

Intelligence cycle

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Intelligence cycle

The intelligence cycle is a set of processes used to provide useful information for decision-making. The cycle consists of several processes. The related counter-intelligence area is tasked with preventing information efforts from others.

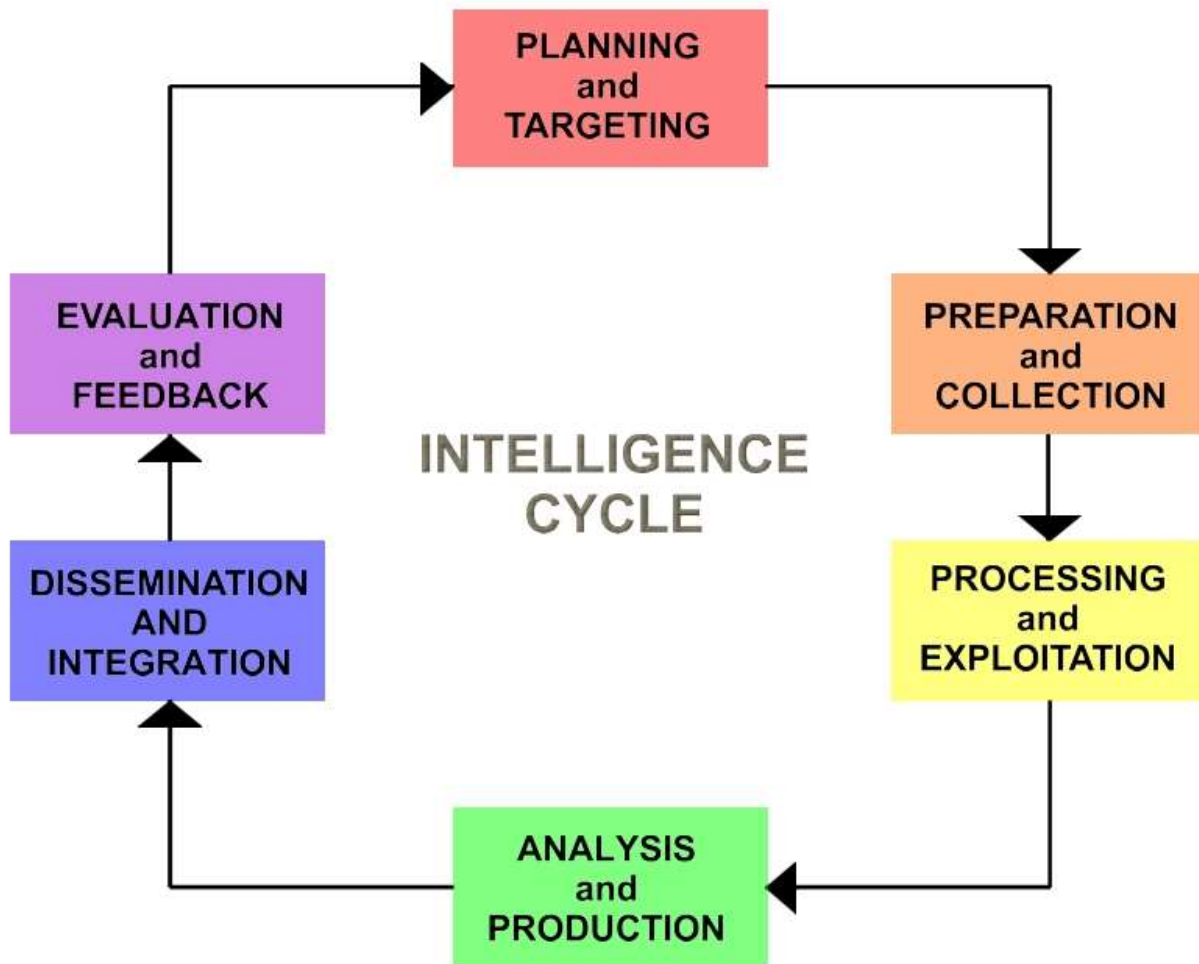


Figure 1 Intelligence cycle or process

A basic model of the process of collecting and analyzing information is called the "intelligence cycle". This model can be applied, and, like all the basic models, it does not reflect the fullness of real-world operations. Through intelligence cycle activities, information is collected and assembled, raw information is transformed into processed information, analyzed and made available to users. The intelligence cycle consists of five phases:

1. *Planning and Targeting*: Decide what needs to be monitored and analyzed. This involves determining information requirements, developing an adequate intelligence architecture, preparing a collection plan, issuing orders and requests to intelligence agencies.

2. *Preparation and Collecting*: Establishing an intelligence officers' own strategy, gathering raw information using a variety of collection types, such as human sources (HUMINT), geo-spatial sources (GEOINT), etc.
3. *Processing and Exploitation*: Refining and primary use of information in primary decisions.
4. *Analysis and Production*: The processed information is translated into a finalized intelligence product, which may include the resulting syntheses, predictions and intelligence measures.
5. *Dissemination*: Providing intelligence products to consumers (including those in the intelligence community)

In addition to these phases, a sixth step, not only in the intelligence activity, but in cooperation with customers and observing the operational environment for the effectiveness of the information provided, is very important:

6. *Evaluation and feedback*

These steps are generally divided within an intelligence organization. The number of steps varies according to the strategy of each intelligence organization, some organizations compressing some of these steps (eg, analysis and production is included in the processing and exploitation phase), or by adding other steps according to the specific requirements.

The initial phase of planning and targeting of the intelligence cycle includes four major stages:

1. Identification and prioritization of information requirements;
2. Development of an adequate intelligence architecture;
3. Preparing a gathering plan; and

4. Issuing order and requests to the intelligence organizations.

The collection coordination intelligence requirements management (CCIRM) is the NATO doctrine of intelligence gathering management, although it differs from the US doctrine.

In the "analysis and production phase", the information is processed only after it has been verified by all available sources, their veracity increasing according to the number and quality of the additional checks.

Intelligence activity is an iterative process in interaction with many actors, so the process of intelligence activity can be characterized as dialectical in that a given hypothesis can be confirmed, revised or rejected based on additional information from other disciplines.

An important condition for the efficiency of intelligence as a finished product is the speed and accuracy of communications between the involved actors.

From an epistemological point of view, it is still unclear when the intelligence becomes knowledge: during the collection, after the analysts have been further verified, after their approval at the organization level, or when an independent body confirms the analysis?

Another aspect to be considered in the intelligence cycle is the relationship with the legal system, as the role of the various actors in the intelligence process is less clear than those involved in the legal act. Human sources can be motivated by numerous personal biases. For example, an analyst may benefit from subtle incentives to reach a conclusion, or information collectors may be forced to collect only certain information. (Morgan 2012) That is why there must be an institutional mechanism that can challenge the assumptions and conclusions made during the intelligence analysis. In this sense, some intelligence organizations use a so-called "red team analysis", an alternative analysis of information and conclusions in intelligence products. (US Department of the Army 1995) According to the former CIA officer Richard Heuer, such an alternative analysis

has the potential to use specific techniques to determine where "analyzes" were "wrong". (Heuer 1999)

Military strategist John Boyd created a different decision and action model (OODA), (Boyd 1976) useful in many areas of conflict. Its model has four phases: 1) *Observing* a threat or opportunity; 2) *Orientation* in the context of other information; 3) *Decision* based on the best action plan; 4) *Action* to carry out the plan. Each new iteration of the cycle is faster than the previous one, due to the accumulated experience. By comparing it with the traditional intelligence cycle, observation could be an output of the collection phase, while orientation is an output of analysis.

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