

NATIONAL SECURITY, INTELLIGENCE AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract:

National security can be built only on strong national organizations with a highly specialized human resource, an organizational culture based on information and a managerial conception capable of ensuring and using adequate, verified and processed information (intelligence information) according to organizational competences. The establishment within the main public institutions of Research, Analysis and Prognosis Departments (DCAP) aimed at sustaining decision making process and with roles comparable with private CI&EW structures might prove to be (if they are not already) a necessity for the near future. The third millennium leaders have to understand that the modern/postmodern management surpassed the information era, reaching now an intelligence era. Therefore, we must prepare for such an "arms race".

Keywords: competitive intelligence (CI), business intelligence (BI), early warning (EW), knowledge management (KM), benchmarking, intelligence culture, smart nation

Introduction

In Western consolidated democracies, it is organizations that ultimately lead society: they possess the most important financial and logistical resources; they are endowed with long-term interests, plans and strategies which, for the most part, do not change from an electoral cycle to another; they make decisions based on exhaustive information about the political-diplomatic milieu, the market and the consumers, the environment and society; they have the power to influence political decision-making and, last but not least, they employ the best specialists, no matter their field of activity.

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Therefore, the state's margin of action is limited, as it is controlled or modelled by the interests and actions of great organizations, including state bureaucracy.

In states where democracy is less consolidated, where private organizations are weakly developed, societal performance depends, to a greater degree, on the performance of political power, on its capacity to organize and plan strategically for the long term, to set objectives and directions of strategic development which do not change, no matter how parties or leaders in power change. To reach this desideratum or strategic objective, professional bureaucratic organizations are needed.

Without this, in a world of global competition and dynamic and permanent change, neither progress nor security can be generated, even in its most basic and concise definition: **liberty in front of threat**, both for the individual and for organizations making up the state.

Freedom is an extremely vast and generous philosophical concept, yet, in the parlance of security we could reduce it to: **having one's own minimal capacities to react and act when faced with any type of threat**. This kind of capabilities can offer one, depending on their efficiency and state of development, a certain degree of freedom, the ability to defend oneself alone, but also time to better organize, to allocate new resources and/or to receive support from allied states or organizations.

No matter the level of development and democracy, eventually, the state, through its organizations, bears the main responsibility for national security, for protecting the citizens and society in general through ensuring environmental and economic security, through securing healthcare and through preserving capacity to act in crisis situations (be they of military, economic, health, ecological, pandemic, cybernetic or terrorist nature). As a consequence, the state needs to create its own intelligent mechanisms and to adapt to current and future challenges, becoming what the literature calls a „smart nation“, through better employing its own and its partners' information and know-how.

Management of change *versus* information management

The managers of modern organizations are aware that, currently, leadership becomes more and more the management of change, and change is a permanent process relying on a constant flux of information, on the developments of the internal and external environment, which need to be known and carefully evaluated. Therefore, *an efficient management of change*

implies a *high-quality information management and an adequate information strategy*. This is also valid if we speak of *crisis management, the management of risk* and, even more so, of *strategic management*.

To believe that you can successfully achieve these types of management without projecting and operationalizing intelligence processes which ensure the necessary information and, implicitly, the respective analyses and evaluations, adapted to the specificities of each managerial decision, is utopic.

Among all, maybe the most misunderstood and wrongly applied concept is that of management of change, as many managers, especially from public organizations provoke change without adequately understanding the **direction of changes** that occur outside the organization and to which their organization needs to adapt. Many times they achieve a *primary benchmarking*, based on which different external successful "solutions" are copied, without truly understanding *why, in what context and to what purpose* these have been adopted, hoping to achieve the same results as the organizations they are copying. We are faced, therefore, with a type of *management through imitation*, a contemporary perpetuation of *forms without substance*. This is incapable of reaching the organizational goal, that is to produce "results for the outside" or to „obtain performance on the market“, according to the definition given by Peter F. Drucker (Drucker, 2000, p. 14).

The capacity to obtain and make use of all relevant information to reach a managerial goal, both inside and outside the organization, eventually determines the difference between successful and weak management. Excessive concentration on internal problems makes one lose sight or distance oneself from the organization's goals.

"Management through imitation" is different from "intuitive management", which always relies on unmediated experience in a certain field, on specialized and permanently up to date information and knowledge.

Simple imitating other organizations' or states' behavior rarely has the desired results. Military specialists know that they cannot strike a moving „target" except by anticipating its position and calculating an "interception course". As one cannot intercept a target by simply following its course (except if, maybe, one possesses a vastly superior level of technological development), one cannot catch up with a top organization if one makes the same decisions. No organization has the time, same organizational history and culture, the same experiences and objectives and is not similarly situated regarding time and place, starting point or development level as another. *Imitation makes one always get there too late.*

To prevent such a development, strategic information and early-warning is required, to indicate market tendencies and the directions followed by those who are ahead, so that one can place his own organization on *an interception course*.

Intelligence in public organizations

To be competitive, public interest organizations/institutions, especially executive ones, need, similarly to private ones, their own structure to fulfill functions of *competitive intelligence* and *early warning*, aiming to support the process of decision-making and following their consequences after implementation.

Such a structure has to be, by necessity, *bureaucratic, professional, permanent (not subject to political and leadership changes) and must have the right to work with classified information*. It could be organized as a Department for Research, Analysis and Prognosis (DRAP), aimed at supporting a coherent and long-term strategic information management.

To reach its goal, such a department should be subordinated directly to executive management, similarly to Competitive Intelligence (CI) or Business Intelligence (BI) or marketing and public relations (PR) departments. The DRAP's tasks should be permanent market research in the field of the institution's responsibilities; collecting and analyzing relevant information on the market and inside one's own organization, monitoring the results and the effects of important management decisions; elaborating evaluations, prognoses, recommendations and action strategies, according to projected organizational goals.

Permanent contact with the main decision-maker(s) (top management), with other functional structures, but also access to the organizational culture/sub-culture specific to them, to information related to the stage of development of current projects or on the decision-maker's agenda, would allow such an organism to quickly evaluate any new data and to generate the newest and most relevant information, analyses and proposals to support the decision-making process, according to the daily needs, goals and strategic objectives of the institutions which it is part of.

The DRAP would need to be conceived in such a way as to constitute the main "information interface" with other institutions that handle data and knowledge of interest for its field of competence, such as: other governmental structures (ministries, agencies, prefectures), National Bank, banks and private companies, academia, specialized mass-media, professional

associations, NGOs, international organizations, and, last but not least, national intelligence services.

Thus, all resources and knowledge reserved **in the system (knowledge management) on a certain topic would be employed to its best use.**

Through the creation of such departments by the main consumers of state information, any interested institution and, especially, intelligence services would benefit from a permanent interlocutor and from a better and faster feedback, from a superior use of one's own activities resulting in a more efficient way to employ resources, including public funds, by all institutions involved in the act of governing. Thus, the final assembly of information directly at the beneficiary, one of the desiderata proposed by the American analyst, John L. Peterson for the American national intelligence community would be reached (Toffler & Toffler, 1995, p. 185). This would correspond to a greater degree to the beneficiary's specific interests and needs.

Exact and real-time knowledge of these "needs" by the DRAP would orient and optimize the activity of the "information providers" (including intelligence agencies) and would make products delivered to the final beneficiary immediately useful for the evaluations that ground a decision. The decision-making process would become more efficient through the faster generation of information, solutions or action plans, which are close and adequate to managerial requests and the desired objectives.

A professional structure of this kind would allow, in crisis situations, the shortening of the information cycle in the case of intelligence agencies, as these would be able to directly deliver brute information, and have them analyzed and disseminated to the legal beneficiary directly by the DRAP.

Through such a mechanism, a giant leap would be achieved to overcome one of the most perverse effects of the information age: "analytical block" caused by information overflow to the modern-day decision-maker, who, although he can rely on more information and sources, does not possess the time and the necessary capabilities for collection, selection, verification, processing and analysis of relevant data for decision-making. The creation of a DRAP would eliminate this block. Referring to government institutions, it becomes obvious that the quality of the decision-making act eventually depends on ensuring one of the European Union's main desiderata: *good governance* and, eventually, national security.

Therefore, the development of information collection and processing, anticipation and early warning capabilities, as well as of abilities to adapt to a new course of events, becomes vital for those who wish to be protected from

surprising, but predictable developments and/or those who intend to quickly reduce the gaps in order to be competitive on a certain market, either local, regional or global.

To be able to influence events in a certain sector of activity, knowledge of the rules of the game and of, at least, the main important actors (*market and competitor intelligence*) is required. The tipping of the balance in a direction or another is always preceded by „emergent patterns” which can be detected ahead of time. Nothing, at the human or global scale, happens overnight, and, therefore, events cannot be handled unless one has the managerial and organizational structures ready and able to detect (early-warning), to learn, to adapt and to respond to quick and successive changes.

All this can only be realized on the basis of intelligence that is opportune and immediately useful for decision-making (*actionable intelligence*). The creation, in public institutions, of competitive intelligence structures similar to those extant in the private environment and which can signal this information could be a solution.

The American competitive intelligence specialist, Larry Kahaner (1997, p. 19), urges all managers to forget the *information age*, warning them that “we are living the intelligence age, and the two are quite different”. In the information age, everybody has extended access to information, but few to information that is verified, analyzed and processed according to real decision and action needs, that is intelligence. The management of information becomes the key to time and strategic-decision management. Those who do not have structures and organizations specialized in collecting and real-time processing of information they need, cannot aim for success.

Eventually, national security can only be based on strong national organizations, made up of informed individuals and an organizational culture based on information in general and on intelligence, in particular. A nation which has or can build such organizations can aspire to the title of “smart nation”.

References:

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