

# The Intelligence Cycle: From Recon to Action



This article is part of the [Antistasi Commander's Handbook](#).

## Battle Quotes

“Knowledge is power.”

— Sir Francis Bacon

## 1. PURPOSE

To establish a doctrinal process for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of battlefield information. In asymmetric warfare, intelligence is our most decisive weapon. It allows our small force to bypass enemy strengths and strike with precision at identified vulnerabilities. An operation without intelligence is mere gambling; an operation with intelligence is a calculated execution.

## 2. SITUATION

**The conventional adversary is a creature of habit and doctrine.** They rely on standardized patrol schedules, established supply routes, and predictable responses. This doctrinal rigidity is a critical vulnerability. However, the enemy also possesses overwhelming sensor capabilities and firepower. Moving blindly within the Area of Operations (AO) will lead directly into the enemy's strength, resulting in the catastrophic loss of personnel and materiel. Therefore, every action must be informed by a clear understanding of the enemy's disposition and intent.

## Battle Quotes

“Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.”

— Sun Tzu

## 3. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

**Intelligence drives operations.** It is not a separate or specialized task but a continuous cycle that

underpins all planning and action. We do not wait for information to fall into our laps; we actively hunt for it. This process converts raw data from the field into actionable intelligence that enables commanders to make effective decisions. The cycle consists of three distinct, continuous phases.

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graph TD
    subgraph "The Intelligence Cycle"
        A("Collection") --> B("Analysis")
        B --> C("Dissemination & Action")
        C --> A
    end
```

## a. The Three Phases of the Intelligence Cycle

### (1) Collection

**This is the active gathering of raw information from the AO.** The goal is to see the battlespace through the enemy's eyes.

#### Battle Quotes

“You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear.”

— Sherlock Holmes (A. Conan Doyle)

### (a) Observation

*The primary collection method. This involves covertly watching enemy forces from static Observation Posts (OPs) or through mobile reconnaissance patrols. Use of optics, drones, and simple patience is paramount.*

### (b) Interrogation

*Enemy Prisoners of War (POW) and captured local collaborators are a direct source of information on enemy morale, plans, and the location of key leaders or assets.*

### (c) Seized Materiel

*Valuable information can be recovered from the battlefield. Search enemy dead for maps and documents. Seize laptops from objectives. This materiel can provide a direct window into enemy plans.*

#### Battle Quotes

“The greatest advantage in battle is a lifetime of study and preparation, including the study of

the enemy.”

— General James “Mad Dog” Mattis

### Insurgent Commander’s Note



Key intelligence can be acquired by interrogating captured enemy officers/squad leaders or by hacking laptops found at enemy installations.

Both will provide the rough location of the Arms Dealer.

## (2) Analysis

**This is the process of turning raw information into usable intelligence.** One piece of data is an anecdote; multiple correlated pieces of data form a pattern.

### (a) Pattern Identification

*Connect the dots. A supply truck is seen at the same outpost every day at 1300hrs. An enemy patrol always uses the same road. A QRF always responds from the same base and along the same route. These are exploitable patterns.*

### (b) Vulnerability Assessment

*Based on the patterns identified, where is the enemy weakest? That daily supply truck may only have one escort vehicle. That patrol may be over-extended and far from support. Analysis determines not just what the enemy is doing, but how we can use it against them.*

## (3) Dissemination & Action

**Intelligence is worthless if it is not delivered to the right person in time to be acted upon.**

### (a) Reporting

*All collected information must be reported up the chain of command clearly and concisely. Use the map to mark enemy positions and movements. A simple report like, “Enemy BTR patrol, four dismounts, heading east on Route 4, passed grid 123-456 at 14:30,” is invaluable.*

## (b) Actionable Intelligence

Leadership synthesizes these reports into a coherent picture of the battlefield. This picture—the actionable intelligence—is then used to plan and launch operations such as ambushes, raids, or sabotage missions, targeting the vulnerabilities that have been identified.

### Insurgent Commander's Note



Use map markers religiously. A temporary marker placed by a scout is infinitely more useful than a vague voice report. Mark what you see, when you see it, where you see it. Effective map marking turns individual observation into collective knowledge.

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## 4. TACTICAL APPLICATION: THE RECON TEAM

**The recon team is the commander's primary collection asset.** Their mission is to gain information, not to seek combat. Their success is measured by the quality of their intelligence, not their kill count. Their motto is simple: *"See without being seen."*

1. **Core Mission:** Return with a complete and accurate report, having never fired a shot.
1. **Essential Tools:** Your most important tools are your binoculars/scope and your map. Drones are a high-reward asset but are noisy and easily detected; use them with extreme caution from deeply concealed positions.
1. **Reconnaissance Methods:**
  1. **Route Recon:** Observing a specific road or path to map enemy traffic.
  2. **Area Recon:** Observing a wider area, such as a town or outpost, to determine enemy disposition.
  3. **Surveillance:** Long-duration observation of a single high-value target or location.

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## 5. THE INTELLIGENCE CHECKLIST (PIRS)

A recon element must know what information to prioritize. These are the Priority Intelligence Requirements (PIRs).

### (1) Enemy Composition & Strength

1. **What is the enemy?**
  1. Infantry, armor, logistical trucks? How many are there?

## (2) Enemy Location & Disposition

### 1. Where are they, and what are they doing?

1. Are they on patrol, in a defensive posture? Where are their heavy weapons and key leaders located?

## (3) Enemy Activity & Timings

### 1. What is their routine?

1. Where do convoys commonly travel? Which routes do they prefer?

## (4) Key Terrain & Obstacles

### 1. What terrain features control the area?

1. What terrain offers us a tactical advantage? Where are the best spots for an ambush or OP? Where has the enemy placed mines, roadblocks, or checkpoints?

### Battle Quotes

“The map is not the territory.”

— Alfred Korzybski

## 6. SUMMARY

Intelligence is the lifeblood of the insurgency. It allows us to mitigate risk, conserve our limited resources, and apply our strength with surgical precision. The cycle of Collection, Analysis, and Dissemination is continuous; the intelligence gained from one successful mission becomes the foundation for planning the next. To fight without information is to embrace defeat.

### Battle Quotes

“Thus, what enables the wise sovereign and the good general to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond the reach of ordinary men, is foreknowledge.”

— Sun Tzu

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