Five Questions to Military Intelligence Readiness

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In 1757, during the French and Indian War, the British Army charged Major Robert Rogers with creating an independent unit to operate along the frontier against the French. As part of his training plan, Rogers wrote *28 Rules of Ranging* providing one of the earliest definitions of military readiness:

> "All Rangers are to be subject to the rules and articles of war; to appear at roll-call every evening, on their own parade, equipped, each with a Firelock, sixty rounds of powder and ball, and a hatchet, at which time an officer from each company is to inspect the same, to see they are in order, so as to be ready on any emergency to march at a minute's warning; and before they are dismissed, the necessary guards are to be draughted, and scouts for the next day appointed."[1]

Premier special operations units, including the US Army's 75th Ranger Regiment and Canada's Queen's York Rangers, continue to employ *28 Rules* today. Roger's orders remain relevant because his readiness criteria is sufficiently directive and yet flexible enough to account for changes in the operational environment. Restated, *28 Rules* is not so narrowly prescriptive as to limit their efficacy to a single mission, theater or conflict.

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[1] http://www.rogersrangers.org/rules/index.html

More recently, US Army Chief of Staff General Mark A. Milley reinforced the

Army's long tradition of demanding soldiers be prepared for action at a moment's notice

saying, "Readiness for combat is our No. 1 priority, and there is no other No. 1."[2] GEN

Milley's readiness focus and this specific dictum has permeated our Army's discussion

of priorities. In turn, leaders developed training stratagems, in some cases without

doctrinal standards, to ensure their formations are mission capable. However, the lack

of codified, benchmarks have created an uneven approach across the greater Army as

individual units applied multiple readiness definitions and differing training

methodologies. These varied readiness definitions and the accompanied challenge in

coherently cross-walking functional requirements of a ready Army Intelligence

Warfighting Function (IWFF) can unintentionally inhibit organizational capability and

functional readiness. Centralized training task selection and a well-intentioned emphasis

on generic readiness metrics not aligned with a unit's mission and its operational

employment concepts may detract from mission readiness. Mission Essential Tasks

must address the assigned Mission the units are performing or are expected to perform.

Ready for What? How the Army Intelligence Warfighting Enterprise postures for Crisis and Conflict

Echelon Above Corps (EAC) operational theater level intelligence formations,

which are Theater Committed Forces on the Global Force Management Allocation Plan

(GFMAP), produce and disseminate threat intelligence in support of the Army

Component and the Combatant Command. EAC forces are structured, manned and

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[2] https://www.ausa.org/articles/milley-emphasizes-'readiness-combat-our-no-1-priority'

equipped to execute through "Phase 0" or "Phase 1" conditions. Should conditions transition to "Phase 2" or beyond, US Army Reserve intelligence forces augment the EAC unit to provide a corresponding expansion in their intelligence capacity, enabling a 24/7 intelligence operations cycle supporting the theater level land force commander. The US Army's Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) EAC theater intelligence brigades also sustain the collection, processing, analysis and production of operational level intelligence directly consumed by the Joint Command (COCOM or designated JTF) in support of crisis actions. The sustaining intelligence products and services vital to setting the theater include: maintaining theater intelligence architectures and data stores; maintaining vital trusted relationships with host nation security and law enforcement authorities; provide threat reporting on critical enabling infrastructure; Overseas counterintelligence operations continue to during a crisis and expand as necessary.

The theater intelligence brigade integrates active military, reserve component and Department of the Army civilians consisting of career intelligence professionals in both the Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS) and the Military Intelligence Civilian Excepted Career Program (MICECP). DA civilians comprise upwards of 25% of the EAC theater military intelligence brigade's capability and subject matter expertise. DA civilian intelligence manning within theater intelligence brigades must be considered an essential element of MI brigade readiness and is fundamental to the theater's Army Intelligence Enterprise overall posture. Army readiness metrics do not fully address civilian readiness metrics, yet their skilled contribution to the mission remains a critical element to assure the full functionality of the IWFF. Additionally,

structural interdependencies across the active, reserve and DA civilian manning components cannot be reduced without significant readiness impacts. Failure to holistically address these interdependencies will continue to result in flawed readiness assessments skewing the understanding of the actual mission posture, capability and capacity of the EAC MI Brigade, and the theater's Army IWFF to supported warfighting headquarters. Clarity matters.

Beyond a "Phase 1" situation, tactical level Echelon Corps and Below (ECB) intelligence formations move from garrison into their deployment posture and enter the theater architecture for access to the larger intelligence enterprise with deployed systems. Once established, ECB intelligence forces further configure their collection capability, intelligence analysis and processing systems, producing intelligence for their tactical echelon commands.

Readiness Assessment Challenges

Certain individual readiness variables, say physical fitness or weapons qualifications, are easily measured through objective performance events such as a timed running event or scoring a range card. Similarly, establishing collective readiness benchmark of at the company, battalion or Brigade Combat Team (BCT) may be determined through evaluation of its Mission Essential Task List (METL). Armor units, for example, conduct systemic gunnery training culminating in live fire events on measured tank ranges to accurately assess the readiness of assigned tank crews. Gunnery is a regularly occurring event conducted under the auspices of school qualified master gunners with established training requirements and standards on dedicated ranges. Tank gunnery requires the entire unit, from commanders to cooks, to

demonstrate performance to standard. And yet, this critical metric is only one of several essential measurement criteria that assist in objectively assessing the lethality of small units and combat crews.

Our argument: accurately judging the readiness of a military intelligence soldier, or MI unit, is more challenging as the evaluation criteria are more subjective. Objective T becomes a "hard fit." For example, what are the right benchmarks to measure an MI unit's readiness? Unlike BCT gunnery, MI units rarely have opportunity to train collectively above the section level, separate from larger collective unit training events. Although individual military intelligence units have developed tailored "MI gunnery training," the Army lacks a codified doctrine to assess military intelligence formations above the company level.[3] CTC feedback indicates even when soldiers demonstrate straightforward digital proficiency, they often cannot produce relevant intelligence products supporting the commander's decision cycle. Intelligence requires judgement, critical thinking, and a balance in cognitive skills to produce the right analytical assessment and collection in the context of the overall mission requirements. The absence of a common assessment criteria reduces a holistic understanding of intelligence readiness across the force. These challenges increase the individual and collective learning curves as soldiers pursue real readiness- confidence in collective skills, aligned mission focus, and a demonstrated understanding of the operational environment.

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[3] https://www.army.mil/article/190522/soldiers_master_intelligence_skills_through_gunnery_training

Five Questions for Military Intelligence Leaders- Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

Leaders must also keep key point in mind as they develop MI readiness training – *the intelligence warfighting function provides predictive analysis and operationalized information enabling commanders to make informed decisions and take action throughout every phase of an operation- from tactical through theater strategic levels.* Anything else is a distraction from the unit's wartime mission. But how is that desired readiness achieved? There is no silver bullet to meet the challenges of establishing and maintaining MI readiness. We propose five questions to assist leaders in evaluating the essential elements intelligence enterprise readiness at their level.

Question 1: **Does your unit have talented people with demonstrated skillsets to work with intelligence mission systems- at sufficient density and experience in grade- to support the warfighting mission?**

- Is your team ready to produce intelligence on a sustained basis and prepared to "fight tonight" at the individual and collective levels?
- Does the IWFF team possess the regional expertise required for their mission?

Question 2: **Are your unit's intelligence mission systems (used for collection, processing, and interoperability with other fires/maneuver/mission command systems) available and regularly employed on mission tasks?**

- Are intelligence systems technically capable of collecting and processing theater specific indicators and warnings required of the mission?

- Can you confidently employ your systems to collect and produce intelligence in support of your command?

Question 3: **Does your unit possess IT maintenance and sustainment, have the authority to operate on applicable networks, regularly exercise with an understood architecture, capably employ your IT in an expeditionary mode and demonstrate the ability to access, transport, process, analyze and deliver intelligence to consumers in a relevant format?**

- Does the unit have Primary, Alternate, Contingency and Emergency (PACE) plans for assured delivery of intelligence and are able to fight through contested or Disconnected, Intermittent and Low Bandwidth (DIL) conditions?
- Does the unit have the ability to rapidly deploy, setup, configure, troubleshoot and interoperate their intelligence systems?

Question 4: **Do MI leaders understand and possess the demonstrated capability to tailor and assemble intelligence systems and equipment to anywhere we need them?**

- Are MI personnel ready to operate on a sustained basis as a coherent intelligence enterprise?

Question 5: **Can MI leaders (at every level from Theater Army G2 to Battalion S2) design, assemble, integrate, synchronized and leverage intel architectures and capabilities for warfighting mission commanders on a consistent basis?**

- Are MI personnel and units horizontally and vertically integrated across the larger intelligence community?

- Are MI personnel qualified with assigned IWFF platforms, software, hardware and doctrine?

- Are MI personnel regularly answering the commander's intelligence requirements?

- Is there a comprehensive IWFF talent management process for military and civilian personnel balancing professional growth opportunities with theater oriented mission requirements?

Sustaining Intelligence Readiness

If you can answer yes to all five questions, then your unit will have military intelligence readiness. And that is just the start. Having obtained readiness, it must be sustained and continuously improved. Army readiness must be continually renewed to counter our adversaries, for every day our adversaries plot, innovate, and integrate new strategies and technologies to exploit conditions in our operational environment for their interests and advantage. Leaders cannot rest upon past accomplishments at the expense of continually training their soldiers under realistic war time conditions. Bluntly stated, no MI professional should be at rest given the very real challenges facing our nation. Sustaining readiness is arguably the most difficult challenge. Disconnected civilian HR practices and routine soldier reassignments create a constant turnover of personnel and theater specific expertise. The industrial age policy framework of our acquisition system often addresses yesterday's threats by programmatically delivering

inadequate systems tomorrow.[4] In other words, readiness is continually degraded under administrative manning and equipping policies. Unit commanders must scrupulously ensure their units maximize real world mission performance, smartly integrate training time and resources focused on critical mission priorities, apply disciplined risk management in training plan development and play a vital role in executing training plans.

Concluding Thought

In 2018, soldiers no longer carry muskets or hatchets as they did on the frontier. Soldiers now have access to firepower and technology Major Robert Rogers would scarcely believe possible. While the equipment has evolved, the fundamental precepts of readiness first espoused by Rogers remain unchanged, albeit modified, for our brave new world. Leaders must ensure their units are prepared for action at a moment's notice against the global threats ranging from near peer competitors to non-state actors. "History shows us that war is likely to come without warning or time for preparation and points to the necessity of preparing everything possible before war is declared."[5] Our Nation deserves no less.

The opinions expressed in the article are solely those of the authors and do not reflect those of the United States Government, the Department of Defense, or the United States Army.

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[4] https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf
[5] Infantry Journal - Volume 7, Some Needs of the Army, 1910, pp. 843