# SMART POWER – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION IN INTELLIGENCE

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*The article, starting mainly from the concerns of Romanian authors in the field, intends to highlight the importance of education and training in defining, building, supporting and designing a Smart Power strategic model, as a way to make optimal use of the resources and power tools a state has at its disposal for national interests, values, objectives and goals.*

*Currently, one of the relevant characteristics of the security environment is the quantitative domination of information. Its production, management, manipulation, multiplication and capitalisation transcend strictly institutionalised boundaries, and the effects are found in all areas of society.*

*In this context, the specific training and education of specialists in intelligence institutions, accepted as one of the power tools of states, takes place under the complexity of the evolution of information and means of transmission and processing, in socio-economic developments, including pandemics, as well as under the pressure of the dynamics of political debates and actions.*

*Keywords: hard power; intelligence; education; leadership; performance;*

## INTRODUCTION. SMART POWER – SHORT THEORETICAL APPROACH

Credited as one of the most important authors who has approached the concept of *"smart power"*, Joseph Nye (Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Relations in the Clinton Administration) starts from defining power as the ability of a state to achieve the desired results, including changing the behaviours of other actors, if the situation requires.

Frequently, power is associated with the possession of specific resources, generally associated with: population, territory, natural resources, economic means, military force; power knows a potential or a materialised dimension; through government policies whose success depends on skilled leaders and state leaders. Traditionally, the test of great power has been the constitution of the *"force for war"* (Nye, 2002, p. 4).

Nye details the distinction, differentiating between *hard power* (derived from military and economic instruments) and *soft power* (generated and sustained by the attractiveness offered by the culture, ideology, values, institutions of a state) as a phenomenon that depends on the degree or consistency of their use, both in the nature of the behaviour and in the materiality of the related tools and resources. Both types of power interact, support each other, and are aspects of the ability to achieve goals, by affecting the behaviours of other actors. As an example, *"command power"* is the ability to exercise authority (hard), to change what others do and resides in coercion or persuasion (induction). *"Co-optive power"* represents the capacity, the ability of a state to redesign, remake, influence and reformulate (*"shape"*) what other state actors want and can derive from the attractiveness of a culture and ideology, respectively from the ability to manipulate the political option agenda. Obviously, the forms of behaviour of states in the case of exercising power in international relations take place along a continuum, between the two extremes (the power to exercise authority, respectively to co-opt) and may include: coercion, persuasion, influencing the political agenda, attractiveness. From this perspective, there is a tendency to associate the resources specific to soft power with the behaviour attributed to co-opting power, while the resources associated with hard power are rather related to the behaviour of exercising command, domination, the relationship being, however, imperfect. As an example, some states may be more attracted to states that have the power to exercise authority, due to the myth

of invincibility enjoyed by the latter; at the same time, authority can sometimes be used to set up institutions that later become legitimate. But, in general, the association presented above is the one that refers to the reference of soft and hard power. (Ibid., p.179).

In line with the argument, power in the global information age is becoming less tangible and less and less coercive, especially among advanced states. In a diverse world, such as today, all three sources of power, military, economic and soft remain relevant, in varying degrees of interaction and mutual influence, and if current economic and social trends are maintained, leadership in the information revolution and soft power will become increasingly important. The power in the 21st century will be exercised through a mix of hard and soft resources and tools. In this context, the USA will continue to employ more than any other state the three sources: military, economic and soft power, and the biggest mistake the USA could make in this context would be to fail in a one-dimensional approach and consider that investing exclusively in the military instrument will ensure and sustain American power. (Ibid., pp.11-12).

On the other hand, subsumed under the purpose of the topic and the article, considering the term SMART as an acronym, the literature in the field of organisation management proposes it as a usual, practical way to define managerial objectives: Specific Measurable Achievable/Agreed Relevant Timely. That is why, management, as a leadership structure, must consider a number of criteria for establishing and defining an organisational goal: to be specific, to refer to a specific field, to be clearly and precisely defined; to be measurable, quantifiable through the managerial tools available, to allow its evaluation (quantitative and qualitative) as objective as possible; to be able to be satisfied with the resources available to the organisation, taking into account, in particular, the human resource, with its qualifications, competences and characteristics and at the same time to be approved by the employees and management; to be relevant for the field of activity of the organisation and to contribute to the mission of the organisation, to be achievable in a concretely established time interval, to be framed in time. The multitude of specialised works in the field offers a special place to this way of approaching the objectives. Thus, the management's perspective on defining goals or objectives can be convergent to the ways of using the power tools available to politico-military or political decision- makers.

Promoted as a strategic model for the 21st century, smart power requires the elites of a state, especially the political class, to identify and materialise the characteristics of public institutions, define policies, implement and correct them in a timely manner, and involve all constituents of society in a national synergy, on two levels, domestic and international. Externally, the intelligent use of national power

instruments requires the vision and action of state institutions, the national business environment, academia and civil society to identify those forms of participation and international cooperation and partnership through which national interests are supported, political objectives are achieved, and vulnerabilities, risks and threats are limited in the context of the judicious use of available resources.

Concluding, the smart power model highlights and imposes the optimal use of power tools available to a state to achieve national goals, maintaining them in the appropriate level of ambition and supporting the national interest in the long run.

## INTELLIGENCE IN TODAY'S SOCIETAL ENVIRONMENT

In the information age (characterised by uncertainty and information abundance – Open Source Revolution, exponential developments of research and analysis in private academia etc.) in which states continue to remain the fundamental factor in organising power and generating order worldwide, the role of intelligence services is mainly to identify threats, through their ability to provide the policy makers with that *"key to decrypting reality"*, represented by the mass of data, facts, events, processes available for the formation of strategic knowledge, which no other source of information can provide (Maior, 2010, p. 31).

The economic-social, technological and institutional challenges of the operational environment to this fundamental activity are amplified in the current context of the SarsCov2 pandemic, with all the limitations, institutional, behavioural, political and social changes related. Without claiming to exhaust all the factors, events or actions with an impact on the proper functioning of state institutions, I present below a recent approach, relatively different from the classic analysis on the PMESIIE model (Political, Military, Economic, Social, Informational, Infrastructure, Environment), which brings to the fore a number of characteristics of contemporary society (developed from another perspective), which intelligence services must take into account.

Thus, the events, phenomena and socio-demographic, technological and informational developments, in a horizon of 20-25 years, could be fundamentally influenced by 10 factors, which would determine the evolution of humanity rather towards the formation of the *"client"* type of individual *(Cliens)* and "angry" *(Iratus)*, than to Homo Deus of whom Youval Harari speaks optimistically in his works (Bondoc, 2020):

1. Secularism (and the secularisation of urban life) has allowed the strong development of science and technology, with related advances, but has focused on material and short-term issues, causing the shift of *"responsibility"* from God to man;

- This situation favours the increase in the number of people with a weaker connection with the divinity, the tendency towards excesses, the weakening of morality, by its descent from the transcendent to the mundane, the increase in popular dissatisfaction, affecting at the same time the feelings of religious people.

2. The development of sewage and drinking water systems, as well as the progress of the pharmaceutical and medical industry have brought immense benefits but have decoupled humanity from natural evolution;
   - Social progress has increased life expectancy, but physically there is dependence on technology and medication, decreased tolerance to pain, discomfort, and increased *"needs"* and expectations of support from outside.

3. Comfort, at home, office and in cities, has led to diminishing challenges and therefore physical and intellectual resistance, for the majority of the population, increasing the gap between life and nature.
   - The degree of difficulty and the number of challenges have decreased for a large part of the population, and the physical consequences (obesity, muscle weakness, skeletal changes etc.) will be complemented by the effects on the human intellect, underused.

4. Permanent stimulation of consumption leads to complex changes in behaviour.
   - Stimulating the frequent multiplication and change (by the appeal of traders mainly to the emotional, mobile side and to prioritising the short term at the expense of reason and the long term) of products and services purchased with a new variant will lead to attenuation of deep relationships and tendency for superficial behaviours, lacking in stable points of reference.

5. The volume and frequency of scientific developments have pushed more and more people towards a feeling of professional and even social inadequacy, as they do not know how to keep up.
   - The current continuous development determines more frequent economic, professional changes and human interactions than a person normally comfortably endures, which generates increased intellectual challenges, the management of which requires external support (guidance or specialised training); many people become resentful and are tempted to politically support populist solutions and offers that, in exchange for votes, promise miracles and blame "others" (the rich, the foreigner, the traitor in the party etc.) for their own difficulties. Constant frustration leads to outbursts of anger.

6.  The information society has aggravated the above problems. Although it has greatly facilitated access to information and experiences, it has had serious negative effects.

    • Among them the following can be mentioned: brain flooding with a large volume of data, difficult to manage (feeling overwhelmed), excessive ideas, images, sounds, movements, smells, taste sensations and social interactions being several times higher compared to a century ago; emotional, sensationalist and exhibitionist/tabloid manifestations, to stand out as personal forms of expression (through the media, on social platforms or on other public occasions); the massive spread of false news through the internet (favoured by the natural inclination of the human being towards sensational, conspiratorial news and scenarios, negative towards the normal), which affects the calm and cohesion of society; Immediate *"rewards"*, favouring short-term concentration and dependence on the support of others.

7.  Exceeding the level of basic needs, the accumulated wealth and technology of society, as well as the awareness of the vastness and complexity of a global world have induced a sense of security, but also of frustration, with the decrease of individual responsibility.

    • Societal complexity tends to be increasingly difficult to understand, to inhibit individual participation in the general state of well-being, to cover up irregularities and to tolerate the irresponsible (who do not end up being held accountable); politically, the client tends to act in the short term, according to the electoral cycle (4-5 years) or why not, the professional one (to change jobs every few years);

8.  Many people have reached to the level in the *"Maslow's pyramid"* at which they want to express themselves and be listened to/appreciated; this coincides with the excessive feeding by marketing and the information society of emotional and positional radicalism.

    • The existence of numerous political, academical, ideological stances determine the appearance and promotion of the radical discourse, so that the message reaches the target; the traditional debate tends to be blurred by this type of discourse and message, which affects the focus on principles, social cohesion and real dialogue.

9.  The universal voting system has allowed a reasonable harmonisation of interests between the elites and the general interest for about 70-80 years, but now society is experiencing growing cracks.

    • As long as the socio-economic model sought to cover basic needs, the general interest was harmonised with the real needs of most people,

and the issues under discussion were easier to perceive correctly; due to the overcoming of basic needs in many states, the consumer society in the information age of the wealth of data, products and services pushes to stimulate the emotional and the irrational, with political consequences of favouring emotional debates to the detriment of the rational; there is an urgent need to ensure correct information and democratic training of the population in the first years of school.

10. The phenomenon of globalisation subjects the individual: a. to an intense professional competition; b. to pressure for cultural/identity uniformity too fast; c. to *"upward"* comparisons with the highest (world) standards, including from a socio-political point of view.

   • The human need for security and control determines the tendency of individuals' behaviour towards stability and predictability. However, technological changes have significantly increased the individual and collective efforts for professional and economic adaptation, with the related difficulties and concerns; the tendency for cultural, socio-political and identity uniformity supplements these efforts. The status induced by the permanent client, under the slogan *"the client is always right"* raises expectations in individuals about their rights to others, misunderstood, feelings of frustration, emotional instability, anger, expression of radical messages, negativity, rejection of long-term solutions.

The ten factors have the potential to generate detrimental consequences for human society as a whole:

   • The physical and mental decline of the average person, although there are many premises for significant progress.
   • The emergence of a new type of *"religion"*, consumerist, exaggerated, premature and unsustainable, for large segments of the population, which are disconnected from their own contribution to society.
   • The temptation, from more and more groups of individuals of communicative aggression of those who have a different opinion, including the destruction of current social models, without proposals for replacement, which becomes similar to an anarchic approach.
   • A tendency of cheerful irresponsibility manifested by many decision-makers, on different levels of exercising public functions, with prospects of aggravation of problems.

The highlighted factors feed into each other and encourage deviant behaviours, which must be counterbalanced by the right mix of smart and reasonable public policies, with a special note on preparing the younger generation to properly manage the abundance of information to which it is subjected.

With regard to intelligence, the policies need to take into account that relevant societal change drivers are pushing intelligence services to experience a paradigm shift, which is generally in the form of transition processes specific to change management, based on a series of axioms (Nițu, 2018, p. 218):

- from classical, symmetrical and clear risks to asymmetrical, increasingly diffuse and non-linear risks;
- from information to intelligence;
- from state-focused security to individual security (human security);
- from intelligence agencies to (increasingly integrated) intelligence communities;
- from competition to cooperation and synergistic work between agencies through joint task forces on clear and specific objectives, areas or topics;
- from national security systems to joint undertakings by objectives, areas or topics of expertise;
- from the linear intell cycle to network intell processes;
- from information resources management to knowledge management;
- from old to new IT applications;
- from need to know to need to share and even responsibility to provide;
- from the division of labour to multidisciplinary task forces and fusion centres;
- from the focus on forecasts to scenarios and simulations designed to change the future;
- from in-house training methods to extensive partnerships with academia and civil society;
- from paper-based intell products to briefers that interact directly with consumers/beneficiaries.

The process of change is directly focused on the staff training and education processes in institutions responsible for managing information resources and knowledge, causing decision-makers and leaders of education and training structures to formulate and materialise new formulas for strategic innovation and transformational decisions (Colesniuc, 2019).

## PERSONNEL AND STAFF TRAINING – STRATEGIC FUNCTION OF INTELLIGENCE INSTITUTIONS

The intelligence services are part of the same logic of operations in any organisation (defined, controlled and coordinated form of human activities to achieve the proposed goals), regardless of their functional orientation, in the constitutive manner: profit – non-profit/state – private.

The components of any organisation, including those working in the field of intelligence, are primarily dependent on the human factor, its quality, motivation, employment, satisfaction, leadership and interaction in a regulated framework and oriented to a previously defined purpose.

The *smart power* model for intelligence services cannot be developed on an educational component without appealing to the historical and institutional continuum. Strategic knowledge is generated and becomes more developed by assuming the legacy of previous knowledge, institutional experiences, transformed into lessons learned, which are included in the current educational process for training experts and leaders. The curricula design has to take into account both the beneficiaries' training request, expressed and transposed in the graduate model or the competencies aimed to be achieved at the end of the training (from the perspective of being, knowing, doing), as well as the evolution of the security environment in the fundamental fields (political, economic-financial, socio-cultural, military, technological, infrastructure, environment and climate) whose understanding and knowledge is conferred by the cognitive-interpretive functions of the training structures.

The whole vocational training process includes at least three important participants, who thus build a mutually beneficial relationship: the *"student/ employee"*, the *"instructor/professor"* and the *"beneficiary/employer"*.

Their interaction is under the obligation to define, adopt, internalise and develop those professional skills, values, attitudes and behaviours for the benefit of the product of educational and training process (the student) to be able to contribute to the mission of the organisation, the intelligence service. This is minimally defined as avoiding strategic surprise and providing current information and strategic knowledge for decision-makers, and, in the future, to promote the continuous improvement of internal processes to ensure the performance of the institution and its adaptation to current and future security challenges.

Analyses on the skills required by the labour market in populated urban areas, larger than 100,000 inhabitants, show the preference, the tendency of companies to hire staff, on the distribution of soft (a) and hard (b) skills, respectively, which prove or hold: a. creativity (similar to 2019), persuasion (s.2019), ability to collaborate (s.2019), ability to adapt (s.2019), emotional intelligence; b. competencies regarding: blockchain, cloud computing, analytical reasoning (s.2019), artificial intelligence, UX Design (s.2019), business analysis, affiliate marketing, sales (s.2019), scientific computing, video production (Pate, 2020).

One of the important and constant objectives of the organisations involved in the education and training process is the training of leaders. Declaratively, it is a permanent topic evoked by the management of any organisation, whether it is

a public institution, company or non-governmental organisation. Intelligence services are no exception. The challenge of the process itself, with tactical characteristics, at first sight, has strategic influences, as it represents the option for continuity and performance of the current leadership, which must be subsumed under the triangulation of ethos-pathos-logos.

Therefore, in the curricula design, the issues of concern are legitimately expressed regarding: the optimal weight of the specific disciplines; the centre of gravity of this training; defining the relationships and limits between technical, social, communication and leadership skills; the adequacy of the technical-scientific tendencies to the formation of competencies; the influences of the operational environment on the training requirements; managing the pressure exerted by the exponential evolution of the IT&C domain on staff training.

As an example, at least five technological developments will significantly transform the information-operational environment specific to intelligence structures, with implications on the process of designing training and education for personnel, appropriate to them (Vasian, Iorga, 2019, p. 82):

1. Extensive dependence on the Internet of states, organisations and non-state actors, globally, by exploding connections and increasing the speed of access to network services (4G/5G), of human users, both in economic and social areas strongly developed and in poorly developed regions generating insecurity – diminishing human interaction and migration to digital human interaction;

2. Defining and manifesting the cyber environment, with all its components (hardware, software, management, personnel), as a new military operational environment, relevance also recognised by NATO – new offensive action capabilities on the border between conventional and hybrid;

3. The emergence and widespread implementation of global smart surveillance systems in the Internet environment (including DarkNet), in digital communications networks (mobile, fixed, terrestrial, satellite etc.) and in civil monitoring systems and security – advanced technology for algorithmisation and automation of operational intelligence processes;

4. Accelerated implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms in IT services, weapons and security systems, industry and society, while developing application-type AI tools (machine learning, Natural Language Processing – NLP and Computer Vision), able to successfully replace the human factor – robotisation and algorithmisation of intelligence domains such as OSINT, CYBERINT, HUMINT, IMINT, GEOINT.

5. Achieving technological maturity and increasing the relevance of industry and space technology, while facilitating access to these developments

for non-state actors and less developed states, but aiming at the rapid acquisition of high-tech tools usable both in power relations and in achieving defensive and offensive security purposes – moving military confrontations in the space field, technologization of surveillance tools and ISR-type systems.

These developments, a direct result of the application of advanced technology in civil society and the military in the past 10 years, will be the main factor in reshaping the operational and information environment for the interest of any intelligence structure, regardless of region, area or field. The technological aspects mentioned above will require the separation of the current training processes on two or even three levels, as follows: the training stage, the advanced education stage and the development stage of the strategic culture on security, intelligence and technology (Ibid., p. 89).

Nevertheless, these approaches address a category of adults, which requires the use of the andragogical model (different from the pedagogical model), whose functionality and efficiency are based on a number of principles that take into account: the respect of didactic staff for the audience; institutional collaboration between educator and educated persons, mutually advantageous (involvement of the beneficiary in the development of training planning documents and of the trainees in the evaluation of the training process); the independence designed for students to facilitate achieving their decision-making autonomy; the professional and life experience of the students (through which they can contribute to and offer suggestions and proposals for improving the contents of vocational training; facilitating participatory training methods etc.), solving problems (problematisation and development of content as close as possible to reality, which imposed appropriate solutions); critical thinking (Dragoman, 2017, pp. 73-82).

As a defining element for the function of adapting the organisation to the operational environment, the training and continuous professional education of staff in intelligence services thus becomes an activity with a strategic, institutionalised dimension, which ensures and fully covers the need for continuity and progress of the institution, as a functional system intended for the welfare of society.

## CONCLUSIONS

Conceptually, but also in action, the smart power model requires the decision-makers to choose those power tools that correspond and respond best to managing the challenges to a state's interests.

The adequate and optimised use of the available means and resources requires decision-makers to benefit from a strategic knowledge (considered both in depth and horizontal and prospective openness) that can only be provided by national

intelligence services, institutionally, through interinstitutional cooperation formats, departmental, but also at international level through bilateral cooperation or security cooperation formats.

Under the pressure of the information society and the open-source revolution, intelligence services are experiencing a paradigm shift, necessary to adapt to the constantly evolving characteristics of the operational environment.

As a component part of the institution, the structure of education and training, which fulfils a strategic function, must meet the requirements of the beneficiaries, regarding the definition, implementation and training of professional competencies, and, at the same time, can contribute prospectively and formatively with evaluations, solutions and proposals for the continuous modernisation and alignment of specific education and training to the characteristics of today and future society.

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