



The Need for Intelligence-Led Policing

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By Michael Barrett

Recent decades have witnessed a rapid spread of communications and other technologies across all facets of society, enabling small and previously disparate groups to better coordinate their activities and learn from one another in furtherance of their common objectives. These advances have of course increased the productivity of the U.S. population at large, but at the same time have created new opportunities for those outside the law, including organized criminal elements and terrorists.

One result of these societal changes is that today's criminals are displaying increased sophistication and operational agility in their efforts to subvert law and order, and that in turn has created a need for U.S. law-enforcement agencies – local, state, and federal – to concentrate their collective law-enforcement efforts in a more structured manner and to modernize the various business processes they use to determine resource allocations. Experience suggests that the optimum way to achieve these goals is through a new series of processes and procedures that form the structural components of what is called Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP).

Intelligence-led policing is a management philosophy developed in the United Kingdom to ensure that resource allocations are based primarily on an improved awareness of the operating environment. It also is a collaborative philosophy that supports decision makers, through data collection and intelligence analysis, to improve their situational awareness and thus enable them to optimize their crime-control strategies, the allocation of resources, and tactical operations guidelines.

The Key Requirements

The adoption of ILP processes requires a concerted effort by all parties – including analysts, operators, and senior leaders – involved in planning and/or operations. For analysts, the key components of the ILP

processes include the creation of tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence products that support immediate needs, promote situational awareness, and provide the foundation for longer-term planning. For operators, ILP requires that they become not only better data collectors but also better consumers of intelligence-related products – shifting, if and when required, from emphasizing post-event evidence collection to gathering data for entry into appropriate databases and, later, drawing from the databases and intelligence analysts the information needed to support

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ongoing operations.

For senior leaders, the decision to adopt an ILP philosophy requires them to work more closely with both analysts and operators to ensure that a common and accurate operational picture is driving the distribution of resources.

Intelligence-led policing often requires a structural reorganization that not only supports data collection but also the creation, dissemination, and cataloguing of intelligence products to drive strategic decision-making and a structured allocation of resources. It also defines the processes associated with intelligence that will be incorporated into crime-prevention strategies. The primary aspect of this process is bounded by the five interlocking processes of what is called the Intelligence Cycle: Planning and Direction; Collection; Processing and Collation; Analysis and Production; and Dissemination and Integration.

Data vs. Intelligence

In this context, intelligence can be defined as the synthesis of known data and analytical reasoning to create a reasonable determination about the overall operating environment. Unfortunately, the term *intelligence* is often but incorrectly used interchangeably with two rather different terms: *data*, and *information*. In the past, some very difficult problems have been created when law-enforcement agents have misused official intelligence and/or when the general public has misunderstood the nature of the data being collected. For that reason alone it is particularly important that special care be taken when describing the nature of the information in question.

“Data” refers simply to raw information that that has been collected but has not yet been analyzed. Nonetheless, in most operational situations it is vitally important, for two reasons, that a large and varied amount of data be collected: First, data is often perishable in nature and may be lost forever if it is not collected and catalogued at the earliest opportunity. Second, seemingly innocuous data might quickly become critical information as a result of post-collection analysis. This is, in fact, why all evidence at a crime scene should be carefully catalogued: in case it later becomes relevant to the case.

Data + Analysis = Intelligence

In short, therefore, intelligence is the product of careful evaluation and analysis of all of the data collected. That product is then disseminated in reports and other ways to help operators, analysts, and senior leaders better understand their collective operating environment and to drive the appropriate allocation of resources.

The adoption and implementation of an ILP policy and organizational philosophy will require the U.S. law-enforcement community to adjust its operational processes to bring improved structure to its near-, mid-, and long-term planning cycles while at the same time optimizing its resource-allocation decisions. To facilitate these several changes will require a concerted effort by all parties involved--analysts, operators, and senior leaders – to ensure that the end result is an

appropriate variant of the ILP model that is consistent with the agency's mission, strategy, and core values.

Guidelines, Tenets, and Components

As guidelines, it would help to remember the three principal tenets of the ILP process: ensure an adaptable force construct for flexible deployment; follow the Intelligence Cycle for the analysis of data; and use intelligence-driven analyses to set priorities and allocate resources.

For analysts the key components of the ILP process include the creation of tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence products that support immediate needs, promote situational awareness, and provide the foundation for longer-term planning. The intelligence analyst also plays a particularly important role in the Intelligence Cycle. In addition to assisting in the creation of the collection intent, the intelligence officer is responsible for ensuring that the agency's collection plan remains a dynamic, living product.

For operators the ILP process requires becoming better both in the collection of data and in the use or "consumption" of intelligence-related products. This frequently if not always means shifting from an emphasis on the collection of post-event evidence to: (a) the gathering, on a continuing basis, of *all* relevant data and ensuring that that data is provided for entry into appropriate databases; and (b) also drawing – from the intelligence analysts and relevant databases – all of the information needed to support ongoing operations.

Finally, adoption of the ILP process requires that senior leaders actively work with analysts and operators to ensure that the leadership is provided a clear and accurate picture of the operating environment and therefore can act to distribute resources in accordance with the reasonable conclusions and appropriated priorities developed from the data provided.

In today's homeland-security milieu, data collection and intelligence analysis are vital for the planning and prevention of, response to, and/or mitigation of terrorist attacks, man-made and natural disasters, and organized-crime incidents. Traditionally, in the United States only the armed services, the national-security intelligence community, and various specialized law-enforcement units have applied intelligence operations to their strategic-planning processes. However, because of the increasingly sophisticated operational capabilities of those who operate outside the law, it seems evident that most if not all participants in today's U.S. homeland-security efforts must use intelligence not only to improve their situational awareness but also to develop their contingency plans and determine their allocation of resources.

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