

Reengineering *Intelligence*

Ph D. Cristina POSAȘTIUC

Romanian Intelligence Service

e-mail:pcristina@deti.ro

Abstract

Unlike the business environment, where successful management models are characterized by the ability to make profits and orient all available resources to satisfy the demands of the end-user, in the field of social organizations and public institutions, the efficiency measurement can hardly be quantified. Among the specific indicators of any modern intelligence organization, the following elements should be mentioned: the early warning capabilities, the strategic value of the products, the focus on collaborative activities, the emphasis on open source exploitation, and the academic expertise. Although intelligence services have had a major role in the information age which has ruled over the society, as soon as the need for information has been replaced by a more sophisticated demand, known as the need-to-know principle, intelligence organizations have been forced to turn themselves into knowledge agencies.

Keywords: reengineering, collaborative, network-centric, knowledge society.

Antropological Reasons of Change

Several specialized assessments highlight that despite the profound changes the intelligence environment witnessed in the last two decades, many *intelligence* services still have cumbersome entities, structured and run according to Adam Smith' principles dating back to the 18th century: division, specialization and technological progress capitalization.

Experts' opinions are mainly based on the fact that those organizations are, like most modern institutions, creations of the 19th century; with all adjustments they have been subject to over time, they generally revolved around the bureaucratic model derived from the legal/rational authority concept as defined by Max Weber¹.

¹ Max Weber identifies six key elements of the model of the modern bureaucratic system: clear regulations, the formal hierarchy, inflexibility in vertical communication, the big size of the organization, unipersonal leadership, the promotion system.

A remark having as a reference point the end of the Cold War and 9/11 attacks is that *intelligence* services reform has occurred *post factum*, as a result of several syncope in carrying out their key mission.

However, a constant preoccupation for preventing major gaps between threats and risks dynamics, on the one hand, and intelligence services' adjustment to these developments, on the other hand, has lately been noticed.

The idea that the pace of institutional adjustments in *intelligence* is rather slow could originate in the social and institutional change, namely in the fact that, macrosocially, the transition from the industrial society to the knowledge society has been made gradually.

Considering what Braudel² called "*long duration*", the adjustments of mentalities underlying social and cultural practices fueling structural norms have been made smoothly enough to avoid a dramatic outphasing in terms of institutions' adjustment to new realities.

The situation is completely different if we consider current changes. In a research conducted by the University of Bucharest³, the new social configuration, defined either as the 'postindustrial'⁴, 'postcapitalist'⁵, 'technological'⁶, 'information' and 'network'⁷, 'risk' or 'knowledge' society, is characterized by 'a flow of causal determination from knowledge to social processes of organization, management, identity structures etc. or from technologies, especially information and communication, to macrosocial

² Braudel, Fernand, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Meridiane Publishing House, 1985-1986. The author introduces the concept of *long duration* to better express the difference between visible historical stages (history of events) and the profound ones (history of mentalities).

³ <http://www.stisoc.ro> – *Public and Science*, 2010.

⁴ Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, New York, Basic Books, 1973. J. Hage and C.H.Powers, *Post-Industrial Lives: Roles and Relationships in the 21st Century*, Newbury Park, CA:Sage, 1992, in the *Public and Science Study*, available, on October 20, 2011, at <http://www.stisoc.ro>

⁵ P.F.Drucker, *Post-Capitalist Society*, New York, HarperCollins, 1993, in the *Public and Science Study*, available, on October 20, 2011, at <http://www.stisoc.ro>

⁶ P.L.Berger, B.Berger and H.Kellner, *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*, New York, Vintage Books, 1974, in the *Public and Science Study*, available, on October 20, 2011, at <http://www.stisoc.ro>

⁷ J.R.Beniger, *The Control Revolution*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986. M. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, New York, Harper and Row, 1996, in the *Public and Science Study*, available, on October 20, 2011, at <http://www.stisoc.ro>

configurations like ‘technology-based globalized societies’, ‘economies, and information and knowledge societies’ or ‘network-based societies’.

The knowledge society is therefore, par excellence, a society compressing the development cycles determined by the technological and globalization progress, as well as one in which the old patterns of the social architecture are totally reversed in favour of a ‘network’ world⁸. Nowadays, people and institutions are more than ever products of information exchange connections established within networks among persons, organizations or national states during the social time, in the real geographic area or in the virtual space.

Any analysis of institutional changes should therefore start by realizing that the main difference from the industrial society, which ended in late 20th century, is individualization: “the individual’s emancipation from the constraints imposed by the social structures and categories and his stand-out as an architect of his own identity on several networks”⁹.

Reengineering Intelligence

The knowledge society and the coming one, the conscience society, are so much different from any other form of previous social organization, that the *intelligence* strategic thinking needs deep changes, from the almost Victorian traditionalism of organization and values, to the promotion of a revolutionary concept based on competitiveness, innovation and knowledge.

Introducing, as an argument, the *reengineering* concept, specific to economic sciences, may seem surprising, but the prospective may be different if we consider that relevant experts have been the first to understand that ‘the factory pattern, based on the pyramidal hierarchical organization is obsolete; the workers are now highly specialized and qualified, all they need is information and the authority to act in order to be successful’¹⁰.

The main idea conveyed by the *reengineering* theoreticians, Michael Hammer and James Champy¹¹, professors at the Massachusetts Institute

⁸ The term network society was introduced by Manuel Castells (1996), researcher in the communication field. His study – The Space of Flow, published in The Rise of the Network Society, 2000 (available at <http://socacis.ubbcluj.ro>) is very eloquent.

⁹ The study *System for Social Networks Analysis*, conducted by University of Bucharest, 2010.

¹⁰ Stan, Silviu, *Reengineering – a new philosophy of management*, Expert Publishing House, 2007.

¹¹ Hammer, Michael, Champy, James, *Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business Revolution*, Harper Collins, New York, 1993.

of Technology, is that the radical redesign of the organization's *processes* should prevail against the reorganization. As compared to the fundamental Taylorist principles, relying on the efficiency of the repetitive tasks carried out by different structures, the *reengineering* concept brings the tasks together into work units designed to operate this way.

Major problems faced by private companies were solved by placing *processes* before *function*, as the shortcomings did not necessarily lie within the compartments, but in intercompartmental relationships.

Reengineering solves a challenge faced by many companies: while developing, they are prone to excessively focus on the organization's internal problems and needs, neglecting the clients' needs.

Mutatis mutandis, the US, British or Spanish intelligence agencies were taken by surprise by the waves of terrorist attacks that emerged at the end of the Cold War not because they lacked resources, appropriate technology or freedom of action, but because they focused on internal problems and on the need to reassess their missions and roles.

The assessment of the intelligence communities, including the Report issued by the US Congressional 9/11 Commission¹², proved that the most serious flaws were not found at the level of various departments or activity profiles, but at the level of information sharing and cooperation within the intelligence community.

One could notice that the most common error triggering operational failures of the intelligence services is linked to the way in which the *intelligence* process is built – the path from *input* (planning and data collection) to *output* (dissemination) –, more precisely its erroneous design starting from the organization's and not customer's requirements.

Not accidentally, the lack of feedback is considered an indication of the wrong implementation of the *intelligence* process: either the decision-maker's silence is caused by the failure to understand the information value, or the information lacks intrinsic value, the lack of reaction shows clearly that the customer was not involved in the process aimed at setting priorities and major goals.

¹² The 9-11 Commission Report, *The Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, Official Government Edition, available at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/911>, on October 13, 2011.

Reengineering Essence: Moving Power to the Edge

According to the *reengineering* theory, the first step towards rethinking the intelligence consists in replacing the security services' practice of information *feudalization* with consistent interdisciplinary cooperation, interagency partnerships under the umbrella of the national intelligence communities.

Moreover, fostering cooperation with partner agencies and encouraging information sharing have become an *imperative* condition¹³.

*Network-centric intelligence*¹⁴ is the formula defining the involvement of various actors inside or outside the institution, it entails cooperation with the civil society and the important universities and research institutes, recognizing, implicitly, the fact that *intelligence* agencies cannot cope by themselves with the challenges posed by the new security environment.

Robert David Steele pointed that the underlying threat to peace and prosperity – the so-called “cause of causes” – derives from the chasm between policymakers with power, and private sector experts and participants with knowledge, ignoring thus a vast amount of knowledge.¹⁵

Asymmetric threats require asymmetric responses. In order to be able to *scan* the area of interest and to fulfill the early-warning task, the *intelligence* agencies should no longer rely on a pyramidal architecture, on cumbersome regulations, the encouragement of horizontal teamwork being an imperative.¹⁶

Thus, the creation of an efficient system requires a new organizational management philosophy, which provides for the transformation of the institutions dominated by a powerful core structure

¹³ <http://www.sri.ro>, Online Library, *Strategic Documents, Strategic Vision 2007-2010* – “Enhancing cooperation with other national intelligence services and strengthening SRI’s profile within the intelligence community as well as broadening international cooperation in bilateral and multilateral formats (...)” are mentioned among SRI’s priorities.

¹⁴ Sharfman, Peter, *Network-Centric Intelligence: An Approach to a Strategic Framework*, The Command and Control Research Program (CCRP) Publication Series, available at <http://www.dodccrp.org>, on October 22, 2011.

¹⁵ Robert David Steele, “Fixing the White House and National Intelligence”, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence*, 2010.

¹⁶ Idem.

into a *cluster*¹⁷ entity, where many decisions are made at the intermediate levels or even in the operational theater¹⁸.

Steele¹⁹ asserted that the “*central intelligence*” syntagm was an oxymoron, making a harsh analysis of the US intelligence community’s working principles, especially in terms of the lack of dialog between politicians and government policy-makers (power factors) and the experts with vast knowledge. He assessed that the US leadership operates on only 2% of the relevant information.

Director of the Romanian Intelligence Service George Cristian Maior also noticed that, in the current security environment, ‘the actors and processes have experienced a fundamental change, and the power is not longer exercised by individual entities, but by networks, which relay on information sharing, civic action and supranational integration’, and the answer of the intelligence should take the form of ‘assimilation by ‘internalizing’ those changes’.²⁰

The modern services effectively apply those principles by setting up flexible working units with specific tasks permanently oriented towards consulting the regional factors, sharing information with other entities and participating in numerous interdisciplinary and inter-institutional meetings.

The collaborative work is primarily focused on prediction, strategic value of the products, and assimilation of open source information and expertise of the experts outside the intelligence agencies.²¹

The secret tends to lose its supremacy in the globalization and Internet era, the stake shifting towards joining efforts with top scientific researchers, with business representatives, in order to achieve the early-warning function over some social, economic, demographic, and geopolitical developments.

¹⁷ Alberts, David; Hayes, Richard, *Power to the Edge*, The Command and Control Research Program (CCRP) Publication Series, available at <http://www.dodccrp.org>, on October 20, 2011.

¹⁸ <http://www.sri.ro>, Online Library, *Strategic Documents* – This philosophy was explicitly stated in the first programmatic document approaching SRI’s institutional reform process – Strategic Vision 2007-2010 –, asserting the need to “increase the flexibility of the Service structure by: mitigating bureaucracy, raising the autonomy level and structural decision-making decentralization; balancing responsibilities by an equal assignment at the decision-making level; rethinking internal practices and rules and supporting horizontal cooperation among structures (...)”.

¹⁹ Robert David Steele, *idem*.

²⁰ Maior, George Cristian, Message of the Director of the Romanian Intelligence Service in the 2011-2015 Strategic Vision. SRI in the Information Age, available at <http://sri.ro>

²¹ Schreier, Fred, *Transforming Intelligence Services*, National Defense Academy, 2010.

In future, the analysis will mainly revolve around global developments, the challenge faced being the approach on the core worrying problems and the way in which strategic advantage over the enemy is achieved.

This is actually the essence of the collaborative work, which makes the transition from *cooperation* to the *integration of the actors* outside the intelligence agencies in a complex system that produces superior knowledge.

An Operational Concept

In my opinion, *Reengineering Intelligence* should become a reality in managing the intelligence services, an ad hoc definition revealing a significant potential of this type of approach: *fundamental re-thinking and radical re-design of the intelligence processes, in order to considerably improve the performance indicators in the field, especially the early-warning one.*

This proposal observes the principles found in the complex process of SRI's institutional reform process, more precisely exceeding the vision focused on *structure*, and adopting an orientation favoring working *strategies, policies, and practices.*

To that end, probably the most important lesson learned in the modernization process of the Romanian Intelligence Service is that the institutions make real progress not when they search for solutions to topical problems (a significant activity, which is actually related to the management logic), but when they design the future, when they have a strategic vision on the role they have to play in a context completely different from the present one (*The 2007-2010 Strategic Vision* on 'Service transforming' and *The 2011-2015 Strategic Vision* on 'career transforming'²²).

As the matter of fact, the Romanian experts debate on the fundamental values of *reengineering*:

- "The reform is often used as a catch-all phrase, including all efforts already taken in order to operate significant changes in the intelligence services. Actually, the reform is an answer to certain gaps in the system. (...) The failures in the intelligence activity do not necessarily depend on the organizational gaps, and the reorganization is unlikely to settle organizational problems. The reorganization as such is a predictable, slow process. Before completing the process, the old causes of the shortcomings will be replaced with new ones. (...) In order to tackle

²² *2011-2015 Strategic Vision. SRI in the Information Age*, available at <http://sri.ro>

the future security changes, the intelligence services should look ahead towards the constant transformation of the activity and not in the past, towards reform. If the reform is a static process, reactive, oriented towards mending the mistakes of the past, the transformation ensures the anticipative dimension, focused on preventing the future mistakes, based on a continuous dynamic”.²³

Considering the defining parameters of the knowledge society, as previously described, we assess that the intelligence services face a crucial decision for their future and the international security, and for preserving the democracy values as a last resort. The problem is not *if*, but *when* they will realize their impossibility to face today's enemy with structures conceived for another historical period. Dealing with secrets, the collaborative philosophy is a *discreet revolution*, but there is also hope that, at a certain moment, the intelligence services will turn into *knowledge services*.

Bibliography

1. Alberts, David; Hayes, Richard, Power to the Edge, *The Command and Control Research Program (CCRP)* Publication Series, available, on October 20, 2011, at <http://www.dodccrp.org>.
2. Bell, Daniel, *The Coming of Post-industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, New York, Basic Books, 1973, in the *Public and Science Study*, available on October 20, 2011, at <http://www.stisoc.ro>
3. Berger, P. L., B. Berger, H. Kellner, *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*, New York, Vintage Books, 1974, in the *Public and Science Study*, available on October 20, 2011, la <http://www.stisoc.ro>
4. Beniger, J. R. *The Control Revolution*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986. M. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, New York, Harper and Row, 1996, in the *Public and Science Study*, available on October 20, 2011, la <http://www.stisoc.ro>
5. Braudel, Fernand, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Meridiane Publishing House, 1985-1986.
6. Drucker, P.F., *Post-Capitalist Society*, New York, Harper Collins, 1993, in the *Public and Science Study*, available on October 20, 2011, la <http://www.stisoc.ro>

²³ Grosu, Ion, "Intelligence Services: Reform or Transformation?", *Intelligence*, no.16, July 2009.

7. Grosu, Ion, *Intelligence Services: Reform or Transformation?*, Intelligence Magazine, no.16, July 2009.
8. Hammer, Michael, *Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business revolution*, Harper Collins, New York, 1993.
9. Maior, George Cristian, *Uncertainty. Strategic Thinking and International Relations in the 21st Century*, RAO Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009.
10. Maior, George Cristian, *The New Ally – Rethinking Romania's Defence Policy at the Beginning of the 21st Century*, RAO Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009.
11. Maior, George Cristian, *A War of Mind*, RAO Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010.
12. *Public and Science*, 2010 <http://www.stisoc.ro>
13. Schreier, Fred, *Transforming Intelligence Services*, National Defence Academy, 2010.
14. Sharfman, Peter, *Network-Centric Intelligence: An Approach to a Strategic Framework*, The Command and Control Research Program (CCRP) Publication Series, available on October 22, 2011, on <http://www.dodccrp.org>.
15. Stan, Silviu, *Reengineering – A New Philosophy of Management*, Expert Publishing House, 2007.
16. Steele, Robert – David, *Fixing the White House and National Intelligence*, International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence, 2010.
17. *2011-2015 Strategic Vision. SRI in the Information Age*, the Message of the Director of the Romanian Intelligence Service, available on <http://www.sri.ro>
18. *Analysis System of Social Networking*, a study conducted by the University of Bucharest, 2010.
19. *The 9/11 Commission Report, The Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, Official Government Edition, available on October 13, 2011, on <http://ebooks.unibuc.ro>
20. <http://ebooks.unibuc.ro>
21. <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/911>
22. <http://www.sri.ro>