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JOINT SERVICE INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION  
F BRANCH

INTRODUCTION TO INTERROGATION  
AND TACTICAL QUESTIONING - COURSE NOTES

"The whole technique of skilled interrogation is to build up an atmosphere in which the initial desire to remain silent is replaced by an urge to confide in the questioner".

Lord Diplock

References:

- A. Allied Joint Publication (AJP) 2.5 Handling of Captured Personnel, Equipment and Documents (September 2001)
- B. Joint Warfare Publication (JWP) 1-10 Prisoners of War Handling (March 2001)

INTRODUCTION

1. The prisoner represents a potential source of valuable information about an enemy with whom he has recently been serving. The information may be of value at any level from tactical to strategic dependant on the knowledge of each prisoner. Under certain circumstance he may be the main, or indeed only, source of information. Exploitation of this source requires considerable skill, and must be left to the trained interrogator and, to a limited extent, the trained unit tactical questioner (TQ).
2. The value and extent of information obtained from a prisoner depends not only upon the skill of the interrogator but also upon the speed which the prisoner is made available to him and upon the efficiency of the staff which direct, control and brief the interrogator.

DEFINITIONS

3. Confusion arises over the meaning of the terms brainwashing and indoctrination and their relationship with interrogation. The following definitions should therefore be understood:
  - a. Brainwashing. "The cleansing or purging of the mind of established ideas by persistent and intensive psychological pressures, culminating in the replacement of these ideas by others, usually for the purpose of rendering the subject docile and willing to confess to imaginary crimes at a public trial".
  - b. Indoctrination. "Imbuing with a doctrine, idea or opinion".
  - c. Interrogation. "The systematic questioning of selected, unwilling prisoners by a trained interrogator".
  - d. Tactical Questioning. "The obtaining of information from unwilling prisoners, the value of which would deteriorate or be lost altogether if the questioning was delayed until a trained interrogator could be made available".
4. It should be apparent from these definitions that interrogation and tactical questioning are the only ones in these processes which are primarily concerned with the ideas or information which are already in the mind. In brain washing or indoctrination it is those ideas which are put into the mind which are of primary importance. It should also be apparent that interrogation and tactical questioning are the only ones of these processes that would be of immediate value for intelligence purposes.

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AIM OF INTERROGATION

5. The aim of interrogation is to gain accurate and timely intelligence by the systematic extraction of information from selected prisoners.

AIM OF TACTICAL QUESTIONING

6. The aim of tactical questioning is to obtain information, the value of which would deteriorate or be lost altogether if the questioning was delayed until a trained interrogator could be made available.

DEBRIEFING OPERATIONS

7. This activity involves the detailed and formal questioning of selected, consenting individuals, who may possess information of potential intelligence interest. Examples include refugees, evacuees or released detainees. Ideally debriefing of consenting individuals should be conducted by trained debriefers, however unit tactical questioners could find themselves taking on the responsibility of screening and debriefing such persons should the tactical situation require it.

METHODS OF OBTAINING INFORMATION

8. Direct Approach: As the title implies this is simply either one or two interrogators working on a prisoner asking direct questions in a deliberate style; this is the most common approach and forms the basis for most interrogations.

9. Indirect Approach: This involves the use of ploys, effectively creating a scenario that leads the subject to believe that they are not in fact under interrogation.

10. Stool Pigeon or informer: A lot of information can be gleaned by putting the stool pigeon or informer into the PW cage or holding area and having him just listen and look.

11. Monitoring: The ability to monitor prisoners, ideally using both audio and video, [REDACTED] can have rewarding results.

INTERROGATION IN WAR

12. Tactical Questioning. Tactical Questioning (TQ) is the first questioning to which a Prisoner of War (PW) is subjected. TQ normally takes place at the HQ location of the capturing unit and is carried out by suitably trained members of that unit. TQ utilises the initial shock of capture in order to obtain specific information and intelligence and identifies individuals for further interrogation. The capturing unit should also prepare a capture report, which should be passed back with the prisoner. Note that TQ may be constrained by the lack of linguistic capability within the capturing unit; should this be the case then TQ should be carried out by interrogators with the appropriate language skills who are detached from a Joint Forward Interrogation Team (JFIT) to work with the capturing unit. For each PW the tactical questioners produce a TQ report referring to the PW number. It is at this stage that PW are selected for further interrogation.

13. Interrogation. Interrogation is the systematic questioning of selected, unwilling individuals by trained interrogators. It normally applies to captured personnel (CPERS) such as PW, for whom the Geneva Conventions (GC) lay down provisions for their handling and treatment, and members of other hostile organisations detained in circumstances which may or may not amount to armed conflict (Article V Operations). This is an overt activity, which may be conducted, in uniform or civilian clothes. If employed in circumstances that are not legally defined as Article V operations, interrogation will require appropriate authorisation at a high level and will likely be referred to under the less emotive phrase of 'Tactical Questioning using interrogation methods'. Trained personnel (generally Tri-service reservists with