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## **COGNITIVE HUMINT TOOL FOR COGNITIVE ENVIRONMENT**

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**Abstract:**

Understanding human behavior is imperative for the success of HUMINT in military deployments, no matter if this refers to the enemy, friendly or own troops behavior. Whoever has the power to influence human behavior – besides the ethic responsibility for such actions that is not the subject of this article – is able to efficaciously achieve the desired objectives. Nowadays, the human behavior in general, is part of an extended human network enabled by social media, households, Internet of Things and Internet of Everything, all together forming the “actors” within the cognitive environment. Like many other “military tools”, HUMINT needs to be able – to a certain extent – to shape the hearts and minds, particularly the human source ones. The old model of winning the hearts and minds, generally applied in counter insurgency operations and not only, was instinctively applied in HUMINT domain with positive results. Nevertheless, the complexity of the cognitive environment, where the dexterous influencers are playing the “molding games”, necessitates a methodological and scientific approach that requires to firstly analyze our own behavior and then to influence others. A Cognitive HUMINT Tool enables the understanding of how the heart and mind can determine the actions, or vice-versa, and would create the premises for shaping the human sources. **Disclaimer:** This paper expresses the views, interpretations, and independent position of the author. It should not be regarded as an official document, nor expressing formal opinions or policies, of NATO or the NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence.

*Key words: HUMINT; cognitive; psychology; human; intelligence; military; source; shaping.*

### **1. HUMINT in Cognitive Environment**

Cognitive environment is not officially approved as a NATO warfare environment or domain but in reality, we have to admit that we are totally immersed into a “cognitive pool” made of perceptions, thoughts, ideas, decisions, etc. Even more, nowadays all these cognitive elements are connected and blended into technology, and we dare to affirm that our thoughts are sometimes “created” by technology. Everything is interconnected, the people with the houses, the houses with telephones ... the telephones, being almost an extension of us, are influencing our spirits, our emotions. Furthermore our emotions are influenced by whomever has the will and access into this cognitive environment, whomever understands how deeply intertwined is everything, whomever can figure out that our minds are blended into physical and virtual environments at the same time.

In the past, the cognitive environment was not as visible as it is now, the social interaction was based on face-to-face communication and the messages broadcasting range was limited to a certain geographical area. Now, social interaction is based on the virtual environment where the speed of spreading the message is far beyond our capacity to analyze its potential impact. In this new cognitive environment, the risk of being manipulated is tremendously higher than in the past, masses of population being easily influenced to take action into a certain direction. Our will is dependent on the “baits” dropped into the cognitive environment ... our will is part of the cognitive environment.



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HUMINT needs to adapt to this new enhanced/expanded cognitive environment.



1.1 - Cognitive Environment – Past & Future

*Past ... winning the hearts and minds!* Even if it was not institutionalized, the psychological approach of HUMINT was to win the hearts and minds, going without saying that once these two are won, automatically you influenced the will to proceed to action. This was by default, instinctively influencing the feelings and thoughts by creating a “desire” to take action. Of course, the micro-cognitive environment formed between the HUMINT-er and the human source was mainly influenced by the face-to-face micro-environment. Nowadays this micro-environment is connected with a much bigger cognitive environment described above.

*Future ... knowing the hearts and minds, create a desirable action!* In general, the mechanism of influencing human sources does not have to be changed, only the way of analyzing should be more relevant. If we want to create the “desire to take action” for the human source we need to emphasize and break down in a detailed manner the “will to take action” – the will of the human source. The “tool” proposed in this article, named Cognitive HUMINT Tool, is nothing else than an old religious and psychological model of the powers of the soul: heart, mind and will (fuel of the action). The same analysis should be applied both to HUMINT-er and the human source.

## 2. Cognitive HUMINT Tool – Components’ Definition

Starting from these three components of the soul, this article proposes an idea, a way of analyzing the relationship between the HUMINT-er and the human source, by separately analyzing the personality of both and their interaction. Again, we do not claim the wheel invention, it’s just a method generally used instinctively in day-to-day life by ordinary people and scientifically applied in psychology. Of course, the method’s adaptation to HUMINT operational needs, represents the novelty in this affair.

### **Mind or ... thought**

At this moment, there is no generally accepted concept and without equivocation, regarding the definition of the “mind”, but we will try to scratch a little bit the surface and dare to propose a definition. The simplest definition of “mind” is the “ability to think” [1] The mind (intellect, reason, thoughts, rationale, etc.) is the component of a person that enables us to “sense” the world around us, it is the faculty of consciousness and thought. It is the mind’s job to reason, think things over, and reach conclusions. The mind relies on the five senses (see, hear, smell, taste, and touch) to obtain information, but uses its internal functions to analyze and come up with the perceived reality’s image as Plato said, “thought is a vastly superior means to obtain the truth”, and we may add ... to obtain our “own truth”. The perceived image of reality depends also on the emotions associated with this; process summarily described in the next subchapter. If we want to be even more precise, this



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image could be also formed as an intuition image, without the need of conscious reasoning [2] and since the intuition was not conceptually put on the feeling's side, maybe we could say that intuition is just another source of information for the mind or even a power by itself. Anyway, this article does not want to cover the psychological intuition aspects since for the moment the theory is too blurred, but the article will deal with this “identified truth” from which various mental processes start. Our activities, our actions and our feelings depend on our mind, our thoughts, our “own identified truths”.

#### **Heart or ... emotions**

Heart or feelings and emotions should be seen as the same thing if we can call it a thing. According to the dictionary, the heart is defined as “the place in a person where the feelings and emotions are thought to be” [3] ... heart is the feeling but also the place itself, not mandatory to be the body part, so called heart. Anyway, for sure in this article the heart should not be confounded with the organ in our body, anyhow as the brain is the tool for the mind, the same, the heart as conceptualized in this article, is the tool for the feelings/emotions. As the five senses are the source of information for the mind, the same senses are the source of feelings, many studies revealing the fact that any sensation is accompanied by an emotional background colored in “emotional” nuances. The specificity of the emotion is the subjective reflection of the reality, the emotion having this evaluation function, being at the same time a subjective reaction to the internal or external environment [4]. Besides the evaluation function, the emotions may play also different other roles like body activator like in the stress somatic reactions cases, communication tool like in dissatisfaction expression with an angry reaction, action activator like in the fight and run process. Of course, in exercising these functions, the heart cannot claim as having the monopoly because the delineation between the mind and heart is also blurred from time to time.

#### **Action or ... will**

“Action” is the power of taking action and it should be seen as the “will” interface of the interaction between person and reality whether internal or external. The will is in charge with fulfillment of the necessities or better say the perceived needs. According to the dictionary [5], the will is the ability to control your thoughts and actions in order to achieve what you want to do – your perceived needs. The will is also defined as the human capacity to act in the direction of a scope consciousness established [6]. Thus, we can say that the will concept is intertwined also with the “desire” and “motivation” concepts as E. Elin says that the will is often identified or substituted with the motivation [7]. In our article, the will/action is treated as the factor/trigger that inflicts the action, determines the person to take action in certain circumstances. In fact, this is the unspoken goal of the article to pay more attention to this component of the soul in order to complete the heart-mind model with the main entity that drives us to action – the will – and to figure out the mechanism of inflicting/provoking/ determining another person – human source – to take action in the HUMINT desired direction. The biggest enemy for HUMINT in this endeavor is the “will” characteristics themselves, because the “will” is not only the capacity to fulfill a desire/need, but also to inhibit some of them based on the code of values, beliefs and social norms, a domain that will be also covered below. According to Locke [8], and Kant, the will represents the power of mind or the capacity to take decisions based on the intellectual knowledge of reality [9]. If we consider that the perceived reality is formed by thoughts (mind, reasoning) and emotions (heart), we easily admit the words of J. Kuhl stating that the will is a shaping factor for unifying emotions and mind processes [10]. Overall, the “action” as the final step in the volitive process represents a result of the evaluation made in the will-heart-mind laboratory. S. Rubinstein referring to the unitary character of psychological life, stated that the same psychological process could be at the same time (and in

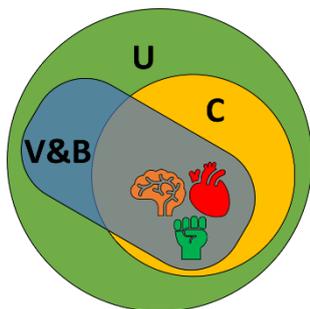


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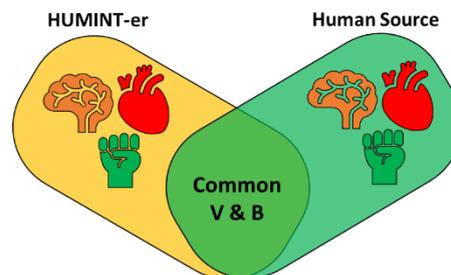


general it is), emotional, rational, and volitive [11]. This laboratory is envisaged to be analyzed in this article to better understand the “action” process.

In the volitive process, a very important role played for taking action towards a certain direction is represented by our values and beliefs (V&B) consciously or unconsciously developed along the life. Its importance in volitive process resides in the difficulty to change or significantly alter the someone’s V&B. Without disregarding the fact that the “action” could be performed by a person against the internal values and beliefs, if a good motivation arises (e.g. the bribe effect), this article tries to identify the common psychological niche between two persons – HUMINT-er and human source – which offers the opportunity of “shaping” without creating the discomfort of acting against internal V&B. The values and beliefs are deeply assimilated in our mind-heart-action laboratory and in general, without the exceptions mentioned above, the evaluations produced by this laboratory are in line with the values and beliefs, conscious or unconscious. The picture 2.1 depicts the place of the laboratory in our conscious (C), immersed in the V&B space that is prolonged in the unconsciousness (U). The common psychological niche desired to be identified between the HUMINT-er and the human source should be at the intersection of the HUMINT-er’s V&B with the human source’s V&B spaces, as visually displayed in the picture 2.2.



2.1 - The laboratory / V&B place in Consciousness / Unconsciousness



2.2 - Psychological Niche – Common Values & Beliefs

### 3. Cognitive HUMINT Tool – Functioning Mechanism

The question is “How does this laboratory function?” As it happens whenever someone is trying to offer a silver bullet for solving a social science problem, it is the same in our case, when the proposed Cognitive HUMINT Tool – the laboratory – is analyzed with the intention of determining a way to shape the will of the human source. We are conscious from the beginning, it’s even a belief, that we cannot draw attention to this tool as a universally applied tool for any cases. We believe in the necessity of comprehensively evaluate the human source laboratory so that we can create the favorable premises of influencing the will/action. In other words, the main responsibility of HUMINT-er is to assess the human source laboratory, and to match with its own laboratory by identifying first the common psychological niche. This niche should be consciously accepted as common V&B space by both, HUMINT-er and human source. Then, the “shaping” goes towards intelligence collection by launching the message (most probably a verbal one) discreetly associated with information requirement goal. This message should trigger the human source’s laboratory evaluation process ... concluded with a desired action of obtaining/providing the info required. But let’s see how does the laboratory function?



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The baseline, generally accepted, but not scientifically proven, is that thoughts create feelings, feelings create actions, and eventually, actions create thoughts again, like a continuous clear flow within the laboratory, Mind – Heart – Action and Mind again. Nevertheless, as described above, the line between the heart (emotion) and the mind (thought) is a very thin one, and the great dilemma is which one was the first the emotion or the thought? Between the *logic of feelings* and *logic of rationale* there is no natural barrier, some cases could be both attributed to feelings or rationale [12]. No matter the answer, we accept that there are persons who are led by their emotions-heart and some other who are led by their rationale-mind. In this article, the person who is led by heart will be categorized as “the emotional”, the one led by the mind “the thoughtful”, and the one led by actions “the subordinate”. The last one, the subordinate might be the easiest to understand, because its actions are determined by the order of someone, and regardless of its internal laboratory process evaluations, the bound to the “boss” is so tight than even if the order is emotionally or rationally accepted/unaccepted the will is activated to perform the action – task, order. For HUMINT shaping process, this case will be difficult to be managed, because such persons will apply the “boss filter” to all the emotions and thoughts. In other words, on top of its V&B layer, the “boss filter” will prevail and dominate the actions. The HUMINT-er should assess “the subordinate” and act accordingly, by remaining in the V&B psychological niche but considering also the over-head imposed “boss filter” ... if the filter can be avoided, the shaping process enters on its common path.

The other two categories “emotional” and “thoughtful” deserve of course the biggest attention, and most of the population – we dare to say that – are within these boundaries, otherwise we will not have revolutions, revolts, strikes or person-to-person fights. The will in these cases is activated mainly by the heart-emotions or the mind-thoughts. To better understand how to shape the human source, there is a need to figure out how an emotion or a thought is turned into action. We will try to apply reverse engineering, starting from the goal of the HUMINT-er, to obtain information that should also become – maybe not verbalized with the same words – as one of the human source’s goals.

The human source to accept this new goal necessitates first an assessment process made by HUMINT-er regarding the match between this goal and the V&B psychological niche of the human source. Only when this match between the goal and the niche is anticipated, the shaping operation could start a further development. There would be an invisible fight between the will of HUMINT-er and that one of the human source.

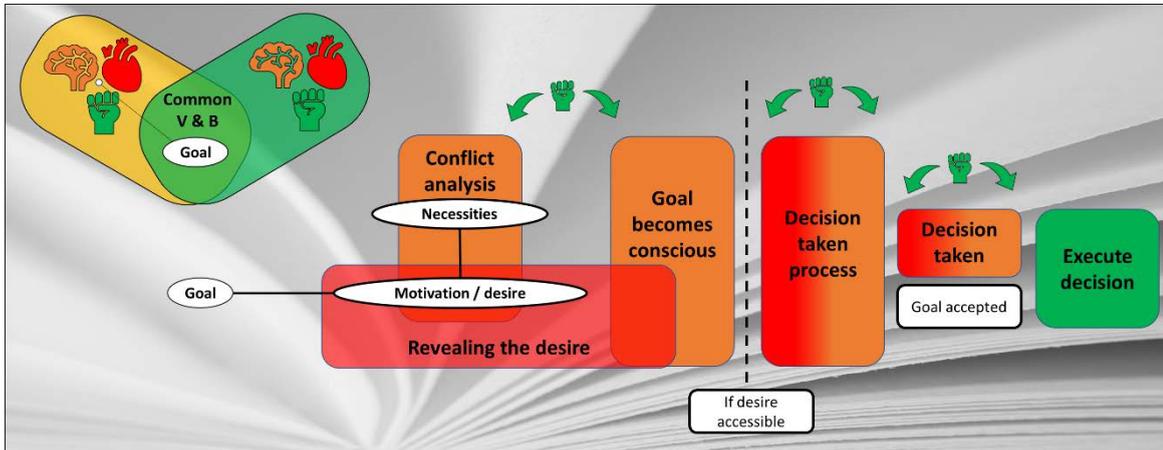
To determine the human source to accept the new goal, the HUMINT-er should first trigger or activate a motivation, a desire, an interest inside the human source laboratory. The HUMINT-er must anticipate this desire, otherwise the overall shaping process may go into another direction. This desire should also be among the necessities, needs of human source. Rubinstein states that this motivation – necessity – is revealed to the human source under an emotional cover that draws attention to the significance of the necessity [13]. This is what we can see on the face of our interlocutors when we make some proposal, and the emotional acceptance or unacceptance is immediately seen on their face. Afterwards, according to Rubinstein [14] and St. Jon of Damascus [15], the conflict of necessities, motivations and impulses is analyzed, and the goal of motivation becomes conscious. The motivations are hierarchized in accordance with the goal. If the human source desire is accessible, the decision of acting or not is made [16]. This is the key moment when the will of the human source is “convinced” of taking a decision which lays between heart and mind. Once the decision is taken this implies that the goal was accepted. It seems that the decision taking process – strained effort – is automatically accompanied by the negative emotions [17], and the HUMINT-er should take this into consideration by creating a positive emotional bound, according to the principle that a smiling face arouses the sympathy, hope and goodwill to interlocutors.



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After decision, the last phase of volitive process is to take action, to execute the decision, that could be also a complex and a lengthen process. In the graphics 3.1 below you may find the overall process of shaping operations from the goal transfer from HUMINT-er to human source to the execution of decision.



3.1 - HUMINT shaping operation process on human source decision

From this moment, depending on the type of the human source laboratory (emotional of thoughtful) the HUMINT-er will create both emotional and rationale guidance, insisting on that terrain – heart or mind – on which the human source predominantly has the tendency to “listen”. Some people listen to their feelings, despite their rationale judgement, while others suppress their feelings in advantage of their rationale. Of course, on top of this there is also the intuition, reminded at the beginning of this article. The intuition has the capacity to “access”, otherwise invisible manifestations of the subconsciousness of the human source and to identify some other unknown resorts, but in order for this spark to happen it needs a self-training on this kind of access to self-subconsciousness, before claiming it in relation with a human source. Taking the intuition out of this laboratory, being far more an even more complicated and unknown process, the goal could be achieved through the so-called mixt judgement [18], where the rationale judgement represents a skeleton, and the emotions are used as tools for argumentation methods. This mixt judgement could be also called “calculated emotional judgement”, or “artificial judgment” because it’s conscious, willing and calculated, being in contradiction with spontaneous emotional judgement. The mixt judgement varies in accordance with the quantity of the emotional and rationale judgement involved. In the graphics 3.1 above the mixt judgement or calculated emotional judgement is represented by the rectangle “decision taken process” colored in red – heart, emotions – but also in orange –mind, thoughts. The main moments in this shaping process where the HUMINT-er has something to say or should pay attention are:

1. Understand the human source’s laboratory.
2. Identify the psychological niche (common values and beliefs).
3. “Put” the goal in the psychological niche.
4. Launch the goal so that to trigger a motivation/desire/interest which should be one of the human source’s necessities. At the same time, the HUMINT-er must be sure that the anticipated motivation/desire is accessible – desire’s accessibility being a game stopper.
5. Create the emotional and rationale positive state that encourage the decision, thus the goal being accepted.



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#### **4. Conclusions**

The most important phase in shaping the decisions of human sources is the understanding of their psychological profile, the so-called laboratory – by us. The importance of knowing how emotional, thoughtful, or subordinate the human source is, it is seen during all the five steps described above – critical moments when the HUMINT-er can influence the decision taking process of the human source. On the other hand, the HUMINT-er should apply the process of understanding the own laboratory, if there is an objective to have a better understanding of someone else’s laboratory. This is based on the principle that you cannot understand the psychological mechanism of you interlocutor if you didn’t first understand your own. The HUMINT Cognitive Tool, with its functioning mechanism of taking the decision proposed in this article, does not intend and does not claim to be a silver bullet for any kind of collection related HUMINT operations. For example, this tool cannot be applied for elicitation – a HUMINT collection operation also – because the goal in such cases does not become conscious, and the examples may continue. At the same time, the article represents just an incipient initiative of analyzing this complex process of shaping the human sources decisions, by using current psychological theories without reinventing the wheel. The HUMINT Cognitive Model is designed as a tool for ordering and systematization of the vast amount of information regarding the psychological profiles of human sources in order to simplify and use them especially in shaping operations. But, what it is the most important is that a HUMINT Cognitive Tool is a necessity for a better understanding of the nowadays so enhanced/extended cognitive environment.

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