

Intelligence



U.S. Marine Corps

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
Headquarters United States Marine Corps
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CHANGE 1 to MCDP 2
Intelligence

1. This publication has been edited to ensure gender neutrality of all applicable and appropriate terms, except those terms governed by higher authority. No other content has been affected.
2. File this transmittal sheet in the front of this publication.

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE
MARINE CORPS

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert S. Walsh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'R' and 'W'.

ROBERT S. WALSH
Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps
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FOREWORD

Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 2, *Intelligence*, describes the theory and philosophy of intelligence as practiced by the United States Marine Corps. It provides Marines a conceptual framework for understanding and conducting effective intelligence activities. The Marine Corps' view of intelligence is based on our common understanding of the nature of war and on our warfighting philosophy as described in MCDP 1, *Warfighting*.

Intelligence discusses the effective use of knowledge about the enemy and the environment in support of military decision-making. *Intelligence* acknowledges that uncertainty pervades the battlefield and that our best intelligence efforts can only reduce, not eliminate, uncertainty.

One of the main aims of this manual is to put intelligence into its proper context in relation to other activities of warfighting. The Marine Corps views intelligence as a fundamental component of command and control that is inseparable from operations. The general concepts which apply to effective command and control apply equally to intelligence. This publication, therefore, presumes familiarity with MCDP 6, *Command and Control*, which establishes fundamental doctrine for command and control.

MCDP 2, *Intelligence*, does not supersede any current doctrinal publication. It provides the authoritative basis for the subsequent development of intelligence doctrine, education, training, equipment, procedures, and organization. *Intelligence* affords no specific techniques or procedures for intelligence activities; rather, it offers broad guidance which requires judgment in its application. Other publications in the intelligence series of Marine Corps warfighting publications provide specific tactics, techniques, and procedures.

Marine Corps intelligence doctrine applies across the full spectrum of conflict, from peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance operations on the one hand to general war on the other. Furthermore, this publication pertains equally to small-unit leaders and senior commanders. Since intelligence is an essential component of any military activity, this manual is meant to guide Marines at all levels of command in both the operating forces and the supporting establishment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. C. Krulak', is positioned above the printed name.

C. C. KRULAK
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

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Intelligence

Chapter 1. The Nature of Intelligence

How Important is Intelligence?—The Objectives of Intelligence—Intelligence as Knowledge—Intelligence as a Process—Why the Mystery?—What Makes Intelligence Different?—Expectations of Intelligence—Intelligence in the Information Age—A Case Study: Desert Storm 1990–1991—Conclusion

Chapter 2. Intelligence Theory

What Do We Want to Know About the Enemy?— Characteristics of Good Intelligence—Classes of Intelligence—Capabilities Versus Intentions—Signals and Noise—Levels of Intelligence—Intelligence Requirements—Sources of Intelligence—Functions of Intelligence—Security—The Intelligence Cycle—A Case Study: Vietnam 1972—Conclusion

Chapter 3. Creating Effective Intelligence

The Challenge to Intelligence—Intelligence Is a Command Responsibility—The Command-Intelligence Connection—The Intelligence-Operations Connection—Intelligence as a Team

MCDP 2 Intelligence

Effort—Intelligence Is a Product, Not a Provision—A Balanced Approach—Focusing the Intelligence Effort—Generating Tempo Through Intelligence—Intelligence Education and Training—A Case Study: Somalia 1992–1993—Conclusion

Notes

Chapter 1

The Nature of Intelligence

“And therefore I say: Know the enemy, know yourself; your victory will never be endangered. Know the ground, know the weather; your victory will then be total.”¹

—Sun Tzu, The Art of War

“For the whole reason-for-being of all military intelligence personnel is to facilitate accomplishment of the mission, and to save lives. When they fail, all the wrong people are hurt.”²

—Stedman Chandler and Robert W. Robb,
Front-Line Intelligence

To develop effective intelligence, we must first understand its fundamental nature—its purpose and characteristics as well as its relationship to command and operations. This understanding will become the basis for developing a theory and practical philosophy for intelligence.

HOW IMPORTANT IS INTELLIGENCE?

Maneuver warfare requires a firm focus on the enemy. It aims at taking action which avoids enemy strengths and exploits enemy critical vulnerabilities. The identification of these strengths and vulnerabilities is crucial. Maneuver warfare requires acting in a manner to deceive and then striking at a time and place which the enemy does not expect and for which he is not prepared. Identification of an adversary's expectations and preparations is also important. Maneuver warfare requires decision and action based on situational awareness—a keen understanding of the essential factors which make each condition unique—rather than on preconceived schemes or techniques. How is this situational awareness gained?

Accurate and timely intelligence—knowledge of the enemy and the surrounding environment—is a prerequisite for success in war. Certainly, maneuver warfare places a heavy emphasis on the judgment of leaders at all levels. Nonetheless, judgment, even genius, cannot substitute for good intelligence. Genius may make better

sense of available information, and it may provide superior and faster use of the knowledge it gains from that information, but no commander—no matter how brilliant—can operate effectively without good intelligence. A brilliant commander, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, proclaimed that, “It is not that one general is more brilliant or experienced than the other; it is a question of which general has a better appreciation of the battlefield.”³

Intelligence, therefore, is at once inseparable from both command and operations. Intelligence contributes to the exercise of effective command during military operations and helps ensure the successful conduct of those operations. By identifying enemy weaknesses susceptible to attack, intelligence also serves as an important element of combat power.

Effective intelligence in the hands of capable commanders has often provided decisive advantages of tactical, operational, and strategic importance. The Battle of Midway in June 1942 was won by a vastly outgunned and outnumbered American fleet because its commanders had received, recognized, and acted upon detailed and accurate intelligence. In 1986, during air strikes conducted in response to Libya’s terrorist activity, intelligence provided the detailed understanding of the Libyan air defense system that enabled Marine and Navy aviators to effectively shut it down. Intelligence’s identification of critical vulnerabilities in Iraqi air and ground defenses contributed to the rapid and thorough defeat of Iraqi forces during Operation Desert Storm.

THE OBJECTIVES OF INTELLIGENCE

Understanding the relationship between intelligence and command and control is key to understanding the role of intelligence. Command and control is about making and executing decisions. The main purpose of intelligence is to support the decisionmaking process.

Intelligence strives to accomplish two objectives. First, it *provides accurate, timely, and relevant knowledge about the enemy (or potential enemy) and the surrounding environment*. In other words, the primary objective of intelligence is to support decisionmaking by reducing uncertainty about the hostile situation to a reasonable level—recognizing, of course, that the fog of war renders anything close to absolute certainty impossible.

In achieving its primary objective, intelligence performs four related tasks. First, it identifies and evaluates existing conditions and enemy capabilities. Second, based upon those existing conditions and capabilities, it estimates possible enemy courses of action, providing insight into possible future actions. Third, it aids in identifying friendly vulnerabilities the enemy may exploit. Finally, intelligence assists in the development and evaluation of friendly courses of action based on the results of the first three tasks.

The second intelligence objective is that it *assists in protecting friendly forces through counterintelligence*. Counterintelligence