HISTORICAL REFERENCE POINTS OF OPEN SOURCE UTILITY IN INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract: *Open sources have proven their utility throughout the last decade, especially for giving the national intelligence communities a whole insight and context of their nation's state. The evolution of what we call today security environment has been highly influenced by the shift from secret or covert to open-source, leading to a nowadays widely acknowledged OSINT importance. For example, the intelligence communities estimate that OSINT provides between 80 and 95 per cent of the information used in their operations. In other terms, the present paper describes the way open-source has reached its major role in the intelligence activity, by listing the most influential OSINT initiatives and their creators: Sherman Kent, Vannevar Bush and Robert David Steele, and also the most significant moments in the so-called „OSINT Revolution". From this last point of view, one hypothesis from which we start in this article is that the develop of modern open sources – the internet, especially social media, had encouraged intercultural communication, offering new opportunities for knowledge and the management of transnational security challenges in a constantly changing environment.*

Keywords: *utility, OSINT, (R)evolution, intelligence, history*

1. INTRODUCTION

From a historical point of view, it is difficult to determine when open information sources started to be used in national security activity. A rigorous scientific approach in this regard would require the initiation of a research on the types of sources that may be associated with open sources for each historical epoch, and similarly on the issues that could be subsumed for each security era.

Military-media relationship date from modern era, and throughout history consisted of propaganda for the kings and warriors, which was provided by the chroniclers paid to do that. Even if, in general, open source has long been disregarded, specific casuistry of the nineteenth century and twentieth century provides examples of technological innovations (invention of photography and radio), which allowed the diversification of sources as well as examples of the use of media in military operations (Lahneman: 2010). Moreover, in this period, although open source exploitation was not a systematic procees governed by detailed rules, its role began to be realized, illustrative to that end being the statements of Tsar Nicholas II (1818-1881), who said that "we do not need spies. We have the Times of London 'and of Oscar Wilde (1854 - 1900), who emphasized that "spies are no longer used today.

The newspapers do their work instantly" (Pallaris, 2009). The impact of new mass communication technologies was true during the early nineteenth century with mass circulation newspapers and electric telegraph. It also marked a major change in the structure of the armed forces and some quality developments of society. Many works address the relationship between military environment and media and their position in society, including their legal obligations. In recent decades, particularly the U.S. armed forces have seen their relationship with the media in much narrower terms. That military view had a major impact on U.S. actions during Iraq war (2003 - 2011).

Today, the ways of getting information have diversified greatly along with significant technological developments, so the intelligence tends to become more and more an activity based on analysis of information obtained from open sources and on the use of societal academic/private specialists. More recently, the emergence of social media has been a major change in the long history of the use of open source in activities with an impact on the national and international security. Events in Syria, 1994 Rwanda massacre, and Kosovo War - the first major war of the Internet age - are examples to that end (Badsey, 2009).

As a result of the emphasis on technological change, some governments and their armed forces

didn't pay attention to such social issues. For example, one of the first reactions to the Mubarak government uprising in Cairo in January 2011 was an attempt to block Egypt links with the "outside world". That proved not only ineffective, but also of secondary importance to the way in which subsequently the revolt spread. Currently, a more complex and subtle struggle for international propaganda is underway largely by exploiting Web 2.0 (Badsey, 2009). From a historical point of view, military response to each new change in media technology (from the electric telegraph and mass newspapers, through photography, cinema journals, radio and television to the Internet) was to identify vulnerabilities, risks, and threats posed by them to answer - as described by sociologists – to a "moral panic".

2. OPEN SOURCES EXPLOATATION AND INTERCULTURAL CONTEXT

Over time, communication has evolved greatly, acquiring more advanced forms. News in information technology are considerably improving. The conduct of interpersonal relations are influenced by the Internet and by all the possibilities it offered. The Internet, the largest open source information, provides extensive possibilities for communication and access to remote areas and groups and also assimilation of different cultural values (Bodoga *et al.*, 2010). The twentieth century adapts to a multicultural communication, which involves more than understanding the rules of the group. It means accepting and tolerating differences. At present, communication between individuals occurs quasi-instantly, in a world where time and space no longer involve real barriers, because information technology helps us to move quickly and freely in the virtual context. We are constantly subjected to the pressure of speed, in an online and offline world, because numerous online social networks were developed in communication. Intercultural dialogue therefore aims to strengthen respect for cultural diversity in the context of the complex reality of today's society, characterized by different cultural identities and beliefs (Bodoga *et al.*, 2010).

3. TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS AND OPEN SOURCES IN MODERN EPOCH

Intrigue, espionage, coded correspondence, closed-door meetings and clandestine operations led and influenced much of European politics during the Renaissance. These activities have been occasionally in the center of political scene and during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (*FAS*, 2009). A large part of these efforts was based on data collected from open sources (chronicles, printed papers) by "honorable spies", as ambassadors were called at that time, or by other practitioners of "secret diplomacy".

So-called black art practitioners have included some of the most famous names in Europe: Nicollo Machiavelli, Sir Francis Walsingham - Secretary of State for Queen Elizabeth I - who designed the first permanent peacetime intelligence device. Even from the start, the Catholic Church has become a force in espionage, based on information collected from the time chronicles. Having a large and powerful bureaucratic apparatus, important resources, but also access to culture, it was able to control extensive information operations creating a true spy network (*FAS*, 2009). The church domination was challenged in the Renaissance when the consolidation of centralized states made them take the lead and even to establish dominance, monopoly in that area, to protect their political and military, but also economic and military interests. More than twenty years after the end of the Civil War, photography became an essential resource in the business of intelligence. The first example is the 1887, when there were taken photos for certain coastal British crews. Also, by radio appearance in 1895, has been revolutionized the intelligence activity (Federation of American Scientists).

In its first phases open sources exploitation was not achieved by structured rules, most often being reduced to newspaper clippings or public information to the citizens, that were subsequently transmitted to decision- makers via spies. Napoleon Bonaparte is a representative exponent of what a politician who has built and enhanced his public image throughout his life represents. Historian Philip Taylor said that "under Napoleon regime, France became in fact the first modern state based on propaganda". One could notice that propaganda could have been seen everywhere, by force of strict censorship and ubiquity of imperial authority. He perfectly intuited and benefited greatly from print media and printed explosion generated by the French Revolution, which he knew how to exploit it for his own benefit. He transformed the two government-sponsored military newspapers "Courrier de L'Armee d'Italie" and "La France vue de L'Armee d'Italie" that were supporting French morale in his own promotional

tools, contantly linking his name to any victory or heroic action on the Italian front. To strengthen and enhance his public image, Napoleon continuously wrote mails, bulletins, proclamations. One of the first steps Napoleon took as first consul of a country who had proclaimed its liberty as supreme ideal was to introduce strict censorship, removing 64 of the 73 publications that were published in France. In 1810 he founded the General Directorate of Printing and Booksellers which collaborated with the police to control all publications. However, French history was rewritten to highlight Bourbon's decadence compared with his greatness.

During the 1877 – 1878 Romania's War of Independence, newspapers in Romanian and German ("Albina Carpatilor", "Observatorul", "Scoala romaneasca", "Telegraful roman", "Resboiul" "Hermannstadter Zeitung", " Siebenbürger Boten") were publishing updated news on developments on the front, about Romanian troops and its Russian allies which were fighting Ottoman army. The reports of these publications generated a memorable solidarity response of the population in support of Romanian army materialized in voluntary conscriptions, money and even doctors accompanying the ambulances at the front. Between 1914 and 1916, the embassies of the main combatant countries were heavily subsidized Romanian press, trying to get public sympathy. Germany, France, and England have paid newspapers and publicists who, through articles, were to determine Romania enter the war. Pamfil Seicaru wrote in "History of the Press" that the delegations of France, Russia, Britain and Germany had received funds to purchase newspapers, establish new publications, and to influence politicians.

4. PREMISIS FOR AN INSTITUTIONALIZED OSINT

If public information exploitation is closely connected to the creation of intelligence as a tool to support government actions, the transformation of the open sources collection and analysis in a strategic area with specific rules and tools has its origins in the U.S. Following the 1941 Princeton University research it was created "Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service" / FBMS, the first professional structure responsible for monitoring, filtering, archiving as well as transcription and translation of information and news from foreign media sources. The exploitation of open sources within the U.S. intelligence was influenced by two critical moments considered failures of intelligence activity, namely the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941) and the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Thus, in 1947, FBMS came under the authority of CIA as "Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service" / FBIS, and in 1948 it was created "Federal Research Division" in order to provide "specialized research and analytical services through the use of the largest libraries in the world, that of the American Congress".

At the European level, the first structured approach of open sources, without being so complex as the American one, can be found in 1939 when, at the request of the British Executive, BBC launched a commercial service to monitor and analyse foreign print and radio media within the 'Digest of Foreign Broadcasts' programme, later called "Summary of World Broadcasts" and then "BBC Monitoring". Also, the East German "Ministry for State Security" service developed its monitoring capabilities, some sources indicating that it monthly analyzed 1,000 magazines, 100 books, 100 newspapers, and transmissions of radio and TV from West Germany. During the Cold War open sources had an important role in understanding the military and political intentions of the opponent being a standing resource to other departments in establishing the collection requirements. However, the intelligence community has been reluctant to recognize their value, and among experts there was the belief, that persists even today in some areas, according to which secret information is the most valuable one (*IRSN*, 2010).

Moreover, a study by three researchers (Mark Travers, Leaf Van Boven and Charles Judd) at University of Colorado Boulder / USA has shown how the "heuristic secrecy" can increase the perceived value and weight of intelligence-based decision, regardless of its informative quality (2014). According to the authors,

> a possible explanation for this is that the authorities devote significant resources to collecting and protecting 'state secrets' and, often, these investments yielded results that showed notable added value of the use of classified information. (Travers *et al.*, 2014:99)

However, technological advances, the Cold War, and the change in geographic and thematic priorities for intelligence operations prompted renewed debate about the need to reform the

structure of intelligence community. In this vision, one of the factors was public information sources dynamics (Mercado, 2007).

In 1992, the US Intelligence Reorganization Act defined the intelligence-gathering program objectives as "providing timely and objective intelligence, based on all available public and non-public sources of the U.S. Intelligence Community". In 1996, the Commission on the Roles and Capabilities of the U.S. Intelligence Community (known as the Aspin-Brown Commission) concluded that "a greater effort to exploit the great universe of information currently available in open source is needed". Along with American efforts, OSINT methodologies and tools were developed at the level of NATO and the European Union (European Monitoring Centre for Media, Joint Research Centre of the European Union). The year 2005 marked the creation of the first open sources agency, which was set up taking into account the recommendations of the U.S. Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission – when the National Intelligence Director/DNI decided to create Open Source Center by absorbing CIA FBIS Division and the World News Connection / WNC under the supervision of the National Technical Information Service / NTIS. OSC is defined as

> the first U.S. Government provider/supplier of foreign open source intelligence which provides international data on the political, military and economic issues and technical information unrelated to common media. (*Raytheon*, 2014:1).

At the same time, it was created the position of Deputy Assistant to the National Intelligence for Open Source, in order to enhance the visibility of the "National Open Source Enterprise". Later, in 2006, it was created Informational Sharing Initiative Environment and a framework that defined U.S OSINT (*IRSN*, 2010). Currently, there are a growing number of government departments and NGOs active in the exploitation of open sources. Organizations and institutions in the fields of security, defense and public order empowered to ensure state security are creating more and more links with the public through the virtual world. (Steele, 1995:462).

The Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) created the Open Source Center, a structure dedicated to this activity in Romania. In Canada, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service does not benefit from an independent agency, but within the Office for Foreign Relations there is a media center that deals with open source monitoring.

Specialized structures in Italy, Agency for External Information and Security (AISE) and the Agency for Internal Information and Security (AISI), have developed specialized departments in this regard. And the Joint Counter-Terrorism Center (GTAZ) in Germany has under its command Joint Internet Center, called GIZ.

5. CONCLUSIONS

As M. Wiewiorka and D. Wolton (1987) stated, if not so long ago it was very difficult to get informed due to the lack of information and poor accessibility to them, today is difficult to be properly informed just because high flow of information. In the twenty-first century, global world claims another reference to information. Is about the information retrieved, managed and distributed by a certain kind of intellectual elite, that should always be a prerequisite for political act and, equally, the foundation of everything that our democracies represent today.

Today, we put great emphasis on national security information obtained from open sources. This is true as standalone product, but also as part of the secret intelligence. Over the time, amid the evolution of technology, OSINT contribution to the process of intelligence has changes, many intelligence agencies realizing the strategic advantage offered by the exploitation of open sources in the context of the growing influence of new media and the increasing number of think tanks s and private companies that can provide analytical support. The increasing complexity and interconnections of our world, along with decreasing uncertainty have highlighted the importance of Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) to achieve national security. This type of information provides a wide range of "operational needs" from strategic historical and cultural knowledge to data on infrastructure and current socio-economic conditions, vital tactical commercial geospatial data that cannot be provided by other operational capabilities.

In the new networked society (network society), the interaction between these processes and the reactions triggered by them are considered the foundations of a new society. Specific for this type of society is the culture of communication protocols that allow direct relationship based on sharing of different cultures to communicate value. The cultural meanings coexist, interact and transform each other, as a result of this ongoing exchange.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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