A Report on GEOINT2019

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Abstract

The GEOINT 2018 symposium was held at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas, U.S., over June 2 to 5, 2019. The theme of this symposium was "Human-Machine Teaming & Innovation Yield Mission Success." The GEOINT symposium has been held every year since 2004, and it is hosted by an organization known as the "United States Geospatial Intelligence Foundation " (USGIF). This symposium is the largest exhibition in the world dealing with geographical and spatial information for military security and intelligence activities.

Most of the attendees were mainly coming from the U.S., working for governmental and private organizations involved in geo-spatial information, including information acquired by Earth observation (EO) satellites for national security & defense activities. Even though there is no official announcement from the USGIF, about 4,000 persons attended this symposium every year. From Japan, about 50 people working for governmental and private organizations involved in EO for military security and intelligence activities were in attendance.

Impressions and Analysis

One can say for sure that this GEOINT symposium's main technological focus, GEOINT (geospatial intelligence), has been shifting from the usage of imagery data, as acquired by EO satellites for defense and national security purposes, to overall intelligence activities using geospatial information. It seems that this symposium is dealing more now with IT systems, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and various platforms, rather than satellite hardware.

GEOINT is a subject related to the technical aspects of certain mission objectives, and therefore, the technologies involving the latest mission objectives in the intelligence field have become important. At the GEOINT 2015 symposium, which the author had also attended, the participants were mainly discussing how one could utilize the imagery data acquired by large EO satellites for local reconstruction in the aftermath of large-scale disasters, such as

Hurricane Katrina. At this year's symposium, many satellite manufacturers were in attendance and exhibiting, and therefore, mock-ups of larger satellites and actual hardware for ground segment installation containers were on display on-site. Meanwhile, at the GEOINT 2015 symposium, the topics focused on the usage of Small Satellites. In order to support remote-piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) activities in asymmetric warfare against guerrilla forces, such as Al Qaeda and Islamic State (IS), developments focusing on realizing mutual use between larger and smaller satellites and multi-frequency observations had been discussed and exhibited. Recently, satellites are being used for surveillance against homegrown terrorism; however, technologies used in criminal investigations, such as activity-based intelligence activities utilizing imagery data acquired by security cameras installed at any street corner, have been required. At this year's symposium, a few discussions and exhibitions involving smaller satellites had taken place, and methodologies regarding how to utilize IT technologies for effectively preventing terrorism were discussed and exhibited. It seems that satellites have become a part of GEOINT methodologies. Meanwhile, at last year's symposium, many attendees insisted that the usage of AI was important; however, it seems that the usage of AI has become an ordinary occurrence this year.

Presentations and Exhibitions
(1) Keynote Speech from the Director of the NGA

(2) Keynote Speech from Ms. Sue Gordon, principal deputy director of National Intelligence

(3) Training: An Introduction to the Fundamental Concepts of How Machine Learning & Deep Learning Algorithms Work

(4) Panel Discussion: Digital Natives Empowering the GEOINT Enterprise

(5) Exhibitions

Other Miscellaneous Comments

The sightseeing spot of the San Antonio River Walk is a great place to enjoy delicious Tex-Mex cuisine (a fusion of Mexican and American cuisine). This cuisine can contain a lot of refried beans, avocado, and cheese, and if one feels that the volume of the dishes in this cuisine is too much, it is better to choose a fajita. A fajita is any type of grilled meat with green pepper and onions, served as a taco on a flour or corn tortilla. The fajita style is such that you can add whatever amounts, toppings, and seasonings that you want into your taco, allowing for easy eating.

The author was also able to find a great craft beer by Alamo Beer (named

after the historic fort, the Alamo) that pairs great with fajitas.

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