Transparency and Effectiveness in Law Enforcement Intelligence

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Abstract

“Freedom and security balance” is one of the most controversial issues related to security. Contrary to popular belief, freedom and security are not direct opposites of each other. Actually they promote each other. If there is security, people can feel free. But if not, they cannot feel free. In this perspective, “transparency and efficiency balance” is so important for domestic intelligence activities like law enforcement intelligence, security intelligence or counterterrorism intelligence.

The research question is whether enhancing transparency and controllable secrecy makes intelligence effective and promotes domestic security intelligence or not. In order to clarify, 29 face-to-face interviews were conducted with individual group members that could affect security policies in Turkey. These individuals were parliament members, judges, security and intelligence officers, journalists, and academics.

With this research, I focused on the perception of domestic security intelligence. The interviews all had seven distinct sections:

- Definition of Law Enforcement Intelligence
- The main ambition
- Subjects, content, and boundaries
- Methods and procedures
- Achievements and failures
- Balance between Secrecy and Transparency
- Social reinforcement

The Selected Results of Research

Modern security terminology should be used for current security problems. I mean that you cannot solve current problems using outdated terminology.

The concept of domestic security concerns not only national security interests but also the interests of social security and personal security. Thus, DSI should work carefully for both human rights and the rule of law.
Although secrecy and efficiency seem likely to promote each other in the intelligence world, in reality, both of them are direct opposites of each other for the perception of DSI. Enhancing secrecy does not necessarily help to enhance the efficiency for DSI, because having the trust of the people is more important for the effectiveness of DSI.

The values of the agency involved in implementing security and the values of society should align with one another. The overall mission of the agencies should be revised according to the changes in society.

Because of past failures, some security and intelligence agencies could be viewed as a threat by certain members of society. For instance, there is a security intelligence agency which has absolute authority and advanced technological equipment but there is no accountability. Nobody knows their mission or objectives and nobody oversees them. How do you feel - secure or insecure?

Operational intelligence activities (like counterterrorism intelligence) which are conducted within the country must consider law enforcement’s methods and procedures not the other tactics of foreign intelligence services. This is because the most powerful weapons of terrorist organizations are the misapplications and inappropriate behaviors of states. And they will use them efficiently for recruiting activities.

As a consequence; it is not easy but it is still possible to make a distinction between domestic intelligence and foreign intelligence. We should focus on the fact that it is conducted within the country or outside the country. Secret and transparent areas should be defined clearly in DSI. I mean the public should know which kind of information should be secret but they don’t need to know what it entails.

Contrary to popular belief, there should not be certain secret areas in DSI. Secret areas of DSI should be relative and controllable. That’s why people consider that their privacy, rights and interests are protected. And it makes people feel safer and more peaceful. Because of the decrease in failures, administrative and judicial control and democratic oversight makes DSI more effective and more efficient and makes people safer and more peaceful.