

OPEN SOURCE SOLUTIONS SEMINAR

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FROM A TO Z: WHAT WE'VE DONE WITH OPEN SOURCES

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QUITE A NUMBER OF MY FELLOW SPEAKERS HAVE DISCUSSED THE NEW FRONTIERS IN OPEN SOURCE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY. THE FRONTIER THAT WE ARE PIONEERING IS ONE OF ACCESS, ON THE MOST BASIC LEVEL, TO INFORMATION LOCKED AWAY FROM US LITERALLY FOR DECADES. FOR MANY YEARS PEOPLE BELIEVED THAT THERE WAS ONLY A VERY LIMITED AMOUNT OF VALUABLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION AVAILABLE FROM OPEN SOURCES AND THAT VALUABLE INFORMATION ON RUSSIA COULD BE COLLECTED ONLY BY STEALTH.

THE MOST COMMONLY REPEATED MANTRA WAS: "THE SOVIETS DON'T MAKE INFORMATION AVAILABLE." I HAVE NEVER SUBSCRIBED TO THIS BELIEF EVEN BEFORE THE WORDS: "HELLO, JOINT VENTURE, THANK YOU AND GOODBYE" BECAME THE MOST POPULAR WORDS OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF RUSSIANS, MY BUSINESS PARTNER AND I EMBARKED ON A VENTURE WHOSE SUCCESS DEPENDED ON OUR ABILITY TO UNDERMINE CONVENTIONS ABOUT INFORMATION ACCESS IN THE FORMER USSR. OUR TIMING WAS FORTUITOUS

NO REGION OF THE WORLD HAS CHANGED AS DRAMATICALLY IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS WITH RESPECT TO ACCESSING OPEN-SOURCE INFORMATION THAN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION. WE SERVE AN INTERNATIONAL CLIENTELE OF MAJOR CORPORATIONS, LAW FIRMS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, AS WELL AS US GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, AND OUR COMPANY IS KNOWN INTERNATIONALLY AS A LEADING SOURCE FOR COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND LEGAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE FORMER SOVIET UNION.

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES THIS AFTERNOON TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF MY THOUGHTS ON THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF OPEN-SOURCE INTELLIGENCE GATHERING IN THE CIS. LET'S CONSIDER A FEW QUESTIONS.

- WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT FIVE YEARS AGO, THAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD OPENLY PUBLISH ARTICLES ON RADAR JAMMING AND COUNTERMEASURES IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL TECHNICAL JOURNALS?

INSTEAD OF READING HOMILIES ABOUT REDOUBLING EFFORTS AND OVERFULFILLING THE PLAN IN JOURNALS LIKE VESTNIK SVIAZI (COMMUNICATIONS BULLETIN), WE ARE READING ABOUT DOMESTIC STEALTH TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCED FIGHTER AIRCRAFT FOR SALE ON THE WORLD MARKET.

- WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT FIVE YEARS AGO, THAT A US COMPANY COULD OBTAIN RUSSIAN LEGAL STATUTES FOR ITS CLIENTS MORE QUICKLY THAN ANY MOSCOW-BASED ORGANIZATION? ONE OF OUR KEY SERVICES IS THE COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF LEGAL STATUTES WE TYPICALLY OBTAIN, CATALOGUE AND NOTIFY SUBSCRIBERS OF NEW LAWS BEFORE THEY HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN MOSCOW.
- WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT FIVE YEARS AGO, THAT DETAILED DATA ON GOLD RESERVES IN RUSSIA, HISTORICALLY A CLOSELY GUARDED STATE SECRET, WOULD EVER BE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE? EARLY NEXT YEAR, WE WILL PUBLISH A COMPENDIUM OF GEOLOGICAL PROSPECTING AND MINING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CIS ALONG WITH PERTINENT DATA ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGIES THEY USE, ORE RECOVERY, PROSPECTING AND DISCOVERED GOLD RESERVES, AND OTHER RELATED DATA THIS COMPENDIUM PRESENTLY NUMBERS ALMOST 300 PAGES AND CONTAINS DATA NEVER BEFORE RELEASED IN THE WEST. DATA ON GOLD RESERVES AND GOLD PRODUCTION HAVE ALWAYS BEEN KEPT IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE. THIS WAS BECAUSE THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT KNEW THAT IN A CLOSED SOCIALIST ECONOMY WITH AN ARTIFICIAL MONETARY VALUATION SYSTEM, THE TRUE WESTERN-BASED VALUE OF THEIR CURRENCY, BASED ON GOLD RESERVES, FOR INSTANCE, WAS DEPENDENT ON KNOWLEDGE OF THESE RESERVES. THIS BLUFF WAS SO SUCCESSFULLY PLAYED OUT THAT UNTIL 1991, USSR GOLD RESERVES WERE ESTIMATED BY THE WEST TO BE 10 TIMES GREATER THAN THEY REALLY WERE. THE TRUTH ABOUT SOVIET GOLD RESERVES WAS ONLY RECENTLY CONFIRMED WHEN THE WEST REQUIRED ACCURATE INFORMATION IN ORDER TO BACK LOANS THAT WERE BEING GRANTED TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT.

FOR MANY YEARS THERE HAS BEEN A DEFICIT OF RELIABLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FORMER USSR. AUTHORITATIVE DATA WERE SCARCE, AND MUCH OF WHAT WAS PUBLISHED WAS OF DUBIOUS VALUE. TODAY, THIS IS COMPLETELY REVERSED. WE ARE NOW BEING DELUGED BY A FLOOD OF NEW AND VALUABLE INFORMATION FROM THE CIS. A FUNDAMENTALLY NEW CHALLENGE FACING WESTERN ANALYSTS IS HOW TO EFFICIENTLY AND THOROUGHLY COLLECT, PROCESS AND EVALUATE ALL OF THESE DATA.

WHAT ARE SOME OF OUR CHALLENGES?

1) THE FIRST IS ORGANIZED ACCESS: THE FORMER SOVIET INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE, COVERING ALL OF THE REPUBLICS, HAD THE FUNCTION OF COLLECTING, ORGANIZING AND, OCCASIONALLY, DISSEMINATING INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DATA (INCLUDING STATISTICS). THIS WOULD INCLUDE SUCH ORGANIZATIONS AS THE SOVIET STATE PLANNING COMMITTEE, THE STATE COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS AND OTHERS. THIS INFRASTRUCTURE NO LONGER EXISTS IN AN INTEGRATED FORM.

SOME OF THESE SOVIET-ERA ORGANIZATIONS NO LONGER EXIST. ENTIRE MINISTRIES THAT SUPERVISED VARIOUS INDUSTRIAL SECTORS HAVE BEEN ABOLISHED. OTHERS HAVE BEEN PRIVATIZED. SOME, LIKE THE RUSSIAN COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS, CONTINUE TO OPERATE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THEIR REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENTS. MOST OF THESE INSTITUTIONS FACE CONSIDERABLE COMPETITION FROM PRIVATE SECTOR CONCERNS LIKE THE FAKT JOINT STOCK COMPANY WHICH PUBLISHES THE NEWSPAPER COMMERSANT. FOR CONSUMERS OF THIS INFORMATION, LIFE HAS BECOME RICHER BUT FAR MORE COMPLEX. FORMERLY, THE VOLUME OF USEFUL INFORMATION WAS LIMITED, BUT AN INFORMED USER KNEW WHERE AND HOW TO FIND IT AND HOW TO EVALUATE IT. NOW, THE INFORMED USER MUST BE EVEN MORE DISCRIMINATING, AND IN ORDER TO BE THOROUGH, MUST CHECK AN EVER-GROWING MULTITUDE OF INDEPENDENT AND SOMETIMES CONTRADICTORY SOURCES. RAW DATA IS A LITTLE LIKE RAW SEWAGE, YOU MUST TREAT IT CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU SWALLOW IT.

2) THE SECOND CHALLENGE IS CLIENTELE NEEDS:

OUR ACTIVITIES ARE DRIVEN BY THE NEED TO SATISFY THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS OF OUR CLIENTS. OUR CUSTOMER BASE FOR OPEN-SOURCE INFORMATION IS CHANGING RADICALLY. UNTIL ABOUT 5 YEARS AGO, MOST USERS OF OPEN SOURCE INTELLIGENCE ABOUT THE FORMER SOVIET UNION WERE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WHICH WERE INTERESTED PRIMARILY IN MILITARY SUBJECTS, SPECIALIZED TECHNOLOGIES, AND DEMOGRAPHICS. THE GROWING NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL USERS OF OPEN-SOURCE INFORMATION NOW FOCUS ON AREAS THAT JUST A FEW YEARS AGO WERE OF LITTLE OR NO INTEREST IN THE WEST. EXAMPLES INCLUDE: THE MARKET FOR CONSUMER GOODS, SUCH AS COSMETICS AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS. ALSO OF INTEREST ARE POTENTIAL MARKETS FOR CONSUMER SERVICES, SUCH AS INSURANCE AND MORTGAGE BANKING. OTHER NEW AREAS OF CLIENT INTEREST INCLUDE RETAIL AND WHOLESALE PRODUCT DISTRIBUTION, AND CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS RANGING FROM URBAN MASS TRANSIT TO HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

NATURALLY, WE MUST BE ADEPT IN MEETING THESE VARYING NEEDS OF

DIFFERENT CLIENTS. BUSINESS DECISION MAKING VERSUS NATIONAL SECURITY MANDATES DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO INTELLIGENCE GATHERING.

3) A THIRD CHALLENGE IS INFORMATION DELIVERY, IN PARTICULAR, THE SPEED WITH WHICH WE ARE COMPELLED TO COLLECT, PROCESS, ANALYZE, AND DELIVER INFORMATION PRODUCTS. IN MOST CASES, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAS MORE DEMANDING TIME REQUIREMENTS THAN THE GOVERNMENT. AN AVERAGE THINK TANK MAY TAKE UP TO A YEAR TO PRODUCE AN ANALYTICAL WORK FOR A GOVERNMENT SPONSOR. OUR TIME TABLES FOR DELIVERY OF WORK TO CLIENTS GENERALLY FALL INTO ONE OF THREE CATEGORIES.

SHORT-TERM DEMANDS MEAN THAT WE HAVE BETWEEN 24 AND 48 HOURS TO UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM, FIGURE OUT HOW WE ARE GOING TO SOLVE IT -- THAT IS, TO IDENTIFY WHAT SOURCES OF INFORMATION CAN GIVE US THE ANSWERS WE NEED-- AND TO OBTAIN, PROCESS AND DELIVER THAT INFORMATION TO THE CLIENT IN AN ACCEPTABLE FORM.

LET ME CITE AN EXAMPLE. LAST FRIDAY AFTERNOON ONE OF OUR CLIENTS RECEIVED LATE CHANGES TO AN AGREEMENT FROM THEIR UKRAINIAN PARTNERS. THIS DOCUMENT WAS TO BE SIGNED THE FOLLOWING TUESDAY. THEIR UKRAINIAN PARTNERS WERE TO BOARD A PLANE BOUND FOR THE US ON SATURDAY MORNING. LEGALLY, THE CHANGES WERE FAIRLY SERIOUS. THE UKRAINIAN SIDE SENT A FAX WITH NEW LANGUAGE WHICH SERIOUSLY TANGLED THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR THE PENDING JOINT VENTURE'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS. A NEW STATE ORGANIZATION CALLED THE STATE PROPERTY FUND WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE DECISION MAKING LOOP IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT WOULD HAVE HAD VETO POWER OVER CERTAIN BOARD DECISIONS. THERE WAS NO REASON FOR THESE CHANGES TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE AGREEMENT SINCE THIS STATE PROPERTY FUND WAS NOT A PARTY TO THE AGREEMENT.

WE DECIDED THAT THE BEST WAY FOR US TO EVALUATE THE POTENTIAL THREAT OF THESE CHANGES WAS TO OBTAIN A COPY OF THE ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF THE UKRAINE STATE PROPERTY FUND. WE REGULARLY USE CHARTERS OR ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION TO HELP US BETTER UNDERSTAND WHO WE ARE DEALING WITH AND THEIR JURISDICTIONAL RANGE

OUR MOSCOW OFFICE SPENT MONDAY WORKING THE PROBLEM AND BY MONDAY AFTERNOON MOSCOW TIME (AND MORNING OUR TIME) WE RECEIVED AN E-MAIL MESSAGE FROM MOSCOW WITH THE INFORMATION WE NEEDED TO ADVISE OUR CLIENT. BY THE TIME THE UKRAINIAN DELEGATION ARRIVED FOR THE FINAL NEGOTIATIONS AND SIGNING CEREMONY, WE NEW MORE ABOUT THE STATE PROPERTY FUND THAN THEY DID. MORE IMPORTANT, WE HAD

APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION IN THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE THAT PROVED OUR POINTS AND IN THE END, AN ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE WAS ACHIEVED.

IN CONTRAST WITH THESE CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROJECTS, A MEDIUM-TERM PROJECT FOR US MIGHT SPAN A PERIOD OF UP 2 WEEKS AND A LONG-TERM PROJECT TYPICALLY TAKES 3-6 MONTHS FOR IN DEPTH RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WHAT CONSTITUTES AN OPEN SOURCE IN RUSSIA HAS CHANGED OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. AS RECENTLY AS 1987, THE WEST RELIED HEAVILY ON SOURCES LIKE LOCAL PRESS AND OTHER PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR BROADCASTS AND BBC SUMMARY OF WORLD BROADCASTS, NTIS, FBIS AND JPRS REPORTS. THESE SOURCES ALONE CANNOT KEEP PACE WITH THE INFORMATION EXPLOSION IN THE CIS, AND CONSEQUENTLY, THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW IN TERMS OF GETTING TARGETED COMMERCIAL INFORMATION, 4 TO 6 YEARS AGO MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED A PUNISHABLE CRIME AND ESPIONAGE. THE FOLLOWING REPRESENT NEW SOURCES AND METHODS OF ACCESSING INFORMATION ABOUT THE CIS THAT WE REGULARLY USE AND WHICH ARE NO LONGER CONSIDERED ESPIONAGE. I MIGHT ADD, HOWEVER, THAT SHOULD THE US GOVERNMENT PURSUE SOME OF THESE TECHNIQUES, IT MAY NOT BE APPRECIATED BY THE GOVERNMENTS IN THE CIS

INFORMATION SOURCES INCLUDE

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS
100S OF NEWLY AVAILABLE REPORTS AND DATABASES FROM PRIVATE ENTERPRISES
UNPUBLISHED - OFFICIAL REPORTS FROM REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENTS
BROCHURES FROM PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS AND EVEN FORMER MILITARY FACILITIES
NEW JOURNALS AND PUBLICATIONS WHICH ARE NO LONGER CENSORED
THESE JOURNALS GIVE US ACCESS TO FINANCIAL, ACCOUNTING, PRICING AND OTHER DATA. THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF THESE JOURNALS FROM ALL OF THE FORMER REPUBLICS
INTERNAL MEMORANDA AND INSTRUCTIONS FROM GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND STATE COMMITTEES, AS WELL AS OTHER LEGISLATION
DIRECTORIES

INFORMATION ACCESS

LIBRARIES IN THE CIS (MANY OF WHICH WERE CLOSED TO FOREIGNERS)
COMMISSIONED RESEARCH (EITHER SUBCONTRACT OR VIA OUR OFFICE)
INTERVIEWS (DIRECT MAIL QUESTIONNAIRES, PERSONAL INTERVIEWS OR
PHONE CALLS)

NETWORKING

SUBSCRIPTIONS

ADVERTISING

COURIERS (PRECEDED THE FAX MACHINE - WE ONCE USED A TRAIN
CONDUCTOR TO DELIVER A DOCUMENT TO OUR MOSCOW OFFICE

FROM MINSK). FAX MACHINES AND E-MAIL ARE BECOMING MORE
WIDELY USED IN THE CIS

IN ADDITION TO THESE RESOURCES AND ACCESS TECHNIQUES, WE ALSO
CONSULT THE MANY DATABASES AND WESTERN SOURCES, EITHER WRITTEN OR
PERSONAL CONTACTS.

IN ADDITION TO THE MANY CHALLENGES THAT WE FACE, WE ARE ALSO
OBSERVING INTERESTING CHANGES IN THE NATURE OF OPEN-SOURCE
INTELLIGENCE IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION. IN THE CIS, THE LINE BETWEEN
WHAT IS AN OPEN SOURCE AND WHAT IS NOT AN OPEN SOURCE, BETWEEN
WHAT SHOULD BE AND WHAT SHOULDN'T BE PUBLIC INFORMATION IS
VIRTUALLY UNDEFINED.

WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL, OF COURSE, IS REALLY A
SUBJECTIVE QUESTION. HOWEVER, IF ROLES WERE REVERSED, AND IF OUR
COMPANY WERE A RUSSIAN ORGANIZATION WITH THE MISSION OF GATHERING
BUSINESS INFORMATION ABOUT THE U.S. FOR RUSSIAN CLIENTS, WE WOULD
SIMPLY NEVER SEE SOME TYPES OF MATERIALS THAT FREQUENTLY PASS
THROUGH OUR HANDS ABOUT THE CIS.

WITHOUT BETRAYING CONFIDENCES, WE HAVE ON MANY OCCASIONS RECEIVED
COPIES OF EXTREMELY SENSITIVE DOCUMENTS, INCLUDING:

- A COPY OF AN AGREEMENT SIGNED LESS THAN A YEAR AGO BY A
LEADING US COMPUTER COMPANY AND A SOVIET GOVERNMENT
MINISTRY CONCERNING DELIVERY OF A WIDE RANGE OF
COMPUTER HARDWARE, INCLUDING A DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF
PAYMENTS BY THE SOVIET SIDE, AS WELL AS DONATIONS ON THE
PART OF THE U.S. MANUFACTURER. **ASET HAS NOT RELEASED
THIS INFORMATION.**
- A COPY OF A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR AN OIL AND GAS PROJECT
BETWEEN AN AMERICAN, JAPANESE AND RUSSIAN COMPANY AS
YOU MIGHT WELL IMAGINE, THE STUDY PROVIDES CONSIDERABLE

DETAILS ABOUT A MAJOR ENERGY PROJECT.

- THE SOVIET MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS TELEPHONE DIRECTORY. WHILE THIS MAY NOT SEEM DRAMATIC, KEEP IN MIND THAT JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, THE RAILWAY MINISTRY WAS CONSIDERED A DEFENSE-RELATED AGENCY, AND THIS DIRECTORY DETAILED THE MINISTRY'S INTERNAL STRUCTURE AND IDENTIFIED LARGE NUMBERS OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL, THEIR POSITIONS AND OTHER KEY DATA.

IN THE CASE OF THE COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT INVOLVING THE U.S. COMPUTER COMPANY, I SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT WE DID NOT DELIBERATELY SET OUT TO OBTAIN A COPY OF THIS AGREEMENT. RATHER, IT WAS PROVIDED TO US TOGETHER WITH MANY OTHER LESS-SENSITIVE MATERIALS IN THE COURSE OF CONDUCTING A WIDE RANGE OF RESEARCH ON THE RUSSIAN COMPUTER INDUSTRY. IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE THAT AN ORGANIZATION CONDUCTING SIMILAR MARKET RESEARCH IN THE U.S. WOULD SIMPLY HAPPEN UPON COPIES OF SUCH CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS IN THE REGULAR COURSE OF ITS BUSINESS. THE POINT IS: "PROPRIETARY INFORMATION" IS STILL VERY MUCH A FOREIGN CONCEPT IN THE CIS. INDEED, FOR MANY PEOPLE IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION, A CONFLICT OF INTEREST IS SIMPLY ANOTHER BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY.

OPEN SOURCE INTELLIGENCE IN OUR FIELD RARELY STANDS ALONE. MORE OFTEN, IT IS USED TO SUPPLEMENT OTHER TYPES OF RESEARCH. FOR EXAMPLE, CHARTERS (EQUIVALENT TO OUR ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION) OF BOTH CIVILIAN AND FORMER MILITARY AGENCIES WE HAVE OBTAINED INTERNAL FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTING DATA REGARDING THE SALES AND REVENUES FROM SPECIFIC PRODUCT- LINES OF WESTERN COMPANIES WITH SALES REPRESENTATIONS IN MOSCOW. MAPS, TECHNICAL DATA ON RAILWAYS, OTHER TRANSPORTATION CENTERS AND NODES AND LISTS OF MANUFACTURERS WITH DETAILED INFORMATION ON THEIR ASSEMBLY LINE TECHNOLOGY ARE OTHER EXAMPLES. NEXT YEAR, ASET WILL PUBLISH A NATIONWIDE DIRECTORY OF RAILWAY AND TRANSPORTATION ROUTES AND NODES: ANOTHER UNIQUE RESOURCE NEVER BEFORE AVAILABLE OUTSIDE THE FORMER USSR.

THERE IS A CAVEAT TO THIS. BUSINESS EXECUTIVES FROM THE COUNTRIES OF THE FORMER USSR HAVE MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT BUSINESS ETHICS. AS INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS RELATIONS DEVELOP, CIS BUSINESSMEN WILL BE COMPELLED BY THEIR WESTERN PARTNERS TO CONFORM TO MORE INTERNATIONALLY-ACCEPTED BUSINESS ETHICS AND PRACTICES. HAVING SWUNG FAR IN THE DIRECTION OF UNPARALLELED ACCESS TO INFORMATION, THE PENDULUM WILL ULTIMATELY SWING BACK TOWARDS PRACTICES SIMILAR TO THOSE OF OTHER MARKET ECONOMIES. THIS WILL, OF COURSE, INFLUENCE

THE NATURE OF OUR WORK. WE ARE ALREADY SEEING NEW REGULATIONS REGARDING THE EXPORT OF INFORMATION. IN RUSSIA, FOR EXAMPLE, CERTAIN TYPES OF GEOPHYSICAL AND OTHER NATURAL-RESOURCE DATA MUST NOW BE LICENSED FOR EXPORT BY THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES IN THE FIELD. FINANCIAL PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS ARE BEING IMPOSED. THE COMPENDIUM I MENTIONED EARLIER WAS AWARDED SUCH A LICENSE.

THIS SHIFT IN THE INFORMATION FLOW FROM THE CIS HAS LED TO CHANGES IN HOW THE WEST RESPONDS. THESE CHANGES REPRESENT ANOTHER CHALLENGE THAT AFFECTS A COMPANY LIKE OURS.

WE HAVE WITNESSED AN INCREASING DUPLICATION OF EFFORT IN THE US BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR IN TERMS OF THEIR MANAGEMENT AND PROCESSING OF OPEN-SOURCE INFORMATION. THIS DUPLICATION HAS EVOLVED FROM THE FORMER GOVERNMENT-INTENSIVE EFFORT TO COLLECT AND PROCESS INFORMATION ON AN ADVERSARY. UNFORTUNATELY, AS THIS ADVERSARY HAS BEGUN TO TRANSFORM ITSELF INTO A NEW COMMERCIAL MARKET, WE ARE WITNESSING A FRANTIC EFFORT BY SOME GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THEIR LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT.

ONE OUTCOME OF U.S. GOVERNMENT EXPANSION INTO THE COMMERCIAL INFORMATION MARKET IS AN EVIDENT LACK OF QUALITY AND UNDERSTANDING IN CERTAIN AREAS. THIS CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO A LACK OF EXPERIENCE AND THE ABSENCE OF INTERNAL QUALITY CONTROL PROCEDURES THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF COMMERCIAL CLIENTS. THIS PROBLEM IS NOT LIMITED TO DEALING WITH INFORMATION FROM THE CIS. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF COMPANIES THAT MAKE A HANDSOME LIVING TRANSFORMING FDA DATA, FOR EXAMPLE, INTO ORGANIZED VALUE-ADDED DATABASES.

PERESTROIKA WAS A MIXED BLESSING FOR U.S. RESEARCHERS OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION. GREATER AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION IS GOOD, BUT POORLY PROCESSED INFORMATION CAN DAMAGE THE DECISION MAKING OF THOSE WHO USE IT. EVERY DAY, FOR EXAMPLE, WE ENCOUNTER POOR-QUALITY LEGAL TRANSLATIONS BEARING THE SEAL OF A U.S.-GOVERNMENT AGENCY. THE SEAL LENDS GREAT CREDIBILITY TO THESE DOCUMENTS. BUT SOME OF THESE TRANSLATIONS ARE A HAZARD TO THE UNWARY COMPANY WHICH USES THEM IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH FOREIGN PARTNERS.

FOR EXAMPLE, IN AN OFFICIAL US GOVERNMENT TRANSLATION OF THE UZBEK FOREIGN INVESTMENT LAW THE WORD "CONVERSION" OF PROFITS WAS USED

INSTEAD OF REPATRIATION OF PROFITS WHICH INDICATES THAT PROFITS OF JOINT VENTURES CAN BE CONVERTED FROM ONE CURRENCY TO ANOTHER BUT NOT REPATRIATED. SUCH A MISTAKE IN TRANSLATION MAY CAUSE A COMPANY TO REJECT UZBEKISTAN AS AN INVESTMENT TARGET.

A NEW RUSSIAN DECREE ON SECURITIES TRANSACTIONS, THE RUSSIAN WORD AKTSIYA, WHICH MEANS SHARE, AS IN A SHARE OF STOCK, WAS REPEATEDLY TRANSLATED AS ACTION. ONE WAS LEFT TO WONDER WHY THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT WAS REGULATING THE ISSUANCE OF ACTIONS. THE SAME TRANSLATION STATED THAT RUSSIAN CITIZENS WERE TO RECEIVE VOUCHERS UNDER THE NEW PRIVATIZATION PLAN FROM "A SINGLE VOUCHER ISSUE" WHEN, IN FACT, THE RUSSIAN TEXT, PROPERLY TRANSLATED, STATED THAT CITIZENS WERE ENTITLED TO VOUCHERS FROM EACH VOUCHER ISSUE. SUCH ERRORS ARE NO MEANS AN EXCEPTION. JUST LAST MONTH, "ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER" WAS TRANSLATED AS "ELECTRONIC MONEY CIRCULATION" "THE MONEY SUPPLY" WAS RENDERED RATHER IMAGINATIVELY AS "THE MONETARY MASS" WHILE THE "LOWER CLASSES" APPEARED AS THE "POORLY-PROVIDED-FOR-STRATA". THE RUSSIAN VOUCHER LAW MADE REFERENCE TO VOUCHERS OFFERED FOR SALE WHICH WAS RENDERED IN THE US GOVERNMENT TRANSLATION AS "POTENTIALLY QUOTED VOUCHERS." WITHOUT ACCESS TO THE ORIGINAL RUSSIAN LANGUAGE DOCUMENT AND THE ABILITY TO READ IT, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE SENSE OUT OF ANY OF THESE MISTRANSLATED TERMS. NATURALLY, THE USE OF SUCH TRANSLATIONS AS THE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS AND SECURING MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR CONTRACTS IS, TO SAY THE LEAST, INADVISABLE.

THE PROBLEM OF POOR QUALITY INFORMATION, OR IN THIS CASE, BAD TRANSLATIONS OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS IS NOT EASILY SOLVED. IF A PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATION PRODUCES SUBSTANDARD WORK, IT IS COMPELLED BY THE MARKETPLACE TO IMPROVE OR ULTIMATELY IT IS DRIVEN OUT OF BUSINESS BY COMPETITION FROM A SUPERIOR PRODUCT AND SUPPLIER. ACCOUNTABILITY IS HARD TO ACHIEVE IN THE GOVERNMENT SPHERE WHEN THE PRODUCT IS SIMPLY PASSED FROM ONE GOVERNMENT AGENCY TO ANOTHER AND SUBSEQUENTLY DISSEMINATED. TO BE FAIR, I SHOULD NOTE THAT THERE ARE ALSO PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS WHICH DO NOT MEASURE UP. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THAT THEY EVENTUALLY GO BANKRUPT.

AS WE ALL KNOW, GOVERNMENT BUDGETS ARE BEING REDUCED. WHEN THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS PROVIDING A RELIABLE SERVICE, IT WOULD SEEM LOGICAL FOR THE GOVERNMENT NOT TO DUPLICATE THESE EFFORTS AND EXPENSES WHICH ARE ALREADY BEING INCURRED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO OFFER A SIMILAR AND HIGHER-QUALITY SERVICE. ALTERNATIVELY, THE US GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER MORE COLLABORATION AND UTILIZATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE RATHER THAN RE-INVENTING

THE WHEEL AND DEVELOPING INTERNAL MEANS OF REPEATING WHAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR ALREADY OFFERS.

IN SUMMARY, THERE IS FAR MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN RUSSIA THAN YOU MIGHT IMAGINE. THE INFORMATION IS OF VARYING QUALITY. THE MEANS FOR ACCESSING THIS INFORMATION ARE EXPANDING. TRANSLATIONS OF THIS INFORMATION, IF NOT DONE EXCEEDINGLY WELL, CAN INTRODUCE DANGEROUS MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

AS YOU CAN SEE OUR OLD PROBLEM OF INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION BY THE SOVIETS HAS BEEN TURNED UPSIDE DOWN. WE STILL HAVE THE SAME POOR SIGNAL-TO-NOISE RATIO PROBLEM BUT FOR DIFFERENT REASONS. WE HAVE A SURFEIT OF INFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION IS NOW THE RESULT OF ERRORS BY SOME US GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS RATHER BY INTENT OF THE FORMER SOVIET GOVERNMENT.

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