

How a Comparative View and Mutual Study of National Strategic Intelligence and Competitive Intelligence Can Benefit Each Other

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National strategic intelligence and competitive intelligence seem to be two different disciplines. Research has focused on the two fields—national strategic intelligence and competitive intelligence—separately, without any attempt to apply lessons and relevant explanations from one field to the other. Looking deeply into these two fields reveals, however, that they have a lot in common. As the methodology of intelligence in both governments and business has hit a glass ceiling, based on the gaps between expectation and execution in both fields, there is a need to recognize what can be done to improve these practices in both areas. One of the options that has emerged from comparing intelligence performance in both fields is the possibility of applying the accumulated experience in the business field to improve the national one, and vice versa. In both government strategic intelligence and in competitive intelligence, the intelligence discipline is a method of the decision-support system. The use of an objective approach is an important way of assisting chief executives in both fields to avoid mistakes during the process of deciding what to do next.

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Introduction

National strategic intelligence and competitive intelligence appear to be two unrelated fields.¹ In recent years, however, academic research in national, competitive, and marketing intelligence has shown that a comparative analysis can be made of the two areas (government and business), revealing possible relationships between them. One particularly interesting topic is the comparison between the intelligence failures in both areas and how they can be prevented and whether these areas can be assisted by the experience gained from the other in order to improve performance.

Strategic surprises with fateful significance are common in the political-security sphere and in the business sphere. The popular 2011 uprising known as the Arab Spring in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, and Syria against the governments and rulers of these countries—including the revolutions that led to the fall of Mubarak's regime in Egypt and to the tragic and destructive civil war in Syria—demonstrate the far-reaching consequences of the strategic surprise in the national arena. In the business arena, the strategic surprise of Nokia—the “world's mobile communications leader”—was the advent of Apple's iPhone (2007), which obliterated both Nokia mobile phones and Kodak consumer cameras. It is only natural that those planning a strategic move do all they can to cause the surprise, while those who are charged with thwarting the opponent's strategic moves do their best to prevent the surprise.²

For many years, intelligence capabilities have been recognized as a state's basic skills, as decision makers demand quality intelligence upon which they can depend. A proper definition of intelligence is “secret state activity to understand or influence foreign entities.”³ Herman states that covert intelligence is information gathered by special means, and it starts where the media and the overt sources stop.⁴

- 1 According to SCIP (Strategic and Competitive Intelligence Professionals), competitive intelligence is the process of legally and ethically gathering and analyzing information about competitors and the industries in which they operate in order to help an organization make better decisions and reach its goals. See <http://www.scip.org/>.
- 2 Avner Barnea, “Failures in National and Business Intelligence: A Comparative Study,” PhD diss. (University of Haifa, School of Social Sciences, 2015).
- 3 Michael Warner, “Wanted: A Definition of ‘Intelligence,’” *Studies in Intelligence* 46, no. 3 (2002):15–22.
- 4 Michael Herman, “Intelligence and Policy: A comment,” *Intelligence and National Security* 6 no. 1 (1991): 229–239.

Since World War II, government decision makers have been aware that intelligence is an important and often critical tool for the national decision-making process. Extensive research of national intelligence began about fifty years ago, and today it is recognized as an integral part of studying international relations and political science.⁵

Competitive and marketing intelligence was introduced and became institutionalized only in the 1980s and even more so since the second half of the 1990s. It was strongly influenced by studying the relevant experience acquired from the national intelligence, together with outstanding inputs from the business sector.⁶ Michael Porter's pioneering book *Competitive Strategy*—one of the most influential works in the field of business strategy—was one of the factors that drove the progress of intelligence in business.⁷ While the information revolution became significant also in business at the end of the 1990s, the dynamic changes in the competitive environment globally transformed competition and advanced a comprehensive research and academic study in competitive and marketing intelligence.⁸

Early-warning systems are highly recognized both in national intelligence and business intelligence. Looking practically into the implementation of these systems in each field shows that the challenges are quite similar, and

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- 5 Abram Shulsky and Gary Schmitt, *Silent Warfare, Understanding the World of Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Potomac, 2002); Uri Bar-Joseph and Rose McDermott, *Intelligence Success and Failure: The Human Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Karin Yarhi-Milo, *Knowing the Adversary: Leaders, Intelligence and Assessment of Intentions in International Relations* (New Haven: Princeton University Press, 2014).
 - 6 Alf H. Walle, *Qualitative Research in Intelligence Marketing: The New Strategic Convergence* (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 2001).
 - 7 Michael Porter, *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors* (New York: Free Press, 1980).
 - 8 John Prescott, "The Evolution of Competitive Intelligence, Designing a Process for Action," *APMP* (Spring 1999); Qui Tianjiao, "Scanning for Competitive Intelligence: The Managerial Perspective," *European Journal of Marketing* 42, no. 7/8 (2008): 814–835; Richard G. Vedder, and Stephen S. Guynes, "A Study of Competitive Intelligence Practices in Organizations," *Journal of Computer Information Systems* 41, no. 2 (2000): 36–39; Paul Dishman and Jonathan Calof, "Competitive Intelligence: A Multiphasic Precedent to Market Strategy," *European Journal of Marketing* 42, no. 7/8 (2008): 766–786; Sheila Wright and Jonathan Calof, "The Quest for Competitive, Business and Marketing Intelligence: A Country Comparison of Current Practices," *European Journal of Marketing* 40, no. 5/6 (2006): 453–465.

often they depend upon the interpretation of the intelligence and the interface with the decision makers.⁹

Similarities Between the Two Intelligence Disciplines

The basic assumption in this paper is that in both fields, national and business, the intelligence about the changes in the external environment by rivals or competitors supports the decision-making process. In both fields, there is a need to improve. This could be achieved through cross-functional studies, especially as the decision makers who process the information point to common biases and errors by individuals, which to a greater degree is better researched in business than in intelligence organizations.¹⁰ Based on the review of existing literature on both competitive intelligence and government (strategic) intelligence, this study will look at the perspective of what each field can learn from the other. This study may show that mutual learning will improve the quality of intelligence in order to better understand complicated situations and thus support the decision-making process. This study may be beneficial specifically in avoiding strategic surprises as well as in improving the understanding of complicated situations.

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- 9 Jami Miscik, "Intelligence and the Presidency, How to Get it Right," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2017); Ben Gilad, *Early Warning: Using Competitive Intelligence to Anticipate Market Shifts, Control Risk and Create Powerful Strategies* (New York: Amacom, 2004); Cynthia M. Grabo, *Anticipating Surprise: Analysis for Strategic Warning* (University Press of America, 2004).
 - 10 Andrew P. Sage, "Human Judgment and Decision Rules," in *Concise Encyclopedia of Information Processing in Systems and Organizations*, ed. Andrew P. Sage (New York: Pergamon Press, 1990), pp. 227–229; Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Choices, Values, and Frames," *American Psychologist* 39 (1984): 341–350; Lowell W. Busenitz and Jay B. Barney, "Differences between Entrepreneurs and Managers in Large Organizations: Biases and Heuristics in Strategic Decision-Making," *Journal of Business Venturing* 12, no. 1 (January 1997): 9–30.

Both disciplines—national intelligence and competitive intelligence—are based on the “intelligence cycle.”¹¹ This cycle is a systematic process of five steps ensuring that intelligence activities are carried out under checks and balances:

1. Definition of key intelligence topics: What we know about the issue and what we need to find out;
2. Collection: Collecting information from several of sources;
3. Organization: Taking all relevant information that has been collected, putting it together, and organizing it;
4. Analysis: Examining all the relevant information that has been collected and determining how it fits together, its meaning, and significance;
5. Processing and distribution: Giving the final analysis to decision makers.

The intelligence cycle is a closed loop; feedback must be received from the decision makers, and revised intelligence requirements must be issued. The similarity between the explanations of intelligence failures in both national and business fields is present in five major areas:

1. Gathering ability: Usually there is no shortage of information;
2. Noisy information environment: Struggles with receiving and classifying information, even prior to the estimation stage, due to large amounts of unclear and sometimes contradicting information;
3. Human factor failures: The literature focuses on the failures of the intelligence analyst and not on the failure to identify the intelligence targets (the other side—the appraised rival, which is the focus of attention of the scattered surprise. Less attention is given to developing an analytic ability to prevent a scattered surprise given the lack of awareness of this matter;
4. Organizational difficulties and deficient cooperation: Failures that are derived from the structural complexity of organizations and inter and intra organizational competitiveness harm cooperation and do not lead to fully utilizing the intelligence;

11 Judith Johnston and Rob Johnston, “Testing the Intelligence Cycle Through Systems Modeling and Simulation,” in *Analytic Culture in the US Intelligence Community*, ed. Rob Johnston (Washington DC: CIA, Center for the Study of Intelligence, 2005), https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/analytic-culture-in-the-u-s-intelligence-community/chapter_4_systems_model.htm; Thomas Smith, *Encyclopedia of the Central Intelligence Agency* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2003), pp. 137–138; David Omand, *Securing the State* (C. Hurst & Co Publishers, 2010), p. 113–137.

5. Interaction between intelligence and decision makers: This might cause biased estimations and could prevent their transmission, in order to prevent a conflict between the desired policy and the intelligence estimations.¹²

Competitive intelligence has adopted the discipline of national intelligence and applies it to its needs, with necessary modifications. The lack of resources allocated to fulfill the competitive intelligence needs of corporations makes its scope limited, and therefore, the competitive intelligence can deal simultaneously with only a small number of KITs (key intelligence topics) and thus can process less information. However, from its very beginning, competitive intelligence did not focus only on tracking threats from competitors or monitoring significant technological developments (such as digital media replacing the DVD and CD; laser printer replacing the ink-jet printer; digital photography replacing chemical film; and plastics replacing metals and glass, and so forth). It also studied trends in markets, with an emphasis on understanding the customer's desires to make decisions leading to competitive advantage.¹³ Competitive intelligence and market intelligence are actually complimentary; competitive intelligence usually monitors broad perspectives of the external environment that may affect corporations, with a deeper view to the future,¹⁴ while market intelligence is focused on the current situation in the markets.¹⁵

One notable similarity between national intelligence and competitive intelligence is the ongoing attempt to get decision makers to acquire the most from the intelligence presented to them. Monitoring frequent changes in the two areas of business and state security is not easy because it is difficult to assess the significance of signals and noises and to predict the future and thus reduce uncertainty.¹⁶ Another similarity is that in both areas, intelligence is proactive and strives to obtain information that can be alert to the changes

12 Barnea, "Failures in National and Business Intelligence."

13 Jan Herring, "Key Intelligence Topics: A Process to Identify and Define Intelligence Needs," *Competitive Intelligence Review* 10, no. 2 (1999): 4–14.

14 Bernard J. Jaworski, Deborah J. Macinnis, and Ajayk Kohli, "Generating Competitive Intelligence in Organizations," *Journal of Market-Focused Management* 5 (2002): 279–307.

15 Dishman and Calof, "Competitive Intelligence"; Avner Barnea, "Competitive Intelligence in the Defense Industry: A Perspective from Israel – A Case Study Analysis," *Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business* 4, no. 2 (2014): 91–111.

16 Farshad Rafii and Paul J. Kampas, "How to Identify Your Enemies Before They Destroy You," *Harvard Business Review* (November 2002).

in the external environment and their meanings.¹⁷ In both areas, often the intelligence presented to decision makers can be a catalyst for further actions and new initiative to secure advantages.¹⁸

Competitive intelligence and national intelligence usually deal simultaneously with both tactical and strategic areas to answer different needs and requirements by intelligence consumers; however, senior decision makers tend to seek primarily strategic intelligence.¹⁹ In competitive intelligence, they often work closely with strategic planning units and marketing whereas in national strategic intelligence, these units operate closely and often directly with the senior decision makers,²⁰ trying to influence and make their inputs recognized.²¹

Positioning Intelligence in the Business Sector

In recent years, we have seen a growing recognition in the business field that competitive intelligence is one of the core competencies required for the decision-making process,²² like other capabilities, such as marketing, sales, research and development, operations, and human resources. Until the mid-1990s, it was not obvious that a need for competitive intelligence existed. Executives previously achieved their positions in the business world by relying on unorganized information, “gut feelings,” and personal experience.²³

Competitive intelligence has not yet become widely established and still does not occupy its proper place in the minds of the decision makers. For many years, competitive intelligence professionals focused mainly on the

17 Prescott, “The Evolution of Competitive Intelligence.”

18 Anders Johansson, Daniel Roos, and Volker Kirchgeorg, “The Art of Systematic Surveillance,” *Arthur D. Little* (March 2013), http://www.adlittle.cn/sites/default/files/viewpoints/ADL_Intelligence_management_2012.pdf.

19 Jan Herring, “Senior Management Must Champion Business Intelligence Program,” *Journal of Business Strategy* (September–October, 1990): 48–52; Douglas Bernhardt, “Strategic Intelligence for Executives,” *Wits Business School Journal* 3, no. 22 (2010).

20 Klaus S. Søilen, “A Place for Intelligence Studies as a Scientific Discipline,” *Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business* 5, no. 3 (2015): 35–46.

21 Stephen Marrin, “Why Strategic Intelligence Analysis has Limited Influence on American Foreign Policy,” *Intelligence and National Security* 32, no. 6 (2017), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2016.1275139>.

22 Robert M. Grant, *Contemporary Strategy Analysis* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2005).

23 Michael D. Watkins and Max H. Bazerman, “Predictable Surprises: The Disaster You Should Have Seen Coming,” *Harvard Business Review* (April 1, 2003).

tactical: the immediate actions by competitors and other players, finding out their short-term intentions and identifying changes in the business environment. In recent years, it is possible to see increasing recognition of the comparative advantage of competitive intelligence in the strategic area,²⁴ supporting the need to recognize and thus assess what is happening around and to know who a company is fighting²⁵ and contribute to the planning and preparations for the coming years.²⁶ Søilen showed that while competitive intelligence and market intelligence function is important, the top management can become the problem when a company is struggling to compete, and it can affect the intelligence.²⁷

What is Challenging Intelligence?

In national intelligence, as in business intelligence, collection efforts can usually obtain sufficient and significant information that is useful to assess threats and opportunities and their meaning. Intelligence in business, unlike national intelligence that obtains secret information by using large and unique resources, is very careful to follow the law, and its value to business success gets a great degree of recognition.²⁸ Its activity is based on gathering mainly from public information (known as Open Source Intelligence or OSINT) in a narrower scope, but it is still capable of achieving high-quality results by helping to create a valid intelligence picture of the dynamics of the external environment.²⁹ Still, competitive intelligence is evolving as the needs of businesses—and not the method or technology supporting the gathering

24 Craig Fleisher, Sheila Wright, and Helen T. Allard, “The Role of Insight Teams in Integrating Diverse Marketing Information Management Techniques,” *European Journal of Marketing* 42, no. 7/8 (2008): 836–851.

25 Yuval Atsmon, “To Develop a Winning Strategy, Know Who You Are Fighting,” *McKinsey & Company*, June 27, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2IB2kZN>.

26 John Prescott and Stephen Miller, *Proven Strategies in Competitive Intelligence: Lessons from the Trenches* (New York: Wiley & Sons, 2001).

27 Klaus S. Søilen, “Why Care about Competitive Intelligence and Market Intelligence? The Case of Ericsson and the Swedish Cellulose Company,” *Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business* 7, no. 2 (2017): 27–39, <https://ojs.hh.se/index.php/JISIB/article/view>.

28 Cynthia A. Bulley, Kofi F. Baku, and Michael M. Allan, “Competitive Intelligence Information: A Key Business Success Factor,” *Journal of Management and Sustainability* 4, no. 2 (2014).

29 Leonard M. Fuld, *The Secret Language of Competitive Intelligence* (New York: Crown Business, 2007).

and analysis of information—change.³⁰ In business, it is preferred to have a single organization unit that is responsible for intelligence and strategy but at the same time to include cross-functional teams to support the analysis of information.³¹ What really matters more than the type and quantity of the data is establishing a deep corporate culture of evidence-based decision-making. According to O’Connell and Frick, it also means encouraging everyone in the organization to use data more effectively.³²

Competitive and market intelligence were pioneers in developing significant capabilities in monitoring social media and using the insights obtained as an additional tool in the process of making decisions.³³ Real-time social media information as well as traditional market and competitive intelligence provide detailed pictures and tell a comprehensive story than neither alone can deliver. Big data accelerates these capabilities. This formula was recently presented by the leading business consulting firm, McKinsey. In this important article, the authors stated that the business world had developed advanced analytical tools for obtaining vast business information extracted from social media in addition to “conventional” sources.³⁴ National intelligence also gives increased weight to OSINT, revealed as important and qualitative, which

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- 30 John McGonagle and Michael Misner-Elias, “The Changing Landscape of Competitive Intelligence: Two Critical Issues Investigated,” *Salus Journal* 4, no. 1 (2016); Troy Mouton, “Organizational Culture’s Contributions to Security Failures,” MA thesis (Louisiana State University, 2002), http://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2120&context=gradschool_theses; Ming-Jer Chen and Mary Summers Whittle, “Competitor Acumen: The Heart of Competitor Analysis,” Darden Case No. UVA-S-0293, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2975253>; Nanette J. Bulger, “The Evolving Role of Intelligence: Migrating from Traditional Competitive Intelligence to Integrated Intelligence,” *International Journal of Intelligence, Security and Public Affairs* 18, no. 1 (2016): 57–84.
 - 31 Gary L. Neilson, Karla L. Martin, and Elizabeth Powers, “The Secrets to Successful Strategy Execution,” *Harvard Business Review* (June 2008).
 - 32 Andrew O’Connell and Walter Frick, “You Have Got the Information, but What Does it Mean? Welcome to ‘From Data to Action,’” *Harvard Business Review*, (November 19, 2013).
 - 33 Fleisher, Wright and Allard, “The Role of Insight Teams in Integrating Diverse Marketing Information Management Techniques,” *European Journal of Marketing* 42 no. 7/8 (2008): 836–851; Topi Laakso, *Handbook of Social Media Intelligence*, (M-Brain, 2016).
 - 34 Martin Harrysson, Estelle Métayer, and Hugo Sarrazin, “How ‘Social Intelligence’ Can Guide Decisions,” *McKinsey Quarterly* (November 2012).

can hardly be ignored. If in the past, one could argue that national strategic intelligence relied primarily on secret information, it is now changing fast. OSINT has become highly significant as we are living in an age of growing transparency.³⁵ In recent years, social media has become a significant source of national intelligence,³⁶ while it already has been a source for competitive and marketing intelligence for over the past ten years.³⁷

With the fast development of the internet, the information revolution, and more recently, the enormous growth of social media, the business world has become much more transparent than in the past. Difficulties in getting important information have gradually declined, but the main problem remains in how to deal with vast amounts of information. The utmost challenge is the development of analytical capabilities that can benefit from the information obtained. A new evolution of social competitive intelligence has emerged, meaning that competitive intelligence is better performed in a networking organization that supports the analytical process.³⁸

The American intelligence community is gradually granting higher priority to the value of OSINT. Since the Arab Spring, US intelligence has recognized the need to understand trends, preferences, and perceptions among wider audiences, where the business world is already well experienced through research and marketing intelligence that monitors massive crowds

35 Sean P. Larkin, "The Age of Transparency," *Foreign Affairs*, 95, no. 3 (May/June 2016): 136–146; Nicholas Ballasy, "Brennan: CIA Must Rely on Social Media in the Middle East," *PJ Media* (May 20, 2015), <http://pjmedia.com/blog/brennan-cia-must-rely-on-social-media-in-the-middle-east/>.

36 Eyal Pascovich, "Intelligence Assessment Regarding Social Developments: The Israeli Experience," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 26, no. 1 (2013): 84–114; Kristan J. Wheaton and Melonie Richey, "The Potential of Social Networks in Intelligence," *E-International Relations* (January 9, 2014), <http://www.e-ir.info/2014/01/09/the-potential-of-social-network-analysis-in-intelligence/>.

37 Lars Degerstedt, "Social Competitive Intelligence: Socio-Technical Themes and Values for the Networking Organization," *Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business* 5, no. 3 (2015): 5–34.

38 Ibid.

of customers. Other western intelligence communities, including Israel,³⁹ follow comparable directions, drawing similar lessons from the Arab Spring.⁴⁰

In business, one of the most significant capabilities of qualitative collection is through the employees themselves. Since many of them have wide contacts with parties outside their company as part of their duties, they are exposed to important information that can help achieve a competitive advantage. This requires competitive intelligence professionals to build internal networks often through informal relationships with relevant employees and brief them on KITs and get from them information that comes to their attention. Note that business firms are strict on keeping their activities legal and are careful to work according to codes of ethics. In recent years, with the rapid development of OSINT and particularly social media, many companies maintain contacts with their employees through internal social media systems and other applications to share useful competitive information.⁴¹

It appears that corporations are longing to be in the position as described by Cisco's CEO John Chambers: "We understand the market, our competitors and—most importantly—how our competitors think . . . I have a pretty good idea what their next two moves will be."⁴²

Intelligence Failures in National and Business Intelligence

One of the definitions of intelligence failure is taken from the CIA: "Systemic organizational surprise resulting from incorrect, missing, discarded, or inadequate hypotheses." According to another definition, intelligence failure is "organizational surprise resulting from incorrect information, a lack of

39 Pascovich, "Intelligence Assessment Regarding Social Developments."

40 CIA, "INTelligence: Open Source Intelligence," *CIA: News and Information*, (2010), <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2010-featured-story-archive/open-source-intelligence.html>.

41 Maral Mayeh, Rens Scheepers, and Michael Valos, "Understanding the Role of Social Media Monitoring in Generating External Intelligence," Twenty-third Australasian Conference on Information Systems, Geelong (December 3–5, 2012).

42 John Swartz, "Cisco's Chambers: 2 Days with Man on a Mission at CES," *USA Today* (January 9, 2013), <http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2013/01/09/cisco-ibm-oracle-hp/1791255/>.

information, from neglect or inadequate hypotheses.”⁴³ Often it means late detection of a significant threat that gives a substantial advantage to the initiator side, resulting in significant damage to the other side.⁴⁴ Examining the failures and the reasons for their occurrence leads to the conclusion that it was possible to prevent them in many cases.⁴⁵ The reasons for failures usually do not arise from a lack of information but rather from the human factor; that is, misunderstanding the meanings of available information and poor evaluation of new and unfamiliar threats.⁴⁶ The result is an incorrect presentation of the threat’s meaning, organizational failures, and difficulties in the application of the “intelligence culture.”⁴⁷ Too often this is also a result of the diffusion of political considerations into intelligence assessments,⁴⁸ which is apparent in the “Report on the US Intelligence Community’s Prewar Intelligence Assessment on Iraq” from 2004.⁴⁹ When heads of states refrain from intelligence warnings, it is not considered an intelligence failure.⁵⁰

One of the leading and greatest scholars within the field of military and security strategy, Yehoshafat Harkabi from Israel, emphasized that the lack of distinction between threats is a result of cognitive failures causing difficulties

43 Rob Johnston, *Analytic Culture in the US Intelligence Community: An Ethnographic Study* (Central Intelligence Agency, 2005), https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/analytic-culture-in-the-u-s-intelligence-community/chapter_1.htm.

44 Bar-Joseph and McDermott, *Intelligence Success and Failure: The Human Factor*, pp. 13–17.

45 Paul R. Pillar, “Presidents Make Decisions Based on Intelligence,” *Foreign Policy* (Jan/Feb 2012).

46 Bar-Joseph and McDermott, *Intelligence Success and Failure: The Human Factor*, pp. 13–17.

47 Philip Davies, “Intelligence Culture and Intelligence Failure in Britain and the United States,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17, no. 3 (October 2004): 495–520; Mouton, “Organizational Culture’s Contributions to Security Failures.”

48 Zeev Maoz, “Intelligence Failures: An Analytical Framework,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA, August 31, 2006, http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p151465_index.html.

49 Russ Travers, “The Coming Intelligence Failure: *A Blueprint For Survival*,” *Studies in Intelligence*, no. 1 (1997), <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/97unclass/failure.html>.

50 Mark A. Jensen, “Intelligence Failures: What Are They Really and What Do We Do about Them?” *Intelligence and National Security* 27, no. 2 (2012): 261–282.

to produce a realistic picture.⁵¹ After failures of strategic intelligence at the national level, usually governments conduct a comprehensive examination into the causes of the failures, in order to avoid them in the future and to expose their results to the public (such as the 9/11 Commission Report, 2004). In most surprise attacks since 1939, intelligence communities claimed beforehand that an attack was not imminent so decision makers later pointed the finger at intelligence for not foreseeing the attack.⁵² Expectations of improving the quality of intelligence with the increase of resources and tools in recent years did not materialize, and the capabilities of the American, British, and Israeli intelligence did not show significant improvements while the reasons for failures remained the same.⁵³

Business intelligence failure can be defined as a significant surprise caused by an erroneous assessment of the competitive environment.⁵⁴ Unfortunately comprehensive review processes and lessons learned from business failures are less common.⁵⁵ However, in recent years it has been recognized that some of the reasons for business failures also lie in the lack of intelligence processes, difficulties with managers to identify changes in the business environment, biased information submitted, their intent to be appeased, or decision makers who ignored intelligence presented to them. This is precisely what happened to Nortel, a world leader in telecommunications, when the senior management ignored early-warning signals about major changes in the competitive environment provided by its competitive intelligence unit;⁵⁶ this was one of the key factors that led to its collapse.⁵⁷ Furthermore, as

51 Yehoshafat Harkabi, *Fundamentals in the Israeli Arab Conflict* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishing, 1971) [Hebrew].

52 Bar-Joseph and McDermott, *Intelligence Success and Failure*, pp. 17–19.

53 Richard Betts, “Fixing Intelligence,” *Foreign Affairs* 81(2002): 43–59.

54 Natalia Tsitoura and Derek Stephens, “Development and Evaluation of a Framework to Explain Causes of Competitive Intelligence Failures,” *Information Research* 17, no. 2 (June 2012).

55 Avner Barnea, “Lack of Peripheral Vision – How Starbucks Failed in Israel?” *African Journal of Marketing Management* 3, no. 4 (April 2011): 78–88.

56 Paul Schoemaker, George S. Day, and Scott A. Snyder, “Integrating Organizational Networks, Weak Signals, Strategic Radars and Scenario Planning,” *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 80 no. 4 (2013): 815–824.

57 Jonathan Calof, Laurent Mirabeau, and Greg Richards, “Towards an Environmental Awareness Model Integrating Formal and Informal Mechanisms – Lessons Learned from the Demise of Nortel,” *Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business* 5, no. 1 (2015): 57–69.

a result of the size of corporations, pockets of quality intelligence are available for individuals or small groups that do not impede formulating the intelligence picture.⁵⁸ The outcome is often the lack of submission of important information to the decision makers, usually as a result of an absence of intelligence awareness or a voluntarily tendency to preserve power without sharing information.

The business sector is gradually moving toward internal sharing of information and has concluded that information sharing, especially about the external environment, is one of the means to strengthen business competitiveness.⁵⁹ The belief is that quality information already exists internally and has to be channeled to support decisions. In national intelligence, sharing information is one of the most important lessons learned from the Inquiry Commission of the 9/11 terrorist attack. The implementation of sharing information in national intelligence encountered difficulties and had internal opposition due to a disproportionate amount of secrecy and compartmentalization, resulting from limited vision and fixation of thought.⁶⁰ In the opinion of the 9/11 Inquiry Commission, this was one of the major reasons that caused the intelligence failure that could have prevented the 9/11 terrorist attacks.⁶¹ We also saw this problem in the failure to prevent the terrorist attack at the Boston Marathon in April 2013.⁶²

Following the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent failure to properly assess Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction program in 2003—two intelligence

58 Kurt April and Julian Bessa, "A Critique of the Strategic Competitive Intelligence Process within a Global Energy Multinational," *Problems and Perspectives in Management* 4, no. 2 (2006), <https://businessperspectives.org/journals/problems-and-perspectives-in-management/issue-10/a-critique-of-the-strategic-competitive-intelligence-process-within-a-global-energy-multinational>.

59 Christopher G. Myers, "Is Your Company Encouraging Employees to Share What They Know?" *Harvard Business Review* (November 6, 2015); Clayton Christensen, "Knowledge Sharing: Moving Away from the Obsession with Best Practices," *Journal of Knowledge Management* 11, no. 1 (2007): 36–47.

60 Gregory Treverton, *Intelligence for an Age of Terror* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 1–14.

61 "The 9/11 Commission Report," (2004), <http://www.911commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>.

62 Mark Giuliano, "How the FBI is Evolving to Meet Threats in a Changing Environment," *From the Boston Marathon to the Islamic State, Stein Counterterrorism Lectures*, ed. Matthew Levitt, Counterterrorism Lecture 6 Policy Focus 139 (Washington DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2014), pp. 9–16.

failures exhibiting two completely different types of errors⁶³—official investigations were conducted to determine their underlying causes. No consideration was given to the potential inputs from the analytical models used in the business sector. All recommendations were to do more of the same inside the national intelligence practices. After oversights in analysis that culminated in the failure to warn of the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, the US intelligence community also had reached similar conclusions years before to do minor changes, which actually did not improve the quality of analysis. No serious consideration was given to explore outside the box of already known analytical practices used by the business community and the academy.

Academic research of business failures does not often highlight failures of intelligence but rather studies other causes, such as unsuitable products, inadequate pricing, slow reaction to the competition, wrong strategic moves, and personal management mistakes of executives.⁶⁴ In numerous cases, especially in large corporations where the price of failure is high, the failure could be repaired in a reasonable time and therefore is less alarming compared to similar consequences of national intelligence failures. Some of the most serious threats to firms might not even be perceived as such.⁶⁵ Acceptable solutions for business failures, such as replacing senior management and organizational changes, usually ignore a lack of intelligence or deficient attention by the decision makers. A compelling example is the business failure by Levi's⁶⁶ and Nokia.⁶⁷

Around the world, including Israel, it seems that the number of directors who understand that quality and timely intelligence is critical to business success is increasing and therefore implementing the discipline of competitive and market intelligence into their organizations has become common practice.

63 Richard Betts, "Two Faces of Intelligence Failure: September 11 and Iraq's missing WMD," *Political Science Quarterly* 122, no. 4 (2007): 585–606.

64 Kevin Coyene and John Horn, "Predicting your Competitor's Reactions," *Harvard Business Review* (April 2009).

65 Michael Stahl and David Grigsby, *Strategic Management for Decision Making* (New York: KWS Kent Publishing, 1992).

66 Mathew Olson, Derek van Bever, and Seth Verry, "When Growth Stalls," *Harvard Business Review* (March 2008).

67 James Surowiecki, "Where Nokia Went Wrong?" *New Yorker* (September 13, 2013), <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/currency/2013/09/where-nokia-went-wrong.html?printable=true¤tPage=all>.

What Can National Intelligence Learn from Competitive and Market Intelligence?

For years, conventional business thinking recognized that competitive and market intelligence studies come from the experience of national intelligence⁶⁸ in several fields:

1. Implementing “the intelligence cycle” into the business intelligence process
2. Focusing the intelligence methodology in the firm around KITs
3. Setting up closed interaction between intelligence and decision makers, using intelligence indicators for warning of threats in the competitive environment, such as loss of market share, difficulties with major customers, decreased interest in competitors by the senior management, ignoring new competitors, delays in response to changes, and lack of knowledge about competitors.

The challenge is to implement a new cross-organizational discipline, which often faces firm objections and resistance to change.⁶⁹ This challenge was the focal point of the paper about implementing competitive intelligence in organizations by Arthur D. Little’s consultancy, “The Art of Systematic Surveillance.”⁷⁰

The US intelligence community mistakenly thought that it could not learn from experience gained by business intelligence despite the fact that the intelligence committees of the US Congress and a few experts within the community tried to convince them that this approach was wrong. It turns out that national intelligence previously tested rival organizations based on confidential information and usually ignored OSINT.⁷¹ They neglected to analyze large audiences, for example, for early recognition of civil unrest or changing trends among audiences threatening the existing regimes. Meanwhile, the business world had acquired vast and successful experience using marketing research and collecting public information to identify consumer preferences and analyze competitors moves. David Shedd, deputy director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, noted the recent failure of intelligence in predicting the events of the Arab Spring: “Analysts failed

68 Thomas Kelley, *Marketing Intelligence: The Management of Marketing Information* (London: Staples Press, 1968).

69 Soilen, “Why Care about Competitive Intelligence and Market Intelligence?”

70 Johansson, Roos, and Kirchgeorg, “The Art of Systematic Surveillance.”

71 David Steele, “The Open Source Program: Missing in Action,” *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 21 no. 3 (2008): 609–619.

to note signs that would have indicated to us, shown us, that there was a growing dissatisfaction . . . in the general population. We missed that.”⁷² These events led the US intelligence agencies to examine relevant business experience, analyzing the positions of broad audiences (crowd sourcing) in conjunction with academia and many global companies, including Intel, HP, Dell, Google, Eli Lilly, Procter & Gamble, and General Electric.

An additional field that allows American intelligence to learn from these business experiences is in forecasting markets,⁷³ known as prediction markets. This extensive business experience allows us to estimate the directions and trends in the markets and get early warnings of possible significant changes.⁷⁴ Intelligence communities in the United States and Israel have looked recently toward the experience acquired by the business’ sector in measuring performance and specifically, the value of information.⁷⁵

72 Ken Dilanian, “U.S. Intelligence Official Acknowledges Missed Arab Spring Signs,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 19, 2012, http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world_now/2012/07/us-intelligence-official-acknowledges-missed-signs-ahead-of-arab-spring-.html. In the case of the uprising against the Shah in Iran in 1979, the US intelligence community missed the indicators regarding the coming uprising of the population against the regime. See Douglas MacEachin and Janne E. Nolan, “Iran: Intelligence Failure or Policy Stalemate?” in *Discourse, Dissent, and Strategic Surprise Formulating U.S. Security Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, ed. Douglas MacEachin and Janne E. Nolan (Washington DC: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University, 2006).

73 Richard Betts, “Analysis, War and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures Are Inevitable?” *Strategic Intelligence: Windows into a Secret World, an Anthology*, ed. Loch Johnson and James Wirtz (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing, 2004), pp. 97–99.

74 Pong Fei Yeh, “Using Prediction Markets to Enhance US Intelligence Capabilities,” *Studies in Intelligence* 50, no. 4 (2006).

75 Boyd Hendriks and Ian Wooler, “Establishing the return on investment for information and knowledge services,” *Business Information Review* 23, no. 1 (2006): 13–25; John Hollister Hedley, “Learning from Intelligence Failures,” *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 18, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 435–450; Asaf Gilad and Meir Orbach, “8200 Silicon Valley Corner: The IDF’s Largest Unit is Learning to Work like a Start-up,” *Calcalist* (July 1, 2012) [Hebrew], <http://www.calcalist.co.il/internet/articles/0,7340,L-3575727,00.html>; David Moore, Lisa Krizan, and Elizabeth Moore, “Evaluating Intelligence: A Competency-Based Model,” *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 18, no. 2, (Summer 2005): 204–220.

The Interrelations Between National Intelligence and Competitive Intelligence: A Case Study⁷⁶

Often large corporations find it difficult to forecast future events and threats in the competitive arena, even though there are particularly good tools to improve business forecasting, such as the Four Corners Model by Porter⁷⁷ and proven models that have been offered by Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric.⁷⁸ These competitive failures can cause unexpected difficulties that may lead to a corporation's collapse and, in extreme cases, to bankruptcy. However, these business failures are not unusual incidents, and they occur time and again. It is actually one of the responsibilities of competitive intelligence directors to present industry forecasts to the decision makers and also to the board of directors.

Zim Ltd. was a leading Israeli corporation in the shipping business, among the ten largest in the global industry of marine containers.⁷⁹ In 2009, Zim made a presentation to its bond holders, in preparation for a discussion about possibly deploying its debt. The presentation, which included graphs, showed the predicted increase in the volume of maritime transport versus the investments in building new ships expected in the coming years. The shipbuilding business has no secrets: The number of ships being built and requested delivery dates are public information. No one builds ship containers in their backyards and takes them secretly into the sea. It was possible to see that the production rate of ships was growing faster than the projected rate of cargo. According to that presentation, the capacity of marine transportation was to increase by three and a half times, from 4.9 million TEU (unit of measurement accepted in containers) in the year 2000 to 17.9 million TEU by the year 2013. The world's trade was not expected to increase at a similar rate in these thirteen years, hence creating a surplus capacity of shipping containers. Moreover, since late 2008, the situation had become worse as the demand had decreased, which dramatically exacerbated the problem of over capacity in shipping transport.

76 Nathan Sheva, "Zim lost 186 million \$," *Marker* (August 27, 2009) [Hebrew], http://www.themarker.com/tmc/article.jhtml?ElementId=nl20090827_78683; Doron Zur, "Sail with the Herd," *Marker* (August 23, 2009) [Hebrew].

77 Porter, *Competitive Strategy*.

78 Jack Welch, *Winning* (New York: Harpers Business, 2005).

79 This case study about Zim Ltd is presented briefly, while the aspects of the intelligence failure have been given special attention.

However, even without this decline in the demand for shipping capacity, there was still over capacity as a result of too many ships that were being built. If Zim could see the surplus capacity expected for sea transport, why did it enter into a strategic plan of acquiring massive ships and entering into a huge debt, a plan that could endanger its very existence?

Zim's annual report from 2004 by its parent company, the Israel Corporation Ltd., had predicted the following based on intelligence reports: "The management of Zim ships mentioned that the supply growth rate is expected to be higher than the growth in demand for transport of containers, given the increase in new orders for ships under construction. Such growth could have a significant impact on the business results of the leading marine companies." If this situation was evident already in 2004—too much supply of transport capacity—and this same statement appeared in the management reviews, showing that the senior management was exposed to this assessment, then the question remains: why did the senior management of Zim decide to enter into a massive investment program in 2006 and 2007 and order new ships?

If a competitive intelligence analyst identifies expected surplus capacity in two or three years, the most logical thing to do would be to advise the senior management to replace the fixed costs with variable costs and reduce debt; that is, it was not worth buying ships and equipment or to make long-term lease agreements. It was better to sell ships, shorten long-term leases, and focus on short-term contracts. In this way, when it was low tide, one could easily reduce costs and return ships whose lease dates had passed. The problem was that life does not always work like this. First, such tactics would hurt profitability in the short term, at the price of increasing the running costs for future flexibility and reducing risk. Second, nobody wants to be the one that diminishes a growing industry. Therefore, management tends to do what everyone else is doing and expand when all are doing so. This was a familiar human weakness and also a cognitive bias: We prefer to be wrong with everyone than to be right alone.

There is a lesson to learn from this case: People working in the business world should be able to disconnect from groupthink. It is easy to say and more difficult to perform. The excess of current production capacity was a heavy burden on Zim's shoulders for several years after 2009, which later led it into bankruptcy.

What are the lessons learned from the competitive intelligence aspects? Was it possible to avoid the catastrophic financial situation that Zim reached in 2009 through the use of competitive intelligence analysis? The answer is clearly yes. Competitive intelligence is also about identifying the big trends that will reshape the business environment and the drivers that disrupt the industry. It is possible to prepare forecasts for various industries, including shipping, mostly as the information is open and accessible. This analysis will help to identify which trends will have the highest impact, what issues disruptions could cause, and what possible future scenarios are suggested.

| Areas of activity | Imported tools from competitive intelligence | Imported tools from national intelligence (potential) |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Analysis | SWOT | Early-warning indicators |
| Gathering | OSINT | KITs |
| Management of uncertainties | Forecasting | Opportunity analysis |

Table 1: Using intelligence tools to improve the decision-making process

Intelligence tools from national strategic and business intelligence could have helped the decision makers and Zim. The use of forecasting, SWOT analysis, and OSINT (Table 1, second column above), was not enough to have a strong impact on the decision makers who ignored this analysis, later bringing Zim to bankruptcy. Zim could have improved its intelligence performance by using tools acquired from the national intelligence discipline (Table 1, third column), such as early-warning indicators, so that Zim would have known better about threats as a result of global changes in international commerce; KITs to improve focus on what was really important for Zim at that stage; and opportunity analysis, which could have identified external opportunities and vulnerabilities that could have been exploited to advance a more careful strategy.⁸⁰ An insightful view will never give the answers; however, only concise strategic intelligence efforts could have provided Zim’s decision makers with the inconvenient truth of what was really going to happen to Zim if it ignored the drivers of change in the competitive arena.

80 Karen Rothwell, “Opportunity Analysis in an Intelligence Context,” *Competitive Intelligence Magazine* 15, no. 1(January/March 2012).

Conclusion

Intelligence failures, including missing the prediction of the Arab Spring, has led the American, British, and Israeli intelligence agencies to examine the accuracy of relevant experiences in business analysis of large audiences, forecasting, opportunity-analysis techniques, and attempts to measure the value of information, all well-known in the business world. National intelligence organizations seem to have gradually comprehended the need to study other disciplines, including the business field, to see how they could enhance their abilities and the necessity of opening up to the business sector and implementing new capabilities, which, after making adjustments, could help confront the challenges they are facing. An excellent example is how the FBI reinvented itself after 9/11 and reorganized itself from a law enforcement agency to a national security organization as a result of a study by three notable scholars from Harvard, led by Jan Rivkin, using specialized academic capabilities in organizational design and organizational identity.⁸¹

Those engaged in competitive and market intelligence disciplines constantly strive to reach the highest professional level recognized by national intelligence and see there the true model for information and intelligence management. On the other hand, by using intelligence discipline it is possible to create early warnings, even before the burst of a major economic event like the 2008 financial crisis,⁸² which changed the economic history of the world. This is also true of many other strong corporations, which failed to see the changes made by competitors and strategic market moves, which left them without any likelihood of surviving.

In both government intelligence and in competitive intelligence, the intelligence discipline is a method of the decision support system. The use of an objective approach is an important way of assisting chief executives in both fields to avoid mistakes in the process of deciding what to do next. It leads to a more careful evaluation of alternatives and dimensions in a comprehensive way, thus overcoming many of the problems associated

81 Ranjay Gulati, Ryan Raffaelli and Jan Rivkin, "Does 'What We Do' Make Us 'Who We Are'?" Organizational Design and Identity Change at the Federal Bureau of Investigation," *Harvard Business School Working Paper* 16-084 (January 12, 2016).

82 Timothy Walton, "The 2007–2008 Financial Crisis as a Way to Better Understand Intelligence Failure," paper presented in ISA conference, April 2012; Avner Barnea, "Financial Crisis as an Intelligence Failure," *Competitive Intelligence Magazine* 14, no. 2 (April/June 2011).

with biases in information processing, biases in group dynamics, and in individual decision making. In addition, intelligence analysis has the benefit of displaying all the information in a systematic way for key decision makers.