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Economic intelligence and its role in the competitiveness of major countries (USA, Japan, France)

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***Abstract*---**The ability to gather information, understand economic events, analyze them, and make sound economic decisions, as well as handle the collection and analysis of economic data in a logical and scientific manner, and comprehend and apply economic theories in practice, constitutes economic intelligence. This productive approach, heavily influenced by American management schools, now represents a constrained view of reality, where defending economic interests has become the central focus of U.S. strategy. President Bill Clinton gave a global dimension to the economic intelligence process. Therefore, we believe it is useful to broaden the analysis by presenting the historical context of the concept. Arab countries have not fully adopted this approach or integrated it into their scientific and economic fields... etc. Economic intelligence is considered an integral part of research and knowledge activities, encompassing vigilance, early warning, analysis, summarization, impact assessment, and counteraction. Its primary goal is to protect the national heritage, especially in its technological and industrial dimensions.

***Keywords*---**Economic Intelligence, Economic Information and Strategy, Competitiveness, Vigilance, Information Systems.

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Introduction

As economic changes accelerate, the demand for information increases, with product lifecycles shortening, modern technologies evolving faster, and competition intensifying in a global market. Economic intelligence is seen as a manifestation of sound economic judgment. In order for an organization to innovate, produce, and market effectively, it requires accurate, comprehensive, and actionable information. Analyzing and organizing this information has become increasingly important: understanding markets, their segmentation, their openness to the world, and their working conditions, knowing the competition, technologies, and innovations, etc.

Perhaps the most important feature of adopting an economic and strategic intelligence approach is the necessity of its implementation in an environment marked by a growing number of competitors and adversaries. This leads us to conclude that institutions and societies that effectively control and manage information are the ones that succeed in asserting themselves on both regional and global scales. Additionally, it can be inferred that the more an economy controls the process of information management, the more it becomes capable of facing what is known as economic warfare, which the world is currently witnessing. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to address the following problem:
What is economic intelligence? How does it benefit and serve business organizations? Is it a necessity or an option?

Through this paper, we will attempt to answer these questions and others through the following points: The concept of economic intelligence, the shift from technological vigilance to economic intelligence, economic intelligence as a tool for development and innovation, economic intelligence and strategic (useful) information, and the stages of economic intelligence.
Thus, we have divided our research into five sections:

1. The Concept of Economic Intelligence
2. Methods of Artificial and Strategic Intelligence
3. Models of Artificial Intelligence
4. The Nature of Strategic Vigilance
5. The Relationship Between Strategic Vigilance and Economic Intelligence

1. The Concept of Economic Intelligence:

The first practical definition of economic intelligence appeared in 1994, by a working group from the General Planning Department, where it was defined as "a set of activities related to the research, processing, and dissemination of useful information for economic agents and stakeholders to formulate their strategies."

Due to the necessity for an organization's manager to adopt strategies for developing new products, investing in new markets, improving productivity, understanding competitors, and making timely decisions, there is a constant need to understand the increasingly complex and expanding environment. In this context, information is considered a fundamental raw material for effective organizational management.

Economic intelligence, therefore, focuses on identifying useful information at the best cost, analyzing it, and making it available to decision-makers within the organization at the right time. As a result, it is a crucial factor for competition.

A. Definition of Economic Intelligence:

Economic and strategic information is considered useful when used rationally within a decision-making system, aiming to improve the organization's position and enhance competitiveness, vigilance, and responsiveness to the competitive environment. However, the concept of economic intelligence mainly refers to a public policy defined by the state, with the participation of other stakeholders and players. It has its content and areas of application. The process of economic intelligence is built on the following elements:

- **Competitiveness Policy:** This is based on research and development activities and enables institutions to track opportunities and access global markets. It is achieved through mutual recognition of strategic stakes and the gathering of general and specific information.
- **Economic Security Policy:** Its goal is to protect the strategic environment of the national economy.
- **Influence Policy:** Particularly at the level of bodies responsible for setting systems and standards that govern economic life.

The scope of economic intelligence application is primarily focused on markets, which are considered sources of added value. However, its reach extends beyond that, as it also represents a source of influence and power. Examples include aerospace projects, defense, energy, pharmaceuticals, genetics, communication networks, information technology, and security. These projects are not governed solely by price or product quality and related services; the approval and political support of the state become the decisive factor in obtaining them.

Thus, economic intelligence is concerned with studying the tactical and strategic interactions at all levels of activity, from the organizational level, through the intermediate level (local communities), to the national level (strategies adopted by decision-making centers in the state). Among the main features of economic and strategic intelligence, we can highlight the following:

- Strategic and tactical use of competitive information in decision-making.
- A strong management structure to coordinate the efforts of economic agents.
- Strong relationships between institutions, universities, central and local administrations.
- Integration of lobbying practices and influence strategies.
- Incorporation of scientific, technical, economic, legal, and geopolitical knowledge.
- Adopting "globalization" as a framework for decision-making.
- Secrecy in the dissemination and acquisition of information in a legitimate manner.
- The main objective of economic intelligence is to protect national heritage, particularly in its technological and industrial dimensions.

B. The Emergence of Economic Intelligence:

The concept of economic intelligence originated in the mid-1980s in the Atlantic region, where it underwent significant developments. American literature prefers to use terms such as "Marketing Intelligence" and "Economic Intelligence," rather than the narrower term "Competitor Intelligence."[1]

The first practical definition of economic intelligence appeared in 1994 by a working group from the General Planning Department in France, defining it as "a set of activities related to the research, processing, and dissemination of useful information for economic agents and stakeholders to formulate their strategies."[2] Economic intelligence works by identifying useful information at the best cost, analyzing it, and providing it to decision-makers in the organization at the appropriate time, making it an essential element for competition.[3]

Currently, and based on the historical experiences of various countries, the implementation of economic intelligence has become crucial for Algeria and its institutions. In 2006, during a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem, a definition of economic intelligence was presented: it is "the collection, use, and dissemination of useful information that contributes to generating the necessary knowledge for decision-making, managing institutions, and developing contextual knowledge to support decision-making."[4]

C. Characteristics of Economic Intelligence:

Among the main characteristics of economic intelligence, we can list the following:[5]

- Strategic use of competitive information in decision-making.
- Strong management to coordinate the efforts of economic agents.
- Strong relationships between institutions, universities, and central and local administrations.
- Formation of lobbying groups and influence strategies.
- Integration of scientific, technical, economic, legal, and geopolitical knowledge.
- Secrecy in disseminating and acquiring information legally.

D. The Importance and Role of Economic Intelligence:[6]

The importance of economic intelligence is reflected in its ability to achieve the following:

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1 Abdel Razzaq Khalil and Ahlam Bouabdli, *Economic Intelligence in Service of Business Organizations*, 5th International Scientific Conference on Knowledge Economy and Economic Development, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Al-Zaytouna University, Jordan, April 27-28, 2005, p. 2.

2 Alain Bloch, *L'intelligence économique*, 2nd edition, Économica, 1999, Paris, p. 3.

3 Abdel Razzaq Khalil and Ahlam Bouabdli, *Op. cit.*, p. 2.

4 Kourbali Baghdad, *Séminaire de: Intelligence économique et veille stratégique*, Oran, PPT, 2011/2012, p. 85.

5 Sihem Abdel Karim, *The Policy of Supporting Economic Intelligence in Algerian Organizations*, Research presented at the 11th Annual Scientific Conference on Business Intelligence and Knowledge Economy, Al-Zaytouna University, Jordan, April 23-26, 2012, p. 668.

6 Youcef Boumediene, *The Mechanism of Strategic Vigilance and Intelligence: A Tool for Facing Future Challenges and Enhancing Competitiveness*, 4th International Conference on Competition and Competitive Strategies, November 8-9, 2010, p. 26. link

- Encouraging organizations to actively contribute to change rather than merely reacting.
- Improving the quality of strategic decisions to face future challenges.
- Serving as a source of innovation by stimulating the search for new ideas.
- Promoting collective action based on the exchange and sharing of information, both at the data acquisition and analysis stages.

2. Tools of Economic and Strategic Intelligence:

Information and communication technology has created the ideal conditions for the growth of economic intelligence processes worldwide. The rapid increase in the number of computers, as well as the methods for collecting and analyzing information, has led to the adoption of economic intelligence by various institutions and organizations, both public and private. Among the institutions that have developed models for competitive analysis, the **Fuld Model (1995)** stands out. This model includes six tools for competitive and strategic analysis, which are as follows:[7]

A. Profile of the Intentions and Capabilities of Decision-Makers: This tool allows for the prediction of the decisions of leaders and identifies the factors that influence their decision-making processes. To develop a psychological profile of decision-makers, seven key determinants must be considered: leadership styles, cultures, career paths, competencies, orientations, inclinations, and past decisions. These factors are analyzed in the context of the organization's current and future environment, taking into account costs, available technology, management practices, and operations.

B. Benchmarking: Benchmarking is a technique that helps identify the high-efficiency determinants of the best-performing organizations within the same industry sector and apply the lessons learned from them.

C. Analysis of Future Strategies: This tool aims to understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats surrounding an organization. This is the same model commonly used in strategic analysis, known as SWOT Analysis. The results of this analysis help to define strategic directions and identify key intervention areas.

D. Predicting Competitive Strategies: Fuld's model proposes an analysis of the four external forces surrounding the organization: regulations and policies, technology, changes in the industry (such as mergers and acquisitions), and customers (the growth of consumption patterns). Several other methods in this field include Porter's Five Forces Model, and the Competitive Response Model, which involves evaluating various competitive responses using traditional competition analysis techniques, benchmarking, mathematical models, and qualitative methods (e.g., expert interviews and observations).

E. Predicting the Introduction of New Products: In this area, Fuld suggests Timelining, which involves tracking the operational activities of organizations, gathering resulting information, and analyzing it to predict product introductions.

F. Cost Analysis: In this approach, the analyst primarily uses the budget as an analytical tool. The main element of this approach is focusing on critical factors,

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[7] Fuld, L. M., *The New Competitor Intelligence: The Complete Resource for Finding, Analyzing, and Using Information About Your Competitors*. New York: John Wiley, 1995, p. 482.

such as the purchase of equipment, buildings, and infrastructure, as well as administrative costs.

It is worth noting that each type of institution or organization develops its own specific methods in this area, aligned with the nature of its activities and the scope of its operations. However, the main goal of using economic intelligence is to preserve economic independence, acquire additional market shares, foster creativity and strategic alliances, and ensure the sustainability of an organization’s competitiveness through:

- **Innovative capabilities:** (customers, value-added products).
- **Performance efficiency:** (market share, profits, and expansion).
- **Sustainability:** (the lifecycle of the organization).

Among the quantitative methods used to analyze the results of economic intelligence, **Knowledge Management** and **Data Mining** (extracting knowledge from data) are noteworthy.

3. Economic and Strategic Intelligence Models Around the World:

The term "economic" or "competitive intelligence" originated in Japan. At that time, Japan directed all its material and human resources (referred to as "civilian power") toward economic development. This led to the emergence of a unique and structured administrative organization that allowed for the collection of all information related to economic, industrial, and technological matters. Below are some of the most prominent and pioneering models in the field of economic and strategic intelligence worldwide.

3.1 The Japanese Model:

In Japan, economic intelligence is centered around the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), whose primary role is to assist, guide, and inform Japanese businesses (see Figure 1).

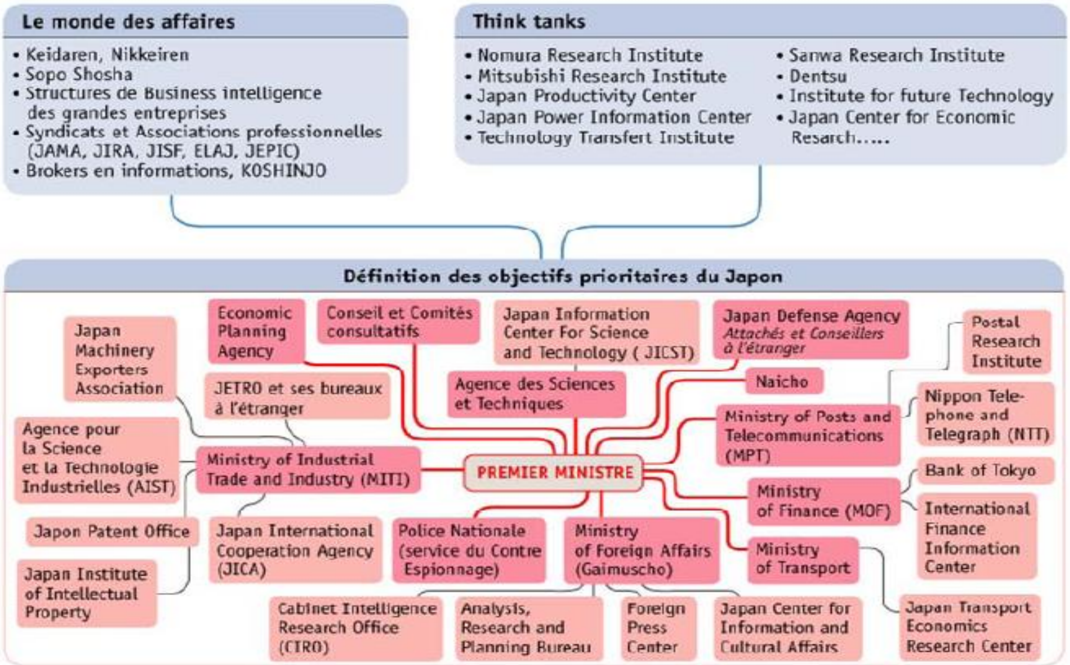

Figure 1: The Japanese Model of Economic Intelligence

The ministry is also linked to Japanese universities (Sogo Soshas), large commercial companies that fund research centers, think tanks, visiting researchers, professional organizations, and research-oriented administrative bodies. This system was designed to benefit businesses based on the idea that good management of resources that create value requires an integrated policy. This includes sending Japanese trainees abroad, receiving foreign trainees, and requiring these trainees to write reports on their assignments. During the post-war reconstruction years, the Japanese managed to integrate research and development through technologies they had copied or stolen. This approach was later adopted by emerging economies in Asia, particularly China.[8]

3.2 The American Model:

The American approach to economic and strategic intelligence underwent significant transformation during the 1990s, driven by several international changes, including the economic development achieved by Japan and Europe, which became major competitors to the United States. For example, the American company **Boeing** faced fierce competition from **Airbus**, and **NASA** was challenged by the **Ariane Space Station**.

As a result, the United States developed a booming information market, which later became a global leader. This market included various information stakeholders such as brokers, universities, think tanks, libraries, and private security agencies. The primary goal of economic intelligence operations in the

[8] COMMISSARIAT GENERAL DU PLAN, *Rapport Martre. Intelligence économique et stratégie des entreprises*, Paris, La Documentation Française, 1994.

United States is to support influence and lobbying efforts to achieve the country's public interest both domestically and internationally.

In addition, all entities and institutions collaborate to develop the country's national priority strategy and to plan its implementation according to well-coordinated and precise working mechanisms, as illustrated in **Figure 2**.

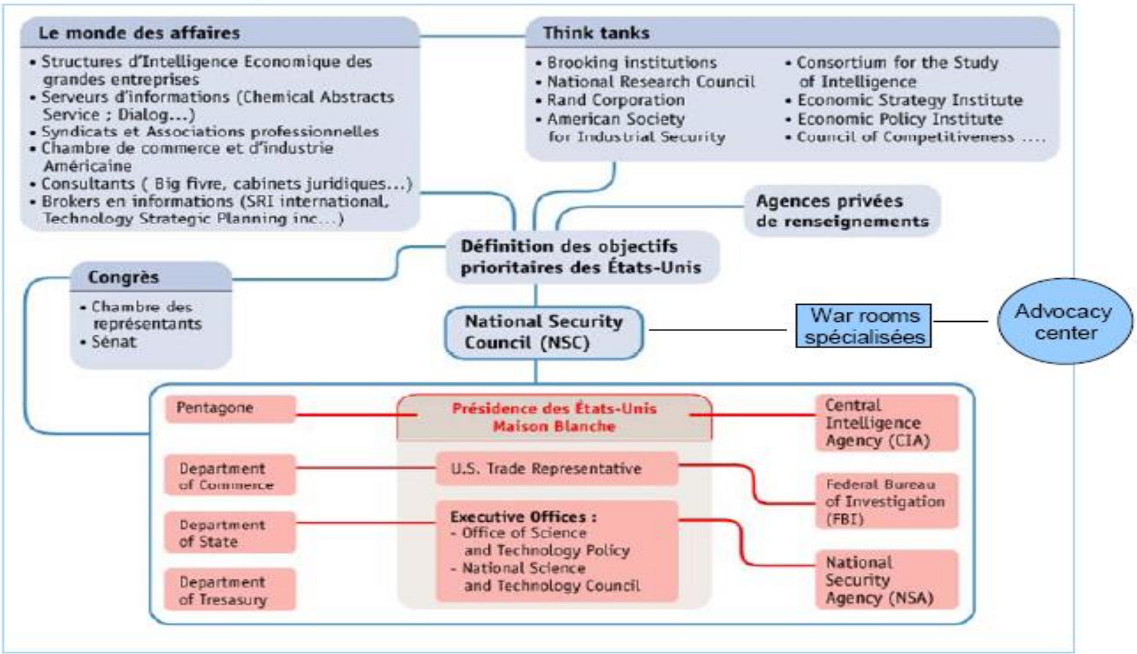

Figure 2: The American Model of Economic Intelligence

3.3 The French Economic Intelligence System:

Unlike the previous two systems, the French system is characterized by the strong role of the government in the field of economic intelligence alongside major public institutions. In France, public initiatives outweigh private ones. Furthermore, the French model of economic intelligence faces two main challenges:[9]

For instance, in France, there are 473 bodies that receive only 0.09% of the GDP, while there are 12,000 such bodies in the United States receiving 2.1% of the GDP, 3,000 in the UK, and 2,000 in Germany. Calls for reform of the French economic intelligence system began in 1995 following the publication of the **Carayon Report**, followed by the **Martre Report**. Carayon proposed a model of economic intelligence tailored to France's specificities, as shown in **Figure 3**.

[9] CARAYON B., *Rapport au Premier Ministre. Intelligence économique, compétitivité et cohésion sociale*, Paris, La Documentation Française, June, 2003.

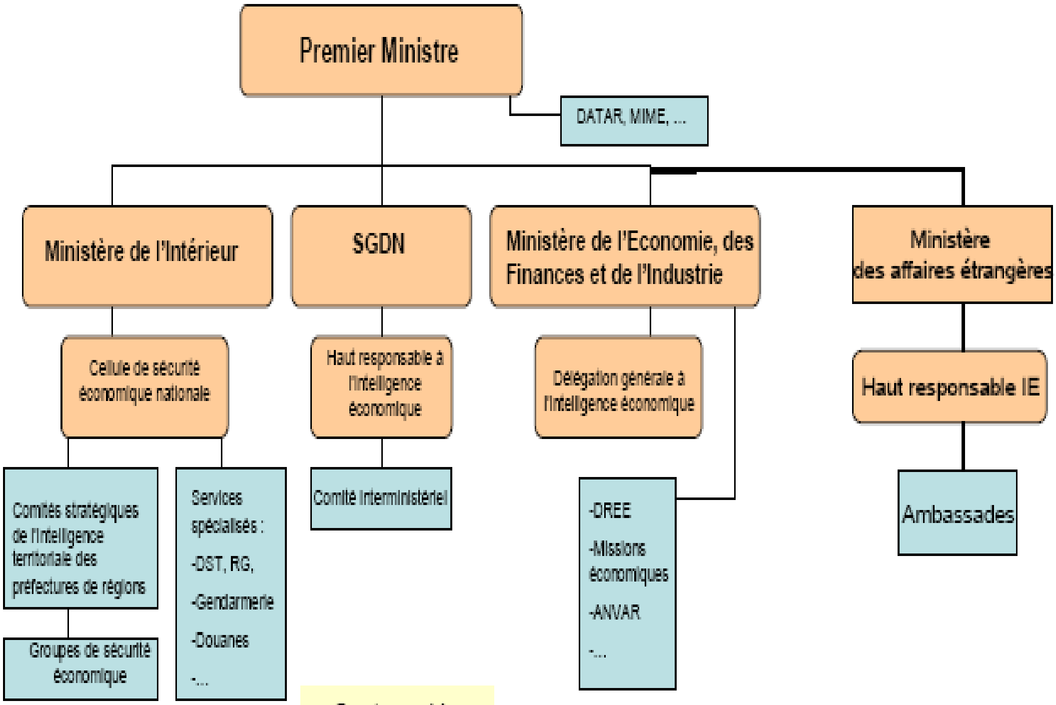

Figure 3: The French Model of Economic Intelligence

4. Strategic Vigilance:
The term "vigilance" is a modern concept that emerged in contexts related to information management. Therefore, we will first address the general concept of vigilance and then focus specifically on the concept of strategic vigilance.

1. The Concept of Vigilance:

A. The Origin of the Term:
The term "vigilance"[10] is derived from the Latin word *vigila*, which refers to radar surveillance, meaning to guard or monitor in order to protect a certain place or area and keep it secure. Although the term has modern origins, it has spread widely in Western countries, thanks to contributions from many thinkers, including H. Lesca, who helped explain and clarify the roots of the term. In Europe, the concept of vigilance is linked to technological information, while in the United States, it is associated with competition.[11]

B. Definition of Vigilance:

- **Linguistic Aspect:** In Arabic, the term "vigilance" means [12]"alertness" (the opposite of sleep). A person who is "vigilant" is awake, attentive, cautious, and aware of what is happening around them.

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[10] Guy Massé, *Intelligence économique - Un guide pour une économie de l'intelligence*, 2000, p. 249.
[11] Chewar Kheireddine, *Competitive Vigilance and Its Importance in the Organization*, *Algerian Journal of Legal and Economic Sciences*, Issue 04/2009, p. 267.
[12] Khalil Al-Jar, *Le dictionnaire arabe moderne Larousse*, Larousse Library, Paris, 1973, p. 1305.

- **Conceptual Aspect:** Among the definitions agreed upon by specialists and researchers in this field are the following:
  Vigilance refers to [13]"being alert and in a state of readiness to receive and absorb signals, actions, or words from one's external environment, without necessarily knowing what exactly will occur or when and where it will happen."
  It is also described as [14]"a process of observing and monitoring the environment, tracking and disseminating processed information for the purpose of making strategic decisions."
  From these definitions, we can deduce that vigilance is an organized process of researching, monitoring, analyzing, and selecting information from the organization's environment to support strategic decision-making.

C. Definition of Strategic Vigilance:
Many business management researchers have addressed the concept of strategic vigilance. Below are some definitions:
Strategic vigilance is defined as[15] "a continuous process that involves the targeted and repetitive collection of data or information, processing it according to one or more of the user's objectives, using expertise related to the subject or the nature of the gathered information."
It is also described as [16]"a collective and ongoing process carried out by a group of individuals voluntarily, where they track and monitor information about changes that are likely to occur in the external environment of the organization."
Another definition of strategic vigilance is [17]"a continuous activity that allows an organization to monitor and track its commercial, technological, and other environments in order to anticipate all developments."
From these definitions, we conclude that strategic vigilance is an ongoing process of researching and monitoring information about changes occurring in the organization's environment, then processing and disseminating this information for decision-makers to leverage opportunities and mitigate threats.
2. Features of Strategic Vigilance:
The definition of strategic vigilance leads to some essential features, which are as follows:[18]

- **Strategic Nature:** It helps in decision-making, particularly related to non-recurring decisions that do not follow previously examined models.
- **Voluntary:** Strategic vigilance is not a passive or limited activity. It goes beyond simple monitoring of the environment and is considered a proactive process that involves being alert to and often investigating expected information.
- **Collective Intelligence:** Strategic vigilance requires collective intelligence. It involves teamwork where a group of individuals interacts and

[13] Humbert Lesca, *La veille stratégique, la méthode L.E.S scanning*, EMS Editions, 2003, p. 3.
[14] Kourbali Baghdad, *Op. cit.*, p. 168.
[15] Youcef Boumediene, *The Mechanism of Strategic Vigilance and Intelligence: A Tool for Facing Future Challenges and Enhancing Competitiveness*, 4th International Conference on Competition and Competitive Strategies, November 8-9, 2010, p. 21. link
[16] Mohamed Jaouad El Qasmi, *Management par processus & la veille stratégique*, Accessed on: 01/03/2013: link
[17] Mohamed Jaouad El Qasmi, *Management par processus & la veille stratégique*, *Op. cit.*, p. 2.
[18] Humbert LESCA, *Veille stratégique: concepts et démarche de mise en place dans l'entreprise*, 'Ministère de l'Education Nationale' de la Recherche et de la Technologie, ADBS, 1997, p. 2-5. www.veille-strategique.org/docs/plaquette-.pdf

collaborates to notice signals in the environment and interpret them in a meaningful way.

- **Environment:** The organization's environment consists of various influencing factors and variables, which impact it holistically, especially when targeting strategic vigilance.
- **Fostering Creativity:** Strategic vigilance involves interpreting early warning signs, which are linked to creativity. The information being sought does not describe past events but enables the formulation of hypotheses and the creation of a proactive vision.
- **Forecasting:** It involves predictive information that provides insights into the organization's future.

3. Methods for Implementing the Strategic Vigilance Process:

The strategic vigilance process can be implemented through two different methods or mechanisms:[19]

1. **Control Mechanism:** In this method, the initiative comes from the potential information user. Research activates strategic vigilance information, starting with an urgent request from a direct supervisor who expresses a specific need for information.
2. **Alert Mechanism:** This method involves continuous research for information conducted by certain individuals. These individuals, on their own initiative, alert the direct supervisor when they observe important information, even if the supervisor has not specifically requested it. The initiative for strategic vigilance in this team comes from the activator.

Through either of these mechanisms—control or alert—the strategic vigilance process operates, leading to proactive and predictive information that meets the needs of the organization.

4. Types of Strategic Vigilance:

A. Strategic Vigilance and Porter's Five Forces:

The concept of strategic vigilance encompasses a comprehensive form of vigilance, which consists of several integrated types. Strategic vigilance gives an organization the ability to act quickly and at the right time with the highest possible effectiveness, using the least amount of resources, thus contributing to improving and maintaining its competitiveness.

As competition in the industrial sector intensifies daily, it has become the defining behavior of competitors. This is explained by Porter's model, where he identified the five basic parameters of competition that govern the future of an organization. Therefore, the organization needs to clearly define the various characteristics that distinguish these parameters so that it can later determine the best strategies to adopt. This involves setting up a monitoring system for the developments occurring in the environment, if the organization has the desire and means to do so.

[19] Humbert LESCA, *L'utilité de la méthode L.E.Scanning*, CERAC Grenoble. link

This comprehensive monitoring system is referred to as "strategic vigilance," which can be divided into four sub-systems of specialized vigilance: technological, competitive, commercial, and environmental. As proposed by **Martinet** and **Ribault**, there is a significant relationship between the five forces and the forms of vigilance that can be extracted based on the target activity field. Based on this, the types of strategic vigilance are classified into four main categories: **commercial vigilance**, **competitive vigilance**, **environmental vigilance**, and **technological vigilance**.[20] Additionally, other types of vigilance exist, such as **social vigilance**, **legal vigilance**, **political vigilance**, and more.

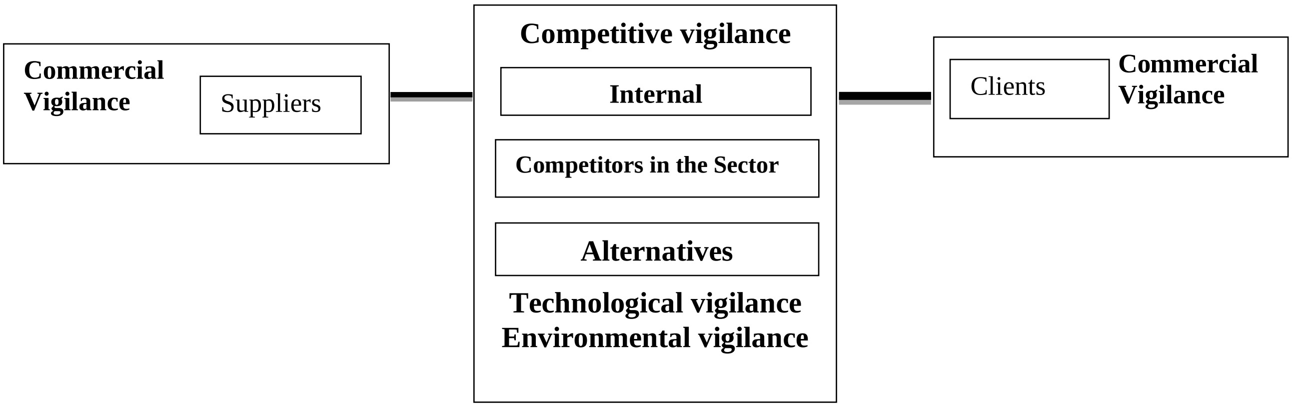

Figure No. (1-6): The Four Major Types of Vigilance
Source : Alain Bloch, l'intelligence économique, op cit, p17.

B. Technological Vigilance and Competitive Vigilance

1. Technological Vigilance:
Technological vigilance is defined as "the monitoring and analysis of the scientific, technical, and technological environment and its current and future economic impacts, to anticipate risks, threats, and development opportunities." It is also described as "an activity that focuses on monitoring the organization's environment to detect weak signals that emerge with the development of technologies."

Alternatively, it is "the monitoring of the development of basic or fundamental research, manufacturing stages, and raw materials, to bridge science and industry and create synergy between the two."

The true significance and practical benefit of technological vigilance lies in "systematic anticipation to acquire the maximum amount of information and knowledge from various sources with the primary aim of using it to rapidly find the most effective solutions to the problems faced by organizations, economies, or societies."[21]

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[20] Taïb Daoudi et al., *Technological Vigilance as a Tool for Building Competitive Advantage for the Economic Organization*, p. 10. Accessed on: 02/06/2013. link
[21] Said Oukil, *Technological Vigilance in Developing Countries: Between Theory and Practice*, p. 15. Accessed on: 27/05/2013.

Thus, the objective of technological vigilance is to monitor the technological and technical environment to keep up with its developments. Its role within the organization is manifested through forecasting and detecting technological and informational developments, or predicting them in the near future, so that the organization can acquire them ahead of its competitors, thus enhancing its competitiveness.

2. Competitive Vigilance:
Competitive vigilance involves researching, processing, and disseminating information related to the organization’s competitors. This concerns the monitoring and tracking of both direct and indirect competitors, whether current or potential.[22]

Analyzing competitors is a crucial step in the process of analyzing the competitive environment of an organization by examining and understanding competitor behaviors, predicting their future actions, and identifying the forces that shape their strategies. It also allows the organization to uncover strengths that represent opportunities if exploited effectively. Key areas of focus in competitive vigilance include:[23]

- Identifying competitors’ suppliers, products, resources, and competencies.
- Understanding competitors' research and development areas.
- Monitoring the distribution channels used by competitors and new products they release.
- Tracking potential movements of competitors.
- Evaluating the nature and degree of threats posed by competitors.
- Analyzing competitors' strategies, pricing policies, and financial results.

C. Commercial, Social, Legal, and Environmental Vigilance

1. Commercial Vigilance:
Commercial or marketing vigilance focuses on gathering information related to the organization’s core concerns, such as customers, markets, suppliers, and the workforce in the labor market. Therefore, the aim of commercial vigilance is to understand the needs, desires, and behaviors of current consumers, track the evolution of their needs and loyalty, and ensure customer satisfaction. It also involves understanding suppliers’ conditions, financial status, and their introduction of new products.[24]

2. Social Vigilance:
Social vigilance involves identifying and observing all social phenomena, such as social conflicts, religious and cultural confrontations, generational misunderstandings, adherence to traditions, and anything that catches the vigilant’s attention and threatens or strengthens organizational integrity.[25] Social vigilance, therefore, consists of monitoring changes related to the social environment of consumers, including various aspects of individuals' social lives.

[22] Revelli Carlo, *L’intelligence stratégique sur internet*, 2nd edition, Dunod, Paris, 2000, p. 13.
[23] Ben Nafla Kadour, Dr. Merziq Achour, *Research Paper titled "Strategic Vigilance as a Communication Channel Between the Organization and its Environment"*, p. 10. Accessed on: 10/03/2013. link
[24] Ben Nafla Kadour, Dr. Merziq Achour, *Op. cit.*, p. 11.
[25] Picard, *La veille sociale: prévoir et gérer la conflictualité industrielle*, Vuibert Editions, Paris, 1992, p. 2.

These variables include consumers' habits and traditions, demographic growth and development, and population density.

3. Legal Vigilance:
Legal or legislative vigilance involves tracking and monitoring the development of laws and regulations issued by the government and decision-makers. This type of vigilance is especially important today in the context of globalization. Organizations must monitor these laws and regulations, as they can either present opportunities or advantages granted by the state that should be seized or represent risks and negative impacts on the organization's activities that must be avoided.[26]

4. Environmental Vigilance:
Environmental vigilance concerns the remaining elements of the organization's environment that have not been addressed by the previous types, such as financial, cultural, ecological, funding, and economic factors. These types of vigilance are equally important, as they also affect the organization's operations and future. Implementing environmental vigilance is challenging for an organization because it involves a wide array of environmental factors. Therefore, the organization must handle selected information carefully, analyzing, processing, and transmitting it to decision-makers so that they can define the key data for the vigilance process.[27]

In conclusion, the fields and major types of vigilance mentioned collectively form strategic vigilance. This process enables the organization to stay ahead by anticipating and tracking various changes and developments in its environment, helping reduce environmental uncertainty and strengthen decision-making. The following figure shows the most important elements that concern the different types of strategic vigilance.

[26] Ahmed Omarsti, Saïd Kroumi, *The Importance of Strategic Vigilance in Improving Strategic and Competitive Decisions for the Organization*, Intervention at the 4th International Conference on Competition and Competitive Strategies, p. 5. link Accessed on: 04/05/2013.
[27] Revelli Carlo, *L'intelligence stratégique sur internet*, *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

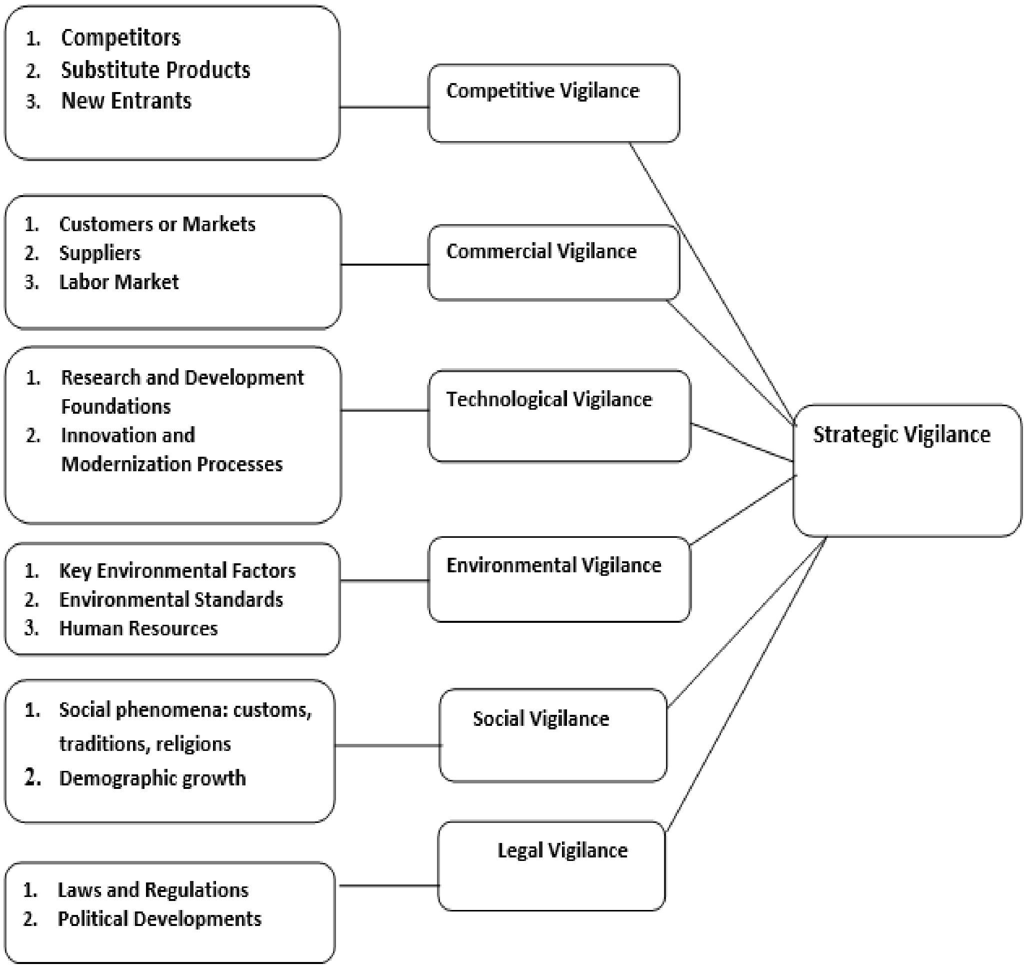

Figure (1-7): Elements of Strategic Vigilance

D. Strategic Vigilance and Information

Environmental monitoring includes various types and categories of information, such as internal and external information, personal and non-personal information, weak and strong signals, scientific, technical, and economic information, control information, impact information, and partial information. [28]We will explain the latter division as it encompasses the other classifications, as it relies on the flow of information both to and from inside the organization.

1. **Control Information**

   Control information refers to information produced by the organization for internal use. Understanding this type of information is crucial because it enables the organization to compare its performance against that of top-

[28] Dr. Kamal Rouibah, *Study on the Awareness of Kuwaiti Companies' Officials Regarding the Use of StrategicInformation*, published in the *Arab Journal of Administrative Sciences* in 2004, Vol. 11, Issue 2, p. 1-33, p. 3. link

performing organizations. This information is managed through information systems such as human resources systems, quality systems, and production systems. Control information serves as a support to vigilance but does not carry significant weight in strategic vigilance.

2. **Impact Information**
   Impact information refers to information produced inside the organization and directed for external use, or that is shared with individuals and groups outside the organization, such as customers and suppliers. One of the key information systems managing impact information is the marketing information system. Like control information, impact information merely supports strategic vigilance.[29]
3. **Early Warning Signals (Partial Information)**
   Partial information, also known as early warning signals, consists of key information that the organization actively seeks. These signals are often “scattered, partial, and uncertain, originating from various available information sources, requiring integration.” Therefore, they are referred to as "weak signals." Partial information represents strategic information gathered from outside the organization and directed for internal use. It typically involves predictions of potential developments that could impact the organization.[30] Partial information includes the following:
   - **Information about Competitors**: This includes all information related to current or potential competitors within the same industry or sector. It involves details about new products or services in the market or any innovations or changes competitors are making.
   - **Personal and Competency Information**: This type of information pertains to individuals and key figures in competing organizations, major customers, suppliers, or any individuals whose actions might impact the future of the organization. It includes social networks, party affiliations, club memberships, and any forces related to these figures.
   - **Commercial Information**: This includes all data regarding customer interests, preferences, and needs in an effort to gain their satisfaction and loyalty. It also covers any issues they face when purchasing products or services.
   - **Financial Information**: This type of information refers to data about the availability of raw materials, goods, or semi-finished products, external financial resources, or skilled labor.
   - **Technological Information**: This pertains to information on new methods or trends in production or improvements in products and services, as well as new or alternative technologies, whether for services or manufacturing.
   - **Social Variables**: This category includes information about changes in lifestyle patterns, job creation, consumer activities and habits, and population growth rates.
   - **Political Variables**: This category covers information about new legislation, laws, policies, trade protection laws, environmental protection

[29] Ahmed Omarsti, Saïd Kroumi, *Op. cit.*, p. 5.
[30] Souad Choukle, Humbert Lesca, "Support de L’information: Un Facteur Clé Dans Le Processus D'Attention Collective Aux Signaux Faibles". www.veille-strategique.org

laws, tax systems, customs duties, and political developments at the local, regional, and international levels.

- **Economic Indicators**: This encompasses information on various economic indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), inflation rates, economic growth indicators, stock market movements, per capita income, consumption rates, trade balances, payments, and more.

5. The Relationship between Strategic Vigilance and Economic Intelligence

The relationship between strategic vigilance and economic intelligence is not entirely clear, as the two concepts are closely intertwined. As discussed earlier, strategic vigilance focuses on monitoring the organization's environment. It is an organized and continuous process aimed at staying informed about all environmental developments that are relevant to the organization and affect its operations. This process culminates in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information. On the other hand, economic intelligence is broader, as it not only includes the outcomes of the vigilance process but also involves interpreting this information as indicators for making strategic decisions that align with the organization's objectives.

From this, we can conclude that the relationship between strategic vigilance and economic intelligence is complementary. Strategic vigilance is a component, whereas economic intelligence is a more comprehensive concept. The application of strategic vigilance is at the micro level, meaning it focuses on the organization itself, while economic intelligence operates at the macro level.

Furthermore, we can assert that strategic vigilance differs from economic intelligence in that it does not alter or modify the organization's environment in which it operates. Its role is limited to identifying and monitoring changes and developments in order to predict and alert the organization. In contrast, economic intelligence aims to enable the organization to position itself effectively within its environment and assist it in confronting competition.[31]

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[31] Abdel Fattah Boukhmoum, Aïcha Mesbah, *The Role of Strategic Vigilance in Developing the Competitive Advantage of the Economic Organization*, 4th International Conference on Competition and Competitive Strategies, November 8-9, 2010, p. 9.

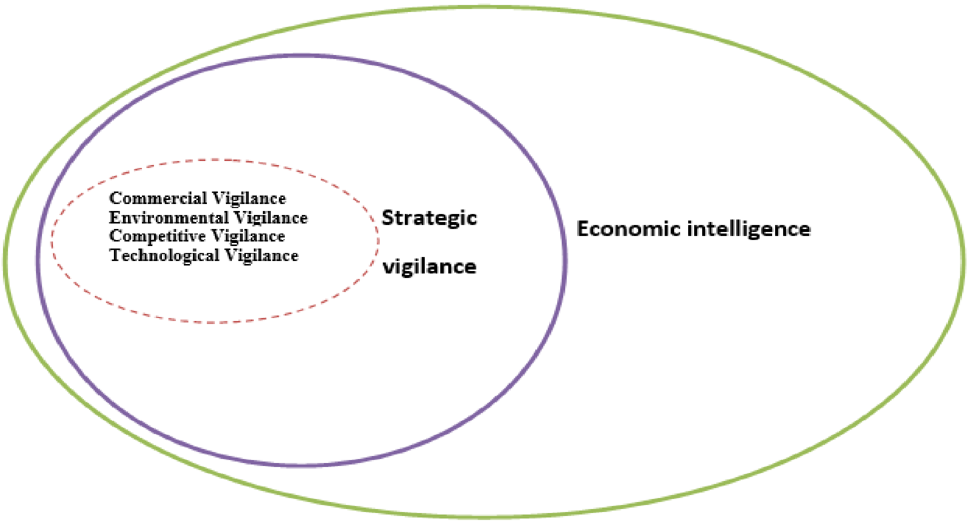

Figure No. (1-5) The relationship between economic intelligence and strategic vigilance
Source : Note de synthèse de l'Institut Atlantique d'Aménagement du Territoire (IAAT). La veille stratégique, du concept à la pratique – http://www.iaat.org/telechargement/veille_strategique_note_synthese.pdf.

Conclusion

The new environment is characterized by numerous transformations and developments, which require today's organizations, within the competitive environment, to search for methods and means to strengthen their sources of information and enhance their ability to understand both their internal and external environments. This is essential to predict the changes occurring within these environments, identify opportunities to seize them, and uncover potential threats to address them. This inevitably leads to gaining a competitive edge, ensuring the organization's continued activity and its prolonged presence in the market while achieving a competitive lead.

Therefore, economic institutions are now required to adopt a new approach based on the organized and rational management of information. This responsibility falls to the process of strategic vigilance in its various domains.

Strategic vigilance is a process based on forecasting and monitoring various environmental changes and developments. It involves the continuous, alert search for information, constant monitoring of the organization's environment, processing this information, and disseminating it. All this is aimed at achieving the organization's strategic objectives, creating opportunities, reducing uncertainties, and addressing threats while minimizing potential risks.

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