



## **(S) The Mahdi Militia Uprising and SIGINT/HUMINT Collaboration**

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*The author of this story was deployed to Baghdad to work SIGINT Development; specifically, to find SIGINT leads from all sources of data (S//SI)*

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(S) For two sleepless weeks this past August, CSG\* Baghdad was a whirlwind of activity. The events in An Najaf, involving the Mahdi Militia and the leader Muqtada al-Sadr, were in full swing, and the CSG's job was to advise Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I) on the latest intelligence. The CSG fed timely all-source analysis to the MNF-I Director of Intelligence (C2), Brigadier General DeFreitas, during the whole period -- from the outset of the uprising, during Ayatollah Sistani's return to An Najaf, and through to the end of the Imam Ali Mosque Siege. Ultimately, this information was used by MNF-I to guide operations by troops on the ground. For the CSG, being collocated with some of these units at Camp Victory and seeing them return from battle really drove home the importance of what we do as an intelligence community.

(TS//SI) A few weeks prior to the August uprising in An Najaf, CSG Baghdad had done an area survey in support of the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) to look for any activity by Lebanese Hizbollah (LH). Though we could not find sustainable evidence of LH activity in the city, we did find an inordinate number of Iranians. On August 21st, when the C2 called a meeting to discuss the newly erupted crisis in An Najaf, CSG presented the work previously furnished to ISG.

(TS//SI) Once a concerted effort was begun on An Najaf, CSG Baghdad noted that the aforementioned Iranian operatives were collocated with Mahdi Militia members, and a clear picture unfolded of whom coalition forces were facing. Bear in mind, while the C2 needed full support in An Najaf, the CSG was concurrently answering Requests for Information from units throughout the whole of Iraq.

(TS//SI) With the analytic assault underway at CSG Baghdad, the C2 still needed the "whole" picture, not just SIGINT. Already, the CSG was relying heavily on the great SIGINT work of NSA's [MENA](#), [GEOCELL](#), and [Counterterrorism](#) (CT) Product Lines, CSGs in Tampa & Qatar, not to forget the tireless support of all the dedicated people at GRSOC. However, without HUMINT, IMINT\*, etc. the C2 would have been stuck with dots on a map and reports which to him would have smacked of SIGINTese (although BG DeFreitas is a former "98G" voice interceptor/linguist).

(TS//SI) Working with analysts from other agencies within the Intelligence Community in Baghdad, CSG Baghdad was able to put names, faces and entire biographies to the dots on the map. We were able to corroborate previous HUMINT reporting with historical research provided by our GEOCELL's capabilities, thus adding validity to asset reporting.

(S) Some potentially life-saving analysis came from the Coalition Explosive Exploitation Cell (CEXC), staffed by Explosive Ordnance Demolition experts from many agencies, services and countries. They piece together the "improvised explosive devices and their variants" (IED) story in Iraq. Using their work, we could determine where explosives were hidden, how they were being smuggled into An Najaf, what was their origin and who was using them.

(TS//SI) It is not the role of the CSG to present the C2 with targeting storyboards, though that is in effect what it was producing. Thankfully, CSG Baghdad is collocated with the Targeting Cell. This group of multi-service officer and enlisted intelligence analysts was able to fuse the incredible amount of data relating to An Najaf and create succinct storyboards, which appropriate units could turn into successful 'capture/kill' missions.

(S) SIGINT doesn't happen in a vacuum, nor does a C2 in a war zone have time to sift through

all their "-INTs" while a crisis unfolds. The clearest battlefield picture must be presented consistently and repeatedly to the C2. The fact that the Imam Ali Shrine is still intact, the Mahdi Militia is in disarray and relative calm has returned to An Najaf is testimony to the successful collaboration of the "-INTs" in time of crisis.

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\*(U) Notes:

CSG = Cryptologic Services Group

HUMINT = Human Intelligence

IMINT = Imagery Intelligence

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