

Commandant's Note

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FINDING THE TERRORIST: Locating the Enemy

To destroy terrorists we must first *find* them; that is what I want to highlight in this Commandant's Note. The contemporary operating environment (COE) may well represent the face of war into the next decade. When we consider the nature of the global war on terror — its asymmetrical quality, diverse groups of enemy fighters employing hit-and-run tactics, and their ability to operate in terrain ranging from mountains to major urban centers — we realize that unconventional warfare has become the way we fight today. In addition, special operations forces now more than ever share the battlefield with the combined arms team and with our sister services. Each force brings its own unique skills and lethality to the fight. The operational tempo of the COE demands faster and more adaptive forces than ever before.

Since the Saddamist and Taliban forces were defeated and scattered in the opening battles of this war, they — along with Al Qaeda and other terrorist factions — are now fighting in smaller cells. Today's insurgents employ their own tactics, techniques, and procedures; some learned from various outside terrorist organizations and bordering countries who support them; or the hard way, by combat trial and error against U.S. and allied forces. Meanwhile, we also continually develop and refine our tactics, techniques, and procedures to counter terrorists' methods and get inside their decision cycle.

In this environment, *finding* the enemy is critical. It is a critical mission of the reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition battalions in our modular structure, as well as an inherent mission for every Soldier on the battlefield. Ultimately, the destruction of the enemy depends on how well all of our formations execute the *find* mission, and we need to make *finding* an all-out effort. By the end of FY 2007, nearly a third of our maneuver battalions will have *finding* the enemy as their primary mission. This expanded reconnaissance, surveillance, and collection effort will mean greater contact with the host nation population, and a commensurate increase in the human intelligence input required for success.

An important part of this effort is cultural awareness and our ability to understand the social, economic, and religious routine and habits of the local community. It will reveal patterns of movement, the daily cycle of activity, key individuals that drift in and out of our field of vision, and changes that can alert us to potential danger. Foreign language skills are a factor here; leaders need to identify Soldiers even marginally fluent in the native language and draw on their talents. Interpreters in units can assist



in sharpening our Soldiers' abilities to pick up key words related to tactics, explosives, and weapons. We cannot make every Soldier an Arabic, Kurdish, or Pashto linguist, but picking IED trends or other threats out of street conversations can lead to success. Linking the analysis of all these sources together and identifying targets is a top priority.

Training Soldiers and leaders to *find* the enemy is a priority at the Infantry School. The Ranger Training Brigade is continuing to update the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leaders Course (RSLC) with emphasis on the *find* mission. RSLC has expanded courses on imagery collection and transmission, focusing on small unmanned aerial vehicle employment and using tactical surveillance equipment camera kits. More training is now done on uniforms, munitions, and foreign alphabet training. Based on input out of Iraq and Afghanistan, target interdiction and sniper employment have also been added to the POI. The 4th Ranger Training Battalion has assisted in the predeployment training of National Guard Soldiers in long range surveillance units and will provide mobile training team and observer/controller support to assist units in matters of modularity, transformation, and predeployment activities.

The Infantry Center is not alone in enhancing our skills at *finding* the terrorist. The Armor School has expanded its officer education system to include reconnaissance-centric training and is focusing on reconnaissance operations tactics, techniques, and procedures in its Cavalry Leaders Course and the Scout Leaders Course. These and other initiatives will enhance and advance our *find* effort as the Armor and Infantry Centers join ranks as the Maneuver Center of Excellence in the near future.

Finding the terrorist where he plans and operates has never been easy, but we are doing it. Up to now the enemy has gained temporary advantage by immersing himself among a tolerant population in which he hides, refits, rearms, and recruits, and from which he attacks. We must disrupt this pattern at every opportunity. We need to be there when he sets up his ambush, when he emplaces an improvised explosive device, or when he gets behind the wheel of a vehicle packed with explosives. We need to know his meeting places, his routes to them, who meets with him, where they live, and where and from whom he gets his support. Once we have achieved this, we can kill or capture him and his accomplices before they can commit further terrorist acts. We will continue to do our part in training Soldiers for this critical mission.

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