

Managing Strategic Uncertainty in Defence and International Relations: An Info-Gap Perspective

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Abstract

Strategic success is strongly supported by close attention to surprise and uncertainty, and by robustness against uncertainty in attaining critical – though possibly sub-optimal – goals. This attention to robustness against uncertainty leads us to a critique of any strategy that attempts to optimize the outcome. Deep uncertainty requires robust satisficing rather than optimizing. We begin with a discussion of Clausewitz, Hayek, Shackle and Popper for understanding the nature and prevalence of uncertainty in human affairs. This leads to info-gap decision theory and the analysis of robustness to surprise. We then examine an example of the management of uncertainty in the Normandy invasion. We generalize this to discuss methodological aspects of the formulation and evaluation of national security policy.

Selected References (see also info-gap.com)

Books:

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Articles:

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Many more citations, mostly quantitative ones, here: <https://info-gap.net.technion.ac.il/homeland-security/>