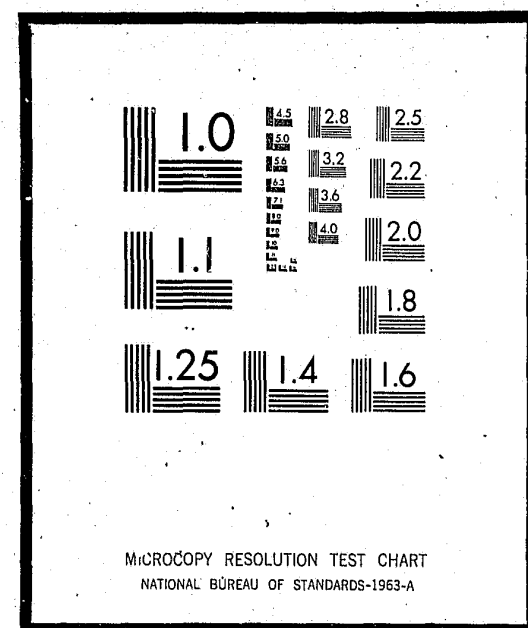


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Evaluation

of the

Michigan Intelligence Network Team

by

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Evaluation

EVALUATION REPORT

Title: Michigan Intelligence Network Team (MINT)

Grantee: Michigan Office of Criminal Justice Programs

Implementing Agency: Michigan Department of State Police

Funding History:

<u>Grant Numbers</u>	<u>Project Periods</u>	<u>Federal Support</u>
70 DF 038	12/1/69 - 12/31/71	\$ 67,300
71 DF 666	2/27/71 - 2/26/72	214,833
72 DF 05 0037	7/15/72 - 2/25/73	148,950
73 DF 05 0010	5/15/73 - 5/14/74	110,254

Purpose of the Project: The MINT objective has been to gather, analyze, and disseminate strategic and tactical information regarding organized crime figures and syndicated criminal activity in the State of Michigan. MINT is not an enforcement unit, but is intended to provide informational support to other units, whether at the State, local or federal level, which are attempting to gain arrests and convictions against organized crime figures.

I. Methodology

A. Organization and Authority Structure.

The MINT project is a joint state and local government effort to control organized crime in Michigan. It is staffed by men from the Michigan State Police and by local police department officers.

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Administrative and field authority are vested in the State Police so that all participating personnel, including the local officers will have state-wide jurisdiction, giving MINT an advantage not enjoyed by many other units.

MINT is coordinated by a full-time Michigan State Police Lieutenant who reports to the Commander of the State Police Intelligence Section.

A strategy group proposes surveillance targets and formulates broad policies for the operation of the unit. This group is comprised of high-level representatives from the State Attorney General's Office, the Department of State Police, and the Detroit Police Department.

B. Strategy of Operation.

MINT's twenty-two agents are split into three squads, two of which are surveillance units, and one of which is a staff and investigative unit. In general, these squads rotate functions so that each agent gains exposure to all aspects of intelligence work. To provide a necessary degree of continuity in the maintenance of the unit's files, however, some agents are kept on the staff squad on a permanent basis. Further, new agents are generally broken in on the staff squad before being exposed to actual surveillance work in the field.

The surveillance teams consist of two units, comprised of seven men each operating in two shifts, seven days a week. Their primary function is to conduct investigative surveillance on organized crime targets and submit detailed notes on their activities.

The staff and investigative unit has the responsibility of making staff and field investigations, gathering tactical and strategic information in support of the surveillance units. This squad performs in-depth investigations of a target's business relationships, ownerships, and investments. It also updates individual background data on organized crime figures and their associates, as well as vehicle registration files that are related to these individuals. A further function of this unit is to perform analysis of the data submitted by the surveillance crews, or in other words, to determine the relevance and importance of various bits of information obtained through surveillance.

Once processed, information is disseminated to user agencies in the following ways. If the agency is a participating unit (that is, it contributes personnel to MINT), it receives information directly in the form of photocopies of investigation files. All other agencies can receive information directly through the Michigan Intelligence Central File, provided they are members of the Network, a system for the exchange of law enforcement information between jurisdictions throughout Michigan.

A substantial amount of information is available to any interested law enforcement units on an informal basis. A notable feature of this project is easy and complete access of information contained in the MINT working files that various law enforcement units have enjoyed over the past four years.

C. Relationship to State-wide Organized Crime Effort.

MINT fills a unique niche in the Michigan organized crime control effort. Unlike most other units, which aim to arrest, investigate, and/or prosecute organized crime figures, MINT serves primarily as an intelligence gathering unit. This information is then made available to these other units for their use in obtaining arrests and convictions.

Virtually no other unit in Michigan has the capability of conducting full-time surveillance on a long-term basis. No other unit can supply enforcement agencies with the in-depth intelligence that is provided by MINT.

MINT is further set apart by its multi-agency composition, involving the efforts of both State and local law enforcement officers. This particular aspect of MINT is judged to be extremely valuable, because it promotes a worthwhile degree of interagency cooperation that has been largely missing in the effort against organized crime to date.

MINT has served as an intelligence resource for a large number and great variety of enforcement agencies. Among the users of MINT information are: The Michigan State Police,

the Detroit Police Department, the Michigan Attorney General's Office/Organized Crime Unit; the police departments of Warren, St. Clair Shores, Sterling Heights, Southfield, Livonia, Birmingham, Royal Oak, Wyandotte, Flint, Fraser, Ann Arbor, and West Bloomfield Township; and the Federal Strike Force, the Michigan Intelligence Network Task Force, the Wayne County Task Force, the Michigan Department of Treasury, the Oakland County Prosecutor's Organized Crime Unit, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Ontario Provincial Police, and the Windsor Police Department. In addition, numerous other contacts have been made with other units in various parts of the United States, including California, Texas, and Florida.

II. Administrative History of Project

The Michigan Intelligence Network Team was conceived and operationalized in late 1969. At this time, MINT did not yet have Federal funding, and therefore faced a number of obstacles in getting itself started.

One of the first and foremost needs, after that of obtaining staffing from participating police departments, was the acquisition of vehicles and a communications capability. At this early stage, vehicles were donated by some of the local participating police agencies. Unfortunately, the communications problem was not so easily solved with the un-availability of mutually compatible radio gear. Until suitable equipment could be obtained under the Federal

grant, field operations had to be coordinated through the use of shuttle cars. This rather laborious and awkward procedure proved that an ambitious interagency surveillance venture like MINT can survive even without the supposedly bare necessities of doing business, namely radio equipment.

The unit's Coordinator position at first rotated among the participating agencies, changing on a periodic basis. This arrangement created administrative problems, so that this position was eventually made permanent.

To a large degree, the most important achievement in the early life of the grant was MINT's ability to secure the whole-hearted support and patronage of many of the various police administrators in the Detroit area. This support, in turn, was largely the result of the MINT founders' personal salesmanship and previously established professional ties with these administrators. For any such interagency unit, it is judged to be extremely important that the coordinator be acceptable to and well acquainted with the heads of agencies that would work with the unit.

III. Results of Project

A. Difficulties in Measuring Project Worth.

In a very real sense, it is impossible to measure the true worth of the MINT project with strictly scientific devices or quantitative instruments. Nor is the sheer amount of effort expended a good indicator of the value of

this unit's contribution to the public good. The impact of the MINT project on Michigan's organized crime control effort cannot be portrayed meaningfully by such things as the number of items of information gathered and disseminated, the number of manhours devoted to an investigation, or even the number of arrests and convictions obtained.

In part, this is true because MINT comprises only one part of the overall effort against organized crime in Michigan; other aspects not covered include investigation and prosecution. To judge the worth of MINT based on the number of arrests and convictions of organized crime individuals is to assume that these other functions are being served with maximum efficiency by other units, an assumption that is probably not true.

Also, by the very nature of surveillance work, there is usually no way to foresee the value of a piece of information--a license tag number, for example--so that much of the effort expended by a surveillance unit will practically speaking not yield actual arrests and convictions. Without this comprehensive approach to information gathering, law enforcement agencies would effectively be prohibited from understanding the identities and activities of organized crime figures. An official of a Michigan-based federal organized crime unit explains: "Experience should have taught us that we must be in the intelligence business every

day and night....We cannot totally rely on our regular enforcement procedures to provide the investigative leads and corroborating evidence that will prevent yet another to infiltrate and to become so entrenched that it is almost impossible to identify them, let alone bring a successful prosecution against them." It thus becomes clear that a seemingly inefficient operation (when judged solely by the number of arrests and convictions obtained) is actually indispensable to effective organized crime control.

B. Objectives.

This project can and should be assessed according to its professed objectives. As with all organized crime units, the overall objective of the MINT project is the reduction and suppression of organized crime in the State of Michigan. In order to achieve this overall goal, MINT aims to accomplish the following sub-objectives:

1. To acquire, analyze, and disseminate organized crime intelligence to agencies that can use this information for obtaining arrests and convictions.
2. To promote interagency cooperation at all levels of government in Michigan's organized crime control effort.
3. To provide local law enforcement agencies with a resource of trained surveillance investigators through the training and utilization of local agency personnel on the MINT unit.

4. To maintain the currency and accuracy of information available on known organized crime individuals.

C. Evaluation of Project by Outside Agencies

Since the MINT unit cannot realistically be expected to evaluate itself in an objective fashion, the frank opinions of outside agencies were solicited to help determine the degree to which MINT was successful in meeting the above sub-objectives. These agencies fall into two groups, those that participated in the MINT program by contributing personnel to the unit (Participating Units) and those that were merely users of MINT information (Non-participating Units). These agencies were asked to respond to the four questions shown in the following table, which summarizes their responses. Copies of each agency's response are collected at the end of this report in an appendix.

	<u>PARTICIPATING UNITS (N=13)</u>	<u>NON-PARTICIPATING UNITS (N=10)</u>
1. How useful to your agency has the information provided by MINT been?		
a. Critically important	6	1
b. Usually helpful	4	9
c. Sometimes useful	1	0
d. Of negligible importance	1	0

	<u>PARTICIPATING UNITS (N=13)</u>	<u>NON-PARTICIPATING UNITS (N=10)</u>
2. If personnel from your agency participated in the MINT project, was the training that was provided them...		
a. Extremely valuable?	11	0
b. Generally worthwhile?	2	0
c. Somewhat beneficial?	0	0
d. Of negligible worth?	0	0
e. Not applicable.	0	10
3. What effect has MINT had on the quality of formal and informal cooperation between your agency and other law enforcement units working in the organized crime area?		
a. Significantly positive	7	7
b. Somewhat beneficial	4	3
c. No effect	1	0
d. Damaging	0	0
4. Overall, would you recommend that the MINT project be continued?		
a. NO.	1	0
b. YES.	10	9
c. If yes, would you recommend that MINT be expanded?		
1. NO.	0	0
2. YES.	6	9

The fourth sub-objective, that of maintaining the currency and accuracy of intelligence, is judged to be fulfilled by virtue of the fact that MINT generates and disseminates approximately 1,000 items of new data of organized crime figures and their activities every month.

The other three sub-objectives were addressed directly by outside agency evaluations. From their letters, the following conclusions can be drawn about the MINT unit's operation:

1. In general, respondents indicated that the information provided by MINT has been "usually helpful" to "critically important". This permits the conclusion that the sub-objective, to acquire, analyze, and disseminate intelligence, has been successfully accomplished by MINT. An important observation is that the Participating Units tended to rate the value of MINT information higher than did the Non-Participating Units, an indication that the units that contributed personnel were deriving greater benefit from MINT as a result of their investment.

2. For all the Participating Units, an overwhelming majority indicated that the training provided their personnel by experience with MINT was "extremely valuable", while only two said that training was only "generally worthwhile". Generally, the letters displayed great enthusiasm for the training benefits accrued by their agents while serving on the MINT unit.

It is therefore concluded that the sub-objective, to create a resource of trained surveillance investigators, was successfully accomplished.

3. Both the Participating and the Non-Participating Units in general agreed that MINT has had a "significantly positive" effect on the quality of formal and informal cooperation between agencies working in the organized crime area. The remaining minority in each group said that the MINT unit has had a "somewhat beneficial" effect on the quality of inter-agency cooperation. This permits the conclusion that this project has successfully promoted cooperation between agencies in Michigan's organized crime control effort.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they would recommend that the project be continued, to which overwhelming majorities of both groups answered affirmatively. Those that answered positively were then asked whether they would recommend that MINT be expanded. All answers were positive. It is therefore concluded that the vast majority of units familiar with MINT's operation perceive the project as having been worthwhile and as worthy of continuation and even expansion.

Finally, the outside units were asked to indicate in what respect they believed that MINT could be improved. Several respondents believed that the unit should be expanded either geographically to concentrate on other parts of the State

besides the Detroit area, or in terms of taking on additional tasks or additional kinds of targets. Two respondents specifically suggested that targets should include lower level syndicate figures, since "the workers will show the pattern of thinking from the top". Two agencies indicated a belief that MINT's dissemination of information to individual jurisdictions could be improved, particularly regarding the presence and activities of underworld members living within an agency's jurisdiction. Two other agencies, one a Participating Unit and the other a NonParticipating Unit, saw the need for greater involvement in the MINT project by outside agencies. Only one department, a Participating Unit, saw a need to improve the actual inner workings of MINT, suggesting "better line of communication between staff and surveillance teams" might be in order.

D. Operational Difficulties

In addition to possible problem areas pointed out by the outside agency responses, one finds a number of serious operational difficulties that have beset the effectiveness of this unit, and, to a large degree, the entire organized crime control effort in Michigan.

First, despite the progress made by MINT in promoting interagency cooperation, a key obstacle to improved operational

success in the organized crime area remains the long-standing reticence of different agencies in exchanging information with one another. It appears that most units are extremely willing to use the information disseminated by MINT, whether received directly or through the Michigan Intelligence Network Central File, but that some of these same units are reluctant to share with MINT information that they had developed themselves. These units may believe that any information donated to the MINT unit will suffer a serious security risk because MINT information is widely disseminated among other agencies. In fact, however, the widespread sharing of MINT intelligence has never resulted in damage to an investigation. Nevertheless, the organized crime control effort in this State has apparently a long way to travel before perfect cooperation can be realized.

A second barrier to complete success is the inherent nature of organized crime itself. Much of the activities of underworld figures are so-called "victimless" crimes, which necessarily means that law enforcement agencies suffer from a lack of willing witnesses to help build cases. This unwillingness is worsened by the strong element of fear among otherwise cooperative individuals who face terrorist reprisals at the hands of syndicate criminals. This barrier by itself guarantees that successful prosecutions will continue to be difficult to assemble in the future.

Perhaps the most serious barrier to marked success in the organized crime area has been the fragmentation of effort which currently exists in Michigan's organized crime control effort. In the City of Detroit alone there are eight groups comprised of State, local, or Federal law enforcement officers working on the same members of the local organized crime group. This has lead not only to the obvious expense to the public of needless duplication of effort, but it has resulted in acrimonious interagency jealousies. It even has been the cause of the disruption of current surveillances through too many crews being on the same investigation, getting in each other's way. But the greatest harm of this duplication is that the State lacks a clear set of priorities for the coordination and efficient direction of its organized crime control effort.

IV. Recommendations

Based on the numerous positive evaluations of this unit by other law enforcement agencies that have led experience with MINT over the past four years, particularly where these units are the users of MINT's product, it is recommended that the essential nature of MINT--a centralized, multi-agency, full-time effort to gather and disseminate organized crime intelligence--be retained through continued support and participation on the part of both State and local governments

A centralization of the intelligence function is recommended since this has been shown in MINT's case to prevent time consuming, expensive, counterproductive duplication of work by several agencies. MINT represents this centralization.

It is further stressed that MINT's multi-agency aspect be retained and perhaps even expanded, since this factor is judged to be responsible not only for facilitating an unprecedented degree of cooperation among different jurisdictions, but also for permitting the equally unprecedented flow of information between agencies and widespread dissemination of accurate, up-to-date intelligence on organized crime figures. MINT therefore represents a breaking down of inter-jurisdictional barriers to effective prosecution of racketeers.

Further, it is recommended that the intelligence function performed by MINT for Michigan be retained as a full-time operation, unfettered by competing obligations, even if this function is incorporated into an all-encompassing unit. MINT represents such a full-time commitment.

Based on the operational difficulties encountered by MINT, as described earlier, it is recommended that a state-wide unit be created which combines all of the aspects of the Michigan organized crime control program--investigation, prosecution, and intelligence. If such a unit were modeled

after MINT, involving the personnel of all interested jurisdictions, the long-standing problem of a lack of interagency cooperation would be further abated, as has been the experience of the MINT program in this regard. In the area of fostering interagency cooperation, MINT can be viewed as a successful prototype for a greatly expanded unit, both in terms of exercising a full range of organized crime control activities, and in terms of having a broader range of personnel from other units to participate in this new unit.

The creation of a single state-wide organized crime control unit would further eliminate the fragmentation of effort which currently exists in Michigan's organized crime control effort. The practical benefits of such a consolidation would include:

1. Reduced expense to the public. No longer would the taxpayer have to support a multiplicity of jurisdictions to perform a task that can be performed by a single unit.
2. Reduced interagency strife and competition. No longer would a multiplicity of agencies be vying with one another for the credit and recognition necessary for continuation of their various projects.
3. Increased efficiency of operation. Various agencies would no longer be disrupting each other's pursuit of the

same targets.

4. Increased sense of priority. No longer would a loose confederation of semi-autonomous units be free to set for themselves largely unrelated objectives.

5. Increased utilization of available intelligence. No longer would there exist the possibility of intelligence being gathered without consideration given to prosecution priorities, or of prosecutions being prioritized without awareness of existing intelligence on organized crime activities.

END