



Intelligence Wars: Lessons from Baghdad

By Steven K. O'Hern

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In this revealing insider's look at the US intelligence community's efforts to fight the insurgency in Iraq, author Steven K. O'Hern, who served in Iraq in 2005 as a senior intelligence officer, offers a critical assessment of our intelligence failures and suggests ways of improving our ability to fight an often elusive enemy.

O'Hern criticizes America's military leaders for being enamored with high-technology solutions for all situations, including intelligence operations. Essentially, we are still relying on an intelligence system that was designed to beat the Soviet army. Using examples from human source operations conducted in Iraq, this book explains why human intelligence—not technology—is the key to defeating an insurgency and why the US is so poor at using what the military calls "HUMINT." O'Hern also cites internal structural problems that work against effective intelligence operations. The author gives examples of missed opportunities that resulted from information being caught in "stovepipes" and red tape.

In conclusion, he cautions that these unresolved problems will continue to affect the United States in any future conflict against an insurgency.

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Editorial Review

Review

"[It] amounts to a **worthy assessment** of tactical intelligence planning and operations." --proceedings, a magazine of the U.S. Naval Institute, Vol. 135/6/1,2076, June 2009

"O'Hern addresses a key subject—how to get the most out of HUMINT (human intelligence) in the irregular wars of today and those of the future. Grounded in experience and thoughtful, it provides a **great primer on the problems facing our HUMINT community today** and a set of practical recommendations to fix them." --Colonel T. X. Hammes, US Marine Corps (Ret.), author of *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century*

"We constantly read about the U.S. Military uncovering Iranian agents penetrating the borders into Iraq from the media, but I believe the reports in the book accurately reflect a non-biased approach to revealing those reports. The book reads almost like a journal and without revealing too much information that would compromise efforts abroad. Mr. O'Hern did **an outstanding job** of walking the tight rope between classified and unclassified, while providing **a tool to teach analysts of all disciplines and experience levels,...**" --Garth Phoebus, Marine veteran of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedoms I and II, former Senior Intelligence Analyst (Marine Expeditionary Unit), and executive editor of the *Marine Corps Intelligence Association INTSUM Newsletter*

About the Author

Steven K. O'Hern (Overland Park, KS) was director of the Strategic Counterintelligence Directorate of the Multi-National Force in Baghdad, Iraq, from April to September 2005. He is also a retired air force colonel, who served as a special investigations and counterintelligence officer and commanded units of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations at bases in Minnesota, Georgia, Oklahoma, and South Korea. Currently, he is vice president for Group Legal of Swiss Re, the world's largest reinsurer.

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