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GREEK INTELLIGENCE SERVICE AND POST 9/11 CHALLENGES

Human beings have always needed information to secure their livelihood and their safety – the location of the best fishing stream, the site where firewood might be gathered, when deer herds were likely to appear. In the classical Greece, covert action and clandestine operations were among the most common and yet most vilified methods of statecraft. All states used (Athens and Sparta), no state wants to admit the fact, and if the operations became public the world severely disapproved. Greeks used local citizens who served as “proxenos” (1) The “proxenos” had to be a citizen of the state in which he served, not of the state he represented. These men (“proxenos”) became the equivalent of modern spies or agents as a conduit for information and clandestine activities in the course of normal duties during the Peloponnesian Wars. (2)

Furthermore, the historical record suggests that very few societies (especially not Empires) could pass up the opportunity of using such useful and flexible tools when overt military operations were either impractical or impossible. Nowhere is this more clear than in the case of the ancient Romans. (3) In their public propaganda they prided themselves on being open, aboveboard and honest. In reality, they were experts at political manipulation, spying, and dirty tricks. For five centuries they ruled over the Mediterranean world with an iron fist, yet much of that control was not the direct result of using military force.

Today, in the current “information age” we are constantly bombarded by facts, opinions, speculations, rumor, and gossip from every direction. Television carries into

our homes each night unsettling images of squalor and death from around the world (not to mention our own backyard). Computers draw us into an interactive milieu where e-mail gives, and expects in return, ever more rapid exchanges of information. The cellular telephone assures that a flow of information will follow us everywhere: into a car, the mall, and the meeting place. What effect has this rising tide of information – and its secret undercurrents we call intelligence – had on decisions made in the high councils of government? (4) Foreign policy decisions are preceded in most cases by the gathering and interpretation of information by government officials about the costs and benefits that may accrue to their nation from various options.

As the Intelligence Community inexorably works its way into the 21st century, it faces an unprecedented array of challenge. The chaotic world of environment of the post-Cold War era offers a wide array of different issues to be understood and a variety of new threats to be anticipated. The rapidly developing information age presents advanced and complex information technology and methodologies to be mastered and integrated into the intelligence process. (5)

Greece as an industrialized nation and active member of the European Union as well as NATO calls for a higher level of management efficiently, effectiveness, economy and employment criteria. To create a Greek Intelligence Community that can master those challenges and successfully continue to perform its role of supporting national, political, diplomatic, economic and military decision-makers plus operational and tactical military commanders.

The article highlights on the 9/11 post challenges that the National (Greek) Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) has to face into the 21st century. It first describes shortly the historical steps that took place to establish today's NIS-EYP. Second, it points out the new responsibilities that the Greek Intelligence Service had to go through in the last decade regarding the current reform strategy which introduced several basic innovations. Last, it concentrates on the development of the post 9/11 Cold War challenges and how NIS-EYP could respond to the new threats in the coming decades.

A Short History of the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP)

On May 9, 2003 the National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) became 50 years old. In the Hellenic Republic, the first attempt to construct an Intelligence Unit started in January 1926. In 1952, when General Papagos became a Prime Minister, he renamed

once again the “General Directorate of Information” into “Central Intelligence Service and Research- (KYPE).” The new intelligence agency was reported directly to the Prime Minister. KYPE put the foundation for today National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP). (6)

A new intelligence branch was created as “Central Intelligence Service” (CIS-KYP) and is established according to western standards as a self-standing Agency being subject to the Prime Minister and having the country’s national security as its mission. (7) From 1969 until 1974, the “Central Intelligence Service” functioned as an independent public service reported to the Prime Minister. (8) The efforts by the former Prime Minister Constantine Karamanlis conservative government after 1974 to modernize the intelligence service yielded few results. In the 1980s, the Socialists took over the government and tried to bring the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) under control by assigning party officials to it. The intelligence service was thereby paralyzed under the burden of political patronage.

The restructuring of the Greek Intelligence Service started in 1986 with a new Presidential Decree, ND 1645/1986, which put the steps to transform the “Central Intelligence Service (CIS-KYP)” towards its new name – “Greek Intelligence Service - (NIS-EYP).” Today, the Greek Intelligence Service constitutes a self-standing civil public agency and its political head is the Minister of Public Order. (9)

The mission of the National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP), as defined in Article 2, of the Presidential Decree 1645/1986, includes the following: (10)

- The collection, processing and dissemination, to the component Authorities, of information pertaining to the Country’s National Security;
- Counterintelligence activities focusing on foreign Intelligence Officers acting against the country;
- The security of national communications
- In time of war or mobilization the NIS-EYP, in parallel with its above-mentioned powers, also becomes the country’s intelligence staff.

New Responsibilities of the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP)

Intelligence services are by nature opaque. In order to prevent their inherent tendency toward autonomy, the Greek State needs to introduce mechanisms for political and

internal balances. These checks should not undermine its operative ability but prevent the emergence of the usual degenerative phenomena.

Meanwhile, an advanced proposal for the creation of a new special task force will signal the introduction of a new task to the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) “traditional” duties under its current reform strategy by introducing seven basic innovations, which will enter NIS-EYP into the 21st century: (11)

- A Study Center is created with the purpose of collaboration with scientific organizations, universities and specialized research institutes. It will undertake the drafting of studies and analyses of issues of interest to the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP);
- A Staff (strategy) planning council [steering committee] is created regarding the Service’s policy and for crisis management;
- Emphasis is placed on training with the creation of a Training Directorate, aiming for modern training, education and specialization of personnel;
- A Sub-Directorate for National Issues is created;
- A Directorate for International Cooperation is created, for better exchange of information with allied services;
- A Sub-Directorate for International Terrorism and Organized Crime is being established, for the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) to be able to answer the needs of the new era;

Under the Greek Intelligence Service’s reorganization, the provisions of the Civil Service Code are extended to cover the Service civilian personnel, which include the personnel in specific beneficial provisions. The new structure of the NIS-EYP indicates a significant reduction in the number of uniformed personnel, which is a development in keeping with the international models in this sector.

Moreover, as former Minister of Public Order, Mikhail Khriissokhoidis stated when welcoming former Deputy Minister, Evangelos Malesios to the Ministry of Public Order, “the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) is being called to play a new, significant role in consolidating national security. The Greek government is evidently aware of the increased demands and will secure the requisite funds in light of the debate on the new budget in the Greek Parliament. (12).

Post 9/11 Challenges and the Role of the Intelligence Services

As we enter the twenty-first century, terrorism remains a vital threat to national and global security interests. Epitomizing the state of anarchy in contemporary life is increasingly becoming a universal nightmare from hostage-taking to assassination of political leaders, to bombing of embassies, and hijacking of aircraft. There are several specific reasons why terrorism will grow in the near future, including an international support network of groups and states exist that greatly facilitates the undertaking of terrorist activities. (13)

Terrorism remains as threatening as ever, hence ensuring the safety and interests of its citizens at home and abroad will, therefore, continue to be every government's paramount responsibility in the coming months and years. Understanding the method of operation employed by terrorists, identifying the threats and specific targets both present and future, and knowing the damage and consequences that may result from acts of terror violence will assist governments in responding to the reality of terrorism. (14)

The traumatic events of 9/11, 2001 in U.S. as well as 11/03, 2004 in Spain underlined the opportunities offered to terrorists and criminals by hesitant or partial intelligence exchange. Some of the suspects in the Madrid bombing had been of interest to the French and Spanish police in 2001, but had been released for lack of evidence. By 2003, two of them were on a list of suspects issued by the Moroccan police for a series of café bombings in Casablanca, but were nevertheless living openly in Madrid. More remarkably, during early April 2004, the inability of the U.S. to provide Germany with access to a member of Al-Qaeda arrested in Pakistan and held by the U.S. at an undisclosed location, contributed to the early release of Mounir-el-Motassadeq, an important aspect who was before the courts in Hamburg on charges relating to the 9/11 attack in U.S. (15)

Intelligence and security cooperation continues to be problematic because there is a fundamental tension between an increasingly networked world, which is ideal terrain for the new religious terrorism, and highly compartmentalized national intelligence-gathering. The networked world is a well-known (or at least well recognized) aspect of globalization. Compartmentalized national intelligence gathering is less well understood. Compartmentalization occurs for two reasons. First, western secret services rightly place in high premium on protecting their sources. Second, western states have different notions of privacy and so resist large-scale data sharing. Source protection is such a firmly established convention that it

is unlikely to change; as a consequence, secret services will not move towards sharing high-grade “killer punch” intelligence material on anything but a selective and bilateral basis. (16)

Bureaucratic Entities

Immense changes in the nature of the Western intelligence agencies have taken place since the Cold War ended. The agencies have refocused onto new targets; large-scale internal changes have occurred; and the services have been integrated more closely with the general policymaking process. Intelligence agencies are bureaucratic structures operating within the context of the civil services of their respective nations. This basic fact is often overlooked; very little has been written about intelligence agencies as bureaucratic entities, partly because they have historically been somewhat hidden from public view, and partly because until recently they have had only relatively limited exchanges with the rest of the bureaucracy. But scholars Laurence Lustgarten and Ian Leigh remarked that their interviews with many people in several countries “have yielded a strong and uniform impression: above all security officials are bureaucrats. They live by rules and paper, and function by committee.” (17)

The security and intelligence agencies have become quite large bureaucracies in the post-World War II period. As Michael Herman has remarked, “The great change after 1945 was for intelligence to become both a large-scale and a lifetime employer.” (18) This is especially noticeable in the U.S. where the number employed in intelligence has been estimated to be as many as 82,000, with a combined budget of about \$ 17 billion. The numbers, though far more modest for the other nations under discussion, still amount to several thousand people in each. Unsurprisingly, Herman also noted that “Intelligence has acquired the characteristics of large Weberian bureaucracies, modified but not submerged by the growth of computerization.”(19) Like the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP), most security and intelligence services are bureaucracies much like any other it would be surprising if they did not have the same advantages and disadvantages, suffer from the same pathologies, and undergo the changes experienced in the wider bureaucratic environment of their respective countries.

All Western intelligence agencies have undergone massive internal changes in recent decades that could be said to constitute “modernization.” They have changed the

nature and extent of their recruitment policies; they have tried to ensure that their staffs are more representative of the populations they serve; their personnel policies, in terms of career paths, complaints procedures, and the like have been brought increasingly closer to the public service norm (sometimes because of serious personnel problems); their management practices are beginning to more closely match those in the private sector, and they have, by and large, also physically modernized, in the sense of having acquired new headquarters facilities. (20) As a result, they now more closely resemble the rest of their respective nations' public services and have increasingly become an integral part of them. Much of this internal modernization has occurred while the intelligence agencies have also had to adapt to a new external policy context because of the end of the Cold War, and while they have all been subjected to a steadily increasing degree of oversight and accountability. (21)

Concluding Remarks

Greece needs a modern and efficient intelligence agency that can collect and process information that is able to plan and carry out secret operations for the protection of the national interest. The practice of staffing NIS-EYP with military officials and police officers has failed. It needs a new generation of highly skilled officers and modern technological equipment.

However, it is significant to give credits to the productive role of the NIS-EYP towards the break-up of the 17 November terrorist group by coordinating its actions with the Greek Police – Counter Terrorist Unit (CTU). A mistake of one of the 17 November terrorists in a bombing attack unlocked the front door of 17 November terrorists. The Greek Police connected older unexploited evidence to the new facts and managed to arrest the majority of the 17 November members. The reasons for the dissolution of the main terrorist group (17 November) was the loss of the public's favor or tacit acceptance, the lack of ideology, the internal degeneration of the organizations, the loss of contact with political reality, the recently reinforced professionalism of the Greek authorities, the political will of the state, and certainly the substantial NIS-EYP collaboration with foreign intelligence services, such as MI6, FBI, CIA, DST, BND.

Overall, intelligence is in an exquisitely awkward position in adapting to a changed world. It is a service industry, one designed to serve Greek foreign policy, but how

can it do so when the definitions of Greek interests and policies are themselves in a flux? It is charged with providing information to its decision makers, (who most of the time), are in the process of redefining their objectives. The National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) will not have the luxury of waiting for the changes to solidify.

They will, of course, have to embody the qualities of high national security and professional intelligence competence as well as the undoubted integrity that leaders of the Greek Intelligence Community have always had. But they will also have to have the quality of vision, so that they can foresee an Intelligence Community of the 21st century that is a realistic, credible, and attractive future, but is different and better in important ways than that which now exists. They will also have to have the inspirational qualities required to communicate that vision in ways that will motivate the Greek Government, the Greek Parliament and the Greek Intelligence Community members to share in it, so that it can be implemented.

Despite the swirling changes that NIS-EYP has undertaken in the last years, enough is known of the world that intelligence will confront beyond 2010 to begin the reshaping. That world will require intelligence to be dispersed, not concentrated; open to a variety of sources, not limited to secrets; sharing its information and analyses with a variety of would-be coalition partners, including foreigners and people outside government, not guarding its “secrets” tightly. (22) And for the National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP), which its tasks will be different, the Greek government should seek to keep the more threatening intelligence operations within reasonable limits, particularly those linked with diplomacy.

Note: National Intelligence Service (NIS) – Elliniki Ypiresia Pliroforion (EYP)

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