

The Impact of Regimes on the Structure of the CIA and the KGB During the Cold War and on the Errors Committed

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Abstract

Based on a comparative analysis, the paper investigates how regimes affected the structure of the CIA and the KGB, as well as the errors committed during the Cold War.

The study is divided into several main parts. Initially, we examine the regimes in operation in the United States of America and the Soviet Union during the Cold War and their influence on the structure of the CIA and the KGB. In the next stage, we discuss the structural problems in the CIA and the KGB, the methods used in order to collect information about each other (HUMINT and TECHINT), and their strong and weak points in intelligence activities. At the conclusion stage, based on the Case Study, we review the errors committed by the CIA and the KGB from the perspective of HUMINT, and on the basis of a comparative analysis, we judge to what extent the structural problems and the committed errors were a result of the regime types.

Key Words: Cold War, CIA, HUMINT, KGB, Regimes, Structure.

Introduction

The activities of the intelligence services were crucial during the Cold War, when the United States and the Soviet Union were engaged in a military, political, economic, and ideological struggle.

The CIA and the KGB made every effort to obtain more classified information about each other because, in any type of war, having information about the enemy can be crucial.

Both the American and Soviet intelligence services made a number of errors throughout the aforementioned period. From a political standpoint, the Cold War era turned out to be rather tense, so this was expected. It is always expected that governments will make mistakes during challenging and tense historical periods. Personnel in the intelligence agency frequently switched sides due to ideological, financial, or other motives. Aldrich Ames, who brought a lot of harm to the Central Intelligence Agency, is a well-known illustration of this.

The Cold War era should serve as a lesson for both the United States and the Post-Soviet countries because it is crucial to analyze the mistakes made during this time in terms of security. The reason the Cold War period was chosen is that we have access to some cases from the Cold War era, but their number would be even lower if we included Post-Cold War activities because recent historical cases have not yet been declassified and won't be until they lose their political significance.

In addition to the errors made, the literature analysis exposed structural problems caused by the regimes that reduced the efficiency of the CIA and the KGB. Since human intelligence cannot be replaced, regardless of how technology advances in the future, we shall talk about the blunders committed in this area. Analysis of errors in this area will always be valuable because they are repetitive, although the same cannot be said of errors in technical intelligence due to the rapid advancement of technologies following the end of the Cold War.

In the paper, a hypothesis was formed that the democratic and totalitarian regimes affected the structure of the CIA and the KGB, which became the reason for the errors committed in terms of human intelligence (HUMINT) during the Cold War. Regime type (democracy and totalitarianism) is an independent variable, and the dependent variables are the structure and the errors committed.

Through comparative analysis, it is crucial to ascertain if the democratic and totalitarian regimes had an effect on the CIA's and the KGB's organizational structures. Did the Democratic and Totalitarian regimes determine the priorities of the Intelligence Services? (HUMINT/TECHINT) What mistakes did the CIA and the KGB make in terms of human intelligence? To what extent did the type of regime cause the errors committed?

In order to answer the questions listed above, we use one of the methods of qualitative research: a Case Study. It should also be noted that this paper is an Inductive type, since at the initial stage the structural problems and the errors committed in the CIA and the KGB were analysed, and then we came from a specific to a general conclusion that the given results were caused by the types of democratic and totalitarian regimes.

Structural Problems In The CIA And the KGB Induced By Regimes

Regime types have a significant impact on the formation of a country's institutions. The democratic regime made the Central Intelligence Agency as decentralized as the American government. The primary benefit of decentralization is that authority is not abused and does not serve the interests of a single person or group; nevertheless, it also has the disadvantage of a weak control mechanism. To this was added the principle of compartmentalization, which increased security but hampered coordination as the timely exchange of information at the internal level was impossible. The Central Intelligence Agency was an independent intelligence service and was primarily responsible for strategic analysis and covert action abroad. (Moses, 1983) Under independence I do not mean independence from the government's leader but rather independence from the so-called "killing the messenger" attitude. The latter entails disregarding expert evaluations when the analysis offered contradicts government policy. (Shulsky & Schmitt, 2002) Nonetheless, after a few years of the intelligence service's inception, certain issues with supervision's efficacy arose. (Snider, 2008) Furthermore, in democratic regimes, there are difficulties with intelligence that do not arise in a state with a totalitarian regime. This is society's stance towards covert action. As Dahl (1998) points out: „Democracy confers many advantages on its citizens...they possess fundamental political rights; in addition, they also enjoy a wider sphere of freedom;” (pp.75-76). Although the democratic regime in the United States has increased citizens' political rights and liberties, it has also decreased security. In particular, as people's rights in terms of government control have grown, so has their demand for the openness of government actions (mostly linked to covert actions), which has complicated the issue of preserving secret information. (Shulsky & Schmitt, 2002) The National Security Act (1947) defines covert action as: „An activity or activities of the United States Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad, where it is intended

that the role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly.“ (p.100).

The CIA was further distinct from the KGB in that it made no effort to control and intimidate its own citizens, which was also caused by the type of regime. During the Cold War, the primary purpose of the Central Intelligence Agency was to contain the external dangers presented by the Soviet Union and its ideology. However, the concentration on covert actions hampered the CIA's analytical department's capacity to correctly Assess the situations. This is supported by Dulles' evaluation, which underlines the shortcomings of the Central Intelligence Agency's assessment of the Soviet Union. (Weiner, 2007) This flaw was causing unfavourable outcomes in the execution of deception.

The free press also complicates the activities of intelligence services in democracies. In the case of America, the right to free speech is defined by the constitution; hence, the existence of a free press presented extra security issues during the Cold War. (Shulsky & Schmitt, 2002) The opinion that press control is important is supported by the example of Napoleon Bonaparte, who did not have to make extra efforts to collect information about England because the English press could not be controlled by the state, so Bonaparte always trusted the information spread in the press more. (Andrew, 2018) The American press was obviously not as uncontrolled as the English press, although some classified information was still leaking. For the Soviet Union, information about the current processes in America was more easily available than information about the Soviet Union in America because there was neither freedom of speech nor a free press in the Soviet Union. Therefore, totalitarian states are in a more profitable position in terms of information control than democratic ones.

The problems related to intelligence activities in totalitarian regimes are different from those in democratic regimes. Unlike the CIA, the KGB's organizational structure was centralized and heavily politicised. The fact that the KGB was a centralized political body is indicated in the Regulation issued by the Council of Ministers. („Положение о Комитете государственной безопасности при Совете Министров СССР и его местных органах", 1959)

As Arendt (1958) points out: „Totalitarian bureaucracy, with a more complete understanding of the meaning of absolute power, intruded upon the private individual and his inner life with equal

brutality.”(p.245). The scenario was similar in the Soviet Union. Public life was under the control of one party. It should also be noted that comparable sorts of intelligence services are not established to serve national interests or assure the safety of civilians but rather to protect the governing class and battle their rivals. (Prouty, 1985)

In contrast to democratic regimes, in totalitarian regimes, the personnel of intelligence agencies are subjected to extensive political vetting, Not only before entering the service but throughout their career, which creates tension at the organizational level. The efficacy of the intelligence agency suffers as a result of such circumstances. Unlike the CIA, high-ranking KGB officials were also required to be active members of the party. (Barron, 1974)

Firstly, the KGB prioritized political beliefs during the selection of personnel and, after that, the quantity of informants. (Barron, 1974) This resulted in two types of problems: the first was that candidates took advantage of the organization's politicization and demonstrated false allegiance to communist ideology in order to advance their careers; the second was that similar selection criteria in the KGB simply gathered a large number of non-professionals, which damaged the organization's security.

The compartmentalization principle was applied at the structural level in the KGB. Access to information was frequently restricted (especially in foreign residencies) to the point where only one person might have detailed information on a specific activity abroad; thus, excessive secrecy eventually led to the fact that the KGB no longer had access to the details of the case and often had to halt the operation. (Barron, 1974)

One of the key problems was an existing "quota system" in the KGB, which had a detrimental impact on the reliability of the work done. The KGB was establishing a particular quantity for recruitment. This was the incorrect strategy because, to safeguard their careers, the KGB officers frequently exaggerated the value of contacts, which resulted in a waste of resources.(Barron, 1974)

The Soviet Union did not have a group of politically impartial analysts. On many occasions, politicians do not like to hear assessments that are not favourable to them, so they prefer analysts who make assessments that are acceptable to them. The behaviour when officials fail to pay heed to evaluations that are unacceptable to them is known as "killing the messenger," and it was a major problem in the Soviet regime. (Shulsky & Schmitt, 2002) Furthermore, the Politburo did not

trust analysts. The information was passing from the KGB's head to the Politburo, which subsequently made subjective decisions. The practise of mistrusting analysts comes from the Stalin era, because even he did not trust their evaluations. Such an approach resulted in the blunder that Stalin did not take into account the information offered by the analysts during the year, and when Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, they were unprepared to resist.(Knightley, 1986) There was also the issue of "mirror imaging," which involves predicting the likely behaviours of another state based on one's own policies, which is one of the most common mistakes in intelligence.

As we saw, the structural problems outlined above differ between the two intelligence services. The compartmentalization, which existed in both intelligence services, is an exception; however, in the case of the CIA, the problem was coordination, and in the case of the KGB, suspension of operations. It also should be highlighted that the centralized intelligence service had more problems than the decentralized one.

But the main distinction between the CIA and the KGB remains in the priorities of human intelligence and technical intelligence, which we shall address in the next chapter. Using examples, we will define why HUMINT is more effective than TECHINT.

The Advantage of HUMINT Over TECHINT

Along with having an impact on the CIA's and the KGB's organizational structures, the regime types should be recognised as having an impact on the intelligence agencies' priorities.

In the case of the United States of America, technical intelligence was defined as the main priority. One of the main reasons for this was that the totalitarian regime and closed system in the Soviet Union made it difficult to obtain information, as it was difficult for foreigners to enter the Soviet Union (especially during the Stalin period), so it was necessary to develop TECHINT in order to gather information about the main adversary. In turn, the democratic regime in the United States made HUMINT a priority for the Soviet Union, as there were no restrictions on travel to the USA. In addition, the free press in the USA further expanded access to information for the Soviet Union.

Despite some of the advantages of technical intelligence, I consider that human intelligence is always one step ahead of technical intelligence, and there are many examples of this. One example of why human intelligence is more important is that in covert eavesdropping, it is possible for the target party to receive information from a double agent. As a result, the target object will intentionally spread misinformation or simply not say anything of value. A similar fact was observed during the Cold War, when the Americans secretly dug a tunnel from the West Berlin to the East and installed listening devices on the telephone cables, through which the Americans in Berlin listened to Russian generals and all people who were interesting to them, although the Russians learned about this fact through a double agent and they weren't discussing any valuable information over the phone. In the end, America lost because a lot of money was spent on this operation and they they did not understand anything important. (Murphy et al., 1997)

The CIA considerably trailed the KGB in the development of HUMINT by prioritising TECHINT. This argument is further supported by the fact that, after the Cold War ended, the Americans who had exposed the Russian double agents (Robert Hansen, Lee Howard, and Aldrich Ames) discovered that Russia had information that none of the people they had revealed had access to. Therefore, it may be concluded that the Americans were unaware of another double agent working in the Central Intelligence Agency.

The famous coding machine "Enigma" also emphasizes the role of human intelligence, since it was of great importance to obtain notes and instructions on "Enigma" by a double agent, which eventually ended up in the hands of the British and led to their success. (Shulsky & Schmitt, 2002)

Another example of why human intelligence is more important than technical intelligence is the case of Hansen. In particular, the Americans had installed listening and surveillance devices on the territory of the Russian embassy, which Hansen disclosed to the Russians, and as a result, the American intelligence service received a large financial loss.

Along with the advantages of HUMINT that were highlighted by examples, the drawbacks of it should also be acknowledged. The biggest difficulty facing HUMINT is that it is riskier and requires more time. In some ways, it costs the government more than TECHINT because it requires time, which is not a renewable resource like money. Additionally, it is an issue if an agent from one country ends up in the hands of another, since there is a strong likelihood that they will gain

access to sensitive material or convince him to begin working covertly for them. However, HUMINT is far more significant than TECHINT, since TECHINT alone will never be sufficient to acquire information such as a country's political objectives or military strategies. (Shulsky & Schmitt, 2002)

Comparative Analysis of Errors Committed

(Aldrich Ames and Dmitry Polyakov Case Study)

The Aldrich Ames case is the most visible manifestation of the CIA's personnel management flaws. On the other hand, with the mentioned case, we can consider the shortcomings of the KGB in the context of rational decision-making. In addition, Polyakov's case is also interesting because it proves the notion that political interests in the Soviet Union were more important than intelligence interests, and it also confirms the influence of the KGB on other intelligence services inside the state.

One country's intelligence officers become double agents for four reasons: ideology, financial gain, ego, and compulsion. (Dulles, 2006) In the instance of Ames, I believe the major motivation was an ego and the desire for financial gain, but, as he stated himself, his decision was mostly founded on ideology. In my opinion, the ideological factor should be excluded, because if Ames had a similar motive, he would have sided with the Soviet Union much earlier, for example, during the Vietnam War, because American foreign policy in the 1960s had a really negative impact on the country's intelligence services in terms of personnel outflow.

The case of Ames illustrates that the CIA had structural and organizational weaknesses. As I previously stated when discussing structural difficulties, the problem of compartmentalization inhibited the quick transfer of information between divisions of the Central Intelligence Agency, and too much departmentalization also damaged control mechanisms. At the same time, the evidence released by the Central Intelligence Agency following Ames' arrest, which allowed them to identify the traitor, raises doubts about its reliability. Ames was traced down based on a review of his finances, according to statements from the Central Intelligence Agency and other sources, since his expenditures exceeded his income. (Dylan et al., 2020) In fact, there is a more logical

explanation: Ames was betrayed by another Russian double agent. The Central Intelligence Agency did not wish to publicise this possibility because: 1. The Central Intelligence Service has already lost numerous sources in the Soviet Union in recent years, and if this version was made public, they would have lost another source. 2. The fact that they could not find the traitor for so many years and then went on his trail based on information from a Russian double agent would have hurt the reputation of the organization.

The KGB, on the other hand, made the following mistake with Ames: once he provided the KGB with a list of Russian double agents, the head of the intelligence service (Kryuchkov) caught all of the traitors, which was an obvious signal for the Central Intelligence Agency that they had a mole in their organization. The KGB made a mistake, and they could have acted more rationally. For example, one option was to use the mentioned persons for their own benefit and carry out so-called deception operations or gradually withdraw them from the work, but the organization's head usually did not take analysts' opinions into account and acted based on political interests. The notion that the abovementioned action was truly motivated by political interests is supported by a regulation adopted by the Council of Ministers in 1959, which specifies that the KGB is a political body, And also by the fact that Kryuchkov, in addition to being the head of the KGB, was also a member of the Politburo.

Poliakov's case also demonstrates how decisions in the KGB were made based on political interests and how this intelligence service wielded significant influence over other intelligence services. The intelligence service did nothing when Poliakov was betrayed at the GRU by Hansen. The reason for this was that the KGB controlled everything, and there was a lot of competition between the two services, and they thought that if this information became public, the KGB's influence on the GRU would be even stronger, and it was these kinds of departmental interests that outweighed the intelligence service's interests, and Poliakov was gradually withdrawn from the work. (Kalugin, 2009)

Polyakov's case also demonstrates weaknesses in the CIA's estimation of the Soviet Union, which was harming many sorts of activities. One of the deceptions involving Polyakov was carried out by the United States of America with the purpose of diverting the Soviet Union's attention and wasting their resources. The Americans intended to lead the Soviet Union into believing that

America had created a new powerful chemical weapon. It should also be noted that this operation overlaps with the Vietnam War; thus, I believe America's major purpose was to gain an advantage in Vietnam at the price of diverting the Soviet Union's focus to another matter. This effort was a failure because America still lost the Vietnam War. Furthermore, experts failed to adequately appraise the Soviet Union's capabilities. In reality, by making this move, America caused the Soviet Union's strengthening rather than its weakening, which was one of the operation's key aims. (Garthoff, 2000)

Another huge mistake occurred when the American press reported about Polyakov that he was a triple agent who was supporting Soviet goals. This information did not reach the USSR, yet the fact that this sort of secret material was released in the press is itself a huge mistake and underlines the intelligence service's weakness in secret information protection. Similar occasions in relation to the press are common in democratic countries because, in totalitarian regimes, there is no free press at all. (Garthoff, 2000)

Finally, both cases demonstrate the errors committed by the United States and the Soviet Union, which differ from one another, but the common aspect is that the fundamental causes in both cases emanated from regime types.

Conclusion

The results of the paper confirm the hypothesis that the types of regimes during the Cold War influenced the structure of the CIA and the KGB and, therefore, the errors committed. The characteristics of democratic and totalitarian regimes were reflected in the organizational structure of the intelligence services. However, compared to a democratic one, the structure created under a totalitarian regime had more problems.

In the case of the CIA, the organizational structure was as decentralized as the United States government because decentralization is an important element of democracy. The decentralized structure itself led to compartmentalization, which created coordination problems. In addition, democratic institutions are distinguished by more credibility than totalitarian institutions, so there was a greater trust factor between personnel of the CIA in contrast to the KGB. The Central

Intelligence Agency was accountable to the U.S Congress and the president, which increased oversight mechanisms but also increased the risks of leaking classified information. A free press in a democracy has also complicated the issue of protecting classified information.

In the case of the KGB, the totalitarian regime led to the formation of a centralized structure for the intelligence service since power in the Soviet Union was also concentrated in the hands of one party. The politicization of the mentioned intelligence service also resulted from the type of regime because the interests of the ruling party in the Soviet Union were above all other interests. The excessive secrecy of information within the structure also created additional obstacles and caused the suspension of operations. In addition, the "quota system" was a problem, which led to the exaggeration of the importance of contacts and eventually to the waste of resources. Also, the KGB did not have a group of impartial analysts; The Politburo was doing its own assessments, which often caused problems of "mirror imaging".

The regime types also determined intelligence priorities. In the case of the United States, TECHINT and, in the case of the Soviet Union, HUMINT were the main methods of information gathering. Due to the closed system in the Soviet Union, there was a problem of penetration, so the Americans made TECHINT a priority, and the priority of Soviet intelligence was HUMINT because the democratic regime allowed free movement in the United States. At the same time, the free press made it easier for the Soviet intelligence service to evaluate the processes taking place in America.

As for the errors committed, in the case of the KGB, it was decisions based on political interests, which is confirmed by the Cases of Ames and Polyakov. In the case of the CIA, the problem was the weakness of the analytical department's assessments in relation to the Soviet Union and trust at the organizational level, which is also supported by the mentioned cases.

Thus, on the basis of inductive research, the analysis of the structure of the mentioned intelligence services and the errors committed during the Cold War in terms of HUMINT allowed us to give an answer to the formulated questions and confirmed the hypothesis expressed at the beginning that the democratic regime in America and the totalitarian regime in the Soviet Union really determined the structure of the intelligence services and the errors committed, so this was not caused by a number of coincidences.

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