

December 2, 2002.

INTERVIEW STRATEGIES – GUANTANAMO BAY

As we approach the one-year anniversary of the confinement of Al Qaeda/Taliban detainees at GTMO, perhaps it is a good time to revisit our interrogation strategies which may be in need of revision.

Since last year, detainees have been interrogated by representatives of the Defense Human Intelligence Services (DHS) and by members of the FBI/CITF in an effort to obtain valuable intelligence. In this sense, the missions appear to be identical. However, both the FBI and the CITF have additional responsibilities. While the FBI is working to obtain information to strengthen existing terrorism investigations for prosecution, the CITF is trying to ensure that incriminating information gathered from the detainees is done in a manner acceptable for military tribunals.

Central to the gathering of reliable, admissible evidence is the manner in which it is obtained. Interrogation techniques used by the DHS are designed specifically for short-term use in combat environments where the immediate retrieval of tactical intelligence is critical. Many of DHS's methods are considered coercive by Federal Law Enforcement and UCMJ standards. Not only this, but reports from those knowledgeable about the use of these coercive techniques are highly skeptical as to their effectiveness and reliability. Since nearly all of the GTMO detainees have been interviewed many times overseas before being sent here, the FBI/CITF believe that a different approach should be undertaken in terms of trying to elicit information from them. The FBI/CITF favors the use of less coercive techniques, ones carefully designed for long-term use in which rapport-building skills are carefully combined with a purposeful and incremental manipulation of a detainee's environment and perceptions. A model of this approach was offered recently in an FBI/CITF interview plan for detainee 063:

FBI/CITF agents are well-trained, highly experienced and very successful in overcoming suspect resistance in order to obtain valuable information in complex criminal cases, including the investigations of terrorist bombings in East Africa and the USS Cole, etc. FBI/CITF interview strategies are most effective when tailored specifically to suit a suspect's or detainee's needs and vulnerabilities. Contrary to popular belief, these vulnerabilities are more likely to reveal themselves through the employment of individually designed and sustained interview strategies rather than through the haphazard use of prescriptive, time-driven approaches. The FBI/CITF strongly believes that the continued use of diametrically opposed interrogation strategies in GTMO will only weaken our efforts to obtain valuable information.

A second problem with the current interrogation strategy is that detainees are smarter now than when they first arrived. No longer are they susceptible to suggestions for early release or special consideration. Indeed, no one seems to know when the military tribunals will begin. As TDY interrogators continue to interview and re-

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interview detainees utilizing every theme imaginable, detainees have become increasingly cynical of any concessions offered. Moreover, they appear to have become better conditioned for almost all interrogation approaches with many detainees simply refusing to answer any questions. Complicating matters is the structural set-up of Camp Delta, which enables detainees to exchange counter-interrogation resistance strategies with relative ease while at the same time strengthening their solidarity.

Except for a recently enacted reward system offering minor creature comforts to cooperative detainees, there is a lack of major incentives which could encourage detainees to provide more information. Major incentives are greatly needed. Recently, investigators from Italy were successful in retrieving valuable information and cooperation from some detainees after they were provided with guarantees of judicial leniency.

In addition to reviewing interrogation strategies, the FBIHQ representatives wish to discuss with the Commanding General the following issues:

1. Projected long term FBI Agent and Professional Support presence in support of JTF GTMO mission
2. FBI continued technical support
3. DOJ prosecutorial interest in GTMO detainees

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