

THE SUPERIORITY OF INFORMATION AND THE POWER OF THE NATION STATE

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Abstract: Access to valuable information has been, is and will continue to be the focus of all the nation states. The benefits of access to information cannot be questioned, but the volatile nature of this Power Information has shown over time that a state's inability to keep its secrets leads to the loss of this power. The present paper captures historical milestones of information gathering activity that have greatly changed the balance of power between the state actors involved.

Keywords: espionage, motives, ideology, money, revenge, whistleblower, Rosenberg, Philby, Walker, Penkovsky, Ames, Snowden

1. Introduction

The fight for the state supremacy is based on the access to information of all kind and fields. The access to information, by using all means considered available, has characterized the geopolitical scene of the second half of the past century. The dichotomy communism – capitalism was carried out in state and non state, direct conflicts or proxy war, overt and covert operations, where were invested massive human and technological resources with the accurate aim of getting classified data and information. The article is focused on the study of certain cases of spying performed secretly, that have produced or they could produced massive damages to a state or to a coalition of states.

They fall into one of the five types of espionage:

- Classic espionage;
- Leaks of classified information;
- Acting as an agent of a foreign government;
- Violations of export control laws;
- Economic espionage [1].

Case studies are focused on historical milestones of intelligence that have greatly changed the balance of power between state actors involved in this silent fight for information.

2. Ideology and nuclear secret

The damage caused by nuclear capabilities from Hiroshima and Nagasaki has generated major changes not only on the geopolitical scene, but also in society, leading to a real nuclear culture marked by symbols like: “events (such as the Cuban Missile Crisis), figures (such as Mikhail Gorbachev), communities (such as “nuclear downwinders”), sites (such as the Soviet nuclear weapons laboratory, Arzamas-16), policies (such as containment), institutions (such as the Strategic Air Command), and technologies (such as ballistic missile defense)” [2].

The nuclear arsenal held by US at the end of WW2 made that the balance of power to incline seriously in favour of Western Allies. The nuclear secrets have started to become hunted by the Soviets even though

they held superiority in terms of quantity of conventional resources (with a report by 10:1 as a number of military deployable divisions [3]. They felt vulnerable as regards a possible confrontation with the Western block.

The ideology of some of human intelligence assets was the key that opened to the Soviets the access to the information within the American nuclear facilities from Los Alamos. Based on communist beliefs or considerations regarding the dangers of nuclear monopoly, a number of researchers of the American, Canadian or British nuclear program have decided to offer to the Soviet, the formula for production of the atomic bomb. One of the most notorious atomic spies was Klaus Fuchs, having the code name "Raymond" who had access at both nuclear facilities from Los Alamos New Mexico and from Harwell England, where he held the post of chief of division at Atomic Energy Research Establishment. Alongside Fuchs, there have been engineers less well known to the public such as Theodore Hall, George Koval, Bruno Pontecorvo, and spy ring that held the front page of media like Harry Gold and the Rosenberg family (Ethel and Julius).

This first example shows us that the access of the Soviet to the nuclear secrets involved minimal efforts, but the achieved results led to massive results through access to nuclear technology well ahead of the expected deadlines. Such an approach not only did it balance the power but it really inclined in favour of the Communists. The change of power pole from West to East was also possible thanks to the action of other human assets infiltrated among British or American structures, based on the same ideological motivation. Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess, Kim Philby, Anthony Blunt and John Cairncross, known as "Cambridge Five", "Cambridge Spy Ring" or "Magnificent Five," decided to share information which they held from the important post kept, with the secret communist services. The close cooperation

between England and the United States did that all NATO efforts on the territories of the Warsaw Treaty countries, such as Operation Valuable / Fiend, which attempted to bring Albania out of the USSR's influence, to be immediately defeated by the Soviet KGB [4]. This due to Kim Philby, one of the five, that has got to lead the anti-Soviet section of British intelligence services MI6 (the British equivalent of the CIA).

The Soviets had also "volunteers" who acted based on the ideology. The best example is given by the Russian colonel Oleg Penkovsky who was completely disappointed by the communist regime and party leaders: *"I happened to marry a general's daughter and quickly found myself in a society of the Soviet upper class. I was one of the privileged. But soon I realize that their praise of the party and communism was only in words. In their private lives, they lie, deceive, scheme against each other, intrigue, inform, cut each other's throats. In pursuit of more money and advancement for themselves, they become informants for the state security on their friends and fellow workers. Their children despise everything Soviet, watch only foreign movie films and look down on ordinary people. Our communism, which we have been building for 45 years, is a fraud"*[5].

I have chosen to question the Penkovsky's case due to the effects that it generated. He photographed and sent to the Americans top secret documents which included war plans and military manuals of Russian ballistic missiles. The identification of nuclear facilities in Cuba and information about the reality of Soviet capabilities, allowed the Americans and NATO states to avoid a Third World War that was likely to be nuclear.

3. Money Talks

But not communism's ideology or beliefs were the most common reasons in spying activities. Money and material advantages

have been the ones that have often led to counterbalancing the power of one or the other of the geopolitical game played by the great actors on the global scene. This is also confirmed by the report of the Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC) a “*Department of Defense entity dedicated to improving the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of DoD personnel suitability, security, and reliability systems*” [6].

PERSEREC's role is to analyze the cases of espionage and identify the factors, situations, the behaviours, patterns and reasons, and other elements according to which American citizens have committed acts of betrayal. We find in the table below that money is second-handed in this rankings and one thing interesting is that this department was created as a consequence of the espionage actions made by John Anthony Walker Jr. [7]

Motivations for Espionage through Time

Characteristics	1947-1979		1980-1989		1990-2015	
Total motivations in each cohort	<i>n=100</i>	%	<i>n=129</i>	%	<i>n=134</i>	%
Money	41	41	58	45	37	28
Divided loyalties	17	17	18	14	30	22
Disgruntlement	17	17	22	17	20	15
Ingratiation	6	6	12	9	22	16
Coercion	7	7	2	2	2	2
Thrills	10	10	10	8	5	4
Recognition or ego	2	2	7	5	18	13

As a result of minor offenses, the teenager John Walker joins the US Navy as a radioman to avoid jail. He becomes Warrent Communications Officer and decides to solve his financial problems by selling secret information to the Soviets. He takes photos to certain US-Navy KL-47 encryption codes with which he enters the Soviet embassy. It was the first step in a 17-year long espionage career. Having access to the encryption keys, the Russians also needed the encryption machine to have full access to communications used by US naval forces. For that, USSR asks North Korea to capture USS Pueblo Cargo spy, secretly sent to collect SIGINT and ELINT information in the Sea of Japan. They gets in possession of the KW-7 encryption machine used by US naval forces along with manuals and other documents [8]. The decision to change US encryption passwords does not stop the Soviets to

decode US ship communications because they had access to the new keys with the help of Walker. “*Walker nevertheless provided a huge array of other secret Navy and U.S. documents to America’s Cold War adversary. These included operational orders, war plans, technical manuals, and intelligence digests*” .[9]

Even if there is no clear evidence, it is assumed that the information received from Walker about the Americans actions, arrived in Hanoi via Moscow, and B-52 air strikes and naval air operations were known by the Communists.

It is certain that the information disclosed by Walker allowed the Soviets to study and understand the military thinking of Americans, to know their intentions, and perhaps the most important thing: he give to the Soviets the location of all the nuclear submarines, on which the United States was relied in a possible armed confrontation.

Thus, between 1967-1985, during the 17 years when Walker and his spy circle was active, a possible direct war between the US and the USSR was likely to be won by the latter.

After the 1950, the ideologically-motivated spies almost disappeared from the United States [10], most of the betrayal being based solely on financial motivation, like Aldrich Ames of the CIA, or on combinations such as ideology and money like Adolf Tolkachev. The latter provided information to the Americans about Soviet fighter aircraft, fighter aircraft radar systems, and the latest generation of surface-to-air missile systems. These data offered by a single asset, which could not be collected through open sources or other technical sources, *“could have meant the difference between victory and defeat, should a military confrontation with the USSR have occurred”* [11].

According to the report *“An Assessment of the Aldrich H. Ames Espionage Case and Its Implications for U.S. Intelligence”*, made by a US Senate committee, Aldrich Hazen Ames revealed over 100 operations conducted by the CIA, FBI or the US Defence, and he compromised all human intelligence assets from the Soviet block. *“His betrayal stands as the most egregious in American history”* and *“caused more damage to the national security of the United States than any spy in the history of the CIA”* [12].

Neither the mistakes he made in his 31 years of career and 9 years of espionage, such as negligence and disdain for security requirements and violation of Agency regulations (*Ames left a briefcase of classified materials identifying the source on a subway train, In Rome, he was known to prepare classified reports at home, he was occasionally found in other CIA offices where he had no reason to be, and with materials he had no reason to have, sexual relationships with recruited assets*[13]) nor the “satisfactory” overall evaluation did not stop him from raising his professional

career. But the extravagant goods they bought (new Jaguar car and a 540,000\$ house) contrasted with the previous financial pressures due to divorce, that he passed or could not be bought from the modest salary of about 70,000\$ a year. These issues had to raise some questions from the CIA.

3. Revenge, loyalty, ego and personal code of ethic

Apart from ideology and money, disgruntlement, ingratiation and recognition or ego are also reasons that have led to betrayal and leak of information, and most of all we are talking about a mixture of reasons. Like the most famous case of betrayal within the FBI of agent Robert Hanssen. Although in his statements he claims that money was the one that led him to betray, the behaviour and the statements of his acquaintances showed that Hanssen's ultimate goal was *“to play the spy game better than anybody's ever played it before. He wants to be the best spy ever”*. [14]

Last but not least, we must remember whistleblower, a term that defines *“a person who comes forward and shares his/her knowledge on any wrongdoing which he/she thinks is happening in the whole organisation or in a specific department. A whistleblower could be an employee, contractor, or a supplier who becomes aware of any illegal activities”*. [15]

The Bradley Manning or Edward Snowden cases, which fed the WikiLeaks platform with classified information inside the US Army or the National Security Agency (NSA), were more than a slap on the US. They have shown us that personal perception of wrongdoing does not overlap with the American authorities. A different standard in this direction means to follow a personal code of ethics that can turn a “custodian” into a “distributor” of extremely expensive government secrets.

“Because of Snowden, the U.S. lost

valuable intelligence capabilities that had taken millions of dollars and years to build”.[16] And the technological capabilities of the present make thousands of pages of information to be instantly and irrecoverably distributed from one part of the globe to the other one, with the help of the Internet.

4. Conclusions

The cases presented during the work reveal the fragility of global security as a result of the decision of a single person or a restricted network that acts due to: money, ideology, disgruntlement, ingratiation and recognition or ego. Procedures that provide access to classified information, especially for national security domains, should focus

on recruiting people based on their character and personality, not just on the organization's need to hire staff. Candidates and staff are submitted to specific selection, verification, approval, control and specialist training stages, but as we have seen in Aldrich Ames case, their superficial treatment did not trigger warning signals when serious breaches of security regulations were overlapped. Issues that indicate elements of incompatibility of a person who has or will have access to classified information must be urgently signaled and carefully analyzed because the damage that they may subsequently create will surely overcome the boundaries of national security.

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