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AIR FORCE ISR OPERATIONS

Cultural transformation lies at the heart of Lt Gen Dave Deptula and Col Mike Francisco's article "Air Force ISR Operations: Hunting versus Gathering" (Winter 2010). Although I completely concur with this vivid metaphor's usefulness concerning information, some unit-level considerations are worthy of deeper discussion and thought.

First, with regard to the underemployment of collection management, I contend that it is fairly rare for the unit level to be fully aware of and actually engage the vast tools of collection management. Granted, intelligence Airmen at this level are not trained to be experts in such management (nor should they be); however, at best a cultural reluctance and at worst a professional ignorance exists in generating intelligence requirements. We have weapons for hunting information but do not employ them frequently. Instead, we often choose the analytical path of least resistance and peruse favorite Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET) (or Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System) websites for relevant information. Indeed, classified online resources are powerful tools. However, without proactive leadership, these tools can germinate an analytical proclivity to merely pluck ("farm") data from this vast, distant, and processed informational pasture.

Second, regarding anemic consumer-to-producer cross-talk, the Air Force's general intelligence (especially at the unit level) Airmen are exceptionally reluctant to contact the producer of an intelligence product. Nearly every intelligence product has a phone number or e-mail associated with it, but rarely does a user call the author for questions or clarification. I consider this simple action an example of unit-level "hunting," but it is generally not culturally accepted (codified, taught, and routinely implemented) amongst unit-level intelligence. In con-

trast, my intelligence experience has seen producers as typically and genuinely honored to receive a call “from the field” on their work; they will readily assist the field above and beyond posting a new product on the SIPRNET. Operational and strategic horizontal-level intelligence networking is quite impressive; however, my interpretation of General Deptula's position is an argument for equally impressive vertical connectivity between the tactical consumer and the expansive intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance architecture.

I understand and support the importance of doctrinal codification and development of tactics, techniques, and procedures as proposed by the authors. However, their improvements at the macro level may neither quickly nor effectively stir the needed cultural transformation they posit at the micro level.

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