Forward Observer's

Quick Start Intelligence Guide

FO
FORWARD
OBSERVER

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Blind Spots

Why do I need intelligence? Because everyone has blind spots.

A common theme in the preparedness community is beans, bullets, and band-aids. We need food and water to survive, we need medicine to treat injuries and illness, and we need guns and ammo for defense… but against whom?

If we're dumping hundreds or thousands or more dollars into beans, bullets, and baid-aids, doesn't it stand to reason that we should investigate our surroundings as well? In an emergency situation, don't we need to be aware of what's going on beyond our line of sight?

I think so. I was a military and contract intelligence analyst, and we in this country are likely to face a lot of the same types of situations that we dealt with overseas -- namely criminals and anonymous threats.

At the heart of intelligence is the ability to reduce uncertainty. If you're concerned about a grid-down scenario or a financial collapse or the Golden Horde or some other event or threat, then some basic intelligence work should be at the top of your 'To Do' list.

Colonel John Boyd, an Air Force fighter pilot, was the first to describe the decision-making process he called the OODA Loop. Because fighter pilots have to make split-second decisions, their ability to **Observe** a development, **Orient** to what that means, **Decide** which course of action they should take and then **Act** on it, is a critical part of their survivability in combat. Similarly, lots of tactical shooting trainers have incorporated the OODA Loop into their curriculum for the exact same reason.

That ability to Observe and Orient is the informational phase of the decision-making process. Without the ability to Observe and Orient -- in other words, the ability to gather intelligence and then analyze it -- we're essentially blind and deaf.

Can you imagine getting into a gunfight if you can't see or hear your opponent? Yet that's exactly what many are preparing to do on a larger level. We're limited by our field of vision and line of sight, but with an intelligence effort, we can begin to expand our field and depth of vision.

Our goal is to produce
Early Warning and Threat Intelligence.

Early Warning Intelligence
whether it's 30 seconds, 30 minutes, or 30 days,

and Threat Intelligence
on the who, what, when, where, why, and how of a situation.

Intelligence Requirements

Before we begin gathering intelligence, we need to identify our knowledge requirements. What types of information are we looking for, and what information do we need in order to produce Early Warning and Threat Intelligence?

What we're doing here is *directing* intelligence collection. We're telling our collectors what to gather. In the same process, we can ensure that we're being efficient.

Small organizations must be ruthlessly efficient if they're to succeed. Wasted time and resources can lead to wasted lives. And since you and your family are non-renewable resources, we need Intelligence Requirements.

An Intelligence Requirement is a question or a statement that describes something we don't know, but need to know. Here are some examples for gangs to get you started...

1. What gangs are active in the area?
2. How many personnel does each gang have?
3. What are the expected activities of each gang?
4. Which gangs have the capability to challenge law enforcement?
5. Where in the area is each gang located?

Intelligence Gathering

So we have our list of Intelligence Requirements. That tells us what information we need to gather in order to begin producing intelligence.

There are four primary 'intelligence disciplines' we need to implement in our local intelligence effort:

Open Source Intelligence (OSINT)

Imagery Intelligence (IMINT)

Human Intelligence (HUMINT)

Signals Intelligence (SIGINT)

Here's a brief explanation of our four intelligence disciplines...

Open Source Intelligence, or OSINT, is information available in the open, whether that's online, in newspapers, magazines, meetings, speeches, or other sources. You'd be surprised what kind of information you can find online.

Imagery Intelligence, or IMINT, is derived from maps, map data, and geospatial information systems (GIS). I highly recommend getting three types of maps printed off in 24" by 36". You're going to need (1) a topographical map of your neighborhood; (2) satellite imagery for your neighborhood; and (3) a street map of your neighborhood. You can order these from a number of sources, including the USGS or http://mytopo.com. You can also capture these images on GoogleEarth.

Human Intelligence, or HUMINT, comes from humans who have placement, access, or exposure to target information. HUMINT sources can be friends, family, co-workers, acquaintances, or complete strangers. We need to seek out and build relationships with the people who have the information we want.

Signals Intelligence, or SIGINT, is derived from radio signals and the internet. Emergency services personnel, ham radio operators, and VHF/UHF walkie-talkies are all potential sources of real-time information.

Our job is to utilize these types of sources to gather intelligence information. Once we have this information, we need to analyze it, which includes evaluating the information for veracity. We synthesize information to create intelligence, which informs decision-making.

Getting Your ACE in Gear

Remember...

Gear is good.

Gear and knowledge is better.

Gear, knowledge, and experience is best.

I have a growing list of recommended equipment we need in order to run an Analysis & Control Element, or what we call the ACE. This list sometimes changes as new products come out...

You can find it at: https://readfomag.com/ace

Get Access to Our Training...

Forward Observer instructors teach in-person classes and we have over 24 hours worth of lectures and e-courses available online.

Get more information at:
https://readfomag.com