

# OPINION

of Prof. Velichko Rumenchev, DPhSc.

ABOUT DISSERTATION ON

**NATO Rhetoric Strategies in Bulgaria**  
*Information Policy of the Alliance Implemented  
through Web-Based Communication Channels during  
the Period 2016 – 2021*

Every NATO-related theoretical work since its establishment until today is relevant, whether it deals with history or with the present. Both in international and in Bulgarian aspect. It falls within the interests of a wide range of researchers and of the general audience that is well interested in the issues of war and peace, of collective security, protection of democracy and democratic benefits, etc. The author properly highlights this immense scope of issues in the Bulgarian context. To this end, at the very beginning of this opinion, I would like to note that I fully acknowledge the contributory instances in the dissertation, which in their entirety, are directed to Bulgaria, thus filling, to a great extent, the theoretic and factual vacuum, which this dissertation, if not filling it entirely – and this cannot be done in any scientific work individually, at least starts filling it. Although the dissertation might possibly have a wide range of addressees, it has its major targeted audiences, and in this respect, the dissertation completely performs its key function – to serve the specialists and their periphery. It studies NATO communications in Bulgaria and the NATO and Bulgarian documents that regulate the public communications and their practical implementation in Bulgaria through publications in web-based channels, while emphasizing on what refers this topic to the Rhetoric Department – the rhetoric comprehension of the public and political discourse, of the message formulation, the definition of the rhetoric aspects about the tactical and strategic communication strategies of the Alliance in Bulgaria as crucial for the dissertation. The author underlines that the key emphasis is put on the present due to the extremely intense

international situation and the great number of problems it raises – in particular, holding of opponents and mitigating the risk in tactical and strategic aspect. It is underlined that this is the exact place of the military rhetoric and its role as part of the Alliance’s policy – after the end of the Cold War, and in particular, during the recent times. The author clarifies the subject matter and the object of the study, and the objectives he formulates are definitely ambitious. Especially the identification of “the reasons for the low efficiency of the applied communication models in terms of the public perception of the Alliance’s mission and values, in terms of the persuasion of the necessity of the Bulgarian membership in NATO, and in terms of the establishment of sustainable trust in them”. This is extremely complex and multifaceted issue related to history, culture, religion, ethnopsychology, and of course, to communication strategies and rhetoric. This issue alone could be an object of a comprehensive doctoral dissertation. It would be good, if this issue has been considered in a separate chapter of the dissertation but obviously this has not been the author’s objective. As the title tells us, he has another focus – the work has achieved this objective.

The doctoral student sets tasks that should be explained in the relevant order, and namely:

1. consideration of the theory framework of the political and military-political rhetoric;
2. review and analysis of the rhetoric aspects in the documents that govern the implementation of NATO and Bulgarian communication policies;
3. rhetorical analysis of the practical implementation of the regulatory documents, including the publications on the official websites and social media accounts;
4. definition of conclusions and recommendations for efficiency improvement.

The dissertation comprises 144 pages and is structured as follows: introduction, three chapters and conclusion, as well as references and an annex. The author is familiar with the specialized literature – both in the field of rhetoric and the topic-specific field. He uses enough printed media and electronic media publications, as well

as legal regulations, which has its reflection in the author's competence.

The first chapter deals with the political rhetoric. The doctoral student deserves congratulations for not making the unsuccessful attempt, which is quite typical for dissertations on rhetoric, for detailed historic review of rhetoric covering the period from its inception until today. In contrast to the chronological review of rhetoric, Boris Tsenov has chosen a thematic approach and considers main compositions, authors and continuity. Although in quite summarised and detached manner, the work considers the trends in the rhetoric development, and in particular the political rhetoric, the military one being a type of such political rhetoric. As Clausewitz says: "The war is a continuation of politics but with other means". After declaring the theoretic field – political/ military rhetoric, I would like to once again congratulate the author for his further approach in the study.

The second chapter is devoted to the legal regulations of rhetoric, and in particular, its framework documents – those of NATO and Bulgaria. The nature of the matter requires its scrupulous consideration what the author does to sufficient extent. Like the judicial rhetoric, this type of rhetoric should not miss this as well. It sets framework and requirements inside.

The third chapter deals with the matter yet formulated in the dissertation title on "The Information Policy of the Alliance" realized by NATO headquarters and the competent Bulgarian institutions through web-based communication channels during the period 2016 – 2021.

The annex enables the reader to get personally familiar with the documents used for the study, which is a positive feature, to my opinion.

In conclusion, I hereby express the opinion that the proposed scientific work of the doctoral student Boris Tsenov has the required merit and may be successfully defended.

17.05.2024

Sofia

Prof. Velichko Rumenev, DPhSc.