

# INFORMATION – A POWER DRIVER

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*The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed a special stage in the evolution of mankind given the historical major changes that have occurred and led to an information based society that trespasses any frontiers and gradually dilutes any temporal or spatial constraints. Modern armed forces pay special attention to the aforementioned aspects since one of the main aims is to win the information battle given the extended role of information technology and of communications means in the battle space.*

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There is no novelty in viewing information as a power driver. Nonetheless, such a perspective has become a multisided one and its consequences (not always beneficial when altered or willingly skewed) have become as important as the complexity of the modern battle space. Information has always been a key element of the military decision making process, especially during armed conflicts. However, nowadays, given the current development of society in general, the role of information has increased. Consequently, information has become a power driver and one of the most important defense resources.

Contemporary military establishments pay particular attention to the role and function of information and view the winning of the information battle as a major goal to be achieved in the context of an ever increasing use of information technology and communication means across the battle space. Nowadays, it is obvious that the digitization of the battle space, as well as of all information related activities

is the grand strategy. Moreover, it is common sense to forecast that the wars of the future are to be undertaken in an integrated manner in terms of the forces that will be employed and of the spaces where they will unfold - the term of cyber-space being no longer just a term, but a reality.

The leadership process will only take place in an information-based environment. Moreover, it will be gradually integrated into the armament systems. As a result, to achieve the aims of such a process robots will be used, technologies will be remotely controlled, intelligent ammunitions will be employed, new IT based technologies will be put in place to enable work methodologies that will allow for military actions to be undertaken while monitoring adversary's performance. The military units engaged in battles will take over, process and rapidly transfer information from across the cyber battle space. Such an endeavor is possible only if a wide array of automated systems and armaments is already in place so that they make up for the physical limits

of the human beings and for the limited technical performance of the classical armament, and optimally coordinate various force categories and armaments given the compressed operational time and the need to preserve human strength so that the latter is only used when necessary or just to consolidate on the success of the mission.

2,500 years ago the great Chinese strategist, Sun Tzu, said the following: *“Knowledge allows an intelligent government and military leadership to outsmart the others and to accomplish great things”*. [1] Such a statement is valid even nowadays and underlines the necessity to continuously supply information on time and in accordance with the need of the human deeds, regardless of their nature, to become efficient. Actually, providing the decision makers with on time and qualitative information is no longer a goal per se, but a continuous and permanent concern and subject of study for many contemporary disciplines.

Information lies at the core of human knowledge. As a result, to meet their fundamental and superior needs humans require a significant and diversified volume of information.

The complexity of the term “information” has generated an extensive number of nominal definitions, and hence of meanings. As a result, this paper will only look at several of these as recorded by the Romanian language [2]: *“communication, news, that brings up to date in relation with a situation”*; *“All the material used to inform and document, sources”*; *“Each of the elements considered new as compared with the existing ones and included in the overall meaning of a symbol or of a group of symbols...”*.

Besides such definitions, countless others, more or less scientifically grounded, have been formulated in order to better account for the concept of “intelligence”. Some of these describe information as a product, others as a complex process, while the third category of definitions combines the first two views. To better tackle the complexity of such a concept, the science of Information Theory appeared. The latter’s role is to analyze the characteristics of information in various fields such as mathematics, physics, biology, medicine, telecommunications, military, economic, social, etc.

Information lies at the core of the decision-making process. Therefore, instead of providing an overview of the role played by data and information in the development of the defense and security strategy, we believe it is more relevant to quote some well-known experts in the field:

*“He who knows his enemy as well as himself (...) is sure to win. He who does not know his enemy (...) will surely lose”*. (Sun Tzu)

*“Any war is based on information.”*; *“Nothing will encourage more and clarify better but having precise information on the enemy’s status.”*; *“Both in imaginary scenarios and in forecasts, the force of the unknown cannot be fully measured.”* (Napoleon Bonaparte)

*“Any plan and any war related action is based on information.”* (Carl von Clausewitz)

*“Knowledge is power and our times are definitely dominated by the quest for power.”* (Constantine Fitz Gibleon)

*“The research data and their accurate interpretation should underlie any situation analysis,*

decision-making process and operation planning.” (Marshall G.K. Jukov)

“No commander can underestimate the role of the intelligence service. (...) History has it that no nation can neglect it without damaging its major interests”. (Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery)

“Intelligence is an essential occupation, but nothing more than an occupation. It is an important element of the decision-making process, but nothing more than an element; its usefulness fully depends on the way it is used and guided.” (Walter Lagneur)

In line with all of the above quotes, it is also worth mentioning the words carved on the Mossad’ coat of arms and that sum up, in our opinion, the essence of the information operations: “*Ki betahbolot taase leha milhama ...*” that reads as “*Thou shall conduct wars through schemes...*” or “*Thou shall win wars through cunning*”.

An overview of the military literature on information [3] reveals that the latter may contain one, a series or a group of data recorded by a sensor and conveyed by the same sensor through various means. This is a concrete instantiation of some of the forms taken by information at a specific moment and in a specific place.

In its various forms, information has been a feature of all military conflicts conducted so far. In this respect, military analysts believe that information is as omnipresent as the air and water necessary to sustain life functions, more necessary than fuel, and much more powerful than the most powerful bombs. Generally speaking, information can be viewed as a means of communication,

message carrying news about events, objects, processes, actions, phenomena that are to be conveyed, understood and accepted for a well defined goal. Moreover, the term of “information” refers to all the news about the surrounding environment and that are the result of the interactions occurring within it.

Information is not a mere necessity, but a major element of the art of war, a real weapon for the one who holds, protects, processes and efficiently manages it. It allows for a conflict, of a military nature or not, to be won before the visible outbreak of hostilities. Thus, information: drives a review of the operational concepts, as well the integration and harmonization of the fighting means with the previous experience; is important and decisive for the outcome of a conflict or war since it influences the functioning of the systems in place in decision making field; governs actions, helps anticipate and make fast operational decisions.

The quality and quantity of the information held at a certain moment, the ability to efficiently manage and use them in order to make decisions are the key element of information power, which is a fundamental component of strategic power.

Information influences all activity fields and represents a driver for efficiency and power. Moreover, it gives moral strength and increases leaders’ skills since it contributes to conducting and winning operations, shortens wars and, most important, saves lives.

The information gathered for usefulness purposes must be processed and transformed into information and intelligence. Subsequently, it must be disseminated in order to

allow for forecasts about adversaries' intentions and potential.

The advantages of using information as a weapon are derived from the capacity of those owning it to protect their interests through non-lethal means, on one hand, and to act in a more discrete, efficient and better adapted manner to current international relations without breaking international laws, on the other hand.

In conclusion, intelligence as a product results from the information relevant for the formulation and implementation of a governmental policy in order to promote a nation's security interests and to prevent the treats from its real or potential adversaries, as well as from information from the military field concerning the adversary's capabilities and plans for a military action, and the data concerning the activities and the diplomatic intentions of another country in the information field.

The specialized literature of the last 10-15 years used numerous definitions and meanings for the term of intelligence. However, the common thread of all these underlines the use of the term to refer to those actions/activities underlying the gathering and usage of information from various fields, especially for espionage purposes. Without attempting to fully cover all the meanings currently associated with the term of intelligence, we are providing below some of the most significant ones that view it as: knowledge provider that can be coded in order to be kept, processed and later conveyed to an interested beneficiary; product generated by the gathering, processing, evaluation and interpretation of available

data related to actions, events and environments of interest; analytical process based on the processing of raw data/information; activity generating synthetic information products based on the analysis of primary or disparate data.

Summarizing all of the above definitions, we can define intelligence as information processing at a cognitive level in order to assign a usefulness value to it from the perspective of a beneficiary's/decision-maker's goal.

The concept of value is an important one from the perspective of the events that have been unfolding since the beginning of the 3rd millennium (e.g. the terrorist attacks since 11 September 2001 and 11 March 2004, the media scandals of the Gulf War, and the military interventions in Afghanistan and Irak). As a result, it is obvious that the national and international security field has undergone major changes at the level of the paradigms upholding it and, consequently, has triggered major changes in the academic approaches to the concept of "intelligence". Moreover, intelligence as information in all its possible forms is one of the weapons used in the new asymmetric conflicts. Therefore, holding and efficiently using it represent these type of conflicts' most important stake.

In the book entitled *The Management of Information Systems*, Gheorghe Nicolaescu and Vasile Simileanu [4] define intelligence/information as *"the element that can be coded, kept, processed and communicated; the result of available data collection, processing, integration, analysis, evaluation and interpretation in fields of interest"*.

A similar definition is provided by Mireille Rădoi in *Intelligence Services and the Political Decisions* [5]. The author mentions that intelligence and its usefulness value depend both on its suppliers and users. For information to be operationalized and processed it has to: be real; ensure a multilateral perception from an economic, technical, human and scientific point of view; be synthetic and concise; be precise; be delivered on time; be dynamic; be adapted to the features of the personnel involved in its management.

Thus, intelligence becomes a function of the strategic and security information management and, hence, an essential component of the analytical information knowledge. Its goal is to acknowledge and assimilate within the information flows everything new and of value to a decision-maker focused on acting and using it in order to preserve the major interests of society.

In conclusion, intelligence links the INFORMATION-MANAGEMENT-POWER triad, validating the relationships and interactions among the information systems' attributes, the processing of information and the decision-making level using it.

Through an intelligence-based approach an integrated overall view is obtained and, as a result, the action framework used to maintain balance between the identified threat and the necessary measure to counter it without wasting any additional energy and human and material resources gains legitimacy. Moreover, that allows matching the response measures to the threat level, and avoiding the imbalances resulting from the employment of methods inadequately chosen to counter the identified threat.

The use of intelligence in the activities of the Romanian General Directorate for Defense Intelligence (DGIA) allows for a cooperation in real time with other intelligence services and with civil society representatives and, inherently, for the development of a security culture and for the promotion of national interests.

The global fierce competition among states and regional/global power centers for the access to/monopol over energy resources, for the development/conquering of resource markets and consumption markets are triggering and will trigger conflicts, challenges and various scenarios aimed at ensuring influence, control and power. In addition to all of the above, there are also the interests of the non-statal actors that make the odds of the power games to become even more complicated and difficult to anticipate. In this respect, it is worth reminding that linguistic, religious, historical (i.e. old conflicts or alliances, neighbourhood relations, territorial claims) criteria, current or prospective economic interests, available resources, competition in fields of major interest (i.e. nuclear, cosmic, oil, gas, access to the sea/ocean), the belonging to military alliances trigger the positions states take towards one another. In such a context, the intelligence activity becomes an essential instrument in getting acquainted with the developments in the field of national security, as well as a major factor used in the anticipation and forecast of the geopolitical and strategic relations, and in the evaluation of possible threat sources and of their likely behaviour. Moreover, the integrating role of this activity, its capacity to capture positive or negative developments

and distinguish the threats emerging at a certain moment makes the forecast of future events possible.

Thus, intelligence activity is validated as a modern capability of maximum use for the "know - how", "know - who" and especially the "know - when" needs. The interdependence, multidimensional character, the novelty of some risks and the contemporary asymmetrical threats (especially those after 1990, and exceptionally after 11 September 2001) are much more different than the classical conflicts (including terrorism, organized crime, human and drug trafficking, illegal migration, money laundering, insecurity, energetic dependence, espionage) characteristic of the beginning and middle of the XXth century show the necessity of approaching events from new and interconnected perspectives.

Romania is subject to the rules of the same game as other states and, as a member of NATO and EU, has to assess the asymmetrical risks, to propose solutions and answers to the contemporary challenges, to gradually reform the activity of its main intelligence services. Moreover, the status of EU and NATO member, asks form Romania to become not only a security beneficiary, but also a security provider. As such, it succeeded in leaving behind risks raised by ethnical and religious conflicts, or by territorial claims on behalf of some of its neighbours. However, the geographical position of Romania does not completely rule out possible future risks posed by the tight relationship between globalization and regional phenomena. In this respect, it is worth reminding the following: Romania's position on the eastern border of the

EU and the cross-border risks derived from this; the sources of latent conflict in the Balkan area (Kosovo, Albania, Cyprus) and in the Black Sea area (Transnistria, Crimeea); the relative proximity to the conflicts in the Middle East and the insuccess and inherent risks generated by the failure of the negotiations aimed at creating a Palestinian state; the swift changes occurring in Irak and Caucasian states for the past years as a result of the fight for supremacy over energetic resources and their unpredictable evolution in the future; the actions of states such as Russia, China, India and Iran that trigger anti-American reactions and that impose a multipolar view on the world; the USA- Russia disputes over the antimissile shield installation, over NATO expansion, as well as the difficult to assess consequences of the Russian-Georgian conflict; the complexity of the Iranian nuclear problem, its relation with the position of the Arab states on this topic and USA's and Russia's positions on this issue, and the risk of an Israeli-Iranian conflict outbreak with unforeseeable consequences in the pan Arab environment; some European states' negotiations with Russia and the Caucasian republics about their access to the oil and gas transport routes and the risk for Romania not to have access to such routes; the sprawl and international character of actions undertaken under the "Al Qaeda brand" by terrorist groups; humanitarian crises, illegal migration, drug trafficking, etc.

All of the above are only a few of the most important current and future risks/challenges for the international security environment.

The INTELLIGENCE -  
COMMUNICATION - STATAL

ACTORS (DECISION MAKERS) relationship has become an essential one in the international and global security environment that is eroded and permanently under the siege of asymmetric risks and threats or subject to the competition among the world's power poles.

Intelligence alongside with the emergence of the security conceptual systems can contribute to diminishing the differences between security beneficiaries and security providers so that in the end all of these could become security guardians. Moreover, intelligence will qualitatively value the activities unfolding in organizations/systems in charge of security so that, based on the gathering, storage, processing, analysis of information, the right conclusions can be drawn. Based on these, the decision-makers in charge of applying state policies will be able to formulate their strategies to fight back the risks and threats identified.

The efficiency of the measures taken in order to ensure national security, to prevent and counter any type of threat is directly related to the intelligence level and to its performance in relation with the internal and external actors. The efficient management of national security problems should lead to the development of an efficient management of the intelligence sector.

The way human relationships evolve nowadays revolutionizes the communication process and the systems facilitating the contact among individuals and among organizations. As a result of the unprecedented development in the field of communication a state's information heritage is increasingly subject to information aggression.

Within this context, the request for an intelligence system, its use and improvement are essential for any state's capabilities to counter actions specific to information warfare. As a result, one of the intelligence community's priorities must be the human resource (HUMINT), since the latter is one of the most efficient tools used in information collection. The human source of information requires coordination. Thus, information collection must be done in one place so that the decisions made certify the best resource saving conduct. However, technical intelligence (TECHINT) is of great help for HUMINT especially when it comes to penetrating terrorist organizations and organized crime structures.

For efficiency and adaptation purposes an intelligence service must focus on reconstructing its analytical means, on developing linguistic programs, on diversifying agent recruitment, on establishing a better connection between information collection from human sources and from signal sources at operational level, between unilateral and liaison operations.

In order to counter asymmetrical and nonconventional strategic threats the collaboration between the public and private sector is essential. Moreover, adopting/adapting the legislation in the field of these new type of risks management is also mandatory. For the future information warfare will require

an integrated intelligence support in order to ensure operations security and enemy deception, to support psychological operations and electronic warfare, to prevent any potential adversary from influencing, deteriorating or destroying command

and control capabilities. The more the information age and information war evolve, the greater the challenges in the intelligence field. In this respect, the intelligence structures can outmaneuver an adversary, but they can also become its target.

Intelligence proves that the information warfare has developed a permanent, multidisciplinary and dual nature. Its permanence resides in the development of a global strategy aimed at collecting information, at protecting and managing adversaries' access to information not only in times of conflicts or crisis. Its multidisciplinarity refers to the interconnected systems, organizations, viewpoints, measures taken to conduct such a war. As for the dual nature of intelligence, the latter refers the faded distinctions between the civil and military fields, to the fact that the violent means of countering enemies are no longer under the monopoly of a state's

military and they are more often than not surpassed by information violence that manifests itself not only in the military, but also in the banking, financial, energetic, communications, resource distribution, infrastructure fields. As a result, intelligence is required to offer the means to counter future threats of such a diversified nature.

The goal of any state's authorities in power is to ensure national security. Consequently, at international level they will act in such a way as to promote a policy of joining the alliance/system of alliances aligned to their goal and to keep under close scrutiny the reactions of their prospective external adversaries. With a view to this, intelligence becomes the main support instrument used in making decisions concerning the choice of external allies and the countering of malevolent intentions of external opponents.

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