

Chapter 4 Federal Agencies Disrupt, Dismantle, and Destroy Terrorist Groups Abroad

Offensive counterterrorism operations are intelligence led and intelligence intensive. As we shall see, all the major departments and agencies conducting counterterrorism operations in this mission area are long-time federal users of intelligence, have access to both national and departmental intelligence products at all classification levels, and know how to drive intelligence collection systems and assets to get the information they need to do their jobs. Further, all these customers are sophisticated in terms of understanding what intelligence can and should do for them and in demanding excellent and comprehensive support.

The *National Strategy for Counterterrorism* (2011) calls for “maintain[ing] our focus on pressuring al-Qa’ida’s core while emphasizing the need to build foreign partnerships and capacity.”¹ This is an offensive, action-oriented directive and clearly spells out a specific mandate, led by the federal government abroad, to disrupt, dismantle, and destroy the enemy.

At home, counterterrorism is a law enforcement function. The attorney general officially has the lead role, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has been designated to direct all major investigations, and the FBI has established a network of Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) to bring other federal, state, and local law enforcement into FBI-led investigations (see Chapter 5).

If the **federal government** is in charge of all counterterrorism operations and investigations at home and abroad, then what is the role for **state and local law enforcement** in terrorism prevention? In this chapter we will see that they have no role overseas. In Chapter 5 we will see that state and local law enforcement have a limited role in domestic terrorism investigations—liaising with the FBI through their officers seconded to local JTTFs and gathering counterterrorism intelligence and leads, which are sent to the JTTF for action. Only in the case of an ongoing or imminent attack, such as those that occurred at Fort

Hood in 2009 or the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013, do state and local law enforcement have a significant, direct “prevent” role. Of the more than 18,000 state and local law enforcement organizations, only the New York Police Department (and a handful of others at a second tier) has world-class counterterrorism intelligence and operational programs. This is not surprising given the fact that New York City is the prime terrorist target in the United States.

THE NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER COORDINATES U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM

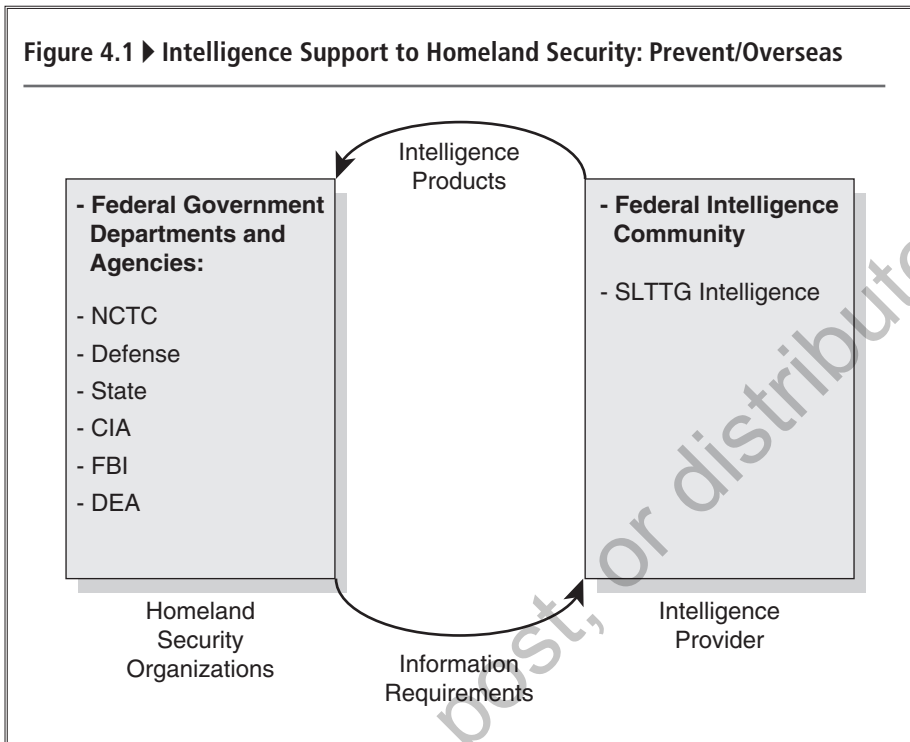
The president, the National Security Council (NSC), and the assistant to the president for homeland security and counterterrorism formulate strategic policy but have assigned the job of coordinating counterterrorism “prevent” operations to the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). According to its website, the NCTC’s mission is to “lead our nation’s effort to combat terrorism at home and abroad by analyzing the threat, sharing information with our partners, and integrating all instruments of national power [military, law enforcement, covert action, diplomacy] to ensure unity of effort.”²

A careful look reveals that the NCTC is both a policy organization and an intelligence one. On the policy side, the director of NCTC reports directly to the president on what is called “strategic operational planning.” In brief, when a terrorist threat is identified, the director of NCTC has the authority to assign responsibility to any U.S. government entity, including the Department of Defense (DOD), FBI, or Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) covert action, to dispose of that threat. Here is the exact bureaucratic language:

Unique among US agencies, NCTC . . . serves as the primary organization for strategic operational planning for counterterrorism. Operating under the policy direction of the President of the United States and the National Security Council NCTC provides a full-time interagency forum and process to plan, integrate, assign lead operational roles and responsibilities, and measure the effectiveness of strategic operational counterterrorism activities of the U.S. government, applying all instruments of national power to the counterterrorism mission.³

As shown in Figure 4.1, the intelligence providers and customers for overseas counterterrorism operations are all federal departments and agencies, although on occasion state and local intelligence organizations have provided useful reports.

Figure 4.1 ▶ Intelligence Support to Homeland Security: Prevent/Overseas



One might wonder why the president has given NCTC the power to direct cabinet-level organizations, but the answer is pretty straightforward: If there is an immediate terrorist threat, someone has to be able to direct immediate action to eliminate that threat. There simply is not time to go through a complex interagency process to determine (or argue about) who should be in charge. To make sure the NCTC has this authority, the president has made the director a “direct report” for strategic operational planning, even though he is technically a subcabinet official and reports to the director of national intelligence

on all intelligence and budget issues. In brief, the director of NCTC has two jobs and two bosses, but when it comes to taking action, the president has given him direct decision-making authority.

Of course, this authority is used judiciously. For the most part and

RESEARCH ISSUE

Most management texts identify having a single supervisor as an element of good management. Should the director of NCTC have only a single boss? Who and why?

when not pressed by the need for immediate action, the director of NCTC works collegially with other cabinet organizations, seeking consensus decisions on who takes the lead to nullify any threat. Further, the director always refrains from trying to tell his partners how to do their business. That is, the NCTC might direct the FBI to deal with a certain terrorism threat but would then leave it to the FBI to decide on the optimal way to achieve that goal.

Conducting U.S. Counterterrorism Operations Overseas

The DOD (military force), State Department (diplomacy), FBI and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) (law enforcement), and CIA (covert action) are the primary federal actors in our counterterrorism program overseas. Each of these departments and agencies has its own internal intelligence organization that draws on the full spectrum of collection and reporting from the entire Intelligence Community (IC). The NCTC has its own internal intelligence analysis organization and also draws on the entire IC to support its strategic operational planning function. As we shall see in Chapter 5, the NCTC also connects to the FBI-led JTTF system, state and local law enforcement, and the nationwide fusion center network when addressing terrorism prevention within the United States.

As noted above, these federal actors are long-time intelligence consumers, and all have their own significant intelligence components that produce intelligence products for the rest of the department (known as departmental intelligence). The major restructuring of the IC in 2004 was designed to ensure comprehensive intelligence support to these federal counterterrorism warriors, diplomats, clandestine officers, and law enforcement agents.

In the next four sections, we introduce the key U.S. instruments for implementing counterterrorism programs overseas—military, diplomatic,⁴ covert action, and law enforcement—and the actors in the organizations that use them—the DOD, State Department, CIA, and FBI/DEA. Then a case study is presented to show examples of the intelligence needed to plan and conduct operations overseas.

The Military Option

The DOD brings massive capabilities to the “prevent” mission. On the policy side of the department, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for special operations/low-intensity conflict (ASD SO/LIC) takes the lead in policy discussions on the role of the military in preventing terrorism by taking action overseas.⁵ (In later chapters, we will see that the assistant secretary of defense

for homeland defense and America's security affairs takes the lead departmental role in the domestic protect, respond, mitigate, and recover arenas).

On the military side, Special Operations Command (SOCOM) has the primary role in planning and conducting military counterterrorism operations outside the United States, while the Northern Command coordinates and conducts activities by the uniformed military in the domestic protect, respond, and recover missions.⁶

For the foreseeable future, disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al-Qa'ida, its adherents, and associated movements overseas will continue to dominate the SO/LIC and SOCOM agendas. The administration and Congress both recognize correctly the strategic importance of the counterterrorism mission and have provided for growth in personnel and funds for SOCOM even in this time of budget cuts.

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, the NSC provides broad policy direction to the entire government on all dimensions of counterterrorism. When this body meets to discuss options for dealing with foreign terrorist threats, including military operations, the secretary of defense and his or her undersecretary for policy are supported by personnel in the SO/LIC office. These staffers, in turn, look to the military elements of the IC and especially to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) for intelligence support. With almost 70,000 uniformed and civilian personnel drawn from all four services, SOCOM is capable of conducting the full range of unconventional warfare, from psychological operations to significant military maneuvers. SOCOM has been directed by Congress to develop special operations strategy, doctrine, and tactics; train assigned forces; and ensure special operations forces' combat readiness.⁷ SOCOM also has its own internal intelligence component (its "departmental" intelligence organization), responsible for formulating tailored intelligence support requirements.

As we shall see in the case study, SOCOM normally works with regional combatant commanders in the planning and conduct of specific operations. Nevertheless, there are occasions when SOCOM will act unilaterally under the direction of the secretary of defense or, if instructed, the director of the CIA.

SOCOM's two basic approaches to combating terrorism are the direct use of U.S. military forces and providing indirect support to indigenous security forces.⁸ The direct approach involves SOCOM's highly trained small units, which conduct precise strikes such as the attack that killed Osama bin Laden in 2011. In the case study, we will see an example of the indirect approach that consists of empowering host nation forces through military training and

equipment, humanitarian assistance, and engaging key populations. Similar techniques are used by the CIA in the conduct of covert action when the United States does not want to acknowledge its role.

The Diplomatic Option

The State Department's coordinator for counterterrorism takes the lead role in preventing terrorism through the use of diplomacy. This office's primary mission is to forge partnerships with foreign governments and multilateral organizations to advance counterterrorism objectives. The State Department uses a broad range of diplomatic tools to convince non-U.S. entities to take actions that support our counterterrorism policy and security goals, ranging from moral suasion to public diplomacy to meeting treaty obligations to fiscal, monetary, and trade incentives. The website for the State Department's counterterrorism coordinator contains a comprehensive list of bilateral and multilateral programs and initiatives.⁹

The coordinator for counterterrorism supports the secretary of state at NSC meetings related to terrorism. In supporting the secretary, the coordinator will draft position papers recommending not only diplomatic actions but also, as appropriate, military, law enforcement, and covert actions. These papers are reviewed and approved by other components within the State Department, especially the geographic bureau(s) that will be impacted by NSC decisions. The primary mission of the State Department's intelligence component, the assistant secretary for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), is to provide support to those formulating and implementing these diplomatic actions. INR is primarily an analytic unit; so it will draw on the entire IC to collect and process required intelligence.

The coordinator is also responsible for producing country reports on terrorism.¹⁰ These reports are statutorily mandated annual assessments of trends and events in international terrorism. Each report contains a breakdown of foreign government counterterrorism cooperation and profiles of designated foreign terrorist organizations. Much, if not most, of the material in these reports is provided by the IC.

The Covert Action Policy Instrument

Covert action is "an activity or activities of the United States Government [USG] to influence political, economic or military conditions abroad, where it is intended that the role of the USG will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly" (National Security Act of 1947, Sec. 503, para. C). The CIA is the U.S. government agency directed by law to undertake covert action. Covert action is the most sensitive of our country's techniques for implementing

counterterrorism policy. Operating in the space between diplomacy and military force, covert actions are the “third way” of accomplishing our goals.

Covert action covers a broad range of diverse activities—from propaganda to providing training and equipment to foreign intelligence and security services to overthrowing governments. The activities themselves are not necessarily secret or clandestine, but the role of the United States must be disguised. This is what separates covert action from diplomacy or the use of conventional military force: when the USG wants to accomplish a national security goal without its involvement being recognized—covert action is employed.¹¹

The need for covert action to remain covert explains why the CIA rarely acknowledges such programs. There are well-known exceptions, such as the bin Laden raid in 2011. In most cases, however, covert actions remain classified for decades, are never declassified, or become public when they fail. Even when the public finds out about a covert action, however, the CIA almost never explains all the elements involved in a covert action program.

In his written statement to the 9/11 Commission, however, then-Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet laid out in detail the CIA’s comprehensive covert action program to go after bin Laden before 9/11. The quotes below are selected from Tenet’s written testimony and provide one of the few unclassified but official insights into the range of actions undertaken as part of a major covert action program.

Excerpt: Written Statement for the Record of the Director of Central Intelligence Before the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States¹²

By 1998, the key elements of the CIA’s strategy against Bin Ladin included:

- ▶ Working with foreign countries to break up cells and carry out arrests.
- ▶ Disrupting and weakening his businesses and finances.
- ▶ Listening to his communications.
- ▶ Pursuing a multi-track approach to bring him to justice, including working with liaison services, developing a close relationship with US federal prosecutors, and enhancing our unilateral capability to capture him.

CIA’s policy and objectives statement for the FY 1998 budget submission prepared in early 1997 evidenced a strong determination to go on the offensive against terrorists.

The submission outlined our Counterterrorist Center's offensive operations and noted the goal to "render the masterminds, disrupt terrorist infrastructure, infiltrate terrorist groups, and work with foreign partners."

The FY 2000 budget submission prepared in early 1999 described Bin Ladin as "the most significant individual sponsor of Sunni Islamic extremist and terrorist activity in the world today."

- ▶ It noted the Agency's use of a wide range of offensive operational techniques against the targets. These included the creation of dedicated counterterrorist units in key countries, joint operations with liaison partners to apprehend wanted terrorists, recruitment of well-placed agents, and penetration of terrorist support groups.¹³

Runup to September 11—Our Operations

The third period of peak threat was in the spring and summer, 2001. As with the Millennium and Ramadan 2000, we increased the tempo of operations against al-Qa'ida. We stopped some attacks and caused the terrorists to postpone others.

- ▶ We helped to break up another terrorist cell in Jordan and seized a large quantity of weapons, including rockets and high explosives.
- ▶ Working with another foreign partner, we broke up a plan to attack US facilities in Yemen.
- ▶ In June, CIA worked with a Middle Eastern partner to arrest two Bin Ladin operatives planning attacks on US facilities in Saudi Arabia.
- ▶ In June and July, CIA launched a wide-ranging disruption effort against Bin Ladin's organization, with targets in almost two-dozen countries. Our intent was to drive up Bin Ladin's security concerns and lead his organization to delay or cancel its attacks. We subsequently received reports that attacks were delayed, including an attack against the US military in Europe.
- ▶ In July, a different Middle East partner helped bring about the detention of a terrorist who had been directed to begin an operation to attack the US Embassy or cultural center in a European capital.
- ▶ In addition, in the summer of 2001, local authorities, acting on our information, arrested an operative described as Bin Ladin's man in East Asia.
- ▶ We assisted another foreign partner in the rendition of a senior Bin Ladin associate. Information he provided included plans to kidnap Americans in three countries and to carry out hijackings.
- ▶ We provided intelligence to a Latin American service on a band of terrorists considering hijackings and bombings. An FBI team detected explosives residue in their hotel rooms.¹⁴

Remember that these activities took place before 9/11. It is safe to assume that covert action programs since 9/11, while similar in basic techniques, are operating on steroids. CIA covert action officers require intelligence support to plan and implement their operations. The agency often will draw on the National Security Agency for signals intelligence and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency for imagery support, but with its massive analytic capabilities, tailored clandestine collection systems, and the lion's share of the IC's human intelligence capability, the CIA produces the bulk of the intelligence needed to support its covert actions.

U.S. Law Enforcement Overseas

As a matter of policy, the United States does not conduct unilateral law enforcement operations overseas. Rather than focus on bringing a terrorism suspect back to the United States to face prosecution, the FBI provides assistance to other governments to support their efforts to fight terrorism, cybercrime, and transnational criminal enterprises.¹⁵ In some countries, the FBI works on task forces with host organizations or multilateral organizations such as Interpol and, on occasion, conducts joint operations. Perhaps equally important, the FBI deploys agents and crime scene experts to assist in the investigation of attacks such as the 2010 bombings in Uganda and the 2008 bombings in Mumbai, India.

The FBI's Office of International Operations and the legal attaché (legat) program support the FBI's investigative priorities through liaison and operational interaction with the FBI's foreign law enforcement and intelligence counterparts. In 2011, the FBI had 62 legat offices and 13 suboffices with 182 agent and 107 support personnel, for a total of almost 300 employees stationed abroad. The FBI's intelligence component provides intelligence support to foreign law enforcement through these overseas personnel and in turn receives significant intelligence from liaison law enforcement organizations. The FBI counterterrorism and intelligence programs are discussed in detail in the next chapter, because the FBI is the lead element in our domestic terrorism prevention program.

The other U.S. law enforcement agency with a significant presence and mission overseas is the DEA, which is also a formal member of the federal IC. One of the DEA's missions is to

bring to the criminal and civil justice system of the United States, or any other competent jurisdiction, those organizations and principal members of organizations, involved in the growing, manufacture, or distribution of controlled substances appearing in or destined for illicit traffic in the United States.¹⁶

As part of their program, the DEA has 86 foreign offices in 67 countries to conduct operations overseas. In addition to their law enforcement function, these DEA personnel also move intelligence to overseas partners who, in turn, reciprocate by providing intelligence information to U.S. law enforcement. The DEA also manages the national drug intelligence program in cooperation with federal, state, local, and foreign officials. The DEA places special emphasis on the nexus between terrorism and narcotics.

INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT TO OVERSEAS OPERATIONS: A CASE STUDY

To better understand the specific intelligence required by war fighters, diplomats, law enforcement officers, and covert operators, we will examine declassified CIA and DIA reports on an actual terrorism threat in Latin America.

We will look at all three types of intelligence documents—strategic, operational, and tactical—supporting preventers. These documents, despite their age, provide a representative example of those being produced today and, of course, have the benefit of being declassified. To make this scenario more relevant to today's effort, we will discuss the customers for this intelligence using the bureaucratic organizations and procedures in effect right now, rather than those in effect during the early 1990s.

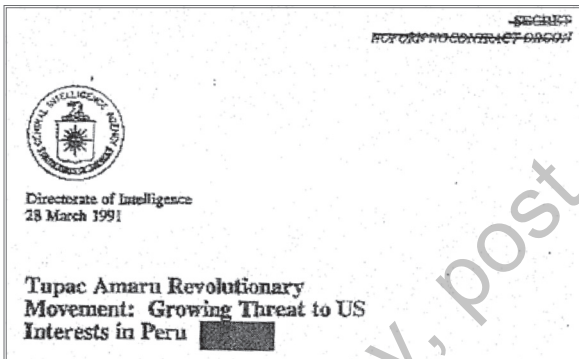
We first will look at an intelligence report on terrorism in Peru, produced by the CIA in March 1991. Remember that an intelligence report can be both strategic and operational, depending on who is using it. This particular intelligence report would be considered strategic when provided to support NSC and NCTC meetings. It contains what can best be considered summary material on the threat, needed by senior decision makers. Later, when this report is supplemented with detailed information, it would constitute tailored operational intelligence needed by midlevel military officers, diplomats, and covert action officers to put together a campaign to implement the NSC/NCTC decisions.

Most Americans remember the first Gulf War in early 1991, but few recall that during the first few months of that year, a Peruvian terrorist group, the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), conducted 25 attacks against U.S. interests, including a mortar attack against the U.S. Embassy commissary and a drive-by attack on the U.S. ambassador's residence, with automatic weapons fire. The MRTA denounced the U.S. war in the Gulf and stepped up its attacks in protest. An NSC meeting on such a threat today would consider military, diplomatic, and covert policy options for disrupting, dismantling, and

destroying the MRTA. It would also consider law enforcement assistance to the Peruvian government. After the NSC provided general guidance on policy goals, the NCTC would lead the interagency effort to develop an integrated offensive operational plan. Individual agencies would then carry out the plan on the ground in Peru.

Strategic Intelligence for Policymakers

The intelligence report discussed below provides the NSC an overview of the MRTA, the threat it poses to the United States, and the probable intensification of that threat if the United States does not take action. By reading and digesting this report, the NSC decision makers around the table will achieve a common,



shared understanding of the MRTA threat, its organizational strengths and weaknesses, and the Peruvian context within which it functions. The intelligence report also provides enough information on how the MRTA operates so that decision makers can identify which of their tools and

approaches will be most effective in dismantling and destroying the MRTA. Below are some direct quotes from the declassified intelligence report.

Excerpt: The Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) Threat¹⁷

Intent: The MRTA is a Marxist-Leninist organization determined to seize power to rid Peru of [an] "imperialist" presence, specifically US influence . . . growing dominance of hardliners within its leadership . . . declared "war" on the United States in mid-January 1991 and labeled all US installations, personnel, and economic enterprises in Peru as legitimate targets.

Capabilities: Has about 1,000 hard-core members with another several thousand supporters and sympathizers . . . Cuban-style command structure . . . security measures well planned and strict.

Strategy, tactics, and operations: Since it began operations in 1983, the organization has hit US targets over 100 times. . . . MRTA attacks since last November appear to depart from the practice of trying to minimize casualties and collateral damage . . . recent MRTA attacks, including car bombings, have taken place during the day when passersby were within range. . . . Since beginning of the year (in the last two months) it carried out at least 25 attacks against US interests, including an RPG-7 and automatic weapons fired at the US Embassy. . . . In an afternoon bombing in January against the office of the Interior Ministry two people were killed, as many as 100 others injured. . . .

Outlook: The MRTA poses one of the most serious terrorist threats to US interests in Latin America today—a threat that may extend beyond the borders of Peru as a result of the group’s ties with other Latin American terrorist groups.

Given the surge in attacks against U.S. targets and the dire outlook, it is not surprising that the U.S. government would meet at the highest level to consider taking direct and/or indirect actions to reduce or eliminate the MRTA threat. At the national level, intelligence informs policymakers of the threat, but it does not direct a policy response or even openly suggest approaches. It does, however, point to possible weaknesses that could be exploited to bring down the MRTA. These reported weaknesses are in the area of funding and personnel. Once again, here are direct quotes from the report.

Excerpt: Possible Weaknesses of the MRTA Threat

Funding: MRTA supports its activities largely through bank robberies, kidnappings, and extortion. . . . The MRTA has well-established support groups in both Sweden and France. These groups provide money, medicine, clothing, and political support. . . . MRTA was suffering severe economic problems at the time of its 27 August 1990 Congress. . . . The organization was “no longer” receiving firm support from the Soviet Union, Cuba, or Nicaragua; had not received enough “taxes” from the narcotics traffickers to cover MRTA’s expenses; and had experienced further hardship from [the government’s] economic shock program . . . [but an] improvement in financing may be . . . the result of the groups’ increased kidnapping and extortion activities in recent months. Given Libya’s past support to the group, Tripoli may have recently provided limited funding.

Personnel: Many MRTA members are full-time professional combatants who receive a salary from the organization.

Taken together, resource constraints and the requirement to pay their combatants might open possibilities for financially strangling the MRTA. In fact, this is where the “strategic” world begins to move into the “operational” arena. The NSC now has enough information to make a strategic decision—that is, that the United States will seek the destruction of the MRTA. We move to the operational level to develop a plan to implement this decision.

Operational Intelligence for Military Planners

In view of the NSC decision to destroy the MRTA, the various government departments that wield our military, diplomatic, covert action, and law enforcement tools now are charged with working through the NCTC to develop a range of proposals to achieve this goal.

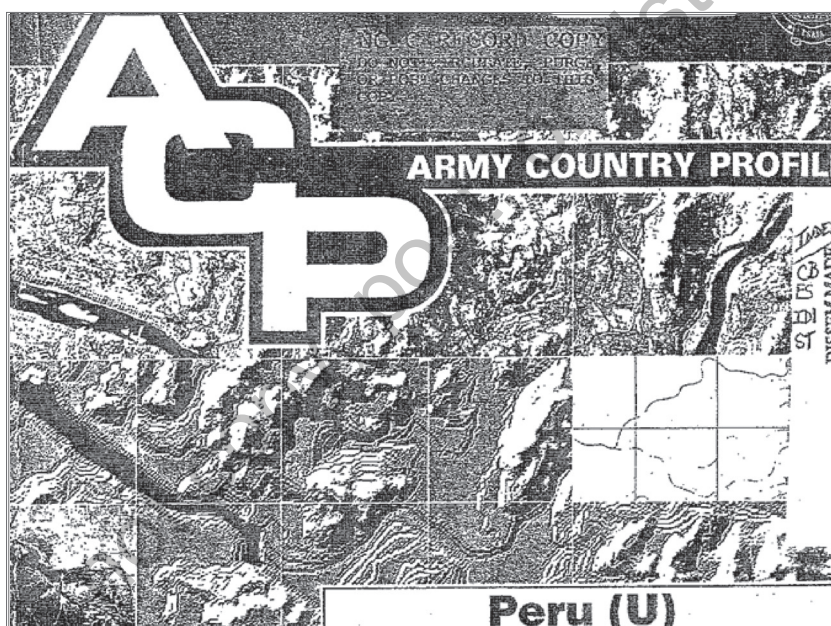
In preparing to attend the next NSC or NCTC meeting, the secretary of defense, secretary of state, director of the CIA, director of the FBI, and DEA administrator would all follow a similar preparation process. Each would identify a senior officer to support or represent him or her at the meeting, and that officer would ensure that his or her boss had an action plan that responded to the threat. Let’s take a closer look at one action element—the DOD.

The defense secretary’s senior representative for this terrorism issue would be the head of SO/LIC. In preparing for the NSC meeting, SO/LIC staff officers would start with intelligence products such as the declassified CIA report. The chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff would also attend the NSC meeting, and his or her staff would look to SOCOM and the regional commander (in this case, the U.S. Southern Command, or SOUTHCOM) for staff support on proposed actions. The intelligence elements (called J-2) of SOCOM and SOUTHCOM would prepare operational intelligence that their operators (J-3) and planners (J-5) require to develop options for implementing a military solution—the direct and indirect use of military force.

Some of this operational intelligence would build on the CIA report, but it would be much more detailed in describing the MRTA’s goals, strategy, operating procedures, strengths, and weaknesses. The operational planners would also draw on encyclopedia-like intelligence reports detailing the strengths, weaknesses, structure, and capabilities of the Peruvian government, military, intelligence, and law enforcement, including doctrine, size, structure, and capabilities. This “country study” would also provide information on Peruvian counterterrorism strategy and tactics, organization and personnel strength, location of bases, training camps, logistics, and communication. Intelligence on Peruvian governmental capabilities to combat the terrorists and restore public

confidence in governmental structures is a critical input in developing an operational plan to work with the Peruvian government and destroy the MRTA.

The declassified *Army Country Profile: Peru* (1991) is an example of the massive intelligence product needed by planners.¹⁸ This five-volume operational intelligence report contains hundreds of pages of material. The bulk of the report goes into great detail on the Peruvian armed forces and intelligence services. The report also dissects the threat from both the MRTA and the other major terrorist group, the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso [SL]) movement. You should take a look at this document online to gain an appreciation of the scope and depth of material provided to U.S. military planners.



The stated purpose of this “finished intelligence [is] to support tactical commanders and contingency planners.” Chapter 1 summarizes the political, economic, and security threat (insurgency) context. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the armed forces. The remaining chapters describe in detail the Peruvian military forces and their weaponry. In today’s world, this off-the-shelf study would be the first of many operational intelligence products SOCOM/SOUTHCOM operations planners would request for use in developing deployment options. Once the planners get started, they quickly begin to task their

intelligence providers for more detailed and current information to help them determine the merits of the direct versus indirect approach, and the specifics of implementing an operational plan.

Tactical Intelligence for Military Units

Returning again to our scenario, let's jump forward a few months. We now have NCTC and NSC approval to use the military tool to achieve our goal of destroying the MRTA and SL. An operational plan has been developed by SOCOM and approved by the NSC/NCTC. Military intelligence must now provide tactical intelligence support to troops on the ground. We will set the stage by assuming that the operational plan calls for use of SOCOM's direct approach and that a number of U.S. Special Forces units are now operating in Peru, acting both independently and with selected Peruvian military units.

For this scenario, we are using the material contained in an actual declassified tactical intelligence report on guerrilla activity in the Mazamari–Satipo region of Peru.¹⁹ During the engagement phase, tactical intelligence such as this would be provided to (and often by) forces on the ground.

The date is January 20, 1991, and we are with a small Special Forces team assisting the Sinchi—a branch of the Peruvian police that is made up mainly of Indians. The U.S. Special Forces troops have been conducting searches for weeks for units from the SL insurgent force. They have not been able to locate any groups but have just received this intelligence (quoted directly from the 470th Military Intelligence Brigade) on an attack that occurred on January 14, and intelligence on the probable location of about 30 insurgents:

Excerpt: Declassified Tactical Intelligence Report: Guerrilla Activity in Peru²⁰

Summary

On 14 Jan, SL Guerrillas ambushed a column of armored vehicles from the Sinchi's 48th Commandancia. They conducted the attack from trenches on both sides of a road near the village of Satipo. Major Mendoza, the Sinchi Convoy commander, died in the ambush after failing to close the hatch of his Caspir armored vehicle. SL guerrillas used Molotov cocktails, improvised hand grenades, small arms fire, and a mine in the road during the ambush. After approximately one hour in the kill zone, the Sinchi vehicles moved slowly to a point 400 meters up the road. The personnel dismounted the vehicles, established a

perimeter, and called for reinforcements. The reinforcements arrived three hours later. The 46th Commandancia received the wounded Sinchi troops. After repairing the vehicles, the Sinchi moved back to the ambush site and reconnoitered the kill zone. They found one dead SL guerrilla who was the regional political officer of the Boca Sapito area. In an inspection of one of the Caspir armored vehicles involved in the ambush, over 200 penetrations from small arms fire were found.

On 19 January, Major Casada of the 48th Commandancia led a patrol back into the Sapito area to try to find more SL bodies. The head and fingers of the political officer killed in the 14 January ambush had been cut off making identification impossible. The Sinchi patrol found another body in a ditch. *A villager informed the patrol that the SL were in her village demanding medicine, water, and money. Villagers also told the patrol that about 30 SL, carrying five wounded and two dead, had just left the village in the direction of the Rio Pangoa.* (Emphasis added)

With this tactical intelligence, our Special Forces would be able to conduct an operation to seek, capture, and/or destroy the SL group. Our troops would know the enemy's approximate location, numbers, weapons, and readiness to fight.

In our scenario, we are able to control the timeliness of the intelligence reporting, but in actual combat this is a major challenge, as is assessing the reliability of the source of the information (described simply as "a villager"). Nevertheless, the scenario does provide an example of the type of information needed by tactical forces, as well as the challenges posed by timeliness and source reliability.

These strategic, operational, and tactical intelligence products to support counterterrorism efforts in Peru are representative of both the nature and quality of intelligence support to federal actors overseas. In all three cases, their high quality reflects both a customer orientation on the part of the intelligence producers and the expectations of a knowledgeable customer. Each report provided analyzed information needed by specific customers to do their jobs. At the strategic level, there was enough information on the threat to enable the NSC to decide that actions had to be taken to destroy the threat (the MRTA). At the operational level, there was information on both the terrorist groups but also on our likely partners in the Peruvian military. As noted in the text, additional intelligence would be tasked to help planners finalize an approach to meeting the NSC mandate. Finally, at the tactical level, we saw the type of concrete information needed by troops on the ground to seek out and destroy the enemy.

This deep dive into intelligence support was focused on support to the military. Similar intelligence products would be prepared by State Department intelligence (INR) to support diplomatic efforts and by CIA analysts to support covert action plans.

Intelligence Support to Diplomacy

At the State Department, an operational plan to destroy, if possible, or at least weaken the MRTA through diplomatic actions would be prepared under the direction of the coordinator for counterterrorism. Such a plan might include diplomatic moves, economic assistance, and public diplomacy actions. The State Department would try to build consensus and coalitions with nations that are in the best position to damage the MRTA, which means first gaining cooperation from Latin American countries on such basic steps as preventing Peru's neighbors from providing safe havens for MRTA leaders and fighters. Similarly, we can make diplomatic *démarches* to select intergovernmental organizations, including the Organization of American States and the United Nations, explaining what we want to achieve in Peru and why. Additionally, the *démarches* would state what specific assistance from other governments and intergovernmental organizations is needed to go after the MRTA in areas such as finance.

Our diplomats could also work with Peruvian authorities on public information campaigns to better explain our rationale for helping Kuwait in the Gulf (recall that the MRTA was accusing the United States of imperialist ambitions in the first Iraq war). U.S. diplomats could also provide financial and technical assistance to the Peruvian government in a similar campaign to convince the populace that the MRTA, with its use of indiscriminate violence, does not represent their best interests.

A final component of the diplomatic action plan might involve economic assistance projects to create job opportunities for peasants who otherwise might work for the MRTA. In planning such projects, intelligence would be needed to identify the locations and types of projects most likely to impact the MRTA's recruiting efforts.

The diplomatic team would require additional operational intelligence to create and move forward with this action plan. First, the planners would need more intelligence regarding the connections MRTA has with other terrorist organizations and other sources of support in third countries. To effectively counter foreign financial support for the MRTA, our diplomats would need to

be able to provide foreign governments detailed information on which of their citizens are involved. The original intelligence report gives a broad overview of these connections, but diplomats need specific information. The MRTA relies on Cuba and Libya for supplies and financing, but the extent of this support and whether or not it continues is currently unknown. The MRTA is also connected with support groups in Europe; specifically, there is confirmation of connections to support groups in France and Sweden. The MRTA has also been linked to other terrorist and criminal organizations. These groups include the Colombian narcotics cartels and other terrorist and insurgent organizations from South America. It also appears that at least a part of the movement's financing is linked directly to the drug trade, and the State Department and DEA would need to know their relationships to drug traffickers.

To gauge the feasibility of public diplomacy initiatives, the State Department would use intelligence assessments on the views of local populations and the degree to which they support the MRTA based on ideology versus financial reasons. Many fighters in the MRTA are peasants who receive a salary for their

service. If we obtain better information about the MRTA's financial situation, we might be able to reduce its funding and limit its ability to recruit new members.

All these actions, plus FBI support to Peruvian law enforcement, would be included in the diplomacy plan.

Intelligence Support to Covert Action

Finally, the CIA would prepare a covert action plan for dealing with the MRTA. We can envision the type of actions the CIA might propose by building on those undertaken to defeat bin Ladin before 9/11. Specifically, such a covert action plan might call for the CIA to

1. disrupt MRTA financial streams;
2. disseminate propaganda to reduce public support for the MRTA;
3. create mistrust within the MRTA itself;

RESEARCH ISSUE

The State Department requires specific, detailed information for use in convincing a foreign country to take action. Intelligence agencies do not want to provide such specific information. Why? How would you resolve this controversy?

4. provide Peruvian military and police with bomb detection/counterterrorism training;
5. disrupt drug trafficking ties/connections with other organizations;
6. track/red flag the movements of individuals with MRTA ties between Peru and France/Sweden/Libya;
7. disrupt communication capabilities/electricity/online capabilities of the MRTA; and
8. help coordinate Peruvian military action against MRTA strongholds/interests/infrastructure.

Some of these actions overlap the military “indirect” operations, while others duplicate or complement diplomatic steps. It is up to the interagency process as directed by the NSC and the NCTC to determine the appropriate mix of U.S. foreign policy tools to effectively disrupt, dismantle, and destroy the MRTA.

One final note: The MRTA and SL are no longer viable organizations.

STUDENT EXERCISE

In this chapter, we saw that the MRTA was one of the most dangerous terrorist/insurgent groups in Latin America during the 1990s.

In 1991, while the United States was focused on the first Gulf War, the MRTA declared war on the United States.

In this exercise, you will be a member of one of three U.S. government teams, and will develop a plan to eliminate the MRTA threat.

- ▶ The military team is composed of SOCOM and SOUTHCOM planners and is led by a representative from the ASD SO/LIC office.
- ▶ The diplomatic team is composed of State Department, FBI, and Treasury Department officials, led by a senior deputy to the coordinator for counterterrorism at the State Department.
- ▶ The covert action team is composed of officers from the CIA’s clandestine service, led by a senior officer from the CIA’s Counterterrorism Center (*not* the NCTC).

Assignment

Each team has three tasks:

1. Using the CIA intelligence report *Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement: Growing Threat to US Interests in Peru* (see additional information below), identify and annotate the sections of the report that demonstrate that your policy tools (military assistance/military action, various dimensions of diplomacy, various aspects of covert action) could be effective in achieving the U.S. goal of countering the MRTA threat.
2. Using the intelligence reports listed below and any additional materials you can find through research, each team will develop an action plan to disrupt, dismantle, and destroy the MRTA.
3. Specify in detail the additional intelligence information you need to carry out your action plan, including your assessment of the collection techniques (the "INTS" discussed in Chapter 2) that will be most effective. I suggest you start with the information in the CIA report and then ask yourself the level of detailed intelligence your forces will need to carry out your planned actions.

Deliverables

Each team will submit a single, typed report (10 double-spaced pages or fewer) covering all three tasks. Each team will prepare a 5- to 10-minute voice-over PowerPoint presentation on Task 2—your team's action plan.

Resources

Strategic Intelligence:

Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement: Growing Threat to US Interests in Peru

Declassified CIA report (March 28, 1991)

http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000393913.pdf

(Continued)

(Continued)

Operational Intelligence:

Army Country Profile: Peru

Declassified Army Intelligence report (June 15, 1992)

<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB64/peru32.pdf>

Tactical Intelligence:

Declassified 470th Military Intelligence Brigade report

<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB64/peru31.pdf>

NOTES

1. White House, *National Strategy for Counterterrorism* (Washington, DC: White House, June 2011), http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism_strategy.pdf, p. 1.

2. National Counterterrorism Center, "NCTC Mission," <http://www.nctc.gov/>.

3. National Counterterrorism Center, "Who We Are," <http://www.nctc.gov/whoware.html>.

4. In this text, the diplomatic instrument is defined broadly and includes the full array of political, economic, and financial tools used by the U.S. government overseas.

5. Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, U.S. Department of Defense, "Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict," <http://policy.defense.gov/QUSDPOffices/ASDforSpecialOperationsLowIntensityConflict.aspx>.

6. United States Special Operations Command, "About USSOCOM," <http://www.socom.mil/Pages/AboutUSSOCOM.aspx>.

7. *Posture Statement of Admiral William H. McRaven, USN Commander, United States Special Operations Command Before the 112th Congress Senate Armed Services Committee*, March 6, 2012, http://www.socom.mil/Documents/2012_SOCOM_POSTURE_STATEMENT.pdf, p. 6.

8. *Ibid.*

9. See U.S. State Department, "Programs and Initiatives," <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/index.htm>.

10. See U.S. State Department, "Bureau of Counterterrorism," <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/>.

11. James E. Steiner, "Restoring the Red Line Between Intelligence and Policy on Covert Action," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 19 (2006): 158.

12. *Written Statement for the Record of the Director of Central Intelligence Before the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, March 24, 2004, http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/hearings/hearing8/tenet_statement.pdf.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

15. See Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Terrorism," <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/terrorism>.

16. See U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, "DEA Mission," <http://www.justice.gov/dea/about/mission.shtml>.

17. Directorate of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, *Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement: Growing Threat to US Interests in Peru*, March 28, 1991, http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000393913.pdf.

18. The complete declassified Army Intelligence report *Army Country Profile: Peru* is available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB64/peru32.pdf>.

19. The full (declassified) tactical report, produced by the U.S. Army's 470th Military Intelligence Brigade, is available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB64/peru31.pdf>.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 7A.