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Book review

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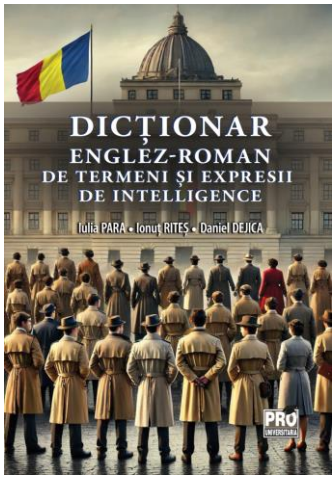

There are words which, when they enter a language, bring an entire world with them. In Romanian, *intelligence* is one of those words. In English, the term encompasses four distinct realities at once: processed information, that is, the product itself; the activity through which that product is generated; the institutions that carry out this activity; and, finally, the mindset of those who serve within them. Romanian, far from lacking the resources to accommodate such richness, has long developed a family of equivalents, each occupying its own semantic space. *Informații* ("information/intelligence") covers both the product and the activity and rests on a respectable tradition dating back to the

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Second Intelligence Section of the Romanian General Staff. *Servicii* or *servicii de informații* ("intelligence services") designates the institutional dimension, and when Romanians today speak of "the world of intelligence," they generally mean the services, and everyone understands the reference. *Analiză de informații* ("intelligence analysis") names the central operation of the field. In technical areas, particularly those associated with cybersecurity, forms derived from *inteligență* ("intelligence") have also become established in compound terms and are now accepted without controversy.

The beauty of the translator's profession lies precisely here: difficulty arises not from the absence of solutions but from their abundance. Anyone translating an alliance document or a specialised study is not confronted with a lexical gap but with the obligation, in every line, to determine which of several valid equivalents is the most appropriate. Such decisions cannot rely on intuition alone; they depend on usage, that is, on sustained familiarity with the texts of the field. It is precisely this accumulated and organised usage that the present dictionary offers, and this is perhaps the highest praise one can bestow upon a reference work: it spares its readers the years they would otherwise have spent collecting, one by one, what they now find assembled in a single volume.

The context in which this dictionary appears deserves attention because it explains its significance. After 1989, the Anglo-American vocabulary of security entered Romanian not gradually, as specialist terminologies usually do, but all at once, together with institutions, manuals, international cooperation, and, more recently, military alliances whose documents are drafted in English. Lexicography naturally followed one step behind. While there have been several commendable attempts, including Alexandru Grumaz's *Dictionary of Intelligence and National Security* (Military Publishing House, 2015) and Valentin Munteanu's *Dictionary of Intelligence and International Relations* (2016), neither set out to achieve what the volume signed by Iulia Para, Ionuț Riteș, and Daniel Dejica (2024) accomplishes: a systematic bilingual inventory, from A to Z, of the terms and expressions currently used in this field.

The composition of the team is perhaps the book's strongest argument even before one opens its pages. Daniel Dejica, a distinguished professor and Dean of the Faculty of Communication Sciences at Politehnica University of Timișoara, brings expertise in Translation Studies and extensive experience in specialised translation. Iulia Para, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of the West University of Timișoara, contributes a deep understanding of economic language, a domain in which technical terminology and everyday vocabulary constantly intersect. Ionuț Riteș, Head of the Classified Information Protection Office within the Chamber of Deputies, contributes what academic dictionaries almost always lack: living usage. An intelligence glossary written solely by linguists would likely have been elegant but difficult to use; one written exclusively by practitioners would have been practical yet linguistically imprecise. Here, the two forms of expertise support and validate one another, and the result is evident on every page. The foreword is signed by Senator Ioan-Cristian Chirteș, Chair of the Permanent

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Joint Parliamentary Committee for the Oversight of the Romanian Intelligence Service. This detail is more than a matter of protocol: it demonstrates that the volume has been received not merely as an academic exercise but as an instrument of institutional communication in a field where precise understanding between agencies or alliance partners is not simply a matter of style. In their introduction, dated Timișoara, August 2024, the authors themselves emphasise this point, arguing that terminological clarity is a prerequisite for effective coordination.

The dictionary contains more than three thousand terms and expressions arranged in strict alphabetical order, regardless of their status, in a two-column format, with English on the left and Romanian on the right. There are no definitions, and this absence is a deliberate choice rather than an omission. A bilingual glossary does not explain; it provides equivalents. Its strength lies in the speed with which it answers. Whenever mere equivalence proves insufficient, the authors add precisely the amount of clarification required in parentheses, a technique that yields some of the book's most rewarding pages. *Yellowcake*, for instance, is first rendered literally as *turtă galbenă* ("yellow cake"), before being explained as "uranium concentrate," offering a small lesson in the culinary metaphors favoured by technical languages. *Zulu time* becomes *ora Zulu*, accompanied by the clarification that it refers to Coordinated Universal Time. *Kompromat* remains *kompromat*, since Russian has provided a term that no language has felt compelled to replace.

A reading of the entries reveals with remarkable clarity a historical transformation that no essay could illustrate more convincingly. One layer of the vocabulary is the classical lexicon of spy novels and the Cold War: *agent provocateur*, *agent-in-place* (effectively translated as *agent infiltrat*), *safe house*, *dead drop*, *brush pass*, *defector*, and *cutout*. Another layer belongs to an entirely different world: *keylogger*, *zero-day*, *GPS spoofing*, *voice cloning*, *advanced persistent threat*, *VPN chaining*, and *adversarial machine learning*. The distinction between these layers is not merely technological but imaginative. The vocabulary of a field that, for a century, revolved around individuals, meetings, and hiding places has, within two decades, become one of networks, protocols, and automatisms. Anyone wishing to understand how states observe one another today can read this dictionary not merely as a reference work but as a document of its age.

For readers approaching the volume from philology, one of its most instructive passages is found in the foreword, where it is stated explicitly that *intelligence* should be translated as *informații*. This is a principled decision and, in my view, the correct one, as it preserves continuity with the Romanian tradition of the field and protects the proper meaning of the term from an overly convenient equivalent. The fact that forms derived from *inteligență* also appear throughout the glossary, wherever technical subfields have established them, does not contradict this principle but rather complements it. A dictionary does not legislate; it records. The authors have had the wisdom to document language as it is actually used today, together with all its ongoing developments. The imagologist in me would add that a well-established vocabulary in

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one's own language is a sign of a culture that has truly appropriated a field rather than merely borrowed it.

The bibliography and webography deserve separate mention because they elevate the volume beyond the status of a simple list. The works cited include Richards J. Heuer's *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, Mark M. Lowenthal's *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, as well as studies by Michael Herman, David Omand, Robert Jervis, Amy Zegart, and Michael Warner. These are supplemented by the official glossaries of NATO, the CIA, the British Security Service, and the European Union Situation Centre, alongside French lexicons, which represent a particularly strong and distinctive tradition in intelligence terminology. For students and early-career researchers, the few pages at the end of the book are worth an introductory course in themselves.

When one closes the volume, a broader observation remains. A bilingual dictionary is never merely a tool. It is an act of culture through which someone assumes responsibility for proposing, within one language, the equivalents of a field that developed in another, and for doing so in a manner that is reasoned, coherent, and thorough. The achievement of these three Timișoara-based authors lies both in the courage of their undertaking and in the patience required for its three thousand entries. From now on, anyone translating in this field has a reliable point of departure. Rarely does a working tool justify its name so completely.

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