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CIA chief: Military strikes offer lessons

By Stephen Manning, AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON — The U.S. government is analyzing the results of strikes against enemy targets to learn how the groups respond when attacked, the CIA's director said Wednesday.

Speaking at the Air Force Association's annual conference, Michael Hayden said U.S. forces are trying to "tickle" enemy groups to provoke a reaction.

"We use military operations to excite the enemy, prompting him to respond. In that response we learn so much," said Hayden, a retired Air Force general who has led the CIA since 2006. CIA spokesman Mark Mansfield later said Hayden was not referring to clandestine activities in his speech.

Hayden said the CIA is working closely with the military in places such as Iraq's Anbar province, where American troops have fought Sunni insurgents. That experience helped CIA officers develop a strategy to engage Sunni tribal leaders, which Hayden said has contributed to a recent drop in violence in Iraq.

The agency "picked up insights we would not have had" by working with American forces, Hayden said.

Hayden's speech came on the final day of the Air Force conference, an annual gathering of mostly Air Force officials and defense contractors that supply the service. Hayden retired in July from the Air Force, where he had been head of the service's intelligence office before leading the National Security Agency for a six-year run that ended in April 2005.

Hayden said the CIA also was focusing more on sending agents to immerse themselves overseas in duty locations for longer periods of time. More than half of agency analysts have been hired since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

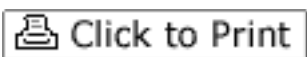
But the U.S. education system has not responded to the latest threats in the way that it focused on the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Hayden said the agency needs more experts in non-Western cultures and languages.

"We have not seen the shift in academia for the current war that we saw for the previous war," he said.

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