



INTELLIGENCE, INFORMATION & DECISION MAKING

Ajith Colonne, Visiting Lecturer in Management, Department of Humanities,
Kotelawala Defence Academy

INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION

The process of making military decisions in today's context has become more complex than what it used to be a few decades ago in view of the rapid advancement of technology and the increasing degree of uncertainty. In complex situations intelligence plays a vital role in making strategic decisions in order to avoid debacles.

While discussing the use of intelligence for the development and execution of policies and operations concerning the enemy, the potential enemy, areas of actual operations or potential operations, three long-established definitions of intelligence in a military context that poses numerous challenges could be elaborated as follows:

1. Military intelligence is the knowledge about the enemy or the potential enemy required by the military commanders at all levels for planning and conducting operations.
2. It is the product of the collection, evaluation and interpretation of information with regard to foreign nations or foundational geographic areas, with protective significance in the context of the development and execution of policies and operations.
3. It is a product resulting from the processing of information that concerns the enemy, the potential enemy, areas of actual operations or potential operations.

These three definitions of intelligence are from a Military prospective. In General, intelligence refers to processed / value-added information, including reliable source information on intended plans and / or actions of enemies, competitors and any other concerned activists. Also, it is important to distinguish between "Information" and "Intelligence".

Anything that can be predicted with a reasonable probability by anybody does not qualify as intelligence. For example, in view of the numerous past incidents that took place in Colombo, anyone can warn the authorities about the possibility of another major attack in the city of Colombo, but it is not possible for the authorities to initiate counteraction based on such information. However, the same information provided more precisely by a reliable informant, preferably with a time dimension, and gathered in such way can be interpreted as intelligence. In such a situation strategic counteraction can be initiated with precise organisation and preparation (e.g. a reliable source reveals that there will be another suicide mission in the city of Colombo within the next ten days). Therefore, in general, the term 'intelligence' can be interpreted as specifically processed information based on what is the strategic action that has to be initiated.

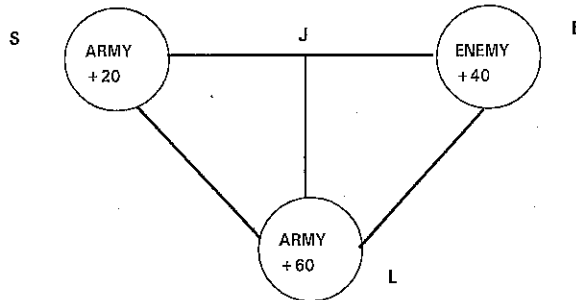
The most rapidly growing area in economic theory during the 1990s has been Information Economics, especially the area known as Asymmetric Information. It suggests that the possession of asymmetric information would ensure survival and success in any competitive environment. Further, it elaborated that, when one party is in possession of prerogative information over the others, in spite of the fact that the information is inaccessible, the other party is in a position to derive logical inferences from the observations made on the behaviour of the party in question. This will enable the other party to formulate and initiate strategic counteraction. Such observations of enemy behaviour also can be interpreted as Intelligence. For example, when a terrorist organisation is in the process of launching a major offensive against security forces, it may start amassing cadres in strategic locations, may conduct model training, and may even make coffins. In such a situation, the security forces are in a position to assess the likely targets and formulate counter strategies based on their observations, even in the absence of any reliable intelligence.



Decision Making

A decision is a conscious choice among analysed alternatives, followed by an action to implement the choice. Also, a decision is often made without perfect information. In other words, there may be a slight uncertainty or probability of the actual situation. Being different from the desired outcome, any decision demonstrates the process a decision-maker should adopt while arriving at a decision.

Uncertainty dominates in the absence of reliable information. Let us assume that in a war-affected area, the army has a large camp (A/L) with 60 soldiers and a small camp (A/S) with 20 soldiers. The enemy is also running a camp (E) with 40 cadres in the same area. The numbers are known to both parties. The map of the area in which they are established is given below in a diagram as follows:



It is clear from this above diagramme that both camps should have a minimum of 20 soldiers on guard duty at any given time, as they cannot afford to lose a camp at any cost. Also, in an operation, soldiers in groups of 20 have to be mobilized. The Army has to abide by rules and regulations set by a legitimate government. Both the Army and the enemy are equally experienced and aware of the following facts too.

One side has more soldiers than the other in a face to face attack. Irrespective of its role as offenders or defenders, the stronger side can kill a number from the other which is equal to the excess number of the weaker. For example, if one side has 100 cadres and the other side has 125, irrespective of who is attacking and who is defending, the side with 125 can kill 25 soldiers to balance the figures.

In order to take enemy by surprise and ambush them all, one only needs the exact number of soldiers. For example, if one wants to ambush 100 enemies and kill them all, one needs exactly 100 soldiers.

Let us suppose that one has received intelligence of the enemy who is going to attack one of the camps with its full force, during the next few hours. One can suspect it to be sent deliberately by the enemy, for one to make a wrong move. In view of such suspicion, one may further expect the enemy to monitor all the movements of the soldiers on every road. Assuming that it is not possible for one party to gather information on activities of the other party in the immediate outer periphery of each camp, one may raise the following questions:

- What is your immediate course of action?
- If you can get outside assistance, which camp will you reinforce?
- If the roads joining the two army camps (L and S) and the centre road (LJ) are completely cleared from enemy intelligence activities, what would be your decision?

Arriving at a Solution

Being a formal organisation, representing a legitimate governing order Army has to abide by predetermined rules and regulations. Therefore only either a group of 20 or a group of 40 can be moved out of the large camp to carry out any possible course of action.

Now, you are confronted with a situation of absolute uncertainty, whether the intelligence information is either (X) genuine or it is (Y) deliberately sent by the enemy to provoke the Army for a wrong move. In view of such uncertainty, let closely examine all the possible courses of action.



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There are five possible course of action that could be named as (A, B, C, D, E). These courses of action can be tabulated in a pay-off matrix as follows:

ACTION	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	GENUINE(X)	BOGUS(Y)
A	Offensive	Move 40: L - J	+40	- 20
B	offensive	Move 40: L - E	00	- 40
C	Defensive	Move 40: L - S	+40/+20	- 20
D	Defensive	Move 20 : L - S	00	- 00
E		Ignore	- 20	- 20

A/X The army can kill the enemy if the ambush is laid at the junction (+40).

A/Y The enemy will observe the army moving 40 towards the junction, then over-run the large army camp (-20).

B/ There will be only an exchange of fire but without any casualties (00).

B/Y The enemy can lay an ambush outside E on the road LE, as they observe the army coming for an offensive attack (-40).

C/X If there is sufficient time to lay an ambush S on the road SE, 40 enemies can be killed. Otherwise in the face-to-face confrontation, 20 enemies can be killed (+40/+20).

C/Y The enemy will over-run the large camp (-20).

D/X The enemy will come for the attack and he can be repulsed with no casualties from either side (00).

D/Y The enemy will not initiate any attack (00).

E./X The enemy will simply over-run the small camp (-20).

E/Y The enemy sees no reinforcement of the small camp and he will over-run the small camp (-20).

A comparative evaluation of the courses of action stated above with regard to the selection criteria of the best strategy is as follows:

a) Strategy A is eight equivalent to or dominates Strategy C. Therefore, C can be eliminated. Similarly, Strategy D, strictly dominates Strategy E and dominates Strategy B. Therefore both B and E can also be eliminated. Now, remains either Strategy A or Strategy D. But, Strategy A involves a risk of losing a camp (large). Thus the only remaining strategy is D. However, if there is a requirement to choose between A and D, either the Maxi-Maxi or the Maxi-Mini criterion can be used, depending on the risk-taking orientation of the decision-maker.

b) In view of the selection strategy, if there is an attack, it will definitely be on the small camp irrespective of X or Y. Therefore, reinforcements should be directed to the small camp.

If the roads LS and LJ are cleared from enemy activities, the enemy dose not have an incentive to play a game by sending information deliberately, as he cannot monitor the movement of the army on those two roads. This implies that the intelligence information is genuine. Thus, the most appropriate course of action is to lay the ambush with 40 people at J (Strategy A.)

Based on the strategic value of the above courses of action, three useful inferences can be derived from the exercises involved:



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1. ONE PAYS THE HIGHEST PRICE FOR IGNORING INTELLIGENCE, (and therefore E is the worst possible course of action)

2. Inflexible rules and regulations confine the action only to defensive strategies. It is clear that in this case, the enemy is in total control of the area, with just half the strength of the army.

3. Offensive action should be taken only if either an acceptable higher level of certainty can be established, preferably supported by intelligence, or the uncertainties can be logically reduced to an acceptable low level.

The question whether the information is true or false, which may puzzle the decision-maker right at the beginning, is not a concern of this model. If the fact that the information is true cannot be established with a higher degree of certainty, then the information does not qualify as intelligence. Therefore, there is no need to take action.

In conclusion, the model clearly attempts to demonstrate the significance of making a systematic decision under conditions of uncertainty. A knowledge-based decision will always be more effective under conditions of uncertainty than a decision made on initiative.

