

ANALIZA INFORMAȚIILOR – MANUAL - Review-

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The volume “Information analysis” was written under the careful coordination of Mrs. Sorina Maria Cofan, a police instructor in the field of information analysis, and was published at the publishing house of the Ministry of Interior, in Bucharest, 2014 with a view to offering an exhaustive portrait of information analysis, highlighting its applicability to the field of public order.

The title of this manual of information analysis is suggestive and synthetizes the essence of the entire volume, which supports not only the consolidation of the security culture, but also the instauration and the uniformity of some concepts, whose definitions should be widely and unanimously accepted and used by the whole Romanian intelligence community.

The first chapter starts by defining the concepts *information*, *analysis* and *intelligence* – capital concepts of intelligence activity. Thus, the importance of information to the decision-making process, is emphasized –as “*a base of all the current activities*,” but this must take into consideration “*the compulsory elements of an information: novelty, opportunity, actuality, authenticity, accuracy, precision and utility*” in order to be exploited by the information user. The analysis represents the dynamic, cognitive and complex process that implies “*the decomposition of information in its components, the extraction and the adjustment of the meaning of the information’s components and the assemblage of the explanation this meanings is a way that can be apprehended and applied.*” The *intelligence* concept is presented as a formula (*information + analysis = intelligence*), which underlines the fact that an analyzed information transforms into intelligence that offers the knowledge necessary to decision

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makers. Therefore, the first chapter has a descriptive role, presenting the concepts used in the intelligence field and offering details concerning the National Intelligence for Security Doctrine and the principles that guide the National Intelligence Community.

After this theoretical preamble, the intelligence process is presented. In the volume, it is called *informational cycle*, while in the Anglo-Saxon literature it is presented under the name of intelligence cycle. This schematizes the transformation of information to intelligence that is delivered to the political leaders. The stages of informational cycle are: *planning, collecting, evaluation, collating, analysis and dissemination*.

The first step is planning, which represents assessing the ways and the methods used in obtaining the information in accordance with the demands from the legal customer or with the internal auto-adjustment mechanisms. This plan is realized by the intelligence analyst, because through the corroboration of the information obtained from all the sources he is the only one who will have the panoramic view over the issue. The analysis of information is seen as a human activity that requires professionalism and that is why it must be planned with a view to maximizing its effect – obtaining an objective, pertinent analytical product. In other words, the efficiency of the analytical process is enhanced through planning, organization, because “*elaborating a plan of information collection ensures the analyst the premises of directed, accurate and relevant information collection for the current analysis and it is subscribed to achieving the objectives of analysis. This plan defines the amount of information that will be collected, the form in which the information is needed, the sources that will be exploited and the way in which will be realized the collection.*”

The *information collection* phase represents all the activities used in order to find and get the information. After collection, the information passes through an *evaluation* process of both source credibility and information validity and then through a *collating* process, which implies organizing and putting the information in a data base. In respect of *evaluation*, the author decided to develop this stage in a different chapter, where he underlined the evaluation grid used by the intelligence structure of Ministry of Interior.

Analysis is the next step in the process. It has the role of filtering the information through the mental processes, creating links between pieces of information that seem disparate with a view to creating a portrait of the issue studied. After finishing the analytical product the analyst is required to ask for feedback from a colleague, who might detect the errors and the disparity in information by reading the whole written material.

The last step is the *dissemination* of the analytical product to the customer in order to have a solid and pertinent informational basis to sustain his decisions. Also, at this step the analyst can request feedback from the customer in order to quantify the degree to which the analytical product was in concordance with his needs, offered a panoramic view over the issue and to ask if he needs additional explanations.

Regarding the location of the chapters, some modifications could be made to group those in a logical sequence that won't interfere with the presentation of the analysis that occupies more than a half of this volume. Taking this into account, the shift of the chapter entitled *sources of information* after the one presenting the intelligence cycle would make the paper easily readable and comprehensible.

Considering the fact that this volume is a manual of information analysis published by the Ministry of Interior, it presents a distinctiveness that wasn't tapped before in the literature. This distinctiveness is marked by the presentation of punctual cases and the specific methods used by the intelligence structure of MAI. Hence, even if the concept of analysis is presented, detailing the analytical techniques and methods, the author wrote a separate chapter in which he presented the software products used by the Ministry of Interior in the field of information analysis.

The chapter "*Ethics and professional deontology*," highlights another organizational disparity, as this is interposed between the chapters where the information analysis is detailed. Consequently, for easing the reading of this paper it is recommended that this chapter be put after the presentation of *informational cycle* and *sources of information*. In this manner it the needs for ethical behavior in a complex process such as intelligence would be apprehended.

To the end of this volume, the author comes again to the theoretical presentation of the more concepts, such as *threat*, defined as "*every unfavorable situation, the imminent modification tendency within an organization, that can be harmful or can put in danger the defensive capacity of the entity*," *vulnerability* – "*a weakness in the defense system of an entity that can be exploited in order to prejudice or disrupt the normal activity*" and *risk* – "*the probability of an action or event to appear and have negative effect on the entity's integrity, on the normal activity of the entity and on its capacity of action*." I am of the opinion that this chapter is not correctly placed, as it should be near the basic concepts of information management, that open this volume. This is an organizational aspect, and the rearrangement of the chapters would make a more easy perusal.

The last chapter closes this volume in an original manner by synthesizing the methods of inter-institutional cooperation, cooperation that transcends the national borders, being made between intelligence structures of European police departments within European Police Office (EUROPOL), European Police College (CEPOL), International Organization of Criminal Police (INTRPOL), Southeast European Law Enforcement Cooperation (SELEC) and Frontex (European Agency for Operational Cooperation Management at the Borders Of Member States).

In conclusion, making this short presentation of the volume entitled "Information analysis," we have evaluated the extent to which it has achieved its goal – as an information analysis manual. Therefore, presenting exhaustively not only the concept of information analysis, from the theoretical approach to the practical applicability within the departments of the Ministry of Interior, but also the minimum knowledge necessary to apprehend the informational system, the manual succeeds in contextualizing the importance and the necessity of information analysis in the national intelligence system. Thus, excepting the organizational changes that should be made in the chapters' sequence, this volume succeeds in synthesizing the process of information analysis, bringing about novel elements – the applicability of intelligence analysis in the field of public order and the tools used by the structures that manage this issue.