

# The Death of Human Intelligence: How Human Intelligence Has Been Minimized Since the 1960s

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Since the beginning of time, the collection of human intelligence (HUMINT) has been the cornerstone of gaining an advantage over one's enemies. Over the past fifty years, the United States, under three particular administrations, has tried to end the process of HUMINT collection. HUMINT has always been associated with tradecraft and the necessity to work with unsavory characters. The information gleaned from these characters, however, has proven both vital and important in terms of defending against a threat as well as pursuing an objective. The derision expressed toward the methods of collection and those involved in the process has gone from a clandestine operation to front-page headlines. This image has been changed by political factors not associated with winning or losing.

**Keywords:** HUMINT, SIGINT, Collection, President, Church Commission, Attorney General, Intelligence, DNI, tradecraft

## Introduction

Attorney General Eric Holder's decision to ask a special prosecutor to investigate for possible criminal prosecution Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operatives who interrogated terrorists in overseas locations is the latest and most egregious instance of political gamesmanship by Holder, who strode into office promising to remove the taint of politicization from the Justice Department.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the correlation between the 1970s Church Commission and the current Obama administration can provide a basis for the prevailing mindset regarding the workings and methods of the Intelligence Community

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(IC). The Church Commission hearings concluded with fourteen published reports about the operations and abuses of US intelligence agencies, which included assassination plots to murder foreign leaders. Attorney General Eric Holder refocused examination of intelligence operations, specifically the CIA's Human Intelligence Operations (HUMINT), once again. For example, Holder pronounced himself obligated to "follow the facts and the law."<sup>2</sup> One critical fact, however, he entirely ignored; professional prosecutors had already examined the allegations of the CIA's misconduct, conducted an inquiry, and made a determination not to prosecute – although one contractor outside the interrogation program was prosecuted for assault. Holder never mentioned that a task force (informally dubbed the "Detainee Abuse Task Force") in the Eastern District of Virginia had already considered all of the applicable information, including the CIA inspector general's 2004 report that had been made public. Following standard procedure, the task force drafted "declination memos" and set forth the rationale for not proceeding with prosecutions.<sup>3</sup>

By proposing to prosecute members of the IC for their role in interrogation, the attorney general of the United States essentially neutered the IC. In one of the first pronouncements, Attorney General Holder, with backing of the White House, essentially took away the power of the CIA and rendered the agency useless and irrelevant. Without the ability to use enhanced interrogation techniques, information gathered in the field would no longer prove to be beneficial as it had been in the past. The Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) has been dependent upon HUMINT methods. By removing the human factor from intelligence operations, the reliance on technological means of intelligence gathering supersedes all other forms of intelligence collection. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "by threatening to prosecute CIA officials, the Obama Administration is taking ownership of future troubles in a way that will only do itself harm. Like the Church and Pike probes of the 1970s."<sup>4</sup>

The Church Commission of the mid-seventies was created around intelligence failures during the Vietnam War. At the same time, a group of senators led by Senator Frank Church from Idaho was looking to deal a severe blow to the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Intelligence Community. As the war ended and the agenda switched to budget cuts and non-proliferation, the mindset became increasingly against the DoD and the IC. These hearings were used not only to study the cause-and-effect, but also to embarrass the hierarchy of these two organizations. While this

commission was blamed for future failures due to the restrictive nature of its findings, its worst example of failure was the neutering of the intelligence apparatus in general. Oversight and approval became the means to an end for the Senate and the House. This led to failures in subsequent years that cost many lives.

The White House and Justice Department is working toward the goal of a similar kind of Intelligence Community. This would mean that the ability to collect Human Intelligence and Signal Intelligence would be greatly limited by the White House and Justice Department. In other words, the ability to protect the homeland would be influenced by decisions made in meeting rooms, not battlefields. If one lesson was learned from the Vietnam War, it was that politicians were not qualified to win the battle or protect the troops. This is where the United States is heading today.

### **HUMINT Collection**

Perhaps one of the most comprehensive definitions of HUMINT is found in the website of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which states that:

Human Intelligence (HUMINT) is the collection of information from human sources. The collection may be done openly, as when FBI agents interview witnesses or suspects, or it may be done through clandestine or covert means (espionage). Within the United States, HUMINT collection is the FBI's responsibility.<sup>5</sup>

In terms of intelligence collection, all branches of the IC use various means of surveillance and collection for their benefit in terms of their specific missions; this includes all of the "INTs" as well as unmanned aircraft and other forms of collection. O'Hern states that,

Although intelligence collectors are trained in source protection procedures, this process is not free of risk. In many cases, personal meetings are required between the source and collector to share information. Great care is taken to select a proper site for the meeting, but most must take place in enemy territory or on a coalition forward operating base. Neither offers a safe haven or refuge from the watchful eyes of an enemy insurgent or his allies.<sup>6</sup>

The number and capability of trained intelligence collectors is a limiting factor to the size and scope of a human source network. On average, trained

collectors represent less than five percent of the total organization conducting counterinsurgency operations and their capacity to develop sources and collect intelligence is finite. Communication between a collector and a source is often limited due to security considerations and the timeliness of a source's response to specific intelligence requirements is unpredictable. Rivera and others indicates that,

Fears of reprisal are palpable and their consequences are dire. In Afghanistan alone, the United Nations observed . . . 462 assassinations in 2010 in reprisal for cooperating with the coalition according to their records, double the number from the previous year. The figures may not include many killings in remote areas, like the mass beheading, because fearful villagers never reported them.<sup>7</sup>

Direct and personal relationships with sources also can also be dangerous for the intelligence collector. In December of 2009, seven intelligence collectors were killed in Afghanistan by a source serving as a double agent who detonated a suicide vest after being granted special access to a coalition base by his handlers.<sup>8</sup>

In the current political environment, the use of HUMINT has been greatly limited by presidential directives and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI). Rules and regulations have been put in place to monitor activities such as HUMINT collection, interrogation and other means of protecting US national security. Whereas in the past the methods were not discussed, today these operations are made in the full view of Congress and must be approved prior to execution. This hinders the ability to collect real time data. Intelligence Community Directive Number 304, dated March 2008, states that,

The DNI is committed to ensuring that HUMINT activities are executed in a prioritized, coordinated, integrated, and professional manner; that USG elements engaged in the collection of intelligence through HUMINT activities, counterintelligence activities, or activities that involve the use of clandestine methods are coordinated and deconflicted with IC HUMINT activities; that HUMINT practitioners use core common standards; and that there is transparency into HUMINT support capabilities to allow all IC elements to benefit from technical or other advances.<sup>9</sup>

As the attorney general and the president have weighed in on the use and function of HUMINT, the public has been given the impression that wrong doings and needless harm have come to the community. For example, Fox News on September, 21, 2009 urged Obama to stop the probe. Obama stated, "I appreciate the former CIA directors wanting to look out for an institution that they helped to build. But I continue to believe that nobody is above the law."<sup>10</sup> Additionally, on the CBS news program *Face the Nation*, Obama said, "I want to make sure that as president of the United States that I'm not asserting in some way that my decisions overrule the decisions of prosecutors who are there to uphold the law."<sup>11</sup> While the politicization of intelligence gathering has been brought to the forefront, the methods and responsibilities remain the same. If the academic side of the world strives for clarity, the political side strives for acceptance; these rarely occupy the same sheet of music.

Seven former CIA directors, whose tenures span back as far as thirty-five years, wrote to the president that the cases have already been investigated by the CIA and career prosecutors, and that to reconsider those decisions makes it difficult for agents to believe they can safely follow legal guidance. They stated that the decision to reopen a criminal investigation created an atmosphere of continuous jeopardy for the intelligence community, especially those involved in HUMINT.

A decision by Attorney General Holder to investigate would have stood as a defining gesture of independence from President Obama, and would have been in sharp contrast to his predecessors, who were said by lawmakers in both parties to have run the Justice Department as a satellite office of the White House. Holder had told associates he was weighing a narrow investigation, focusing only on CIA interrogators and contract employees who clearly crossed the line and violated the Bush administration's guidelines and engaged in flagrantly abusive acts. In taking that route, Holder would have run two risks. One is the political fallout if only a handful of low-level agents had been prosecuted for what many critics see as a pattern of excess condoned by the top of the government. The other is that an aggressive prosecutor would not stop at the bottom, but would work up the chain of command, and end up with a full-blown criminal inquiry into the intelligence agencies – just the kind of broad, open-ended criminal investigation the Obama administration said it wanted to avoid. In a sense, Attorney General Holder put himself in this awkward position. Earlier in 2013 he successfully argued, in the face

of CIA protests, for the release of legal memorandums produced by the Justice Department during the Bush administration. The memorandums showed that the administration had authorized the use of interrogation tactics such as head slapping, walling, and waterboarding. The documents also brought accusations of torture into the public eye.<sup>12</sup>

The basis of this paper is both academic as well as political. In today's environment, the two are very difficult to separate. While the standards of practice of intelligence gathering have changed over the years, the mission has remained the same. While the idea of political interference in national security is frowned upon, many people have different theories as to which is more important. The lack of human intelligence and the concentration on technology has led to both poor gathering and missed opportunities. As the literature shows, three administrations did not believe, or were not comfortable with the use of HUMINT. The Ford and then the Carter administrations believed that HUMINT was a cause of the mistakes and errors made in the Vietnam War. These ideas led to the Church Commission, which placed the IC under the direct control of Congress. This was a reaction to the need to find the reasons for the failures in the Vietnam War. Most recently, the Obama administration has elevated the use of technology to a much higher level than that of HUMINT. While the growth and sophistication of technology add to the science of intelligence collection, it does not have the same effect as direct human contact in the gathering of real-time information. While the Obama administration does not believe in the value of HUMINT, it has made the issue more difficult than it should be. By threatening to prosecute operational employees of the IC for their methods, the trust-in-government factor has been completely destroyed. The trust of the IC is difficult to repair, and towards the end of Obama's presidency, the damage in the areas of HUMINT and clandestine service is still very obvious.

### **Findings and Analysis**

When researching a subjective matter, such as the decline in the use of HUMINT during different time periods or administrations, the results can be confusing. This framework led to the Church Commission and the future of relations between the Obama administration, the Justice Department, and the Intelligence Community. The Obama administration has weakened the resolve and the purpose of the Intelligence Community to such an extent that the collection methods and results have been adversely



affected. During the Carter and Obama administrations, the reliance on HUMINT was at its lowest levels in recorded history. This is not to say that the methodologies and practices were not in place. The reliance on new means of technology grew from the 1960s to the present day; the idea that HUMINT was key to providing reliable intelligence changed during each administration from 1960 to the present. As technology changed, the reliance on electronic means became more prevalent. This allowed for less human interaction, and for distance to be employed in gathering data. The problem arose when the data became corrupted, based on the knowledge of the enemy, and the unwillingness of the administrations in power to use the data for productive means. The role of the HUMINT analyst was, and always will be, to gather information and analyze the raw data for useful means. If this is not followed through the data becomes dated and irrelevant. This has been the case in these three particular administrations.

#### *Vietnam War and the Church Commission*

The use of HUMINT was widely seen as contributing to the failure of the Vietnam War. While many articles and books have been written discussing the ultimate failure of the war, the topic always seems to return to either poor intelligence or misused intelligence data. In keeping with the idea of technology overstepping the use of HUMINT, the Vietnam War was conducted by political theory instead of military intelligence. The nature of the war made the need for on-the-ground intelligence that much greater. Senator Frank Church from Idaho convened a senate committee that spanned the end of the Ford administration and continued through the Carter administration. The sole purpose of this committee was to show the failures of the IC during the Vietnam War and to make changes for the future. As history has shown, this was a major mistake.

The Report of the Committee, dated January 27, 1975, stated that, “The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities has conducted a fifteen month long inquiry, the first major inquiry into intelligence since World War II. The inquiry arose out of allegations of substantial, even massive wrong-doing within the ‘national intelligence’ system.” This mistake centered on oversight and the lack of reporting authority of the IC. The goals of this committee were to control the functions of the IC – not necessarily for mistakes that had been made – but more for congressional control of the community and the information gathered. This committee took into account IC involvement in all areas of the globe. This included

regional conflicts, tribal conflicts, and all events that could destabilize a government or region. It also included involvement in cases like Watergate and internal US issues.

The final recommendations of the Church Commission were the most all-encompassing recommendations ever made by any congress in regards to the powers of the IC. Its resolution was to establish a committee to investigate the nation's intelligence apparatus. It was deemed necessary to investigate methods and results from the Vietnam War and other actions during that time period.<sup>13</sup> This resolution effectively took the power away from the president and the IC and created a senate committee to oversee all intelligence activities. This effectively removed the IC from any role in determining either policy or action. As the Carter administration proceeded under these new rules, the IC was effectively rendered a non-functioning part of government. Technology was beginning to play a larger role and the need for HUMINT was becoming increasingly negligible. The operational directorates of the IC were no longer as useful as they once were, because of the time factors involved in determining action.

#### *Carter and the Church Commission*

The Church Commission was formed at the end of the Ford administration, but its decisions and recommendations were put in place during the Carter administration. Research has shown that the Church Commission did more to undermine the IC than anything in history. While the need for oversight and fact-finding was a noble goal, the Church Commission used the results of the Vietnam War to determine the future direction of the use of HUMINT and other forms of intelligence gathering. Senator Church decided to hold these hearings based on the failures of the war itself, and not on the failures in intelligence. While mistakes were made, the failures of Vietnam had more to do with mismanagement than lack of intelligence. A political management system in an overseas war can never work if the commanders in the field are not allowed to do their jobs. In the Vietnam War, the rules of engagement were determined in Washington and not on the battlefield. This led to oversights in troop strength, intelligence, and an overall failure to determine the outcome. The Church Commission used these results to limit the power of the IC and to set forth a perilous path for the future.

One of the main recommendations of the Church Commission was that the IC should answer to the Congress for all matters. This was as ludicrous



as having the IC report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff under Kennedy. The IC works in the shadows and their methods need to be covert. By answering to Congress, the issues would have focused on classification and the time it would take to make a decision. This recommendation was doomed from the start. HUMINT was still the key source of information during the Vietnam War. Technology in terms of weapons and material was moving quickly and the use of satellites and computers was just getting started, but HUMINT was the key. While the methods of gleaning information are not always pretty, they are effective in determining the next move on the chessboard. Without the ability to interrogate enemy prisoners, the use of battlefield intelligence is not an option. The best sources of the next steps come from those involved in the fight. HUMINT proved very successful in the field, but its advantage became ineffective by limiting its use in the future. If in the long run, the IC would have had to ask permission of Congress, the apparatus would have been rendered useless.

The Church Commission and its recommendations were taken at face value by President Carter. The decision to limit the scope of the IC and its methods was put into place not long after he took office. This was a leading cause of the implosion of both the military and the IC. During Carter's presidency, the military strength, including intelligence, was at its lowest levels in history. The recruiting numbers for military service were at an all-time low and the Soviet Union was becoming a more dominant force in the world. It seemed that the era of American exceptionalism was nearing its end, as a result of the economic recession in the mid-1970s, paired with the end of the Vietnam War, and the lack of trust in the military and the political environments. The Carter administration, in agreeing to implement the findings of the Church Commission, allowed the United States to lose its place as the leader of the free world and to bring about doubt, both internally and externally, as to the future of the country. This fear and uncertainty led to the overall feeling of loss-of-face among the population. These attitudes stemmed from the Church Commission hearings and its recommendations to do away with many HUMINT gathering techniques. The direction of the presidency and the country were greatly influenced by the hearings and their recommendations. It took a decade for the United States and its military and intelligence communities to become productive. Only a change in president and attitude allowed the country to get back to being exceptional.

*The Obama Administration*

Of all the administrations in the past fifty years, the Obama administration has done more to do away with HUMINT. As technology has grown and functionality has improved, the need for HUMINT, as determined by current policy, has increasingly diminished. The Obama administration, and, in particular, the attorney general, have determined that the use of HUMINT in many forms is a punishable offence. At the beginning of the presidency, the attorney general declared that he was going to prosecute intelligence community operators involved in enhanced interrogation. Not only was this incredible, it did more to stop the flow of information than anything imagined. Operations were halted, operators stepped down, and the use and techniques of HUMINT were put in the closet. The research shows that the decline in actionable intelligence dropped greatly during the first six months of Obama's presidency. This was directly tied to the comments and pronouncements of the attorney general.

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Attorney General Holder, with the backing of President Obama, essentially took away the power of the CIA and made its mission irrelevant, and triggered a series of events that weakened the defense posture of the United States for the next several years. Without the ability to use enhanced interrogation techniques, the information gathered in the field would no longer be as beneficial as it had been in the past. These methods of HUMINT had been the cornerstone of activities in the GWOT. To take

the human factor out of play makes the reliance on technological means of gathering intelligence paramount to all other forms of intelligence collection. While technology has been a boon to the industry, it does not allow for the interpersonal methods and means of intelligence. As with all forms of technology, the systems can fail and the information can be corrupted. This is not to say that HUMINT is perfect, but the ability to garner information is more reliable in a face-to-face setting.

With the Obama administration, the use of technology has become the sole driving force in intelligence gathering. This is part of the issue. Technology, be it drones or electronic surveillance, OSINT or MASINT, is the new way of the future. It is relatively clean and somewhat less costly than actual people on the ground. The drawbacks are that verification is more difficult and human verification is needed in order to be successful. Another flaw in the reliance on technology is the 24-hour news cycle. The administration takes credit for the successes of the community in near real-time. The Bin Laden raid was broadcast within minutes of completion to say, "Look what we did."<sup>16</sup> This also provided the enemy with the same access to information, specifically the location and result. This is not the way of the IC. Failures are made public and successes are internalized. The preeminent factor should be the safety and security of the population both at home and overseas, and not who gets credit. This has led to a furthering of "classified" information being released by the participants who retire from active duty and write books. In the past, the operations of the intelligence community and the Special Forces community were private matters that were not used for profit nor as part of the release of information. With Obama's administration, all of this has changed. Judicial Watch has released hundreds of DoD and CIA communications, revealing that the administration leaked classified information to filmmakers about the raid in which Osama bin Laden was killed.

The Obama administration has taken the report of the Church Commission, and has multiplied it several times. The world has changed greatly since the 1970s. For example, the Cold War has ended and the Soviet Union does not exist. Technology has become the means to an end for all types of information and intelligence gathering. The world has become much smaller in terms of travel and communication. The public has taken an active role in both gathering and transmitting information along with their opinions. This has caused the need for covert action to be more important than ever before; the Obama administration, however, looks

at covert action as a means to celebrate the result. The term “spiking the football” has become part of the lexicon when describing how the Obama administration takes credit for the work of those in harm’s way. Drone strikes have become the method of choice for neutralizing the enemy without regard to collateral damage. Information is acted upon prior to verification, and information is gathered about citizens, leaders, and just about anyone else. This is not the spirit nor method of the IC. The only thing that can be said is that the Obama administration likes to use the IC for the dirty jobs, but does not stand behind the individuals who are tasked with that responsibility. This is shown by the actions taken by the Department of Justice when it comes to prosecuting CIA operatives involved in HUMINT. By considering interrogation akin to torture, the Department of Justice has placed the lives and the methods of these operatives on trial. These trials have been conducted by the news media, and not by courts of law. The methods of gathering information in a war zone do not have the same benefits as the methods used in a controlled environment. While torture is not an acceptable means of interrogation, the Congress has passed legislation allowing for enhanced means of interrogation.

The use of HUMINT in the protection of the nation has steadily declined with the advent of technology. Over the past fifty years, and particularly during three administrations, the use of face-to-face contact has become a very small part of intelligence gathering. During this time, however, other administrations have recognized the value of HUMINT to the point where many attacks were averted based on information gathered from interrogation techniques. Why the Kennedy, Carter, and Obama administrations failed to see or understand the value of HUMINT is a question that has many answers.

The failure to understand the benefits of using HUMINT is the key to success of most terrorist attacks both in the United States and abroad. While many of the methods used in gathering HUMINT are not mainstream or pleasant, the information that can be provided could be tantamount to the prevention of an attack on the United States. The political leadership, however, prefers intelligence from technology rather than human sources. While this is part of the overall goal, technology is not and never was the only key to a successful intelligence operation. Although technology continues to change on a daily basis and the ability to glean information has taken on a new meaning, this does not preclude the necessity of employing people to provide both battle-field and ongoing intelligence.

As already stated, the technology available has grown exponentially over the past fifty years, with the most advances in the past fifteen years. Electronic Intelligence (ELINT), Signals Intelligence (SIGINT), and other sources now are significant factors in gathering intelligence. The difference is that all of these methods are impersonal, and they require a great deal more analysis than HUMINT. What is said electronically does not have the same nuance or body language of a personal conversation. One cannot read body language to determine the truth electronically. While all of the methods of collection are important, the only personal method is HUMINT.

In the IC there are many types of personnel. There are analysts, who look at the raw data; scientists, who build new methods or programs for analysis; and there are operators. The operators are usually in the field, with little back up or direction. They are responsible for their own safety as well as the safety of their sources. This is what is called the clandestine service. This service is the primary source of HUMINT. All the operator has is the belief that his country will stand behind him if there is a problem. These operators are in the field, alone many times, for months or years at a time. It is their job to embed themselves in very dangerous positions. The idea is that they become part of the group, and they report back with information. That information can be about an upcoming attack or the plans for another 9/11. These people are in harm's way for most of their careers, and they work out of love for their country. When the attorney general threatened to prosecute this type of person, their motivation and trust in government disappeared.

HUMINT has been the source of information that has stopped planned attacks. It provided information as to the whereabouts of targets and leaders, and for all of time it has been the most reliable method of intelligence gathering. The administration seems to feel that it is no longer important and wishes to do away with it. As the research has shown, without the use of HUMINT, the world would be a much more dangerous place, and the future of the United States might be questionable. The terror events of today may be partially the result of the lack of HUMINT since the start of the Obama administration.

The research all shows the benefits of the use of HUMINT. It also shows the problems caused by three administrations that did not believe in its effectiveness. The truth is in the results and the only way that it can be judged is by studying history. This means past history, current events, and the future. This is the only way to see the benefits of HUMINT and



the problems caused by not believing in the methodology. The future will be the key to codifying the results of the current research.

A recent revelation has added to the concerns of HUMINT. While the administration is apt to rely on technical means of intelligence gathering, the CIA has continued to use HUMINT as key to collecting information. A recent report states that the director of the CIA admitted to spying on the email and correspondence of the Senate Intelligence Committee. An internal investigation by the CIA found that its officers penetrated a computer network used by the Senate Intelligence Committee in preparing its report on the CIA's detention and interrogation program. According to the report, the CIA inspector general, three of the agency's information technology officers, and two of its lawyers "improperly accessed or caused access" to a computer network designated for members of the committee's staff who were working on the report and had access to millions of documents at a CIA site in Northern Virginia. The names of those involved have not yet been made available because the full report has not yet been made public.<sup>17</sup>

The White House publicly defended the CIA's director, John O. Brennan, saying he had taken "responsible steps" to address the behavior of CIA employees, which included suggesting an investigation, accepting its results, and appointing an accountability board. This revelation about the CIA's activities is damning in light of the administration's desire not to use HUMINT. A scandal of this nature will be difficult to overcome and make the future direction of HUMINT even more tenuous.

### **Conclusion: Moving Forward**

While moving forward requires an understanding of the past, the key areas of HUMINT have been discussed and argued throughout the years. The three administrations discussed in this article are key to understanding the desire to do away with this type of intelligence gathering. While unsavory and sometimes bordering on illegal, the means used to gather information are not subject to public scrutiny. While at war, the available means of intelligence gathering are to be used and tolerated. The debate about torture is a false argument for the doing away with gathering HUMINT. Most of the public understands the need to gather information, and they are not concerned with the methods. What constitutes torture for one is a successful interrogation for another. The means used are secondary to the results. If a 9/11 style of attack can be prevented by any means, the public



will support it. There are many instances when the public in general does not have the need to know, as the public is concerned only with the results.

By removing the means to gather HUMINT, the United States, in particular, has made a conscious decision to bet the future on technological means of intelligence gathering. While this may be less threatening and more cost effective, the results will be less than satisfactory. Technology has its place, but the difficulty lies in the verification of information and the ability to react to a particular situation. The only method of verifiable intelligence is to have people on the ground and, better yet, embedded with the bad actors. While inherently more dangerous, the rewards outweigh the risks in being able to gather verifiable intelligence. There is a place for the use of technology in terms of analyzing data and conducting surveillance, but these are indirect means of intelligence gathering; rather, a live resource is the best means of gathering information.

Another area of concern is the methods used to gather HUMINT. In the Obama administration, the use of enhanced interrogation is considered illegal. While this is the best way to gather intelligence, the country, or at least the administration, does not seem to have the stomach for the methods. While torture is considered illegal, the use of any means necessary to stop an attack should be considered in the best interest of the population. When the attorney general announced that CIA interrogators would be indicted, the use of HUMINT effectively ended.<sup>18</sup> When a CIA operative does not have the faith of his own leadership, the mission will surely fail. Operations need to be run with the full support of the government, even if they may come close to crossing a red line. The operator needs to know that he will not be in danger of prosecution for doing his or her job. Sadly, this is no longer the case nor the belief of those in the IC.

Technology, communications, and travel have become second nature, making the distances between countries or factions much smaller. For technological means of intelligence gathering to be successful, the information must be verified and analyzed in near real-time. This is not possible due to many considerations. The dissemination of information alone would take more time than is available. Without the benefit of HUMINT, the dangers will continue to gain strength. Once critical mass is reached, attacks similar to 9/11 will take place. Once the United States is hit again, then the rules will change. The Obama administration seems to be more interested in ideology than in safety or protection. While no one wants to prosecute a war, the fact that war is sometimes necessary is being

overlooked. By being reactive instead of proactive (SIGINT vs. HUMINT), the administration is opening the doors to many types of terrorist attacks. What remains to be seen is the size and scope of such an attack and, more importantly, the reaction of the leadership to that attack. Time will be the key to determining the necessity of HUMINT, and the feeling is that time may not be so far off in the distant future.

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