PROXY INTELLIGENCE AND THE CLASSIFICATION OF INTELLIGENCE ACTORS USING THE UNITED STATES AS A MODEL

Review Article

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Abstract: This paper provides a definition of proxy intelligence and a classification of intelligence actors using the United States as a model. The activity of the main U.S intelligence actors is briefly discussed. An intelligence service is defined as a service provided by both state and non-state intelligence actors. Document analysis, content analysis and comparative method were used. Based on the study conducted, it was concluded that the U.S. actively uses non-state intelligence actors, particularly private intelligence companies, in its political activities. Their role, contribution and significance in making foreign policy decisions are defined. "An intelligence service" is systematized as a specific service that intelligence agencies provide to their clients. Based on the conclusions reached, practical recommendations are proposed to the Russian authorities to build communication and business relations with Russian private intelligence companies. Based on the finding obtained in this study, a course in the Political Science, Information and Hybrid Warfare master's degree program at Moscow State University was designed.

Keywords: Outsourcing intelligence, corporate intelligence, dark intelligence, hybrid intelligence, proxy intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last ten years, conflictology has been enriched by a series of technologies for waging previously atypical wars: hybrid wars (trade, sanctions or information wars), proxy wars, non-traditional wars. For centuries it has been impossible to wage war without intelligence, whose importance has already been addressed in numerous scholarly articles and scholarly literature. However, atypical wars require an atypical approach to conducting intelligence activities, because the success of any conflict not only depends on "atypical" military measures, but also on right military and political decisions reached by the lead-

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ers of warring parties. Of course, traditional state intelligence apparatus bears a substantial burden during confrontation, which requires them to attract and activate additional resources capable of conducting the same kind of non-traditional intelligence activity under the conditions of non-traditional wars, in other words, proxy intelligence.

PROXY INTELLIGENCE

Proxy intelligence means the provision of intelligence services by non-state intelligence actors in the interest of the state client (as a rule, a state intelligence actor or the state's top leadership both directly and through agents of influence). Proxy intelligence activities are conducted both by commercial companies and non-profit organizations (NGOs –NPOs). At the same time, the term proxy intelligence is often used in Western scholarly literature (Keenan, 2017). The term can be interpreted as "puppet intelligence activity" or "intelligence activity through intermediaries". British social anthropologist Jeremy H. Keenan refers to North African intelligence agencies (specifically, the Algerian DRS) precisely as "puppets" in relation to the British MI-6. In terms of intelligence activities, the term "manipulative intelligence" is more appropriate, whereby an actor is used in an operation without even realizing it. At the same time, if we can talk about "proxy intelligence" as a type of outsourcing, then we cannot talk about using the actor "manipulatively" (without his knowledge and insight into the goal of activity), because, by receiving a contract from the state, the private subcontractor familiarizes with the goals and objectives of cooperation.

An *intelligence service* (IS) should be understood as a provision of highly intellectual service, information, to the client (eliminating uncertainty when making management decisions) or disinformation (with the aim of exerting a positive influence on areas of interest), be it potential and real adversaries, competitors or rivals. Providers of intelligence services may be both state intelligence actors (SIAs) and non-state intelligence actors (NSIAs). Private sector intelligence has been defined as a process of collecting, analyzing and sharing operational strategic and tactical information about possible hostile entities and dangerous world events, which may pose a direct physical or reputational risk to the company's operations or assets (Torres-Baches, 2017). An intelligence service is a service that can be provided by an intelligence service provider (ISP) both independently, that is, without using supporting technological instruments, relying only on their competences, knowledge and experience, or by means of specialized intelligence solutions.

An *intelligence solution* (IS) means an area of activity aimed at instrumental, technical, technological, financial monitoring of and support for the provision of intelligence services.
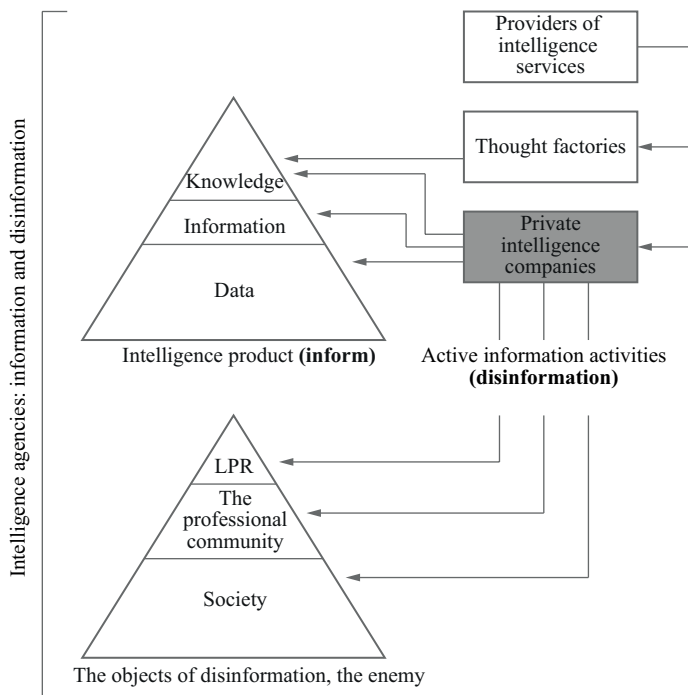
Figure 1. Intelligence services

All intelligence services can be briefly characterized as informing the violator and disinforming the adversary. At the same time, information is understood as a presentation of data, as well as information and based on it, the synthesis of new knowledge, analytical conclusions, foresight (forecast). Disinformation campaign against the enemy is also carried out across three levels:

1. Disinformation of society;
2. Disinformation of the professional community, opinion leaders;
3. Disinformation of decision-makers.

Obviously, in modern conflicts, US state intelligence actors do not have the same freedom of action as their commercial subcontractors do. This is largely due to a number of reasons:

1. Strict legislative control over the intelligence community and the "transparency" of their actions;
2. Limited funding;
3. Existence of diplomatic and reputational consequences if intelligence activities are uncovered on the territory of the enemy;

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4. The need for significant competencies (expertise and specialization) that are growing rapidly with which state actors, unlike private ones, cannot keep pace.

All this led to the emergence of private sector intelligence industry back in the 19th century, which is extremely financially powerful today unlike the same sectors in other countries.

Intelligence services (in terms of information) were classified by the US intelligence community in the middle of the 20th century according to methods for obtaining information and sources of information:

1. OSINT – Open source intelligence.
2. HUMINT – Human intelligence.
3. SIGINT (ELINT, COMINT, MASINT) – Signals intelligence (Electronic intelligence, Communications Intelligence, Measurement and Signature intelligence).
4. IMGINT - Imagery intelligence.
5. GEOINT - Geospatial intelligence.
6. FININT - Financial intelligence.
7. TECHINT - Technical intelligence.
8. CYBINT (DNINT) – Cyber intelligence (Digital network intelligence).

THE CLASSIFICATION OF US INTELLIGENCE ACTORS

Presently, no classification of intelligence actors has been made in the scientific community, both by political scientists and historians of intelligence services. However, open sources are full of labels used by journalists, such as "private intelligence structures", "spies for hire", "private subcontractors employed by intelligence agencies", or "outsourcing intelligence" (New York Post, 2008). Journalists associate all companies that have ever worked with special services under government contract, which only confuses researchers interested in this field. For example, in his doctoral dissertation "Intelligence in the U.S. state mechanism (a legal and historical aspect)", Dndukov also points out that the topic has not been sufficiently addressed by scientists. "Until the mid-1990s, serious scientific (including legal) research aimed at the study of U.S. intelligence was carried out within specialized scientific and school organizations. A lot of available works addressing U.S. intelligence, which were published both in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, were not scientific and can be considered works of a journalistic nature..." (Dundukov, 2015).

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Nevertheless, in 1972, the CIA published two categories of subcontractors in the Report of the Working Group on Contracts with American Commercial Companies (Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, 1972):

1. Administrative, contractual, purchasing:
   – Subcontracting services;
   – Financial and budgetary services;
   – Legal consultation and services;
   – Logistic services;
   – Medical consultation and services;
   – Personnel screening;
   – Personnel recruitment;
   – Purchase of goods and services;
   – Public and press relations;
   – Scientific research;
   – Training.

2. Intelligence and operational:
   – Analysis;
   – Collection;
   – Operations;
   – Support;
   – Intelligence.

However, half a century has passed since then and the world has substantially changed: development, technology and geopolitical situation have considerably influenced outsourcing intelligence industry, leading to the rapid development of private sector intelligence, which has been divided into commercial and non-commercial actors, providers of instruments and solutions necessary for the provision of intelligence services and suppliers of intelligence services themselves, into public players and mimics. The classification of intelligence actors is presented in Figure 2.

State intelligence actors – state intelligence bodies that report directly to the head of state, in the case of the USA – the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), the NSA (National Security Agency) or report to the head of state through the head of an agency, for example, the DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency).
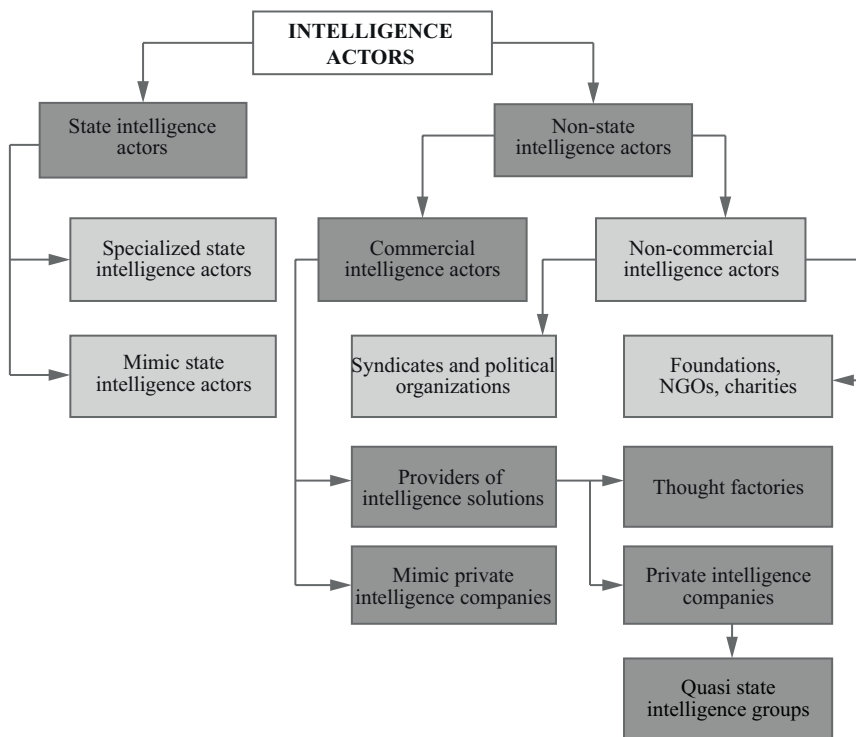
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Figure 2. Classification of intelligence actors

THE CLASSIFICATION OF U.S. STATE INTELLIGENCE ACTORS

State intelligence actors – intelligence actors entirely under the control of state institutions.

Specialized state intelligence actors (SSIA) – Agencies (institutions), whose aims and goals are to gather and analyze intelligence data. Their activity is regulated by state laws, normative documents, regulations, decisions, as in the case of the CIA – the CIA Act of 1949. Specialized state intelligence actors in the United States are referred to as the U.S. Intelligence Community, which is composed of 17 intelligence agencies.

Mimic state intelligence actors – state organizations whose activity is focused on other tasks and functions, such as the promotion of democracy and transparency, the development of political competition in third countries, whose activities are somehow focused on the execution of intelligence tasks, such as the recruitment and "grooming" of agents of influence; the conduct of information operations; the collection and analysis of information on the structure of the

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political system in the region, and so on. The U.S. Agency for International Development can be classified as such an organization (Romačev, 2022a). All mimic actors are subordinate to the head of state through agencies that supervise them, for example, the USAID through the U.S. State Department. Mimic state intelligence actors can be regulated both by the President's order (as in the case of USAID) and normative documents, orders, decisions, and so on.

Classification of U.S. Non-State Intelligence Actors:

Non-state intelligence actors include private organizations, both commercial and non-commercial, whose founder are not government authorities and whose activity is directly or indirectly related to the conduct of intelligence operations aimed at collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information or creating instruments to carry out these functions.

Komleva defines private intelligence agencies (PIA) as structures whose activity began with industrial espionage and the fight against it, which does not correspond to reality, because the concept of industrial espionage falls under criminal activities, which discredits both the reputation of the company and its entire existence. This is the reason why the cult of "competitive intelligence" as an activity based on ethics and legality began, in the mid-1980s, to form in the business circles in the United States (Komleva, 2013).

Commercial intelligence actors are business entities which provide the following services:
– Gathering and analyzing information, which is available through open communication channels;
– Gathering information from people using different methods ;
– Synthesizing knowledge about risks, dangers and opportunities
– Scientific and technical intelligence;
– Developing information gathering and analysis systems, information dissemination systems, analytical systems using artificial intelligence, cyber-intelligence systems, forecasting systems, and so on;
– Implementing active information activities
– Training in information-gathering and analysis technologies, content dissemination technologies, open-channel manipulation technologies, cyber operations technologies, and so on.

The activity of commercial intelligence actors falls exclusively within the province of law, that is, the application of illegal methods and technologies to obtain information, such as wiretapping telephone calls, hacking e-mails, torture or blackmail, is unacceptable, except for those in line with the SSIA and planned actions when participating in covert operations in third countries.

It should be emphasized that private intelligence actors do not conduct operative and investigative activities in any country, including the United States.

Classification of commercial intelligence actors:

Providers of intelligence services (PIC) are companies that specialize exclusively in IC. On the other hand, PICs can be divided into *thought factories* (idea factories, think tank) – companies specialized in the synthesis of knowledge about risks, dangers, and opportunities both in the area of business, geopolitical, and national security interests, such as:

– RAND Corporation;
– Team B.

Private intelligence companies are organizations that specialize in the full spectrum of intelligence services, ranging from the extraction and processing of data and information to knowledge synthesis, analytical conclusions, foresight (forecasting), which are capable to conduct active information activities. These companies can accumulate (contain) adjacent (intermediate) competences, such as those of intelligence solution providers, the development of instruments, technologies, and software/hardware solutions. The following companies are representatives of such actors:

– CACI International Inc.;
– Kroll Inc.;
– Pinkerton National Detective Agency;
– Secure Solutions International, Inc.
– Smith Brandon International, Inc.;
– Strategic Forecasting Inc;
– Strategic Insight Group (SIG).

Quasi state intelligence groups can be distinguished in this class – they are private intelligence companies, set up on the secret initiative by special state intelligence actors; however, they are *de jure* not related them. As a rule, the existence of such organizations is strictly confidential and they become known several decades later, either through declassified documents or exposure, leak or a big scandal. Typical representatives of such actors are:

– The Pond;
– The Gehlen Organization;
– Task Force 157.

Intelligence solution providers – developers of application solutions for information gathering and analysis, knowledge synthesis, forecasting, and so on. Typical representatives of such actors are:

– Palantir Technologies Inc.;
– Itek Corporation;
– Booz Allen Hamilton Inc.

Mimic private intelligence companies – private commercial companies, whose activity is focused on providing other services or producing products, which are not directly related to the intelligence service. As a rule, these intelligence services represent a secondary source of income for such organizations. For example, private military companies which provide military consulting services, escorting military guards, guarding industrial facilities in crisis zones, such as:

– Xe Services LLC;
– Military Professional Resources Inc.;
– Sullivan & Cromwell LLP;
– American Business Consulting Inc.;
– Massachusetts Institute of Technology;
– Yale University;
– Stanford University
– Cambridge Analytica Ltd.

Non-commercial (non-profit) intelligence actors – non-governmental (non-state) non-commercial foundations or organizations, such as:

– National Endowment for Democracy;
– Vernon Fund.

The contribution of intelligence actors to political decision-making in the United States

THE USAID ACTIVITY AS A MIMIC INTELLIGENCE ACTOR

This organization is a representative of U.S. soft power abroad and acts strictly in accordance with US foreign policy interests (Ромачев, 2022a). Since the mid-1990s, the Agency's priority region for projects has been the post-Soviet space and countries such as Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, and Kazakhstan. At the same time, Georgia and Ukraine received the most substantial grant funding – between 90 and 160 million dollars per year – to implement democratic reforms and election campaigns from 1996 to 2006. The main focus of the USAID has been the development of programs pertaining to the formation of parties and non-governmental organizations, including in the Russian Federation and the former Republics of the Soviet Union. U.S. economic aid is another instrument for exerting influence on the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and post-Soviet states. In the early 2000s, more than 100,000 citizens from 12 CIS countries participated in the U.S. government training programs for leaders of NGOs, SMIs and government officials. The West has mainly been focused on Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine to completely separate their economy and politics from Russia and the CIS. The importance that the United States attaches to each post-Soviet state varies contin-

uously. As a result, the Ukrainian crisis, the sudden deterioration of relations with Russia, coupled with an exacerbation of the situation in the Middle East, forced Washington in 2014 to shift its focus toward the CIS countries, mainly toward Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova.

The NED activity as a non-commercial intelligence actor

The NED provides grants for research on the development of democracy and human rights in foreign countries. Every year, the National Endowment for Democracy provides financial assistance to hundreds of non-governmental organizations around the world, whose activity is related to the development of democratic institutions. The mount of the grant depends on the size and scope of the project, but it usually amounts to 50 thousand dollars for 12 months (Олегович et al., 2022). The NED finances only non-governmental organizations, which may include civic organizations, associations, "independent" media outlets and other similar organizations.

The geography of the NED grantees encompasses practically the entire world, which is directly related to the U.S. foreign policy interests (and consequently the U.S. special services) at this or that historical moment.

Activity of the Pond as a private intelligence company (quasi state intelligence groups)

The Pond has been involved all areas of foreign intelligence: cryptography, foreign intelligence, covert operations. The characteristic of the Pond agency is its wide network of observers – people with different educational background and social status. They did not take any actions to obtain classified information and thus did not attract attention to themselves. However, if the "observer" unexpectedly obtained classified information, they would pass it on to the Pond. A large number of their observers did not receive money from Grombach, the head of the organization, but worked for the Pond for ideological reasons, while some of them even used their own funds (Ромачев, 2022b).

The activity of Itek Corporation as a provider of intelligence solutions

Richard Leghorn, the founder of the Itek Corp. and a former US Air Force aerial reconnaissance expert, was the first to propose flying reconnaissance missions over enemy territory in peacetime. Leghorn is the ideologue of the Open Skies project. The Open Skies project allowed signing countries to fly over any other, which, according to Leghorn, reduced international tensions and allowed countries to verify their adversaries' actions (Ромачев, 2022b).

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Team B's activity as an intelligence service provider (Thought Factory)

On May 6, 1976, George H.W. Bush, the Director of the CIA, created an analytical thought factory – Team B. Team B consisted of a team of outside experts, who were invited to evaluate the Soviet strategic systems, while Team A consisted of intelligence analysts within the CIA, who were carrying out their own assessment at the same time. The need for a competitive assessment prompted the creation of such a team.

Team B was led by Harvard professor Richard Pipes, which was made up of famous "hawks" such as Paul G. Nietzsche, William Van Cleve, and Paul Wolfowitz. Unsurprisingly, Team B concluded that the intelligence experts underestimated the threat because they had heavily relied on the verified data instead of extrapolating Soviet intentions based on ideology. In essence, Team B was to generate hysteria about the external threat, that is, the Soviet Union and thus encourage the President and the Congress to engage in an arms race.

The activity of American Business Consulting Inc. as a mimic
private intelligence company

In 1947, the company started publishing the newsletter *Counterattack*, whose mission was to detect and expose communists. The ABC also performed for-profit activities – it conducted background checks on specific persons and companies to determine if they are linked to communists or their supporters.

CONCLUSION

In the United States, non-state intelligence actors have become full-fledged participants in the political decision-making process, both in U.S. foreign and domestic policy. In his article, Tim Shorrock, a journalist and private intelligence industry researcher, with reason stated that "this unaccountable oligarchy of spies controls the information that guides our military and civilian leaders (Shorrock, 2016).

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