
**GEORGI STOYKOV RAKOVSKI NATIONAL DEFENCE
COLLEGE**

REVIEW

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RE: Scientific works presented in the contest announced in the State Gazette No. 78 of 4.10.2019, Order of the Minister of Defence No. OX – 888/27.09.2019, for holding the academic position “Assistant Professor”, a position provided for a serviceman at the Department of Military and Language Training of Information and Security Unit of “G. S. Rakovski” National Defence College, in the higher education field: 9. “Security and Defence”, professional area 9.2. “Military”, to teach the following subjects: “National and International Security” and “Analysis of Crises and Conflicts“

OF THE APPLICANT:
COLONEL VASIL HRISTOV STANKOV, PHD

Sofia, 2019

1. General overview of the scientific research, scientific application and teaching activities of the applicant

In the present contest for acquiring the academic rank “Assistant Professor” the only applicant, Colonel Vasil Hristov Stankov, PhD, participates with his own 14 scientific works and he presented for review 14 publications which were published after his successful doctoral thesis defence and include:

- two monographs with a total volume of 272 pages;
- two articles published in scientific editions referenced and indexed in internationally recognised databases;
- three articles published in non-referenced magazines with scientific reviews, incl. one article in English;
- five reports presented at national and international scientific fora and published in edited collective volumes;
- *two* scientific publications in the specialised edition for classified information of “G. S. Rakovski” National Defence College.

I admit all the works proposed for review as they comply with the subject area of the announced contest. Most of the presented scientific works are in Bulgarian and three of the publications are in English. All publications are the autonomous work of the applicant, have not been presented for participation in other contests for acquiring academic degrees and ranks and have never been reviewed.

The presented list of publications shows that the scientific works of the applicant are up-to-date and are directly intended for the needs of the training process at the Department of Military and Language Training. The two monographs were issued in 2019 and the reports were presented at prominent national and international fora dedicated to the issues of security and defence, and the articles were published in leading national and international journals.

The publications with which Colonel Vasil Hristov Stankov, PhD, participates in the announced contest reflect his scientific interests and aspirations in the higher education field “Security and Defence” and cover topical issues of the military and national security theory and practice on which the applicant has been working consistently and purposefully. This refers to the studies dedicated to different aspects of security and defence, with a focus on the international situation and the security environment, as well as the analysis and evaluation of the military and political situation in crisis regions which are of interest to Bulgaria.

The scientific works of Colonel Vasil Stankov, PhD, are thematically versatile and wide-ranging. A key distinctive feature of his research approach is the level of his

theoretical thoroughness and analytical capacity. The works created by him are interesting, topical and deal with original author ideas regarding the identification, analysis and summary of various aspects of national security. They are equally well received by experts and larger audiences. In its entirety, the scientific works of Colonel Stankov, PhD, fully comply with the theme of the announced contest and present the author as a serious researcher with a clearly pronounced interdisciplinary aptitude in the sphere of security and defence. The overall analysis of the applicant's scientific works shows that the titles presented for review fully cover the academic requirements and standards.

2. Evaluation of the andragogic ability and activity of the applicant

The scientific works of Colonel Vasil Stankov, PhD, and his extensive professional and management experience in the capacity of a long-term military diplomat, Head of Section at the International Security Assistance Force HQ in Kabul, Afghanistan, and a director at the Military Information Service prove his high expertise in the area of the announced contest.

The professional CV of Colonel Stankov, PhD, would not be complete, if we do not mention that he successfully transfers his scientific and practical achievements in the training process as a visiting lecturer. He was invited to participate in many scientific conferences, round tables, and discussions as an expert in the security and defence field. Colonel Stankov, PhD, has established his reputation of a specialist with high-level language competences in English, Turkish, Arabic and Russian, which is essential for his successful pedagogical work.

3. Main scientific results and contributions

The works proposed for review present Colonel Vasil Stankov, PhD, as a researcher with consistent aspirations and scientific ambitions for unbiased analysis of the problems dedicated to information methods and priorities in the strategic military intelligence and for elaboration and optimisation of the practical organisational activities and other specific aspects of the activities of the strategic human intelligence.

I admit for evaluation all the 14 publications specified by the applicant, because they exactly correspond to the subject of the announced contest and the main scientific results and contributions of the works presented by the author relate to further development of existing and generation of new knowledge in the undoubtedly significant and fundamental scope of the Security and Defence science. In this context, the original scientific contributions of the applicant can be sought mainly in the professional area 9.2. "Military", specialisation "Strategic Military Intelligence"

(publications from 1.1. to 1.8. incl.), but some of them can also be referred to professional area 9.1. “National Security” (publications from 2.1. to 2.4. incl.), which makes it possible to summarise them in the following two groups:

The first group of contributions cover the scientific scope of the analysis of a wide range of security and defence issues and refer to the transfer of new scientific knowledge in military science and practice. Achievements with contributory nature are found in the scientific publications proposed for review. They are dedicated to clarification and critical analysis of the problems, with a focus on the military aspects of the strategic military intelligence, and the positions of all key stakeholders and new sides in the comprehension of the conflict are examined and summarised in support of the activities for acquiring and analysing intelligence information.

The second group of contributions is the result of a profound study and elaboration of military and political security issues by revealing significant new aspects of the existing scientific concepts and problem areas such as international efforts and prospects for resolving the Syrian conflict; the regional strategy of Turkey and its plans for transnational influence, as well as Turkey’s approaches to the problems in the East Mediterranean region, and current trends in the defence policy of the country.

Certainly it is not possible in a review which is legally limited in volume to evaluate every specific contribution indicated by the applicant and therefore I would like to express my support for the manner of their formulation and taxonomization, and I would allow myself to focus on the two habilitation works of Colonel Stankov, PhD, which are the representative scientific result of his persistent practical and creative efforts.

The monograph *Geopolitical Aspects of the Syrian Conflict* is the author’s interpretation of the methods and approaches of studying the main driving forces and motives of the major military and political factors determining the onset, development and prospects for resolution of the Syrian crisis. The text is written in an academic but understandable language, contains facts and evidence analysed in the light of the multi-faceted efforts for resolving the conflict and the possible scenarios for its outcome and leads to the author’s assessment of the conflict’s impact on the security environment in the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Black Sea region. Of note is the clearly expressed stance of the author on the possible implications of the Syrian conflict on the security and interests of Bulgaria.

In the second monograph presented for review, *Analysis and Evaluation of the Military and Political Situation in Crisis Regions*, the author reveals and substantiates

the need of systematic methods of analysis and evaluation of the military and political situation with a focus on its crisis states, typical of the regions which are of interest to Bulgaria in terms of related military and political risks and threats for the security of our country and that of our NATO and EU allies. By reasoning the opinion that the military and political situation is part of the dynamic system of the modern security environment, the work outlines the methodological framework that allows the identification of correct approaches to the analysis and prospects of development of the military and political situation, incl. the trends of long-term or situational effects.

4. Evaluation of the significance of the contributions for science and practice

A reasoned evaluation may be made that the stated contributions *are the personal achievement of the applicant* and, besides being useful, original and significant, they add new value to the knowledge of a productive foreign policy behaviour of the country in a highly dynamic external security environment. They present theoretical summaries and solutions to practical problems which are important for the security and defence of the country by supplementing and specifying various aspects of the organisation and management of the armed forces. They embody and present a construct of knowledge that can be successfully used for training specialists in the area of security and defence.

5. Critical notes to the presented works

Without detecting any significant deficiencies in the entire construct of the research works presented for review, I would recommend the applicant to diversify the format of his production, to pass his extensive theoretical and practical experience in his future work through guidance of post-graduate and PhD students and to continue to seek a wider international recognition of his research through publications abroad and at international fora. I recommend Colonel Vasil Stankov, PhD, to participate in the implementation of scientific and application projects, given the quality of his expertise.

6. Evaluation of the applicant

I know Colonel Vasil Stankov, PhD, as a person and researcher with high professional competence, peer tolerance and integrity. In his work he excels with a constant strive for further development, with his good analytical skills, consistency and accuracy in the studied issues. I think that the works presented in the contest are his own autonomous production and successfully defend the claims for original scientific contributions referred to in the factsheet. The nature and content of the publications

proposed by the applicant in the contest fully meet the requirements of the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, its Implementing Regulation and the in-house regulatory framework of “G. S. Rakovski” National Defence College for scientific works with results and applicability in the training process for holding the academic position “Assistant Professor”.

7. Conclusion

I give my positive evaluation of the scientific works of Colonel Vasil Hristov Stankov, PhD, an applicant in the contest for holding the job position “Assistant Professor” at the Department of Military and Language Training for a serviceman in the higher education field: 9. “Security and Defence”, professional area 9.2.“Military”, to teach the following subjects: “National and International Security” and “Analysis of Crises and Conflicts”.

I propose to the honourable members of the academic jury for the contest to elect Colonel Vasil Hristov Stankov, PhD, to hold the academic position “Assistant Professor”.

8 December 2019
Sofia

Reviewer:
Prof. Lidia Velkova, PhD