



# Human Intelligence Employment during Multidomain Operations

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A United States special operations Service member conducts reconnaissance in support of Operation Resolute Support in southeast Afghanistan, April 2019. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Jaerett Engeseth). Adapted from original

## Introduction

Throughout the joint phases, U.S. Army human intelligence (HUMINT) collectors conduct the full spectrum of HUMINT operations (source operations, liaison, screening, interrogation, and debriefing). The information obtained during these operations helps set the theater, influence situational understanding, and enable decision making. Additionally, HUMINT often assists with providing the answer to the commander’s “why?”

The Army conducts multidomain operations in support of joint forces through four strategic roles arranged by purpose:<sup>1</sup>

- ◆ Shape operational environments.
- ◆ Prevent conflict.
- ◆ Conduct large-scale ground combat.
- ◆ Consolidate gains.

To support joint operations, Army HUMINT must successfully align their relationship of the Army strategic roles with the joint phases. Army HUMINT operations can occur across multiple domains and in multiple theaters, spanning all phases of operations. When armed conflict with adversaries becomes unavoidable for the United States, our forces’ daily intake of

detainees may include thousands of enemy prisoners of war, many of whom possess unique intelligence that only Army HUMINT can exploit.

## HUMINT Operations across the Army Strategic Roles

Army HUMINT doctrine informs us how and when to employ the various HUMINT functions across the Army’s strategic roles and joint phases to help provide commanders and staffs with detailed and current knowledge of our adversaries.

**Shape Operational Environments and Prevent Conflict.** The Army strategic roles of shape operational environments and prevent conflict correspond with the joint *shape* phase and *deter* phase.<sup>2</sup>

**Shape Phase.** During the shape phase, Army HUMINT collectors focus primarily on overt debriefing programs, source operations aimed at adversary hard targets, and the establishment of responsive source networks in advance of conflict. It is important to note that most commanders have Army HUMINT collectors in their formations who are capable of performing advanced levels of source operations. Unfortunately, most tactical Army units do not have the requisite authorities or mission to conduct those functions during shaping activities. Commanders should remain aware

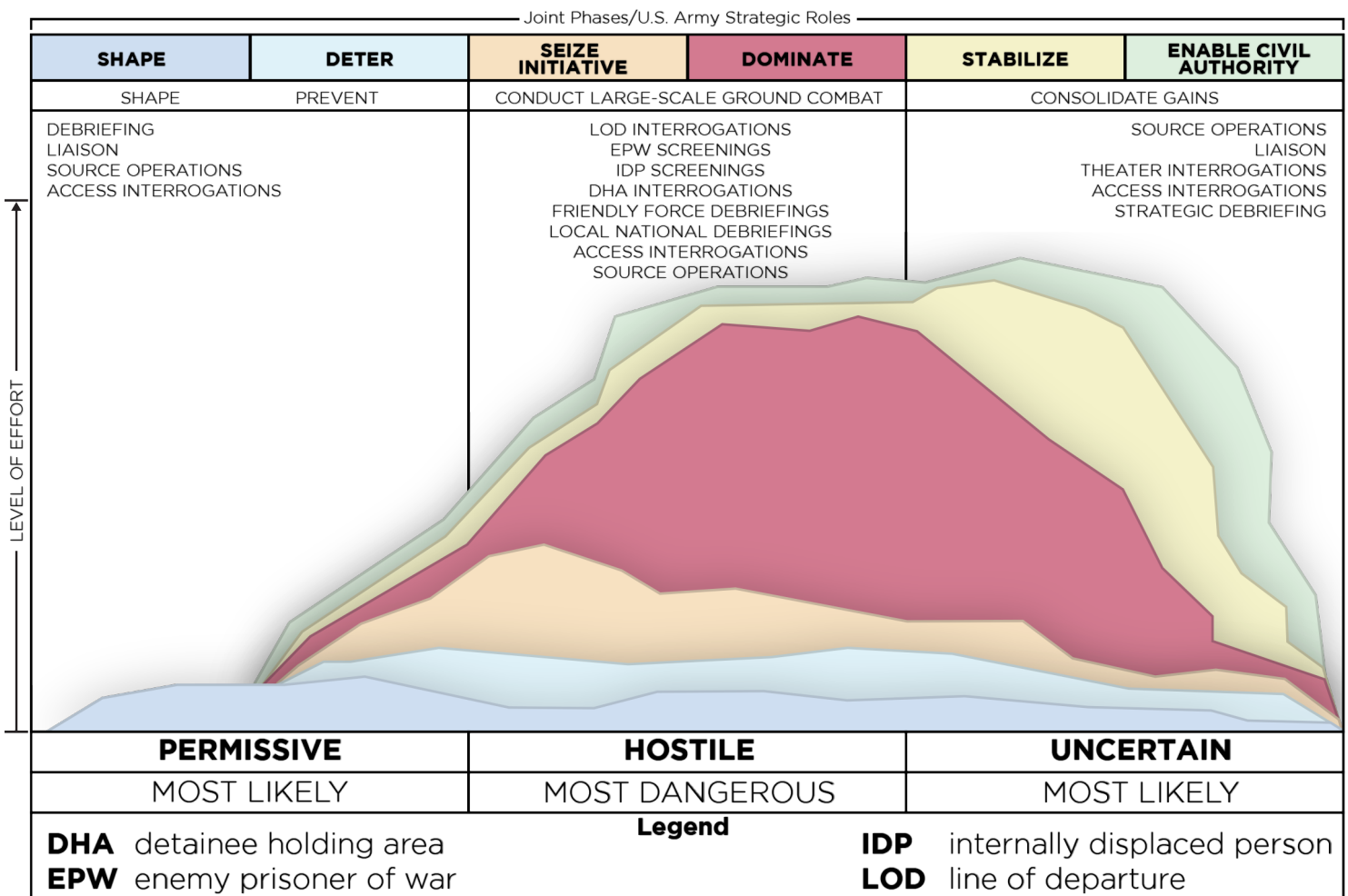


Figure 1. HUMINT Level of Effort across Army Strategic Roles<sup>3</sup>

of the HUMINT capabilities within their units and seek to maximize those capabilities where applicable. To fulfill the mission of setting the theater, shaping, and deterring while in a competitive environment and in advance of conflict, Army HUMINT collectors must be actively involved in identifying, engaging, and collecting from HUMINT sources to prepare the operational environment and maintain HUMINT readiness.

**The intent of the deter phase is to prevent an adversary from undesirable actions through the posturing of friendly capabilities and demonstrating the will to use them.... Many actions in the deter phase build on activities from the previous phase and are conducted as part of security cooperation.<sup>5</sup>**

HUMINT collectors can also perform liaison. Liaison with coalition forces can occur during the shape phase, including liaison with alliance partners (for example, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Five Eyes, and other treaty partners). Shaping activities occur throughout all operations. HUMINT provides support to shaping activities with the end state of helping to set conditions for successful theater operations. In this phase, HUMINT helps to increase commanders' situational understanding of both allies and adversaries in the area of responsibility, as well as the operational environment. Additionally, HUMINT supports efforts to gain and enhance international legitimacy and multinational cooperation by developing allied and friendly military capabilities and improving intelligence sharing in hopes of mitigating crisis.<sup>4</sup> Some of the activities HUMINT collection focuses on during this phase are:

- ◆ Enemy activities.
- ◆ Criminal elements' operations.
- ◆ Effects on the area of operations.
- ◆ Proxy actions or intent.
- ◆ Strategic facilities and networks.
- ◆ Unstable governments.
- ◆ Allied communications limitations or military skills.

**Deter Phase.** During the deter phase, HUMINT collectors continue to focus on debriefing programs and source operations. It is vital that these activities continue from the shape phase into and throughout the deter phase. HUMINT collectors will continue with many of the same tasks from the shape phase with adjustments to collection efforts based on commanders' information requirements. HUMINT prioritizes efforts based on the environment changing from a stable (shape) environment to a potentially threatening (deter) environment. As the operational environment evolves, the commander's efforts shift based on the intelligence warfighting function efforts. Collection requirements may change when indications and warnings create decision points for commanders that push the environment to the next phase—seize initiative.

Tailoring forces and task organization to a specific purpose is a crucial facet of deterrence activities. Therefore, HUMINT collection teams should remain flexible in meeting the commander's intent and changing their collection focus based on the commander's guidance. Their overt collection operations may evolve to more sophisticated source operations, and sources may be passed between units or agencies to support potential offensive operations. Coordination and deconfliction occur with joint and allied partners to focus on specific targets, as well as information sharing across the combined joint operating environment.

HUMINT leaders should begin to plan for any crisis that may involve internally displaced persons or enemy prisoners of war. The Army has refocused on conflict in large-scale combat operations with peer and near-peer threats. To prepare, HUMINT Soldiers must plan for large-scale screening and interrogation operations during both the seize initiative

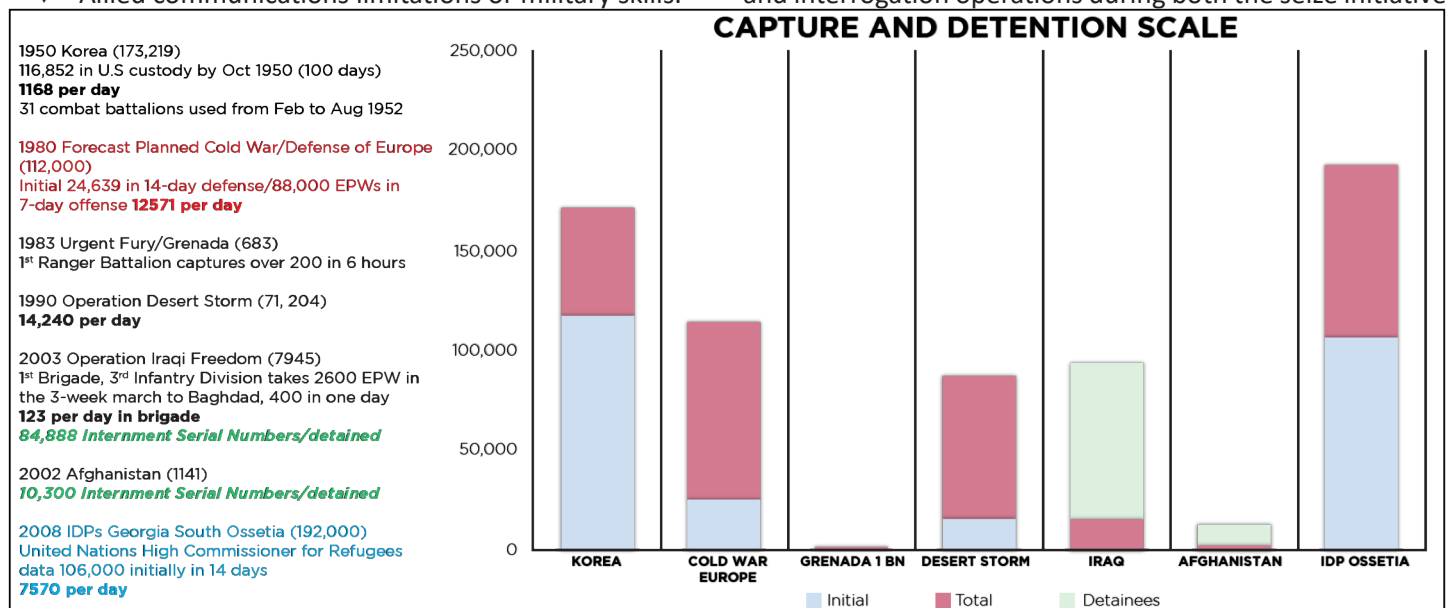


Figure 2. Enemy Prisoners of War/Internally Displaced Persons Historical Capture and Detention Rates<sup>6</sup>



phase and the dominate phase in order to support the commander's decision making. An increased focus on liaison between friendly forces is necessary for the sharing and coordination of information and sources. Army HUMINT will identify pockets of instability within local ethnicities, tribes, religions, and people groups to provide early warning of a civil or military-civilian incident. In doing so, Army HUMINT will identify the concerns of the various factions of the populace, allowing opportunities to assist local governance and bolster citizens' confidence in their government.

## Conduct Large-Scale Ground Combat

The Army strategic role of conduct large-scale ground combat relates to the joint *seize initiative* phase and the *dominate* phase.<sup>7</sup>

### Seize Initiative Phase.

During the seize initiative phase, HUMINT collectors conduct screening operations to identify defectors, internally displaced persons, and enemy prisoners of war, as well as to identify personnel who may be able to provide information in response to information collection requirements. Screening may occur at or near the line of departure, detainee holding areas, urban population centers where internally displaced persons/refugees tend to migrate, or internally displaced persons/refugee camps. The most relevant information is likely to come from the interrogations of enemy prisoners of war and debriefings of internally displaced persons because of the rapid expiration of valid information in a dynamic operational environment. Source operations may continue, but the speed and nature of operations within the seize initiative phase do not create a permissive environment conducive to sophisticated full-cycle source operations. HUMINT collection will focus on the collection of information pertaining to enemy dispositions, intentions, plans, order of battle, enemy courses of action and intent, capabilities, and morale, as well as assisting in battlefield damage assessment.

HUMINT enables a commander's information advantage during the seize initiative phase; the more rapidly and thoroughly HUMINT collectors can screen and interrogate enemy prisoners of war, the better enabled commanders will be to seize and maintain the initiative. It is essential to drive focused collection with a forward-thinking collection management

plan that provides time for planning HUMINT operations and is analyzed and disseminated no later than the combined arms rehearsal. Focused collection driven by collection tasks guidance gives commanders the best operational picture and helps fires support combat operations through the targeting of the high-priority target list. Units must plan for detainee operations in coordination with the unit provost marshal and higher headquarters to ensure support for such operations.

During the seize initiative phase, commanders must consider committing large amounts of combat power to detainee-handling tasks. With proper placement of HUMINT collection teams forward toward the forward line of troops, screening operations can assist with transferring detainees to detainee collection points or detainee holding areas. Collectors conducting interrogations in consolidation areas will benefit from HUMINT collection teams properly screening detainees at or near point of capture. The expedient interrogation of detainees can provide commanders with timely, relevant, accurate, predictable, and tailored information.

**Dominate Phase.** During the dominate phase, Army HUMINT's primary focus is interrogating, screening, and debriefing. Brigade-assigned HUMINT collection teams will continue to focus on battlefield interrogations in support of maneuver elements, while expeditionary-military intelligence brigade HUMINT collection teams and U.S. Army Reserve HUMINT capabilities will focus on division and higher requirements. When established within a joint area of operations, the joint interrogation and debriefing center (JIDC) is the theater-level interrogation effort.

The JIDC conducts intelligence interrogation and debriefing collection operations to support contingency and combat operations in the joint operations area. Typically, it is administratively and operationally self-sufficient and operates within a theater or strategic detention facility. The military intelligence battalion (interrogation) command, staff, personnel, and equipment form the primary operational capability of the JIDC.

Capture rates and availability of interrogator-certified personnel play a large part in how many detainees can yield intelligence value within a set timeframe. Time is HUMINT's most critical asset. The longer enemy prisoners of war are in custody, the less valuable their information is. It is crucial that

### Operation Red Dawn: Premier Interrogation Capability

After coalition forces invaded Iraq in March 2003, toppling its government, the United States military launched an intensive manhunt for the deposed dictator, Saddam Hussein, who had escaped Baghdad when the capital fell. During Operation Red Dawn, U.S. troops extracted Hussein from a hole in the ground in Tikrit. Months of meticulous intelligence gathering through interrogations by United States Army SSG Eric Maddox played a pivotal role in the operation—considered the biggest triumph of the Iraq War—with no trigger pulling or drone strikes.<sup>8</sup>



U.S. Army photo

A military police Soldier demonstrates a body search on a detainee as part of detainee operations training at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany.

the interrogation of enemy prisoners of war occur as soon as possible after their capture. That is why HUMINT collection teams on the forward line of troops are so beneficial to satisfying priority intelligence requirements. The exception is enemy prisoners of war who many have knowledge of strategic significance, such as campaign planning; these individuals should be sent to higher-echelon facilities, in rear areas, for more in-depth interrogation.

Commanders and staff must anticipate and plan for potentially high rates of capture, especially during the dominate phase. If coalition forces are breaking the enemy's will to resist, mass surrenders on the battlefield can complicate and tax the maneuver element, as well as the brigade's enablers charged with removing potential detainees from the battlefield. Screening operations, tactical questioning, and interrogations can all be negatively affected when a unit is inundated with a high number of detainees during a mass surrender.

The collection manager is vital throughout all planning and specifically for interrogation operations. HUMINT must anticipate and leverage collection managers to plan for mass surrenders during large-scale combat operations at all echelons. If we know the threat characteristics, including the threat structure for a unit, we can anticipate whom we will face, including their reserve and adjacent units, which will provide our forces with tactical advantage. Through source operations and battlefield interrogations as well as interrogations within detainee holding areas, Army HUMINT can help identify enemy intentions, tactics, and techniques. It can also help identify the potential for the enemy to attempt to slow our tempo with a variety of obstacles such as chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-yield explosive (CBRNE) threats, criminal elements/proxies, or special forces personnel to impede our logistical lines.

During the dominate phase, HUMINT must position forward and coordinate with maneuver elements to conduct intelligence interrogations of detainees with time-sensitive

information at or near the point of capture. When units afford HUMINT the ability to interrogate as close to the point of capture as possible—rather than waiting to interrogate in rear areas—HUMINT enables commanders to rapidly converge effects. Given a robust communications suite and a tactical vehicle with appropriate armament, HUMINT can push forward at or near the point of capture to interrogate and exploit potential time-sensitive information and documents enabling friendly forces to dominate the enemy.

Additionally, HUMINT can provide input to battle damage assessments, which are critical in the dominate phase. Battle damage assessments help the commander see better through the fog of war.

### Consolidate Gains

The Army strategic role of consolidate gains includes the joint *stabilize* phase and the joint *enable civil authority* phase.<sup>9</sup>


**Stabilize Phase.** During the stabilize phase, military units performing stability tasks operate in a complex environment with and among many actors. Much like the other phases, stabilize provides a constant “ebb and flow” of challenges for military commanders. Although there may be a fleeting elation within the local populace following the end of major combat operations, the complex nature of stability operations tends to overwhelm a military commander with multiple problems all at once. ATP 3-07.5, *Stability Techniques*, discusses the need to secure the peace, empower the host nation's intelligence and security apparatus, secure borders, and protect key personnel and facilities following combat operations.<sup>10</sup> These crucial actions are all in line with the principles of stability:<sup>11</sup>

- ◆ Conflict transformation.
- ◆ Unity of effort and unity of purpose.
- ◆ Legitimacy and host-nation ownership.
- ◆ Building partner capacity.
- ◆ Rule of law.

To execute the tasks in the stabilize phase, a robust intelligence effort and partner information sharing are necessary. With freedom of movement and HUMINT-specific collection emphasis, Army HUMINT will excel in this phase to provide commanders unique intelligence information that is otherwise unavailable. Army HUMINT will partner with the host nation to conduct necessary interrogations of persons held in foreign custody. This assists in transforming conflict and legitimizing host-nation security forces. Having the proper authorities and agreements with the host nation will allow HUMINT, through source operations, to assist in targeting bad actors that may be undermining host-nation and U.S. stabilization efforts. HUMINT can and should work closely with special operations forces to identify points of friction with the host nation, partner forces, and local populace that may hinder stabilization efforts. It is vital that Army HUMINT work closely with security forces to identify threats during this phase.

**Enable Civil Authority Phase.** During the enable civil authority phase, Army HUMINT collectors will focus on overt debriefings, source operations, liaison, and ongoing theater interrogations to continue gathering information of intelligence value. This focus will assist civil authority to regain its ability to govern and administer the services and other needs of the population. For commanders to reach their military end state, legitimate civil authority must be established to the point where further outside military intervention is unnecessary. Once we transfer responsibility for political and military affairs to the host nation, Army HUMINT collectors may still conduct operations while the host nation's national army, police, and other security forces are established.

## Conclusion

Army HUMINT can provide commanders with critical and unique intelligence throughout all phases of joint operations. Army HUMINT conducts full-spectrum HUMINT operations to set the theater, shape the commander's understanding, and enable the commander's decision making. Army HUMINT can play a vital role to inform leaders at all levels of the Army and Department of Defense; Army HUMINT can be uniquely suited to gather information otherwise unavailable to commanders. Army HUMINT must provide effective support across the range of military operations to the Army as a discipline of the intelligence warfighting function in order to achieve our national objectives. 

## Endnotes

1. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], 6 October 2017), 1-14. Change 1 was issued on 6 December 2017.
2. Department of the Army, FM 3-0, *Operations*, 1-14.
3. Graphic is adapted from figures found in Department of the Army, FM 3-0, *Operations*, 1-12, 1-14.
4. Department of the Army, FM 3-0, *Operations*, 1-13.
5. Ibid.
6. The data points for this graphic were gathered by Headquarters, Department of the Army G-2X with assistance from Headquarters, Department of the Army Office of the Provost Marshal General.
7. Department of the Army, FM 3-0, *Operations*, 1-14.
8. Volker Janssen, "The Surprising Interrogations That Led to Saddam Hussein's Capture," History.com, A&E Television Networks, November 8, 2018, updated January 31, 2019, <https://www.history.com/news/saddam-hussein-capture-iraq-interrogations-eric-maddox>.
9. Department of the Army, FM 3-0, *Operations*, 1-14.
10. Department of the Army, Army Techniques Publication 3-07.5, *Stability Techniques* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 31 August 2012).
11. Ibid., 1-1.

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- WO1 David McGillivray currently serves in the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Brigade Combat Team S-2. He has 13 years of operational experience in the human intelligence (HUMINT) field, ranging from strategic collection to tactical leadership, to institutional instruction. WO1 McGillivray has served as a strategic debriefer, source operations collector, and team leader in Afghanistan, and as a HUMINT manager within a division G-2X. His military service covers nearly the full spectrum of Army HUMINT operations. He is an Advanced Operations Course–HUMINT graduate, and most recently is involved with the development of the annual interrogation proficiency test concept.