
Dilemmas and Consequences: The Role of Intelligence in the Context of Neglecting its Analysis in the Decision-Making Process

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Abstract:

Purpose: The purpose of this article is to analyse the role of intelligence services in the political decision-making process, with particular emphasis on the consequences of neglecting intelligence analysis by decision-makers. The study seeks to identify the determinants that lead political actors to disregard intelligence inputs and to explain why accurate and timely intelligence information does not always translate into effective decisions, including cases of political non-decision.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The article adopts a qualitative research design grounded in the realist theory of state security and political decision-making theory. The analysis is conducted using the process-tracing method, which enables the reconstruction of causal mechanisms linking intelligence activities, the flow of analytical information, and the behaviour of decision-making centres. The study is supported by comparative historical case studies drawn from military conflicts, counterterrorism, electoral interference, and contemporary security crises.

Findings: The findings demonstrate that the quality or accuracy of intelligence does not primarily determine the failure to utilise intelligence information in decision-making processes, but by the attitudes and characteristics of decision-makers. Biological factors (such as health, age, and biological rhythms), personality traits (including authoritarian tendencies and cognitive rigidity), and external situational factors (notably crisis conditions and stress) significantly influence the rejection or marginalisation of intelligence analysis.

Practical implications: The results underscore the need to strengthen institutional mechanisms to ensure the effective integration of intelligence analysis into political decision-making. These findings may inform reforms in national security governance, intelligence

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oversight, and crisis management frameworks.

Originality/Value: *The article contributes to the literature by offering a multidimensional explanation of the underutilisation of intelligence that extends beyond organisational or informational shortcomings. The article's originality lies in combining realist security theory with process tracing and rich empirical illustrations, thereby advancing understanding of the human factors underlying intelligence-related decision-making failures.*

Keywords: *Intelligence services, decision-making process, intelligence analysis, non-decision, national security, political leadership.*

JEL codes: *D73, F52, H56.*

Paper type: *Research paper.*

1. Introduction

The adage attributed to Socrates, "the past serves as a lesson for the future," is relevant to the modus operandi of both historical and contemporary intelligence and counterintelligence agencies. The same methodologies persist: provocation, unmasking, false legend, recruitment, turning an agent, false information, baiting, deactivating, encryption, decryption, as well as the trading of information and secrets.

Nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that we presently confront an entirely distinct landscape. Essentially, there are two concurrent realities: the tangible ("analogue" or "non-virtual") realm and another that continually expands and consolidates its dominance - the realm of informational, virtual, and digital reality. These realms increasingly intersect and blur their boundaries. While the mechanisms and operational principles of intelligence agencies remain consistent, it's evident that they are increasingly adapting to the dynamics of the latter reality.

One of the primary goals of intelligence operations is to gather information and utilise it effectively. When we consider the role of intelligence in the decision-making process, it is essential to recognise that the information it provides often serves as an "input" that initiates the process. If the input information is falsified or disregarded, the entire decision-making sequence (despite its rationality and high level of optimisation) is likely to yield an erroneous decision (Child, Elbanna, and Rodrigues, 2010).

Despite the extensive diversification of information sources and the accessibility of intelligence analyses, there are instances where this knowledge remains underutilised or inadequately analysed by decision-makers. Examining both historical perspectives and contemporary intelligence activities shows that such decision-making instances

have occurred and still persist. Consequently, a research issue arises concerning the neglect of analysis and the subsequent utilisation of intelligence information.

In the subject literature, intelligence activities and their role have undergone multifaceted analysis (Leslau, 2010; Arcos and Palacios, 2018; Betts, 2011; Marrin, 2008; Dunn *et al.*, 2009). However, within this framework, issues of neglect in the utilisation of acquired intelligence information have been marginally addressed. While existing discussions address the consequences of disregarding such information, they overlook fundamental dilemmas and conditions that underlie the question of why such neglect occurs. Therefore, the article addresses the underexplored dimension concerning the role of intelligence and examples of its underutilisation in the decision-making process.

2. Methodology

The theoretical framework of this article is based on the neorealist perspective on state security. Political realism asserts that the primary objective of state policy is to ensure its security. One classic realist viewpoint portrays states as entities that prioritise the pursuit of national interests in their external relations, defined in terms of power (Waltz, 2000, 5-41). Power is understood in static terms, referring to material factors - namely, the military and economic components of power (referred to as hard power) (Waltz, 1979; Wohlforth, 2016; Dorozik *et al.*, 2020).

This analysis draws on the second interpretation of the realist paradigm, which thrived during the Cold War confrontation between East and West. Within this paradigm, ensuring security means protecting the state's essential internal values. As Kenneth Waltz indicates, internal balancing is a critical aspect of enhancing a state's capacity, driven by security concerns (Waltz, 1997; Zakrzewska and Miciuła, 2019). In this context, the efforts of modern states to develop internal balancing involve not only military advancements but also the operations of intelligence services.

Equally significant in this context is the theory of political decision-making. Decision-making is an intrinsic aspect of human behaviour. It involves analysing the current state of affairs, identifying the desired state, noting differences and discrepancies, and ultimately setting a goal and selecting a course of action (Heywood, 2013; Miciuła, 2013). In the context of political decisions, which are the focus of this article, their significance is even greater. The consequences of these decisions can be crucial for national security or other international entities. Therefore, there is a clear need to understand political decision-making and its components.

In summarising the threads of theory, within the outlined research perspective, the role and significance of information in this process are particularly noteworthy. It can be argued that they are indeed a *sine qua non* condition of political decision-making practice. The importance of decision analysis significantly escalates in matters related to national and international security. It is precisely in these domains that political

decision-makers make crucial determinations concerning survival and the development of the political community and its institutions (Mintz, 2005, 94-98).

The methodological foundation of this analysis is process tracing, a causal sequence. It facilitates the exploration of causal mechanisms, providing answers to the questions "how" and "why" (Beach and Pedersen, 2013). Causal mechanisms encompass physical, social, and psychological processes which enable one entity to influence another (Bennet, 2008). Process tracing methodology allows for the examination of the sequence of dependencies shaping the characteristics of information flow between intelligence services and the decision-making centre, as well as the subsequent consequences of this process.

In pursuing the aim of analysis, which is to delineate the role of intelligence and the underutilisation of its activities in the decision-making process, the premise was adopted that the failure to utilise intelligence data in decision-making is not determined by their degree of accuracy, but by the stance of the decision-making centre. To verify this premise, the following research questions were formulated: What role does intelligence information play in the decision-making process? Why do decision-makers overlook analyses provided by intelligence? What factors influence the decision-making centre and its final decision?

3. The Role of Intelligence Services in the Decision-Making Process

The ongoing evolution of contemporary security threats to the state has led to a significant increase in the importance of intelligence operations. They have become essential components of activities conditioned, among other factors, on information operations, preparing societies to function according to specific patterns, and ultimately on making offensive and defensive decisions against potential adversaries.

To underscore the role of intelligence and the information it gathers in the context of their utilisation in the decision-making process, it is necessary to refer to the so-called intelligence cycle.

The concluding analysis of intelligence data is just one of the many stages in the decision-making process for political decision-makers overseeing state security. In the context of the subject matter of this study, the aforementioned intelligence cycle comprises four main stages:

1. Determination of the information requirement by state authorities authorised to do so based on the law. This stage is closely linked to the analysis of security space risks and the prioritisation of threats by political decision-makers (as well as their subordinate security and law enforcement agencies).
2. Gathering information by intelligence services according to the needs of the authorities (there are various methods of information gathering by intelligence

services, including: *Open Source Intelligence, Human Intelligence, Signals Intelligence, Imagery Intelligence, and Measurements and Signatures Intelligence*) (Unver, 2018, 3-4).

3. Analysis of the collected data, which primarily involves two areas: strategic analysis and signal analysis. Strategic analysis is a comprehensive assessment of events which enables the preparation of forecasts. Signal analysis, on the other hand, takes the form of a brief report – a one- or two-paragraph information piece from the ongoing work of the intelligence services.
4. Dissemination of the final analytical products to the recipients. If decision-makers do not respond to the received analysis, this stage concludes the intelligence cycle (Phythian, 2013, 1-4).

Presenting the intelligence cycle allows us to relate the information gathered by intelligence services to the broader informational processes within the decision-making centre. The core of these processes involves acquiring and processing information about the state of the environment (in this case, security), and subsequently making decisions. This ultimately involves transforming reality into its desired state.

Therefore, it is imperative that every decision-making centre has a clearly defined information subsystem in the form of specialised organisational units. In the context of a state's efforts to ensure the safety of its citizens, intelligence services fulfil this role. When integrating the role of intelligence services into the decision-making process, one can refer to Olavi Holsti's concept, which distinguishes three stages: input (new information), the system of beliefs about facts and values, and output (political decisions) (Holsti, 1962, 244-252).

Considering the functions performed by intelligence agencies, their actions should be classified into the first stage of the decision-making process – input. Meanwhile, the information they convey is of a secondary nature, serving as a label for categorising received information.

4. Neglect of Analytical Intelligence Activity

Observing the military theatre in the context of intelligence analysis neglect by political decision-makers, it is instructive to look back at historically distant yet profoundly illustrative events. The highlighted context brings to light events from 1854, revolving around the Balkan War between Russia and Turkey and their allies, England and France. Leading the anti-Russian coalition was Lord Raglan, a veteran of the Battle of Waterloo.

On October 24, 1854, spies dispatched to gather intelligence on the Russian army returned with critical reports. The information they provided was invaluable,

accurately pinpointing the location and disposition of enemy forces. Their reports indicated a planned Russian attack at dawn the following day, even identifying the intended strike location.

Faced with such pivotal intelligence for future actions and decisions, what did the commander-in-chief do? Terry Brighton writes about it in "Hell Riders: The True Story of the Charge of the Light Brigade": "Raglan read it [the intelligence report - ed. B.P.], said - very well - and did nothing" (Brighton, 2005, 79).

Historians of military conflicts agree that if Raglan had acted on the intelligence report and repositioned his divisions, the outcome of the Battle of Balaklava and the entire campaign could have been significantly different. This was not the only instance of a commander ignoring intelligence reports. The battle triggered a series of disastrous events. Without a clear understanding of the *ordre de bataille* and unable to keep up with the dynamic, yet predicted, developments, Raglan issued several vague and imprecise orders.

This culminated in the infamous massacre of the Light Brigade, a cavalry unit charging into enemy positions. The Charge of the Light Brigade has since become synonymous with senseless military defeat. It is worth noting that two and a half millennia ago, Sun Tzu wrote: „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. Now this foreknowledge cannot be elicited from spirits; it cannot be obtained inductively from experience, nor by any deductive calculation.

Knowledge of the enemy's dispositions can only be obtained from other men" (Sun Tzu, 2004). *Historia magistra vitae est* - history teaches us valuable lessons, as the Latin saying goes. All it takes is the willingness to learn. Before September 11, 2001, the political actors responsible for the security of the United States did not anticipate that fanatical terrorists could hijack multiple commercial planes using nail files and turn them into "divine wind," crashing them in suicide attacks into selected targets. It can be said that these decision-makers acted like Lord Raglan, disregarding the clear and concrete warning signals that were abundant.

On June 13, 2001, Egyptian government agencies warned Washington that Bin Laden's organisation was planning an assassination attempt on the U.S. president during the G-8 summit in Genoa. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak indicated that the attack would likely involve a plane loaded with explosives (Tyler and MacFarquhar, 2002). Unlike American decision-makers, who disregarded these warnings, the Italians took the threat very seriously.

The Italian government deployed anti-aircraft batteries around the Genoa airport and maintained constant patrols by anti-terrorist divers in the most vulnerable seaport (Carroll, 2001). The American government also received warnings from the Russians. A year before the World Trade Center attack, the Moscow press reported that Russian

intelligence had informed the CIA about 25 terrorist pilots trained for suicide missions. Vladimir Putin personally conveyed these warnings, stating explicitly that Russian intelligence had identified airports and government buildings in the U.S. as likely targets (Sonavane, 2019). British media also contributed to this chorus of warnings.

The British *Sunday Telegraph* reported that in August 2001 Mossad had informed the FBI and CIA about 200 of Osama Bin Laden's operatives who had infiltrated the United States and were planning a large-scale terrorist attack (Wastell and Jacobson, 2001). Additionally, numerous other signals reached U.S. intelligence services, including information about Islamists training in aviation within the United States, despite having only tourist visas that did not permit them to work or enrol in such courses.

Moreover, the attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 should have heightened the vigilance of American agencies. Despite Bill Clinton's order for retaliatory missile strikes in Afghanistan at the time, none of the agencies, including the FBI, CIA, NSA, and DIA, initiated increased alertness or readiness.

It is important to objectively analyse the reasons behind these mistakes and oversights. American agencies, with an annual budget of around \$30 billion, undoubtedly had the resources for effective preventive measures. They possessed the methods, techniques, and personnel for gathering information, as well as trusted allies like Egyptian, Israeli, Pakistani, and Saudi intelligence. One hypothesis regarding the lack of adequate response from the authorities points to a lack of cooperation in the intelligence sphere between the CIA and the FBI.

However, it's worth noting that given the multitude of information sources about such a potential attack, such assertions do not stand the test of time. It can be noted that such a chain of causes and effects was not unprecedented in American history. Looking back to the previous century, one can recall an instance when on the night of November 12, 1940, several outdated Swordfish biplanes took off from British aircraft carriers in two successful raids, effectively neutralising a significant portion of the Italian naval forces in the Mediterranean Sea.

This pivotal event dramatically shifted the balance of power in the region, exerting a significant, if not decisive, influence on subsequent developments in that part of the world and, consequently, on other fronts of World War II. The news of the attack on the Italian fleet at Taranto, one of the largest Italian naval bases, reverberated across all the media outlets of the time, leaving a profound impression on certain decision-makers in the USA, including the Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox.

Knox astutely foresaw that the Japanese could draw lessons from the British tactics. Within days of the attack, Lieutenant Takeshi Naito, the deputy air attaché of the Japanese Empire in Berlin, arrived at the devastated port of Taranto. His primary

objective was to gather intelligence on the parameters and progress of the British attack. The Japanese swiftly drew insightful conclusions from the British operation's course and strategy.

Several months later, on the morning of December 7, 1941, Japanese torpedoes and bombs effectively incapacitated much of the American battleship fleet in the Pacific for an extended period. According to researchers and historians, the Americans possessed sufficiently accurate information and intelligence to prevent the surprise attack and adequately prepare themselves. However, despite being informed about the potential attack in January 1940, no decision was made on this matter by Commander Lieutenant Arthur McCollum, head of the Far East Section of the Office of Naval Intelligence.

Neglecting intelligence analysis and information extends beyond the military spheres. From this perspective, the analysis is rooted in Russia's interference in the 2016 US presidential election. Even prior to the official commencement of the electoral campaign, the Director of the US Defense Intelligence Agency, James Clapper, repeatedly cautioned the government about Russia's growing cyber capabilities.

As the election campaign of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump commenced, FBI memos surfaced, indicating the potential for cyberattacks capable of disrupting the pre-election period and the elections themselves (Piotrowski, 2017, 1). During this period, experts identified four main areas of action by Russian services: selective information dissemination, information theft, disinformation, and disruption of the voting system (Van De Velde, 2017, 10).

After breaching the Democratic National Committee server and the Clinton Foundation, the operations of Russian intelligence services became a matter of public concern. As a result, compromising documents about the Democratic candidate were published via platforms like DCLeaks and WikiLeaks.

Both US intelligence services and numerous non-governmental experts had previously warned of such threats (Joint Statement from the Department of Homeland Security and Office of the Director of National Intelligence on Election Security, 2016). American cybersecurity expert Dave Aitel highlighted that the comprehensive actions undertaken by Russian services to destabilise the US electoral process fall into the category of cyber warfare (Aitel, 2016).

On January 6, 2017, the US intelligence community released a report titled "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections." Its primary assertion is the confidence of US intelligence agencies regarding actions directed by the Russian President during the US elections (Background to "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections": The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution, 2017).

It is notable that despite the information and intelligence analyses provided by US agencies, political decision-makers refrained from taking decisive actions to counter Russian influence.

The report outlines Russia's intentions to erode Americans' trust in public institutions and disrupt the electoral process to thwart Hillary Clinton's victory. As Donald Trump's chances of success increased, active measures were further intensified. In the context of the vital role of the electoral process in developed and stable democracies, external interference essentially undermines the core principles of democratic governance. What's even more perplexing is the passive response of American political elites to the events described.

To underscore the gravity of the issue at hand, it is instructive to compare the American situation with that of the Netherlands. Given the warnings from intelligence agencies regarding potential Russian meddling in the 2017 elections, Dutch authorities took proactive steps. They opted out of electronic voting and automated vote counting systems and issued directives barring election commission members from using email and USB memory devices (Brattberg and Maurer, 2018).

Leveraging intelligence insights empowered political decision-makers to enact measures curtailing significant Russian influence on the electoral process. From the standpoint of safeguarding the fundamental tenets of democracy, a distinct contrast emerges between the approaches of the US and Dutch administrations to this matter.

The onset of Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2022 exemplifies analytical neglect concerning intelligence provided by intelligence services. Interviews conducted by the Royal United Services Institute with heads of Ukrainian intelligence agencies reveal deep involvement of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in planning the invasion of Ukraine.

Jack Watling and Rick Reynolds highlight that the FSB received orders to draft plans for Ukraine's occupation as early as July 2021. For this purpose, the FSB's Fifth Service restructured its Department of Operational Information, significantly bolstering its personnel from about 20 to over 200 members. Moreover, they segmented it into thematic sections focusing on the Ukrainian parliament and critical national infrastructure (Watling, Danylyuk, and Reynolds, 2023, 4-5).

One fundamental action taken by the special services of the Russian Federation in preparing invasion plans for Ukraine was to reduce reliance on Russian agents for recruiting local operatives. This is illustrated by the unmasking, in June 2022, of Andrii Derkach, a member of the Ukrainian Parliament, by the Security Service of Ukraine. Derkach's mission was to establish a network of private security firms intended to support the Russian invasion upon its commencement (SBU, 2022).

Recruited by Russian services, high-ranking state officials were intended to exert

continuous influence and pressure on the top political leadership of Ukraine to persuade them to abandon their pro-European tendencies. This influence aimed to destabilise the country politically, and after the capture of Kyiv, to install new authorities mirroring the policy pursued by the Kremlin.

In the first hours of the war, senior Russian officials called their Ukrainian counterparts, urging them to remain passive and surrender. Such phone calls were received, among others, by Andrii Yermak, the Chief of Staff of the President of Ukraine, and Minister of Defence Oleksii Reznikov (Watling, Danylyuk, and Reynolds, 2023, 15). The actions of Russian services aimed at bringing about the capitulation of Ukraine's higher state structures may shed light on the mechanism behind the Russians' failure.

It should be emphasised that there were numerous instances of such actions undertaken by the FSB. However, within the context of this article, it's crucial to not only focus on operational aspects but also on the determinants associated with the Russian intelligence cycle. The Russians aimed to capture Kyiv within 72 hours of initiating hostilities.

Despite extensive military operations and efforts to destabilise the country politically, their plan failed. Russia was unable to spark an internal political crisis in Ukraine or seize Kyiv to establish a regime aligned with the Kremlin's policies. The reasons for this can be examined on various levels. However, it is noteworthy that the domino effect - a series of Russian setbacks in the war's early phase - was triggered by disruptions in the decision-making process within the analytical products of intelligence activity.

Until the final moments preceding the onset of full-scale military operations, Russian special services were preparing for actions aimed at destabilising the internal situation. However, the structures established by the FSB in Ukraine were ill-prepared for utilisation in the conditions of prolonged armed conflict.

Moreover, on February 20, 2022, the Americans made an unprecedented move by disclosing their intelligence, thereby warning the world about Russia's aggression against Ukraine. During a press conference, US President Joe Biden underscored, "We have reason to believe the Russian forces are planning and intend to attack Ukraine in the coming week, in the coming days. We believe that they will target Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, a city of 2.8 million innocent people" (Macias, 2022).

Such a step by the American administration further complicated the plans for the Russian invasion. However, Moscow's decision to initiate the war prompts several observations regarding the conditions of the decision-making process.

Firstly, Russian intelligence services developed action plans focusing on post-invasion activities and the achievement of strategic objectives by the Russian military.

This is evidenced by, for example, the lack of adequate logistics, the vulnerability of Russian convoys, or the shortage of fuel and ammunition.

Secondly, Russian agents overestimated their influence on Ukraine's socio-political landscape, potentially resulting in the provision of erroneous information to the decision-making centre - thus, the decision-making process relied on flawed input information.

Thirdly, Russian services were instructed to expedite operational activities rather than assess their feasibility - resulting in the breakdown of the third and fourth stages of the intelligence cycle.

Fourthly, the characteristics of the decision-making centre must be taken into account; despite warnings from intelligence services and recommendations to postpone the invasion until the summer of 2022, no such decision was made. In the context of Russian institutional culture, characterised by obedience to orders, top-down management processes, and the primacy of an imperialistic approach, the dismissal of intelligence recommendations is not unprecedented.

5. Conditions Influencing the Decision-Making Centre

The decision-making process can be examined across three dimensions. Firstly, there is the systemic perspective, viewing the decision-making centre as a stabiliser within the political system. Secondly, there is the analysis of decision-making through the lens of rationality, often approached from the standpoint of game theory (Pietraś, 2000, 295). From the perspective of this article's research focus, the third dimension is crucial, revolving around the conditions that influence the decision-making centre (political decision-makers).

Behavioural inclinations prompting decision-makers to neglect the analytical outputs of intelligence work can be influenced by three categories of factors: biological, personality and external. Regarding biological factors, one can point to elements such as health status, age, gender, and biological rhythm. The primary biological factor is health status. Any illness affecting the decision-maker can significantly impact their decision-making centre. In a typical scenario, the leader's illness may be associated with a loss of initiative, isolationism and increased suspicion. These aspects may find confirmation in the final erroneous decision.

The second factor related to the age of the decision-maker significantly influences the decision-making process as well. It should be noted that as individuals age, the effects of aging on the body intensify - potentially leading to a weakening of concentration abilities, reduced stress resistance, and an increased tendency towards irritability, excessive self-assurance or stubbornness.

Another biological determinant is gender. In the context of the decision-making

process, special attention is given to the differences in brain utilisation between women and men. Women tend to rely more on the right hemisphere of the brain, responsible for synthetic and holistic thinking, while men often lean towards the left hemisphere, which performs analytical and logical functions (Pietraś; 2000, 308).

In a model approach, these distinctions can markedly impact the comprehension of issues related to decision-making. Biological rhythms are also a crucial factor influencing a decision-maker's attitude. These rhythms are associated with changes in blood composition and body temperature, which in turn affect intellectual and emotional performance. Disruptions to a person's circadian rhythm can negatively impact their decision-making approach. For example, making decisions in the evening can significantly impair a person's decision-making abilities.

The second group of factors pertains to the political personality of the decision-maker. An individual's political behaviour, and consequently their decision-making process, is directly influenced by two key elements: the decision-making situation and the political personality. The decision-making situation encompasses various dimensions such as social, political, and historical factors.

Meanwhile, political personality is shaped by attitudes that are functions of social influences forming a specific personality model (Post, 2008, 131-132). For instance, a decision-maker with an authoritarian personality will strive to limit external influences, relying primarily on their own perspectives and analyses. One hypothesis regarding Vladimir Putin's decision to initiate the war in Ukraine highlights his imperialistic mindset.

The core dilemma regarding the influence of political personality on the decision-making process is understanding the conditions under which personality significantly shapes decisions. Mahlon Brewster Smith highlights that while the type of political personality dictates the direction of influence, the decision-making situation determines the intensity of this influence (Greenstein, 2014).

The group of external factors influencing the decision-making centre comprises various elements from the decision-maker's environment. These include stimuli that cause stress and frustration, sources of cognitive dissonance, and crises. These factors are independent of the decision-maker's behaviour and are inherently unstable.

Nevertheless, they similarly affect how the decision-maker perceives the situation. Environmental changes, even those not characterised by crisis, can induce stress, frustration, or cognitive dissonance (Cooper, 2007, 5-28; Walumbwa, Maidique, and Atamanik, 2014, 284-293). Furthermore, an imbalance in the decision-maker's emotional state can impact the clarity with which informational needs are communicated to the information centre, disrupting the decision-making process from the input phase.

During crises, these three factors significantly increase their influence. A crisis induces high emotional tension and irrational decision-making, arising from the inability to make decisions. In such situations, the human body activates specific mechanisms which can involve ignoring external information, seizing control in collegial decision-making settings, or avoiding decision-making altogether. Consequently, the accurate perception of reality becomes disrupted, negatively impacting the decision-making process.

Analysing intelligence activities during and after World War II, James Rusbridger, a former MI6 courier and CIA agent, emphasized the crucial role decision-makers play in assessing and utilising acquired information (Rusbridger, 1991, 8). In the context of the decision-making process, particularly concerning information flow, it is the decision-making centre that determines its impact on the final decision. In this regard, the presented conditions often serve as the primary determinant of the phenomenon of ignoring intelligence information.

6. Conclusions

Intelligence services play a crucial role in the decision-making process. Their activities in this context are typically situated at the outset of decision-making, known as the input phase. However, from the viewpoint of these services, the so-called intelligence cycle, which precedes the final entry into the initial decision-making phase, holds greater significance.

If the initial information is distorted, misrepresented, or misinterpreted, the entire decision-making process, despite its high level of optimisation and rationalisation, is likely to culminate in an incorrect decision or its absence. Similarly, if the decision-making centre conveys guidelines or informational expectations incorrectly to the intelligence services, the same outcome can occur.

Therefore, it can be argued that intelligence information profoundly influences the decision-making process, serving as its foundation. Even with a high level of accuracy in the information provided by intelligence services, one should not assume the success of the decision-making process. The experiences from the cases described in this article illustrate that precise information can still be ignored or improperly utilised by political decision-makers. There are several factors influencing the attitudes of decision-makers toward the decision-making situation.

The first set of factors pertains to biological determinants which influence the decision-making centre. Among these, one can highlight health status, age, gender, and biological rhythm. Recognising the significant impact of physical condition on one's mental well-being underscores the importance of these factors in decision-making. These conditions can affect the decision-maker's sense of control - particularly its loss - leading to the disregard of input information.

The second group of factors pertains to the political personality of the decision-maker. The array of traits specific to a particular type of political personality often becomes the primary determinant of a specific decision made by the political decision-maker. Viewing intelligence analyses through the lens of one's own beliefs and limiting access to external stimuli can potentially serve as a rationale for disregarding provided information (even despite its high level of credibility).

The third group of factors can be described as labile and variable. These factors encompass external conditions that influence the decision-making process. Among them are crisis situations and extraordinary circumstances that directly impact the first two dimensions of decision-making: biological and personality factors. The occurrence of potential crises, threats or events that dynamically alter the nature of the decision-making situation affects not only the biological aspect of the decision-maker but also the psychological dimension (e.g., in the form of cognitive dissonance).

The impact of intelligence operations through the information they provide to decision-makers is a vital aspect of the decision-making process. This analysis underscores that despite the rapid advancement of modern technologies, particularly in the security sector, human factors remain the primary cause of decision-making failures. It is thus reasonable to argue that the failure to utilise intelligence data in decision-making stems not from their accuracy but from the attitude of decision-makers.

However, it is crucial to note that despite the underutilisation of input information, intelligence services play a significant role in building internal balancing, a key component of a state's security policy.

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