

Roll No. \_\_\_\_\_

# Essay

Time Allowed: 1½ hrs.

Max. Marks: 125

## Instructions to Candidate

- Attempt one essay
- The test carries 125 marks.
- Write the essay in about 1000-1200 words.
- Any page left blank in the answer-book must be crossed out clearly.

*(Examiner will pay special attention to the candidate's grasp of his/her material, its relevance to the subject chosen, and to his/ her ability to think constructively and to present his/her ideas concisely, logically and effectively).*

### Remarks

1. Invigilator Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
2. Invigilator Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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Date 24/09/16

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1. Where words fail, music speaks.

2. Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake.

NEVER INTERRUPT YOUR ENEMY, WHEN HE IS MAKING  
A MISTAKE.

We all have enemies. There are different kinds of enemies. For an individual, a competitor at the workplace can be an enemy. For a company, the market leader or direct competitor can be enemy. Similarly, nations may consider other nations to be enemy states for a variety of reasons. Our hearts fill with pleasure when we see our enemy making a mistake. We feel that hitting the enemy at this moment of vulnerability will guarantee our success and the defeat of the enemy. However, this strategy often does not work and sometimes is actually counter-productive. Hitting the enemy when he is making a mistake makes him aware of

his mistake and hence gives him a chance to improve and to undo the damage <sup>caused by</sup> of the mistake. Thus, the best strategy is to not

interrupt the enemy when he is making the mistake. This ensures that the enemy continues with the mistake and eventually self-destructs.

In this <sup>following</sup> paragraphs, we will look at the various reasons due to which it may be better to

not interrupt the enemy when he is making a

mistake and we will also look at examples from

the past and from various sectors to demonstrate

why not interrupting an enemy may be

the best policy. Let us start by looking at

some examples from the past.

The Nanda rulers of ancient India were cruel and authoritarian in nature. They made

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not a good example

a series of mistakes that made them very unpopular. Their opponents Chanakya and Chandragupta did not interrupt the Nanda rulers. They waited for the public discontent to simmer and the Nandas to commit even more mistakes. Ultimately, the public was frustrated and the space had been created for a new ruler to take over - which Chandragupta occupied similarly, in the late medieval era, the Marathas were making a series of mistakes. They were breaking themselves up into <sup>regional</sup> confederates, they were getting disunited and they were venturing into the plains - an area not suited for them. Their opponents, the British did not interrupt. They waited for their mistakes to amplify and also built their own army in the meanwhile. This weakened the Marathas so much that they were badly defeated in 1761 and

what mistakes?

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stopped being the power they once were. Similarly, the allied forces did not interrupt when the Nazis made the mistake of venturing into snow covered Russia. The Nazis tanks froze and the German soldier died due to lack of warm clothes. This was a significant win for the allies and one of the reasons for their victory in the second world war. All the above examples demonstrate that often, not interrupting the erring enemy is the best policy. Now, let us look at the reasons behind this.

One of the main reasons for not interrupting the enemy when he is making a mistake is that, if we do not intervene, it would be difficult for the enemy to identify his mistake. Then, one mistake would lead to the other, and the enemy would ultimately self-destruct. Further,

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interruption from our side would not only give  
 the enemy the identity and improve his mistake, but  
 would also make us vulnerable. The enemy may  
 consolidate his strength and attack us when we  
 interrupt him. Giving the enemy even a small  
 edge or advantage in today's competitive world is  
 also detrimental to ~~our~~<sup>our</sup> own interest. Finally,  
 interrupting the enemy leads to wastage of  
 our own time and resources. This time and  
 resources could instead be spent on developing  
 our strength as the enemy writes ~~its~~<sup>his</sup> own  
 death. Thus the best strategy is to not interrupt  
 when the enemy makes the mistake.

Let us look at this strategy from the  
 point of view of the individual. An individual  
 has many competitors at his work place. The  
 rapid pace of life demands that he does better

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than his competitor to succeed at his job. Thus,

the competitor automatically becomes his enemy.

Consider two journalists who are following the same story. Suppose one of them gets a wrong

lead and starts moving in the wrong direction.

Now, the other journalist should not interrupt

the first journalist while he is making the

mistake as doing so, ~~there~~ may lead to the

first journalist realising his mistake and correcting

it. Similarly, consider two mathematicians

who are very close to the solution of a complex

mathematical problem. If one of them makes a

mistake and moves in a completely different

direction, it is best that <sup>the</sup> other does not indicate

this to the mathematician. This will ensure that

the wrong mathematician does not and the

other mathematician solves the problem first.

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Like individuals, companies too have enemies which are their competitor companies. Here too, the best business strategy is to not interrupt when your opponent is making a mistake. There was a time when G-mail was a relatively new company (e-mail service provider) and had far fewer e-mail customers than Yahoo, which was the market leader. But gradually, Yahoo started making a lot of mistakes - in acquisitions, in investments, in customer interface and so on. Google which owns G-mail realised this and kept looking (observing) Yahoo making these mistakes. Today, Yahoo is at the mercy of another company which is about to acquire it while Google is the market leader and it is growing strong.

The above strategy applies not just to the business sector, but also to the sphere of

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international relations... Soviet <sup>Union</sup> kept making one mistake after the other in its domestic and international dealings. US did nothing ~~but~~ in most of the cases and waited for <sup>the</sup> Soviet to self destruct. This eventually happened in the 1990s. Similarly, Pakistan has made many mistakes in the past and continues to provoke India at every opportunity it gets. But many experts argue that India should not interrupt in Pakistan's mistakes such as funding terror, supporting radicalism, etc as in the long run, these mistakes will hurt Pakistan more than they would India. The hurt caused to Pakistan by its own militia in the Peshawar attack illustrates this point.

Similarly, in the competitive world of sports, interrupting while an opponent is ready

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wrong, India always wanted to stop it, also in such cases, it is unwise to let it happen

a mistake can lead to defeat. In games like Chess and Chinese Go, often opponents' mistakes if identified by the player can ensure victory. However, if the player starts playing moves based on those mistakes by the opponent, the opponent could identify the mistake and correct it. Thus the player should ignore the mistake of the opponent as later the opponent is bound to lose because of it.

While it is true that it is often best to not intercept when the opponent makes a mistake, there are situations in which acting on the enemies' mistakes may be necessary. In cases of war and national security, after it becomes necessary to give the "final death blow" to the opponent. For this, exploiting

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*wrong & suspect*

The opponent's mistake may be necessary. Similarly, many times these mistakes by the opponent may adversely impact us and thus, immediate action becomes necessary. For example, Pakistan's mistake of promoting terror against India impacts India negatively in the short run. Thus, India must act to ensure that Pakistan does not commit such a mistake again. Finally, in many areas such as sports and science, cooperation with the opponent is necessary as sporting spirit and development of science are more important outcomes than winning in these ~~cases~~ fields. Thus picking up a fallen sporting opponent and collaborating with competing <sup>or</sup> mathematician may be better options than exploiting their mistakes.

We have looked at the various reasons because of which it is not interrupting the opponent

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When he is making a mistake is the best policy. We have also looked at various examples from the past and from different sections to illustrate the point. It is quite clear

that mistakes often lead to disasters when left to themselves. Thus, trying to exploit the

mistakes of the enemy may not always be

the best policy. We can in fact wait for

the opponent to make a mistake and then

continue waiting until the opponent makes many

more such mistakes and self-destructs. The

ultimate objective of any competitor is to win

~~to win~~ and towards this end, it seems that

not exploiting the enemy's mistake may be

"losing the battle, but ultimately winning the war"

X

Remarks

few examples are wrong  
but others were good

→ approach is very narrow  
only focus on  
Competition & not Cooperation

56

→ see model notes

Remarks

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