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Exploring the Susceptibility of High Sensation Seeking Individuals to Honey Trap Operations for the Purpose of Targeting and the Development of Self-Protective Countermeasures

Stephanie A. Bloomer

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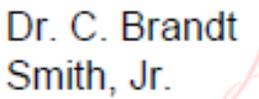
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EXPLORING THE SUSCEPTIBILITY OF HIGH SENSATION SEEKING INDIVIDUALS TO
HONEY TRAP OPERATIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF TARGETING AND THE
DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-PROTECTIVE COUNTERMEASURES

A Master Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

American Public University System

by

Stephanie A. Bloomer

In Partial Fulfillment of the

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of

Master of Arts, Intelligence Studies

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Charles Town, WV

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my loving wife Emily, whose willingness to tolerate both my physical and mental absence over the many years that it took to reach this point had more of an impact upon my ability to complete this academic goal than any other factor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all of the professors and students whom I have had the pleasure of interacting with throughout my many years at the American Military University. The knowledge and experience that I have gained throughout this process have far exceeded my expectations, and the instruction that I received over the last few years helped me to realize that what I once thought was an interest in the art of intelligence collection is actually a passionate calling that must be heeded.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

EXPLORING THE SUSCEPTIBILITY OF HIGH SENSATION SEEKING INDIVIDUALS TO
HONEY TRAP OPERATIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF TARGETING AND THE
DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-PROTECTIVE COUNTERMEASURES

by

Stephanie Ann Bloomer

American Public University System, November 4, 2015

Charles Town, West Virginia

Professor Curtis Brandt Smith, Thesis Professor

Sexual espionage is a practice that has been well documented throughout history as an effective means of collecting human intelligence, which continues to produce impressive results despite the fact that the tenets of this method are now widely known. This study seeks to explain this phenomenon by demonstrating a correlation between high sensation seeking individuals and the tendency to seek out and engage in adrenaline-producing activities, which can oftentimes include high-risk sexual behaviors. A specific focus was placed upon the prevalent nature of the high sensation seeking personality trait within Special Operations communities, and how this increases the susceptibility of these organizations to honey trap operations. A qualitative case study was conducted in order to explain why these individuals are inherently more vulnerable to sexual espionage tactics, and this information was then utilized to generate countermeasures that can assist in reducing the vulnerability of American SOF personnel. The complex threat environment that the United States is currently facing will necessitate a full-scale approach to

intelligence collection, and the benefits of engaging in sexual espionage should not be overlooked or underestimated; therefore, targeting recommendations have also been provided as a means of exploiting this similar tendency in foreign SOF organizations.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“There are great occasions in which some men are called to great services, in the doing of which they are excused from the common rule of morality.”
Oliver Cromwell (Perry 1995, 1)

The act of prostitution has long been identified as one of the world’s oldest professions; similarly, the exploitation of sexual attraction for the purpose of gathering valuable information is one of the oldest forms of intelligence collection. Modern technology has unquestionably had a significant impact upon the day-to-day lives of most citizens around the globe, and few institutions have experienced as significant of an impact from these developments as has the United States Intelligence Community. Most foreign nations are unable to match the monetary funding and asset acquisition processes that are necessary in order to conduct the high-tech spying that the United States has recently been exposed of being capable of. Similar to the guerilla style warfare that has proven to be relatively effective against U.S. forces overseas, foreign intelligence agencies have also recognized the need to rely on collection methods of the past in order to impact their technologically superior foe. While the United States is continuously working to develop new ways of detecting and preventing threats to its sensitive and classified information being targeted via more sophisticated collection strategies, it is imperative that efforts continue to be made to assist in the curtailment of the less technologically advanced collection methods as well.

Sexual espionage, oftentimes referred to as a ‘honey pot’ or ‘honey trap’, has long been utilized as one of the more effective means of collecting information from human sources, and unlike most collection techniques, the rudimentary art of using sexual seduction to access information has withstood the test of time. Though the United States largely denies the use of

this collection technique due to issues concerning morality, many other foreign nations do not have such qualms regarding this method.

While the act of exploiting an individual's sexual proclivities for intelligence collection purposes has been a known threat since antiquity, it became particularly concerning to U.S. counterintelligence personnel at the height of the Cold War when Soviet agents were known to favor this tactic. Countless ways in which a honey trap can be executed exist, but the Soviets typically favored blackmailing their victims to gain access to the information that they desired. While there were instances in which long term relationships were established between a Soviet agent and their target, oftentimes the intent of these traps was simply to blackmail individuals utilizing proof of their sexual indiscretions with promises of complete discretion as long as the target agreed to provide the agent with information that while classified oftentimes seemed to be of little intelligence value. Once the requested material had been provided however, proof of the target's complicity with the initial request was then utilized as additional leverage against them. The results of these operations varied; however, those that were successful often proved to be devastating due to the compromise of information that resulted from them.

Concerns regarding sexual espionage practices largely dissipated following the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union as Western nations shifted their focus more towards counterterrorism operations. The threat of sexual espionage operations being waged by the religious extremist groups that have demanded much of the West's attention over the last two decades has been essentially non-existent, and thus the concerns that once surrounded this issue became a relic of the past. Recently however, the global threat environment has grown progressively complex with Russia in particular demonstrating increasingly aggressive foreign policy objectives, which have the potential to shift the existing international power structure.

Vladimir Putin, the current Russian President, has been rather outspoken regarding the role that he believes Russia should play in the handling of several ongoing international crises, particularly with regard to those nations that once belonged to the former Soviet Union or that have been long-term allies of the Russian government (Standish 2015). The fact that Putin is a former member of the Russian KGB, the organization that along with its predecessors was primarily responsible for the coordination and execution of the aforementioned type of operations, may indicate a forthcoming resurgence of former Soviet military and intelligence practices. An example of this can be seen in Putin's persistent denials regarding the presence of government sanctioned troops in Eastern Ukraine despite media reports to the contrary that note the presence of "little green men" in the region, a term used for the well dressed and sufficiently armed fighters in the Donbass region who are believed to be members of the Russian Spetsnaz. These actions may serve as an indication that Putin will begin executing more covert and clandestine efforts in the future as a means of furthering his national policy objectives (Pifer 2014). This shift in tactics should serve as a warning that other favored techniques from the Cold War era may reemerge as well, with the use of sexual espionage as a means of collecting highly sought after intelligence information topping the list of possibilities for a variety of reasons that will be discussed throughout this paper. Russia is by no means the only nation that is known to utilize such tactics, nor should it be considered the only nation that is likely to heavily rely upon this tactic in the near future, but rather it merely serves as an example of the potential threat that currently exists. In order to properly protect the United States from the irreparable damage that could result from a successful honey trap being waged against one of its own, it is imperative that a full understanding of this threat be achieved. Once the threat posed

by such operations is understood it becomes critical to identify the individuals against whom these tactics will most likely be employed.

Not all individuals will prove to be susceptible to honey traps, but the presence of specific personality traits when viewed in conjunction with behavioral tendencies that are oftentimes related to those personality types, particularly with regard to the engagement in high-risk sexual activities, may be a strong indicator of those individuals who may be inherently more vulnerable to such targeting efforts. This research project focuses primarily on the high sensation seeking personality trait due to the fact that it has been linked to a high propensity for engaging in a variety of high-risk sexual behaviors, and has also been shown to be highly prevalent within military Special Operations Forces due to the type of individuals that are recruited to serve in such organizations. An additional factor that has the potential to increase the vulnerability of individuals serving within these organizations centers on the actions that are required of these individuals once they become operational that are believed to exacerbate the already present sensation and novelty seeking tendencies.

While any individual with access to information that could be seen as having intelligence value could potentially be targeted via such efforts regardless of their employer, the continuously increasing reliance that has been placed upon the United States Special Operations Command in support of a variety of foreign policy efforts, coupled with the common personality profiles that tend to be prominent within such units, has turned this organization into a fairly attractive target. As such it is imperative that actions be taken in order to prevent the exploitation of this group, and due to the complex nature of the issue, a multifaceted approach to reducing an individual's vulnerability while simultaneously providing them with a means of extracting themselves from a honey trap if they do in fact become a target will be recommended.

The inverse of this phenomenon is also true however in that comparable organizations within foreign militaries will likely prove to be equally vulnerable to sexual espionage tactics, and may prove to be critical sources of actionable intelligence, particularly in instances where efforts to determine a foreign nation's military strategy through other means has proven to be ineffective. The United States' current stance against the use of such tactics limits its ability to perform such collection efforts against enemies who have proven to have no such qualms. This self-restricting attitude has likely had little impact upon the United States Intelligence Community's (IC) ability to adequately collect information against America's enemies in the "Global War on Terror"; however, as the focus of U.S. foreign policy objectives shifts, it may become necessary to relook such policies.

In order to better understand how this Human Intelligence (HUMINT) collection technique may be employed as the complex global threat environment causes a shift toward a more hybrid form of warfare, this research paper will primarily attempt to answer the question of how internal and external factors contribute to the susceptibility of high sensation seekers within the Special Operations community to honey trap operations, with a secondary question being addressed concerning how this knowledge can contribute to the development of methods for countering such actions when waged against the United States, as well as how it can be utilized in the development of targeting strategies for employment against America's foes.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

While the United States has a general policy of not conducting sexual espionage operations, many of the nations with whom it currently has strained relationships do not maintain the same principles, with both Russia and China boasting long and successful histories when it comes to the employment of the honey trap. As the current wars in the Middle East have demonstrated, at times a more rudimentary approach to a problem can produce far better results than the high tech slant, and with the current threat environment becoming so heavily focused upon more technologically advanced forms of warfare, a somewhat regressive approach to intelligence collection may prove to be surprisingly effective.

This revelation is highly disconcerting given the fact that because the United States does not widely employ this technique against its enemies it also does not place a heavy emphasis upon training its more susceptible populations to both recognize and counter this threat. One such group that demonstrates this elevated level of susceptibility is the United States Special Operation Command due to the prevalent personality types that it employs, and the nature of the threats that it is asked to confront. The current literature concerning aspects of this topic, which includes a variety of books, journals, professional manuals, and other forms of documents found in open source mediums, were analyzed in order to determine not only the prevalent personality types that exist within this organization that contribute to an increased susceptibility to sexual espionage, with a special focus being placed upon the high sensation seeking trait, but also how various internal and external factors compound the already inherent level of susceptibility that exists within some individuals. These resources were then utilized in order to develop countermeasures that can assist in mitigating the risk that this collection method currently poses

within the studied population, as well as to develop strategies for exploiting similar vulnerabilities that likely exist within the Special Operations units of foreign nations for the purpose of intelligence collection.

Historical Examples of Sexual Espionage

Acts of sexual espionage have appeared throughout all of recorded history with the vast number of examples being too prohibitive to try to summarize them all; however, it is critical to develop a generalized understanding of how this HUMINT collection technique has previously been employed in order to fully understand the various manners in which it could potentially be implemented in the future. This collection technique has been heavily depicted in popular films with the effectiveness of such methods being difficult to accept at times due to the obvious nature of the trap being set. However, there are countless examples of modern day honey trap operations that may seem to be equally implausible, and yet troves of classified information have been compromised over the years due to physical and emotional attractions that were irresistibly intense, and yet completely one-sided.

One of the oldest and best known tales of sexual espionage is that of Samson and Delilah as detailed in the Christian bible. Samson, a Nazarite of incredible strength bestowed upon him by his Lord, was continuously being pursued by a group of Philistines who wished to capture and enslave him. Due to his superhuman strength, all of their attempts proved unsuccessful, thus it was determined that the source of his strength must be discovered in order to defeat him. Samson was known to have a propensity for women; therefore, when he became infatuated with a woman by the name of Delilah it was determined that she could be of use. The Philistines approached Delilah and requested, “see if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him and subdue him. Each one of us will give you

eleven hundred shekels of silver” (The Holy Bible 1984, Judges 13-16: 5). Delilah accepted this offer and soon entered into a sexual relationship with Samson. Several times she questioned him about the true source of his strength, and every time he provided her with information that when tested proved to be false. Frustrated, Delilah asked him “How can you say, ‘I love you’, when you won’t confide in me?” (The Holy Bible 1984, Judges 13-16: 15). It cannot be known whether Samson was merely worn down by the frequency of Delilah’s inquiries, or if the fact that his love was being questioned moved him to respond honestly. Regardless of the cause, according to the biblical tale he reportedly revealed to her the secret that she had been pursuing, information that she quickly relayed to those whom had promised her a reward, and Samson suffered greatly because of the trust that he had placed in this woman with whom he had grown intimate. Regardless of any arguments that can be made regarding the validity of religious texts, this story provides insight into the historical nature of the honey trap, and describes just one of the many ways in which it can be, and has been, employed.

One of the most widely recognized forms of sexual espionage is that of a female seductress stealing secrets from her male bedfellows. While this is merely one way in which information can be collected utilizing this technique, this particular method has been highly glamourized by the film industry due to the intrigue that generally surrounds such women, despite the fact that in the films they are simply fictional characters. One female off of whom many such characters could be loosely based however was a woman by the name of Hekmath Fathmy. Fathmy was an Egyptian exotic dancer who caught the attention of many British officers serving in Cairo during WWII. Fathmy’s displeasure over what she felt to be a British occupation of Egypt, coupled with the access that she had to many high-ranking British officers through her profession, made her an ideal asset for the Germans. Fathmy was able to initially

meet individuals from the British General Staff at the nightclub where she worked, but soon became a constant fixture within their social group, being described as “all things to the British officers who had information for her: sweetheart, lover, mother, and confidant” (Mahoney 1993, 81). The unique access that this enticing woman enjoyed can be seen in the example of a night in which a British officer who had grown fond of Fathmy visited her at her nightclub to inform her that he was headed to the front lines to deliver top secret information, no doubt trying to impress the exotic woman. Fathmy, never one to miss out on a collection opportunity, replied that it “wasn’t fair for him to leave without giving her a chance to say good-bye in a proper way”; being ever the gentleman, the officer agreed to allow her the opportunity that she had requested (Mahoney 1993, 81-83). Once alone however, she slipped her suitor a heavy sedative and called upon an acquaintance to come copy the documents that the man had been so proud of being entrusted with. Fathmy was not only able to utilize her seductive nature to glean information from her admirers, but was also intelligent enough to correctly assume that after making herself a permanent member of the officers’ social group, these men would eventually become unreserved in their topics of discussion while in her presence; Fathmy quickly exploited this false sense of security, to the great benefit of the Germans.

The former Soviet Union has long been recognized as one of the most adept nations at conducting honey traps against its enemies, and much of its success can be attributed to the fact that this practice was widely accepted by the Soviet government. Oleg Kalugin, a former KGB general, once said: "In America, in the West, occasionally you ask your men to stand up for their country. In Russia, we just ask our young women to lay down” (Goldhill 2014). While this is a gross oversimplification of the services that these women provided to the Soviet Union, the fact that high-ranking officials were able to speak so openly regarding this practice alludes to its

apparent social acceptance. The documentary entitled “Sex-espionage a secret weapon of the KGB – searching for the truth” highlights why its agents proved to be so effective. This documentary, produced by the Ukrainian television channel STB, lays out the tenets of the Soviet training program that was developed in order to prepare its female agents, referred to as swallows, and its male agents, termed ravens, to execute this highly specialized collection technique. Like most special duty assignments that exist within military and intelligence organizations, selection processes were held in order to ensure that the best candidates were accepted into the programs. Certain basic requirements had to be met which included having a physical appearance that would be considered aesthetically pleasing to a broad range of potential targets, a lack of moral compunction that would prevent a willingness to engage in a variety of sexual activities with a multitude of partners, and a level of national patriotism that would ensure absolute dedication to the mission, along with the appropriate level of discretion should the agent become compromised (Sex-Espionage a Secret Weapon of the KGB 2014). The primary intent of this documentary appears to be for entertainment purposes, an objective that was certainly met; however, the creators failed to provide a comprehensive list of references that were utilized in its development, therefore the validity of the information cannot be independently verified.

“Sexpionage”, a book authored by David Lewis in 1976, confirms many of the details provided in the aforementioned documentary while providing an even more in depth look into how Soviet swallows and ravens were selected, trained, and operationally employed at the height of the Cold War. Lewis gathered much of this information through first-hand interviews with individuals who once filled these roles, which allowed him to provide a unique look into these once highly classified programs, though he admits that he could not definitively rule out the

possibility that some or even all of these sources were deliberately providing him with disinformation either for personal or professional reasons (Lewis 1976, 157).

While countless examples of successful Soviet ‘sexpionage’ operations exist, one of the best-known accounts concerning an American target involved a Marine security guard named Clayton Lonetree and a Soviet woman known as Violetta Seina. Lonetree was working as a security guard for Embassy Moscow in 1985 when he met Seina, a telephone operator and translator who was also employed by the embassy. Shortly after Lonetree entered into a sexual relationship with Seina, despite the existing fraternization policy that strictly prohibited such relationships, Seina introduced Lonetree to “her Uncle Sasha” who recruited the Marine to serve as a spy for the Soviet Union (Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training). During the two years that Lonetree spent working for the Soviets he provided “Uncle Sasha” with blueprints for the American embassies in Moscow and Vienna, along with other classified material. Lonetree eventually confessed to his duplicitous actions, was charged with espionage, and was sentenced to 30 years in prison (though he only actually served nine years); however, concerns regarding the access and information that he may have provided the Soviets with nearly paralyzed the American embassies in Moscow and Vienna, as it was assumed that the information that was provided by Lonetree had assisted the Soviets in bugging every inch of the embassies (Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training).

While the Soviet Union was long regarded as the master of the honey trap, it by no means held a monopoly on this practice, but rather several other nations have successfully employed such operations over the years. Katrina Leung, codenamed “Parlor Maid”, was once believed to be the United States’ best asset on Communist China, and only later was it realized that she was acting as a double agent for her homeland the entire time. Randall Thomas, a Special Agent for

the Federal Bureau of Investigation, noted in an affidavit to the United States District Court that several red flags regarding Leung's loyalty emerged throughout her employment with the FBI (United States of America V. Katrina Leung), yet they went largely unheeded due to the fact that Ms. Leung was sexually involved with both her handler, J. J. Smith, and his supervisory Special Agent, Bill Cleveland (Gertz 2006, 23-24). By entering into physical relationships with the two individuals who were most directly involved in her operations, she was able to guarantee herself a certain amount of protection, as she knew that the agents would go to great lengths to protect her from prosecution should her treachery be discovered, if for no other reason than to protect themselves. The successful nature of this particular strategy was proven when Leung was allowed to continue to operate as an agent of the FBI even after admitting to J. J. Smith that she had been spying for China all along (United States of America V. Katrina Leung 2003). While honey traps are typically thought of as an offensive technique, the "Parlor Maid" operation is a unique example of how the establishment of sexual relationships with the right individuals can be utilized in both offensive and defensive manners. Leung initially utilized sex to gain the trust of her handler and to collect classified information from him, but after being caught working as a double agent she was able to utilize her sexual prowess to ensure that she was not only temporarily safe from prosecution, but also allowed to continue to collect information for the Chinese.

China has since continued to prove that it is highly adept at the employment of this particular technique as is evidenced in the affidavit provided to the United States District Court by FBI Special Agent Scott Freeman regarding American contractor and Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves, Benjamin Bishop. Bishop was recently convicted of "communicating classified national defense information to an unauthorized person" and "unlawfully retaining

classified national defense papers at his residence” after he provided classified information to his still unnamed mistress who as of yet has only been identified as a 27-year-old graduate student from the People’s Republic of China (Gorman 2014). During the period of time over which the two individuals were linked to one another, Bishop was initially serving as an activated Army Reservist with the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) from March 2009 to April 2012, and shortly thereafter was employed by a defense contractor, also working with USPACOM, a position that he held up until his detention in March 2013 (United States of America V. Benjamin Bishop 2013). Bishop held a Top Secret-Secure Compartmented Information (TS-SCI) clearance while in the former position, and a Top Secret (TS) clearance in the latter, both of which required him to be subjected to regular reevaluations meant to prevent and deter individuals with access to classified information from disclosing it to foreign governments or their proxies (United States of America V. Benjamin Bishop 2013). However, as was indicated in Special Agent Freeman’s affidavit, these safeguards did not prove adequate enough to prevent Bishop from engaging in a two year long sexual relationship with a woman who was 32 years his junior and who had ties to a nation with a distinct interest in the type of work that Bishop was involved with. The negative impact of Bishop’s eventual disclosure of a significant amount of information to his mistress, much of which was classified up to the SECRET/NOFORN level, has likely yet to be fully realized (United States of America V. Benjamin Bishop 2013).

The two aforementioned cases each involved individuals who held fairly prominent positions within their respective organizations, a phenomenon that is by no means unique to these examples. Countless distinguished individuals throughout history have found themselves on the receiving end of such operations despite possessing full knowledge of this tactic. Allen

Dulles, a man who is best known for the time that he spent serving as the Director of the United States Central Intelligence Agency, became just such a target while serving in Switzerland in early 1917. The younger Dulles brother was informed by British agents that the Czech woman whom he had been courting, and who through her position of employment also had access to his code room, had been providing information to Austrian agents regarding American war efforts (Kinzer 2013, 24). The British agents were kind enough to ‘take care of the problem’ for Allen, yet this encounter does not appear to have dissuaded him in any way from engaging in such high-risk relationships in the future, as his womanizing tendencies only appear to have worsened as he aged and moved into positions of greater responsibility.

Israel, one of America’s closest allies in the Middle East, is also well known for employing the honey trap, though not always against foreign enemies. Inigo Gilmore, a freelance journalist working on behalf of The Guardian, was able to get the first hand account of a unique Israeli honey trap operation from its target, Mordechai Vanunu. Vanunu initially gained international notoriety after he blew the whistle on Israel’s nuclear weapons program in 1986. Knowing that the repercussions for his actions would likely be severe, he quickly moved to London where he believed that he would be safe from Israeli retribution. Within weeks of arriving in England however Vanunu met a captivating young woman claiming to be an American tourist, and being fully aware of the existence of the honey trap tactic, he specifically questioned the woman about her involvement with Mossad during their initial meeting, an association that she quickly denied. This woman, whom he knew as “Cindy”, eventually convinced him to accompany her on a trip to Rome where he was quickly detained by Mossad agents, forcibly returned to Israel to stand trial, and sentenced to 18 years in prison for committing espionage and treason against the nation of Israel (Gilmore 2004). This example

serves as yet another unique way in which this tactic has been employed over the years, as the Israelis did not need information from Vanunu, but rather they simply needed someone to gain his trust long enough to lure him to a predetermined location; upon the realization that their target was still a virgin at the age of 31, a honey trap likely seemed to be the obvious solution (Gilmore 2004).

The fact that the honey trap is still widely utilized for intelligence collection purposes is well documented with the aforementioned cases barely scratching the surface of the examples that exist in open sources, let alone those whose details undoubtedly remain closely guarded secrets. Where information is lacking however is in the detailing of why these operations continue to be so successful despite the widespread knowledge of the employment of this tactic. In order to understand why this technique is so effective, it is important to understand the factors that likely contribute to some individuals' seemingly heightened susceptibility to this HUMINT collection practice. One way of attempting to fill this information gap is through the study of how psychological variances impact how individuals respond to the actions employed during honey trap operations. Though the issue itself does not appear to have been previously addressed, a significant amount of insight regarding this topic can be gleaned through the analysis of studies that have been conducted concerning certain personality traits, particularly the high sensation seeking trait, and the propensity to engage in high-risk activities. Information regarding the effects of both internal and external factors that appear to increase an individual's propensity to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors must also be considered.

Psychological Traits that Increase Vulnerability to Sexual Espionage

The possession of particular personality traits does not guarantee that an individual will inevitably fall victim to a honey trap; however, studies have proven that there are certain traits

that may make individuals more vulnerable to this form of exploitation. “Acute effects of alcohol on inhibitory control and information processing in high and low sensation-seekers”, written by Fillmore et al. defines sensation seeking as, “a neurobiologically based tendency to seek novel, complex, intense sensations and a proclivity to take physical, social, legal, and financial risks in order to achieve such experiences” (Fillmore et al. 2009, 91). The high sensation seeking trait can be further broken down into four subcategories that include disinhibition, thrill and adventure seeking, experience seeking, and boredom susceptibility (Fillmore et al. 2009, 91). Each of the aforementioned subcategories provide avenues for future exploitation in the individuals possessing them, which will be further discussed later on in this paper; however, the divergent nature of these subcategories within the overall targeted personality trait should be recognized as they highlight the importance of personalizing targeting strategies to the specific individual when sexual exploitation is utilized for collection purposes.

A study conducted by Hoyle et al. entitled “Personality and Sexual Risk Taking: A Quantitative Review” discusses the inclination for high sensation seeking individuals to engage in the three primary categories of high-risk sexual behavior, which include having multiple sexual partners, unprotected sex, and sexual encounters in situations that favor infection or unintended pregnancy (i.e. casual sex with strangers) (Hoyle et al. 2000, 1207). In the aforementioned study, Hoyle et al. conducted a comprehensive review of 53 psychological studies, all of which focus on risky sexual behavior and at least one personality domain included in the Five Factor Model (FFM), which evaluates for the personality traits of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Hoyle et al. 2007, 1212). The results of this research highlighted several key phenomena regarding high-risk sexual behaviors that were supported by several of the reviewed studies. None of these previously conducted

studies actually focus on the exploitation of the high sensation seeker for intelligence collection purposes, but their findings are still pertinent to this application as the high-risk tendencies that are highlighted throughout these studies are precisely the types of behaviors that will be targeted during the execution of a honey trap.

One notable behavioral tendency that Hoyle et al. focused on was the propensity for high sensation seeking individuals to not only have a high tolerance for risk in general, but to also place a high value upon any sensorial stimulation achieved through high-risk activities (Hoyle et al. 2007, 1209). This tendency was further supported by a study concerning the rationality of risky sexual practices which noted that men in particular experienced greater levels of gratification from sexual experiences that were novel, spontaneous, and varied (Pinkerton and Abramson 1992, 566). Marvin Zuckerman, a prominent researcher of sensation seeking and risk taking tendencies, highlighted the fact that as these sensation seeking individuals continue to seek out and engage in high-risk activities, they begin to perceive the involvement in future dangerous undertakings as being less risky than do their non-high sensation seeking counterparts (Zuckerman 1979). Karen Hymbaugh and James Garrett provided an example of this phenomenon in their analysis of recreational skydivers, in which they sought to explain how the presence of the high sensation seeking trait within extreme sports enthusiasts impacted other areas of these individuals' lives as well. This study, appropriately entitled "Sensation Seeking Among Skydivers", determined that individuals who had been assessed as being high in the sensation seeking trait also tended to "(a) prefer more extensive and novel drug and sexual experiences, (b) more frequently volunteer for unusual experiments, and (c) demonstrate a greater degree of generally exhibitionistic and unconventional behaviors" (Hymbaugh and Garrett 1974, 38). This tendency is likely the two-fold result of the high sensation seeker's

constant pursuit of high-risk activities, which causes them to view adrenaline-producing endeavors in a pleasurable context rather than a dangerous one, while simultaneously comparing new experiences to those that they have previously encountered. The frequency with which these individuals engage in high-risk activities has likely resulted in the development of a baseline off of which they gauge future risks which has a far greater tolerance for danger than the comparative baselines utilized by their non-high sensation seeking peers.

Methods of Identifying High Sensation Seeking Individuals

Simply observing an individual's typical behavior in certain environments can assist in the development of general personality profiles; however, one of the primary methods of developing a more reliable report on a willing source is through one of the many commercially available psychological tests. The vast majority of such evaluations include a subjective self-examination in which the studied individual is required to answer a questionnaire regarding their own behaviors and preferences. Once the self-assessment portion has been completed, an individual trained in the scoring of that particular exam generates the results. Though this method is currently considered to be one of the more reliable forms of personality assessment, there are obvious issues with this practice concerning its applicability for the current topic, as this technique is only useful when the individual knows that they are being psychologically profiled, and when they willingly provide accurate answers. Due to these restrictions, psychological testing is only useful in the context of sexual espionage in the identification of individuals within one's own organization who may prove to be more susceptible to such tactics, unless this data can somehow be acquired from a targeted service that employs similar assessment measures.

In instances where psychological testing is appropriate, countless different versions exist, and the burden becomes selecting the most appropriate evaluation for the specific personality traits being assessed for. Several different screening methods are available when evaluating for the high sensation seeking personality trait, though few actually look at this trait specifically. A psychological evaluation referred to as the Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS-V) does exist, and could perhaps prove to be the most ideal screening method for this study given the fact that it specifically focuses on the high sensation seeking trait; however, it does not appear to have been widely utilized in the screening of members of the Special Operations community in the past, which limits the ability to properly analyze its applicability. As a result, a model that has been widely administered to this population, the NEO PI-R (Neuroticism Extraversion Openness Personality Inventory-Revised) will be analyzed instead.

Increased Susceptibility Within Special Operations Organizations

The various psychological theories that discuss the propensity to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors take somewhat divergent approaches to describing how personality affects an individual's affinity for high-risk endeavors. The focus of this paper however is not to attempt to determine which of these theories, if any, is more scientifically valid, but rather how the cumulative mass of this information can be utilized for the purpose of HUMINT collection, specifically utilizing techniques of a sexual nature. In order to do so, it is important to identify the prevalent personality types that exist within the target population, and to then compare that data to the personality types that have been identified as being vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

The primary group that will be considered for potential targeting considerations will be members of the Special Operations community, both those that belong to the United States military and their foreign counterparts. This group was selected for a multitude of reasons, with

the primary determinant being the fact that it is largely comprised of high sensation seeking individuals who generally require higher level security clearances than most individuals assigned to conventional military units. In addition, members assigned to these organizations will likely prove to be softer targets for HUMINT collectors than members of the Intelligence Community who tend to be more cognizant of this potential threat. These individuals will typically possess at a minimum a Secret security clearance which provides access “to information or material that may cause serious damage to national security if disclosed without authorization”; however, many individuals serving within these organizations maintain Top Secret security clearances that allow for “access to information or material that may cause exceptionally grave damage to national security if disclosed without authorization” (gogovernment.org 2015). The provision of higher-level clearances to individuals serving in these organizations is necessary given the fact that they must oftentimes have access to highly compartmentalized operational details concerning future missions due to their involvement in both the planning and execution phases of them. While this can be said of many other entities within the United States government and Intelligence Community, the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) is largely comprised of members who demonstrate an obvious attraction to relatively high-risk activities, and due to the nature of their occupation have a tendency to regularly fulfill this desire, which may lead to a subsequent need to engage in increasingly higher risk activities in order to continue to achieve the desired level of stimulation. The significant proportion of high sensation seeking individuals that make up USSOCOM, coupled with a general lack of knowledge within this group regarding the existence and effectiveness of the honey trap, could lead to a potentially target-rich environment for anyone seeking out information regarding this community or current U.S. military strategy and foreign policy.

In order to determine the typical personality types that comprise the various organizations within USSOCOM, a variety of sources were utilized to include previously conducted studies concerning the selection of individuals to serve within these organizations. A study conducted by Braun et al. entitled “Personality Profiles of U.S. Navy Sea-Air-Land (SEAL) Personnel” assessed 148 Navy SEALs utilizing the NEO PI-R, in which the author noted that “Excitement-seeking was the only SEAL domain or facet score in the “very high” region of the adult male profile” (Braun et al. 1994, 11). While several other key personality traits were identified as being potentially significant in the development of a general personality profile for the “ideal” SEAL to possess, the excitement-seeking trait stands out above all others.

The abundance of high sensation seekers that serve within USSOCOM is necessary in order to maintain the high operational tempo (OPTEMPO) and performance standards that are required of them, but also detrimental in that it may lead to a higher vulnerability to sexual espionage tactics. Conversely, the possibility exists to exploit similar tendencies in these organizations’ foreign counterparts who likely employ similarly minded individuals. “Special Operations Forces Selection: Job Analysis and Multi-Form Assessment” constructed by Ivey et al., was developed as a framework upon which NATO forces could work to either develop their own Special Operations Forces (SOF), or to improve upon the selection and assessment practices of already existing organizations. One of the areas that this document discusses in detail is the identification of the assessed individual’s personality profile utilizing the aforementioned Five Factor Model, after which the authors note that personality attributes should garner careful consideration during the assessment and selection process given the “prominence” with which character traits have been regarded in recent SOF literature (Ivey 2012, 2-9). The Five Factor Model has been lauded by many researchers as one of the most useful tools for the assessment of

an individual's prospective success within a specific vocation given the fact that it "offers a positive performance-based approach to personality and has been found to link personality with performance" (Grice 2006, 48). The correlation that the FFM shows between personality traits and performance makes it the ideal screening tool for SOF organizations that do not have the time or resources to spend on training individuals who are unlikely to successfully complete the training program, or who will prove unable to withstand the rigors of the profession following the completion of their training. While this manual concerning SOF selection was developed with NATO forces in mind as the target audience, it can be assumed that because it is available in open source mediums, non-NATO forces may also currently utilize the information for their own SOF selection processes. If this is true then it can be assumed that their ranks will also be largely comprised of many similarly minded individuals when compared to the United States' and its allies' SOF organizations, thus increasing their own susceptibility to future honey trap operations.

While individuals possessing the high sensation seeking trait may appear to be drawn to professions in the Special Operations community, there are studies that indicate that this profession also tends to intensify the behaviors that are oftentimes associated with the high sensation seeker. Parmak et al. conducted a study in 2012 that showed an increase in sensation seeking tendencies amongst soldiers who had recently returned from combat (Parmak et al. 2012, 558). He noted that one possible explanation for this increased affinity for risk is due to the elevation of the service member's risk tolerance baseline, which is a compensatory measure meant to help the individual cope with the environmental and situational changes that occur over the course of the deployment (Parmak et al. 2012, 553-554). The current "Global War on Terror" campaign has had a significant impact upon USSOCOM, as it has been employed in this

conflict at an unprecedented level. General (Ret.) Stanley McChrystal described this operational shift in an interview conducted by Gideon Rose and published in *Foreign Affairs* in 2013, in which McChrystal described his time serving as the commander of the United States Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). McChrystal highlighted the necessary adaptations that were made to U.S. strategy during that time, and specifically noted the vastly increased operational tempo that members serving under his command undertook as the war in Iraq progressed (Rose 2013). McChrystal's description of the relentless pace that has become standard for those working under USSOCOM serves as a testament to the level of exposure that these individuals are receiving to adrenaline-producing events. Based off of the results of Parmak et al.'s study that sought to explain how this type of exposure can alter behavioral displays, it would be prudent to assume that the high rate of deployment that is being experienced by this small group of individuals has undoubtedly resulted in an increase in sensation seeking tendencies within this population that already demonstrated an affinity for high-risk behaviors and activities. The fact that these organizations deploy so frequently alludes to the possibility that many of these individuals will maintain this elevated level of sensation seeking, never having the opportunity to return to their original baseline levels.

Neurochemical Factors that Influence Risk-Taking

For a long time the administration of subjective personality assessments has been the gold standard for generating personality profiles in willing subjects; however, more recently a new practice has emerged in which a far greater emphasis is being placed upon the effect that an individual's neurochemical levels have on their personality and behavior.

The neurochemical shift that appears to be the most relevant with regard to the studied population is that which is typically experienced when an individual is faced with a stressful and

potentially life-threatening event. This stress reaction, which has been termed the “Fight or Flight response”, occurs as the body prepares to react to a perceived threat by stimulating the sympathetic nervous system. When an individual is continuously exposed to external stimuli that results in the activation of the sympathetic nervous system it is possible for these individuals’ autonomic nervous systems to become deregulated, thus causing them to enter into a sympathetic nervous system-dominant state, in which their bodies chronically behave as though the individual is in a situation necessitating that “Fight-or-Flight” response (Lipov 2013, 1). This shift, resulting in the individual’s perpetual existence in a state of heightened stimulation, may necessitate the seeking out of increasingly risky activities as greater levels of risk are needed in order to provide the high sensation seeking individual with an adequate level of stimulation above their already heightened baseline.

Cortisol, commonly referred to as one of the primary ‘stress hormones’, has recently been linked to the allure of high-risk activities for the high sensation seeker. Laudenslager et al. noted that typically when an individual is faced with a stressful situation or task the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (HPA) will work to increase plasma cortisol levels as the body prepares itself to react via the ‘Fight or Flight’ response; however, several studies exist that highlight the fact that individuals who display high novelty seeking behavior tend to have a blunted HPA effect and subsequently experience lower cortisol secretion in what should be considered to be stressful situations (Laudenslager et al. 2011, 2-6). Laudenslager et al. performed a study on primates to test this theory in which hair cortisol levels were analyzed following the controlled exposure of the subjects to stressful stimuli. It was noted that the subjects with previously identified blunted HPA responses tended to react to challenging circumstances in a more bold and fearless manner than their peers with more responsive HPA activity (Laudenslager et al.

2011, 6). A similar study conducted on human subjects by Tyrka et al. also indicated that high sensation seeking individuals experience an inverse cortisol response in which a notable decrease in cortisol levels occurs when these subjects are faced with situations that most would consider to be stressful, with increased cortisol levels noted when assigned with tasks that were both mentally and physically unchallenging (Tyrka et al. 2006, 1041). Assumptions could therefore be made, based off of the aforementioned research, that the reduced cortisol production that occurs when high sensation seeking individuals are exposed to high-risk activities can have a relative calming effect, further explaining this groups' drive towards these behaviors.

While cortisol production is generally viewed with regard to distress, a study conducted by Dellu et al. identified the fact that rats which had been classified as being "high responders" to novel stimuli demonstrated a prolonged secretion of corticosterone (the non-human equivalent of cortisol) when compared to their low responding peers. In addition they also appeared to be more sensitive to the reinforcing properties of this hormone; Dellu et al. then went on to note that the reinforcing properties of glucocorticoids such as corticosterone in the test subjects and cortisol in man have been found to produce feelings of euphoria in some individuals, indicating that some individuals may in fact experience eustress rather than distress following the production of cortisol, which further explains the desire to induce such production through participation in high-risk activities in the individuals who do not experience the inverse cortisol reaction, but who instead produce appropriate levels of cortisol when exposed to high-risk events or activities and who subsequently experience euphoria following that neurochemical release (Dellu et al.1996, 142).

The theories regarding the inverse cortisol response and the feelings of euphoria gleaned through cortisol production, if correct, could potentially indicate that high sensation seekers may

prove to be more receptive to sexual advances in situations that may be considered as higher in risk for two separate, but equally exploitable reasons. The first has to do with the fact that a reduction in cortisol levels, and the subsequent reduction in the cortisol-induced stress response, may contribute to an underestimation of the level of risk associated with the sexual behavior; similarly, those individuals who excrete appropriate levels of cortisol but experience a euphoric response from it are more likely to properly identify the risk, but will display a comparably higher acceptance of that risk. The second concept has to do with the fact that the pleasurable response to increased cortisol levels that is experienced by this group after being subjected to high-risk situations may increase the desire to engage in sexual activity. Links have long been established between high levels of cortisol production and decreased sexual libido; therefore, if high sensation seeking individuals have been experiencing higher levels of cortisol production due to understimulation, then engagement in a high-risk activity may actually reduce the cortisol levels and activate the individual's libido (Hamilton et al. 2008, 2). Both of the aforementioned theories have obvious implications for the susceptibility of this particular group to honey trap operations, though more targeted studies are needed in order to prove the validity of these assumptions.

C. Robert Cloninger posited that neurochemicals play a significant role in the personality characteristics that an individual displays, and he cited dopamine as the primary chemical that influences novelty seeking behavior, specifically stating that low dopaminergic activity increases novelty seeking behavior (Cloninger 1986, 167). This sentiment was further supported by a study conducted by Hansenne et al. that confirmed Cloninger's aforementioned theory and expounded upon it by noting that this correlation could be contributed to the fact that novelty seeking individuals tend to display D2 postsynaptic dopamine receptor sensitivity and decreased

presynaptic dopaminergic secretion, indicating that these individuals not only feel the need to engage in highly stimulating activities in order to generate greater levels of dopamine production, but when they do, their increased receptor sensitivity enhances the positive effects that are felt following this release (Hansenne et al. 2002, 971). Researchers have also found a correlation between the novelty seeking personality trait and the D4 dopamine receptor (D4DR), which has been associated with a variety of addictive behaviors. The pleasurable effect that many individuals feel following the activation of these receptors is believed to be the stimulus behind the resultant desire to continuously engage in the novelty seeking behavior that is responsible for this effect. This tendency led Zuckerman and Kuhlman to describe dopamine as the primary ‘accelerator’ in the drive towards risky behavior in their study entitled “Personality and risk-taking: Common biosocial factors” (Zuckerman and Kuhlman 2000,1021). Brenda Patoine explains how these seemingly contradictory findings both contribute to increased novelty seeking behavior in “Desperately Seeking Sensation: Fear, Reward, and the Human Need for Novelty”, by noting that several different types of dopamine receptors exist within the human body, and while individuals who possess greater numbers of D4 dopamine receptors tend to display higher sensation seeking tendencies due to the reward-processing abilities of these receptors, those who possess fewer D2 dopamine receptors, which are believed to inhibit dopamine production, have a reduced ability to inhibit dopamine excretion, and as a result the individual experiences a greater release of the euphoria-producing neurotransmitter (Patoine 2009).

Increased Vulnerability Due to External Chemical Factors

While naturally occurring chemical responses stimulated by the body in response to external and internal stimuli have been identified as having an effect on high sensation seekers,

external chemical influences have also proven to be highly influential on the decision-making processes of these individuals, with the focus of such research pertaining primarily to the effects of alcohol consumption on this particular population. The previously mentioned study conducted by Fillmore et al. which examined the variant effects of alcohol on the high sensation seeking individual noted that this group tends to experience more salutary effects from alcohol consumption, while a similar study reported high sensation seekers as experiencing “more subjective vigor and less sedation” after ingesting alcoholic beverages (Fillmore et al. 2009, 91). Not surprisingly, high sensation seekers are reported as having alcohol consumption rates that are twice as high as their low sensation seeking peers (Donohew 2000, 1080), which may indicate a correlation between sensation-seeking and alcoholism stemming from the attempts of such individuals to constantly seek out some form of euphoric stimulation, or perhaps it is the result of these individuals relying on the depressant effects of alcohol to assist in blunting the constant feeling of hyperarousal that is oftentimes reported by the high sensation seeking population (Fillmore et al. 2009, 97). The need to find an outlet for the abundance of energy that exists within this group following alcohol consumption could also potentially contribute to their risk-taking tendencies. Fillmore et al. noted that high sensation seekers tend to display significantly reduced inhibitory control, a phenomenon that was present prior to the consumption of alcohol, but was then further compounded by imbibing in such beverages (Fillmore et al. 2009, 96). These effects not only provide some explanation for the reportedly high level of alcohol consumption amongst this target population, but also the increased percentage of self-reported sexual encounters that occur while under the influence of alcohol, as the lowered inhibitions coupled with the desire for a stimulating experience make sexual activity an obvious physical and psychological outlet. The results of this study should be considered both in the

context of developing programs to ensure individuals employed by USSOCOM who are likely to be targeted via honey traps are aware of their increased vulnerability, particularly while under the influence of alcohol, but also in regards to how this information can be exploited in targeting efforts developed for use against foreign agencies.

Conclusion

As was demonstrated above, a considerable amount of information currently exists regarding the different methods through which honey trap operations have previously been employed in the past and could potentially be utilized in the future. Despite the fact that many of these examples happened decades ago, the ability of sexual espionage tactics to exploit basic human nature has ensured that unlike the more technologically sophisticated methods of collecting intelligence that quickly become irrelevant as new technology is developed, the honey trap will likely always prove to be highly effective when employed against the appropriate target. While it does not appear as though any research has previously been conducted and published in open sources concerning common personality types that may prove to be more susceptible to sexual espionage operations, the aforementioned case studies concerning the psychology behind the desire to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors do support the assumption that high sensation seeking individuals may prove to be softer targets for this particular collection technique.

As noted above, organizations within the United States Special Operations Command have a tendency to recruit and employ individuals who exhibit high sensation seeking tendencies, and given the nature of its role regarding national security and foreign policy, these individuals will generally have access to intelligence that would be viewed as highly desirable by some of America's foreign counterparts, both friend and foe alike. These two factors make individuals operating within these organizations highly targetable, and because they are not public figures or

intelligence personnel, they are likely to be far less cognizant of their potential to become victims of sexual espionage, making them softer and more attractive targets.

The recognition of this vulnerability necessitates the development of countermeasures that can assist in reducing the vulnerability that has been identified within this entity. While the operational need to employ particular personality types cannot and should not be altered, there are ways of potentially reducing the level of susceptibility that currently exists within this population. Additionally, the recognition of this vulnerability within USSOCOM alludes to the fact that many other nations, some of whom are recognized adversaries of the United States and who have proven to be fairly hard targets with regard to other forms of intelligence collection, will likely possess similar vulnerabilities that could be exploited through highly specific collection attempts utilizing sexual espionage tactics. This research paper will therefore primarily attempt to answer the question of how internal and external factors contribute to the susceptibility of high sensation seekers within the Special Operations community to honey trap operations, with the secondary goal of addressing how this knowledge can contribute to the development of both self-protective and targeting strategies.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH STRATEGY

The use of sexual espionage as a HUMINT collection technique has been well documented throughout history, yet this has been done primarily in a descriptive, rather than an explanatory manner. The research that was conducted for this thesis project failed to uncover any previously documented attempts to explain any variance in susceptibility to honey traps caused by differences in personality traits; however, countless studies do exist that attempt to demonstrate a correlation between a variety of personality traits and a propensity for engaging in high-risk sexual behaviors, many of which specifically address the high sensation seeking trait. Additionally, literature pertaining to the specific personality types that are sought after for service in the United States Special Operations Command was utilized in order to show a correlation between the general personality profiles of those who make up these organizations, and those traits that have been identified in the aforementioned studies as showing a greater propensity for engaging in high-risk sexual behaviors. The significant overlap that can be seen, particularly in regards to the high sensation seeking personality trait, demonstrates the existence of a potential vulnerability within this organization. Once the predominant personality trait was identified, further research was conducted in order to determine the effect that both internal and external stimuli are capable of having on the neurochemical responses of these individuals, and subsequently how these neurochemical responses affect behavior. Finally, following the identification of potentially compromising behaviors, recommendations for either modifying these behaviors or reducing the impact that they have on an individual's vulnerability to sexual espionage attempts were generated.

This project was completed as a qualitative case study utilizing secondary sources, with particular focus being placed upon different psychological models that assist in identifying individuals who possess the high sensation seeking trait, and explain how this trait can lead to an inclination towards high-risk behaviors. These theories were then utilized in an attempt to demonstrate how such inclinations can increase an individual's inherent vulnerability to sexual espionage.

Psychological Models of Personality

Of the countless personality models that currently exist, the Five-Factor Model, the Psychoticism-Extraversion-Neuroticism Model, and the Neuropsychopharmacological model provide the most appropriate descriptions of the behavioral and neurochemical displays that could indicate a potential vulnerability to sexual espionage.

Five-Factor Model (FFM) of Personality

The NEO PI-R, one of the personality tests that will be described in greater detail later on in this paper, identifies the five major domains covered under the FFM, which as previously mentioned include neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Costa and McCrae 1992, 16-18). Of these five domains, extraversion (E) provides the greatest insight into an individual's tendency toward sensation seeking. Extraverts are defined as being assertive, active, energetic, and seek out excitement and stimulation, among several other defining characteristics, which all play into the inherent need to partake of activities that provide some form of sensory reward (Costa and McCrae 1992, 15)¹. In addition to the extraversion trait, the neuroticism (N) domain should also be analyzed, as the N5 facet of Impulsiveness is

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commonly associated with the high sensation seeking personality trait, and alludes to the “inability to control cravings and urges. Desires are perceived as being so strong that the individual cannot resist them, although he or she may later regret the behavior” (Costa and McCrae 1992, 16)². The impulsiveness trait must be considered in context when evaluating members of the Special Operations community however, as this group will typically exhibit superior deliberate decision-making capabilities in most instances regarding both their personal and professional lives, but simply display higher levels of impulsiveness regarding the engagement in high-risk, high-reward activities. The types of ‘true or false’ questions that are asked on the NEO PI-R as a means of gauging impulsiveness include such statements as “I rarely overindulge in anything” and “I have trouble resisting my cravings”; these questions may receive answers that indicate a lack of impulsiveness in highly disciplined individuals despite their tendency towards impulsiveness during the pursuit of sensorial stimulation (Costa and McCrae 1992, 69)³. Due to this test’s desire to determine an individual’s general tendency towards impulsiveness, rather than a focused assessment of impulsiveness with regard to particular situations, the possession of this particular trait may only be identified through an observational assessment of the individual’s actions when placed in specific situations that are likely to trigger this behavior. Zuckerman noted that “while [impulsivity is] not an equivalent or supraordinate of sensation seeking, [it] is a highly related trait, particularly in its nonplanning and risk-taking

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aspects” (Zuckerman 1994). It is for this reason that it is important to assess for the presence of impulsivity in the high sensation seeker regardless of the method utilized for identification.

Psychoticism-Extraversion-Neuroticism (PEN) Model of Personality

Hans Eysenck’s PEN model of personality similarly addresses the extraversion trait and provides additional information concerning the sexual behaviors typically associated with this characteristic, which include a tendency towards higher levels of promiscuity, increased playfulness, and an interest in a variety of sexual activities (Hoyle et al. 2000, 1208). Similarly, he noted that individuals high in psychoticism will display higher levels of aggression that may lead to less socially acceptable forms of sexual behavior and high levels of promiscuity (Hoyle et al. 2000, 1208). Eysenck’s model also describes how behaviors generally associated with the final personality category, neuroticism, can indicate a reduced susceptibility to sexual espionage, as he views individuals high in this trait as being comparatively less likely to engage in high-risk sexual activities due to the elevated levels of fear and anxiety that typically manifest in these individuals. (Hoyle et al. 2000, 1208).

Neuropsychopharmacological Model of Personality

C. Robert Cloninger approached the high sensation seeking individual from a psychobiological standpoint with his Neuropsychopharmacological model of personality. Cloninger’s model focuses primarily on the novelty seeking, harm avoidance, and reward dependence traits, believing that there is a direct correlation between the aforementioned traits and the subject’s release of neurotransmitters, specifically dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine (Hoyle et al. 2000, 1209). Hoyle et al. posited that the novelty seeking trait is similar in nature to sensation seeking and likely correlates with high-risk sexual behavior, while the latter two attributes both have a negative correlation with these high-risk behaviors, as the

risk to reward comparison would likely not favor the high-risk activity (Hoyle et al. 2000, 1209). The basic tenets of Cloninger's model have been reinforced by several previous and subsequent studies that focus on the neurochemical shifts that occur within high sensation seeking individuals when faced with varying levels of stimulation; these findings will be utilized later on for the development of approach and targeting strategies.

Hypotheses

Due to the multifaceted nature of the research question which will address how internal and external factors contribute to the susceptibility of high sensation seekers within the Special Operations community to honey trap operations, with a follow-on question of how this knowledge can contribute to the development of self-protective strategies for USSOCOM and targeting strategies to be utilized against the enemies of the United States, three different hypotheses will be considered throughout this research project. These include:

Hypothesis 1: High sensation seeking individuals are inherently susceptible to sexual espionage due to their natural tendency to engage in high-risk activities and greater tolerance for risk than their non-high sensation seeking peers.

Hypothesis 2: Sexual espionage will reemerge as a key HUMINT collection technique as the United States shifts its focus to state actors who are currently emerging as global threats, and who have proven themselves to be adept at the application of such practices in the past.

Hypothesis 3: Knowledge concerning how personality characteristics affect an individual's tendency to engage in high-risk activities can be utilized for the development of countermeasures to protect American servicemembers from this tactic, and also for use in the development of targeting strategies for future honey trap operations executed against the enemies of the United States.

Research Variables

The aforementioned psychological studies that were previously conducted as a means of demonstrating certain high-risk tendencies in high sensation seeking individuals will be analyzed collectively in order to develop procedures for how these proclivities can be identified and subsequently exploited for intelligence collection purposes.

The primary independent variables that will be considered throughout this research project will include the high sensation seeking personality profile and the psychological profiles sought after for selection by different organizations within USSOCOM and foreign Special Operations Forces. Like most personality characteristics, the high sensation seeking trait is inherent to the individual's psychological make up and is therefore unlikely to change dramatically throughout their lifetime. While environmental and situational variations may serve to either enhance or blunt the notable effects of this trait at times, these deviations will typically be minor and merely temporary until a return to the normal baseline occurs. The existence and persistent nature of this personality profile will be identified and measured through the analysis of psychological studies that have employed both formalized subjective testing and observational analysis in order to identify this trait and its associated behaviors.

While the manner in which Special Operations units are employed has shifted since the inception of such organizations, the dynamic that exists within these specialized units has always remained the same, and as such the caliber of individuals that are sought after to serve within these ranks has also remained largely unchanged. The fact that significant portions of the individuals who serve within USSOCOM possess the high sensation seeking personality trait will likely remain unaltered for the foreseeable future due to an operational necessity that requires such personalities in order to be effective. The prevalent nature of this personality type

within USSOCOM was identified through earlier research attempts to explain the ideal psychological make ups for such elite organizations.

The dependent variable that will be considered concerns the neurochemical responses experienced by high sensation seeking individuals when they are exposed to varying levels of stimulation. Richards Heuer noted the error that exists when researchers attribute far too much weight to the internal determinants of human behavior, and largely ignore the external determinants that are known to contribute significantly to an individual's comportment (Heuer 1999, 134). In order to avoid this common miscalculation, different forms of external stimuli that are suspected contributors to behavioral displays of high sensation seeking individuals will be considered within this study. The neurochemical responses that are experienced by high sensation seeking individuals vary greatly depending upon the type and level of external stimuli that the individual is exposed to. As previously mentioned, variances in cortisol and dopamine secretion have been identified when comparing high sensation seeking individuals with blunted HPA responses to their peers who do not demonstrate this personality trait (Laudenslager et al. 2011, 6). The situations and environments in which these individuals are placed will affect their neurochemical state, which can in turn have an effect on behavior.

Bias Concerns

As tends to be the case with most explanatory studies, the chance of confirmation bias being inadvertently included into the study was a concern. In order to prevent this phenomenon from occurring, a structured self-critique was conducted in order to identify any potential analytical bias, and to recognize information that may have been excluded or overlooked that potentially points to alternative hypotheses (Heuer and Randolph 2010, 225).

The need to take cultural variances into account when both identifying individuals who possess the high sensation seeking trait, as well as during the development of exploitation techniques to be utilized against these individuals, highlighted the need for a conscientious avoidance of several different cognitive biases throughout the development of this study. The cognitive bias that has the greatest potential to affect both the identification and the employment of a honey trap is the propensity to engage in mirror-imaging. This tendency, which assumes that others will think and rationalize in the same manner as he or she who is performing the analysis, can prove to be particularly detrimental to an operation when targeting a foreign nation with significant cultural differences (Heuer 1999, 70). As a result, once the shared vulnerabilities within these comparable organizations were identified, it was imperative to view the development of targeting methods for use against foreign enemies and methods for countering such attacks waged against the United States as completely different problem sets, rather than simply as inverse sides of the same issue.

Research Limitations

Due to the fact that this project is being developed for use in an unclassified forum, all materials that were utilized were collected through open source mediums to include journal articles, books, psychological testing manuals, and a variety of other sources. A prudent assumption can be made that additional information regarding this topic exists in classified forums; however, due to the nature of this paper, all hypotheses were developed based off of only the information that was available in unclassified sources.

Additionally, the United States' stated policy regarding the topic of sexual espionage is that it does not engage in such acts due to the immoral nature. It is difficult to believe that the United States wholly resists the application of this proven HUMINT collection practice, given its

demonstrated effectiveness, but due to the religious and moral outcry that would likely ensue following the exposure of such government run operations, it is not surprising that the U.S. government does not overtly support the use of such tactics. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that open sources are completely devoid of any mention of recent applications of this tactic by American personnel, and if this method has been utilized, the details of such operations will likely remain highly classified for the foreseeable future.

A final limitation that must be highlighted concerns the fact that countless factors contribute to human behavior, a fact that has long been identified by the nature vs. nurture debate. As such, it is impossible to isolate those variables that are directly related to the tendency to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors; in order to compensate for this limitation a conceptual analysis, a process in which an attempt is made in order to understand the relationship between the seemingly countless variables, will be conducted in order to understand and address the multitude of factors that can affect an individual's behavior (Heuer 1999, 60). This constraint will be acknowledged throughout the paper, and it should be noted that all recommended targeting strategies are based off of general personality profiles and are merely meant to provide guidance when preparing for future operations, and are not intended to serve as a "one size fits all" template for the execution of a honey trap or for the protection against such operations.

CHAPTER V
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Sometimes your greatest strength can emerge as a weakness if the context changes.
Harsha Bhogle

Sexual espionage is a highly complex subject with several different facets of this topic needing to be analyzed in order to truly understand the challenges of countering it, and the benefits of employing it. In order to make this daunting task slightly more manageable, the role of sexual espionage in intelligence collection will be analyzed in terms of these two separate, yet interconnected activities. Several nations with whom the United States is currently at odds with diplomatically have previously proven themselves to be willing and able to conduct honey trap operations, thus indicating that the future employment of this tactic by these same entities is highly plausible. As such, controls that can be implemented in order to assist in reducing current susceptibility levels within USSOCOM will be addressed, as the hardening of such a vital organization, which has been identified as being a relatively soft target, must take precedence. The second portion of this section will consider how the United States can benefit from exploiting this collection method. The United States currently maintains a non-use policy when it comes to the employment of sexual espionage for intelligence collection purposes, yet the demonstrated success of this particular tactic, coupled with the unique global threat environment that the United States is currently facing, raises the question as to whether American intelligence collection efforts are being hampered by its reluctance to employ this technique. It is for this reason that a secondary emphasis will be placed upon the potential application of sexual espionage against the enemies of the United States, as the previously identified personality traits

and neurochemical responses that make servicemembers within USSOCOM vulnerable to honey traps can be just as easily exploited in its foreign counterparts.

Contributing Factors to USSOCOM's Susceptibility to Sexual Espionage

Members of USSOCOM are oftentimes asked to engage in activities that are dangerous in nature and require the individual to employ decision-making processes that call for a certain level of moral relativism, a tendency that is commonly referred to as "operating in the grey". Professions such as these tend to be ideal for the high sensation seeking individual, as the stimulation provided helps to counter the negative aspects of the high sensation seeking trait such as boredom susceptibility, which tends to arise when the individual is not adequately stimulated. While this personality trait is extremely beneficial when viewed in the context of operational requirements, issues may arise when the desire to engage in high-risk activities bleeds over into the individual's personal life, and when the attempts to fulfill these desires become inappropriate or dangerous in nature. One method that is oftentimes employed by high sensation seeking individuals when seeking out sensorial incentives is engagement in the previously discussed categories of high-risk sexual behaviors. This inclination provides obvious avenues for exploitation, and as such it must be explored from both an offensive and defensive viewpoint.

Members of USSOCOM oftentimes face high levels of unavoidable risk as part of their profession, and it is not unfathomable to think that after years or even decades of engaging in high-risk activities, whether in training or during actual combat, that they would begin assessing future risks in both their personal and professional lives as comparably less perilous than would the average citizen. This penchant for underappreciating risk could lead some individuals to make questionable decisions when confronted with a potentially compromising sexual situation, as they may be inclined to partake in such an endeavor due to a simultaneous miscalculation of

the risk associated with the actions, and the seemingly irrepressible desire to obtain their sought after level of stimulation through sexual gratification. While there are obvious benefits associated with these individuals' ability to react in a calm and unencumbered manner when faced with adrenaline-producing activities, at a certain junction the personality characteristics that were once viewed as being beneficial can quickly become detrimental to both the individual and the organization.

It has already been discussed how the NEO PI-R can be utilized in order to identify high sensation seeking individuals, but this test also provides several additional assessment opportunities that can assist in identifying those individuals who may prove to be especially susceptible to sexual espionage attempts. Additional personality traits that can be analyzed in order to assist in making this determination include the assessment of the individual's impulsiveness and value orientation, as defined by the NEO PI-R under the facets of neuroticism and openness, respectively (Costa and McCrae 1992, 16-17). A score indicating a high level of impulsiveness can be a strong indicator as to an individual's inability to withstand the temptation of a honey trap that has been specifically tailored to their perceived desires (Costa and McCrae 1992, 16). An individual who scores high in this trait on the NEO PI-R, or who is observed as easily giving into their cravings, may find it difficult, if not nearly impossible, to not only deny themselves that which they desire, but to also deal with the subsequent frustration that is associated with this self-denial (Costa and McCrae 1992, 16). As previously noted however, those individuals who are highly disciplined in all other aspects of their lives may not receive a high score for this trait during formal testing procedures.

The values facet, which falls under the openness domain, should also be analyzed as it refers to an individual's "readiness to reexamine social, political, and religious values" (Costa

and McCrae 1992, 17)⁴. Those who score low in this category tend to display a higher propensity to “accept authority and honor tradition and as a consequence are generally conservative”; an individual who receives a low score for the O6 facet is therefore assessed as being a less attractive target, as they will likely be less open to sexual advances that could prove to be potentially compromising (Costa and McCrae 1992, 17)⁵. Oftentimes military units will refer to the collective “culture” of the organization, and reference the behavioral norms that exist within their relatively closed society as being representative of the values that are held by all of those who make up the ranks. While it is generally believed that those who enter into the community do so with the inherent possession of such principles, those who do not are expected to fall in line with the group. While most military organizations will outwardly attempt to instill relatively conservative beliefs into their subordinates, even complete devotion and respect for the organization may not prove to be enough to overcome the effects of the members’ individual personality traits. In line with the standard nature vs. nurture argument, it must be considered whether an individual’s inherent tendencies caused by their personality traits will outweigh the strength of their learned morality and social norms.

The usefulness of the values facet in determining potential risk leads to a similar need to understand the assessed individual’s background. The environment in which the individual was raised during their formative years may provide insight regarding the morals that the subject was exposed to in their youth that may have been carried over into adulthood. One such factor that is commonly cited as having long-term effects on an individual’s behavior is religious affiliation,

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which has been shown to reduce an individual's high sensation seeking tendencies, showing a particular impact upon the disinhibition that tends to be associated with this trait (Boomsma et al 1999, 124). Disinhibition is defined as "the desire to find release through social disinhibition, drinking, going to parties and having a variety of sexual partners"; all of the aforementioned behaviors have the potential to increase an individual's susceptibility to honey trap operations, due to either a reduction in the individual's ability to properly assess risk or in that their behaviors make for an easier initial approach (Boomsma et al 1999, 120). A religious upbringing is not the only factor that results in a more stringent view of morality as an adult, as being raised in a more conservative home, despite the absence of any religious affiliation, may produce similar results. This information should only be considered as supplementary details to be viewed in conjunction with a more recent personality profile however, as many individuals stray far from the values that were instilled in them in childhood.

The countless examples of individuals who have fallen prey to honey trap operations in the past serve as their own testament to the susceptibility of both men and women to sexual espionage. In recent years however the susceptibility of individuals serving within USSOCOM during the current protracted and high-intensity conflicts being waged across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has undoubtedly increased. The mere exposure to external stressors is not in and of itself an indication that an individual will be more susceptible to targeting via sexual espionage, but it is important to understand how chronic stimulation can influence both personality and behavior.

Increased Sensation Seeking Tendencies Due to Current Conflicts

The multitude of different regional conflicts that fall under the umbrella term of the "Global War on Terror" have been unofficially ongoing since the fall of 2001. This protracted

war has been conducted at an OPTEMPO that has persisted at an unprecedented level particularly for those working within USSOCOM. While official statements have been made regarding the effect that placing such a heavy reliance upon such a small group has had on these individuals' family lives and psychological well-being, one side effect that has received far less attention is the resultant constant need for stimulation that develops within this population after consistently operating at such a high level for so long.

The previously mentioned study conducted by Parmak et al. that indicated an increased need for sensory stimulation following combat deployments is especially relevant with regard to USSOCOM due to the unprecedented rate of usage that this organization has endured over the last decade and a half. The OPTEMPO that has been maintained throughout the ongoing conflicts in the MENA region has exponentially exceeded previous levels to the point where the individuals operating within these organizations are remaining in a highly aroused state for significant periods of time with little to no opportunity for a return to their normal baseline levels. General (Ret.) Stanley McChrystal highlighted the reason why many of these individuals are experiencing levels of stimulation during combat tours that exceed those which were previously felt by explaining, "In 2003, in many cases we'd go after someone, we might locate them and capture or kill them, and it would be weeks until we took the intelligence we learned from that and were able to turn it into another operation. Within about two years, we could turn that cycle three times in a night. We could capture someone, gain intelligence from the experience, go after someone else, and do three of those in a row, the second two involving people we didn't even know existed at the beginning of the night" (Rose 2013). When individuals who already have a propensity for seeking out highly stimulating activities are involved in such adrenaline-producing events over extended periods of time, a reduction in

stimulation is likely to intensify the aforementioned effects of boredom susceptibility and excitement seeking. As was noted by McChrystal in the same interview, this level of employment was critical given the threat environment, as these rapid and often simultaneous strikes were necessary in order to keep the enemy off guard and to inhibit their ability to restructure their command and control elements following the loss of key leaders (Rose 2013). USSOCOM has proven itself to be more than capable of maintaining this high-intensity OPTEMPO for extended periods of time; however, it would be prudent to assume that even the most resilient of the individuals who are employed within this organization will be incapable of emerging from such a highly stimulating environment without feeling the effects of it.

The solution to preventing the individuals who are returning from these high intensity deployments from falling victim to sexual espionage traps due to a heightened need for stimulating activity is not to target less vulnerable individuals to work within these organizations, or to retard the current OPTEMPO, but rather to implement measures that will assist in educating those who are vulnerable to these tactics, as well as their leadership, as to how their behavioral tendencies might be exploited, and to implement controls that can assist in reducing this vulnerability.

Methods of Countering Targeting Attempts Against Members of USSOCOM

The United States Special Operations Command is largely comprised of high sensation seeking individuals, a condition that is highly beneficial given the fact that these organizations require personnel who are eager to pursue challenges and who gain satisfaction from high-risk activities. An additional benefit of recruiting high sensation seeking individuals for these high-risk positions is that collectively high sensation seekers have been identified as being more stress-resistant when faced with adverse conditions, which leads to a greater resiliency after

being exposed to the physical and psychological stressors of war (Parmak et al 2012, 553). This increased resiliency is critical for a population that is asked to constantly place themselves into harm's way and to deal with the psychological effects of what they have seen and done for operational purposes in a healthy manner. Thus the solution for reducing the vulnerability level of individuals operating within USSOCOM to sexual espionage operations is not to seek out different personality types that may prove to be inherently less likely to succumb to such collection efforts, but rather to develop manageable solutions that can assist in limiting this vulnerability while still ensuring the operational effectiveness of this population. Several different methods can be employed in order to attempt to reduce this vulnerability, and while a combination of the following proposed methods may prove to be moderately effective, it should be understood that this threat cannot be eliminated completely.

Education

The most simple and least invasive technique that can be implemented for the purpose of reducing vulnerability to honey traps is through simple education. Individuals within USSOCOM need to be alerted not only to the presence of this threat, but also to the variety of successful tactics that have previously been employed. The honey trap was a widely known threat during the Cold War era, and the glamorization of this technique by Hollywood helped to spread awareness regarding its effectiveness for intelligence collection purposes. However, the last two decades have been wrought with international conflicts that have required the United States military to focus primarily upon countering extremist organizations, and the collective fear surrounding the threat of sexual espionage has long since eroded. As diplomatic relations between the United States and state actors such as Russia and China, nations who are known to employ this HUMINT collection practice, continue to deteriorate, a significant reemergence of

this tactic can be expected. Although it is possible, it is unlikely that either of the aforementioned nations would willingly engage in an overt military conflict with the United States in the near future due to the risks associated with such actions. However, both of these nations are well known for their use of clandestine intelligence collection techniques, and it would be prudent to assume that they will continue to employ this tried and true method in support of future collection efforts. While more recent examples of sexual espionage waged against the United States, such as those involving the “Parlor Maid” and the still unnamed Chinese graduate student in Hawaii, have been publicized in open news sources, it is conceivable that many individuals operating within USSOCOM are still unaware of the prevalence of this technique and could benefit from such information. Individuals who require security clearances must receive training on the protection of classified information prior to being granted full access to any sensitive material. The inclusion of threat warnings regarding known sexual espionage tactics that could be included in these initial threat briefings may be enough to dissuade some individuals from engaging in high-risk sexual behaviors, or to at least provide them with some ‘red flags’ to be aware of that may indicate that they are being targeted for a potential honey trap. While the United States military’s heavy reliance upon annual training requirements has created a reluctance to add to the already seemingly unmanageable assortment of mandatory briefings and online training modules, the fact that training on sexual espionage awareness would cover topics of a sexual nature and could rely heavily upon the usage of anecdotal accounts to convey the true nature of this threat may create a bit more interest in the topic. In order to ensure that this type of training appeals to the target audience, Donohew et al. recommends that it be “(a) novel, creative, or unusual; (b) complex; (c) intense, emotionally powerful, or physically

arousing; (d) graphic or explicit; (e) somewhat ambiguous; (f) unconventional; (g) fast-paced; or (h) suspenseful” (Donohew et al. 2000, 1081).

While education regarding this particular technique would undoubtedly be advantageous, this alone is unlikely to significantly reduce the vulnerability of the target population. As has been highlighted throughout the entirety of this paper, one of the most significant factors that contributes to an individual’s susceptibility to honey traps is the possession of the high sensation seeking personality trait and the actions that are taken by the individual in order to achieve the level of stimulation that they crave. Education alone will likely prove to be an inadequate control against the novelty and sensation seeking desires of the studied population, thus additional measures will need to be taken.

Stellate Ganglion Blocks

A common theme that is typically cited by high sensation seeking individuals is the feeling of constantly being in a heightened state of arousal regardless of their situation or environment, with associated feelings of anxiety when a certain level of activity cannot be maintained. Several theories may help to explain this description, with Eysenck’s PEN model perhaps providing the simplest explanation. Eysenck cited cortisol as being one of the primary hormonal indicators of behavioral traits, with chronic overarousal caused by increased levels of cortisol being seen in introverted individuals and chronic underarousal due to reduced cortisol production being seen in individuals who demonstrated the extraversion trait (Hoyle et al. 2000, 2008). Though the lowered production of cortisol levels experienced by some high sensation seeking individuals during high stress events, likely resultant from the previously mentioned issue with the blunted HPA axis response, may result in an increased affinity for high-risk activities, it has also been associated with traits that are ideal for members of the Special

Operations community. Richard Dienstbier noted in “Arousal and Physiological Toughness: Implications for Mental and Physical Health” that “the stress tolerance of the toughened organism is associated with an ability to suppress the cortisol response and to resist brain catecholamine depletion and the associated behavioral suppression” (Dienstbier 1989, 88). The vast majority of the individuals who operate within USSOCOM have managed to master the ability of suppressing either the cortisol response, or the behavioral displays typically associated with it, when exposed to truly stressful situations; however, as was noted in the same report, a significant increase in cortisol levels is recognized in these types of “activity-seeking Type A subjects” when they are being understimulated, which as previously addressed throughout this paper is associated with a different set of operational concerns (Dienstbier 1989, 87).

Assuming that this is true, it can be presumed that high sensation seeking individuals who experience the aforementioned inverse cortisol response or a blunted HPA axis will experience higher levels of stress when placed into unstimulating environments, with a notable alleviation of this anxiety when the environment becomes more stimulating (Tyrka et al. 2006, 1041). Some of these individuals may have experienced blunted HPA axis responses their entire lives, while others may have had experiences later on in life that led to permanent shifts in the HPA response, with PTSD being a recognized cause of such a shift (Tyrka et al. 2006, 1037). In order to understand why this occurs, it is important to understand the role that the sympathetic nervous system plays in the activation of the stress response. The sympathetic nervous system is a subcomponent of the autonomic nervous system, which regulates many of the functions within the body that are subconsciously controlled. The sympathetic nervous system is responsible for the body’s “fight or flight” response when the individual encounters a stressor, and if functioning properly it should return to baseline levels shortly after the external stimulus is removed (Lipov

2013, 1). Generally the autonomic nervous system should exist in an equalized state with the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems balancing one another out; however, when faced with external stressors for extended periods of time it is possible that the body will become sympathetic nervous system-dominant and the individual will feel as though they are in a permanently heightened state of arousal.

The neurochemical effect that occurs as a result of sympathetic nervous system stimulation can provide significant insight as to why high sensation seekers gravitate towards high-risk behaviors despite possessing full knowledge of the detrimental outcomes that their actions could have. In the previously cited experiment conducted by Deltu et al. it was identified that the test subjects appeared to seek out novelty, variety, and change during each of the tests, and it was noted that the high responding rats “behaved as if they needed to be permanently aroused by a high level of novelty” (Deltu et al. 1996, 139). Similar needs have been expressed by high sensation seeking humans, and overtime these individuals will require greater levels of risk and novelty in order to achieve the level of stimulation that they desire. The only way to combat the vulnerability that accompanies such desires is to either ensure that adequate levels of stimulation are achieved through means that do not increase the individual’s susceptibility to sexual espionage, or to attempt to reduce the amount of stimulation that is required.

One of the more recent, and still heavily debated, procedures that attempts to reduce the effects of chronic overstimulation of the sympathetic nervous system is the stellate ganglion block (SGB), a procedure that infiltrates the stellate ganglion nerve chain that lies along the side of the neck with a local anesthetic, which temporarily inhibits the functioning of this branch of the sympathetic nervous system and allows the body to return to the autonomic nervous system’s baseline setting (Lipov 2007, 1).

This procedure was originally developed as a nerve block meant to reduce pain in the upper body caused by either nerve or circulation issues, but due to the positive psychological side effects recognized from its employment, it is now being tested as a treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms (Lipov 2013, 2). Two of the major complaints reported by individuals who are diagnosed with PTSD that are also seen in the majority of Type A, high sensation seeking individuals are the inability to relax and a constant feeling of being anxious and on edge; these symptoms indicate a possible overactivation of the sympathetic nervous system for which the high sensation seeker who demonstrates an inverse cortisol response may feel the need to seek out adrenaline producing events in order to achieve a better balance of their autonomic nervous system. Although no studies were found that directly indicated a correlation between the high sensation seeking personality trait and a chronic overstimulation of the sympathetic nervous system, it can be assumed that those who constantly seek out adrenaline-producing activities, thereby continuously stimulating the sympathetic nervous system, run the risk of potentially reaching a state in which they become sympathetic nervous system-dominant. This can be an especially troublesome phenomenon for high sensation seekers who still crave the same level of stimulation, but due to their heightened sympathetic nervous system baseline may require greater levels of stimulating input in order to achieve the same level of euphoric output.

When engaging in high intensity military operations, such as those that have been conducted by USSOCOM for the past fourteen years, the sympathetic nervous system is continuously stimulated as these individuals engage in high-risk training events and potentially life-threatening operations. Regardless of the presence of any PTSD diagnosis, or even subjective reporting of related symptoms, it can be assessed that the increased need to seek out

stimulation through high-risk activities amongst this population stems from both a greater acceptance of risk and an overstimulated sympathetic nervous system that requires the individual to engage in exceptionally risky behavior in order to get the same satisfactory response that was previously experienced by these already high sensation-seeking individuals.

Though medical trials are still being conducted in order to determine if SGBs are an appropriate treatment method for PTSD-like symptoms, the theoretical effects that this procedure has on the sympathetic nervous system indicates that it may also be a viable method of resetting the sympathetic nervous system baseline in high sensation seeking individuals in an effort to reduce their perceived need to engage in high-risk activities, particularly following intense combat deployments during which these cravings likely intensify due to a chronic exposure to adrenaline-producing events. In theory, by utilizing the SGB to reset the sympathetic nervous system, a simultaneous lowering of the amount of external stimulus that is required in order for these individuals to achieve the desired level of stimulation may be possible. This may in turn reduce the high sensation seeker's vulnerability to high-risk sexual behaviors, to include those executed as part of honey trap operations.

Once again, the complex nature of sexual espionage operations necessitates a multifaceted approach for countering this threat. While the use of the SGB in an attempt to reduce an individual's need for novelty and stimulation may prove to be somewhat successful, this method alone, or even coupled with a greater emphasis upon educating servicemembers about the perils of sexual espionage, will likely prove to be inadequate. Changes to current U.S. policies will be required in order to truly reduce the effectiveness of this HUMINT collection technique.

Policy Revisions to Encourage the Reporting of Sexual Espionage Attempts

While sexual espionage operations can take on many different forms, the most commonly recognized tactic exploits an individual utilizing proof of their sexual indiscretions in order to blackmail them into complying with future requests for information. The use of blackmail in order to recruit sources is notoriously unsuccessful in the long term, as these sources tend to resent their handlers and will provide the minimum amount of information in order to satisfy their obligations. However, if a foreign government or extremist organization were attempting to collect information in the short term with little interest in the development of long-term assets, then blackmail could prove to be a fairly effective technique. This places individuals who find themselves caught up in such traps in a tricky predicament, as their only options tend to be treason or self-destruction, as many times the actions that they engaged in that resulted in their vulnerability to blackmail have moral and legal ramifications under current Department of Defense policies. Arguably, one of the most prolific acts that results in this vulnerability is adultery. The Uniform Code of Military Justice currently prohibits extramarital sexual activity for any participants regardless of their own marital status, and due in large part to the recent military drawdowns, these acts oftentimes result in punishments that while not immediately devastating are essentially career ending. While there is no article of the UCMJ that specifically addresses adultery, it is typically covered under Article 134: General Article. Under the stipulations of the current UCMJ, in order for a service member to be charged with adultery under Article 134 their actions must meet the following criteria: that the accused wrongfully had sexual intercourse with a certain person, that, at the time, the accused or the other person was married to someone else; that, under the circumstances, the conduct of the accused was to the prejudice of good order and discipline in the armed forces or was of a nature to bring discredit

upon the armed forces (Manual for Courts Martial 2012, 387). The UCMJ allows for flexibility when punishing such indiscretions, oftentimes allowing the military commander a significant amount of latitude when determining whether the behavior had a negative impact on the military in any way. The ramifications of such acts can therefore be fairly insignificant if the individual's leadership determines that the behavior was in no way detrimental to the organization or its mission, but in the event that a servicemember is approached by a foreign agent who produces proof of such sexual indiscretions it is likely that the target will assume the worst in terms of their potential punishment and will at the very least entertain the idea of doing what is necessary in order to prevent the exposure of their actions. If the adversary that is running the operation has chosen the appropriate target, the natural tendency towards self-preservation could prove to be devastating to the United States.

It is difficult to accurately determine the frequency with which adulterous affairs occur amongst members of the United States military, and more specifically within USSOCOM, due to the fact that charges of adultery are consolidated under Article 134 with numerous other legal indiscretions. Additionally, charges of 'inappropriate relationships', a term commonly used to describe relationships that are deemed to be unsuitable, but which do not meet the criteria necessary in order to be tried for adultery by court-martial, are oftentimes handled through non-judicial action and therefore are not necessarily tracked by the military's Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps. Given the recent number of high profile cases concerning adulterous relationships carried out by high-ranking members of the United States military however, it can reasonably be assumed that these acts are prevalent throughout the ranks, which indicates that current restrictions that have been placed upon extramarital sexual relationships are not effective at preventing this type of behavior.

Currently if a service member engages in an extramarital affair and becomes the victim of an attempt at blackmail, whether as a result of the exploiter's ability to collect proof of an already occurring relationship or the failure of the victim to recognize the fact that he or she was being targeted utilizing a honey trap, their inability to report such threats without potentially derailing their entire personal and professional lives may drive the otherwise loyal individual to conduct treasonous acts. This is largely due to the fact that even a refusal to give into the exploitation demands and the decision to report such attempts to the appropriate agency will typically destroy an individual's career, oftentimes break up their family, and potentially put their security clearance into jeopardy, thus significantly impairing their ability to secure gainful future employment in their current career field. Current regulations provide absolutely no incentive for self-reporting, and individuals facing exploitation have to decide between self-preservation and loyalty to their country. While this seems like an obvious choice when judging the circumstances from the outside looking in, when faced with such bleak options, many intelligent and well-trained individuals may make the ill-advised decision to provide their exploiters with what they believe to be an insignificant amount of seemingly useless information in order to buy themselves enough time to find a way out of their current predicament, only to later find themselves to be so deeply entrenched that they have no other option but to continue to acquiesce to their exploiters' requests. Questions of morality aside, it is imperative for counterintelligence purposes that individuals have a way of extracting themselves from such compromising situations without jeopardizing their entire futures. One way of accomplishing this is to remove the threat of UCMJ action as a result of extramarital affairs. While the exposure of such affairs could still have a significant impact upon the individual's personal life,

the removal of any concerns regarding the impact of such activities on their professional life may be enough to increase the likelihood of such events getting reported.

This is not to say that individuals who fall victim to honey trap operations and expose information that proves to be detrimental to U.S. national security should not be prosecuted; on the contrary, maximum punishment should be sought for this type of treasonous behavior. The proposed modifications to the UCMJ concerning the act of adultery could limit this form of compromise by providing servicemembers with a means of extracting themselves from a foreign-run honey trap in a less self-destructive manner than currently exists. These changes would also provide additional justification for the prosecution of individuals who do choose to provide information to the enemy after getting caught up in such traps, as the decision to forego the alternative reporting options that were available to them would be highly indicative of the security risk posed by the individual.

Controllable Factors that Increase American Vulnerability

While it is primarily a personal responsibility to avoid becoming the victim of a honey trap, there are additional factors that must be considered that may contribute to a greater national susceptibility to such operations. The United States is a fairly progressive nation in regards to the types of sexual behaviors that are generally tolerated amongst its general populace, especially when compared to many of its foreign counterparts, yet media reporting regarding sexual indiscretions by American public figures is oftentimes indignant, and calls are quickly made for the resignation of the individuals involved purely on moral grounds. David Lewis commented on this phenomenon in his book “Sexpionage” by noting that “behavior acceptable as normal in the average citizen is still, apparently, regarded with horror when performed by those in public life ... but it is the threat of just such exposure, exactly this type of public humiliation and

disgrace, that persuades many sexpionage victims to turn traitor in the hope of salvaging their dignity and their careers” (Lewis 1976, 152). One of the more recent examples of the effects of just such media reporting following the exposure of a public figure’s sexual indiscretions involves former CIA Director David Petraeus. Petraeus was not the target of a foreign-laid honey trap, but rather he became involved in an extramarital affair that was made public after e-mail correspondence that he had exchanged with his mistress was discovered as part of an unrelated investigation (Fingleton 2012). Though concerns later emerged that Petraeus had exposed classified information to his mistress that she was not cleared for (which raises other obvious concerns), the initial calls for his resignation as the leader of the CIA were based off of the fact that his affair was viewed as being immoral and having the potential to make him vulnerable to blackmail attempts in the future. The fact that such a powerful and well-established man was cast out of public service because of an extra-marital affair had to have sparked interest in even those foreign intelligence agencies that do not regularly conduct sexual espionage-type operations. If all that is needed in order to strike such a debilitating blow to such a powerful government entity like America’s Central Intelligence Agency is to expose inappropriate electronic correspondence between a high-ranking official and someone other than their spouse, then why not at least attempt to exploit this self-imposed vulnerability?

The Soviet’s quickly recognized the need to identify such cultural nuances when establishing their programs, and swallows and ravens were trained to assess and target such cultural vulnerabilities. They would oftentimes rely on media reporting from their targeted regions to assist in determining the common societal reactions to sexual indiscretions by important public figures. This information would then assist the agents in gauging the likelihood of success for blackmail operations waged against individuals from that region (Lewis 1976, 36-

37). It can be assumed that the more indignant the reporting regarding sexual indiscretions seemed, the more likely individuals were to succumb to requests for information in exchange for discretion. If tactics such as this are still utilized in identifying potential targets for sexual espionage operations, then the American media is not doing its citizens any favors.

Inflammatory remarks meant for broadcast throughout the nation regarding the legal, though perhaps not always entirely moral, sexual behavior of American public figures, to include military personnel, likely only serves to broaden the bullseye that has already been placed upon Americans for targeting purposes, as it has been made readily apparent that one of the quickest ways to lose favor with the American public is to engage in sexual activities that go against societal norms.

This is not to suggest that the United States take a cavalier approach to promiscuous sexual behaviors, but the tendency of the United States media, and subsequently the general population, to judge sexual activity based upon the outdated puritanical views that the nation was founded upon seems counterproductive for such an otherwise progressive nation. When issues such as the Petraeus affair become national headlines, not because of the potential compromise of classified information that occurred, but merely because of the fact that he had engaged in sexual behavior with someone other than his spouse, it reaffirms to America's enemies that this is an incredibly lucrative avenue for targeting opportunities.

The Employment of Honey Trap Operations for the Purpose of Foreign Exploitation

The United States government does not openly support the employment of sexual espionage as a HUMINT collection technique, due to concerns regarding the morality and effectiveness of this tactic. However, as the global threat environment becomes more complex in nature with many state actors acknowledging the benefits of the use of unconventional tactics for

conflict resolution, it may become necessary for the United States to reexamine its current position on the execution of honey traps, and to realize the benefits of this type of operation when conducted against appropriate targets. The backlash that can occur following the exposure of such operations has the potential to be significant, and therefore this method should only be utilized against targets who have displayed notable vulnerabilities to such operations, and who possess information that cannot be collected or verified through other means. If done correctly, the intelligence gleaned through this collection method could prove to be significant.

Just as USSOCOM has been identified as being more susceptible to sexual espionage ploys due to its significant make up of high sensation seeking individuals, it can reasonably be assumed that its foreign counterparts are equally likely to display increased levels of vulnerability due to their ranks being comprised of individuals who possess similar personality profiles. Some of these nations may prove to be even more vulnerable due to culturally derived sexual repression that only serves to exacerbate the propensity of these individuals to engage in high-risk sexual activities.

Little scholarly data could be found regarding the psychological aspects of the recruitment, assessment, and selection processes for the plethora of foreign Special Operations Forces that currently exist, thus some assumptions regarding the similarities between these comparable organizations have to be made. The aforementioned NATO manual concerning psychological evaluations for SOF selection highlights the importance of selecting individuals who display certain traits such as risk-acceptance, eagerness for challenge, and a natural orientation towards a pursuit of excellence, and it recommends utilizing the previously mentioned Five Factor Model to do so (Ivey et al. 2012, 2-9). The fact that at least some organizations within USSOCOM also utilize the Five Factor Model during their assessment and

selection processes may serve as an indicator that a number of different nations are selecting personnel to serve within their SOF organizations based off of similar personality-based criteria.

Cultural Considerations Regarding Sexual Exploitation

While an individual's inherent personality profile will undoubtedly factor into their potential vulnerability to honey trap operations, external influences will also play a role in this tendency with cultural norms proving to be especially significant. Before even attempting to identify potential targets within a foreign SOF organization, it is important to assess the level and type of vulnerability of the nation itself. When intelligence analysts perform any sort of assessment they are continuously reminded to remove their own opinions and biases from their evaluations, as these subconscious tendencies have the potential to significantly skew the available facts. The same conscious effort must be made when initially determining the vulnerability of a target nation and organization due to the fact that cultural nuances can have a significant impact upon how this form of intelligence collection should be approached.

The Soviet Union was arguably the most adept nation at executing honey traps against foreigners for intelligence collection purposes; however, even they realized that there are cultural limitations to the effectiveness of this collection technique. One example of such limitations was seen in the early 1960's when then Indonesian President Sukarno visited the Soviet Union. As had become common practice with most visiting foreign dignitaries, President Sukarno was immediately inundated with attention from beautiful women, many of whom he eventually engaged with in sexual activities, all of which were being surreptitiously recorded. As his official visit came to an end Sukarno was subjected to the usual Soviet shock and awe tactic of being escorted to KGB headquarters while agents paraded in front of him the undeniable evidence of his indiscretions that had been collected throughout the duration of his trip. To the

Soviets' surprise however, President Sukarno did not react in the usual fearful manner, but rather seemed to enjoy the evidence that was being presented, and subsequently requested copies to return home with for public showing, as he stated "My people are going to be so proud of me!" (Lewis 1976, 18). Needless to say, it is unlikely that President Sukarno or any future Indonesian dignitaries were ever again targeted with this collection technique, as the President's indication of the nation's collective social values had made clear the fact that the desired effect would not be obtained. This particular historical anecdote highlights the need to understand the cultural nuances of the geographical region against which these operations are intended, as a society that appears to be widely accepting of a variety of sexual proclivities may prove to be a far less target-rich environment for honey trap operations. It may also be assumed that extremely conservative nations with repressively strict laws concerning sex and sexuality would also prove to be difficult to target via this method due to the mental reservations that these individuals might have following such an upbringing. However, the presence of strong religious views and conservative beliefs should not be viewed as insurmountable barriers when planning sexual espionage operations, as the placement of such restrictions upon high sensation seeking individuals may serve to escalate the risk associated with such actions thereby increasing the allure.

While the United States is currently facing a highly diverse threat environment, its primary efforts are still focused on countering Islamic extremism across MENA. Due to the religious beliefs that are espoused by these extremist organizations and the closed manner in which they operate, they would likely prove to be far more difficult to target utilizing sexual espionage tactics than some of America's less conservative foes. This increased level of difficulty should not serve as a definitive deterrent however, as the individuals who make up

these organizations are still likely to possess personality traits that make them vulnerable to such efforts, and it may simply require a bit more planning and logistical considerations in order to execute a successful honey trap against these targets. A perfect example of the vulnerability that still exists within such religious extremist organizations can be seen in the case of Anwar al-Awlaki. Al-Awlaki, an American citizen who later became one of the leading propagandists for Al Qaeda, was in fact arrested twice in the San Diego, CA area for soliciting oral sex from undercover policewomen posing as prostitutes back in 1996 and 1997 (*The People of the State of California V. Anwar Aulaqi 1996*) (*The People of the State of California V. Anwar Aulaqi 1997*). Despite his two previous encounters with law enforcement officials, al-Awlaki's propensity to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors remained with him even after he moved to the Washington D.C. area in order to assume the position of Imam at Dar al-Hijrah, one of the more prominent mosques in the area (Shane 2015). The FBI surveillance team that was assigned with tracking his movements following a renewed interest in his potential ties to terrorism following the 9/11 attacks noted that he enjoyed the company of known prostitutes on a regular basis. The agents were able to interview one of these women who noted that al-Awlaki was a regular client of hers (Interview With Prostitute Frequented By Anwar Al-Awlaki, 2002). While the involvement of prostitutes in government-run honey traps is not necessarily a business that the United States should regularly involve itself in, this technique proved to be highly effective for the Soviet Union and Germany (and later East Germany) during WWII and the Cold War. Both nations employed this technique with a fairly loose targeting strategy with most of their operations consisting of simply 'throwing out a net and seeing what they could catch'; this primarily consisted of setting up surveillance inside the brothels that had proven to be favorites for foreigners and government officials and then either utilizing the tapes for blackmail purposes or

for simply exploiting the information that the targets revealed while in their relaxed state (Lewis 1976, 98). A far more targeted operation in which a prostitute who is known to be frequented regularly by a particularly hard target may prove to be worth the potential public outcry should the details of the operation come to light.

The previous two examples concerning the targetability of certain groups and nations depict extreme cases at opposite ends of the vulnerability spectrum, with most groups or nation states lying somewhere in the middle. Once again this speaks to the criticality of developing strong targeting profiles not only for the individual that has been selected for pursuit, but also the nations or groups that the individual is affiliated with, as this can have a significant impact upon how their personal vulnerabilities can be exploited. Utilizing the aforementioned scenarios as examples, it is obvious that any attempts to blackmail President Sukarno regarding his sexual behavior would prove to be disappointing at best, but his affinity for beautiful women may open up other potential avenues for exploitation. Rather than providing Sukarno with countless beautiful women during his visit, it may have been more fruitful from an intelligence standpoint to provide him with one such woman, who had coincidentally also been trained in the art of HUMINT collection and was well-versed in basic social engineering techniques, who could have utilized her charm and sexual prowess to gain his trust, and then used her intellect and wit to gain information.

Conversely, the likelihood of a potential target that is a staunch proponent of Sharia law engaging in meaningful conversation with a woman that he believes is being provided to him for purely sexual reasons is slim. These individuals may only prove susceptible to blackmail practices due to their need to maintain their status within a highly religious organization. Due to the fact that historically the long-term success rate of sexual blackmail has been fairly lackluster,

this technique should only be employed for the short-term, or even one time, collection of information.

Though sexual espionage can be utilized as a short-term collection technique to acquire specific information, the ideal application of the honey trap is through the development of long-term romantic relationships that have the potential to provide continuous access to information in the future. This would obviously require a significant time commitment from the individual tapped for the job, though the targeting of specific types of individuals may not only assist in reducing the demand placed upon the person executing the trap, but could also simultaneously exploit the target's affinity for high-risk activities. Cultural factors will once again come into play, but the deliberate targeting of individuals who will be forced to keep the relationship private, such as those who are married or who are restricted in their ability to enter into relationships with foreigners either due to the cultural implications of such an affair or because of security concerns, would be ideal targets. These individuals would not only have to maintain a high level of discretion for personal reasons, thus providing a certain level of protection for the agent executing the trap, but in both cases the added fear of the repercussions of the target's actions being exposed would likely prove to be beneficial in increasing the allure for the high sensation seeking individual.

The Exploitation of Foreign Special Operations Forces

When attempting to exploit these high sensation seeking tendencies in members of the Special Operations communities of foreign nations, it is imperative that all operations be highly specific to the individual being targeted. Honey trap operations cannot be employed indiscriminately, but rather a significant amount of planning must go into preparing for such operations. As demonstrated in the tale regarding Indonesia's former President, foreign nations

will demonstrate different forms of susceptibility to honey traps, and it is imperative that mirror-imaging be avoided when assessing the vulnerability of individuals. Each nation has its own social norms concerning sexual behaviors, and while variances will exist amongst the inhabitants of the region, these still need to be understood. Fully aware of this concept, KGB officials groomed their operatives to work in specific regions and the students studied the “sexual mores and attitudes” of the country to which they were to be assigned (Lewis 1976, 37). These individuals would utilize a variety of sources in order to understand the sexual environment that they would operate in through local men’s and woman’s magazines, popular television shows and films, and pornographic material (Lewis 1972, 36-37). This information played a critical role in ensuring that the operation had the greatest chance for success and that the actions of the agent who was running the trap proved to be adequate in fulfilling the high-risk and novelty seeking desires that had led the target into the trap in the first place.

It must be remembered that simply possessing the high sensation seeking trait does not indicate that an individual will prove to be susceptible to such tactics, thus in addition to being a high sensation seeker, potential targets should also be evaluated for additional vulnerability factors. Several negative aspects of the high sensation seeking trait have been discussed, with the inverse stress response to understimulation being one of the most notable. The previously mentioned tendency to require heightened levels of stimulation due to chronic exposure to adrenaline-producing events will certainly be seen within the foreign SOF population, and it has the potential to be equally exploitable as the same tendency that exists within USSOCOM. An additional means of exploiting this propensity is by targeting individuals who are not only high sensation seekers, but who are also highly driven, yet appear to be underutilized professionally, as these individuals are more likely to seek out high-risk, adrenaline-producing activities in their

personal lives in order to offset the elevated stress levels that they experience due to inadequate stimulation in their professional lives.

The exploitation of the high sensation seeking personality trait should not stop following target selection, but rather the effects of this trait should be considered when determining how to approach the individual. When it comes to determining the type of approach that will be utilized against an identified target, any high-risk tendencies that were previously noted during the target development phase should be exploited based off of the psychological and neurochemical responses that they are believed to produce. For instance, if the target participates in extreme sports, then the initial approach should be timed so as to fully exploit the stimulation that the target experienced while partaking in that high-risk venture. Provided that the assumption regarding the tendency for high sensation seeking individuals to experience inverse cortisol responses when exposed to external stimuli is correct, then a properly stimulated high sensation seeker should experience a reduction in cortisol levels following their participation in adrenaline-producing activities, and therefore should be experiencing lowered levels of physical and psychological stress. This should in turn lower the feeling of 'being on edge' that is frequently reported by these individuals, and may make them more open to, and less wary of, being approached by an unknown person. As previously noted, the reduction in cortisol levels also plays an important role in the activation of an individual's libido, a factor that plays an obvious role in the initiation of a sexual relationship with a targeted individual.

The controversial nature of the usage of sexual espionage as an intelligence collection technique has prevented the United States from fully exploiting this proven collection method against its enemies in the past; however, as the global threat environment shifts, the collection of

information via this tactic may become more crucial in ensuring that United States policymakers have the information that they require in order to make informed foreign policy decisions.

Conclusion

USSOCOM is an elite military organization that is filled with highly disciplined individuals who also tend to display a high propensity for sensation seeking and risk taking. As previously noted, these traits are ideal given the requirements that are placed upon such organizations, and the common personality traits that are seen within the ranks of these units undoubtedly contribute greatly to the overall success of the community. However, as was also mentioned, these same traits have the potential to increase an individual's level of susceptibility to HUMINT collection practices that exploit the inclination to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors. While this vulnerability has not proven to be of great concern in recent years, increased tensions between the United States and nations such as Russia and China could result in a reemergence of this technique on a far greater scale than has previously been seen. The United States has not been discreet regarding the heavy reliance that has been placed upon USSOCOM to not only deliver precision strikes to foreign threats in MENA, but also to play a significant role in the United States' overall global military strategy. The public nature of the many capabilities that can be provided by these organizations has helped to place a target upon this group, and it is only a matter of time before America's enemies begin to engage it.

While the United States' primary effort regarding sexual espionage should be to develop self-protective countermeasures in order to ward off such attacks, it would be remiss to forego the opportunity to exploit this notable vulnerability within its own enemies. It must be acknowledged that the application of such collection efforts against foreign SOF organizations is accompanied by several limitations that range from current restrictive U.S. policies to the

resource intensive nature of properly assessing potential targets prior to such operations even commencing. This HUMINT collection technique is limited in its applicability due to the many factors that contribute to its potential effectiveness; however, the identification and targeting of highly susceptible individuals who either currently have access to desirable information of intelligence value, or who are expected to move into such positions in the future, could result in the establishment of a critical American asset in an area that is otherwise devoid of vulnerabilities to other U.S. forms of intelligence collection.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The United States is currently facing an increasingly complex global threat environment, and it can no longer primarily focus its energy solely upon countering the Islamic insurgencies in the Middle East and North Africa, but rather it must now begin to redirect its assets to the nation states who have displayed a willingness to take drastic military action in order to enhance their influence in the international community. As the global threat environment grows more complex, so too will the intelligence collection efforts waged against the United States by those who wish to upset the global power structure that currently exists. While the United States must continue to place a heavy focus upon protecting itself from the more notable threats of terrorism and cyber warfare, it must also defend itself against the more rudimentary intelligence collection strategies, such as the employment of the honey trap. The use of sexual espionage as a HUMINT collection technique has long been a favorite of some of the nations with whom the United States currently maintains strained relationships with, and it would be prudent to assume that the current usage of such tactics by these nations has at least been considered, if they are not already being employed.

Concerns have been raised throughout this paper regarding the increased susceptibility of high sensation seeking individuals to sexual espionage operations. The lack of information that currently exists regarding any correlation between the possession of certain personality traits and an increased susceptibility to becoming a victim of a honey trap has been noted; however, by performing a conceptual analysis of a variety of psychological studies that have previously been conducted in an effort to understand why certain individuals display far greater propensities for engaging in high-risk sexual behaviors, trends in common personality profiles were identified.

The prevalent nature of the high sensation seeking personality trait within such studies coupled with the fact that this trait has been identified as one of the more prominent personality traits appearing in individuals serving within military Special Operations units, may serve as an indicator of a potentially elevated susceptibility within these organizations that should be explored further. The mere presence of personality traits such as the high sensation seeking, novelty seeking, or impulsivity traits should not be viewed in a negative light, but rather the behavioral tendencies that the individuals who possess these traits display during their attempts to achieve the level of stimulation that they crave should be analyzed, as it is the high-risk behaviors that are typically associated with such personality traits that could eventually place the individual at risk of exploitation via a honey trap.

The increased reliance that the United States has placed upon its Special Operations Command over the last two decades has undoubtedly increased the susceptibility of the members who operate within this organization to sexual espionage operations by not only increasing the level and frequency of the external stimuli that they are exposed to, and thus potentially increasing their need to engage in high-risk behaviors both in their personal and professional lives in order to experience the level of stimulation that they crave, but also by highlighting the critical role that this organization plays in the furtherance of U.S. foreign policy, which will likely enhance their attractiveness as targets for such collection efforts. The collective concern that once existed regarding sexual espionage within the United States has long since tapered off following the conclusion of the Cold War, but due to recent foreign developments such as Russia's incursion into Ukrainian territory and its more recent involvement in the conflict raging on in Syria, and the ongoing economic espionage and cyber concerns that exist between the United States and China, it would be irrational and frankly even naïve of the United States to

believe that these nations that are known to have previously executed successful honey trap operations against the United States would be hesitant to do so again today. The United States has enjoyed a unique position of power within the international community for several decades, which makes it an obvious target for those who wish to claim this position for themselves. It is unlikely that the nations who aspire to such a role would directly confront the United States in a traditional war given the United States' political capital and military might, and it is because of this fact that America must prepare itself to fend off far less overt attacks such as those that involve sexual espionage. The prevalent nature of the high sensation seeking trait that is found within USSOCOM, coupled with the need for the members of such organizations to have access to highly classified information for operational purposes, makes this small group of individuals the perfect target for future honey trap operations. The implementation of the aforementioned controls, in addition to organizationally specific risk mitigation techniques, can assist in reducing the vulnerability that currently exists within this vital organization.

Just as the current global threat environment must force the United States to reevaluate the vulnerabilities that currently exist within its own organizations, so too must the United States reevaluate how it exploits the existing vulnerabilities within its foreign counterparts. Foreign SOF organizations undoubtedly possess a similar level of susceptibility to sexual espionage operations due to the fact that organizations across the international SOF community appear to employ individuals who possess many of the same personality traits. The United States' unwillingness to exploit this notable weakness could result in self-imposed intelligence gaps concerning the current and future military strategies of foreign nations who have proven that their stated intentions and their true motives do not always align. The lack of foreknowledge regarding the enemy's intentions that both directly and indirectly affect U.S. foreign policy will

force the United States to constantly behave in a reactionary manner, which not only limits its options for future action, but also makes it appear weak to the international community. As a result, it is imperative for the United States to relook its current policy regarding the execution of sexual espionage operations against foreign nations for the purpose of intelligence collection.

Future Research Opportunities

Many assumptions were made throughout this paper that while based off of the findings of previous case studies must still be independently verified. Several future research opportunities exist that would contribute significantly to the furtherance of understanding how certain personality traits, such as the high sensation seeking trait, contribute to the susceptibility of servicemembers serving within the Special Operations community to sexual espionage operations. The combined application of psychological assessments, questionnaires regarding high-risk tendencies (with a heavy focus placed upon high-risk sexual behaviors), and neurochemical analysis following the exposure to both acute and chronic stimulus changes could provide a better understanding of how both internal and external factors affect the high sensation seekers within these organizations, the results of which could be utilized for the further development of countermeasures to protect against future attempts to exploit these tendencies.

Current research regarding the use the stellate ganglion block to reset the overactivated sympathetic nervous system back to its baseline levels in individuals suffering from symptoms of PTSD suggest that it may also prove to be effective in doing the same for high sensation seeking individuals. Trials would need to be conducted however in order to ascertain whether this method would in fact prove to be effective in the sensation seeking population, and if so, whether resetting the overactivated sympathetic nervous system would have the desired effect of reducing the amount of stimulation required by those individuals in order to experience the level of

stimulation that they constantly desire. The desired end state being that the reduced need for external stimulus will ultimately decrease the level of risk that these individuals assess as being acceptable, which may in turn reduce their propensity to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors that leave them vulnerable to sexual espionage operations.

Finally, due to the lack of information that currently exists in open sources regarding the psychological profiles sought out for service within foreign Special Operations organizations, particularly for those nations who have fairly strained relations with the United States, it is difficult to adequately develop strategies for targeting specific personality traits, given the fact that any assumptions being made regarding the personality profiles of non-NATO SOF organizations may simply be the result of mirror-imaging. Further efforts should be undertaken in order to gather information regarding the common personality profiles that exist within specific foreign SOF organizations against whom the United States might benefit from targeting utilizing sexual espionage practices.

The use of sexual espionage as a HUMINT collection technique can no longer be viewed as a method of the past, but rather must be identified as a current threat that must be effectively countered, particularly in populations that are inherently more vulnerable due to the prevalence of specific personality traits. The heavy reliance that has been placed upon the United States Special Operations Command over the last decade and a half is unlikely to subside in the near future, and the spotlight that has been shone upon the organizations that fall under this command by the American media will also likely persist. As a result, it is imperative that actions be taken to reduce the vulnerability of the individuals operating under this command. Additionally, considerations should be made regarding the potential benefits of employing this proven collection tactic against America's adversaries who are likely to possess similar vulnerabilities.

While most information of intelligence value can likely be accessed through alternative collection methods, the United States' reluctance to employ honey traps against its enemies may be creating intelligence gaps that could ultimately prove to be devastating given the complexity of the current global threat environment. The United States Intelligence Community has been stretched to capacity due to the unprecedented complexity of the current threat environment, and as a result it cannot afford to impose unnecessary restrictions upon itself when facing off against enemies who have already demonstrated a willingness to do whatever is necessary in order to gain the upper hand.

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APPENDIX



Creating Connections. Changing Lives.

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