

## INTELLIGENCE IN THE FUNCTIONING OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF A STATE

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**Abstract** The successful implementation of the state foreign policy goals also implies a high quality diplomatic or intelligence service within it. Intelligence capabilities are essential as diplomatic missions usually do not have enough assets to obtain specific and useful information on their own as diplomatic resources are needed for international communication and maintaining good relations. Foreign policy achieves its national interests towards other countries and international organizations by timely planning and realization of its strategies and goals. The realization of strategies and goals important for foreign policy decision making process is hard to even imagine without good intelligence work – data collection, analysis, production and assessment. Nowadays, not only do intelligence and diplomacy interweave and complement each other, but they are also highly complementary and represent part of a continuous cycle contributing to the functioning of state foreign policy. This work aims to highlight that intelligence work contributes to the accomplishment of foreign policy tasks through reliable and useful intelligence. In this regard, the dynamic global developments accompanied by the accelerated development of new technologies will require a certain transformation of some methods of intelligence work in terms of timely information and increasing the value of foreign policy analyses and assessments.

**Keywords:** intelligence, state foreign policy.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Intelligence work has been present throughout all phases of human civilization. Its primary focus has been on secrets in interpersonal relations, specifically the secrets of certain entities (states, their alliances, institutions and individuals). In gathering intelligence, the intelligence service must process, classify, and assess the information based on its utility. This process unfolds through the so-called intelligence cycle and its phases: planning, collection, processing, analysis and dissemination. The phases of intelligence cycle as well as the intelligence methods have changed throughout the history. At first, people as individuals and informal groups performed intelligence duties for a long time since there was no intelligence agency. Those individuals gathered secret data in service of their rulers using various communication strategies, recon and surveillance methods, content reading and analysis, spreading disinformation, coding and encryption. In the beginning, the data were military-political, but later other data relevant to achieving the goals of the rulers were also gathered. Conventional espionage and counter intelligence developed in time as well as intelligence methods and institutionalization of intelligence service. (Đukić, 2017.)

Being specific, semi-autonomous administrative body with specific authorities which conducts intelligence-security subversive operations in order to maintain national and international security and achieve other strategic aims. (Đukić, 2022:52) It is also significant for maintaining and expanding political (and military) power. In reality, intelligence data/information, which are result of intelligence service, rarely determine policy, although it happens. However, they shape policy implementation.

Operational intelligence support contributes to the confidence and trust in the foreign policy implementation; it provides immediacy, pragmatism and focus to the current general conclusions (Pearson 1992). There is enormous information need for states due to foreign policy formulation and implementation, planning military strategy, structuring the armed forces, conducting diplomacy, negotiating an arms control agreement or taking place in the activities of the international organizations. Many governments maintain some form of the intelligence

capacities as a matter of existence in the world where threat and insecurity still exist (Sarkcsian,1995).

One of the main reasons why intelligence exists is to reduce unpredictability in military and political affairs. The more states can reduce unpredictability related to competences and intentions of their rivals (or partners) the bigger is possibility they could avoid conflicts which are results of fear of sudden attacks or other mistakes. Foreign strategic intelligence agency can bring stability to international affairs. Implementation as well as avoiding diplomacy surprises require intelligence and counterintelligence operations. There is a range of models of foreign policy process. One of the most common is “the model of rational actor“. The model suggests the policymakers to take into consideration their options, to define their aims, to take into consideration various alternative ways of achieving their options and choose the most effective method of policy implementation. The model requires reliable intellectual data. Without intelligence, the rational actor model does not function as it should (Spanier,1993).

The other point of view is “the bureaucratic model“, where different parts of executive branch have different points of view what policy should be. These views are partially based on the distinct, self-interested goals of bureaucratic units. According to this model, policy is the result of conflicts among bureaucratic actors. Since national security institutions, such as military and intelligence agencies are part of the bureaucratic machinery, the intelligence service also has a role to play in the bureaucratic model (Spanier,1993).

Intelligence does not exist for its own purpose. It operates through the phases of the intelligence cycle (requirements, collection, analysis, processing, dissemination) and the machinery (organization) to assist decision-makers in foreign policy to draw the best conclusions in areas of their interest. In other words, taking the necessary actions is the final step in the intelligence cycle, even though it is not listed among the intelligence activities (Handel 1989).

National security policy often overlaps with foreign policy. However, national security differs from foreign policy in that its aims are narrower and focused on the security of the nation. Furthermore, national security primarily deals with actual and potential adversaries, particularly their use of force. This means that there is a military emphasis, which is

not typically the case with foreign policy matters. In brief, foreign policy is a part of national security, while the other part is national defense. Therefore, national security usually encompasses all issues of foreign policy. Intelligence services serve both national defense and foreign policy. This makes intelligence data vital for national security, especially in peacetime, when the main hand of national security, forced arms are not engaged in any operations.

## **2. THE FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS AND INTELLIGENCE WORK**

The foreign policy process is the way a certain subject decides about policy and its implementation. The policy choice depends on who makes decisions and how decisions are made. Within a given type of governance, such as democracy, there is no single foreign policy process but rather divergence. There are several explanations as to why and how the political process differs. The most common explanation is that different types of issues are processed differently. One of the distinctions is between crisis and non-crisis policy. Regardless of the type of policy, intelligence data is an indispensable factor in decision making. International aims that the state tries to reach range from very specific (to solve a border conflict) to general (to enhance state impact).

In the international system of sovereign competitive nations, foreign policy aims are often national aims. The aims are rarely cooperative among several countries (alliances) or even less possible they are motivated by idealism (international humanitarian aid). When states act in pursuit of self interest, they follow their “national interest“. Implementing the policy of national interest states have great intelligence requests. The basic element of national interest is national defence which provides physical security for the the citizens of a state. The second element is providing economic prosperity of a entity to the extent affected by resource supplies, balance of trade, exchange rate and additional factors of the international economic policy. The third element of national interest is securing favorable political environment. It includes the capability of state citizens to elect their type of governance and it can also include promotion of values (individual rights) and processes (democracy) in other states which are compatible to their own values and processes. The fourth element of national interest is

providing national cohesion, which means avoiding foreign policy or other pressures (separatist movements which threaten by civil war) irreconcilable domestic divisions or other conflicts that could separate a state. None of these elements of national interest could be satisfied without appropriate intelligence and counterintelligence operations (Holsli,1974).

States have a wide range of instruments through which they can attempt to achieve their foreign policy objectives. These tools include military instruments, instruments for penetration and intervention, diplomatic actions and covert operations. The extent to which a subject can use any of these instruments will vary depending on the power of the country, defined as its ability to coerce or persuade another country to act in a desired manner. A state can be powerful in one, but not in another manner. The ability to apply power varies depending on the context. The military instrument relies on implicit or explicit threat of force and the actual use of force. Possessing military power is also a tool because it enhances the country's reputation and increases its influence. The diplomatic instrument involves bilateral communication. The methods include direct negotiations between governments and making a case in the forum of an international organization. (Johnson,1991).

Secret diplomacy is a powerful weapon of every state in negotiations with the other side. Indeed, very little is known about this skill, and even less is discussed. This is understandable, as these are secretive activities that are rarely made public. There have been cases where intelligence services were engaged in such negotiations with opposing parties or multiple opposing parties. This does not exclude the possibility that, in certain situations, there may be an overlap between conducting covert diplomacy and gathering intelligence. Since the successful diplomacy includes the usage of both “soft“ and “tough“ power proportionally at certain time and the success requires confidentiality, evasion or violations of laws in other countries, it sometimes can lead, especially in democratic states, to raise ethical questions regarding the true objectives of intelligence work (Lazić,2016:237).

According to Oren, intelligence services are inseparable part of the diplomatic efforts, aimed at promoting a state's strategic goals through behind the scenes contacts and public contacts (Oren,2020:115-122). This definition contains a structural obstacle which comes from a national interest determination. Different parts of security system, including

intelligence part, consider the state existential needs and fight against military threat to be the supreme national interest and the top priority which takes precedence over other national interests. On the other hand, besides the general aims of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, foreign service emphasizes the need for creation of international relations based on states images of lawful and recognized members of family of nations and power consolidation as a nation state devoted to the international law and justice. Therefore, it is necessary to reconcile these seemingly disparate goals of the two segments of the state apparatus from the outset.

According to Berridge, the mutual relation of intelligence and diplomacy has been visible and overlapped since the beginning of history and organized power. The author point out that at the beginning these two functions did not differ from each other and they were performed by the same people (Berridge,2005).

Modern diplomacy and intelligence are not only intertwined but are, to a large extent, substantively and procedurally similar, forming part of a unified and continuous cycle functioning within foreign policy, or the global positioning of countries.

Secret operations are part of intelligence. Foreign intelligence, especially secret operations are done by the states in the implementation of foreign policy. As it is mentioned in this field, every nation with the capacity for secret operations consider it to be an irresistible alternative to more open means of foreign policy, such as war and diplomacy. An open war is always too noisy and formal, while diplomacy is always too slow and frustrating (Kevin,1998).

### **3. THE ROLE OF INTELLIGENCE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE FOREIGN POLICY**

Modern intelligences use various methods in their work, which can be classified as methods of gathering intellectual data, methods of processing intellectual findings and creation of final intellectual records. The first group of intellectual methods includes methods of gathering intellectual data from human sources which includes a) agent-based method which means secret gathering of intellectual data by agents b)deductive method, c) gathering intellectual findings from open sources; method of cooperation and technical method with the variety of data

gathering disciplines. The second group of intellectual methods includes the method of processing intellectual findings, creation of intellectual findings and formation of final intellectual documents and scientific methods and methodical procedures and techniques known to all natural, technical and social sciences. The final result of intelligence work in the realization of the intelligence-informative and intelligence-security function are final intelligence products (final intelligence findings) which are synthesized in various forms of intelligence documents and provided to the final beneficiary (Bajagić,2010).

The final beneficiaries, that is to say, decision makers have to set clear foreign policy goals and priorities. If the policy creator priorities are ambiguous, intelligence agency will be insecure about what is expected from it to deliver and it will put its effort into something that could be neglected. In democracy the intelligence agency does not exist for its own purpose. It exist to serve decision makers needs in their process of decision making. When the gathered intellectual data are once submitted to decision makers they can be a part of foreign policy or military issues (Jervis,1991).

Intelligence assessments have to be politically neutral. A key characteristic of intelligence services is their reliance on facts, knowledge and rigorous analysis to provide the most objective explanation of what is happening and what is likely to happen in a situation or area that requires decision-making or policy development.

The result of intelligence analysis has to present the situations the way one sees them no matter if these assessments will support or dispute decision makers perception and current policy. Intelligence is useful in the amount it provides objective significance. Not only the attitude of decision maker causes politicization of intelligence, but also the competition among different intelligence agencies within the government can politicize intelligence, its results and usage.

Policy makers fail to effectively communicate their needs to the intelligence community and generally make poor use of intelligence data. While this is not directly related to the personality of the policy-makers, strong and effective coordination between the intelligence community and the office of strategic policy makers is crucial for better decision-making. Therefore, decision makers must pay attention to improving this coordination (Mijalkovski,2009).

Decision makers usually have limited knowledge on the entire intelligence cycle, especially regarding what happens behind the scenes, such as the collection, exploitation, processing and evaluation of raw data. Therefore, from the perspective of intelligence professionals, policymakers often do not give the intelligence service and intelligence activities the attention they deserve. The nature of the relationship between intelligence services and decision makers is greatly influenced by the management style surrounding the intelligence community and the entire state apparatus. In a democratic society, for example, the attention intelligence activities receive would be vastly different from that in a totalitarian system. Leaders are not expected to accept intelligence assessments without first considering their relevance to their preferred policies or strategies.

Earlier intelligence work, especially in the areas of processing and analysis, was characterized by a lack of relevant information. Data and information on a certain intelligence/security issue or strategic aim were gathered in one place for a relatively longer period of time and then they were evaluated by analytical-synthetic methods and solutions were suggested. Analysis and estimation were the constant process of verification of intelligence/security validity, accuracy and completeness of each concrete data, piece of information or a document dismissing irrelevant data. Certain wider intelligence or foreign policy issues and occurrences, their total or individual causal relationships were taken into consideration. The connection, form and methods of operation, evaluation and prediction of researched occurrence, its real current and possible future dimension as well as evaluation and prediction of overall condition were the subject of intelligence analysis. Unlike in earlier times, the digital era requires from intelligence agencies to gather, analyse and process great amount of data in the short period of time. Whether the speed of information gathering and dependence on it will, in the future, relegate the event/subject of intelligence interest to a secondary priority or direct and shape it in a particular way depends on many factors. Among the most important are the speed and volume of collected (processed) information, the history of the events themselves, the level of understanding, and the quality of the overall intelligence work. A large volume of information and its rapid flow will necessitate a quick response from analysts and swift delivery of information to users,

i.e., foreign policy decision makers. However, new technologies, their utilization and usefulness cannot lead to the condition where information, due to its timeliness, can obscure or form the events and become an end in itself. The current and future events which are of great interest for intelligence and government services should be observed entirely and continuously in context in order to become meaningful and effective. The one should pay attention that events which are interesting for intelligence and which have a certain “routine projections“ do not sort and frame information and in that way threaten its quality, quantity and relevance. There is a need for a certain balance between one and the other, between thorough and fast-paced but above all useful for achieving foreign policy goals. The comprehensive information is obtained when the data obtained by using open sources are complemented with those obtained by human sources or techniques. AI and new technologies will assist analysts to reduce necessary time and to gain great help at data gathering and processing. In the modern information age the ability of the analysts is increased in gathering and processing great amount of information in the short period of time, to create analysis and evaluations with some additional values and to inform the foreign policy decision makers. However, in the situations where the analysts cannot give answers with the assistance of modern technology to more or less complex questions the human factor should be included (Đukić,2023).

In the modern world, intelligence agency directors play an active role in shaping foreign policy processes. This new role has led intelligence agencies to transform into structures that play a more active role in foreign policy decision making processes, unlike the traditional activities of intelligence agencies whose scope has long been limited to specific duties. (<https://politicstoday.org>,2026.)

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Foreign policy strategy, in order to be effective, should be based on timely and verified data as well as on specific models that help meet certain needs of the state. In today's context, these needs are fulfilled by significant engagement of intelligence and diplomacy capacities. Intelligence capacities are necessary owing to the fact that diplomatic missions often do not have the resources required to obtain specific and useful information since

diplomatic capacities are needed to maintain good relations and communication between countries. Advances in technology have always created possibilities for development and wide application in the intelligence and diplomatic sectors. The advancements in IT sector and global communications have had a significant impact on the process of globalization and, therefore, on the process of foreign policy. Artificial intelligence (AI), virtual (VR) and augmented reality (AR), cloud technology, quantum computing, autonomous (unmanned) systems with integrated sensors, proliferation of open sources are just some of the segments affecting (especially in the future) everyday life but intelligence as well. The integration of new technologies into intelligence work will also bring new quality. Collection and processing of intelligence data, preparation of tactical and strategic foreign policy analyses and assessments, providing timely information to foreign policy decision makers are just some of the advantages of modern technology. This will result in certain organisational, technical and personnel changes - some additional specialization within the offices of analysis and operations, continuous training but also the transformation of intelligence capabilities in terms of adaptation, cooperation and projected teamwork. The rapid technological breakthrough along with the dominant human activity will also require the foreign policy decision makers to additionally work on, and specify the requirements towards the intelligence community. Such an approach, if adopted, will contribute to ensuring the reliability and value of foreign policy information, but also to the protection of the national interests and security.

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Paper received: 12.12.2025.  
 Paper approved: 14.04.2026.