

## **Letter to the Editor**

### **National Intelligence Strike Teams**

Dear Editor,

I am in full agreement with Adam Crowe's article "National Strike Teams: An Alternative to Low Probability, High Consequence Events." In fact I believe that the organization of strike teams should be extended to intelligence collection teams originating at the local level.

Homeland security since 9/11 has evolved around first responders and their reaction to hazards, catastrophes, and terrorist threats. The effort has lacked support for law enforcement training in terrorism counteraction. A terrorist attack when it comes will affect the local level first, followed by the state and national level organizations. The gap remains where it is needed most: at the local law enforcement level.

The RAND Corporation recently published a paper authored by Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki on "How Terrorist Organizations Come to an End." The evidence in the Rand study shows that active terrorist groups since 1968 through 2006 have come to an end by different means: (1) they joined the political process or (2) local police and intelligence arrested or killed key members. Military forces have rarely been the primary reason for the end of terrorist groups and few groups within this time frame achieved victory.

Terrorist groups, be they foreign or domestic, have been defeated by diligent and dedicated police work. In all cases it has required a well-trained police force and intelligence-gathering organizations which eventually led to the arrest or deaths of those involved in acts of terrorism. At present the local police departments have not been trained in the gathering of intelligence through a network of agents specifically designed to counter the terrorist threat. In order to fill this need it is important and necessary to develop a well-trained group of law enforcement officers at the local level to establish police departments' Intelligence Strike Teams (IST) to identify terrorist activity and those involved in such efforts. Since all the ports of entry are now protected from illegal entry it is safe to assume that terrorists will attempt to enter the country surreptitiously by other means, i.e. crossing the border illegally, entering the country with third country passports, and/or gaining legal entry under false pretenses, perhaps as students or as business associates of third country business groups. This will limit the number of foreign agents entering the country and will give rise to the "home grown" terrorist group(s).

Countering this threat will require a group of law enforcement officers designated as Intelligence Strike Teams (IST), selected from each major center of the target population area. For example let's assume that on the west coast the largest target population is in Los Angeles and the surrounding area. Officers from each of the departments in the Los Angeles area would work with the Los Angeles Police Department Intelligence Strike Team. All information/intelligence would be processed and coordinated from the offices of the LAPD and disseminated within the police departments in that area as required. The LAPD operating team would process the information and send the information to a coordinating center like Denver where a National Intelligence Strike Team would process the information/intelligence and disseminate it nationally. Each team would work independently but coordinate

information through the federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) processing center in its area. This allows each department to work autonomously within its area and as a part of a larger effort.

The most important part of this system will be the training and implementation of the police departments' Intelligence Strike Teams. The team will engage in developing sources; coordinating with target population leaders and establishing community ties; proselytizing business owners who sell whatever dangerous materials a terrorist group would look to buy. The training will consist of human intelligence collection, to include source operations; training and evaluating Human Intelligence (HUMINT) sources and documents for exploitation; interrogations, debriefings, and elicitations for positive intelligence and information; counterintelligence; and force protection operations, including liaisons with counterintelligence sources. Also, they must train to prepare and edit intelligence and administrative reports, analyze intelligence using HUMINT communications and reporting equipment, and perform briefings as necessary. The objective is to identify agents operating in the target population community and any enemy combatants operating within the community.

The IST will be assigned to specific areas, i.e. West Coast, East Coast, South Atlantic States, Southern States, Midwest, and Western States area to coordinate within their area the efforts of the IST and DHS and its national agencies. The funding for the police departments' Intelligence Strike Teams should come from the DHS budget and the training made available through each National Intelligence Strike Team. The IST will also utilize the support of their department's armed teams, i.e. SWAT and supported by whatever other national armed strike resources are needed. The key to the program is the individual autonomy of each team and the training which will prepare the individual officer of each team in HUMINT collection. The IST will be the first to come into any kind of contact with the threat. Through its net of established agents it will know if there are any strangers in the community; become aware of any new vehicles and tenants; and any new activity in the neighborhood. The agents will also report strangers in areas of the neighborhood.

The establishment of the NIST will provide the fastest alarm, and also build goodwill in the target population by enlisting their help in a war against terrorism. The defeat of terrorism consists of efficient policing of America's borders; the preparation for the aftermath of a terrorist act and the implementation of Local Intelligence Strike Teams to counter terrorism at its operational level within the boundaries of the continental United States. The IST and NIST will be America's first line of defense against the home grown terrorist groups which will emerge given the success of our international counter-terrorism efforts.

CWO Zacharias Fuentes  
U.S. Army Retired  
August 28, 2008