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## THE IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF ESPIONAGE AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

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**Abstract:** *This paper defines espionage as the secret activity of collecting useful data. Old civilizations such as Ancient Rome, Greece or Egypt used a variety of spy techniques and methods in order to create a clear picture of their enemies. The XX century was marked by world wars and the bipolar world division, which resulted in great tensions and confrontations at the international level. It was the time when the world's most powerful intelligence services were formed, while their agents used various abilities to harm the rival side. Therefore, this paper analyzes spy activities, as well as espionage that take place in modern times, in which the race for weapons and economic domination occupies the most important place. Nowadays we are confronting a new form of espionage (industrial espionage), because multinational companies are consolidating their dominant position.*

**Key words:** *espionage, ancient civilizations, Cold War, intelligence agencies, industrial espionage*

### INTRODUCTION

From a historical point of view, espionage was defined as activity carried out by individuals (spies) in order to gather enemy's military secrets (Fraumann 1997: 303). It can also be determined as a set of activities carried out by foreign intelligence agencies, individuals or organizations acting independently or in connection with foreign services in order to obtain information to the detriment of national security (Glossario intelligence 2013, 97). Today, it is generally accepted that espionage is the world's "second oldest profession", given that its roots go back

to the distant past. History records its presence in the time of the Egyptian Empire, ancient Rome and Greece, but also in recent times, during the French Revolution or the First and Second World Wars. It reached its peak during the Cold War, when due to the then division into western and eastern parts the Old Continent was the conflict zone, primarily between capitalism and socialism as two opposite forms of economic organization. Of course, nowadays espionage is still present, but it takes place in significantly changed circumstances, following the development of modern technology. It is quite certain that a spy on the battlefield in time of Alexander the Great can hardly be brought under a common denominator with today's intelligence activity, which relies on computers and satellites. However, the basic principles, even in military, of developed countries of ancient times and today's politics are very similar. The human factor remained identical, for example, the tense relationship of trust and distrust towards a spy (Krieger 2014, 17). The general computerization of society has led to a narrowing of the range of occupations that in the past were performed exclusively by a person, either as an individual or in a group. The area of espionage had the same fate, but far from the fact that the human factor has ceased to play a very important role in gathering various types of confidential information. Spies are still people who are adorned with exceptional intelligence, resourcefulness and courage, which guarantees them the status of valuable factors in the field of international politics. Officials of the most powerful countries in the world have realized that man is the most important resource, but if he/she could offer additional valuable information as well, the initial advantage becomes more than certain. Information is a central element in providing adequate instruments within meaningful and functional actions of psychological warfare directed primarily against the enemy army, population and its allies (Musco 2014, 12). Classical espionage can be understood in two ways, as national, because it represents the extraterritorial action of a certain state for which it is not subject to responsibility, or as strictly related to individual, the agent who performs it, which is seen as intentional fraudulent action that entails personal and criminal responsibility before the damaged authority (Edmondson 1972: 434). For a long time United States of America has been gravitating internationally as the most powerful country in the world, while on the Old Continent without any doubt European Union has the greatest influence. United Kingdom still plays an important role worldwide, relying primarily on the strength of the domestic economy and traditional connection with Western Europe countries. Such a

position of the most powerful states is not a product of chance, but is the result of very well-designed and conducted operations that followed the Second World War. In the last two decades Russian Federation has significantly regained its influence in the world after the collapse of the Soviet Union, while at the same time China has officially become the second largest power on a global scale. Undoubtedly, their intelligence services have great merits in that regard. Certainly, Israel should not be forgotten either, since many justifiably believe that this country has a world-class primacy in the field of espionage for decades.

### **1. ESPIONAGE IN THE TIME OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS**

It is indisputable that the first significant document (The Art of War) which mentions espionage was the work of the ancient Chinese general and philosopher Sun Tzu. Considering that there is no place where it is impossible to conduct spy activities, the mentioned military leader defined the philosophy of war in order to act properly in conflict situations that occur during hostilities and achieve more efficient victories in them. During the two thousand years of our era, espionage involved reconnaissance activities on the battlefield, including knowledge of the position of enemy forces, type of terrain, special weapons, etc. The scouts had tasks to determine the distribution of enemy forces, their numbers and armaments (Burds 2011, 11). The military successes of the Ancient Romans, way of warfare, territorial space of the empire, state system, legal system, architecture, medicine and everyday life do not cease to attract the attention of historians, writers, politicians, philosophers and researchers of other scientific fields. It is known that the Romans were extremely distrustful of the establishment of a body that would resemble today's British MI5 or MI6, American CIA, Pakistani ISI or the Israeli Mossad. Namely, the Roman Senate was composed of a large number of family representatives that belonged to a rich stratum of society. Their interests differed, so they employed various agents and private investigators who gathered necessary information in order to carry out their trade activities in the local and wider area without hindrance. The establishment of a single body that would consequently monitor and disable the work of their informants certainly was not something that would go in their favor. However, situation changed completely with Caesar's coming to power, because he developed an entire information system composed of

numerous couriers and informants (Gee, Button & Kelly 2013, 3). The originator of espionage is considered to be the Roman consul Fabius Maximus, who sent his brother, a good connoisseur of the language of surrounding tribes and a master of disguise, to the territory of enemy for who they believed to be very difficult to control. The mission was successfully completed thanks to the mentioned skills. Practical Romans wanted to protect the internal security of the Empire in every way, so the appearance of wiretapping in the Forum or in public markets was not unusual. A large number of ancient writings testify to the existence of a secret police force, called *frumentarii*, whose headquarters were on the Roman hill called *Caeliann*. They weren't numerous, it is estimated that there were never more than two hundred members of the mentioned forces on the territory of the Empire (Silverstein 2007, 37). *Frumentarii* were formed as a special police detachment whose primary tasks were executions, arrests and espionage activities within the Empire. The name comes from the Latin word *frumentum*, which means corn, because their activities were also aimed at providing grain for the Roman army. The ordinary people saw them as a special military detachment in case of unexpected attacks that required a prompt and immediate reaction. That is how they earned the name - Roman Secret Service (Fuhrmann 2012, 152).

Also, the old Egyptians used spy activities extensively in order to locate tribes that would be effectively conquered and turned into slaves. In his book *The Enemy Within*, British military historian Terry Crowdy cites a case involving Egyptian pharaoh Rameses and a conflict with Hatite people, whose king sent two spies to Egyptian camp as alleged deserters. Their goal was to convince Pharaoh that Hatite army was still far away. Pharaoh believed their story and sent an army into an ambush. Fortunately, the Egyptians managed to capture two more Hatite spies who admitted that the main intention was actually to set up an ambush. So, Ramses was able to send additional troops and avoid disaster (Crowdy 2006, 15). The ancient Greeks were familiar with the pros and cons of espionage, but unlike today's modern definition of this term, they made no distinction between data collection, security, counterintelligence and covert operations. They simply used the word *strategy*, which covered all these activities (Sheldon 1986: 190). In ancient Greece, espionage was used in order to expand the state territory and perform delicate tasks of internal security. The official name for spies was *kataskopos*, which was a term used to denote individuals engaged in espionage activities and wiretapping. They provided the most reliable information, as they resided in under-explored

territories, on which they submitted special reports. Similar to their XXI century successors, they acted more often in groups than individually, using a number of reasons to justify the involuntary use of weapons (Russell 1999, 12).

## 2. XX CENTURY – THE GOLDEN AGE OF ESPIONAGE

The previous century represents a period of accelerated progress of human civilization in almost all segments. Technical innovations such as radio, television or computers became available to the people. The general industrialization marked mass migrations and population settlement in big cities, which resulted in creation of a megalopolis. However, the XX century brought two wars of world proportions and decades of confrontation between the West and the East. Unprecedented war destruction and population suffering, as well as the continuous arms race that followed the Second World War, are synonymous for the darkest side of human existence. As in the present, the interests of the great powers were directed towards the most dominant position on the global level. In such circumstances, conflicting parties try in every way to detect and warn the actions of their opponents, which means large financial expenses, huge security risks, technical equipment and most importantly, well-trained operatives (agents). All carried out actions must be well coordinated, because the primary goal is for the main actors to remain undetected and to achieve desired effect at the same time. That is why intelligence services were set up, as special institutions for gathering information that are extremely important for preserving national security. The most important individuals in the world of modern espionage were part of the American, Soviet, British, German or Israeli secret service. Some became spies for purely material reasons, while others found justification for their espionage activities in ideological understandings or highly expressed patriotism. In order to achieve the set goals, all countries use individuals whose operations involve high-level security risks and lead to serious disruption of international relations. However, regardless of the risks it entails, espionage remains a significant mean of collecting data of paramount importance. It is performed by intelligence services, which are defined as specialized professional organizations that independently or in cooperation with other bodies and organizations implement and realize part of state or political goals, using secret methods of actions, and in their country, party or movement protect vital secrets

and objects from intelligence and other subversive activities of a foreign state or organization (Opća enciklopedija 1989, 122).

United States of America until the Second World War neglected intelligence service, primarily due to its geostrategic position, because this country remained on the side of the war conflicts (Milašinović 1984, 189). Today, billions of dollars are allocated annually for the work of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The American intelligence service, which was founded in 1947 at the very beginning of the bipolar division of the world, now employs over twenty thousand people and has an extremely large influence on political factors in terms of making the most important decisions. The importance of its role is best seen in the fact that it is protected by law from all forms of control in terms of organization, functions, costs, etc. Eventually, the only restriction may come from the United States president, who in most cases tries to protect himself as the initiator of a certain secret operation, while protecting the intelligence service. The CIA pays great attention to counterintelligence work, since it has a large number of departments stationed in all American federal states. Their activity consists of overseeing rallies, public demonstrations and rallies that would propagate views contrary to those proclaimed by the state. At the international level, CIA operates primarily in countries that have weak defense mechanisms and in which democracy is still fragile. The results of its actions are clearly visible if we take into account the events related to the collapse of the Soviet Union, coups in Latin America, Africa or Asia, events in the Middle East or the Balkans. The claims that CIA represents the "state within a state" or "an extended arm of official American policy", are completely correct, however, thanks to its operations, United States manages to maintain a dominant position in the world.

Mossad is the Israeli intelligence agency founded by the first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion. Since its inception in 1948, Israel has been in continuous conflict with the Arab states that surround this country. A large number of secret actions of the Israeli intelligence service were carried out abroad and some of them in a spectacular way. The horrors of the Second World War, in which millions of Jews perished under Nazi terror, were partially mitigated by bringing direct perpetrators to justice. The credit for that goes primarily to the agents of the Israeli intelligence service. How one of the most prominent Nazis of the Second World War, Adolf Eichmann, was arrested (kidnapped) in Argentina, provides the best insight into the efficiency of Mossad's work. On that occasion, its members firstly

put Eichmann to sleep with narcotics and then, disguised as medical staff, with forged documents flew to Tel Aviv, where he was hanged in May 1962 after a trial. At first, Western countries and their intelligence services did not believe in Mossad's sincere intentions. The reasons should be sought in the fact that a large number of agents of the Israeli intelligence service, as well as prominent statesmen, were born or educated in Russia, which created a great deal of mistrust. Particularly interesting is the story of Ashraf Marwan, who worked for Mossad for almost three decades under the code name Angel, although there are indications that he was actually a double agent whose services were used extensively by the Egyptian intelligence service. He was a self-confident and extravagant chemist and son-in-law of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. When their relationship deteriorated after Egypt's humiliating defeat by Israel in 1967, Marwan and his wife Mona moved to London, where the young Egyptian was studying for a master's degree and working at the embassy. When Nasser died in September 1970, his son-in-law was close enough to his country's political elite to become the trustee and special envoy of his successor, Anwar Sadat. Marwan contacted Mossad's office in the British capital twice and was recruited as an Israeli agent, while his work was supervised by Mossad director Zvi Zamir. In the following years, Marwan supplied the Israelis with invaluable information about the Egyptian army and its military strategy. He also presented the details of the planned terrorist attack in Rome, conceived by Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi, as revenge for the Israeli shooting down of a Libyan passenger plane that accidentally entered Israeli airspace in February 1973 (Miller 2016). Also, the Western secret services considered Israel to be an obstacle to their economic policy at the international level, simply because this country had socialist party in power. However, the situation changed completely after Israeli agents successfully smuggled the secret speech of Nikita Khrushchev, the former Prime Minister of the Soviet Union, to the West, in which he criticized the then ruling party. During the 1980s, Mossad operatives assisted the British intelligence service and the Spanish anti-terrorist services in locating and eliminating members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Basque separatist movement (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna - ETA) (Rainesborough 2012, 5).

At the beginning of the XX century, Great Britain was in danger from the growing German imperialism. The then British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith issued an order to the Committee of Imperial Defense to establish a secret service, which was done in July 1909. The newly established Secret Service Bureau was

divided into two sectors, for domestic and international operations, which were initially stationed in the same building. During the First World War, the international sector worked closely with the Military Intelligence Agency, while after the end of the war, all attention was focused on Bolshevik Russia and its communist ideology. In the first decade of its existence, the British service had several names (Foreign Intelligence Service, Secret Service ...), while the current name Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) has been in use since 1920. The fascism that gripped Germany during the 1930s was a clear signal to the British intelligence service that the war was approaching, so a special sector was established to plan, prepare and carry out sabotage operations (Sector D). Operations were focused on German railways, telephone communications, agricultural goods and food supplies, which resulted in a reduction in the war potential of the enemy. Also, the tasks included protection of the most important economic and military facilities. Cold War greatly improved the already good relations between Western intelligence structures. The cooperation was developed even more in terms of joint projects and training of operatives, but also in implementation of specific actions in the field. In addition to external, Soviet enemy, the Secret Intelligence Service also faced internal problems at the time. The separatist aspirations of the Irish Republican Army, embodied in terrorist attacks, were largely neutralized thanks to secret agents who managed to infiltrate the very top of the enemy ranks, which often resulted in mass arrests. At present, there is still a division of intelligence services in the United Kingdom into the Security Service (MI5), responsible for protection from terrorist, espionage and other threats to national security, and the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), responsible for carrying out actions abroad, including collecting data on technological, military, scientific and other capacities of foreign countries.

Committee for State Security (KGB) was the Soviet intelligence service founded in 1954. Cold War was marked by continuous struggle of the opposing sides in terms of universal armaments. In such circumstances, espionage and counter-espionage activities occupied the most important place in the hierarchy of secret service tasks. The Soviet intelligence service did not differ from its opponents in that respect, moreover, it was extremely active. In addition to spy operations abroad, its activities were also directed at internal enemies who posed a threat to constitutional order, which included their liquidation. At first glance, the historical archives relating to the Cold War conflicts give the impression that the KGB was



much more successful than Western intelligence services. However, if we take into account the number of people or agents who "emigrated" from the East through secret channels to West Germany, United States or Great Britain in search of better living conditions or out of fear for their own safety, it is clear that their number is far greater than the number of those who fled from the West to the territory of the Soviet Union. One of the operatives who reported for years to the Western intelligence services on Soviet nuclear potentials was Oleg Penkovsky. He is considered to be the most important spy the West had on the territory of the Soviet Union. In addition to the role of a secret service operative, he was also a representative of Soviet Scientific Research Institute, which enabled him frequent trips abroad and possibility to submit data. It is not known how he was disclosed. He was sentenced to death in 1963, while many Soviet agents were recalled due to omissions in their work. Western intelligence circles considered KGB, which was disbanded in 1991, one of the pillars of the Soviet regime, because the secret police actively and continuously influenced decision-making at the highest level (Azrael 1988, 3).

### 3. ESPIONAGE IN THE MODERN TIMES

Western intelligence services victory in the early 1990s was crowned by the collapse of the Soviet Union. During the Cold War geostrategy played a major role, while today geoeconomics occupies even more dominant position in everyday life (Morbidelli 2005, 7). This is best seen if the overall americanization of the world is taken into account, given that the greatest threat was effectively neutralized. Americanization is actually the correct term that best defines the very commonly used term globalization, as a synonym for destroying traditional values (culture, national identity, religion...) and establishing new rules in the fields of politics and economics. XXI century is the time when American influence is more clear than ever before, which is primarily reflected in the field of economy, where multinational companies represent the most dominant entities. They are established and have headquarters in one country, while forming production plants abroad, guided primarily by desire for greater profit and elimination of competition in the market. The beginnings of the business espionage were recorded in the XV century, when a Chinese princess transferred silkworm cocoons to India

on a hat decorated with flowers, and in that way handed over to her future husband a strictly kept secret about the method of silk production. Then India started producing it and over time became one of the largest producers of silk in the world (Duraković 2007: 174).

Rival companies are a serious threat because they try to compete on the world market for the same clients (customers). Given the huge profits they strive for, such companies often resort to various methods through which they gather information about the activities of their competitors. This created a completely new type of espionage, economic (industrial), which involves the use of intelligence services in order to better position domestic (national) economic entities on the world market. Francesco Bacone, the author of *New Atlantis*, based his political platform on national egoism, scientific manipulation of things, industrial and scientific espionage. Such a political idea is manifested through unreserved competition between states, which means that the result of it can be nothing but a continuous conflict (Griscioli 2016, 3). In the field of economic (industrial) espionage, intelligence structures of the United States, China and United Kingdom are particularly active, trying to provide their companies (corporations) with as reliable information as possible about the activities of foreign competitors. Japan, Russia and Israel also have their own interests in this area. American lobbyists, who are also the most active, put pressure on governments, states and other top officials around the world by securing permits for the exploitation of natural resources, because they provide large profits to their companies abroad. Many foreign intelligence services aim to obtain economic, industrial and scientific secrets of other nations to support the growth and international competitiveness of their economy, save huge research and development costs and / or modernize their country's military apparatus (Corso Online di Alta Formazione 2020).

The well-known Swedish telecommunications company Ericsson, which was known in the world as one of the leading manufacturers of mobile phones, suddenly found itself at the center of a spy affair in 2002. Namely, most people believe that this company dealt exclusively with mobile telephony, but some sources informed that it was involved in development of highly sophisticated radar and missile systems, which supposed to be built into the most modern Swedish fighter aircraft, known as Gripen. The case escalated when it was determined that foreign intelligence services came into possession of confidential information, which resulted in arrest of two employees and one former employee of the

company, on suspicion of being responsible for violating security rules. However, the situation was further complicated when Sweden expelled two Russian diplomats who were linked to espionage in Ericsson. Although the Swedish government and company representatives were initially reluctant to disclose too many details to the public, such developments confirmed public claims that employees provided Russian intelligence with confidential information (Crane 2005: 236).

During 2019 many reports found that global organizations saw cyber espionage as a growing threat that affects industrial sectors as well as critical and strategic infrastructures around the world, including government ministries, railways, telecommunications providers, energy companies, hospitals and banks. Cyber espionage focuses on establishing geopolitics and stealing state and business secrets, intellectual property rights and property information in strategic areas (Douligeris, Raghimi & Barros Lourenço 2020, 2). Nowadays, intelligence services invest large financial amounts in order to collect data on capacities (employees, equipment, finances...) and business plans of economic giants from abroad, which provide a clear insight into future trends in the international market. They collect data at professional seminars and congresses, on the Internet or on the media, so these activities are legal. The problems are illegal ways of obtaining information or "traditional" methods, such as thefts, burglaries or blackmails of employees, which are widely used. Blackmail directed against people who are in decisive positions in large companies is nothing new, bearing in mind that the aim is to damage the reputation of a certain individual, which would ultimately have a negative impact on the entire team.

One of the most effective methods of economic espionage is the use of insiders or employees in competing companies. Insiders are efficient because they are very well acquainted with the content of classified documents, as well as with the places where confidential information are kept. It is almost impossible for other persons to access them, especially if they do not have the necessary authorizations and / or documents (cards) through which the access to well-guarded premises is provided. The information provided to foreign intelligence structures usually contains data on financial statements of companies, their planned budgets, clients they work with, market research... Modern era of high technology is based on top experts in the field of computer technology, better known as hackers, who use their knowledge to access the best protected information systems. In the time of fierce

competition on the international or domestic market, where corporations (companies) are inexorably destroying their former allies due to the continuous search for maximum profits, computer experts have become highly sought, which allows them to monetize their services. Some of them will not seek any compensation for their work, except those who are the fiercest opponents of globalization, large market corporations that neglect the rights of the ordinary worker, or capitalism as a form of economic organization. So, there are people who do not need to be hired beforehand, but can also start collecting information on their own initiative, for which a large number of individuals, intelligence structures or companies will later be more than interested.

## CONCLUSION

Espionage is the second oldest profession since it was used in the times of ancient Rome or Greece. The activities were aimed at collecting data on neighboring peoples and tribes that needed to be conquered. Of course, the espionage at that time was significantly limited comparing to recent times, but the goal was the same - timely, reliable and accurate information. The XX century is rightly called the golden age of espionage, because intelligence services were formed then as necessity, taking into account the tense political relations between East and West after the Second World War. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the aforementioned division of the world largely lost its significance, which, however, did not reflect on the importance of the role that espionage plays in creating international relations. The best proof are the events that are direct consequence of the process of globalization in which espionage is an extremely frequent activity whose modus operandi is improving on a daily basis. Namely, there are new forms of espionage on the scene, such as cyber espionage, which is a product of the general computerization of society in which computers are used to perform various types of work. Thus, they are used to provide information on the military potentials of certain countries, but also on development plans of business competitors. Undoubtedly, the most economically powerful countries in the world, led by the United States and China, resort to the engagement of individuals in order to obtain information about the economic potentials and economies of potentially interesting countries, as well as their successful economic entities. We should not

forget the fact that many spy activities of all intelligence services are aimed at better acquaintance and following of the current political situation in foreign countries. There are both, legal and illegal spy methods, which will certainly be a powerful weapon in the future to regulate global political, economic, security and other relations.

It should be emphasized that espionage implies constant risks, but at the same time has the power to influence the course of world history, especially if it is known that all countries keep certain information strictly confidential. That is why the goal of spy activities is to collect exactly the mentioned information, because they are marked as the most valuable ones and they bring a sure advantage to the one who possesses them. Espionage is imposed as necessity, as it provides direct access to relevant information through agents who are recruited in various ways. Information is most often connected with intelligence services of the countries they come from. The people from those services have previously undergone the necessary training. Often, the recruitment is directed to people whose task is to choose individuals who want to work against their country and become informants. The latter occupy high positions in countries they live, which gives them the access to important information, while their spiritus movens is, in addition to financial benefits, a sense of excitement when performing risky tasks. There is no need to explain the consequences for the successful state functioning if confidential data become available to interested foreign services. It is only certain that the national security in these cases would be in big trouble.

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