but to production and dissemination assets as well. Decentralization provides subordinate elements with the intelligence resources needed to recognize and exploit opportunities as they arise in the battlespace. It also helps ensure intelligence products are tailored to the re-

quirements of commanders at lower echelons. However, decentralization does not mean that intelligence assets will be fully dispersed throughout the force or that each unit will have an equal share of the available intelligence units, systems, or personnel. Since intelligence assets are limited, it is virtually impossible to provide each unit with all the intelligence capabilities its commander may desire. Assets will be allocated based on the commander's intent, the designation of the main effort, and the priority intelligence requirements.

The third technique by which we generate intelligence tempo entails a conscious command decision *to disseminate certain information before it has been fully integrated, analyzed, evaluated, and interpreted*—in other words, before it becomes a comprehensive intelligence product. This approach recognizes that at times a piece of information may be so critical and time-sensitive that it should be disseminated immediately with minimal evaluation and analysis. In a sense, this amounts to decentralizing intelligence production by requiring subordinate units to perform immediate intelligence production. Immediate production rapidly identifies, evaluates, and disseminates intelligence that may have an impact on ongoing operations in order to exploit opportunities and generate tempo. For example, the commander may establish criteria that require the immediate dissemination of any reporting on certain critical enemy targets. The dilemma, which we must resolve on a case-by-case basis, is between the desire to provide as complete and accurate an intelligence product as possible and the requirement to support the urgency of tactical decisionmaking.

Accessibility is a fourth mechanism by which we may accelerate tempo. Accessibility increases tempo by making intelligence available to commanders for use in decision- making. Here we make another conscious command decision—in this case to make intelligence more accessible to users by *minimizing security restrictions or by relying more on open sources*. We can do this by "sanitizing" classified intelligence to protect sources without materially decreasing the value of the intelligence. More important, we should make a conscious effort to ensure that intelligence is classified only to the minimum degree essential to the interests of security.

A fifth way of generating tempo is by ensuring that intelligence products take the *form* most readily understandable by users. This generally means that *intelligence should be presented as meaningful images, rather than reports or lists which require more time to assimilate*. For example, displaying a possible enemy course of action in a graphic with supporting text annotated on the graphic is generally more useful than providing only a text report.

Finally, we can enhance tempo through effective *information management*—taking advantage of all available communication channels and means for disseminating intelligence. Intelligence, like any other information product, flows not only through established hierarchical channels but also by alarm channels, flowing laterally and diagonally as well as vertically (see figure 6). In other words, rather than simply forwarding

information or intelligence via standard channels, we must ask ourselves, "Who really needs this information most?" and transmit that information by the most direct and readily accessible means.

The ability to generate tempo through intelligence was vividly demonstrated in a series of combat actions during the early years of the Vietnam war. A small number of documents recovered from a Viet Cong commander killed by a Marine am-

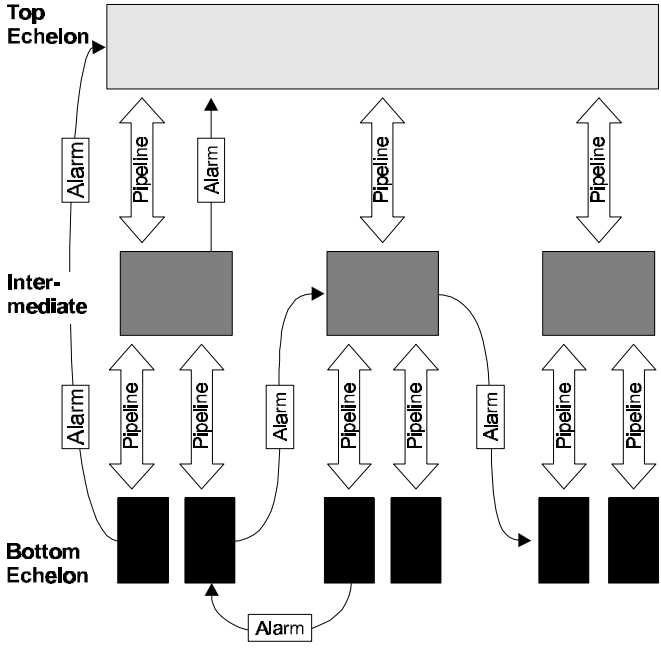

Figure 6.

bush patrol identified a likely enemy training base. Using this intelligence, the next day a Marine combined arms assault surprised and effectively destroyed five enemy companies. Immediate searches of the area led to additional intelligence locating another enemy battalion, which was also quickly attacked, causing heavy personnel and material losses. Follow-on all-source intelligence analysis of both engagements swiftly identified the most likely infiltration routes used by these enemy units, allowing a Marine infantry company a few nights later to successfully ambush a reinforced enemy battalion. A few captured documents combined with rapid dissemination and utilization of the resulting intelligence led directly to a series of successful tactical actions.[6]

INTELLIGENCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Intelligence education and training are a command responsibility. Professional development programs must give all Marines an understanding of the capabilities and limitations of intelligence as well as the employment of intelligence assets. Education and training should likewise provide intelligence personnel with an in-depth understanding of operations so that they may better support operations with intelligence. Moreover, education and training programs should seek to strengthen the relationship between intelligence officers and commanders by increasing their mutual understanding.

Commanders must demonstrate personal involvement in intelligence training. They must dedicate adequate training time to it and ensure that intelligence is realistically integrated and balanced with other warfighting activities. The commander is responsible for ensuring that all the unit's Marines have a basic understanding of the threat and the environment in likely areas of deployment. Classroom instruction, professional reading, discussion groups, and use of wargames with realistic scenarios and threat forces are ways to build such knowledge.

Exercises must be used to reinforce and increase the intelligence awareness of the unit. Exercises should incorporate realistic intelligence to the maximum extent possible. This provides participants with the opportunity to identify their intelligence requirements, allows them to see how intel- ligence is collected, produced, and disseminated, and exposes them to the type and quantity of intelligence support they can expect to receive during actual operations.

The value of incorporating realistic intelligence into exercises was demonstrated during Operation Praying Mantis in 1988. The commander of a Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) based his training scenarios on actual intelligence studies of potential raid sites in the Persian Gulf. For the execution of the operation, the MAGTF was directed to attack the "Sassan" gas-oil platform, a target the

MAGTF had used in its training exercise the week before. The use of realistic intelligence during training gave the MAGTF commander the necessary background knowledge and situational awareness to rapidly complete the plan.[7]

Opposed, free-play exercises are especially valuable, providing the opportunity to conduct intelligence operations in realistic conditions. To use an intelligence staff to create an exercise scenario, with all the pertinent intelligence already generated in advance, is a misuse of assets. Such a scheme robs an exercise of all-important realism in the development and use of intelligence to support decisionmaking. Within the practical limitations of available resources, "scripted" exercise intelligence should be minimized in favor of intelligence generated during the actual exercise.

In the training and education of intelligence personnel, we seek to achieve a balance between specialization and generalization. *Intelligence officers must possess a broad operational orientation*—an understanding of just how intelligence supports operations in general terms—while also developing the specialized skills required by many intelligence disciplines. We should nurture intelligence officers who can synthesize as well as analyze—who can answer the "So what?" question. Finally, we should stress the importance of foreign area and foreign language training in order to build our understanding of potential enemies and operating environments.

A CASE STUDY: SOMALIA 1992–1993

In December 1992, lead elements of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit landed in Mogadishu, Somalia, initiating Operation Restore Hope, a multinational humanitarian assistance operation. Remaining elements of Marine Forces (MARFOR) Somalia followed shortly thereafter. MARFOR intelligence operations illustrate the importance of a commander's involvement in the intelligence effort and of close coordination between intelligence and operations.[8]

The intelligence situation at the start of Operation Restore Hope was typical of what can be anticipated for most military operations other than war, particularly from the tactical perspective: outdated basic intelligence, sketchy current intelligence regarding the order of battle, capabilities, intentions, and vulnerabilities of potential threat forces, and limited understanding of possible reactions from either the civilian populace or the many nongovernmental organizations long operating in the country.

From the beginning, the commander ensured that MARFOR intelligence and operations elements worked as a team. The commander set the direction for MARFOR intelligence operations by focusing the collection and production efforts. During the initial stabilization phase of operations, intelligence requirements were focused on the organization and leadership of the

Somalian clans, boundaries between the clans, and the locations of meeting places, weapons caches, and arms markets. Both intelligence and operations personnel worked to acquire information and develop understanding of the nongovernmental organizations, the status of the local infrastructure, and the cultural aspects of the local population. During the subsequent normalization phase of the operation, intelligence priorities shifted to requirements in support of the civil affairs effort: preserving freedom of movement and commerce throughout the country, determining the effectiveness of civilian authorities, and estimating the attitudes of the clans and the average Somali to U.S. and U.N. efforts.

Collection operations reflected the unique challenges of the humanitarian assistance mission. A considerable amount of information was acquired from foot, motorized, and mechanized patrols. Helicopter visual reconnaissance missions and postmisson debriefs typically provided timely confirmation of information acquired during patrols. The MARFOR's principal human intelligence resources, its counterintelligence and interrogator-translator teams, were exceptionally effective in this environment.

Counterintelligence specialists and interrogator-translators were routinely attached to or placed in direct support of units down to battalion and regimental level. Their immediate availability and integration into unit intelligence collection and other operational activities allowed intelligence officers to rapidly develop pertinent tactical intelligence. In most instances, intelli-

gence was immediately provided to and acted upon by MARFOR operational elements. When more complex targets were identified, intelligence was used to plan and execute sophisticated direct action missions. The effective development and use of intelligence led to the capture of hundreds of weapons and tons of ammunition and supplies. Intelligence contributed directly to the establishment of a secure environment for the conduct of relief activities.

The MARFOR commander characterized human intelligence operations as "providing in-by-nine, out-by-five service on priority intelligence requirements. As a consequence, we have been able to maintain a constantly high tempo of productive operations. The key word here is productive. Patrols, checkpoints, and direct action missions have, for the most part, been directed against clearly defined targets—there have been remarkably few dry holes."[9]

CONCLUSION

The Marine Corps' philosophy of intelligence recognizes that intelligence is an inherent responsibility of command. The commander's direct involvement is required to provide appropriate guidance to the intelligence effort and ensure the full utilization of the intelligence product. Our philosophy also acknowledges that intelligence is inseparable from operations and that effective intelligence shapes or even drives operations. Without close and continuous cooperation, neither intelligence nor operations can function effectively.

Our intelligence philosophy relies on a variety of sources, does not emphasize one phase of intelligence activity at the expense of another, and provides support to all levels of the force. This approach recognizes the importance of qualitative as well as quantitative information requirements. It focuses on priority intelligence requirements, seeking to avoid diffusion of effort. The Marine Corps' intelligence philosophy acknowledges the importance of tempo and uses effective intelligence operations to develop and maintain tempo. Finally, this approach to intelligence recognizes that the obtaining of useful information about an adversary is a team effort and requires that all Marines see themselves as intelligence and counterintelligence resources contributing actively to the intelligence effort.