

**ROMANIAN RESEARCH ON CHINA'S FOREIGN AND
SECURITY POLICY**

Abstract:	<p><i>Explaining and predicting China's international and security policies is a relatively recent concern of Romanian researchers, dating only to the beginning of our millennium. The research effort is assumed by the editorial programs of the big publishing houses, and by the editorial policies of the scientific journals.</i></p> <p><i>A balance sheet shows us that the results are not enough and are not integrated. China's growing presence in our geopolitical region, supported especially by the "One Road, One Belt" program, requires a deepening of knowledge of Chinese interests and style of action in international relations.</i></p> <p><i>This research will substantiate a correct collaboration, for the benefit of both states and people.</i></p>
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Brief introduction

The Romanian research of the Chinese space (under its geographical, historical, cultural, political aspects) claims its origin in the works of Nicolae Milescu Spătarul (1636-1708)¹, who wrote *The Journey to China*² and the *Description of China*³ - Sinological products as a result of his diplomatic mission from 1675-1678, when he visited China by order of the Russian Tsar, to explore

¹ Radu Ștefan Vergatti, *Nicolae Spătarul Milescu (viața, călătoriile, opera)*, Paideia, București, 1998

² Nicolae Milescu Spătarul, *Jurnal de călătorie în China*, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, București, 1956 (reprints: 1958, 1962, 1974, 1987)

³ Nicolae Milescu Spătarul, *Descrierea Chinei*, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, București, 1958 (reprint: 1975)

the possibility of diplomatic relations. There we also find the first analytical observations on the Chinese style of diplomatic and foreign policy, as well as on the Chinese wars.

In the modern sense, the scientific concern to describe and understand China's international and security policy dates back only to the interwar period. Romanian authors (still few) placed themselves in the terminological paradigm proposed by August Scriban's *Dictionary of the Romanian Language*, which defines sinology as "the science of the languages, history, institutions of China"¹. Deepening the institutional aspect of China's knowledge, Romanian historians and geopoliticians make the first observations and comments on foreign policy and the wars in which China relates to Western powers. Significant are the contributions of Nicolae Iorga, who is investigating *The War in the Far East. China, Japan, Asian Russia: Sketches* (1904)² and Ion Conea's notes from the "Bulletin of the Royal Romanian Geographical Society" (1927)³.

Unfortunately, the era of the communist regime in Romania does not bring any progress in the research of China's foreign and security policy, the explanations being mostly political. In the context of the deep divergences between the Soviet Union and China (1956-1971), Romania balanced between the two interests, based on policies that were not intended for the public, and was handled exclusively among the policymakers. The researchers' "help" was not sought - it was even counterproductive.

Contemporary Romanian expertise in the foreign and security policy of the People's Republic of China

Romania's openness to democracy, after 1989, also brought the benefit of democratizing the research environment - in universities, research institutes subordinated to the Romanian Academy or some ministries, think tanks (research organizations with non-governmental status). Political influence has waned and remained rather in the background. So the Romanian research has grown impressively, both quantitatively and qualitatively, being quite little influenced by Romania's accession to Western economic and military blocs; even as political relations between the two states declined, research projects continued and even rose.

Publishers' contribution

The first remarkable phenomenon is the recovery of the communist period, now systematically investigated. For example, the Soviet-Chinese relationship and

¹ August Scriban, *Dicționarul limbii românești*, Institutul de Arte Grafice "Presa Bună", București, 1939

² Nicolae Iorga, *Războiul din Extremul Orient. China, Japonia, Rusia asiatică: Schițe*, Editura Librăriei Socecu&Comp, București, 1904

³ Ion Conea, *Ce vrea China? China de până eri. De ce China nu-i în pas cu vremea?*, "Buletinul Societății Regale Române de Geografie", Vol. 46, 1927

Romania's position as the two key players in the communist camp are systematically researched by Professor Mihai Croitor of Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, who has published six volumes, numerous book chapters, articles in scientific journals¹. Documents on Romanian-Chinese relations during the communist period were collected and edited by former ambassador Romulus Budura, resulting in three volumes published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs². The same type of approach, accompanied by an important analytical contribution, was taken by Ion Buzatu³.

The second tendency to point out is the assumption of publishing programs by the big publishing houses, which hosted Romanian authors profiled on the analysis of China as an international actor and the foundations of its power. Corint Publishing House published the contributions of Dan Tomozei, under the titles *Panda Diplomacy*⁴, *The state in the 21st century - The Chinese model*⁵ and *China Time*⁶. Niculescu Publishing House offered the analysis of Andrei Marga, *The Global Ascension of China*⁷ and *China as a superpower*⁸.

The same publishers have published translations, especially of Western authors, but also work by Chinese researchers. Jin Canrong (*China. The responsibility of great power*) appears in Corint Publishing House⁹, but also relevant historical episodes in Chinese military history signed by Peter Harmsen

¹ Mihai Croitor, *Anul tigrului de hârtie: dinamica rupturii sovieto-chineze (1964)*, Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2019; Mihai Croitor, *România și conflictul sovieto-chinez (1956-1971)*, Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2009; Mihai Croitor, *În umbra tigrului de hârtie: ruptura sovieto-chineză în ecuația bipolarismului (1961-1963)*, Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2019; Mihai Croitor, *Unitate și conflict în lagărul comunist: dialectica rupturii sovieto-chineze*, Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2007; Mihai Croitor, *România și conflictul sovieto-chinez (1956-1971)*, Eikon: Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2014; Mihai Croitor; Sanda Borșa, *În numele revoluției: Mao și cultura politică chineză*, Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2008; Mihai Croitor, *Moscova 1963: eșecul negocierilor sovieto-chineze*, Eikon: Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2014

² Romulus Ioan Budura, *Politica independentă a României și relațiile româno-chineze. 1954-1975: documente*, București, 2008; Romulus Ioan Budura, *Relațiile româno-chineze: 1880-1974: documente*, București, 2015; Romulus Ioan Budura, *Relațiile româno-chineze: 1975-1981: documente*, București, 2015

³ Ion Buzatu, *Istoria relațiilor României cu China din cele mai vechi timpuri până în zilele noastre și dansul în lume dintre cea de a doua fiică a Romei - Luomaniya și împărăția dragonului galben - Zhongguo: cu o scurtă introducere în istoria Chinei și 40 de documente inedite din arhivele M.A.E. și fostei cancelarii a C.C. al P.C.R.*, Meteor Press, București, f.a.

⁴ Dan Tomozei, *Diplomația Panda*, Corint, București, 2015

⁵ Idem, *Statul în secolul XXI – Modelul chinez*, Corint, București, 2016

⁶ Idem, *Timpul Chinei*, Corint, 2018

⁷ Andrei Marga, *Ascensiunea globală a Chinei*, Editura Niculescu, București, 2015

⁸ Idem, *China ca supraputere*, Editura Niculescu, București, 2021

⁹ Jin Canrong, *China. Responsabilitatea unei mari puteri*, Corint, București, 2020

(*Yangtze Stalingrad: Battle of Shanghai - 1937*)¹ and editors Li Wei & Tong Yonguang (*Truths and Facts. The Second Sino-Japanese War 1937-1945*)².

Contribution of the scientific journals

In contrast to the publishers, which by the nature of their mission offer accessible volumes to the public (the ultimate goal of the launched editions being economic - selling them to the widest possible audience, where from the dilution of the specialization claims of the approached topic can also appear), scientific journals host articles on very specific topics. These benefit from maximum specialization and a high capacity to offer policy proposals (in our field, they are materialized in scenarios, models, public policy solutions offered to decision makers in terms of maximum concreteness).

A first category of Romanian research journals that contribute massively to the explanation and forecasting of China's status as a great world power are the economically profiled ones. It detaches the journals of the Institute of World Economy of the Romanian Academy, "Global Economic Observer" (published in cooperation with the "Nicolae Titulescu" University of Bucharest)³ and the "World Economy Review"⁴. The two editorial offices benefit from the contributions of prestigious Chinese economists: Chen Xin, a member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, respectively Guo Xuetang, Professor at the Institute of International Strategy and Political Analysis, Shanghai University of International Affairs and Economics. In this way, many Chinese economists have been featured in both magazines. Topics focus on the operationalization of the "One Road One Belt" program and the "16 + 1" cooperation mechanism, China's regional relations in Europe and especially in Eastern Europe, but also provide successful examples of the Chinese economy⁵. The Romanian researchers who support the Chinese

¹ Peter Harmsen, *Stalingradul de pe Yangtze: bătălia pentru Shanghai - 1937*, Corint, București, 2015

² Li Wei; Tong Yonguang, (Eds.), *Adevăruri și fapte. Al doilea război sino-japonez (1937-1945)*, Corint, București, 2019

³ <http://www.globeco.ro/> (15.04.2022)

⁴ <https://ideas.repec.org/s/iem/journal.html> (15.04.2022)

⁵ Doar câteva exemple: Gao Ge, "16+1 Cooperation: Considering Three Sets of Relationships", „Global Economic Observer”, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2019; Sun Jie, *Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects of Cooperation under The 16+1 And Belt and Road Initiative*, „Global Economic Observer”, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2019; Li Jiang, *The 16 + 1 Mechanism and One Belt One Road Initiative, New Channels of Promoting Sino-Czech Relations*, „Global Economic Observer”, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2017; Song Lilei; Cheng Yu, *People to People Communication: A case study of Education Cooperation between China and CEECs from 2006-2016*, „Global Economic Observer”, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2019; Zhang Min, *The New Trends and Developments of China-EU Scientific and Technological Innovation Cooperation*, „Global Economic Observer”, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2019; Ju Weiwei, *Interconnection Cooperation Between China and CEECs under the Belt and Road Initiative*, „Global Economic Observer”, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2019; Chen Xin; Yang Chengyu,

research direction there are Iulia Monica Oehler Şincai, Sarmiza Pencea, Anna Cristina Bâlgăr, George Cornel Dumitrescu¹.

Another category of Romanian scientific magazines that investigate China's foreign and security policies is the one profiled exactly in this field. The relevant case is the "Strategic Monitor", a publication of the Institute for Defense Political Studies and Military History, subordinated to the Department for Defense Policy and Planning within the Ministry of National Defense. In the first decade of our century, there was close cooperation with the Beijing Institute for Strategic and International Studies - from where Zhou Jian was co-opted into the Editorial Board. Thus, numerous articles by Chinese authors have been featured in issues of the magazine². We also exemplify the case "Studia Securitatis"³, journal of the Center for Research in Political Science, International Relations and European Studies at the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu. The editorial staff is collaborating with Professor Jian Shi of Sichuan University as a member of the Scientific Committee. Articles investigating China's global geopolitical and geostrategic position have been proposed mainly by members of "Lucian Blaga" University⁴.

Romania Industrial Competitiveness and China-Romania Cooperation, "Global Economic Observer", Vol. 5, No. 1, 2017; Fayin Xu, *The Belt and Road Initiative and Globalization: The Perspective of Globalization-Constituting Theory*, „Global Economic Observer”, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2019; Gang Xu, *Sino-Romania Relations Under the Framework of Relations Between China and CEECS Countries: A Perspective of Local Cooperation*, "Global Economic Observer", Vol. 7, No. 2, 2019; Sun Yanhong, *Industrial Restructuring in China and in the EU and New Opportunities for China-EU Industrial Cooperation in the Context of a Changing Global Economy*, "Global Economic Observer", Vol. 5, No. 1, 2017

¹ <http://www.globeco.ro/>, passim (15.04.2022)

² For example: Zhang Linchu; Zhuang Yixiang, *The Review and Prospects of the Sino-EU Relations*, "Monitor Strategic", Vol. VI, No. 3-4, 2005; Zhuang Maocheng, *On the UN Reforms*, "Monitor Strategic", Vol. VI, No. 3-4, 2005; Qiang Shen, *Relațiile SUA - China: Tacticele și Strategiile Administrației Obama*, "Monitor Strategic", No. 1-2, 2011; Wang Shusen, *The Sino-NATO Relations*, "Monitor Strategic", Vol. VI, No. 3-4, 2005; Xie Wenqing, *Relations among Major Powers and Influence on International Strategic Situation*, "Monitor Strategic", Vol. VI, No. 3-4, 2005

³ <https://magazines.ulbsibiu.ro/studiasecuritatis/>, (15.05.2022)

⁴ Casian Anton, *China. Ierarhie, putere și polaritate în relațiile internaționale*, "Studia Securitatis", Vol. VII, No. 2, 2013; Roxana Ioana Banciu, *The gloves are off for Russia-China (Mongolia) - Cuddling in a Regional security complex?*, "Studia Securitatis", Vol. IX, No. 3, 2015; Ovidiu Oltean, *What lies ahead the currency war between US and China*, „Studia Securitatis", Vol. VI, No. 2, 2012; Andreea Maria Pierşinaru; Xu Han, *Chinese and Western theoretical perspectives on Chinese public diplomacy. Common dimensions and differences*, "Studia Securitatis", Vol. XV, No. 2, 2021; Irina Ionela Pop, *China's foreign policy under XI Jinping s administration: from peaceful rise to Great power status?*, "Studia Securitatis", Vol. XI, No. 2, 2017; Dan Alexandru Popescu, *Noi considerații despre relațiile sino-europene, din perspectiva jocului de putere global*, "Studia

Among the journals profiled on the analysis of international relations, stands out the "Journal of Political Science and International Relations"¹ of the Institute of Political Science and International Relations "Ion I.C. Brătianu" of the Romanian Academy. Without developing collaborations with Chinese research, analytical articles are proposed thereby Romanian researchers Lucian Jora, Eugen Lungu, Alexandru Mihnea Ciocan, Cristina Vohn.

Some analytical considerations

Romanian research on the international evolution of China and its military-strategic foundations is far from reaching its potential. There are many explanations and quite a few remedies.

The main cause seems to be the separate and distant evolution of Romania in geopolitical regions and the related international alliances. Romania is an actor with regional pretensions in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, and bases its interests on membership of the European Union, NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Council of Europe. In this respect, his interests do not intersect at all with those of China, which expresses itself as an actor with increasingly global demands, but has the main challenges in its immediate geographical neighborhood - where it interacts mainly with Japan, South Korea, the Russian Federation, India, Australia. Also, China's economic and geopolitical interests in Africa do not intersect at all with those of Romania.

Secondly, Romania - through its political leadership - has kept a distance (not only political) from China, unlike its neighbors. Hungary and Poland, members of NATO and the European Union, are cultivating positive political relations and collecting economic benefits. Serbia, Montenegro and other Balkan countries are doing the same. Romania's moderation has automatically been transferred to the editorial policies of research journals sponsored by government structures - primarily those in the field of security and defense. "Journal of the Romanian Diplomatic Institute"² (which focuses on expertise provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), which provides an electronic archive for the period 2005-2010, does not address Chinese issues at all. The same is true for the journals of the National Defense University, "Bulletin of the National Defense University Carol I"³ and "Strategic Impact"⁴, but also for the journals of subordinate military academies. For example, there is a lack of research on military organizations and the strategic importance of China in the journals of the "Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy in Sibiu, "Scientific Bulletin"⁵ and "Journal of the Land Forces

Securitatii", Vol. IX, No. 2, 2015; Eugen Străuțiu, *Think-tankurile chineze de securitate*, "Studia Securitatii", Vol. VI, No. 3, 2012

¹ <https://journalrspri.wixsite.com/journal> (15.04.2022)

² <http://www.idr.ro/revista-idr-arhiva/> (15.04.2022)

³ <https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/ro/> (15.04.2022)

⁴ <https://cssas.unap.ro/> (15.04.2022)

⁵ https://www.armyacademy.ro/buletin_recomandari.php (15.04.2022)

Academy"¹. This category of scientific publications is completely devoid of the Chinese component (as can be seen in the Contents, as tangential references by way of example and without analytical value may be encountered, accidentally).

The causes are many. Of course, the first research task is always to describe, explain and design the internal needs of the institution. Secondly, the main effort is directed towards researching the international and security environment in which Romania is directly evolving - the European and Euro-Atlantic ones. Only when the geopolitical interests of the alliances where we are a member come into contact do research on China's international behavior make sense. Finally, I think we can talk about subjective causes. Profiling the Romania researchers on Chinese issues does not bring comparable benefits to pro-Western profiling, either professionally or personally.

Under these conditions, what are the reasons and strengths on which Romanian research on China's foreign and security policies can be (re) built?

First, by recognizing China's growing economic and cultural presence in our geopolitical realm. The massive "One Road, One Belt" program is already producing consistent effects in neighboring countries, and Romania can only escape this challenge with undeserved damage. In a normal world, Romania must be interested in the contribution of advanced technologies that can come from China, in capital investments, in advantageous loans for the construction of economic objectives. The economic and cultural projects subject to "One Road, One Belt" have a strong foreign policy component, being supported and promoted by Chinese diplomacy. Any diplomatic action also includes a security component: political, economic, cultural-symbolic, and at the edge - military-strategic. Here are enough reasons to know, explain, correctly predict the behavior, style, concrete international policy action of the Chinese state.

Secondly, Romania and the People's Republic of China have in common an increasingly consistent theme: Chinese emigration to Romania. In constant numerical growth, more and more present from the economic and social point of view, this segment of the foreign people in Romania has all the chances to become a bridge between states and peoples. This normalcy must be supported by serious research, including in the paradigms of human, social, economic security.

What to do?

Let's take a look at the academic and research environment in the West, and we can easily see dozens of think tanks profiled on the knowledge, modeling, prediction of the Chinese presence in the world. Well funded, staffed by valuable researchers, in strong contact with Chinese research, they produce programs, projects, volumes, journals, policy proposals.

In Romania, such an instrument is missing¹. There is a need for a think-tank institute that centralizes available energy and disseminates research results to

¹ <https://www.armyacademy.ro/revista.php> (15.04.2022)

policymakers, universities, the non-governmental sector. An essential resource can be the contact with Chinese research: mixed research programs and teams, exchanges of experience, mutual study visits, research grants, especially for young people. Probably the most appropriate institutional support would come from a consortium of universities with programs in the field of international relations, security studies, foreign languages (compulsory Chinese), associated in a convenient formula with Romanian Academy. At the same time, this institute will be able to systematically consult the expertise of Western think tanks in the field. Of course, this strong initiative will not exclude local and sequential ones, which it can associate and support.

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¹ In the fall of 2021, a Center for Sino-Russian Studies was launched within the Institute of Political Science and International Relations “Ion I.C. Brătianu” of the Romanian Academy, which reviews the Chinese press and publishes rather journalistic analyzes. Site visit is conditional on username and password, see <http://cssinoruse.ro/> (15.04.2022)

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