

TACTICAL TERMINOLOGY

Intelligence – EEIs, OIRs and Assumptions

By Sid Heal

Good intelligence is the cornerstone of making effective tactical decisions. Indeed, the fear of “not knowing” can make even the most intrepid commander weak in the knees.

That is why almost all tactical operations begin with efforts to gain good intelligence. These missions take on many forms ranging from surveillance and reconnaissance to computerized background checks and weather reports. Even to a novice, it becomes apparent that some of this information is more valuable than others.

- The most important bits of information are called EEIs or “Essential Elements of Information.” EEIs are those critical facts that a commander must have to make a decision. Some, like the location of a burglary or robbery alarm, or the direction of a pursuit, are readily apparent. In fact, this information is frequently so apparent we don’t often recognize it as intelligence. Nevertheless, lack of this information is a “showstopper” since no effective tactical plan can proceed until it is obtained. Other EEIs, such as the size of a mob or whether it is armed, are not so apparent and efforts must be made to find out. Identifying these EEIs form the core of a sound intelligence plan.
- OIRs, or “Other Intelligence Requirements,” describe that information which is “nice to have.” OIRs complement the more critical EEIs by “filling in the blanks” and providing a more complete picture of the situation. Examples often include weather reports, hours of daylight, suspect motivation and so forth. Although not as important as

EEIs, OIRs play an important role by providing the intelligence necessary to develop more comprehensive plans.

- The third type of information is an “assumption.” Assumptions are defined as anything which is taken for granted or accepted as true without proof. To be useful, an assumption must but be valid, that is, a logical inference or deduction based upon all the facts available (even though incomplete). An assumption is only used when an EEI or OIR cannot be obtained in time to be incorporated into the decision-making process. Thus, an assumption performs the role of a “substitute” for either an EEI or an OIR. In fact, a litmus test for determining whether needed information is one or the other is to ask, “If I don’t have this information, will I be forced to make an assumption?” If the answer is “yes,” then the information should be sought as an EEI.

EEIs, OIRs and Assumptions are distinct but complimentary components of the complete intelligence picture. They provide a commander with the ability to quickly develop an intelligence plan to support the operation by prioritizing tasks. Failure to recognize the roles these factors play not only complicates the task of gathering and understanding good intelligence, but reduces its value to one of guesswork, hunches, “swags” and whims.

About the Author

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