Review

by Prof. Stefan A. Simeonov, PhD, VFU "Chernorizets Hrabar"

Professional field:
9.1. "National Security"; 2.2. "History and Archeology"

Subject: Dissertation of Dr. Teodora Licheva on the topic: "Transformation of the management cycle in intelligence and counter-intelligence through the integration of modern technological solutions" presented for the award of the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" in the professional field 9.1. National security

The review was prepared on the basis of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation, Ordinance No. 12 for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" and the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" at VFU, Order No. 404/15.07.26 of the Rector of VFU and a decision at the first meeting of the scientific jury of 16.07.2026.

Relevance and significance.

Dr. Teodora Licheva presents a dissertation for the acquisition of the scientific degree of "Doctor of Sciences". The volume, structure and content of the text testify to serious research work on the problems of national security, modern information, communication and management technologies in the still relatively distant field of transformation of security structures in our country.

The individual parts of the dissertation chronologically and logically present the evolution of the understanding of security, the application of new technologies in security, the transformation of digital governance in the field of security. The content of the dissertation shows that Dr. Licheva has chosen a

topical and significant problem as the goal of her research work, combining the theory of management; security theory and information technology.

Dr. Licheva outlines the object, subject, purpose and tasks of her research. She defines and proves the thesis presented in it. The proven thesis is "that modern management processes are inevitably related to technological progress and their development is essentially exponential, as is the development of modern technologies. The governance and security environment are adequate to economic development, and this determines their effectiveness."

The research methodology is impressive and correctly chosen. An integrated methodological matrix of the dissertation has been formed, including a combination of a systematic and structural-functional approach, general scientific methods - analysis (including scenario and prognostic), synthesis, induction, deduction, historical, legal and comparative approaches, preparation and creation of management and descriptive models.

The study in the volume of 425 p. is based on a wide range of 514 sources in several languages, incl. Chinese – scientific publications, monographs, strategic documents of national and international organizations, regulations and reports from leading research centers. Correctly cited and accompanied by 94 tables and 34 figures, they represent a solid basis for analysis, argumentation and evidence of the thesis of the presented work.

Nature, credibility and assessment of contributions.

When forming contributions to the work, Dr. Licheva approaches it with depth and perspective. Her contributions are exclusively her work, they bring novelty to science, create approaches to new theories, enrich existing theories, affirm conceptual models, have a scientific, scientific-applied, practical character and meaning in several different directions. I fully support the main contribution that states "the migration of the elements of the management cycle, typical for the security services, from traditional and analogue to modern digital processes, including the specifics of the individual levels of management according to the

time horizon and the structural levels in the national security system". As a historian, I would like to note that there is an attempt to re-contextualize the development of the Bulgarian security services through a historical-institutional analysis. In view of the technological backwardness of the Bulgarian intelligence and counterintelligence services, a matrix has been created to assess the risks to national security as a basis for comparative cases and indicators of technological maturity. The result of the study in practice is the formulated idea for the development of a national strategy for the transformation of the management cycle in intelligence and counterintelligence. encompassing science, competent institutions and the private sector.

I fully support the conclusion after the comparative analysis, which shows that Bulgaria is at an initial, research stage without evidence of operational implementation in the intelligence structures.

Abstract and publications.

The attached abstract is prepared in accordance with the requirements for such works. It gives a correct assessment of what Dr. Licheva has done, reflects the essence, features and contributions of the scientific work under discussion. We are facing a large-scale study, implemented on the basis of met and exceeded objective scientometric requirements and indicators for obtaining the scientific degree of "Doctor of Science" in the professional field of "National Security". The presented 15 publications and a list of ten citations related to the topic of the dissertation show the author not only as a known to the scientific community, but also as an established researcher of a current and specific field of scientific knowledge. She works and handles skillfully, adequately and competently complex matter, concepts and terminology.

Ratings, comments, questions and recommendations

A toolkit for transforming the traditional management model and replacing it with a modern, technology-based way of management and management is proposed. In general, the path to transformation is justified and reasoned by the

deep and strategic deficiencies of the Bulgarian intelligence and security services. It successfully develops new trends in the field of management.

The scope of the exhibition imposes some restrictions related to access to classified information, geographical scope and the chosen time horizon until 2025. It is these two aspects of security that are considered comprehensively, at all levels and directions (big data, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, blockchain technologies, drones, additive manufacturing, nano and geotechnology, virtual and augmented reality, space technologies).

I recommend that in the future she concentrate her efforts on research and continue her work in the field of intelligence and counterintelligence by making and deepening her contacts and putting into practice the envisaged and proposed modernization of intelligence structures through the described and analyzed forecasts, models, scenarios, roadmaps. The author summarizes that security management in the digital age is not based on analog, traditional and mostly reactive models. It requires a complete transformation of the management cycle, based on data, automation and predictive technologies, while preserving the rule of law, democratic control and ethical standards. As a declaration, however, her assertion that security is not only an institutional function, but is an integrated system of technologies, people, rules and values, in which technological modernization and management culture are interdependent, sounds like a declaration. I admire the text of Chapter Two and Table. 21, analyzing the differences related to the use of big data in intelligence (p. 111).

My recommendation is to deepen her research on the essence, meaning and content of security in the two forms and areas it explores - intelligence and counterintelligence.

Other questions.

1. Will there be the presence of representatives of the existing services (State Agency for National Security, SIA, Ministry of Interior) during the discussion and assessment of the practical value of the presented work?

2. To what extent has the Internet of Things been mastered in intelligence?
3. How will 'logical guessing' (for example, about the active integration of services) give way to verified and proven results?
4. How can the financially, organizationally and managerially adapt the existing various network intelligence platforms and tools for the needs of the special services.

These comments and recommendations do not reduce the quality and quantity of the results, contributions and decisions obtained.

Conclusion.

Based on the above assessments, results, formulated contributions, questions and comments, I propose to the members of the Scientific Jury:

To award Dr. Teodora Licheva, author of the dissertation "Transformation of the Management Cycle in Intelligence and Counterintelligence through the Integration of Modern Technological Solutions" the scientific degree **"Doctor of Science"** in PF 9.1. "National Security".

Signature:

Prof. Stefan Simeonov, DoS

Varna, 10.08.2026