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## INTELLIGENCE SERVICES, OPERATIONS AND INTERESTS (the example of Serbia)

**Jovo Vučković**

Faculty of Business Studies and Law, „Union - Nikola Tesla“ University, Belgrade,  
Republic of Serbia, e-mail: jovo.vuckovic@fbsp.edu.rs

**Abstract:** *On the subject of “intelligence services...”, quite a few authors begin their scientific works with quotes about the ancient existence of these services and cite the legend of “Moses and his instructions to his emissaries to go to the land of Canaan and investigate the way of life there.” Some authors state that the intelligence “services” date even earlier and provide information about “a spy named Banum from the state of Mavi on the Euphrates River”. As part of the security system, the security community, all countries, even the smallest or less stable ones, have their own intelligence service. Lege artis, every state creates an intelligence community, which consists of several related services (in recent times of the agency type), whose goal is to ensure the security postulates needed by the state in preserving its statehood and taking positions in the current conduct of state policy (internal and external). In the available literature, with the aim of processing the topic, approach and thinking about the definition of the intelligence service, there is an explanation from before that it is an “organization of a class character”, that it uses a specific methodology in its work, has its own principles of work, and was formed as an organization which is authorized to, among other things, protect the security of the state whose system it is a part of. In principle, all intelligence services work according to two basic principles: territorial and linear, which are then further divided into constituent parts (organizational units). From the creation of the state as a community until today, the “services” have continuously evolved in all matters (capacity of employees, directions of action, work methods, etc.). From a historical point of view, in addition to important state tasks based on the Law and by-laws of the given state, certain deviations, omissions, and deliberate violations of business discipline were also recorded, which negatively affected the rating of the entire intelligence community, including the state in whose system it functioned. Open interferences in the internal politics of other, usually small states, have also been recorded. Today, all over the planet, according to the*

*available information and sometimes really justifiably, with a cursory insight into the actual situation, we witness the existence of modern intelligence agencies with enviable business results, and with the aim of comprehensively informing users apostrophized by the Law and by-laws in the given country.*

**Keywords:** *Security, Intelligence service, State, Agency, Law.*

## INTRODUCTION

As an inseparable part of the system of government and management, in every country, all authors who deal with statehood and security issues also mention the intelligence service, which is usually made up of several related services/agencies (civil, military, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ...), as an integral part of the overall security system. All this makes one of the important “pillars” of the state. The emergence of the state as an institution is convergent with the emergence of intelligence services. Of course, depending on the development of socio-economic relations and centuries-old and generational progress, the “service” was also built and progressed. Retrospectively, it was associated with a tribal leader, then with religious dignitaries, then with monarchs and rulers, and in recent political history with presidents and governments of individual states. The operations within the scope of the intelligence services are numerous, sometimes they intertwine, and it is not clear whether it is an intelligence or counter-intelligence issue. All services are established and operate on the basis of the Law and by-laws. In addition to secrecy in work, legality is the basic principle in these complex affairs. Intelligence agents work on the basis of a specific methodology, which they implement in practice, on the territory of the home country or in other countries, and they contact their own citizens or citizens of foreign countries, both in the country and abroad. Sometimes they act openly, officially and indirectly, and sometimes, if necessary, for the secrecy of the work, directly or through “third” parties. Depending on the size of the country (geographically and demographically), the strength and capacity of its economy, as well as its reputation in the international community, the reputation and strength of the intelligence service will be reciprocally comparable. Serbia, with its statehood, represents a good example of the evolution of the intelligence service from a group of rural semi-literate brave and wise (usually) men, through military intelligence officers committed to the kingdom who did not care much for democracy, to becoming a modern and well-equipped intelligence agency.

### 1. INTELLIGENCE SERVICE – CONCEPTUAL DETERMINATION

In the organizational sense, each intelligence service is a part of the security community of a country, which, in addition to civilian intelligence services (agencies), consists of military security services, military-police units, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, security services in DCM (diplomatic-consular missions), which, by line of work, are connected

to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is organized according to several principles, and it is usual that it is divided according to the territorial principle (headquarters, center, sub-center, detachment, field intelligence) and according to the functional principle (administration) which refers to the scope of work (administration for counterintelligence activities, administration for intelligence activities).

„A major role in the development of the church's intelligence service in the first half of the 16th century was played by the order of Jesuits - the Society of Jesus. The members of the order were, as a rule, carefully selected people, taught to blindly listen to their superiors without saying a word.“ [Černjak, B.E., 1969]

„The most important features of intelligence services are secrecy, which is a key element of their establishment and operation, followed by specialization, professionalization and teamwork.“ [Matić, D.,G., and Milošević, M. 2023.a)]

„The intelligence service is a socio-historical and class-based specialized organization that, within its scope of work, carries out secret intelligence, counter-intelligence and subversive content according to the vital interests of the adversary, using specific methods and means, with the aim of realizing political interests and protecting internal and external security.“ [Savić, A., 1994.]

## 2. ESTABLISHMENT AND ORGANIZATION OF SERVICES

At the beginning of the activity, those who were engaged in intelligence work, instructed by a leader or by the minister or statesman himself, performed rather simple intelligence work and brought confidential information to the client. Sometimes, such jobs resembled some simpler counterintelligence activity. As there was progress in the socio-economic sense, the state became stronger, and therefore the intelligence services were raised to a higher level. The end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was a time when intelligence work, especially in terms of organization, was improved, and numerous intelligence officers worked systematically and methodically and were “at hand” to their own country.

„Secret informing has existed since the beginning of time. It started in the family, developed in the cooperative, and perfected in all branches of international life “. [Popović, U., 1976. a]

If we ignore the Middle Ages, in which there certainly existed some groups that, at the then level of social development, engaged in intelligence work in Serbia, we can say that it is connected to the time of the First and Second Serbian uprisings and the acquisition of statehood.

“It is known that in the wartime part of the Serbian revolution, which includes the years of the First and Second Serbian Uprising and the Hadži-Prodan Rebellion (1804-1815), but also in the first years of Prince Miloš's reign, there were no organized intelligence services, but intelligence and counterintelligence activity was very pronounced. The Austrian service was certainly the most effective in this regard. In the period from

1815 to 1839, there was a wider institutionalization of intelligence activities in Serbia. That intelligence service and the apparatus of the Serbian administration were, in fact, Miloš's political police, which he managed and which was subordinated to him. By the decree from 1831, within the Belgrade police at that time, the function of "secret police for political affairs" was established, which had the task of "finding secret plots and watching so that the peace of the nation would not be disturbed". Despite everything, in Serbia, the civilian intelligence service, as a rule, had far less importance than the military service". [Stojančević, V., 2004. a]

Of course, in those ancient times, when there were no means of communication or any technical aids, everything came down to the human factor and primitive work with spies. From those acquaintances with persons, who would usually, on the basis of personal connections or for gold coins, inform the insurgents and/or prominent people from Karađorđe or Miloš' surroundings, Prota Mateja explains how the intelligence function worked.

"We had a paid friend in Zemun, and when he concluded that the Turks would attack us tomorrow, he came towards us in the plain, piled reeds and straw, lit a big flame - we see and already know that the Turks will come out to battle tomorrow, and we stay ready". [Stojančević, V., 2004. b]

At the time of the First Serbian Uprising, as well as during Karađorđe's time in general, as a form of counter-intelligence activity and correlation with criminal policy, verbal and written orders were given on how to behave towards espionage to the detriment of the Serbian people.

"Which Serb would be caught and testify that he secretly talks and is friendly with the Turks, that is, a spy, that he betrays his family to the Turks, he should be punished by having both his legs beaten in two places and both hands, and so that he gets up alive on the wheel and not to be taken off while the bone lasts". (Karađorđe Code, art. 24). [Stojančević, V., 2004. c]

During the reign of Prince Miloš, from the beginning and execution of the Second Serbian Uprising until his abdication, and also in the second part of his reign, political life was marked by the prince's absolute power. Of course, he had his close associates, but all final decisions, on all political issues, he made himself and his word was the last and undeniable.

"The intelligence service under Prince Miloš was directed to the political problems of foreign policy, but also to questions from the internal political life of the country. In both cases, Miloš's intelligence service did not only seek to obtain certain information, but also acted in the sense of public control of social movements and social thought, and in the sense of propaganda in favor of Miloš and his policies. [Stojančević, V., 2004. d]

The quote clearly shows that during Miloš's reign, and it is possible that this is a product of the time itself and the socio-political context, not only in Serbia at that time, there was no clear differentiation by departments (external, internal, ...). Although, since the First Serbian Uprising, the institution of *popeciteljstvo* (the ministry) came to life, it

was not clear or precise who was responsible for police affairs and who for intelligence activities. Of course, there were wrong data and information, but the Turkish and Austrian side often spread misinformation..

“The activity of the Serbian intelligence service under Prince Miloš can be talked about since the time when the Second Serbian Uprising was being prepared, although it cannot be said that it existed then in terms of its organization, that is, in terms of organizational forms of certain understandings and a certain way. It existed organizationally only if, in terms of military-political direction, it was concentrated for the main headquarters of Prince Miloš”. [Stojančević, V., 2004. e]

### **3. HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE TIME BEFORE AND BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS**

This period is particularly interesting and somewhat obscured in the sense that there are many political-legal and historical gaps, including the events that preceded the “Great War”, the war itself, as well as the peace, somewhat uncertain, until the outbreak of World War II. The state of Yugoslavia, created in 1918, right in that peacetime period until 1940/41, according to all indicators, was an intelligence training ground for the operation of a large number of services and intelligence agents.

After the well-known “Vidovdan” events of 1914 in Sarajevo and the barrage of baseless accusations against Serbia, the breaking up of the Military Intelligence Service of Serbia; the shooting of Dragutin Dimitrijević in Thessaloniki, the peace produced a weak and devastated military service, which could hardly cope with the overwhelmed intelligence of the great powers. When you add to that the mistrust of the three largest nations in the country, the growth of the Ustasha in conjunction with the VMRO and the Nazi-fascist services, then any serious action by the Serbian service should be seen as a kind of feat.

“Secret intelligence is a special branch of the intelligence service. Many wars, especially in 1914-1918, contributed to the development of the intelligence service in general. According to the statistics of the English General Staff in the war of 1914-1918, there were 150,000 persons of both sexes used as spies, messengers, agents and observers. There is an even greater number of those who protected and occasionally assisted in the work of those intelligence personnel “. [Popović, U., 1976. b]

“Shortly after the Serbian victory over Bulgaria, Apis returned home from Germany. In January 1913, while he was still in the hospital, Apis was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel, and in August of the same year he was appointed head of the Intelligence Section of the General Staff. From that place, Colonel Apis managed the entire intelligence network in Austria-Hungary, which unsuccessfully tried to strengthen its military strength and intentions towards Serbia.”. [Mekenzi., D., 1996.]

The above, in an egregious manner, speaks of the existence of a serious Military Intelligence Service in Serbia before and during the First World War. It also refers to adapting the service and its operatives to the current moment and existing political events, and

giving their contribution with the aim of providing intelligence information to the state authorities.

Given that in Serbia, not “exactly everything” worked, and bearing in mind that, in that country, jurisdictions were often mixed, it all resembled a certain informed pun from which the state did not benefit much.

“In the former Yugoslavia, almost everyone worked in the intelligence service. From finance, customs officers, border guards, gendarmes, territorial units, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of the Army and Navy to the Main General Staff”. [Popović, U., 1976. c]

Major Uglješa Popović describes his experience and contribution in creating the intelligence service of the Serbian army.

“At the beginning of May 1938, the commander of the cavalry school where I was on duty called me and told me: Mr. Major, get ready immediately and report to the Chief of the Main General Staff, General Dušan Simović! In the company of General Simović was also General Radivoje Janković. General Simović invited us to take our seats in the armchairs, and then he said the following in a calm voice: Mr. Major, I know that for nine years, in addition to your regular duties, you have been very successful in the field of military intelligence. This gives me the reason to turn to you for help and cooperation for the realization of an idea. In our army, in addition to the standard intelligence departments, a secret service should be formed, modeled after the French and British secret services. [Popović, U., 1976. d]

“**SAID - DONE!** I acted exactly according to the aforementioned directives of General Simović for the organization of the secret service, which I completed by a certain deadline and submitted to General Simović for inspection on August 25, 1938.

**Name:** Service of the secret military-intelligence service at the Main General Staff, abbreviation S-TVOS!

**Composition:** Headquarters in Belgrade: chief, file clerk, officer and non-commissioned officer for various extraordinary tasks within the scope of the service, 6 paid executive bodies and about 70 voluntary associates.

- Photo services: one aviation non-commissioned officer.
- Chemical service: one junior officer of the pharmacy service.
- Radio-goniometric service: one senior engineering officer.
- Cryptographic service: occasionally two PhDs in mathematics.

**On the field:** 13 intelligence centers in the country, with different composition, located in the border zones according to the countries with which we border and one intelligence center abroad, in Bern.

**Assignment:** A secret military-intelligence service for obtaining information of exceptional importance for the defense of the country.

**Composition and equipment:** Funds for equipment and other material expenses are provided by the Directorate of Intelligence.

**Work instructions:** Personal management of the head is planned for the head office, and special instructions have been prepared for each center. Each intelligence center had

the task of forming its outposts in the neighboring territory, and in addition several independent “antennas” under the direct management of the head of the intelligence center. The intelligence centers will have premises in private apartments under lease, which will be changed every six months. For connection with intelligence centers, the service had a special code. “ [Popović, U., 1976. e]

#### 4. STRUCTURE AND METHODS OF WORK

The structure and organization of the intelligence service in the current time will, first of all, depend on the political system of each individual country, as well as on the structure of the political government, that is, the distribution of forces of the political parties that make up the government of the country in question. Whether you want to admit it or not, political elites connected to the government have a very large influence on the organizational structure of the intelligence service. In recent times, the formatting of services is influenced by “tycoons” and powerful individuals.

In any case, a serious and modern intelligence service, *grosso modo*, should be organized according to two basic principles: 1. according to the geographical principle (at the same time also vertically) (headquarters, centers, sub-centers, detachments, points, advanced intelligence) and 2. according to the linear (horizontal) principle (intelligence, counter-intelligence line, line for the fight against organized crime, etc.). Lines or administrations specified could be further divided. Such a service or agency should also have management - a chief or director, deputy or chief of operations, assistants, and heads according to work lines, whose first superior would, possibly, be one of the assistant chiefs/directors, and the office of the special cash register would be linked to head/director's office.

“All modern intelligence services, respecting the aforementioned principles within their organization, have a similar organizational structure today. The establishment of organizational units and the schedule of work are implemented at: a) horizontal and b) vertical levels of organization.” [Nikolić, G. and Milošević, M., 2022.]

We consider it expedient to give a few remarks about the agency method of work, as a basic method in the work of intelligence services.

Intelligence services exist with the goal of creating an agency network, in the home country or abroad. The product of the given service is *an agent* (lat. agens. a person who does something, i.e. not professionally employed, but hired for secret cooperation... see more - G. Matić and M. Milošević, 2023, Taktika i metodika delovanja ob.-bez. službi, p. 184.) Of course, it is not easy to create an agent. Most often, it starts with the search for informants useful for the service. From several persons proposed and checks made for them, the service opts for one or more persons and approaches to recruitment. Before entering into contact, an operational plan is drawn up. After the first contact, if it is positive and the person shows interest in cooperation, the next contact is planned. The operative must differentiate the motives of the contacted person for cooperation (patriotism, compromising material, money, etc.). The intention of each service is to continue

cooperation with the associate in a conspiratorial way. In this direction, the intelligence officer, as a measure, instructs the associate what needs to be done until the next contact. After registering a person as an associate, the intelligence officer who keeps him connected can award certain rewards to the associate.

## 6. THE MODERN AGE

The transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century coincides with enormous progress in the sphere of science and technology, so intelligence officers increasingly use technical methods in their work. The planetary rules are no longer in the system of unipolarism, but bipolarism is emerging again, with the great appearance on the world stage of large and developed countries such as China and India, etc. Many world integrations are in progress. All this has led to a series of new security challenges. Terrorism has meandered in a number of separate directions that can be linked to ecology, bio-chemical reagents, climate change and the like. “Hybrid warfare” implied restructuring in the headquarters of major intelligence services, and General Artur Sibirovsky refined all this and launched the method of special actions and operations called “network-centric war”, etc. In this sense, the intelligence services had to ad hoc and sometimes forcefully adapt their interests and capacities to the emerging security dilemmas.

“The organizational structure of the intelligence services means its internal organization with the system of established organizational units, the schedule of work and the system of connections between individual parts of the organization”. [Matić,D.G., and Milošević,M., 2023.b)]

## CONCLUSION

Our ancestors, the “first people” lived, or rather existed, on planet Earth, in the sense that everything was reduced to bare survival and biological reproduction. Migrations were negligible, mostly in search of food, but in any case, not far from their habitats. At that pagan level, people gathered fruits and a little later, with some progress (spear, stone-bladed ax, etc.), engaged in small-scale hunting. Any abandonment of a cave or dwelling, no matter what it was, meant the possibility that you, our distant ancestors, would also become someone’s prey. So, on that basis and at that time, we record the first emerging forms of a certain awareness of security. Historically speaking, the roots of the concept of intelligence services and intelligence behavior, concepts such as intelligence service espionage, intelligence, various tactical tricks, etc., are derivatives of the concept of security. The authors mention several regions, that is, countries such as “Mavi”, “Assyria”, “Macedonia” where some primitive intelligence groups supposedly existed.

Analysts in the intelligence community generally agree that during the time of Karađorđe - the period before, during and after the First Serbian Uprising, as well as during the time of Miloš Obrenović and the period leading up to the Second Serbian Uprising, there were



no intelligence services, although the activity of various emissaries, messengers, trusted people, paid couriers, scouts and the like, was very vividly represented, which meant that “they” also relied heavily on some kind of intelligence activity.

In answering many open questions in the sphere of intelligence services, within the entire socio-political community of a serious and modern state, a multidisciplinary scientific approach is needed.

Namely, in the Middle Ages, for a large part and later, until the period in which the Great War took place (1914-1918) and in general during the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, the security system, in the sense of the existence of the intelligence community of a state as we know it in theory and in practice, we can say that it did not exist. Related to this period, institutions of an intelligence character were formed and formatted, which served the king, the emperor, that is, the ruler, and further, the heads of states and governments.

After the Second World War, all the intelligence capacities of the diametrically opposed blocs were focused on the arms race and defense against a possible military strike by the rival bloc. Intelligence services, both in theory and practice, have advanced and taken on “new signs” (bio-terrorism, cyber-terrorism, trafficking in nuclear components or waste, narcotics, new climate change and related dilemmas, etc.), which postulated expert approach and processing.

In this regard, we are witnessing various attempts, both on a micro level and globally, to connect to various state or international systemically organized structures (INTERPOL; EUROPOL, OSCE, OUKB).

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