

Chapter 10

Strategic leadership of the British intelligence community in World War II

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25062/9786287602502.10>

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Abstract: Since the beginning of humanity, the systematic violation of Human Rights has been witnessed as a consequence of war conflicts, which affects the lives of people outside the war and led to agreements in the name of which the participants adhered to not affecting the civilian population or food resources, among others, and this led to the creation of the Rights of War, or International Humanitarian Law (IHL). However, during the twentieth century there were considerable effects on humanity during the development of the two world wars: the First World War, from 1914 to 1918, and the Second, from 1939 to 1945. This chapter analyzes how during World War II an advance in strategic intelligence was observed, led by the United Kingdom, in which different scientists -including Alan Moore- managed to decode the information of the German attacks to end the conflict.

Palabras clave: military intelligence, coded information, leadership, armed conflict.

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APA citation: Moreno Peláez, J. E. (2023). Strategic leadership of the British intelligence community in World War II. In S. Uribe-Caceres & D. López Niño (Eds.), *Theoretical Approach to Notions of War and Strategic Leadership* (pp. 205-222). Sello Editorial ESDEG. <https://doi.org/10.25062/9786287602502.10>

THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE NOTIONS OF WAR AND STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

ISBN (print): 978-628-7602-49-6

ISBN (online): 978-628-7602-50-2

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25062/9786287602502>

Security and Defense Collection

Sello Editorial ESDEG

Escuela Superior de Guerra "General Rafael Reyes prieto"

Bogotá D.C., Colombia

2023



Introduction

War is the manifestation of armed struggle between two or more nations or between two or more sides of the same nation. It is even the opposition of one thing to another in the military sphere (RAE, n.d.). Considering this definition, it is important to recognize that in a state of nature, conflicts between individuals of the same species, especially between human beings, can trigger conflicts of as significant a magnitude as war.

To develop an advantage during the exercise of war, it was necessary to develop activities that would allow this situation. For example, the weapons advance of changing from sticks and stones to arrows and knives, to swords, to firearms and bombs, to culminate today with the nuclear bomb and cyber-attacks.

Another of the mechanisms of advantage in the exercise of war that can be observed is espionage, which can be traced back to the very origins of the history of man. However, because this technique had as its main function to be secret, it is difficult to find testimonies of the ancient activities of espionage (Herrera, 2012).

In the same way, cryptography can be observed in the exercise of war, because considering that the messages of the same side could be intercepted by the enemy side, the art of writing with a secret key or in an enigmatic way was developed (RAE, n.d.).

One of the recorded examples of the use of military intelligence and espionage in warfare is seen in Mesopotamia, approximately 3000 BC. A time when King Sargon I of Akkad used explorers-merchants (or spies) to inform him about the characteristics of the lands he intended to conquer, and who transmitted this information through cuneiform writing (Herrera, 2012).

Over the years, spies were no longer used only as explorers to determine the characteristics of the terrain to be conquered. But were also used to obtain information about the strength of the enemy and the forces of their defensive or

offensive weapons using mechanisms such as posing as merchants or messengers. Therefore, it was normal for the knowledge of a site to become one of the most important sources of power for the development of the war.

With the above it is observed that, for many years, the subject - especially the king or the general - who used military intelligence, and, above all, espionage would ultimately be the winner in an armed conflict (Herrera, 2012).

Now, as humanity advanced, at the beginning of the twentieth century Britain saw the weakening of its political relations with the German Empire, and thus, the constant perception of espionage that was lived in Europe in the nineteenth century (Herrera, 2012) gave way to the creation of the Secret Service Bureau (Security Service, MI5 n.d.) by the British Government in October 1909.

The Secret Service Bureau was distributed in 19 Military Intelligence departments, from MI-1 to MI-19, and had its greatest exponents in MI-5, in charge of the country's internal security using counterespionage, and MI-6, as the one in charge of external security using British espionage in other nations (Herrera, 2012).

This type of espionage tools helped Britain to be among the victorious powers during the two world wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945). It should be remembered that the Second World War was an unprecedented historical event and, in that sense, far superior to the First World War. Since during the WWII both military and legal, political, commercial, food and scientific advances emerged on a much larger scale and with a much greater sophistication. In this research we will focus, precisely, on the advances that were developed, especially in the military context, and secondarily, on legal advances.

During the second planetary conflagration, the Allied powers (Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union, among others), originally led by Great Britain, managed to access coded information of the troops of the Third Reich, through espionage and the decryption of German messages, and achieved with this that the losses of human lives were less than those that could have occurred if these elements had not been activated.

Therefore, this research will allow us to know how the leadership of Great Britain, through strategy in the field of war, provided elements of study for today.

Military cooperation between States and progress in war

Among the first international relations that one nation had with another was trade. However, as technology advanced and the conquests were carried out in continents such as America and Africa, various European nations, such as Spain, the United Kingdom and France, began to relate economically, despite their differences and historical disputes, with the aim of having greater power in their territories, dividing the “New World”.

In accordance with the evolution of relations between States; military cooperation was also carried out. For example, by sharing intelligence and analysis on issues of mutual interest between countries. The ownership of lands to be conquered, the defenses and armament of a territory, among others.

Over time, until the two world wars, cooperation with foreign intelligence agencies was necessary, in order to limit any situation that affected not only a nation, but an entire region, as in the case of the military cooperation of allied states and the Axis powers.

Examples of common forms of international cooperation through intelligence services include the following:

- A State may agree to collect or analyze information in one area and share the results in exchange for similar information obtained in another area by the partner State's intelligence agency.
- One State may allow another to operate in its territory to collect information in exchange for sharing the results obtained.
- One State can help another to acquire the capacity to collect information in order to achieve its own objectives, on the understanding that it must allow the supplying State to share the results obtained.
- Joint intelligence-gathering operations may be conducted, and in which members of a country's intelligence service work side by side or in a complementary manner with their colleagues in the foreign intelligence service.
- There may be an exchange of analysts or technicians between the intelligence services of the two countries.
- A State may offer training in exchange for services provided by the intelligence agency of another country. This occurs when a foreign intelligence agency can provide capabilities that the other intelligence agency does not have (Born & Leigh, 2004, p. 55).

The activity of the British military intelligence community during World War II

The current concept of military intelligence has a close relationship with Great Britain, due to the fact that in that country, through the development of military operations, and due to the fear of espionage, military intelligence departments were created at the beginning of the 20th century.

However, despite the fact that this type of tool was available in Great Britain. It is also recognized that initially military intelligence was disorganized and, therefore, results were obtained through trial and error, with which, being a modern system in terms of the armed conflict, it was necessary to adapt each of the situations of the conflict to reach a better solution (Uribe & Mesa, 2020).

Thus, *strategic intelligence* is defined as "All information, processed, contextualized, analyzed and prepared to be used in decision-making aimed at confronting, neutralizing or preventing threats to national security and its inhabitants at all times and places" (Paredes, 2011).

Now, taking up that the espionage of the World War II had to focus on collecting information to decode the encrypted messages that were sent between the troops of different nations, it is worth noting. For example, how the German Enigma machine, which was reputed to be impenetrable, was deciphered by the decoding machines known as *Turing bombs*, in honor of the mathematician Alan Turing, one of the members of Bonifare, or secret department that the Allies created in 1939, and whose duty was to decipher the code of the German Enigma (Herrera, 2012).

As already mentioned, the United Kingdom had different units responsible for developing military intelligence for espionage and counterespionage. However, during World War II there was a unit that stood out in the Directorate of Military Intelligence: MI7, which prior to the start of World War II had the following functions:

- **MI7 (a):** Censorship.
- **MI7 (b):** Domestic and foreign propaganda, including press releases on military matters.
- **MI7 (c):** Translation, and since 1917, regulation of foreign visitors.
- **MI7 (d):** Propaganda and review of the foreign press (part of subsection [b], until subsection [d] was formed, in late 1916) (Hmong, n.d.).

The exercise of the functions that MI7 had, such as censorship and national and foreign propaganda, as well as press releases on military matters, were activities that allowed Britain to control its own population, by keeping it informed

of certain acts abroad or propaganda about the war, because in the absence of a department that was reviewing what foreign propaganda was, it could happen that inside the United Kingdom there was a sector related to the mission of the Nazis in World War II.

Strategic leadership in the operational exercise of war

Due to the different armed conflicts that have happened during the history of humanity, it has been seen that certain people are born, create and adapt leadership in order to be applied in war, and seek that through said means the result they seek is given winning the armed conflict.

Different kings and generals of Antiquity developed this type of leadership. Great exponents of that include Attila I, king of the Huns, and Alexander the Great and his conquests throughout much of the ancient world. Also, Napoleon Bonaparte and Simon Bolivar, in more recent conflicts, and Adolf Hitler and British Marshal Bernard Montgomery in World War II.

However, leadership was not studied in principle, as were mathematics, history, and so many other sciences. This was due to the traditional conception that leadership is a gift in itself and cannot be obtained through study. This conception was modified between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, with which one of the first theories to be developed was *the theory of traits*, in which the *leader* is seen as a human personality whose thought and emotion are harmoniously linked. Towards 1940 the *theory of style* was developed, which considers that leaders can be created from training in an organization. In the 1960s, *contingency theory* was introduced, which consisted of observing the state of the organization and its relationship with the effectiveness of the leader. In the 1980s it was identified that the leader must be a manager who defines the organization through his vision, in which he aims to establish a stimulus among his workers to improve the organization (Pantoja, n.d.).

Thus, in the 1990s, *post-charismatic and post-transformational theory* was developed, which focuses on the personality and skills of the leader, based on a more collaborative and participatory leadership, where members “learn for the sake of learning”. (Pantoja, n.d.).

The American writer and lecturer John Maxwell identified in his book *The 21 indispensable qualities of a Leader* (1999) the 21 qualities that a leader must have, and among which we can observe the following:

- **Self-discipline:** Faculty of discernment that a person must have to self-regulate.
- **Commitment:** Obligation focused on agreeing, contracting, or fulfilling the obligations of the organization or the working group.
- **Listening:** Skill thanks to which the leader captures not only the words of the interlocutor, but also their feelings and meaning.

Considering the above, we will also mention the contributions that Sherman Kent (1903-1986), as one of the architects of strategic leadership, provided in the development of armed conflicts:

1. Information is knowledge: In this section, Kent described the knowledge that the population of a given country must have for relations with other States, considering the following quote: "our men, civilian and military, who occupy high positions, must possess to safeguard the national welfare" (Senmache, 2022). This is intended to preserve the security of a State through the knowledge acquired by the people at the top, not applying as we observe direct espionage, but the knowledge that can be of help to guarantee national security. (Kent, 1994, p. 25)
2. Intelligence is organization: Kent stated how an organization must be structured to meet the objectives described in the previous axis, detailing the characteristics and qualities of the men who must deal with strategic intelligence tasks. (Kent, 1994, p. 89)
3. Intelligence is Activity: Kent explained that Intelligence is a process and that it is necessary to face methodological problems in different ways. Since the knowledge produced by the strategic intelligence process has its origin in research and this is produced in the following way: of political origin or by the own systematic and continuous observation of what happens abroad. (Kent, 1994, p. 168)

Taking the above into account, strategic leadership can be defined as the ability of a leader to anticipate the coordination of his organization by creating a dynamic environment in which the skills of the processes allow motivating and directing the members of the corporation in the most appropriate way possible based on their duties (Urrego, 2020).

Strategic leadership has emerged as a mechanism through which there is a clear relationship between the community and the organization. In the field of strategic leadership of the Armed Forces is the relationship between the targeting of troops and the chain of command.

Therefore, leadership is an inherent component of a military's activity, as it is necessary to complete the physical and mental capabilities with the direction of their unit in the combat environment, so that the member of the Public Force can effectively adjust to the context while ensuring national security and defense (Acosta & Ardila, 2020).

The strategies of the British military intelligence community that can be used today

Britain officially formalized its intelligence agencies in 1989, having enacted the Security Service Act (SSA) and the Official Secrets Act (OSA).

The following functions of the SSA should be highlighted:

[...] the protection of national security and its protection against threats from espionage, terrorism, and sabotage, from the activities of agents of foreign powers and from actions intended to overthrow or undermine parliamentary democracy by political, industrial, or violent means.

It shall also be [...] to safeguard the economic well-being of the United Kingdom against threats posed by the actions or intentions of persons outside the British Islands.

It shall also be [...] in support of the activities of police forces [...] and other law enforcement agencies in the prevention and detection of serious crime. (Legislation, gov UK, n.d.)

As already noted, the intelligence services of the States intend to protect them from threats of espionage or sabotage in their investigations, with the aim that the spy obtains relevant information in another country. During the civil wars, the world wars and, particularly, in the conflict against Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom found it necessary to articulate to its operational exercise obtaining information from the enemy to resolve the situation in its favour.

In the same way, it is evident how safeguarding the economic well-being of the United Kingdom is a duty of the utmost importance, because once the currency of

a State loses its purchasing power, it begins to lose economic sovereignty, and this leaves its market at the mercy of the currencies of other countries, such as, in such a case, the dollar, the euro or the yen.

The fact that a State loses economic sovereignty makes it the target of activities of other States, which can gradually influence its economy, as is the case with the foreign relations that the Colombian State - or even the Latin American States - maintains with the United States. Whereas, by having one of the world powers on the continent, and once different free trade agreements (FTAs) have been agreed and various public policies have been articulated, the United States has permeated the sovereignty of said nations, and therefore makes the governments in the region must comply with what a subject other than their own State indicates to them.

As for the OSA, the following stands out:

[...] there were six categories of official information which were subject to criminal sanctions if disclosed. The concept of harm or damage caused by particular disclosure of information by Crown servants and government contractors was applied to these categories. However, the new Act exempted the intelligence and security services from the 'damage' tests and made the fact of disclosure by members of these services an 'absolute' offence. (Bartlett & Everett, 2017, p. 20)

It is necessary to restrict the use of certain information for the security of a State. At this point you can see the strategies of the Public Force for the operations it is going to carry out, or some confidential information of the officials, as is the case of the British monarchy. In the same way, that it is declared a crime to disclose confidential information is an advance in the exercise of the power of a State. Because despite the fact that, utopically, the population wants to know everything that happens with their State, this is not feasible, since the exercise of the operations of the Public Force requires, in many cases, reservation so that the expected result is given.

In 1994, through the Intelligence Services Act (ICA), the Intelligence Act was passed, which consisted of keeping the entity under the authority of the Secretary of State, and whose functions consisted of: "[...] to obtain and provide information relating to the actions or intentions of persons outside the British Islands; and to perform other tasks relating to the actions or intentions of such persons" (Legislation for UK, n.d.)

In turn, the functions of the Intelligence Service were established, such as:

- (a) in the interests of national security, with particular reference to the defense and foreign policies of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom; or
- (b) in the interests of the economic well-being of the United Kingdom; or
- (c) in support of the prevention or detection of serious crime. (Legislation for UK, n.d.)

National security is precisely the interest that a government has in protecting the interests of the State. In the case of Great Britain, it is in the interest of defending the Crown Government, that of foreign policy, the economic well-being of the United Kingdom and that serious crimes can be prevented, as well as detected. In a State it is normal that it is intended to prevent the commission of crimes, since through such development of activities it is not necessary to make exaggerated investments in the judiciary or the legislative power, which have the functions of judging and creating rules. Therefore, a State that has a high crime rate and a considerable number of rules that seek to regulate the conduct of people through prohibition and punishment (in application of the *Ius Puniendi*) does not have a good management result and, therefore, the investments made in it are not considerable, compared to other States.

This allows us to observe as examples the technological development of the United Kingdom, compared to the development of Colombia. Clearly, in Bogotá, the capital of Colombia, technology and development are at least ten years behind from those of London. Much more, other cities in Colombia, such as Medellín, Villavicencio, Cali, or Cartagena.

However, another measure developed by Great Britain is the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA), through which the covert surveillance activities of the State were regulated, in terms of the use of trackers and hidden cameras, which could be used against the Police, intelligence services - especially MI5 and MI6, and even local government agencies - (Open Rights Group, 2013).

Through the interception of communications, messages and conversations that transit through a network or are distributed by a service can be obtained (Justice, 2011). However, this type of interception clearly violates the rights to privacy and dignity that people have, which is why it is necessary that a legal authority (*Lawful Authority*) is the subject that allows the interception of communications from a third party. In this case of the legal authority, this is the Secretary of State or the Secretary of the Interior, who will be in charge of preventing or detecting the serious crime that is being committed, so that the protection of the security of the United Kingdom is maintained (Castillo, 2014).

However, there are situations in which in the United Kingdom it is not necessary to issue an interception order for communications (Castillo, 2014, p. 33):

- When both parties consent to the interception or are reasonably believed to have consented.
- One of the parties has given consent - for example, when one of the parties is the one who records the conversation - and the surveillance is directed (a category of RIPA that refers to a type of surveillance that. Although it is covert, does not imply entering a home or private space and is done in the course of an operation or investigation).
- The communication takes place in a private telecommunications network - a company, for example - and the interception has the consent of the person who controls the system - in other words, the boss.
- Communication is made to or from a prison or psychiatric hospital.
- In order for the request for an interception of communications to be approved, the Secretary of State has to ensure that such interception is necessary for: A) the interest of national security. B) preventing or detecting crime. And C) safeguarding the economic welfare of the United Kingdom.

The above exceptions to authorize the interception of communications make it possible to observe a clear respect for the principles of autonomy, freedom of choice and the crime prevention function. All this, without losing sight of the need to maintain national security, prevent crime and safeguard the economic well-being of the United Kingdom.

To designate responsibilities on the interception of communications, there is a commissioner, who, through his experience as an official of the judicial branch of high position, has knowledge about the development of the rules to prevent crimes and guarantee the rights of the people investigated (Castillo, 2014).

To summarize the above information, in the United Kingdom you can find the rules on intelligence shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Intelligence Communities Legislation in the UK*

Laws of economic matters	Classified Information Laws	Legal Bases of Intelligence Communities	Supplemental Standards to Intelligence Community Objectives
Economic Reform Act 1782 (Civil List Money and Secret Service Act of 1782).	Official Secrets Act 1889 (Regulation and Judicialization of State Secrets).	Security Service Act 1989 (Legal basis of MI5).	Counterterrorism laws (2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2013, 2015, 2019).

Secret Service Money (Repeal) Act 1886.	Official Secrets Act 1920 (Prosecution of impersonation or obstruction of security agents).	Intelligence Services Act 1994 (Legal Bases of MI6 and GCHQ).	Investigation and surveillance laws (2000, 2016).
Fraud Act 2006.	Official Secrets Act 1911 (Regularization of Espionage and Counterintelligence Response During Armed Peace).	Security Service Act 1996 (Legal basis of other intelligence communities).	Serious crime laws (2007, 2015).
Criminal Finances Act 2017 (criminal finance act of 2017).	Official Secrets Act 1939 (modification of confession of state secrets in court).	Human Rights Act 1998.	Laws against organized crime (2005).
Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 (Sanctions and Money Laundering Act of 2018).	Official Secrets Act 1989 (Elimination of Public Interest Defense).	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (OSCT Legal Basis).	Covert Human Intelligence Sources Act (2021).

Source: Guzmán and Rivera (n.d.).

As can be seen from the information in Table 1, in the United Kingdom, the interest in safeguarding national security starts from the development of regulations both to prevent terrorist attacks, espionage or sabotage, and for economic protection, since there is a sense of belonging - patriotism - to protect the population, the Government and the crown.

Finally, it can be found that the main objectives of British intelligence are: the defense of national interests. The protection of citizens against external and internal threats. Counterintelligence activities, and the prevention of terrorist attacks at the domestic and international levels.

Conclusions

Espionage services and what we now know as strategic leadership allowed Britain to colonize much of the world, in territories of what we now know as the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, among others.

The constant evolution in the technologies of war and in the operational systems of the Armed Forces allowed Britain to fight with powers of the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as the German Empire, Spain, and France. As well as to achieve an alliance with some of these states to fight

against the German Empire during World War I and against Nazi Germany of World War II. Thus, Britain was classified as the first power to bring together former combat enemies, such as France and the United States, to make a front against powers of different ideological perception.

The advance developed by Britain during the Second World War - mainly in its espionage and counter-espionage work - made the Allied countries the victors, a circumstance that probably would not have occurred if not for the meeting of brilliant minds such as Alan Turing, creator of the bombs that bear his name, or without having managed to decipher the Enigma code of Nazi Germany.

This is still a reason for Britain to continue its constant evolution in preventing serious crimes and better stabilizing the development of national security.

Thus, the Colombian State must learn from these elements, so that it can advance in the protection of its national security, since an enemy to face is corruption. A phenomenon like these attacks and affects not only the stability of the country in terms of health, education, and food rights, but also makes other countries perceive Colombia as a weak nation, which allows the devaluation of its own currency, and that drug trafficking increases considerably. Which causes, then, that through various treaties, conventions and international agreements, part of the sovereignty is surrendered, and, with it, economic power is lost. And this leaves the country exposed to possible attacks from other nations or even from guerrillas or organizations outside the law.

One of the problems that generated the birth of outlaw organizations such as guerrillas, paramilitaries and drug traffickers was the Nation's lack of interest in protecting its national security, and its permissiveness when it came to allowing money to be extracted from different sectors of the population, and thus generating unprecedented corruption in each and every one of the country's public institutions.

Therefore, for the Colombian State to achieve a sufficiently strengthened intelligence directorate, it is necessary that, in the first place, officials who have been proven to be corrupt in the performance of their duties be dismissed. As well as that their management has not been efficient, since the problem of not being able to advance in the establishment of national security lies in corruption.

Secondly, it is necessary to establish protocols that allow the exercise of intelligence and leadership of the Public Force to be expanded, so that the population's trust in public institutions can be restored.

Finally, it is required that the State work in harmony with the population, since the fact that for more than 80 years the same people have governed, and their

management has not been effective is what has caused the weakening of the institutions. At the same time, by strengthening the intelligence system of the Public Force with the development of issues such as intelligence in public institutions to prevent corruption and sanction those who behave like criminals, it would help control institutions, such as the Comptroller General of the Republic, the Attorney General's Office, the Attorney General's Office and even the judiciary, sanction those who have affected the stability of the State.

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