

The Economic Intelligence Services

Francesco Cossiga

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the global spread of competition have shifted part of the focus in what can be defined as “State security” (and, consequently, the focus intelligence and security services established for that purpose) from the military domain and even strictly political to the economic domain. The domination of the economic and financial domains – including the policies defined thereby – has changed the goals of the intelligence services and in the area of defense, on those of the security services (counterintelligence, in the broadest sense of the word, i.e., counter-espionage, counter-interference, counter-disinformation and the passive protection of secrets) and, thereby, their organization as well. All countries in the world include in their political agenda that aspect of the problem, i.e., their internal and external security.

The theme of security and industrial data collection is relatively new and the intelligence or security services, in dealing with the problem, cannot benefit from the type of broad experience, which they have accumulated in the fields of military and political security and intelligence. Therefore, this gives rise to the need for a precise definition of the economic competence of security and intelligence services in order to avoid suspicion on the part of existing institutions – such as the Central Bank, various monetary institutions, and economy-oriented ministries (departments) - that a new center is emerging which is capable of eroding part of their powers. This also gives rise to concern among private operators, who fear additional interference by the State with their business and consequently thwart the establishment of a robust economic and financial structure, even while understanding, this being in their direct and indirect interest, the need for internal security – i.e. defense against intelligence-type attacks, in terms of interference, or disinformation originating from foreign centers and, in particu-

lar, from the intelligence services, also specifically affecting other countries.

In this historically new phase of intelligence services, the services must endeavor to explain, as accurately as possible, the operations related to the economic security of the State, including a limitation clause, which will reassure both the corporate and private centers as to the goals being pursued. Research undertaken in a number of countries has made it possible to identify several categories of danger which may affect state security and which has a specific economic origin. One category, about which much is already known, is that of industrial espionage, which at one time was undertaken for military purposes, but which nowadays is done to further the economic-strategic goals of a country.

Others regard the impacts, on the security of the State, of changes in the international economic order, of "anarchic" migratory trends, biological and ecological manipulations, cultural and religious identity crises rooted in the economy, the economic imbalance between blocs of countries, banking and financial crises capable of upsetting the economic order, and economic crises capable of altering public order.

It should be emphasized that each of the issues listed above has its own specific features, either traditional ones (in other words, exclusively economic), in which case it is dealt with by the extant private or public centers, or new ones, which affect the security of the State and which therefore require the intervention of intelligence and security services. By way of example, let us examine the issue of "anarchic" (illegal) immigration; the consideration of its effects on the labor market and on the ordinary crime rate is entrusted to economic policy authorities and those charged with safeguarding public order. However, they become the concern of intelligence and security services if the body of legal and illegal immigration conceals terrorist elements aiming to subvert of the democratic order and the well-being of the citizens and threaten the economic-financial balance of the state and its interests. These issues and the related activities demand the development of an appropriate foreign economic-financial policy of the State; hence the need for a reform of the concept and structure – not only of security operations, but also of economic-financial intelligence, collection, analysis and dissemination of information acquired abroad or related to foreign subjects, overt and covert alike.

Since the matters enumerated are of interest to more than one center, it is indispensable to ensure the cooperation of all, and therefore the services must ensure that they do not violate the limits of the authorization, and must issue such instructions to the centers which are in actual possession of information that they

need, in order to discharge their respective intelligence and security operations.

Within such a framework, a clearer distinction between the collection of information, which must be centralized for reasons of economy of scale, and their processing, which is the key underlying the success of intelligence and security services – and decision-making based on available facilities, will make it possible to evaluate overall intelligence activities, defensive and offensive ones like.