

REVIEWS AND NOTES

**Mircea Stan, *PROGRAMUL DE MĂSURI ACTIVE AL KGB-GRU ÎMPOTRIVA ROMÂNIEI (1964-1989)*, [THE ACTIVE MEASURES PROGRAM OF KGB-GRU AGAINST ROMANIA]
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review by **Florin BUȘTIUC***

This is the principle which perfectly correlates with the need to develop critical thinking and security awareness: "Security risks are a threat to society as a whole, and any member can become a vulnerability in the absence of a security culture".

It is against this backdrop that Mircea Stan's volume achieves an essential objective, i.e. it provides *an integrated and correlated projection* on security, intelligence and active measures. This is accomplished due to the fact that, from practical experience, for a non-expert, a diverse approach demotivates individual study as it creates a feeling of indefinite effort and unfinished successive conceptual completion.

Therefore, in the first part of the book, the author provides an in-depth analysis of the concept of security by approaching it from the standpoint of a temporal axis: *Peace of Westphalia – present*. Insertions of some significant moments from the following periods are also added: *The Age of Empires* (1500-1600, the Habsburgs and the desire to unify Europe; 1648, the Treaty of Westphalia; 1660-1760, Louis XIV and Richelieu; the French Revolution, the Congress of Vienna, Napoleon III and Otto von Bismarck); *The period of the two World Wars* (World War I,

* PhD "Mihai Viteazul" National Intelligence Academy. Email address: bustiuc.florin@animv.eu

Interwar period I – collective security, The League of Nations, World War II, Interwar period II – erosion of security); *The Cold War and the subsequent crisis of the power system* (the Bipolar World, NATO and WTO, the Korean War, the Suez Crisis, the Hungarian Revolution, the Vietnam War, the collapse of communism etc.). This chronological analysis offers the hypothesis that “the interdependence between national-state sovereignty and the system of international relations has determined several stages of security, and the stage of resilience is the result of the pace and radicalism of changes taking place globally.”

Mircea Stan points out that one of Romania's current objectives is to become a **resilient state**, through the ability of individuals, communities, and that of the state to resist and adapt progressively to negative events. The state would thus, be able to return to normal conditions, with an impact on capacity building and strengthening the current and future generations to meet their needs. A strategy to develop effective tools for strengthening societal resilience (adjusted to the new types of **threats – subtle and subversive**) includes (1) optimizing awareness of hostile/influential actions, (2) defining accessible and transparent public tools to expose the sources of disinformation, (3) developing critical thinking and the ability to identify and combat false information, **with effects in reducing the vulnerability of the young generation to hybrid challenges** (Romanian National Defence Strategy for 2020-2024).

In the second part of the book, Mircea Stan explains *the active measures*, calling for a timely incursion into Russian history (the Age of the tsars, Russian messianism, the Crimean War, the Russian Revolution, Stalin and the security of the USSR, Putin's Russia). The author lists what has remained constant in terms of action influence – the feeling of insecurity, the Russians' obsession with their own borders and the ebb

of expansion (sensitivity to space) – finally translated as a ***predisposition to active measures***.

In order to outline some concepts related to the idea of resilience, we underscore the following significant elements, which have been taken from the various definitions of active measures: prevention of (possible) hostile actions of some (potential) informative opponents (KGB Lexicon); systematic (political) tool used to discredit, isolate and make vulnerable, targeted at states, organizations, individuals (The Congress of the USA, July 13 and 14, 1982, p. 1); open or covert techniques to influence the events or behavior of some states and their actions (from influencing government policies to undermining trust in decision makers and institutions) (Shultz and Godson, 1984, p. 193).

If resistance/resilience (individual, social) is initiated by knowing the specific activities of an adverse entity, the author strives and manages to present a taxonomy of the means and methods of the active measures program, respectively: agents (of influence), official and informal contacts, secret contacts for the purpose of influence; exposure, discredit, compromise, challenge, penetration; persuasion, influence, manipulation, disinformation, propaganda, diversion, subversion, sabotage, rumors, falsehoods, intoxication/deception/maskirovka, reflexive control. Through active measures, strategic events are generated in order to create short, medium and long-term advantages in the social, political, military, economic, and intelligence fields. The author considers that they currently overlap with the meanings of the terms irregular war/ unconventional/asymmetric/fourth generation.

Consequently, it can be seen that a program of active measures is a veritable “Russian matryoshka” with evasions of perception, space and time, with the strategic reversibility of micro-macro dimensions, with expertise in anticipation and projections (“teachers of the future”), with the decomposition and recomposition of operations, resources and

techniques according to the opponent, in terms of the continuity of a unifying perspective.

In terms of resilience, the analysis of adverse activities – in this case, also applicable to active measures – is reflected in the decoding of their goals and plans, and Kevin P. Riehle (2015, p. 55-58) proposes a grid based on:

(1) *Risk assessment*, which answers the question “Where and how does a foreign adversary operate?”

(2) *Analysis of the activities of the opposing entities* which answers the question “For what purposes are resources allocated?” and “What are the state’s priorities?”

(3) *Analytical advice and targeting*, to answer the question “Where and how does an opponent try to neutralize operations?”

(4) *Analysis of business efficiency options*, which answers the question: “How can our efforts neutralize external threats?”

Given that, “Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it” (George Santayana), the author groups the general framework that shaped the Romanian-Soviet relations into two historical stages: 1948-1964 – corresponding to the bilateral policy, and 1964-1989 – when the escalation of political tensions determined the growth of the informative/counter-informative activities between the two states.

Generally, until 1958 Bucharest was a loyal ally of Moscow. However, against the backdrop of the Hungarian Revolution (1956), the framework to discuss the opportunity of Soviet troops on Romanian territory was created. The troops would eventually withdraw in 1958, and in the aftermath different attitudes emerged, from challenging Moscow's decisions in the CMEA to the political ones, such as the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the separate movement on the Cuban crisis.

Romania's "uncomfortable" attitude in the sphere of Soviet influence, along with its distinct positions in the Warsaw Pact meetings – an "autonomy" within the Soviet bloc – led to a fall-out between the Socialist Republic of Romania and other WTO member states. As a result, the KGB decided to coordinate programs of active anti-Romanian measures (for instance, the Hungarian ÁVO/ÁVH and STASI were involved through HVA, amid the use of their representativeness by the Hungarian and German communities as a screen for operations). Against this background, in the late 1970s, the USSR decided that the PGU should transfer Romania from Department XI – "Relations with Socialist Countries" to Department V, which had jurisdiction over some NATO member countries, Switzerland and the other two "rebel" states of the Soviet bloc, Yugoslavia and Albania. Moreover, in the early 1980s, **KGB defined Romania as an enemy state.**

Mircea Stan follows chronologically the main stages of the Soviet program of active measures against Romania, showing that it materialized, in many respects, from erroneous coverage in the Soviet media of Romanian political-diplomatic actions and disinformation (the elimination of positive aspects) regarding the latter's economic and social situation, up to the isolation of Romania internationally. The resizing by the USSR of subversive activities against Romania was determined by the distinct attitude within the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO), respectively by the establishment of diplomatic, military, economic relations (uncontaminated) with Western and Eastern states. In fact, a 1984 KGB document states that Moscow initiated a series of bilateral and multilateral cooperation within the WTO intelligence community to which Romania was not invited, the "quarantine" imposed on the Romanian state being a consequence of KGB-GRU plans for active measures.

In association with the dynamics of the Romanian political and intelligence realities, the book also presents the management of the intelligence/counterintelligence activity between 1964 and 1989. Some significant moments are highlighted: the role and place of the Soviet advisers in the activity of the Department of State Security (DSS), the legislative framework of DSS, the briefing process for decision-makers (and distortions of information flow), mechanisms for responding to the program of active measures coordinated by the KGB-GRU (establishment of UM 0110 and the “D”, disinformation service), the events of December 1989.

The author considers that Romania’s inter-institutional collaboration had the following landmarks: a) the stage in which in each socialist country the intelligence /counter-intelligence activity was led by Soviet advisers, in close collaboration with the KGB-GRU headquarters; b) the second stage of relaxation, after the declaration of the “Brezhnev Doctrine” which aimed at resetting the system of inter-institutional cooperation, the Kremlin hoping for the “return” of Romania; c) the stage when it becomes clear that Romanian had not returned/would not return to the initial position of cooperation with the Soviets, and the security of the Romanian state enters a total isolation being labeled an enemy.

In fact, the author also provides the pieces of a complex puzzle:

- The Soviet advisers were seconded by carefully selected and trained people in elite institutions of the USSR;
- The Soviet advisers represented, along with the Romanian-Soviet joint ventures grouped in the giant Sovrom project, a compact and efficient intelligence structure;
- The Soviet advisers were representative in all fields of activity in Romania (they remained as a single structure and acted without limitations as long as the Soviet troops were on the territory);

- The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Romania did not remove the Soviet influence (the Kremlin still had a large number of clandestine agents – the first generation of Soviet spy networks had its roots in the former members of the Comintern, the veterans of the Spanish Civil War, former Soviet concentration camp prisoners recruited by the NKVD; similarly, the second generation of “pro-Soviets” had its roots, especially, in those who had been sent to Moscow to study);
- In 1962, on the occasion of a visit by Khrushchev, the issue of recruitment by PGU and GRU in Romania was addressed. Khrushchev later ordered that other security and intelligence services in the Soviet Bloc limit their cooperation with similar structures in RPR (non-detailed information which was not for the benefit of the Romanian state).
- Why did the Soviets so easily choose to discontinue the activity of their advisers in Romania (the withdrawal of Soviet advisers on security and intelligence issues began in 1958 and ended in 1964)? One answer would be that, prior to the withdrawal, vast espionage networks had been set up to provide “underground” channels of communication with Moscow (the phrase “I left only to stay”).

One of the author's assessments is that the Soviet-coordinated program of active measures focused on disinformation and intoxication (the KGB had become formidable in HUMINT operations, given the number of Soviet bloc citizens who had emigrated to the West), and **the Socialist Republic of Romania was the target of the active measures about which the public opinion, both in the country and abroad, knew nothing.**

In terms of training and strengthening the security culture in addressing a potential program of active measures (covert/clandestine

operations) of an intelligence adversary, with specific means and methods such as disinformation, subversion, rumors, fake-news, intoxication/deception etc., it is desirable to present hypothetical-theoretical answers to the following questions: *Who are the actual opponents (state or non-state actors)?; What would the analysis of the operational situation related to the program be?; What is the purpose of the program?; Are there any sub-programs and what do they consist of?; Are there any intermediate goals? If so, what are they?; What are the timeframes?; What effects are being pursued and what periods are they related to?; What are the opponent's specific abilities that can be directed to a certain goal/target?; What are the resources and targets?; Where and against which targets does it act?; What is the intelligence perspective? (e.g. recruiting human resources); What are the critical points of the program/subprograms/operations?*

Likewise, the concept of *administrative intelligence* (state competitive intelligence?) should be tackled as it is linked to the idea of institutional security culture. This would represent an openness of secret intelligence specific to specialized structures. *Administrative intelligence* would be a process of collecting and analyzing, at the institutional level, open and official information, which would facilitate the preservation of legislative and regulatory elements, mechanisms and structures, and a level of competence in "key points", to ensure intra and inter-institutional resilience and functional efficiency, both internally and externally.

Administrative intelligence would also increase accountability and institutional initiative, increasing the likelihood of features such as flexibility, adaptability, responsiveness, anticipation and planning, with positive effects on inter-agency cooperation and the ability to combat asymmetric and hybrid threats. But the first step is to become aware of the reality of the threats, and an effective pre-setting is made by

endorsing simple principles – “Plans to harm the enemy are not determined by special methods. Entice away the enemy's best and wisest men, so that he may be left without counselors. Introduce traitors into his country, that the government policy may be rendered futile. Foment intrigue and deceit, and thus sow dissension between the ruler and his ministers. By means of every artful contrivance, cause deterioration amongst his men and waste of his treasure. Corrupt his morals by insidious gifts leading him into excess. Disturb and unsettle his mind by presenting him with lovely women.” (Sun Tzu)

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