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Three Critical Factors in Intelligence Activity: Product, Process, and Personnel (The 3P Project)

by Ionel Nitu, Romanian Intelligence Service

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The term “3P” derives from the three very important categories/areas in defining a reform process of national security intelligence analysis, namely:

- Process (the analysis activity, with its entire set of methods or means, internal procedures and standards, but also with its various types of organization)
- Product (the results of the analysis activity, the products which are sent to beneficiaries/users, and the feedback or requests for information from the intelligence consumers)
- Personnel (the intelligence analyst, as well as the process of his/her selection and training)

Why these three Ps? I must confess that the idea of trying to define the analysis activity, and implicitly the main parts of reform in this important area for the activity of each intelligence service, came following some discussions I had with colleagues, experts, and intelligence analysts. I was co-author of a paper (presented at an international forum) concerning the evolution of intelligence analysis on these three categories: process, product, and personnel. Afterward, I found there is a whole literature that defines the management processes (especially in corporations) or the performance of an organization/company in the 3P logic. Hence, I will briefly approach, from a theoretical point of view, the subject of intelligence analysis reform, and I will talk about the practical component, starting from these three identified essential factors.

THEORETICAL PREMISES

Security risk dynamics after the end of the Cold War is one of the research topics in international relations, as well as in subsequent areas of security studies and intelligence analysis. Among the most well-known authors who discuss the subjects of globalization and widening the security concept are James Rosenau, Alvin Toffler,¹ Robert Keohane, and Joseph Nye in the complex interdependence theories or G. John Ikenberry regarding security strategies.² The changes in the national security area were widely

treated both within organizational theories and rational choice theory (T.G. Cummings,³ L.J. Mullins⁴), as well as in international relations theories (starting from the Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow study on the Cuban Missile Crisis⁵) or in psychological studies (regarding change, e.g., C.A. Carnall, W.W. Burke⁶).

The approaches concerning the change to intelligence analysis are mostly of English origin and are limited to debates on reform of the security area and interagency cooperation. In this field, there are very famous studies such as “The Democratic Control of the Armed Forces” (DCAF Centre, Geneva) or “Kings College,” London, or “RAND Corporation,” in the U.S., as well as those on policy analysis carried out in an institutional framework (the analysis of the Parliamentary commissions post-September 11 or Gregory Treverton’s⁷ and Deborah Barger’s⁸ studies). The first scientific concerns (within the U.S. intelligence community) belong to Sherman Kent (whose name was given to the most famous research institute in this field, the Center for Intelligence Studies, CIA) and Richards Heuer, Jr.⁹

The research on intelligence analysis was started after the end of the Second World War along with the development of the analytical domain within the CIA. Gradually, but in a pronounced way in recent years (in the post-September 11 period), intelligence specialization (SIGINT, OSINT, HUMINT, etc.) and technological development have led to some intelligence studies focused on special fields (secret sources, use of satellites, combating terrorism and organized crime, etc.), but have offered a less comprehensive perspective over the entire process of reform of intelligence analysis. There has been advanced research on developments in the intelligence area, which has been generated by security system reforms and assessments produced within different intelligence services in Europe and the U.S., as well as by the development of cooperation between services within NATO and the EU.

Nowadays, most of the studies concerning the intelligence area have been generated by the emergence, after the end of the Cold War, of some national intelligence communities (in the U.S., United Kingdom, etc.) having the role of harmonizing the objectives of intelligence services and

integrating the collected intelligence. These communities have been passing through a process of fundamental changes with an impact on every component structure, but they have achieved in time their own logic of institutional development which involves transformation processes differing from the individual ones of the intelligence agencies.

Other relevant sources are the professional articles published in various American and European magazines, especially those in the area of intelligence and intelligence analysis, concerning the failures and successes of intelligence services in combating the new security threats or managing the “classic” ones. The Parliamentary commissions established in recent years (especially after September 11) for assessing the activity of important intelligence services have revealed the existence of various dysfunctions which favored the appearance of “analysis failures.” In this context, the need for reforming those systems on several levels has become imperative.

In the U.S., the report of the commission which investigated the activity of intelligence services after September 11 revealed the existence of shortcomings in ensuring the flow of intelligence and mistakes in assessing the available data (minimizing/ignoring the risk or, on the contrary, exaggerating it). With respect to the reform of intelligence analysis within the Romanian intelligence community, there have not yet been studies or research dealing with this subject in a unitary and comprehensive way.

ELEMENTS THAT INVOLVE THE NECESSITY OF CHANGE

Basically, the re-conceptualization process of the intelligence paradigm was influenced by the activity of several exogenous and endogenous factors.

• Among the main internal factors inducing changes in the intelligence field there are:

(a) the major changes in legislation or national security strategies—as well as those generated by the September 11 terrorist attacks. In the last decade, many nations have updated their doctrines, policies, strategies, and legislation regarding security and intelligence and have begun reform of the security domain (including intelligence) by pursuing specific goals and purposes:

- clarifying and developing the concepts within this domain;
- unequivocally defining the elements representing the condition for national security;

- settling the general consensus on the goals and pertinent tools for ensuring or promoting national security interests;
- improving the architecture of the national intelligence system according to security challenges;

(b) relevant adjustments of institutions’ budgets as a result of the transformation of institutional priorities and personnel reduction¹⁰;

(c) beginning the major reform process after the end of the Second World War and, after that, following September 11;

(d) surfacing the need to extend cooperation (at the national and, especially, the international level);

(e) modifying the internal requirements of intelligence agencies (both pursuant to modifying national legislation and the need to adapt to new challenges);

(f) voicing the need for recruiting and guiding personnel, and modifying the organizational culture and methods and procedures;

In some cases the changes occurring within the intelligence domain have been generated by:

- leakage of classified information or discovery of targets, methods, etc., which have generated legislative investigation or public opinion pressures;
- intelligence failures (not necessarily those which become public);
- changes in the political system or certain governmental policies or decisions (including those reducing the bureaucratic system);
- the dynamics of internal relationships (cooperation protocols) or external agreements (for example, the Club of Berne implies adjustments of procedures and sometimes of structures);
- changing the services’ leadership (every new leader is tempted to impose his/her own perspective);
- institutional necessities (concerning the flexibility and reduction of bureaucracy)

• The most important exogenous determinations are posed by the complex and dynamic developments of the security environment, namely:

(a) enhancing the threat areas and multiplication of sources with high potential risk—in the context of growing the number of international actors (as a consequence of disintegration of some multinational states), growing the number of “fragile societies”/“weak states,” and assuming an international and mainly regional active role by some emerging powers. I am referring to those factors that started to shape the activity of intelligence structures:

- proliferation of actors, conflict sources, and type of force used;
- cross-border character, enhancing the scope and the impact of threats;
- technological progress caused by increasing the vulnerability of many different and disparate sources;
- prominence of unconventional forms of conflict;
- increasingly targeting violence toward the urban zone and the internal security area, duplicating social tensions generated by economic, ethnic, religious, and ideological conditions.¹¹

(b) emphasizing the globalization process—which generated, among others, the “explosion” of information (multiplication of sources of information) and enhancing the benefits of technical scientific progress, generating also the globalization of risks. We witness a diminishing of classical dichotomies, internal-external and political-military, in terms of risk development by the states. Beyond the benefits derived from the dissolution of borders and growing competitiveness as a consequence of structural changes, globalization—through phenomena that it generates—determines multiple tense situations and demands changes in the security environment.

Division and integration, internationalization and regionalization, and centralization and decentralization are several phenomena that create insecurity. Terrorism, organized crime, economic crisis, starvation, and climatic changes are global. In the current social economic conditions, unequal access to resources defines the difference between states and foments interstate conflicts. We witness an increase in natural disasters, a reduction of energy resources, and demographic growth related to decreasing water and food resources. These phenomena continue to affect global stability and security. The present situation is the consequence of “breaking down” some states following a deficiency in governance, precarious economic conditions, continued ethnic/religious conflicts, weakness of local and regional cooperation forums, technological differences, etc. According to Dolghin, the fight for energy resources dominates the geopolitics of the

21st century. The resources are “where not necessary” and in the possession of “those who do not deserve them.”¹²

The accelerated process of integration, interdependence, and communication—usually defined through globalization—appears as the greatest challenge to the national security system as well as to the states. Technical scientific progress, accelerated rhythms of IT development, and diversifying the types of information warfare have enhanced the perspectives and scope of planning by national security institutions and have imposed the necessity for strategic assessments. Transposed at a level of intelligence structures, this situation requires overcoming the intuitive forms of prevision based on suppositions, extrapolations, and heuristic exercises (requiring intuition, flair, and creativity) and developing early warning systems;

(c) the hardly predictable character of the new types of asymmetric and unconventional threats, compared to classic threats, focused on state security.

Currently, the most important challenge that the international community faces is caused by the complexity of the new types of threats. These are difficult to identify, observe, and interpret, considering that the security challenges differ from one country to another and from one social group to another. While the classic threats could be geographically localized (risk factors for the nation-state), the new asymmetric threats could probably affect any zone. To anticipate and shape the future, as well as to promote national security strategies/politics and adopt decisions with major implications at the state level, certain substantiated prognoses on a variety of domains are necessary: economic trends, from technological development and climatic change to diversification of the forms of fighting, and in particular the atypical forms of conflict such as counterterrorism).

Getting intelligence and working out national security strategies imply, over the long term, establishing challenging domains and defining objectives. In line with this aspect, utility of intelligence analysis (strategic prognosis) consists in the fact it could provide an advantage to that person who better knows the requirements of a future war, and draws the necessary conclusions for implementing them in a timely manner. In order to counteract the new types of risks and threats, intelligence services have initiated processes both to change the acting component of the intelligence activity (enhanced competencies for the intelligence services in fields such as energy security, food security, etc.) and to increase the role of the analytical component (enhancing the anticipative and preventive component) in order to improve the capability of response to these new challenges.

Increasingly, analysts have noted that security is not only a military power issue but also an issue of access to

intelligence, of understanding the critical role of complementarity between decision-making and intelligence. The focus is not on combating threats any longer, but on the activity of prevention. This requires a proportional increase in the role and real importance of the intelligence services. It should be noted that the global development of events has formed an unknown issue in the domain of study: the relationship between intelligence and security, where intelligence is the strategic resource of power;

(d) the non-operative developments (that are not necessarily related to the dynamic of risks and threats, such as technological ones, to security). IT developments are equally opportunities for modernizing services and also meeting challenges that could cause further risks and difficulties in monitoring those risks;

(e) a direct (arming a hostile neighboring country, war) or imminent (environmental, health) threat;

(f) joining regional political/military/economic organizations (e.g., NATO and EU) that impose new standards and institutionalize some forms of cooperation (which determine structural reorganization, new objectives and missions, etc.).

Usually, the changes in intelligence services are an outcome of the simultaneous action of exogenous and endogenous factors.

PRAXIOLOGICAL GUIDING MARKS TO UNDERLINE THE CHANGING IN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITY

The reality showed that their change is mainly a reactive process that occurs when an inflection strategic point is reached, beyond which the current procedures (“business as usual”) could not efficiently work anymore.

For a real change in the intelligence field, what is necessary is an enhanced strategy of transforming a new doctrinal framework, a rapid adjusting and “continuous learning” system, and transforming the national security system in an intelligence service focused on networks (through interconnecting intelligence platforms of the component structures, disseminating them for analyzing multi-sources, and conducting joint operations).

It should be noted that, after 9/11, reform in the intelligence field in the majority of Western countries generated two significant developments:

-at the operational level, developing some intelligence “fusion” capabilities to integrate data held by different governmental bodies;
-at the strategic level, developing the national intelligence community, as well as international cooperation, in formats both bilateral and multilateral (with noticeable outcomes, explicitly mentioned for growing the common potential to prevent and counteract security risks, accommodate actionable procedures, etc.).

Among the most imperative needs for efficiently managing current and future risks is enhancing national and international cooperation.

• Within the process of changing intelligence analysis (regardless of its level of profoundness or the fact it is revolutionary or, on the contrary, evolutionary), it is very important to establish and, subsequently, monitor:

-the necessities that impose change (e.g., modification of national priorities and objectives after Romania’s joining of NATO and the UE, changing the picture of risks and threats to national security, and enhancing cooperation with Euro-Atlantic services, including other institutions in the national security system);

-the principles and objectives targeted through the process of change (e.g., defining and implementing some scientific methods for intelligence analysis and human resources management, growing institutional flexibility, increasing the quality of activity and the capacity of response to challenges as well as security opportunities, and strengthening the institutional profile);

-the achieved or foreseen outcomes, in every relevant component (structural, functional, ruling, resources management, internal, and external relationships) and the effects on that component of the intelligence process.

Intelligence reform cannot pursue anything but designing a more efficient and flexible organization, connected to the informational society, capable of rapidly reacting to security challenges and proactively following its responsibilities, open to public opinion, and functioning not only based on rules and procedures but also adopting new attitudes and mentalities.

• From a practitioner’s perspective, among the main drivers of change one could mention:

-the detailed planning of change stages and the thorough preparation of their launching;

-the consultation with organization members following the early stages of change planning together with permanent communication with

them, with the purpose of informing the members of intermediate objectives and results, as well as corrections needed;

-the acceptance and undertaking of expected decisions, as well as an exact understanding, by each member, of his/her role within the system;

-the alteration not only of objectives, tasks, structure, and organization but also of the essential features of organizational culture and mentalities, impacting both the internal environment as well as relations with the external environment.

The success of the transformation decisively depends on the people working for the intelligence agencies, on their quality, authority, and determination to take over the role of primary internal agents of change. However, success is also the result of the external agents' contribution (decision-makers, partner services, etc.), as well as that of the people involved in modeling the change (consultants or specialists).

The approach to change in the intelligence domain must have as a starting point analysis of intelligence imperatives after the Cold War and taking into account the events of 9/11, which lead to the identification of multiple deficiencies at the level of the intelligence communities. Among the deficiencies, one could mention the lack of joint standards and practices for internal and external structures, the reduced capacity to establish priorities and use of resources, the multiplicity of tasks, the complex organization and functioning of intelligence work, extreme secrecy, and the structural barriers to cooperation. We must also equally take into account the intrinsic features of the intelligence services (the conservatism, the specific hierarchy, the security agenda, etc.), as well as new requests for them, stemming from the significant shifts in the security environment, the technological boom, and customers' needs and expectations regarding the accuracy of predictions and the control of unexpected developments.

WHY 3P?

Starting with the previously mentioned considerations and the day-to-day activity assessments within an intelligence analysis department, we could consider that the three Ps are becoming crucial factors in the reform and modernization processes regarding intelligence analysis within the intelligence communities and services. The need for an integrated approach of the three factors results from the fact they cannot be analyzed separately:

-it is not feasible solely to improve the analytic process (for example, by implementing new scientific methods for analysis, creating new work methodologies, or extending cooperation with academia) in the absence of professional analysts. The improvement of the

analysis process cannot be an objective by itself if it does not reside in the augmentation of the predictive dimension as well as of the analytic products' quality; -it is not desirable to conduct human resources training exclusively, in the absence of an increase in the quality of the analysis process and without the two above-mentioned objectives to be achieved in intelligence product improvement and diversification; -an increase in the quality of the analytic products cannot be achieved, in order to meet the increasingly complex needs of diversified customers, in the absence of improving the other two factors: the analysis process and personnel.

• The First P – The Process

As long as intelligence work has as its main purpose, generally speaking, to reduce consumers' inherent and "natural" uncertainty, specific to the complex national security issues as well as their induced uncertainty (by manipulation and disinformation operations), the analysis process is mainly oriented to transform the results of intelligence work into a specific contribution to the state's and its citizens' security.

➤ From a functional perspective, intelligence analysis must have a pivotal role between national security intelligence collection and processing on the one hand, and dissemination (information) on the other.

Any explanatory model used in intelligence studies starts with the intelligence cycle. The classic cycle implies certain logic, even a linear one: request/planning – collection – processing/analysis – dissemination. Analysts and managers from different intelligence agencies with significant traditions are proposing new versions of the classic intelligence cycle where, given the informational flood, analysis is not only a part of the overall process but a necessary input to every stage of the cycle.

Therefore, in the launching stage of the intelligence process (the result of either a consumer request or the internal planning process), the analysis should contribute to the orientation of intelligence collection, the precedence of the objectives, etc. Within the collection stage, selecting the targets and risks to be monitored implies an analysis of the priorities of the state and the hierarchy of national security risks. Within the processing stage, the analysis becomes self-referential when it has the objective of assessing its own product (through a specific period, taking into account the ratio between the predictions and the effective developments, etc.). Furthermore, while disseminated to the intelligence consumers, the analysis plays a critical role regarding the shape and content of the intelligence product, the feedback assessment, the identification of ways to

consolidate the cooperation between producer (analyst) and consumer (intelligence customer), and even the development of a common language for them.

➤ From the methodological perspective, it is necessary to improve analysis processes and products by continuously adapting the structure and the working methods, in a way that the final product is obtained as rapidly as possible, at a high-quality level and efficiently (cost-benefit ratio).

In order to eliminate the situation where the intelligence analysis fails due to the limits of the analytical process, a reform of intelligence analysis should envisage:

- theoretically (re)designing the analysis domain, creating new instruments for work standardization and developing the methodology extensively (the increase in the number of research methods, including implementing new methods and techniques used by private intelligence structures—benchmarking, reengineering, risk and strategic management, competitive intelligence etc.—as well as enlarging their domain for applicability) and intensively (refining/perfecting the utilized research methods). It also could be extremely useful to import methods from other sciences, especially the social sciences, applicable to current intelligence work.

The necessity of developing a conceptual apparatus for intelligence analysis is built on the concern regarding elimination of the confusion generated by the absence of consensus on the used/operable notions and concepts in intelligence analysis;

- implementing lessons learned mechanisms, in order to allow the inventory and sharing (even in the educational process) of the factors influencing analysis work (analysis errors, limits or deficiencies determined by some other factors, such as psychological ones, the timelines, etc.);
- addressing in a cross-disciplinary manner the security problems/phenomena and elaborating multi-source analytical products;
- valuing open/public sources, taking into account that the “open society” and the flood of available information is facilitating the use of “unclassified” methods in motivating and implementing security policies;
- focusing analysis work on the development of the capacities and capabilities needed for elaborating predictive/anticipative intelligence products, in order to allow vulnerabilities identification and the countering of risks challenging national security;
- pushing for the use of intuitive-predictive techniques (opportunities analysis, reduced probability

assessment, scenario method, concurrent hypotheses analysis, conflicting decisions analysis, corresponding to strategic intelligence) in order to meet customers’ requests and needs, focused on assessing the implications and emphasizing the uncertainties.

I would support the idea regarding the need for a conceptual apparatus for intelligence analysis with Rob Johnston’s¹³ findings, who—after hundreds of interviews and multiple inputs by U.S. working teams immediately after 9/11—did not identify any standard analytical method for intelligence analysis. The author mentions that “*the most common practice is to conduct limited brainstorming on the basis of previous analysis, thus producing a bias toward confirming earlier views. [...] None of the analytic agencies knows much about the analytic techniques of the others. In all, there tends to be much more emphasis on writing and communication skills than on analytic methods. [...] Most training is on-the-job.*”¹⁴

I believe that, as the operatives have to learn human source approach and recruiting techniques, the analysts have to know and use analytical methods. Particularly important for this complex approach, although a new concept within the domestic intelligence community, is meta-analysis, which could also be called “the analysis of analysis.”

From this perspective, the concept of meta-analysis designates:

- on the one hand, the assessment—mainly in terms of efficiency—of the degree of harmonization between the methods and techniques employed during the analytical process and national security data and information to be processed with a view to developing intelligence products;
- on the other hand, the complex theoretical approach meant to identify the intimate mechanisms that define the analytical process specific to the intelligence area and to (re)configure the used conceptual and methodological instruments in order to improve analysis and prognosis by stimulating critical thinking. Johnston¹⁵ endorses the foundation of an “*Improvement Performance Infrastructure*,” able to measure the actual and ideal analytical performances, to compare them (in order to reveal the performance gaps), to intervene (with the aim of improving the analysis) and, subsequently, to measure once again the performance (to evaluate the efficacy of the interventions).

➤ From a structural point of view, the proper projection of analytical levels’ attributions is essential for setting up networks of communication between the intelligence

structures (gathering and analysis) and for establishing various efficient response mechanisms. The IT platforms have, from this perspective, a major role. They aim at facilitating the interaction (especially as far as the *task forces* are concerned), improving operability (in receiving and recognizing the value of the inputs used in developing the intelligence products) as well as in augmenting the interaction between analysis and intelligence gathering.

• The Second “P” – The Personnel

According to the “3P Project,” it is indispensable to implement a functional model of professional training (as far as intelligence analysis is concerned) having as priorities the training of:

- newly employed individuals;
- trainers (given that they will have a major role in identifying the existing training needs as well as in upgrading existing training programs).

As far as the new employees are concerned, the selection of personnel and recruitment policies are essential. After their employment, their intense and staged training is indispensable. The training has to start from the premise that “what most people know about this job is mostly false. It is the duty of the organization and its recruiters to present its correct image and to work in order to destroy the already established myths.”¹⁶

➤ From a functional perspective, the imperative of developing analytical capabilities (tactically and strategically) in order to identify the best methods for linking the existing capabilities to the priorities of national security is a fact. This is the *sine qua non* goal for the intelligence agencies, most of which have various extensive programs for training individuals involved in the activity of analysis.

Modernizing this critical component of analytical intelligence aims at identifying the needs of the analyst’s own selection and professional development, within the framework of his/her career within an analytical department. The selection methods have to shift from a passive attitude (merely publishing the educational offer and taking any resume or application into account) to an offensive one (selection on specialized websites, information campaigns regarding universities training the specialists the intelligence agencies need, taking part in job-related activities, etc.). For some posts (such as high-level ones) head-hunting companies might help.

➤ From a structural perspective, it is important to have various psychological tests (starting with the selection process) focusing on vocational aptitude. Also, professional tests (based on competences and knowledge) can support the recruitment

process. Later on, work diagnoses might be extremely helpful, focusing on the psycho-professional profile of the analyst (as well as on features for shaping future generations of analysts) and the identification of performance criteria (allowing the identification of significant elements in assuring the analysts’ efficiency as well as their activity’s evaluation criteria). Nonetheless, developing experience-exchange mechanisms (between various analytical departments and also between areas of intelligence gathering and analysis) and generalizing the positive practices might contribute toward optimizing the analytical process, broadening the analysts’ knowledge horizon, and avoiding errors as far as their shaping is concerned.

➤ From a relational perspective, it is vital to have permanent exchanges of opinion, projections, experience, etc., with similar structures within Western intelligence services as well as connections to academic research linked to national security. Keeping the analysts updated with the realities of the security context as well as the fundamental research in related fields (economics, international relations, public administration, etc.) makes possible a proper understanding of the security evolutions that must be evaluated periodically. Attending scientific conferences, seminars, and roundtables keeps analysts’ minds open, allows them to exercise initiative, and promotes a proactive attitude (in regard to their study objectives) to be creative and, at the same time, to practice a critical approach. “An analysis culture rooted in cooperation and interaction, on decisional relevance, implies automatically the development of a more subtle relationship between the various levels of the intelligence.”¹⁷

➤ From a cognitive perspective, given the inherent difficulties of processing complex information, analysts have to be encouraged to clearly separate their assumptions by deduction and to specify the degree and the source of uncertainty involved in the meta-analysis which periodically reexamines the key problems in the context. The analysts have to be stimulated to be innovative as well as rigorous, to use analytical instruments (scientifically validated), to underline the methods presenting various viewpoints, and to present (in intelligence products for decision-makers) not only the limits but also the virtues of analysis.

➤ From a managerial perspective, it is important to create an organizational medium for stimulating analysis and assuring training in intelligence-related analysis, focused on an attempt to widen the analyst’s mental model. Given that the analyst has to estimate—based on available information, his own experience, and his own psychological abilities (intuition, creativity, imagination)—the evolution tendencies of threat indicators or their emergence, there is a risk that the intelligence analysis will be limited by human mental capabilities and the burden of using “mental fixations” or “lenses.”¹⁸

The following are the reasons for which they have to be developed:

-modern policies for the selection of the intelligence analysts (used by particular services) and for stimulating performance (individual or teamwork);
-programs (as diversified as possible) for the training of analysts, by means of experience exchanges with other services, connection to trends of scientific research in expertise areas, and attending seminars and conferences, as well as promotion of individual permanent training.

Work's fulfillment is very important not only for gaining the optimal status for the performance of analysts but also for limiting the number of resignations in the intelligence agencies. For these reasons, creating an optimal working environment (based on meritocracy, ability to stimulate professional performance, and access to management positions) is a must. The non-induced resignations—also known as “deserting”¹⁹—have consequences both in maintaining the secrecy of classified information (known by the analysts) as well as in regard to finances, given the high costs needed for the specialization of this special category of personnel.²⁰

• The Third P – The Product

National security has a multidimensional character, requiring an integrated and interdisciplinary approach. Its accomplishment is possible only within the framework of the existence of suitable institutional mechanisms between the forces and the *levers* aimed at defending and promoting national interests.

Countering the actual complex threats implies the implementation of an integrated mode of response, involving political, social, diplomatic, informational, military, and other categories of elements. It requests improvement of the relationships with the beneficiaries of national security information in order to have efficient feedback, capable of (re)orienting, subsequently, the intelligence activity; strengthening of cooperation between the specialized structures within national security; and opening communication and cooperation channels between the intelligence analysts and academic scholars or researchers (having expertise that might contribute to improving the analyses and assessments).

➤ From a methodological perspective, it is becoming obvious that, in the actual context, the activity of the institutions involved in assuring the security climate has to be organized in a manner which allows analytical structures to adapt and face the new provocations (prefigured by risks and threat extension, in regard to national security).

Given that the demands to inform decision-makers are based on *actionable* intelligence (tactical analyses needed for

taking specific decision in various areas) as well as on *strategic* intelligence (as a consequence of the complex evolutions in the security domain), in the process of reforming intelligence analysis both analytical types (*tactical and strategic*) must have equal importance. The classical terminology might lead, in a first phase, to the wrong conclusions: intelligence as analytical product is *actionable* in itself. One might choose a specific course of action or, on a strategic level, might determine (given available evaluations) the advantages or disadvantages of a certain state policy, the assumed risks, and the way that specific policy has an impact on national security.

One of the unwanted effects of the relationship between the producer and the consumer of intelligence, *excessive information*, generates by default certain selection difficulties in the “news-ocean” of data which reflect correctly a certain reality. The national security reality goes progressively from the *black-and-white*, concrete reality to the area of perception, to images of reality that various actors involved in security build. In comparison to these changing realities, tactical intelligence can be an anchor, a substratum of reality, while strategic intelligence is trying to make a prediction, a transversal vision of all layers of reality. From this point of view, both are vital and reinforce each other.

The failure of analysis of information activity in foreseeing a surprise (e.g., the 9/11 attacks, the Indian nuclear test of 1998) reveals the importance to be attached to the same extent of strategic assumptions and estimates based on technical indications, and the occurrence of minimum tactical indicators which appear at random with strategic assumptions being able to point out a possible surprise.

➤ In terms of structure, analytical activity involves support management decision-taking at the leadership level, through making available to beneficiaries of products designed to substantiate the adoption and effective implementation of measures to promote national interests.

There are many forms in which information activity is conducted to inform beneficiaries, but most often this support remains, despite technological developments, on paper. There are few services (especially in the Anglo-Saxon system) which currently practice direct networking between producer (“briefer”) and consumer (state decision-makers). Some analysts believe that the consumer should be caught carefully between the moments when he is willing to listen and when he is going to take a decision. Beneficiaries have not been and will not be interested (e.g., ex-U.S. President Jimmy Carter) in the importance of intelligence products and do not rely on them. That does not necessarily mean they are good or bad politicians.

Beyond the concrete forms of development of this relationship it is important to build a real partnership based on mutual trust between producer and consumer, allowing the rapid and accurate knowledge of the needs of the consumer and capturing relevant reactions so useful for planning intelligence activities, but also understanding the strength and limits of this kind of activity. Therefore, “only through a partnership between producers and consumers, an often difficult and tortuous one which always must be validated, supported, and defended can intelligence define in an effective way those competitive advantages so much needed in strategic knowledge, that only can decide a victory or failure of the state in the security field.”²¹

➤ From a related perspective, a reform in the field of intelligence analysis needs to aim at the imperative of adapting the analytic product to consumer needs, its security agenda, and its physiological profile. The implementation of various methods such as neuro-linguistic programming or distance personality studies can be extremely useful for ensuring adequacy of the message to the beneficiary profile.

Clear standards and high exigencies must be implemented, both in ensuring the objectivity and credibility of analytical products and in editing them. These must be “two-ply” by various auditing and evaluation mechanisms of intelligence products, which can offer on a monthly basis rigorous internal perspectives about possible errors or the efficiency of the informing action.

The role of the intelligence consumer within the information cycle is very important, assuring the efficiency of the activity of national security. In this respect, one might project various typologies of settling the relationship between the producer and the consumer as well as obtaining feedback (allowing permanent adjustments of information gathering and analysis). Intelligence structures have to empathize. This means they have to *put themselves in the interlocutor’s shoes* (the consumer’s shoes), to identify their needs (justified needs, related to national security objectives and matching the legal attributions) and try to accomplish them. The empathy, the fair attitude, and the relation between the producer and the consumer (natural in democracy) suppose that the producer tries to persuade the consumer, knowing of his/her needs or supposing his/her misinterpretations or difficulties, understanding his/her legal, political and public agenda boundaries, and knowing as well the producer’s and consumer’s limits, originated in their human condition.

As a former analyst said (one of the few who had the opportunity to become later a beneficiary): “We have to understand that we all make mistakes.” We so easily admit the idea that our predecessors were wrong, and history is full of accepted errors (producers and consumers of

intelligence), but we do not expect that, maybe in this moment, it is possible that someone makes mistakes (in an intelligence product) or a beneficiary does so (in adapting to certain decisions). It is possible that now (when reading these lines) an analyst is committing an understandable error or a decision-maker is assuming several things, including one that is wrong or that might generate perverse effects (unplanned) in the future.

GUIDING POINTS FOR DEVELOPING AN ANALYTICAL CULTURE WITHIN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY IN ROMANIA

One of the aims of any project for changes within the intelligence analysis domain should be the development of an analytical culture in the national intelligence community, in order to implement measures that generate added-value in the products and process of analysis, as well as enhancement of the professional training level of analysts.

The development of an analytical culture certainly needs time, given the fact that for the most part in the post-communist period the main institutional objective was to target products (intelligence activity outcomes) and not processes, much less regarding personnel. According to Treverton, analysts should become a dynamic for changing, working successively in other security agencies, employing personnel from outside, and organizing brainstorming with other personnel as routine actions, not as an exception. “They should spend time outside not in their offices, sharing assessments with other experts and verifying their agendas with decision makers.”²²

Adjusting the analytical component of the intelligence process to security environment changes requires development of an analytical culture on three levels:

- At the individual level, through reshaping the training and developing programs and attending courses/changes of experience with other structures of the national security system, foreign services, and academic environment;

- Evaluating the potential and developing new competencies and skills of analysis that require a coherent program for career development resulting in well-shaped character at some stages of initializing, training, and permanent development;

- At the institutional (organizational) level, through reshaping current practices in the intelligence analysis domain, as well as developing an analytical culture. In this domain, a critical area is represented by developing mechanisms and assimilating the outcomes of some

processes and lessons learned that draw out the needs for change through assessing previous errors and mistakes;

-With regard to the external environment, through supporting analysts' attendance both as observers and as lecturers at activities, courses, and programs conducted by the academic and scientific community; encouraging the analysts' attendance at events with their counterparts in foreign partner services, community or Euro-Atlantic security organizations, symposia, seminars, and other forums of foreign cooperation; developing the intra-institutional cooperation through flexible mechanisms of coordination and developing tools for timely communication between analytical and operational sectors.

- Actually, "The 3 P Project" furthers, on the one hand, a permanent adjusting of intelligence analysis (on the three above-mentioned levels) in order to cope with challenges in the security risk domain and, on the other hand, to introduce scientifically confirmed tools in the analytical process (methods and techniques from other disciplines), products (adjusting the message to the beneficiary's profile and the consumers' profile too), and the personnel selection and training process.

As for the analytical managers on different levels, a subject not covered in this article, I feel they should be permanently focused on the improvement of performance from the perspective of the three key factors and they should advance from the stance of delivering analytical products to supplying knowledge. They are not leaders (heads) of departments any more, but also of knowledge. Their authority will be less and less formal and bureaucratic and increasingly anticipative and informal. They should not indicate the way to act but the way forward for the structures and personnel they lead.

They should encourage dynamic forms of organization and ensure the transition from hierarchical, rigid structures to flexible working groups, since the modern intelligence services are less hierarchical and increasingly of the "network-centric" type.²³ Any intelligence analysis manager should cease his current activity to forecast his future and to encourage other individuals to act in reaching future desirable persons.

- Any reform, adjustment plan, etc., should be developed to meet the future or "futures," since it is more and more difficult to anticipate what the future will bring. "In a world of uncertainties, the intelligence structures are not relying exclusively on the former succeeding strategies to project the future strategies."²⁴

The world is changing from an essentially (quantifiably, visibly) threatening one to one dominated by diffuse, formless, and less predictable risks and surprises (impossible to anticipate); from classical wars to cyber, economic, cognitive ones; from linear, predictable, quantifiable developments to non-linear, accidental, diffuse ones; and from symmetry to multiple asymmetries. Surprises, known in the specialty literature as "black swans," will be increasingly present in our life.

The event "black swan" has these attributes: it is an isolated case, "beyond the usual current expectations" since in the past nothing indicated the possibility for it to occur; and it has a significant impact and "retrospective (not inclusively prospective) predictability" that allow us to explain it after it is occurring.²⁵ We already face a real tsunami in the information technology domain (it is not an accident that the Romanian Intelligence Service named its strategic vision for 2011-2015 "SRI in the informational era"). Who anticipated the Wikileaks event? And the "explosion" of social networks? Facebook and Twitter enhancing their use not only in socializing but also in targeting the political arena (see the Facebook effect on young people or the "Twitter revolution" in the Republic of Moldova) will result in reshaping social theories. Who thinks that these spontaneous, unstructured, and virtual forms of association without obvious political aims, without a registered office, without leaders and political platforms, could become significant non-state actors in sociological or international relations theories? The influence of an idea or an objective posted on Facebook could be stronger than the one promoted by a state institution. The Internet is intended to replace the written media and soon the audio and video ones too.

Richard Betts states that intelligence is a domain in which failure is unavoidable, as the planning of resources and data collecting are realizable only based on current priorities and not on future ones. Automatically, the intelligence agencies focus their efforts only on current risks and not on future ones which has always led to strategic surprises.²⁶ This is the reason we should change our approach in seeing reality from many angles (perspectives). We should train our analysts better for facing future (not current) risks. We should introduce scenario analysis and simulations in intelligence analysis (several federal agencies in the U.S. use simulations with analytical scenarios) as standard procedures in current activities. The future is for the futurologists, if they can be integrated into analysts' teams and also placed among authors, film directors, and scene-setters whose opinions should be periodically asked by analysts.

- Besides, at the national security level, methods for inventorying the "futures" (probable, improbable) "futures" should be invented. Although national security is not only a responsibility of certain state institutions but also of the entire society (it is a common asset), certain domestic vulnerabilities (duplicated by probable errors or lacking

some decisions) and the development of the security environment equally influence the state, society, and the citizen. In Romania the concept of resilience is not yet operational. Resilience should be part of the country's National Defense Strategy and be transposed in modalities of post-event acting, with very clear implementing procedures, which allows an immediate intervention (any second of delay could result in multiplication of consequences).

I do not want to conclude in a pessimistic tone, but it is necessary to mention I have attended many international conferences and symposia. In those situations, at the same table there were state (governmental and parliamentary) institutions, intelligence services, NGOs, academics/scientists, and individuals from the private security sector. In Romania, this situation is difficult to imagine as a possibility. International traditions or pure vanity prompt us to work "with us and for us." We live in a suspicious, apprehensive, anxious society that is fighting the future (or, at any rate, it does not intend to shape or develop the future) and its (often unpredictable) consequences implicitly. The future is uncertain as it is a development of self-interests.

We do not determine what will be our image or our make-up 20-30 years from now (by the way, we have no significant study regarding the future image of Romania in 20-30 years), in order to plan how to influence that future through investing already in research, education, infrastructure, etc. In the political programs and security strategies of Romania, from 1990 to the present, there has been no word "future." Therefore, Romania is not thinking about or interested in this specificity. We have no courses on strategic thinking for civil servants and we have no think-tanks specializing in national security. In all probability, now is the moment for planning that infrastructure to ensure the desired future.

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