



ELICITATION

Elicitation is a commonly used and highly effective intelligence-gathering technique using ordinary conversation to extract targeted information from a person in a manner that does not disclose the true intent of the conversation. It can occur anywhere—at social gatherings, at conferences, on ship/facility tours, on the street, over the phone, in writing, and over the Internet.

WHAT IS THE THREAT?

Foreign intelligence entities (FIEs) are adept at taking advantage of professional and social opportunities to interact with people who have access to classified, sensitive, or proprietary information by exploiting an individual's natural desire to be friendly, helpful, or appear knowledgeable.

Typically, the objectives of FIEs are to identify and assess people for their suitability as spies—to determine what information they have access to and what might motivate them to give up insider information. Personal information, information regarding their colleagues, and information not publicly available regarding their command, duties, mission, research, and morale, for example, may be very valuable to FIEs. Don't be overly wary of meeting new people to such a degree that you avoid establishing contacts and friendships, just keep in mind that not everyone you meet has the best intentions.

KEY ELICITATION TECHNIQUES

How do you know when the conversation is merely social and innocent or when it is being conducted for a purpose. You don't know, really. However, recognizing the following common elicitation techniques used by FIEs to GET you talking and to KEEP you talking is the first step:

- » **Flattery/Appeal to Ego.** They may ask your opinion or give value to your opinion.
 - *“Your job sounds very exciting. I’m sure you have some great ideas on...”*
 - *“I bet you were the key person in designing this new product.”*
- » **Quid Pro Quo.** They may share some bit of info, true or not, with you so you feel obligated to share, as well.
 - *“When we have ___ issue, we approach it this way. How would your organization handle it?”*
 - *“Our organization’s infrared sensors are only accurate 80% of the time at that distance. Are yours any better?”*
- » **Mutual Interest.** They may suggest you are similar based on real or feigned shared interests, hobbies, or experiences.
 - *“I couldn’t help but hear you mentioned ___, I just got started in ___ last month and...”*
 - *“Your brother served in the Iraq war? So did mine. Which unit was your brother with?”*

TIPS ON DEFLECTING ELICITATION ATTEMPTS

- » Don't allow others to control the conversation; the person who asks the questions controls the conversation.
- » Listen more than you talk.
- » Deflect a question with another question or change the topic.
- » Provide a general or a nondescript answer.
- » Plead ignorance rather than share information you shouldn't.

If you believe someone has tried to elicit information from you, report it.