



Intelligence in War: The value--and limitations--of what the military can learn about the enemy

By John Keegan

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A masterly look at the value and limitations of intelligence in the conduct of war from the premier military historian of our time, John Keegan.

Intelligence gathering is an immensely complicated and vulnerable endeavor. And it often fails. Until the invention of the telegraph and radio, information often traveled no faster than a horse could ride, yet intelligence helped defeat Napoleon. In the twentieth century, photo analysts didn't recognize Germany's V-2 rockets for what they were; on the other hand, intelligence helped lead to victory over the Japanese at Midway. In *Intelligence in War*, John Keegan illustrates that only when paired with force has military intelligence been an effective tool, as it may one day be in besting al-Qaeda.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

According to Keegan (The First World War), there is a good reason why "military intelligence" is so often described as an oxymoron: inflicting and enduring destruction often has no room for reflection, just retaliation. But retaliation tends toward attrition, and attrition is expensive; thought, for Keegan, offers a means of reducing war's price, taking commanders and armies inside enemy decision-action loops, helping identify enemy weakness, warning of enemy intentions or disclosing enemy strategy. Keegan offers a series of case studies in the operational significance of intelligence, ranging from Admiral Nelson's successful pursuit of the French fleet in 1805, through Stonewall Jackson's possession of detailed local knowledge in his 1862 Shenandoah Valley campaign, to the employment of electronic intelligence in the naval operations of WWI and its extension and refinement during WWII. For that conflict, Keegan expands his analysis, discussing intelligence aspects of the German invasion of Crete, the U.S. victory at Midway and the defeat of the U-boats in the Battle of the Atlantic. To balance an account heavily focused on technology, he incorporates a chapter on the importance of human intelligence in providing information on the Nazi V-weapons. Keegan concludes with a discussion of post-1945 military intelligence that stresses the difference between a Cold War in which the central targets of intelligence gathering were susceptible to concrete, scientific methods, and more recent targets that, lacking form and organization, require penetration through understanding. That paradigm shift in turn is part of Keegan's general argument that intelligence data does not guarantee success. This book shows that the British need not have lost on Crete; that the American victory at Midway was not predetermined. At a time when armed forces tout the "information revolution," Keegan writes in the belief that the outcomes of war are ultimately the result of fighting.

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From [Booklist](#)

"Results in war, in the last resort, are an affair of body, not mind; of physical force, not plans or intelligence." This is renowned military historian Keegan's analysis of 1942's Battle of Midway. Discounting the value of military intelligence is just one of the paradoxical conclusions drawn in the eight case studies comprising this work. With his usual shrewdness about the highly confusing world of war, Keegan subtly weaves into his narrative the disruptions that seem to hex intelligence collection and analysis. In only one case does Keegan grant primacy to a commander's use of intelligence--Stonewall Jackson's 1862 campaign in the Shenandoah Valley. In all of the other examples, Keegan ascribes the outcome to another factor: at Midway, it was luck; during the 1941 invasion of Crete, it was "berserk" German determination. Within each episode, Keegan uncovers a communication breakdown, an analytical mistake, or a tactical blunder that turned even golden military information to dross. Throughout, Keegan projects a deep empathy for battle victims, who were swept away by the thousands. This humane sensibility, on display in book after book, explains why the author is the most popular, and perhaps the best, contemporary writer of military history.

Gilbert Taylor

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Review

"Likely to jar the conventional wisdom. . . . Keegan is always a pleasure to read for his wit, insight and style." —*The New York Times Book Review*

"Bracing, meticulous case studies [by] our greatest modern military historian." —*Newsweek*

“Keegan is a . . . treasure. . . . His analysis is as sharp as ever, and it’s all written with his characteristic flair.”
—*The Christian Science Monitor*

“Thought-provoking. . . . Keegan’s book is a wise corrective, assessing just how useful intelligence has been in battle.” —*The Dallas Morning News*

Users Review

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James Kline:

This book untitled Intelligence in War: The value--and limitations--of what the military can learn about the enemy to be one of several books that will best seller in this year, that's because when you read this guide you can get a lot of benefit on it. You will easily to buy this book in the book retail outlet or you can order it by way of online. The publisher with this book sells the e-book too. It makes you quicker to read this book, as you can read this book in your Cell phone. So there is no reason to you personally to past this reserve from your list.

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