
Intelligence Operations



U.S. Marine Corps

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FOREWORD

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 2-1, *Intelligence Operations*, builds on the doctrinal foundation established in Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 2, *Intelligence* (7 June 1997), and provides the higher order tactics, techniques, and procedures for Marine Corps intelligence operations. Designed for commanders and other users of intelligence as well as intelligence personnel who are responsible for planning and executing intelligence operations, MCWP 2-1 details the:

- Fundamentals of intelligence operations
- Interrelationship of the intelligence functions with the Marine Corps maneuver warfare philosophy and supporting command and control
- Operational and planning considerations for the conduct of intelligence planning and direction, collection, processing and exploitation, production, dissemination, and utilization
- Concept of MAGTF intelligence operations, including roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of intelligence sections, units, and organizations
- Challenges and considerations for providing effective intelligence support across the range of military operations within joint and multinational operations and for supporting the Marine Corps operational concepts of operational maneuver from the sea, sustained operations ashore, and military operations other than war.

2. SUPERSESION

MCWP 2-1 supersedes Fleet Marine Force Manual (FMFM) 3-20, *Commander's Guide to Intelligence* (6 February 1991).

3. SENIORITY

Substantial developmental efforts are under way throughout the Marine Corps intelligence doctrinal hierarchy. The target date for completion of all new and revised intelligence-series doctrinal publications is the summer of 1999. Pending completion of this task, in the event of

terminology, conceptual, operational, or other conflicts between MCWP 2-1 and any current publications within the FMFM 3-2X series, MCWP 2-1 takes precedence.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CHANGES

Recommendations and changes for improving this publication are invited from commands as well as directly from individuals. Forward suggestions using the user suggestion format via either of the following means:

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Recommendations should include the following information:

- Location of change: publication number and title; current page number; paragraph number (if applicable); line number; figure number (if applicable)
- Nature of change: add, delete; and proposed new text (preferably double-spaced and typewritten)
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5. OBTAINING ADDITIONAL COPIES

Additional printed copies of MCWP 2-1 may be obtained from Marine Corps Logistics Base, Albany, GA 31704-5001, by following the instructions in MCBul 5600, *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publications Status*. Electronic copies may be obtained from the Doctrine Division, MCCDC, worldwide web homepage which is found at the following universal reference locator (letters in lower case): **<http://138.156.107.3/docdiv>**.

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The proponent for MCWP 2-1 is Doctrine Division, Marine Corps Combat Development Command

- Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine or feminine gender is used, both men and women are included.

7. CERTIFICATION

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

JOHN E. RHODES
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Intelligence Operations

Table of Contents

		Page
Chapter 1.	Fundamentals	
1001.	What Is Intelligence?	1-1
1002.	Objectives of Intelligence	1-1
1003.	Intelligence and Maneuver Warfare	1-2
1004.	Developing Intelligence	1-3
1005.	Intelligence Operations	1-4
1006.	Principles of Intelligence Operations	1-5
1007.	Intelligence Functions	1-6
1008.	The Role of the Commander in Intelligence	1-8
Chapter 2.	Intelligence and Command and Control	
2001.	Overview	2-1
2002.	Intelligence and Decisionmaking	2-1
2003.	Intelligence and the PDE&A Cycle	2-3
2004.	Intelligence Support to Planning	2-3
2005.	Intelligence Support to Execution	2-7
Chapter 3.	Developing Intelligence	
3001.	Overview	3-1
3002.	The Intelligence Cycle	3-1
3003.	Intelligence Requirements	3-3
3004.	Planning and Direction	3-4
3005.	Collection	3-8
3006.	Processing and Exploitation	3-10
3007.	Production	3-10
3008.	Dissemination	3-12
3009.	Utilization	3-14
3010.	Application of the Intelligence Cycle	3-15
3011.	Counterintelligence	3-16
Chapter 4.	Concept of MAGTF Intelligence Support	
4001.	Overview	4-1
4002.	Role of the Organic Intelligence Section	4-2
4003.	The MAGTF Intelligence Section	4-4
4004.	MAGTF Intelligence Units	4-5
4005.	Focused Intelligence Support	4-6

4006.	External Intelligence Support to the MAGTF	4-8
4007.	Role of Residual Forces, the Supporting Establishment, and the Reserves	4-10

Chapter 5. Intelligence Support to MAGTF Operations

5001.	Overview	5-1
5002.	Intelligence Support to OMFTS	5-1
5003.	Intelligence Support to Sustained Operations Ashore	5-5
5004.	Intelligence Support to MOOTW	5-9
5005.	Intelligence Support in Joint Operations	5-12
5006.	Intelligence Support in Multinational Operations	5-14

Appendices

A	Glossary	A-1
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Figures

1-1	The Information Hierarchy	1-3
1-2	The Intelligence Cycle	1-3
1-3	Relationship between Intelligence Functions and Operations	1-7
2-1	The OODA Loop	2-1
2-2	Intelligence Support to Planning	2-4
2-3	Intelligence Activities during Planning	2-7
3-1	The Intelligence Cycle	3-1
3-2	The Intelligence Cycle—Macro View	3-2
3-3	The Intelligence Cycle—Micro View	3-2
3-4	Intelligence Development and the Intelligence Cycle	3-3
3-5	Functions of the Planning and Direction Phase	3-5
3-6	Intelligence Requirements Management	3-6
3-7	Requirements Satisfaction	3-7
3-8	MAGTF Primary Organic Collection Assets	3-8
3-9	Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace	3-10
3-10	Graphic Climatology Study	3-13
3-11	Graphic Intelligence Estimate	3-13
3-12	Notional MEF Intelligence Architecture	3-15
3-13	Application of the Intelligence Cycle	3-17
3-14	The Counterintelligence Process	3-18
4-1	Concept of Intelligence Support	4-3
4-2	MAGTF Intelligence Section Elements	4-5
4-3	The National Intelligence Community	4-10
5-1	Intelligence Considerations during OMFTS	5-3
5-2	Intelligence Considerations during Sustained Operations Ashore	5-7
5-3	MOOTW Missions	5-9

5-4	Intelligence Factors in MOOTW	5-11
5-5	Joint Intelligence Architecture	5-14

Chapter 1

Fundamentals

“However absorbed a commander may be in the elaboration of his own thoughts, it is sometimes necessary to take the enemy into account.”

— Winston Churchill

1001. What Is Intelligence?

Intelligence is knowledge of the battlespace and of the threat forces in that battlespace. Knowledge is generated in support of the commander’s decisionmaking process and is the result of the collection, processing, exploitation, evaluation, integration, analysis, and interpretation of available information about the battlespace and threat.

1002. Objectives of Intelligence

Intelligence has two objectives. The first objective is to reduce uncertainty by providing accurate, timely, and relevant knowledge about the threat and the surrounding environment. The second objective is to assist in protecting friendly forces through counterintelligence (CI).

a. Reducing Uncertainty

Uncertainty pervades the battlespace—it is a fundamental attribute of war. First and foremost, intelligence should support the commander’s decisionmaking process by reducing uncertainty about the hostile situation. To achieve this objective, intelligence should accomplish four specific actions. First, it should identify and evaluate existing conditions and capabilities. Second, on the basis of those existing conditions and capabilities, it should estimate possible enemy courses of action (COAs) and provide insight into possible future actions. Third, it should aid in identifying friendly

vulnerabilities that the threat may exploit. Finally, intelligence should assist in the development and evaluation of friendly COAs. The fog and friction of war will never allow the commander to have a perfect picture of the battlespace. Because intelligence deals with the greatest number of unknowns—questions about an unfamiliar area and a hostile enemy who is actively trying to conceal information about his forces and intentions—there will almost always be gaps in intelligence, and the knowledge provided will lack the desired degree of detail and reliability. Intelligence cannot provide absolute certainty; rather, intelligence attempts to reduce the uncertainty facing the commander to a reasonable level by collecting relevant information, placing it in context to provide knowledge, and conveying it in the form of images to enhance understanding.

b. Counterintelligence

Within the Marine Corps, CI constitutes active and passive measures intended to deny a threat force valuable information about the friendly situation, to detect and neutralize hostile intelligence collection, and to deceive the enemy as to friendly capabilities and intentions. It denies threat forces information that might increase the effectiveness of hostile operations against friendly forces. In so doing, CI increases uncertainty for the enemy, thereby making a significant contribution to the success of our operations. CI also identifies friendly vulnerabilities, evaluates security measures, and assists in implementing appropriate plans to enhance force protection against the threats of sabotage, subversion, and terrorism.

1003. Intelligence and Maneuver Warfare

a. The Nature of War

The essence of war is a violent clash between independent wills, each trying to impose itself on the other. War's defining attributes of friction, uncertainty, fluidity, disorder, and complexity combine with the various dimensions of human nature to make war a fundamentally unpredictable activity. To succeed in war, we must be able to operate effectively in this uncertain, chaotic, complex, and fluid environment.

b. Maneuver Warfare

The Marine Corps philosophy for winning under these conditions is a warfighting doctrine that is based on rapid, flexible, and opportune maneuver. Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1, *Warfighting*, states that, "Maneuver warfare is a warfighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a variety of rapid, focused, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which the enemy cannot cope."

Maneuver warfare requires maneuver in both time and space to achieve superiority over the enemy. Maneuver warfare concentrates on those actions that present the enemy with a series of dilemmas in which events happen unexpectedly and faster than the enemy can react. Concepts central to the execution of maneuver warfare are:

- **Orienting on the enemy.** Maneuver warfare attacks the enemy "system," the combination of physical, moral, and mental components that make up an enemy or an enemy force. It requires an understanding of the unique characteristics that make the enemy system function so that we can penetrate the system, tear it apart, and, if necessary, destroy the isolated elements. This means focusing outward on the particular characteristics of the enemy.

- **Centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities.** Centers of gravity are sources of moral or physical strength, power, or resistance that are critical to the enemy's ability to resist. Critical vulnerabilities are components of the enemy system that are both crucial to the functioning of the system and vulnerable to exploitation. Identification and exploitation of an enemy's centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities help us to focus combat power toward a decisive aim.
- **Main effort.** The main effort is the unit assigned responsibility for accomplishing the key mission within the command. It is directed where there is the best opportunity for success and at the object that will have the most significant effect on the enemy, normally a critical vulnerability.
- **Commander's intent.** Intent describes the purpose behind the task assigned in a mission. The intent provides continuing guidance when the situation changes and permits the exercise of initiative in harmony with the commander's desires.
- **Mission tactics.** Mission tactics assign subordinates a task without specifying how it must be accomplished. They permit subordinates to exercise initiative in adapting to an ever-changing situation.
- **Tempo.** Tempo is used to keep the enemy off balance, thereby increasing his friction. Speed, initiative, and flexibility generate and maintain a tempo that the enemy cannot match.

c. The Role of Intelligence

Accurate and timely intelligence is a prerequisite for success in maneuver warfare. Maneuver warfare is based on a firm focus on the enemy and on taking action that avoids enemy strengths and exploits critical enemy vulnerabilities. It means acting in a manner and at a time and place that the enemy does not expect and for which he is not prepared. It requires decision and action based on situational awareness—a keen understanding of the factors that make each situation unique. Intelligence provides the knowledge of the enemy and the battlespace that permits the commander to reduce uncertainty, identify opportunities for success, assess risk, outline intent, and make decisions that provide

focus, generate speed and tempo, and achieve decisive results.

1004. Developing Intelligence

a. Data, Information, and Intelligence

Intelligence is not simply another term for information. Intelligence is more than an element of data or a grouping of information; it is a body of knowledge. Knowledge occupies a unique place in the information hierarchy, which is a framework used to distinguish between various classes of information. (See figure 1-1.) There is a clear and important distinction between raw data, information, and intelligence. Intelligence is not a mass of unfocused data or even a collection of related facts. In fact, giving a commander every piece of data that we have without providing meaning can increase uncertainty by overloading the commander with incomplete, contradictory, or irrelevant information. To be considered intelligence, data must be placed in context to provide an accurate and meaningful image of the hostile situation. Intelligence is developed by analyzing and synthesizing data and information to produce knowledge about the threat and the environment. The commander combines this knowledge with knowledge of the friendly situation and employs experience, judgment, and intuition to understand the situation. The commander then applies this understanding in making decisions.

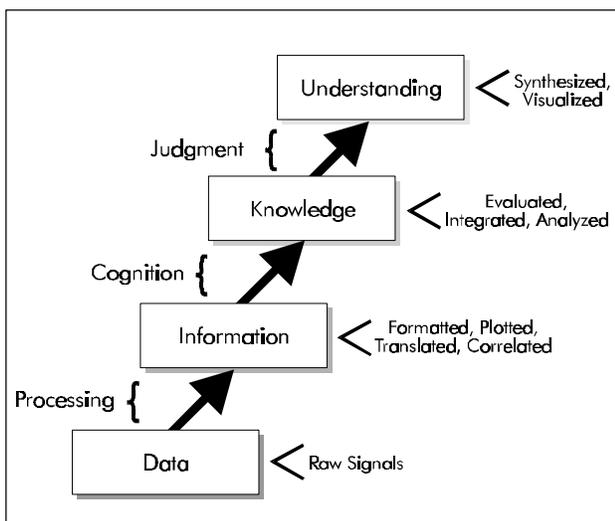


Figure 1-1. The Information Hierarchy. b. The Intelligence Development Process

Intelligence is the output of a process that converts data and information into knowledge that is applicable to a specific military decision. The process used to develop intelligence is called the intelligence cycle. (See figure 1-2.)

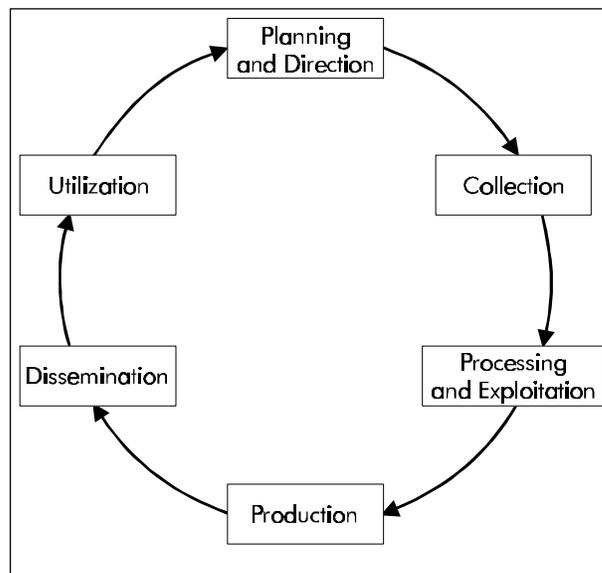


Figure 1-2. The Intelligence Cycle.

The intelligence cycle consists of a series of related activities that translate the need for intelligence about a particular aspect of the battlespace or threat into a knowledge-based product that is provided to the commander for use in the decisionmaking cycle. In this sequence, intelligence needs are identified and a plan is developed for satisfying those needs. Data are collected, processed into information, and converted into intelligence through analysis and synthesis. The resulting knowledge is then provided to the commander as an intelligence product that is used in making decisions.

The information used to produce intelligence is derived from a variety of sources. Intelligence information, that is, information used to generate intelligence, is commonly drawn from three types of data:

- Intelligence data—data derived from assets primarily dedicated to intelligence collection, for

example, imagery systems, electronic intercept equipment, human intelligence (HUMINT) sources, and so on

- Sensor data—data derived from sensors whose primary mission is surveillance or target acquisition, for example, air surveillance radars, counter-battery radars, and remote ground sensors
- Combat data—data derived from reporting by operational units.

Because of their highly perishable or critical nature, combat data and sensor data are sometimes used to effect decisions without being converted into intelligence. Although the demands of the ongoing battle may require rapid action, decisions based on raw, unprocessed data or single pieces of data should be avoided, if possible. The processing, analysis, and synthesis of data and information into intelligence can be accomplished rapidly and at all levels. We seek knowledge—*accurate intelligence, not incomplete, unfocused, or unevaluated information*—with which to enhance our understanding and on which to base our decisions. The intelligence cycle works continuously to satisfy intelligence shortfalls and confirm or refute fragmentary information.

Once collected and processed, information is converted into intelligence through the application of experience and judgment. In this step, information is analyzed to determine its significance and is synthesized with other relevant information to build a coherent picture of existing conditions and capabilities. This picture is then used to predict possible outcomes of environmental conditions and enemy actions. The results of this step are conveyed to the commander in an intelligence product. Because humans understand situations best as images—mental pictures—intelligence is produced and disseminated in graphic form whenever possible. The process is completed when the knowledge provided is applied to influence decisionmaking.

1005. Intelligence Operations

Intelligence personnel and organizations perform a number of separate and distinct activities and functions

that are collectively known as intelligence operations. Intelligence operations are conducted to provide intelligence in support of the decisionmaking process of commanders down to the small-unit level. The primary focus of Marine Corps intelligence operations is the generation of *tactical intelligence*, that is, intelligence that supports the planning and conduct of tactical actions.¹ Intelligence reduces uncertainty and supports the decisionmaking process by:

- Describing the battlespace
- Identifying key factors in the battlespace that can influence operations
- Defining and evaluating threat capabilities
- Identifying the enemy's center of gravity and critical vulnerabilities
- Assessing enemy intentions.

a. Relationship to Command and Control (C2)

Intelligence is a fundamental component of C2. C2 is the means by which a commander recognizes what needs to be done and sees to it that appropriate actions are taken. A principal aim of C2 is to enhance the commander's ability to make sound and timely decisions. Intelligence facilitates the commander's decisionmaking process by making a major contribution to the understanding of the battlespace and the threat. Intelligence is also an integral element of the process through which the commander implements decisions. Inadequate or imperfect intelligence can significantly inhibit the ability of a commander or subordinates to carry out these decisions. Lack of a continuous, effective intelligence effort also degrades the quality of feedback to the commander about the unfolding situation; it is this feedback that allows the commander to modify the actions of the command as needed.

Because intelligence is crucial to success on the battlefield, it must be given command attention. The commander drives intelligence by focusing the intelligence effort through the definition of the mission, articulation

¹ Although the focus is on tactical intelligence, the Marine Corps must draw on both strategic and operational intelligence resources and, in certain circumstances, be prepared to conduct intelligence operations at the operational and even strategic level.

of intent, and designation of priority intelligence requirements (PIRs). A PIR is an intelligence requirement (IR) associated with a decision that will critically affect the overall success of the command's mission. PIRs are a subset of commander's critical information requirements (CCIRs) and are focused on the environment and the threat.²

b. Relationship to Operations

"Intelligence drives operations."

— Gen A.M. Gray
29th Commandant of the Marine Corps

Intelligence is inseparable from operations. General Gray's statement is often used to highlight this relationship. Intelligence drives operations by *shaping* the planning and execution of operations. It provides a menu of factors that the commander considers when making a decision. Specifically, intelligence:

- Identifies potential advantages offered by the environment
- Describes limitations imposed by the environment
- Ascertains and assesses enemy strengths to be avoided
- Uncovers enemy vulnerabilities that can be exploited
- Recommends COAs based on factors of the battlespace and threat
- Enables rapid decisionmaking and the generation and maintenance of tempo.

Operational actions develop logically from intelligence. A commander with effective intelligence knows the nature of the terrain, weather conditions, the composition and status of the infrastructure in the area of operations, the makeup and attitude of the population that will be encountered, and how the combined effects of these

factors will influence mission accomplishment. Intelligence provides knowledge of threat capabilities, strengths, centers of gravity, and critical vulnerabilities, along with insight into the enemy's intentions. The integration of intelligence on the threat and on the battlespace helps to provide the commander with situational awareness, which is used to determine the decisive time and place to strike.

Intelligence and operations must be linked throughout the planning, decision, execution, and assessment (PDE&A) cycle at all levels. Intelligence shapes the plan and provides the knowledge that facilitates execution. It identifies changes in the situation that require modification of the plan or that trigger decisions during the conduct of the operation. At the same time, the nature of the mission and the concept of operations focus and shape the intelligence effort; intelligence that is not relevant to the mission is useless. IRs and intelligence operations are continually evaluated to ensure that they are focused on supporting mission accomplishment.

1006. Principles of Intelligence Operations

Intelligence operations are conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- **The focus is on tactical intelligence.** The Marine Corps is primarily a tactical organization, and the focus of Marine intelligence operations is on the generation of tactical intelligence.
- **Intelligence is focused downward.** Intelligence must be available to commanders at all levels. Although the management of intelligence collection and production is centralized in the Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) command element (CE), the focus is on providing the intelligence needed to plan and execute the mission to every unit involved in the operation. The requirements of the entire force will be considered in directing the intelligence effort. Critical products will be *pushed* down to the tactical commander, who will

² The term PIR replaces the term essential element of information. For a discussion of IRs, PIRs, and CCIRs, see Paragraph 3003.

be able to *pull* additional intelligence support as needed.

- **Intelligence drives operations.** The Marine Corps' warfighting philosophy depends on timely, accurate intelligence for success. Intelligence is the critical underpinning for each phase of the PDE&A cycle.
- **Intelligence activities require centralized management.** Good intelligence is the result of the integration of many separate and specialized collection, processing, and analytical resources. The scarcity of these assets, coupled with the requirement to focus on the commander's PIRs, creates the need for centralized coordination and management. This centralization will be done in the MAGTF CE, under the direction of intelligence officers who are trained and experienced in the management of multidiscipline, all-source³ intelligence operations. *Although centralized coordination and management is required for efficient and effective use of intelligence assets, it is critical for the commander who is exercising centralized control to allocate appropriate resources to ensure that needs of subordinate commands that are crucial to mission accomplishment are properly addressed.*
- **The G-2/S-2 facilitates use of intelligence.** The intelligence officer enables effective use of intelligence throughout the command. As the principal disseminator of intelligence, the intelligence officer ensures that the full implications of the intelligence picture are understood. To do this, the intelligence officer must be a *full and continuous* participant in the planning process.
- **Intelligence must be tailored and timely.** Intelligence must be tailored to the requirements of the user, provided in a useful format, and received in time to affect the decisionmaking process. Delivery of the right intelligence—not simply data or information—to the right place at the right time must be the guiding principle of all dissemination efforts.

- **Utilization is the final step of the intelligence cycle.** Intelligence has no inherent value; its value is derived from its support of decisionmaking. The intelligence cycle is not complete until the intelligence that has been developed is used to plan and/or execute operations.

1007. Intelligence Functions

In providing support to the commander, Marine intelligence organizations carry out six specific intelligence functions:

- **Support the commander's estimate.** Intelligence supports the formulation and subsequent modification of the commander's estimate of the situation by providing as accurate an image of the battlespace and the threat as possible. In this manner, intelligence supports initial planning and decisionmaking. One of the principal tools used in this function is intelligence preparation of the battlespace (IPB). IPB is a systematic, continuous process of analyzing the threat and environment in a specific geographic area. IPB helps to provide an appreciation for the characteristics of the area of operations and the enemy capabilities, weaknesses, and COAs. This knowledge affords the commander an understanding of the battlespace and the opportunity to exploit enemy vulnerabilities.
- **Develop the situation.** Situation development provides continuing knowledge of unfolding events to help update the image of the situation. It is a dynamic process that is used to assess the current situation and confirm or deny the adoption of specific COAs by the enemy. It helps refine our understanding of the battlespace and reduces uncertainty and risk. Situation development occurs during execution and provides the basis for adapting plans or exploiting opportunities.
- **Provide indications and warning (I&W).** I&W serve a protective purpose, providing early warning of potential hostile action. They help prevent surprise and reduce risk from enemy actions that run counter to planning assumptions.

³ All-source intelligence is intelligence that incorporates all available sources of information in the development of the finished intelligence product.

Intelligence Functions	Commander's Focus	Operational Activities
Support to commander's estimate	Plan a mission	Develop and analyze COAs
Situation development	Execute the mission	Monitor execution Modify plan as necessary
Indications and warning	Orient on contingencies	Increase readiness Develop contingency plans
Support to force protection	Force Protection	Support operational security (OPSEC) NBC defense Support deception plan
Support to targeting	Plan fire support	Attack targets
Support to combat assessment	Reorient forces Plan future operations	Consolidate, pursue, exploit Reattack targets

Figure 1-3. Relationship Between Intelligence Functions and Operations.

- **Support force protection.** Force protection is the set of comprehensive security measures, collection activities, and operations that are undertaken to guard the force against the effects of enemy action. Intelligence supports force protection by identifying, locating, and countering an enemy's intelligence collection, sabotage, subversion, and terrorism capabilities. Support to force protection requires detailed and accurate assessments of threat force capabilities and intentions and facilitates efforts to deny the enemy the opportunity to take offensive action against our forces.
- **Support targeting.** Intelligence supports targeting by identifying target systems, critical nodes, and high-value and high-payoff targets as well as by providing the intelligence required to most effectively engage these targets.
- **Support combat assessment.** Combat assessment is the process used to determine the overall

effectiveness of military operations and identify requirements for future actions. Intelligence supports the entire combat assessment process and is directly responsible for battle damage assessment (BDA), which is one of the principal components of combat assessment. BDA is the timely and accurate estimate of the damage resulting from the application of military force. BDA estimates physical damage to a particular target, functional damage to that target, and the capability of the entire target system to continue its operations.

All six functions are carried out continually during the PDE&A cycle at all levels throughout the force. However, particular functions may be stressed more during one phase of the cycle, and different units may emphasize one or two functions over the others on the basis of their individual missions. Figure 1-3 illustrates the relationship between the intelligence functions, the commander's decisionmaking, and operational activities.

1008. The Role of the Commander in Intelligence

Intelligence is an inherent and essential responsibility of command. Commanders must come to think of command and intelligence as inseparable, just as they commonly think of command and operations as inseparable. They must study and understand both the theory and the practice of intelligence doctrine. They must be personally involved in the conduct of intelligence activities, providing guidance, supervision, judgment, and authority to ensure a timely and useful product. The commander's involvement in the intelligence process encompasses the following specific responsibilities:

- **Focus the intelligence effort.** The commander must provide the guidance and direction necessary for the effective conduct of intelligence activities. Intelligence assets will rarely be sufficient to satisfy every requirement. Thus, the intelligence effort must be focused on clearly articulated priorities that drive the concept of intelligence support and the collection, production, and dissemination efforts. The commander provides this focus through the articulation of the commander's intent, the planning guidance, and the command's PIRs.
- **Participate in the intelligence process.** Although the intelligence officer manages the intelligence effort for the commander, the commander is responsible for the results of this effort. Effective participation in the intelligence process requires an understanding of the practical capabilities and limitations of intelligence personnel, equipment, procedures, and products. The commander should supervise the process, interjecting guidance and direction at key points to ensure that the process is responding to the commander's intent. For example, the commander should define the scope of the IPB effort, identify the preferred intelligence product format, and establish priorities among subordinate commands' IRs.
- **Use intelligence in decisionmaking.** Intelligence exists for the primary purpose of aiding the commander's decisionmaking process. Although the

intelligence officer facilitates the use of intelligence throughout the command by providing timely dissemination of the intelligence product and ensuring that the meaning of the intelligence is understood, the commander makes the judgment of its operational impact. The commander makes a personal analysis of the intelligence product and arrives at the estimate of the situation that serves as the basis for the decision. This act is the responsibility of the commander and no one else.

- **Support the intelligence effort.** Intelligence is a team effort. Good intelligence is the result of the integration of many separate and specialized collection, processing, and analytical resources. Some of these resources are organic to the unit; many are provided by units or agencies outside the command. Intelligence operations by organic assets normally cannot succeed without support from throughout the command. Reconnaissance teams must be inserted, sensors implanted, communications assets provided for the dissemination of intelligence, and so on. Timely and effective intelligence dissemination requires the dedication of significant C2 assets. Once an operation begins, nearly every Marine will have the occasion to observe significant facts about the enemy and environment; all personnel should understand and carry out their responsibility to collect and report information. The commander must ensure that all members of the unit understand the importance placed on intelligence and the requirement to support the intelligence effort. In addition, external support must be requested and coordinated. The intelligence section executes the procedures necessary to obtain the required support, but does so in the name of the commander. When the command's support requirements go unsatisfied, the commander must intervene, lending command authority to obtain the necessary support.
- **Evaluate the results of intelligence activities.** The commander must provide feedback to the intelligence support system. This feedback should identify where the intelligence provided met expectations and where and how it fell short. Key areas to evaluate include product content, presentation, timeliness, and overall usefulness.