# A New Risk Factor in the Evolution of Intelligence

## Ecaterina Guiţă[1]

**Abstract**: The purpose of this article is to point out the way intelligence evolved in the last decades with the accent on the new threats or challenges it's faced with nowadays as well as to highlight it's importance in every matter concerning the states but also raising to the level of the entire international system through it's new ways of responding and operating in the informational era. Just as Michael Herman and Richard J. Aldrich pointed out in their works, it is well known that the future of intelligence should concern every actor provided that the more technology evolves it's role as well as the need for such structures are increasing. The main methods employed were documentation, observation, research and case study. Conducting this study we learned that the problem is still actual as the discussions concerning a major issue intelligence is confronted with are still open. The study has implications in the academic groups because intelligence needs more and more specialists capable to face every situation no matter how unforeseen. The present paper brings together different points of view concerning the matter but was also meant as an alarm signal for the readers.

**Keywords:** development; information; revolution; education; threat

## Conceptual Frame

The term intelligence has various meanings, however in this particular context it is used to define secret information that governments collect about an enemy or possible enemy but it may also refer to governmental organizations that collect information, as well as the people working for such organizations.[2]

"As an institution, it serves central and not local government. It deals with information, but in ways that differ from information-gathering and information-handling that take place as integral parts of government and military command and control. It is a specialist activity; in military terms it is "staff" not "line". (Herman, 2001)

Once the Cold War ended, the world has begun to develop more, therefore nowadays we are witnesses to the revolution of knowledge and technology which gradually came to influence every form of manifestation or individuality, as well as the contemporary society. This marked the beginning of a fundamental change in every possible aspect, and so the world as people knew it before the last quarter of the 20th century suddenly suffered major changes that lead to a whole new perspective. The ways of thinking and reacting at a national level were altered due to the ulterior progress and sometimes

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[1] Student, Danubius University of Galati, Faculty of Communication Sciences and International Relations, Romania, Address: 3 Galati Blvd, 800654 Galati, Romania, Tel.: +40372361102, Fax: +40372361290, Corresponding author: ecaterina.guita@gmail.com
[2] "A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles", Oxford United Kingdom, Oxford University Press, 1989 (commonly known as "The Oxford English Dictionary").

even completely reformed, the world finding itself at the gates of a new evolutional age, nowadays known as the informational era.[1]

Faced with a massive amount of information, suddenly became available at a global range through publications, but mostly through computer technology and networks, the intelligence structure was forced to adapt to all the transformations using a double approach. (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000)

First of all, due to the imperative necessity of rapid response and extended knowledge all the processes and procedures were adapted through new ways of action and decision in operations, as well as the consolidation of the analytical skills.

Second, technology became a major resource extremely useful in the shaping of the international system, as well as an increasing factor of power in the informational area, which led to a fierce competition centred on investments meant to ensure the progress of this particular domain.

## The Evolution of Intelligence in the Permanently Changing Informational Era

The first decade following the end of the Cold War was an unfortunate period for the entire intelligence structure due to the fact that the reformation of the system towards the new directions, set by the anterior changes, proved itself to be hard to apply in the middle of the technological progress, worldwide information availability and networks development. All of the above led to the emergence of various phenomena which were to mark the informational era and influence it's every aspect.

In a world of constantly changing threats, globalization[2] and the new terrorism seem to be the major events the intelligence is confronted with, both of them requiring different approaches and strategies concerning discipline, analysis, the management of the information, but also centered on bringing imagination, intuition and innovation in the process. (Aldrich, 2008)

The reform of intelligence is not a new concept, provided that the intelligence structures were always in need of adjusting their objectives, operational environments and requirements concerning surveillance and external control; however most of the adjustments only represented the beginning of evolution. (Wilson, 2008)

The big challenge intelligence is faced with in the informational era is responding more and more efficiently to an enlarged number of threats insufficiently defined which followed the technological progress.

Among the several changes occurring in the intelligence structures there is also the move towards more action, represented by the efforts to go beyond the passive gathering of intelligence seen in the past decade under the impact of globalization. (Aldrich, 2009)

"Globalization has compelled many domestic security intelligence agencies and foreign intelligence agencies to work alongside each other." (Aldrich, 2009) and so the "need to know" became "need to share".

"Intelligence means more than ever intelligence; a game of the best against the best." (Fota, 2012)

In a world where numerous threats keep appearing due to the evolution of technology enforced by the

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[1] Romanian Information Service, "SRI in the informational era", http://www.sri.ro/fisiere/docp/VIZIUNE2011_2015.pdf, accessed on the 12th of March 2014.
[2] The process by which businesses or other organizations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale. (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1989)

fierce competition arising among actors whose primary purpose is the investment in research and progress; threats such as new terrorism, biological weapons, nuclear armament, hackers, and many more; the essential question is freedom or security?

That security is assured by those organisms subordinated to the states, and not only, which have the interest of ensuring the protection of the classified information on all it's levels, as well as protection from any kind of threat or cyber-attack through every means possible.

The accelerated development of technology made the number and variety of threats grow notably and so today, in the so called "informational era" here we are faced with yet another major issue: the internet and every virtual environment.

## Expectations of Intelligence in the Informational Era

Appeared as a result of globalization, the internet compresses space and time facilitating any

kind of informational exchange worldwide; which helps people learn, create, discover or form ties at a global level. But every good has it's bad side so along with all these benefits, the internet makes it easier for information to be lacked, spies to get inside national databases and countless other threats the world is facing.[1]

Every bit of information which happens not to be under protection at a certain time becomes public worldwide through the internet. So how is this matter going to be handled? By protecting the information, of course.

People are already familiar with the structures every state is creating in order to ensure it's integrity and also the safety of it's citizens, as well as the safe keeping of classified information and national secrets;[2] but the question is: until when will all these services be able to resist in front of the continuous progress and challenging openness?

Is there a limit to all this progress? Not as long as this competition of investments between actors is still going on and technology is viewed as a resource. In fact we might as well say that the limit of progress is the lack of technology itself; but nowadays even such places where technology is not yet materialized are diminishing considerably and those are definitely not the great powers ruling the world.

Therefore the world needs more and more intelligence specialists who have the skills and capacities to face every situation no matter how unforeseen, but also the imagination and fresh vision needed to come up with solutions and new ways of approaching every matter as the expectations of intelligence keep growing.[3]

## A New Revolution?

In the last two years there has been another notable change, even greater than the massive access at information. Not only meaningful amounts of information in a variety of domains suddenly became

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[1] Romanian Information Service, official site, "Cyberintelligence", http://www.sri.ro/Cyberintelligence.html, accessed on the 18th of March 2014.

[2] International Romanian Information Service, official site, "Security and Defense", http://www.sri.com/research-development/security-defense, accessed on the 18th of March 2014.

[3] Intelligence and National Security Alliance, "Expectations of Intelligence in the Informational Age", http://issuu.com/insalliance/docs/rebalanceexpectations, accessed on the 16th of March 2014.

public worldwide, but lately a new phenomenon has appeared which can be qualified as an attempt to globalize even education.

We might be witnesses of a new revolution completely different than the one in the past, yet not totally unrelated. As we already know, each state has its own educational system strictly coordinated by the government. But what if all those different systems we have known so far would suddenly become only one, enforced and supported by an undeniable reality: technology!?

What if people worldwide would share the same educational system and means as well as the same access to anything they would want to learn or study? We already know every competence and knowledge we have is the result of education; we create our systems of values based on the education we receive and all the goals we set for the future are directly related to our educational degree.

Education has a major impact in each and every one of our lives and can influence someone's path decisively towards good but equally towards bad. In a world where everyone has the free knowledge and information applicable at a global scale, not controlled by anything and with no set rules either, how many would chose to use that information for good and how many would chose the other?

These seem to be some of the few questions the proliferation of MOOC[1] in the last two years might have arouse. Intended as a "liberalization of education" the MOOC are open online courses written by some of the best minds in the world teaching in well-known universities acknowledged worldwide for their extraordinary achievements and results like: Harvard, Stanford, Edinburgh or Yale University.[2]

In short; each and every one of us can access the courses and take them freely, in the end obtaining a qualification certificate as well as more or less knowledge or interest regarding any particular domain.[3]

Is this the first step towards a unique and universal educational system based on technology? Is it more of a benefice than a prejudice to the world as we know it? Can it help cultivate people's interest and obtain progress?

As far as the European Union is concerned, these courses are relatively new; therefore the European Union's at risk of being late in this domain, provided that the majority of the courses come from other non-European actors. This matter made the subject of a debate of the European Union's Council in November 2013.[4]

What attitude will the European Union adopt concerning this matter of OER[5] ? But more importantly, what are the effects of this tendency of an universal open educational system based on open educational resources and technology on intelligence?

Could this "liberalization of education" with all it's benefits turn into a threat for the intelligence?

We have yet to see what the future will bring.

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[1] A course of study made available over the Internet without charge to a very large number of people (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1989).
[2] Harvard University, Berkley University of California, The University of Texas, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, https://www.edx.org/,accessed on the 18th of March 2014.
[3] Educause Conference 2014, http://www.educause.edu/annual-conference, accessed on the 18th of March 2014.
[4] European Union's Council, "Open Educational Resources and Digital Learning, Enlarged Debate 15591/13, Bruxelles, 6th of November 2013, http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=RO&t=PDF&gc=true&sc=false&f=ST%2015591%202013%20INIT.
[5] Open Educational Resources are any type of educational materials that are in the public domain or introduced with an open license. The nature of these open materials means that anyone can legally and freely copy, use, adapt and re-share them. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Communication and Information, "What are European Educational Resources?", http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/access-to-knowledge/open-educational-resources/what-are-open-educational-resources-oers/.

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