



## State of MCTAIC Report

(Amended)

### 1. Purpose

a. This report conveys my candid views, opinions, beliefs, and goals concerning MCTAIC and the intelligence associations. They are based on fifty years of Marine Corps intelligence experience, discussions with many Marines of various ranks and MOSs, readings in intelligence history, and, last but not least, attendance at numerous annual meetings of the four intelligence associations. Although the Interrogator-Translator association (MCITTA) is not yet a formal member of MCTAIC, I include it in my discussions since interrogator-translators are an essential contributor and element of Marine Corps intelligence and they have stated approval and support of the MCTAIC concept.

b. No one will agree with everything I will say. I'll probably agitate some sensitivities. I look forward to comments, and/or criticism and further discussions. I believe this report is the first of its kind, a candid discussion of Marine Corps intelligence associations, their past, current status, and future. It should be the beginning of such a discussion, not the end. The topic needs further discussion, both in the MCTAIC context and within each association.

### 2. Background

a. Two years ago, BGen Mike Ennis, Director of Intelligence, met with representatives of MCCA, MCCIA, and MCIA. The primary purpose of the meeting was to improve and facilitate DIRINT and HQMC support to the three existing Marine Corps intelligence organizations. Based on the discussions at this meeting, the association members met again to review certain proposed actions. The outcome of this meeting was a draft Strategic Plan which established the Marine Corps Tri-Association Intelligence Committee (MCTAIC) and set forth goals, guidelines, and topics for future action. Two years later, the Strategic Plan is a reality, formally approved by three associations with the MCITTA also on board.

b. Considerable skepticism over the MCTAIC concept was obvious from the very beginning. Each association had its own inherent character, identity, spirit, and purposes. Each had to be assured that the Plan would in no way have any adverse impact on the individual associations.

c. Both CI and SIGINT are seen by many and, perhaps by themselves, as being outside the general intelligence mainstream due to the sensitivity and compartmentation of many of their operations. It is not surprising, therefore, that MCCA and MCCIA initially perceived MCTAIC as a form of intelligence "jointness" being forced upon these single-discipline, proud and vigorous associations.

d. Two years later, these concerns have been allayed and the concept and plan accepted and approved by the associations. The uniqueness of each association has not been compromised or threatened and, in fact, the associations are stronger than ever because of MCTAIC.

e. No discussion of MCTAIC and the future of the four intelligence associations would be complete and accurate without reference to the transformation of the active duty intelligence force over the past decade.

(1) With the implementation of the Intelligence Plan in the mid-90s, Marine Corps intelligence changed dramatically. The MOS structure was modified, LDOs were phased out, intelligence specialist

teams were disestablished, and the concept of a broadly-experienced MAGTF Intelligence Officer significantly changed the career patterns of all intelligence officers, particularly those in the senior grades. Noteworthy, however, the traditional enlisted grade structure and career patterns were generally maintained. This fact has profound implications for the associations.

(2) While some continue to express regret over various elements of the Plan, there is general agreement that Marine Corps intelligence is much stronger today than fifteen years ago. The general criticism of Marine Corps intelligence that followed Desert Storm stands in stark contrast to the generally high marks accorded Marine Corps intelligence in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Reports from senior commanders and other observers indicate that the Intelligence Plan met its critical test in Iraq, effectiveness in combat. I must note, however, that the criticism of Marine Corps intelligence in DS/DS overshadowed much good work done by many Intelligence Marines. In retrospect, although justified in some areas, it was not a balanced evaluation of intelligence performance and did not take into consideration earlier Marine Corps decisions that impacted on intelligence capabilities. Similarly, Marine Corps intelligence in OIF, while outstanding, was not without problems.

(3) Since the Plan was published, a career intelligence officer has achieved flag rank, Intelligence was broken out of the C4I2 organizational quagmire, and, as General Ennis recently noted, Marines have commanded JICPAC, JICCEN, Marine Security Battalion (3 times) and now the Defense HUMINT Service. Twenty years ago this would have been inconceivable.

**3. Some Personal Observations.** Based on my attendance at annual meetings of the four intelligence associations (I attended the initial MCITTA meeting this year), I have three candid observations to share with the MCTAIC members. The relevance of these observations will be highlighted in subsequent discussions.

a. The associations are aging! There has been little success in recruiting new members from the active duty force or those recently retired.

b. Up until recent transmission of DIRINT's Quarterly Newsletter, members were poorly informed on the activities, programs, successes, and capabilities of the active force.

c. The associations are self-centered, focused virtually entirely on their own specific discipline, and, prior to MCTAIC, did not interact in any way with each other. This is not entirely bad and, in fact, is completely understandable.

(1) In a combat situation, a typical G-2 will fuse SIGINT, IMINT, HUMINT, and CI reporting to develop a coherent picture for the commander. Each element retains its unique identity whether it be the CI/HUMINT Company, a Radio Battalion detachment, or the OB/analyst section. The product of their efforts (contributions) is greater than the sum of the individual elements. In current terminology, this is considered synergy. It works within the active duty forces. Why not apply the same principle to our intelligence discipline-oriented associations?

(2) The contributions of Marine Corps intelligence personnel in OIF won battles. I'm certain they considered themselves first and foremost as Marines, secondly as members of the overall intelligence efforts, and finally, as SIGINTERS, HUMINT/CI Specialists, interrogator-translators, or analysts. They took pride in their individual specialty, but realized they were part of something better. They learned to work with their fellow Marines on cross-cueing, merging data, and sharing secrets. This attitude will be relevant when they retire and are petitioned to join one of our associations. They will expect no less.

**4. Goals and Related Principles.** I envision four overarching and inter-related goals for the intelligence associations and a key role of MCTAIC to develop and enhance the synergy we see in the active duty force.

**a. Preserve our Heritage.** The associations must develop a coordinated and integrated history program, tapping the reservoir of experience resident in their members.

(1) During my recent research into the history of Marine Corps intelligence, I discovered several relevant quotations:

*"History is too serious to be left to historians."* (The active participants are the most credible historians.)

*“There is no history, only biography.”* (People make history; each of us is a potential contributor to our history, if we only take the time and make the effort to tell our story and share our experiences.)

*“The practical value of history is to throw the film of the past through the material projection of the present onto the screen of the future.”* (History helps illuminate the future; informs the membership, and contributes to community spirit.)

*“Every Marine an Historian.”* (Title of an article in the Marine Corps Gazette in March, 1961, which succinctly makes my point.)

(2) Marine Corps intelligence history is obviously an utmost priority to me. I’ll submit detailed ideas in a subsequent report to MCTAIC members.

#### **b. Ensure our Future Vitality and Viability**

(1) Our associations are aging and in need of new members. While we can continue to tap those already retired, the focus should be on active duty members and, particularly, on those close to retirement.

(2) Our most commonly shared experience and subject of discussion continues to be Vietnam. Although messages and discussions occasionally touch on more recent conflicts, the associations have failed to exploit, publicize, and institutionalize the experiences of Haiti, Somalia, Panama, Bosnia, and even Desert Storm. We need to recruit Marines who have served in these later campaigns and incorporate their experiences into our associations’ knowledge base.

(3) I believe the key to the future and the primary target of our membership efforts should be the senior non-commissioned officers close to retirement or recently retired. With the MAGTF intelligence officer concept is developing a broadly qualified intelligence officer, the real subject matter experts will be the SNCOs. This was always the case, but in today’s Marine Corps, it is more valid than ever.

(4) The recruitment of officer members constitutes a new problem. We won’t have career CI, SIGINT or Combat intelligence officers in the field grade ranks. They will be generalists who have spent staff or operational tours in several disciplines, but will probably retain a deeper interest in their original MOS. The fact remains, however, that these officers will have a choice of associations upon retirement. Of course, we will have to convince them prior to retirement that association membership has benefits to the retired member.

(5) Since the “generalist” may be drawn toward MCIA, which accepts all disciplines, MCCA and MCCIA must initiate actions and programs to identify and attract those officers who have specialized in or who have strong interest and ties in the SIGINT and CI communities.

(6) The interrogator-translators/linguists represent an interesting target audience. Their obvious choice would be MCITTA. Since they are organizationally linked to the CI/HUMINT community, however, they may migrate to MCCIA. MCIA would be another option. Or they could join more than one association. I would expect that most of the group would be interested in highlighting and maintaining the interrogator-translator identity. While the MCITTA title mentions the now- disestablished Interrogator Translator Teams, the association welcomes and solicits IT personnel from previous and subsequent campaigns as well. Although the associations have MOS requirements, the organizational fusion of CI, Humint, and IT may require a new look at such criteria, particularly if members have additional MOSs.

#### **c. Create a true Intelligence Community Spirit**

(1) We currently consist of four spirited, closely-knit intelligence associations. Three of the four are single-discipline organizations.

(2) As mentioned previously, the changes in the active force highlight interaction and cooperation which will influence the future of the associations. Further, I believe that, just as in the active force, the total sum of the associations could be greater than the sum of its individual parts. Synergy will result if we work at it.

(3) Reno will be the key to the future of MCTAIC. The individual associations will continue and, possibly prosper, irrespective of what happens in Reno. A successful Reno experience, however, will be to the overall benefit to Marine Corps intelligence. Remember, the active duty conference will be in session

nearby and its members will interact with the association members in several social functions. Our actions will influence their attitudes and opinions concerning our associations. We have much to gain, or lose!

(4) While the Reno experience and co-located association meetings may occur once every three to five years, I would like to see more association cross-attendance, interaction and cooperation at the annual association meetings. This should be a topic for MCTAIC discussion at Reno.

**d. Foster a Well-Informed Membership on Marine Corps Intelligence Matters**

(1) Although General Ennis' quarterly newsletter, his other initiatives, and healthy internet exchanges have improved the knowledge level of members on Marine Corps intelligence matters, I believe we can and must do better.

(2) Association charters, both explicitly and implicitly, encourage acquisition of knowledge and professional development. We can't stand still and live in the past. A well-informed membership, as a well-informed electorate, makes rational decisions based on the best information (or intelligence) available.

(3) When we attempt to recruit new members and they ask "what do I get out of joining your association?", we can answer by pointing out our newsletters/publications, internet exchanges, history program, PME guest lectures at annual meetings, and the opportunity to meet well-informed intelligence practitioners at our annual meetings.

**e. Establish a PME for the benefit of all associations and the active duty community at each future MCTAIC reunion/convention.** A few words on Professional Military Education (PME).

(1) MCIA organized and carried out a remarkably successful program last year with distinguished guest speakers. (Generals Gray, Zinni and Wilhelm) discussing the most serious and significant intelligence issue of the day. Such programs encourage attendance of members and contribute to the image and reputation of the association.

(2) Our Reno working group has tentatively scheduled two nationally known writers and authorities on military intelligence matters (Robert Steele and Bing West). Yet, some members are less than enthusiastic about such sessions, preferring more spare time for social and leisure activities. That, obviously, is the association choice.

(3) Social activities are essential elements of our annual conventions and contribute immeasurably to the spirit and camaraderie of our associations. However, to ignore substantive matters concerning Marine Corps intelligence and related topics would be a serious mistake. A balance is required. I'll write more on this topic in a subsequent message on Reno.

**5. Recommendations for Association Actions.** As MCTAIC has no decision-making authority, its purpose is to coordinate, facilitate, stimulate, occasionally agitate, and submit recommendations to the association for their consideration and action. As chairman of MCTAIC, I submit the following recommendations for association review.

**a. Strengthen, Coordinate, and Formalize Association History Programs.** With association concurrence, MCTAIC is prepared to formalize the history program. Each associate has, to some degree, an active history program. We can do better, individually and collectively. In the next month I will forward a more detailed proposal for a better coordinated and comprehensive program for the history of Marine Corps Intelligence.

**b. Develop a More Aggressive Membership Recruitment Program.** Each association should review and intensify current efforts. Associations should exchange views on current and proposed actions. I'll discuss this matter with HQMC officials this month and report results to MCTAIC members. I propose that the associations nominate an individual to participate in a MCTAIC membership drive committee.

**c. Review Association Plans for Reno to Allow Time for Activities of MCTAIC-Wide Interest.** Each association must conduct certain necessary and desirable business and social functions; however, combined professional and social activities offer much to association members. Since we will be meeting under these circumstances only once every three to five years, I believe the associations should seize the opportunity and offer members the obvious benefits of these programs. I'll submit more ideas on the Reno experience in the next several

weeks. Be assured I will be preparing an aggressive information program to make Reno the most significant and widely attended meeting in Marine Corps intelligence experience. Join me in this effort.

**d. Explore Ways to Further Increase the Knowledge Level of Members on the Status of Marine Corps Intelligence.** Progress has resulted from various initiatives, but more could be done. Associations should exchange articles and items of interest. Newsletters and quarterly publications should point out topics, articles, web sites, or books of interest.

As mentioned previously, an effective education program will be a recruitment advantage.

## **6. Summary of Actions to be taken by the MCTAIC Chairman**

- a. Propose a coordinated MCTAIC effort on Marine Corps intelligence history information.
- b. Further build on the superb efforts of our Reno action officers with my personal initiatives to increase attendance, interest, and support for this special occasion.
- c. Discuss specific initiatives with the Director of Intelligence and his staff to further strengthen ties with the active force with specific emphasis on actions to facilitate membership recruitment among recent Marine Corps intelligence retirees.
- d. Increase my personal efforts to identify topics, articles, books, or web sites of particular intelligence relevance and share this information with the associations.
- e. Continue to monitor, expand, and encourage other association initiatives such as library support, update of DIRINT's Reading List, and similar topics of common association interests.

## **7. Final Thoughts**

a. Two years of MCTAIC existence and experience have resulted in greater inter-association dialogue, closer ties with and better support from HQMC, and ambitious plans for the historic Reno collaborative occasion. Irrespective of what happens in Reno and beyond, I would submit that the individual associations have benefited from the MCTAIC experience.

b. This report is one person's views on MCTAIC. The shared views of MCTAIC members would be invaluable to my successor and me. Again, I "suggest" that the report be shared with your Board of Directors and, to the extent possible, with your membership. An open and candid exchange of views and opinions would be of substantial benefit to all who are dedicated to the publication and preservation of Marine Corps intelligence history.

***John J. Guenther***

Chairman, Marine Corps Tri-Association Intelligence Committee  
10 January 2004 (Modified and Amended on 23 January 2004)