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(U) The Impact of the HUMINT Squads on FBI's Collection Capabilities

(U) Background

(U//FOUO) In the aftermath of the attacks of September 2001, the FBI appropriately recognized the imperative to build a comprehensive intelligence structure in order to fully address its responsibilities as a member of the U.S. Intelligence Community (USIC). A significant step toward that goal was the 2003 creation of the Office of Intelligence, which evolved into the National Security Branch in 2005, and the development of policies and deliberate, specific, repeatable processes designed to execute the FBI's intelligence mission.

(U//FOUO) Special Agents (SAs) have been an integral part of this mission from the outset. Initially assigned to the Field Intelligence Groups and relocated to Human Intelligence (HUMINT) Squads with the 2008 launch of the Strategic Execution Team 1.0, HUMINT SAs have been directed to focus on Confidential Human Source (CHS) development and recruitment. Rather than working active investigations, their goal has been to identify individuals with placement and access to strategic threat issues. This mandate empowers HUMINT Squads, and the SAs assigned to them, to fulfill a unique and important role not otherwise addressed by investigative squads; it also cements the FBI's role as the primary collector of domestic intelligence.

(U) USIC Expectations for FBI Intelligence Collection

(S//NF) When briefed by his Systems and Resource Analysis Staff in January 2012 on its *Strategic Evaluation Report: FBI from a HUMINT Prospective*, Director of National Intelligence (DNI) James Clapper indicated the FBI's domestic intelligence focus is an asset to the USIC that should be lauded and expressed his support for the HUMINT Squad concept. The report correctly recognized that the FBI "plays a critical role within the Intelligence Community's Human Intelligence (HUMINT) discipline. No other federal, state, or local program shares FBI's authorities and responsibilities for domestic intelligence collection." In addition, the report recognized that while the FBI has integrated national-level requirements into its intelligence collection efforts, "FBI reporting remains focused on FBI-identified information needs that have an IC nexus. In recognition thereof, FBI has begun to develop HUMINT squads whose purpose is to develop sources and collect intelligence outside of predicated investigations," noting the FBI's acknowledgment of its responsibility to report intelligence beyond that which is derived from investigations.¹ It is this

¹ (U//FOUO) A series of events—from the revision of Executive Order 12333 to the naming of FBI Assistant Directors in Charge/Special Agents in Charge as Domestic DNI Representatives—has increased the

collection which takes advantage of the enormous amount of intelligence available within the United States that can be collected at low cost and low risk.

(U) Current State of FBI Collection Efforts

(U//FOUO) While the FBI has aggressively pursued intelligence collection since September 2001, it has not adjusted its business model sufficiently to support these refocused efforts. Although SAs are expected to maintain an awareness of the intelligence issues on which their CHSs can potentially report, it would be disingenuous to argue that SAs assigned to traditional investigative squads are actively pursuing the collection of intelligence outside of the cases for which they are responsible.

(U//FOUO) This is why HUMINT SAs are so critical to the FBI's Intelligence Program. Unfortunately, HUMINT SAs are not treated like, incentivized to be, or trained as true intelligence collectors. All SAs are still referred to as "case agents," still undergo file reviews, and so forth. While HUMINT SAs have a responsibility to help address their offices' priority threats—which will result in the recruitment of CHSs whose reporting supports specific investigations where substantial intelligence gaps have been identified—this should not be their primary focus. Doing so would only serve to squander a unique resource and result in the following unintended consequences:

- (U//FOUO) The FBI's production of intelligence information reports (IIRs) would be reduced in general, and the Bureau would likely produce fewer IIRs that specifically address priority USIC intelligence requirements.
- (U//FOUO) The Threat Review and Prioritization (TRP) process would be weakened by the lack of proactive

intelligence collection, which is a critical step in addressing gaps identified by TRP.

- (U//FOUO) Field offices could potentially prioritize only those threats into which they have active investigations as a result of reduced intelligence collection capabilities.

(U//FOUO) The most effective way to leverage HUMINT SAs—who comprise just 3.5%² of the field SA complement—is to focus their skills on developing CHSs with placement and access to strategic threat issues in support of critical national intelligence issues (such as the National Intelligence Priority Framework) or FBI issues (such as the TRP Band I–III threats), not as case feeders to investigative squads.

(U) Implications of Potential HUMINT Agent Funded Staffing Level Reductions

(U//FOUO) The FBI should approach the absorption of funded staffing level (FSL) reductions strategically to ensure the organization can continue to address both its law enforcement and intelligence missions. If cuts to HUMINT Squads or HUMINT SA FSLs are indiscriminate so as to avoid comparatively less painful reductions within the investigative programs, the FBI's Intelligence Program will likely be rendered impotent. From a larger organizational viewpoint, drastic reductions in HUMINT SA FSL would send a message to the FBI workforce and its partner agencies that the Bureau does not value intelligence and considers it the organization's least important program. Moreover, such a decision would signal that the FBI's push to become an intelligence agency has failed.

(U//FOUO) Additionally, the FBI must take into consideration the expectations of the Office of the

FBI's responsibility for strategic intelligence and domestically collected foreign intelligence.

² (U//FOUO) This percentage, based on data provided by the Directorate of Intelligence's Strategic Planning and Performance Analysis Unit, represents the number of nonsupervisory SAs in the field working intelligence matters (347) as of June 27, 2013, regardless of their career path designation, compared to the total number of nonsupervisory SAs (10,065) assigned to the field as of June 30, 2013.

and law enforcement communities, and the Bureau's Congressional overseers, all of whom demand the FBI develop sources and collect intelligence outside of predicated investigations; to prematurely reduce or eliminate the program before it has reached full maturity would be a disservice to U.S. national security.

(U) Outlook

(U//FOUO) Regardless of how the FBI structures its squads in response to future budgetary constraints requiring SA FSL reductions, it must retain and improve the HUMINT Program, the HUMINT SA position, and the HUMINT Squad construct. HUMINT SAs, unencumbered by investigative responsibilities, provide the FBI with invaluable warning about the FBI's threat picture "between the cases." They are the only operational entities fully

The impact of HUMINT squads is easy to overlook, not because the impact is insignificant but because the FBI has so far failed to adequately measure HUMINT performance. Before considering dismantling HUMINT squads and disbursing their resources, it is imperative that the FBI undertake a serious review of the impact they have on the organization's ability to execute its intelligence collection mission.

(U//FOUO) The FBI has not yet determined how it will pursue its investigative and intelligence responsibilities in parallel and with identical fervor, nor has it fully committed itself to doing so. Unless the FBI decides corporately to provide sustained support to HUMINT Squads and the unique function they perform, the organization's ability to successfully execute its intelligence collection mission remains in peril.