Expansibility and Army Intelligence

Rose P. Keravuori
©2018 Rose P. Keravuori

Abstract: This article provides insights valuable to transitioning America's military intelligence resources from counterinsurgency operations to the force necessary for responding to a near-peer competitor in a major war.

The US Army has arguably not fought a capable state adversary since World War II. Now, after decades of conducting limited interventions, the expansibility and adaptability of military intelligence capabilities are in question. In a potential major war, the fight will focus on decisive operations and owning terrain, but it will also have to deal with the added complexities of globalization, advanced technologies, state-sponsored hybrid adversaries, and nonstate irregulars.[1] This article examines how US military intelligence would expand in the event of a major war that required the Army to double in size and capability.

The Army's Military Intelligence Corps would have to expand accordingly through a doubling of expeditionary military intelligence brigades and theater intelligence brigades, while incrementally expanding support at the strategic level. But, such an expansion would also affect "intelligence federations" within the intelligence community, which includes the Army Reserve, National Guard, civilians, and contractors, as well as its coalition partners.

Assumptions

In addition to doubling the Army, another major assumption is that the continental infrastructure of the United States, though vulnerable to cyberattack and sabotage, will remain relatively safe from massive kinetic attacks from long-range missiles. The architecture and communication systems that make sharing intelligence possible may be degraded, but they may not be completely destroyed.

Third, US Army forces will be dedicated explicitly to each theater of operations in question. Hence, a two-front scenario, such as one involving Country A in European Command's area of responsibility and Country B in Pacific Command's area of responsibility, would require military intelligence to increase linguists, cultural experts, and foreign area officers for Countries A and B, who are knowledgeable in those theaters of operations. Military intelligence forces would need to be flexible and modular, able to shift resources between combatant commands throughout the theater intelligence brigade structure to

COL Rose P. Keravuori, a US Army Reserve military intelligence officer, serves as the deputy director, US Central Command Commander's Action Group. She is a graduate of the United States Military Academy and the University of Oxford. She has served in the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and in a variety of positions within military intelligence.

---

1 David Johnson, *Redefining Boundaries for the 21st Century Land Force* (Carlisle, PA, US Army War College, December 10, 2016), briefing slides..

reinforce each region.[2] Joint intelligence operations will continue to be conducted with operators and analysts from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

Fourth, decision-makers will select the right force structure for a major war. Military intelligence currently supports the Army service component at the command, corps, theater, division, and lower levels. To expand in a major war, military intelligence support would remain consistent with active duty divisions and therefore expand in concert with them. Staying within the bounds of current units, and within the constraint of doubling brigade combat teams, intelligence units would then double at the expeditionary brigade, theater intelligence brigade, and strategic levels, which would all increase by seven.[3]

Expanding Military Intelligence

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence describes the intelligence community as "a federation of executive branch agencies and organizations that work separately and together to conduct intelligence activities necessary for the conduct of foreign relations and the protection of the national security of the United States."[4] The largest restructuring of the intelligence community since its inception came from implementing the recommendations in the *9/11 Commission Report*. Among many changes, the one with the greatest impact unified "the many participants . . . and their knowledge in a network-based information-sharing system that transcends traditional governmental boundaries."[5] Vertical stovepipes became more horizontal due to a new paradigm of intelligence sharing that ensured each organization was not an independent entity but rather an integrated, coordinating part of a greater community of 17 federal organizations.[6]

Lieutenant General Mary Legere (Retired), a former Army G-2, defines the intelligence federation as a "national and tactical community of interests that includes the Interagency, a coalition of the willing, and your formal and informal intelligence organizations, as well as others that can contribute to your mission."[7] Building a solid federation means aligning the national mission to the tactical objective, having good end-to-end federation doctrine, and exercising the federation from the top down and then back up. The federated intelligence enterprise—with increased analysis, predictions, and value to decision-makers—is the starting point in a major war.

---

2   MG George Franz (commanding general, US Army Intelligence and Security Command), interview by author, November 14, 2016.

3   Other assumptions for this study: six Army Service Component Commands for the six Geographic Combatant Commands; combat support units above corps will increase slightly; combat support units at corps level and below would double, consistent with the increase in combat units. Corps would increase from three to six. Divisions would increase from 18 to 36. Total BCT expansion would be from 57 to 114.

4   "Frequently Asked Questions," Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), February 28, 2017, https://www.dni.gov/index.php/about/faq?start=2.

5   National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9-11 Commission), *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* (Washington, DC: 9-11 Commission, 2004), 400.

6   "Members of the Intelligence Community," ODNI, February 28, 2017, https://www.dni.gov/index.php/intelligence-community/members-of-the-ic.

7   LTG (Ret) Mary A. Legere (former US Army G-2), interview with author, October 30, 2016.

During interviews for this study, intelligence leaders repeatedly mentioned three areas that require special attention in order to expand the Army intelligence corps: (1) shortages of airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets; (2) limited processing, exploitation, and dissemination (PED) capacities; and (3) insufficient human intelligence and counterintelligence capacities.

The insatiable appetite for ISR, "a continuous, recursive operation focused on the collection of relevant information that is analyzed to create intelligence to inform the commander's visualization," would continue.[8] To increase collection of the necessary intelligence ISR brings, the US Army would need multimission aircraft capable of acquiring signals intelligence and full-motion video while simultaneously operating as a shooter, which would mean an increased production of airborne platforms that could exponentially expand the capacity to collect intelligence.[9]

Processing, exploitation, and dissemination is "the execution of the related functions that converts and refines collected data into usable information, distributes the information for further analysis, and provides combat information to commanders and staffs."[10] In wartime, there will be an exponential need to refine data into usable intelligence for further analysis and dissemination, necessitating increased stateside PED battalions.

In terms of human intelligence and counterintelligence, there has always been the challenge of having trained personnel with the requisite language skills and cultural knowledge to collect intelligence through interpersonal means and to thwart our enemies' intelligence gathering. Human intelligence provides crucial knowledge not only of enemy capabilities but also of their intentions. As a current commander on the ground and consumer of intelligence put it, "there is nothing better than a human eyeball answering the commander's priority intelligence requirements."[11]

Expanding Skills and Capabilities

An obvious solution to expanding capacity is to acquire and to retain personnel with the right balance of skills. Many intelligence military operational specialties are currently considered low density—a few soldiers with the specialty are required within the organization or unit, and without those essential skills, various tasks and missions could not be completed. These specialties span six basic intelligence skill sets, or collection disciplines, of signals intelligence (SIGINT), imagery intelligence (IMINT), measurement and signature intelligence

---

8 Headquarters, US Department of the Army (HQDA), *The Stryker Brigade Combat Team Infantry Battalion*, Field Manual 3-21.21 (Washington, DC: HQDA, 2003), 3-1. For more on the ISR enterprise and the increased demand for it, see Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance: DOD Can Better Assess and Integrate ISR Capabilities and Oversee Development of Future ISR Requirements*, GAO-08-374 (Washington, DC: GAO, 2008).

9 MG Mark R. Quantock (former director, J-2, US Central Command), interview with author, November 9, 2016.

10   COL Constantin Nicolet, *201st Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade* (Ft. Lewis, WA: Military Intelligence Readiness Command, leader professional development brief, February 28, 2017), briefing slides.

11 MG Paul J. LaCamera (deputy commanding general, XVIII Airborne Corps), interview with author, November 2, 2016.

(MASINT), human-source intelligence (HUMINT), open-source intelligence (OSINT), and geospatial intelligence (GEOINT).[12]

Growing the intelligence workforce will be a difficult and complex challenge. The intelligence corps will be competing for manpower with all other branches, so in terms of rapid expansibility, leaders must define which intelligence disciplines will be needed immediately, which would be needed within 90 days, and what the force could wait on.[13] There will be a call for bigger, better, and faster intelligence from the beginning of the US Army's preparations for war, yet the availability of skills will need to be prioritized. During the first 90 days, leaders would have to rank the hard-to-get and hard-to-develop intelligence disciplines in terms of depth, complexity, training, and certification against those disciplines that are acquired faster or require less skill. Structuring a pipeline by first placing the right people in the specialties that take longer to develop would allow more risk in lower-skill sets that can be slowly filled.

Currently, intelligence has difficulty filling high-demand, low-density specialties in the signal and human intelligence disciplines. The skills required for signal and cyber are more complex than ever as the technical aspects of those missions have increased. For human and counterintelligence, seasoned soldiers with more life experience generally perform better, making recruiting a young soldier to be a successful agent difficult. After recruiting for these high-demand, low-density specialties, the intelligence corps will eventually need to expand all intelligence disciplines.

While training acts as a choke point, technology can help in an expansion. Intelligence leaders will need to shorten the training pipelines for a quicker throughput of qualified soldiers.[14] In the absence of enough qualified, cleared, and trained people, intelligence will need automated tools that can do what people currently do. Specific areas where intelligence could develop new automated tools include the insatiable appetite for ISR, the need for more PED, and the explosion of raw data.

Humans cannot be taken out of the intelligence process, but technology can provide increased throughput and reduce the cognitive burden on analysts. Doing so would allow analysts to manage the volume and variety of intelligence data and the reporting necessary to answer intelligence requirements while reducing the risk of missing key and essential information. Incorporating new technologies that automate processes will also free up personnel for other tasks. The Army needs to optimize the use of current sensors and baseline systems, but then it must adapt those systems, or commission new systems, for unanticipated needs, all while ensuring commonality of architecture and interoperability for sharing.[15]

Synchronizing the efforts of multiple intelligence agencies to limit duplicated efforts is essential. The recent conflict in Iraq demonstrated that, at the onset of war, most national agencies shifted their attention from around the world to Iraq. An initial lack of deconfliction and

12   "Frequently Asked Questions," ODNI.
13   BG Karen H. Gibson (former director, CJ2, Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve), interview with author, November 11, 2016.
14   Quantock, interview.
15   Franz, interview.

coordination meant several different agencies were duplicating collection and analytical efforts, adding to inefficiency while decreasing capacity.[16] The National Intelligence Support Plan is an effort to integrate theater and national intelligence capabilities, to synchronize intelligence operations, and to identify gaps in supporting a combatant command's mission.[17] A well-defined intelligence support plan between units, between tactical and higher-level headquarters, and with strategic-level intelligence agencies deconflicts intelligence tasks and synchronizes capabilities among the various players.

Army Reserve

One of the assumptions identified at the beginning of this paper was a recall of all individuals in the Army Reserve and National Guard to active duty. As the reserve component becomes fully mobilized, the current units of action (7,500 soldiers) in the Military Intelligence Readiness Command would be activated.

According to the current commander, Brigadier General Christie Nixon, doubling quickly is not a viable option for the reserve component.[18] In one proposal, the Reserve would add two additional expeditionary military intelligence brigades and one additional theater brigade, which would augment intelligence support by about 2,100 soldiers.

In order to understand intelligence in the reserve component, one needs to understand the Military Intelligence Readiness Command, a new paradigm of reserve support formed in 2005. Aggregating 75 percent of intelligence forces in the Reserve, the functional command provides "operational intelligence support to nearly every national intelligence agency and combatant command, and conducts multi-discipline intelligence operations in support of Army Service Component Commands and worldwide contingency operations."[19]

Select units and theater support battalions are operationally aligned with Intelligence and Security Command theater intelligence brigades and units, while the expeditionary brigades are aligned with corps.[20] Mission and vision alignment among the regular Army, Reserve, and National Guard at the theater level is imperative and will need to continue to enable a quick expansion that balances the right skills and mitigates gaps.[21]

What is compelling about the Military Intelligence Readiness Command is its ability to provide units for current operations under its Title 10 mission requirements while providing significant support to civilian agencies, particularly the Defense Intelligence Agency.[22] In a major war, the type of support currently provided by the command

---

16 Legere, interview.

17 US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), *Joint and National Intelligence Support to Military Operations*, Joint Publication 2-01 (Washington, DC: JCS, 2012), IV-5.

18 BG Christie L. Nixon (commander, Military Intelligence Readiness Command), interview with author, November 30, 2016.

19 Nixon, interview; and "Military Intelligence Readiness Command," US Army Reserve, January 30, 2017, http://www.usar.army.mil/Commands/Operational-Functional/MIRC/.

20 Nixon, interview.

21 Franz, interview.

22 LTC Bryan L. Bain, *Army Reserve Military Intelligence: Time for Change*, Civilian Research Project (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2010), 10.

will need even greater communication and connectivity. These communication hubs will be vulnerable to kinetic attacks, cyberattacks, and degradation through overburdening the system.

The processing and analysis system, the Distributed Common Ground System-Army, gathers intelligence from all echelons, enables operational visualization, provides situational awareness, and disseminates data.[23] Before a conflict, the system needs to be standardized for interconnectivity between military intelligence agencies and the entire intelligence community. Leaders will also need to reduce Reserve support at the strategic level and to national intelligence agencies, which could arguably be provided by civilian hires, to meet the intelligence requirements of the fighting force.

In preparation for a major war, decision-makers should build Army Reserve capacity; specifically, military intelligence could be supported by increasing the number of processing, exploitation, and dissemination platoons for full motion video and interrogation capabilities.[24] Three interrogation battalions in the reserve component are not sufficient to provide interrogators and interrogation facilities theater entry capability that is generally essential to mission success.

With the active component losing its interrogation capacity, the Army's entire interrogation capacity will soon reside in the reserve component. Planners also need to include reserve forces into combatant command theater contingency plans so that time-phased force deployment data gets sourced with these units.[25] The conversation regarding the flow of resources should occur during the planning phase, so mobilizing necessary reserve support becomes easier.

A current challenge is tracking the outflow of both active duty and reserve intelligence personnel. Human Resources Command and the Military Intelligence Readiness Command need to ensure an accurate roster of departing personnel and their associated skills. These personnel typically get placed into the Individual Ready Reserve, which "consists of a pool of individual soldiers who have been trained, through their service in the active forces or in the Selected Reserve, and are available for mobilization in time of war or national emergency."[26] Having a list of former intelligence personnel who have been trained and who are easily reached in time of war provides a straightforward way to expand quickly.

Shortening the training pipeline is another imperative for rapid expansion. Civilian capabilities allow reservists to bring context and knowledge from the private sector for a more nuanced understanding on the ground. Yet this "dual life" makes it difficult for reserve soldiers to maintain certifications because the lengthy training and certification times surpass even the limiting factor of funding.[27] Instead of adding standards and certificate requirements, decision-makers need to be realistic about essential skills and balance the intelligence corps's

23   "Distributed Common Ground System-Army," Distributed Common Ground System-Army, February 1, 2017, https://dcgsa.army.mil/about/.

24   Nixon, interview.

25   Nixon, interview.

26   Secretary of the Army, memorandum, "Army Directive 2017-09 (Management of the Individual Ready Reserve)," Washington, DC, February 6, 2017, 1.

27   Nixon, interview.

resources where risks are the greatest. In a major war, a firm grounding in the truly essential skills of certain specialties and on-the-job training will be the winning strategy.

National Guard

The National Guard military intelligence force of just under 11,000 professionals resides at the strategic level in the 300th Military Intelligence Brigade (Linguists), at the operational level in two new expeditionary brigades (the 58th and the 71st), and in the eight division headquarters in the G-2.[28] At the tactical level, the National Guard also uses military intelligence companies within the 28 brigade combat teams. Accordingly, the National Guard primarily holds division G-2 positions, analysis and control elements, and military intelligence companies that deploy in support of the brigade combat teams. In wartime, this intelligence structure would expand by two additional expeditionary brigades, increasing the National Guard intelligence force by about 1,400. The 300th Brigade (Ling) would grow to the size of the theater intelligence brigades with a linguist battalion aligned to each. This expanded brigade would provide interrogation, signal, and human-intelligence support to the Intelligence and Security Command as necessary in the appropriate theater.

The National Guard is postured for the possibility of full mobilization and would rely on the regional training institutes in Utah and Georgia that operate under the One Army School System with the US Army Intelligence Center and School at Fort Huachuca. Whereas one of the largest constraints among active duty, reserve, and National Guard soldiers is institutional training, one key to expanding the intelligence force would be minimizing the training timeline while maintaining the quality of instruction. Increasing the course load while shortening the timeline for Advanced Individual Training would train the specialties in highest demand: intelligence analysts, human intelligence collectors, cryptologic linguists, and counterintelligence agents. As a member of the Army intelligence enterprise, the National Guard will need to continue to provide sufficient Secure Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNet) bandwidth to remain on the secret-level network 24/7 for training or accommodating a large reach-back expansion. The communications pipelines will have to expand for increased support in a major war.[29]

The National Guard would continue to train and to maintain military intelligence readiness prior to such a conflict. The federal military intelligence mission allows the National Guard to build readiness while supporting preparedness for state missions. With full mobilization authority from the president, the National Guard will mobilize to support the fight as well as support homeland defense and homeland security missions in support of a governor, the Department of Homeland Security, and US Northern Command. Based on federal and state requirements, the National Guard will manage the force to provide optimal support to both the conflict and the homeland.[30]

---

28   COL Greg Hadfield (director, National Guard Bureau Chief's Action Group), interview with author, November 30, 2016.

29   Hadfield, interview.

30   "Intelligence," National Guard, January 30, 2017, https://www.nationalguard.com /careers/intelligence.

Once law enforcement is able to provide homeland defense and security requirements, however, National Guard assets are transitioned to forward mobilization.

Civilians

An advantage military intelligence has over other Army branches is the depth of its federated enterprise. The current estimated total workforce of civilians, contractors, and uniformed soldiers working in the national intelligence community is 183,000.[31] Within that pool, contractors are estimated at 58,000 personnel, or 32 percent of the total workforce.[32]

One possibility for rapidly expanding at the strategic level, and perhaps even at the operational level, is to increase the civilian component of the Army intelligence enterprise. This solution avoids the exigent physical and health standards of the Army as well as the more laborious process of recruiting people into the military. Specifically designating civilian positions that need not be forward deployable has some basic advantages, such as relieving the government of educational benefits or costly Veterans Affairs benefits after the conclusion of a war. Furthermore, these civilians can work reach-back intelligence support from safe locations within the United States and select locations overseas. Minimizing the number of uniformed soldiers working in national intelligence while maximizing their presence at the tactical and operational levels will put more uniform-wearing intelligence specialists down at the fighting-force level.

Contractors

In addition to expanding civilian roles in the Army intelligence enterprise, expertise could be added from the intelligence contracting industry.[33] Defense firms have personnel with the full set of intelligence skill sets and requisite clearances. Military intelligence leaders can use them to fill agency gaps, to complete emergent taskers, or to focus on developing future technology solutions. Many of these companies hire former military intelligence analysts and employ current members of the Reserve—an estimated 20 percent of contractors are also Reserve soldiers.[34]

Defense companies have also built sensitive compartmented intelligence facilities (SCIFs) for intelligence communications. Certain intelligence disciplines, like the high-demand, low-density specialties mentioned previously, cannot be built quickly. Cooperation with private industry will help mitigate these gaps in the force until the Army recruits and trains replacements.

The contractor workforce will need to augment any support that does not exist in the current forward-deployed Corps structure. Currently, knowledge management, intelligence systems architecture,

31   Tim Shorrock, "Five Corporations Now Dominate Our Privatized Intelligence Industry," *Nation*, September 8, 2016.

32   Shorrock, "Five Corporations."

33   Quantock, interview.

34   Nixon, interview.

and dissemination are not present within the corps-level G-2 staff.[35] Such staffs are busy conducting intelligence analysis; processing, exploitation, and dissemination with minimal dissemination outside of the corps structure; and briefing the theater commander. Hence, the auxiliary duties of knowledge management and intelligence systems architecture could be assumed by contractors or a civilian workforce.

The difficulty in predicting where future conflicts will occur limits decision-makers' ability to know what linguistic and cultural expertise capabilities should be built in advance.[36] Contracting this type of specialty to defense firms will increase the availability of native speakers, who also understand the unspoken language, such as body language, and the cultural context of the society.[37] These cultural skills are hard to acquire through language school alone. By using contractor expertise, the intelligence corps can easily draw upon a linguist or cultural expert without maintaining such expertise when it is not necessary.[38]

Two obstacles to expanding the contractor workforce rapidly are funding and vetting. The typical planning, programming, budgeting, and executing of the governmental budgetary process is too lengthy, creating a major choke point. Overseas Contingency Operations funds, or war funds, is a strategic resource that could be used to fund contractors more efficiently in a major war.[39] Further extending the timeline for expansion, the current individual security clearance process takes over two years. Part of this constraint comes from a legitimate need to run thorough background checks on contractors due to past leaks and security breaches, which skews and slows the clearance process. During wartime, however, risk calculators will need to be adjusted to meet urgent demands while maintaining the appropriate security posture.

Coalition Partners

In a major war, the United States would most likely participate as a member of a coalition or an alliance. Cultivating the intelligence corps within that coalition will help America follow its doctrine of "by, with, and through" others.[40] Some of our current coalition partners in the Middle East have already started to develop a more robust intelligence corps and strategic intelligence agencies.[41] It is important for the United States to encourage those activities, as our coalition partners would not only know their backyards best, but their intelligence forces also act as a force multiplier to speed military intelligence expansion through other means.

---

35   Gibson, interview.

36   As Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stated, "When it comes to predicting the nature and location of our next military engagements, since Vietnam, our record has been perfect. We have never once gotten it right." Micah Zenko, "100% Right 0% of the Time: Why the US Military Cannot Predict the Next War," *Foreign Policy*, October 16, 2012.

37   Quantock, interview.

38   Gibson, interview.

39   Franz, interview.

40   GEN Joseph Votel (commander, US Central Command), discussion with author, October 2017.

41   Legere, interview.

Conclusion

During the past decade of conflicts, American tactics, techniques, and procedures, as well as networks, were cleared for intelligence sharing. While the first step is to ensure intelligence agreements with security classification guides are in place, preferably prior to a conflict, they must be continually refined. Early investments can occur with open-source sharing, analytic exchanges, training, and exercises, and then expanded by collaboration among multiple intelligence disciplines. Dedicated coalition intelligence sharing will naturally grow as relationships and partnerships deepen.[42]

The key at the beginning of a war is to establish the network and the classification guidelines to support coalition operations, and then to engineer those requirements into an information technology architecture for coalition communications. Resource management officials from all countries need to collaborate early to define a new coalition-sharing architecture.[43] Military intelligence leaders will need to be ready to implement new laws, policies, and authorities to ensure intelligence sharing with partners is successful.

The essential mission of military intelligence is to collect and to analyze all relevant information that supports command decision-making in wartime. In coordination with doubling the size of the Army to meet a potential near-peer threat, military intelligence would also need to expand quickly and effectively to perform its mission.

To expand intelligence, leaders would need to address the challenges of doubling the expeditionary brigades and the theater intelligence brigades while incrementally expanding intelligence support at the strategic level. Smartly expanding personnel resources in the right competencies is important, but it is not the only concern. Leaders will also need to address system shortfalls in processing, exploitation, and dissemination; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; and human intelligence capabilities, as well as develop technological tools to increase throughput and synchronize intelligence plans throughout the intelligence federation.

Leaders must take full advantage of the Army Reserve, National Guard, civilians, and contractors, as well as coalition partners to reach the necessary expansion goals. Each of these components adds value to a coordinated intelligence federation and must be leveraged to expand intelligence capacity quickly during a major war.

---

42   Gibson, interview.
43   Quantock, interview.