

TWO SOULS IN ONE BODY: THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF INTELLIGENCE AS INFLUENCE ACTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

Most definitions of "intelligence" describe it as information processed to provide (fore)knowledge. Intelligence agencies not only describe and try to predict reality, but they also try to influence and shape it. Consequently, definitions that include only information and not influence initiatives fall short in preparing students to work in intelligence agencies and recognizing the different qualities required to execute intelligence's two main functions: analyzing and influencing. This paper recommends that intelligence definitions include both its information and influence components.

Keywords: *influence activities, intelligence, intelligence functions*

INTRODUCTION

Intelligence can be defined as information, process, and activity (de Graaff, 2015). About 90% of all definitions used by government agencies and textbooks define intelligence as information that is processed to provide (fore)knowledge (Bakker, 2012). Alternately, intelligence is what intelligence agencies do. This definition quickly becomes unwieldy, as some intelligence organizations are tasked with broad missions. The East German Stasi, for example, became such a Jack of all trades organization that when rain was pouring through a hole in the roof of a hospital, it was called in to help (Dennis, 2003). A definition based on these functions of the Stasi comes close to Agrell's (2012) axiom, when everything is intelligence, nothing is intelligence.

Nevertheless, studying the activities of intelligence agencies suggests that information gathering, processing, and analyzing is not their only task. They analyze and influence people, places, and things globally. I argue that definitions focusing on information and neglecting influence operations fall short if intelligence educators and textbooks are to prepare students for working in intelligence agencies. Next, I show how analyzing events and developments differ from trying to shape them, indicating that different qualities are required to do both. I conclude by recommending that textbooks and other studies use definitions of intelligence, including influence activities and the usual information component.

METHODOLOGY

To discern which definitions of intelligence are used and which functions are ascribed to intelligence agencies by government agencies and textbooks, I used existing research (such as Bakker, 2012) and reviewed an extensive collection of texts. To establish common denominators in intelligence agencies' missions worldwide and through the ages, I consulted books on intelligence and its history from within and outside the Anglosphere.

My approach has not been normative in condemning one function or another executed by intelligence agencies. Based on empirical research, I tried to find the most common tasks

among intelligence agencies and took these tasks as a given for which intelligence students must be prepared to fulfill. The normative aspect is that the education and training of intelligence students should be appropriate for the tasks that await them in their jobs.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

In 2012, former Dutch intelligence officer Jan Bakker collected about 80 definitions of intelligence from intelligence studies and intelligence organizations, mainly in the Anglosphere. Almost 90% of the definitions focused on the words "information" and "(fore)knowledge." Looking through textbooks that have been published since then, I cannot detect any noticeable change in this respect.

Often these definitions are combined with the description of the so-called intelligence cycle, comprising the processes of setting requirements, collecting, processing, assessing, and analyzing information to produce (fore)knowledge, which supports decision-makers, who may or may not act upon the received wisdom (Benhammou, 2017; Ben-Israël, 2004, Codevilla, 1992; Cousseran & Hayez, 2015; Fingar, 2011; Fyffe, 2022; Quiggin, 2007; Rolington, 2013; Russell, 2007; Stewart & Newbery, 2015).

Apart from data collection, the action comes from the decision-makers, not the intelligence practitioners (Hilsman, 1956; MacGaffin & Oleson, 2016; Zegart, 2022). Herman (2004) agreed, "Intelligence is information and information gathering, not *doing* things to people." (p. 180; See also Tucker, 2014) CIA doctrine states: "reduced to its simplest terms, intelligence is knowledge and foreknowledge of the world around us" (Central Intelligence Agency, 1999; cf.; See also Berkowitz & Goodman, 2000; Clark, 2007; Kahn, 2009; Kitchen, 2022; Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2022; Pateman, 2003; Zegart, 2022).

SHORTCOMINGS

Authors of textbooks that rely upon definitions centered around the words "information" and "knowledge," leaving out the action or influence aspect, have difficulties fitting counterintelligence and covert action into their treatments of intelligence. Counterintelligence takes measures to defend one's organization or offensive action by penetrating other intelligence organizations and manipulating their workings. Covert action is by definition, "active" and "action-oriented" as opposed to "passive" and "information-oriented." (Hitz, 2004; Andrew, Aldrich & Wark, 2009; Johnson, 2022; Zegart, 2022) It seeks "to send messages" (Cormac, 2022, p. 25) and "to change things." (Cormac & Aldrich, 2018, p. 477)

Covert action is no small thing in the world of intelligence. It is estimated that between 1961 and 1974, the CIA conducted over 900 major covert actions and thousands of smaller ones (Zegart, 2022). Due to the mistaken idea that European intelligence and security services do not engage in covert action, this phenomenon is repeatedly left out of European textbooks (Benhammou, 2017; Ben-Israël, 2004), and in US textbooks, it is often the topic of separate chapters that are usually left for the final parts of the book. These textbooks treat counterintelligence and covert action at best as "intelligence-related activities" and not as part of intelligence itself (Macartney, 1995; Berkowitz & Goodman, 2000; Clark, 2007; Herman, 2004; Hulnick, 1999; Hulnick, 2013; Scott & Jackson, 2004). Unsurprisingly, covert action

can still be considered understudied and often misunderstood, just as with Russian active measures (Roberts, 2022; Cormac, 2022).

Another element that often does not get the attention it deserves in textbooks that use definitions centering on information and knowledge is deception. Deception is usually aimed at one's intelligence organization and is one of the dangers analysts must be aware of when assessing information rather than originating from it (Herbig & Daniel, 1995).

CRITICISM

Several authors have stated that sidelining counterintelligence and covert action from the definition of intelligence is artificial and would seem to exclude too much (Gill & Phythian, 2012; Scott & Jackson, 2004; Lowenthal, 2012; Shulsky, 1993; Sims, 2009.). Doing so makes a theoretically clear and functional distinction between intelligence and policy (Laqueur, 1985; Sims, 2009). But because such a distinction does not exist within intelligence agencies, the question becomes whether theory does not diverge too far from actual practice (Hilsman, 1956). In describing the game of football, it is as if one only discusses the defense and not its offense.

As early as 1958, a CIA officer with the pen name R. A. Random wrote that the only fitting definition for intelligence that would be both exclusive and inclusive enough would be "the official, secret collection and processing of information on foreign countries to aid in formulating and implementing foreign policy and the conduct of covert activities abroad to facilitate the implementation of foreign policy." (Random, 1958, p. 76) Former CIA historian Michael Warner came up with a similar definition; intelligence is secret, state activity to understand or influence foreign entities (Warner, 2002; Der Derian, 1992; Svendsen, 2017; Lieutenant-Colonel "X" & Léger, 2013).

INFLUENCE ACTIVITY

Several authors who have included influence operations in their definitions of intelligence have stressed that these activities do not necessarily have to be covert; even if they are called covert, they are often overt (Boyle Mahle, 2004; Cormac, 2022; Cormac & Aldrich, 2018; Gill & Phythian, 2012; Treverton, 2007, 2009; Tucker, 2014).

While covert action in North America preceded the founding of the United States (Johnson, 2022), it has not been a purely American phenomenon (Cormac, 2022), as some authors seem to suggest. KGB General Oleg Kalugin used the term active measures, the Russian variant of covert action (Bertelsen, 2021; Legucka & Kupiecki, 2022; Pacepa & Rychlak, 2013; Perkins, 2018; Pincher, 1986; Rid, 2020), "the heart and soul of Soviet intelligence" (CNN, 1998).

The UK played its part in covert actions as well (De Bellaigue, 2012; Bloch & Fitzgerald, 1984; Cormac, 2018; Cruickshank, 1981; Defty, 2013; Howe, 1988; Lashmar & Oliver, 1998; Maguire, 2015; Mahl, 1999; West, 1987; West 1998), as did Germany (Merridale, 2017; Pearson, 1975), the Netherlands (Engelen, 1995; de Graaff, 1997), India, Pakistan (Sirrs, 2017; de Graaff, 2020b, pp. 462–463), and many other nations in Asia, where intelligence is even "more about doing things, influencing and coercing, than in Western contexts." (de Graaff, 2020b)

Manipulation and intrigue to influence—in other words, political influence operations—are not only from all places but also from all times (Codevilla, 1992; Sheldon, 1997; Tucker, 2014). For example, covert action was not merely a product of the Cold War (Cormac, 2020; Lowenthal, 2012), and Asian and Western intelligence agencies have a long tradition of deception operations (Jones, 1989). And Arguably, new tasks in countering terrorism and in the cyber domain have increased the influence efforts by intelligence agencies (Cogan, 2004; Johnson, 2022; Kahana, 2007; Tucker, 2014; Zegart, 2022). Furthermore, it was difficult for Western intelligence agencies not to counter malign influences by adversaries like Russia and China, which had begun to weaponize information and undermine their countries' democracies (Bergman, 2022; Harding, 2018; Joske, 2022; Malnick, 2022; Peques, 2018; Swan & Bender, 2021; Vilmer, 2018; Weiss, 2014).

More recently, efforts at influencing and preventing the other side's narrative from materializing have been shown by US and UK intelligence agencies' informing world opinion about developments in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict on a more or less daily basis (Adam, 2022; Dylan and Maguire, 2022; Lomas, 2022; Stein & Eisner, 2022; Shkolnikova, 2022; Strobel, 2022; Vir Singh, 2022; Weiss, 2022; Williams, 2022). And just as intelligence has been used to prepare the battlefield, it can also be used to prepare the climate for peace negotiations (Scott, 2004).

ACCEPTING THE DUAL FUNCTION OF INTELLIGENCE

It is important to acknowledge that there are two types of intelligence living under the roof of most intelligence agencies. The relative weight of these two roles may differ from place to place and over time. Accepting that intelligence is a double-edged sword makes it possible to illustrate their differences and commonalities. For example, there are two types of intelligence, A-intelligence is information, and B-intelligence is action and influence. A-intelligence is information either on its way to becoming knowledge or has already reached that stage. B-intelligence may use the information and probably will, but it is not knowledge per se.

A-intelligence is an aid to policy formulation, and B-intelligence aids policy execution. A-intelligence is tailored to a restricted clientele, whereas B-intelligence is communication aimed at influencing a wider audience, whether this consists of opponents, allies, or one's own citizenry. The trade-off between secrecy and transparency falls normally to the side of secrecy in the case of A-intelligence. At the same time, B-intelligence tends to favor publicity in its overt variant. In such cases, the need-to-know circle is drawn much wider in the case of B-intelligence. When we accept that at least part of intelligence is used in public and for public purposes, not only by intelligence consumers but also by intelligence producers, secrecy can no longer be a constituting element of the definition of intelligence. Surely, part of intelligence still can and will be secret information, but it will no longer be possible to say that the connection between intelligence and secrecy is essential, crucial, or central; intelligence by definition, is no longer distinguished from other forms of communication.

A-intelligence is needed by decision-makers and involves fear, uncertainty, and doubt (FUD). It aims to address threats that cause fear, reducing uncertainty and doubt and raising the confidence levels of their clients. B-intelligence also tries to influence behavior, but in

this case, it does so by reducing confidence levels or creating false feelings of confidence among opponents (Cormac, 2022). This is possible because B-intelligence springs not so much from uncertainty but from a position of authority. On behalf of this authority or with its blessing, intelligence officials communicate messages that try to influence an audience by offering an authoritative world vision. Type A-intelligence is about knowing the world, while in contrast, type B-intelligence is about shaping the world (Cormac, 2022; Johnson, 2017).

A-intelligence starts with data and leads up to a story or a narrative, encompassed in a report for the intelligence consumer or client. In other words, it is about interpreting realities. B-intelligence does not end with a narrative; instead, it starts with one that is meant to be superimposed on existing facts or narratives and preferably becomes the dominant one (Cormac, 2022).

Whereas A-intelligence tries to come close to a kernel of truth, even though it is admitted that this will hardly ever be achieved (Berkowitz & Goodman, 2000; Lowenthal, 2012, 2021). B-intelligence does not depart from the idea of truth other than what the broadcaster says is true. Consequently, A-intelligence can hold on to positivist-realist axioms. At the same time, B-intelligence fits much more naturally in a constructivist approach, which does not depart from facts but departs from multiple narratives that meet each other within the global arena.

Thus, A-intelligence tries to avoid bias, while B-intelligence may be biased initially. As former CIA officer Milton Bearden (2020) wrote about Cold War covert action against the Soviet Union: "truth was never as essential as 'will it play?'"

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the difference between information (A-intelligence) and action and influence (B-intelligence) can be summarized under the headings of *being intrigued* and *to intrigue*, respectively. Both A and B-intelligence have to do with communication and are meant to control the environment. Accepting that two types of intelligence coexist under one roof would acknowledge that intelligence agencies can be both at the receiving and acting, and broadcasting end of this dual process. Understanding this will give us a model closer to reality than studies and textbooks that recognize intelligence only in its information function.

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