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150 Years of Modern Romanian Diplomacy (1862 – 2012)

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Diplomacy and Foreign Policy between 1859 and 1918

The emergence of the modern Romanian nation state after the union of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1859 required a policy fostering the interests of the new state on an external plane. Although formally, from the angle of international law, the United Principalities remained under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire, political elites in Bucharest pursued full emancipation. The role of international circumstances was understood and so was the need to shape the Romanian position accordingly.

As a matter of fact, the 1856 Peace Congress of Paris, which ended the Crimean War, had clearly indicated how important the attitude of the big European powers was. The union of the Principalities had become a European question, resolved eventually owing to the support provided by one of those powers. France had proposed union under a foreign prince belonging to a European ruling family not only in order to enhance its own influence at the mouths of the Danube, but also because its main rival at the moment, the Habsburg Empire, had to cope with internal pressure from the Hungarian nation, which not even after the failure of the 1848 revolution had given up its designs for an independent Hungary within the historical borders. Emperor Napoleon III hoped to obtain, with the help of the Romanians, a pressure point behind his rival, especially as the Romanians could be of use in case of a future Hungarian revolution. During the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, a quite hazy plan got shape – which did not materialize, however – for carrying across the Carpathians a batch of weapons, bought for French money and which the Romanians had the mission to transport from the Danubian ports to Transylvania and hand over to the Hungarians. Prussia, in its turn interested in seeing a weaker Austria, as it vied with Austria over the German space, therefore Prussia, too, supported the Union. The German empire would be achieved, not long after that moment, in 1871, around Prussia and the House of Hohenzollern, and not

around Austria and the House of Habsburg. Piedmont, the nucleus of the future Italian state, sided with the Romanians not so much because of a shared ideal, as because its indispensable ally, France, had asked it to.

The powers that opposed the idea of the Romanians' union included fierce opponents. Austria had realized what the intentions of France were, and the Ottoman Empire rightly feared that the Romanians could set a dangerous precedent for the Balkan regions. Even united, the Principalities remained under Ottoman suzerainty, a matter on which the favorable powers had clearly pronounced and therefore the question of independence was not raised – nor could it be raised – in 1856, for the mere reason that the respective state entity did not exist yet. Very interesting was the case of Britain, which served an external political lesson to the Romanian generation of the 1848 revolution. In the beginning, British diplomacy fashioned its attitude after that of its war ally, France. At the moment when, failing all else, the Ottoman Empire guaranteed the neutrality of the Straits, Britain changed its mind and opposed the union. As Europe's no. 1 naval power, Britain wanted to control the world's maritime axes, including the Mediterranean axis (Gibraltar-Malta-Cyprus). The weakening of the Ottoman Empire in face of the Russian Empire, which wanted to drive the crescent out of Europe, jeopardized the strategic interests of Britain as a big power. That is why those interests prevailed and Britain opposed, in the end, the union of the Principalities. Russia, defeated in the war, had no freedom of action in Paris but would take its revenge two decades later, at the Congress of Berlin.

The Paris Convention of 7/19 August 1858 set the terms for organizing the United Principalities, and in January 1859 the double election of Alexandru Ioan Cuza opened up new avenues. The measures taken under the patronage of the ruling prince also included organizing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1862, Apostol Arsache being the first Foreign Minister. While representatives were sent to Paris and Constantinople to obtain recognition of the double election of Cuza, the Ministry was being organized under the official designation of the Department of

Foreign Affairs (*Departamentul Trebilor Straine*), which comprised the following sections: Chancellery, Consular Affairs, Political, Litigation Department, Official Publications.

The rise of the institution aimed at regulating the young state's external ties spurred the efforts to obtain political emancipation and the international status of a sovereign state for Romania. Adding to that was the bringing of Carol I of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen to the throne of the United Principalities, after Cuza's dethronement in February 1866. The Romanian political elite was implementing one of the decisions of the ad-hoc assemblies in Bucharest and Iasi: bringing to the throne a foreign prince from one of Europe's ruling families. Under those circumstances, gaining state independence became a priority of the Romanian society, and Romanian politicians – both the liberals and the conservatives, alongside Prince Carol I – were seeking means to demonstrate the will of the Romanians to the European powers, while waiting for a favorable international moment to obtain independence, the same as in 1858.

In this respect, there are several episodes, from quite a long series, that mark the road to full independence:

- The Constitution of 1866 mentioned Romania as the official name, without any reference to Ottoman suzerainty, although under the 1858 Paris Convention, the name was “the United Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia;”
- The emergence of a diplomatic corps made up, at least in the beginning, of personalities whose personal and family contacts in the European diplomatic and political environment could help foster the Romanians' goals. The higher echelons of the Romanian diplomacy included the likes of Ion Ghica, Petre P. Carp, Mihail Kogălniceanu, George Știrbei, Vasile Boerescu or Petre Mavrogheni, although there is no overlooking the lower ranks without which a bureaucratic machinery could not exist;
- The organization, already under Alexandru Ioan Cuza, of modern, well trained and equipped armed forces;

- Romania's participation in the Universal Expositions of 1867 in Paris and 1873 in Vienna. According to international rules, Romania should have had stands in the pavilion of the Ottoman Empire. But given Carol's insistent efforts, and diplomatic support from France and the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, despite the Ottomans' protests, Romania had a distinct pavilion, decorated with the national insignia;
- The signing of the 1875 Trade Convention with the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, which provided for tax-free exchanges for a period of ten years. Economically, the convention had disastrous effects on the Romanian economy, since Austrian and Hungarian goods made their way to the market at low prices and suffocated local production. Politically, however, the gain was significant and corresponded to the time's priorities, Romania being treated as an equal dialogue partner, as recorded in an international document. It was only after independence and international security guarantees had been obtained that the Convention was no longer extended when it expired;
- The signing of a Romanian-Russian military convention in April 1877, shortly before the flaring up of the Russo-Turkish war, in which Romania, too, participated.

All these signs of the will for political emancipation from Ottoman suzerainty were insufficient if the project was to materialize. The wish to obtain independence, attested to by the initiatives mentioned above, was not enough. The Romanians needed propitious international circumstances, the same as back in 1859.

A favorable juncture occurred in 1877 when a new Russo-Turkish war broke out because the Russian Empire wanted to deal its old rival a decisive blow and drive it away from Europe, while also taking its revenge for the categorical defeat in the Crimean War. But, defeated at the beginning of the campaign on the Balkans front, because of some strategy mistakes, and running the risk to see its army

chased across the Danube, Russia asked for the participation of the Romanian army, headed by Prince Carol.

The allies emerged victorious and the Congress of Berlin ratified, on 1/13 July 1878, the Peace Treaty that recognized Romania's independence (articles 43, 44 and 45). Recognition was conditioned, however, on altering article 7 of the Constitution regarding the granting of citizenship, on accepting certain exchanges of territories (Dobrogea for the south of Bessarabia, annexed by Russia) and on redemption of the shares of the German company that had built the railways in Romania. Internationally, independence was confirmed right away by the Ottoman Empire and by Austria-Hungary, plus the Russian Empire and Italy. By 1880 the other big powers would also confirm (France, Britain and Germany) and so would other smaller European states. Consequently, Romania proclaimed itself a kingdom on 14/26 March 1881, and the ruling prince assumed the title of Carol I, King of all Romanians.

Likewise, under a law passed by Parliament, Romania's diplomatic representations were raised to the rank of legations, with representation, economic and legal powers. There were ten such representations, in the capitals of Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, Italy, Britain and Serbia. And there was also a diplomatic agency in Sofia. The diplomatic staff included envoys extraordinary and ministers plenipotentiary, legation secretaries and attachés.

As far as its foreign policy is concerned, Romania was facing a stringent problem. Although independent, the kingdom was in a delicate situation because of the absence of security guarantees to protect its status and territorial integrity. The more so as the attitude of the Russian Empire, the former ally during the Balkan War, had become unfriendly, even inimical, right after the end of hostilities. Tsar Alexander II's threats that the Romanian army would be disarmed and the categorical refusal of the King Carol I increased the tensions. As the collective guarantee of the great powers – a regime instituted under the the Paris Peace

Treaty of 1856 – had been removed when the Berlin Peace Treaty had been adopted, Romania felt abandoned at the mercy of Russia, with which it had a territorial dispute. This situation determined strong anti-Russian feelings both with the political elite and the Royal House and at a broader social level. The Russian danger was one of the major themes of Romanian foreign policy actions, at least until 1914, and the attempt to counter the Russian threat determined Romania to get closer to Austria-Hungary and Germany. Austria-Hungary and Romania had common interests at a European level or, rather, they had a common enemy, Russia, and the length of the border between the three states could play an important role in the scenarios of a possible armed conflict, considered both in Bucharest and in Vienna. Moreover, Romania's orientation to Germany was due not to the fact that King Carol I belonged to the Hohenzollern family (an important thing otherwise) but rather to the fact that at that moment, after France had been crushed at Sedan and Emperor Napoleon III had abdicated, Germany remained the top power on the Continent. Britain's foreign policy, the "splendid isolation" that meant non-involvement in a system of treaties on the continent yet close observation of the European policy, accounted for Romania having just one choice when it came to its foreign policy. Therefore, on 30 October 1883, Romania signed a defensive alliance treaty with Austria-Hungary, which Germany joined the very same day.

That treaty was renewed after the initial 10-year term but remained secret until the First World War. The one to have imposed that aspect was the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, first of all in order to spare the sensitivities of the Russian Empire, which would have felt threatened learning that its neighbour, Romania, with which it had a tense relationship, had the advantage of such a powerful ally. Threatened, obviously, not by Romania, but by its allies, i.e. Germany and Austria-Hungary. Such a threat could only be counteracted by an alliance between Russia and Germany's main adversary at that moment, France, a question that was inconceivable for Germany's foreign policy, focused as it was on keeping France in isolation so as to prevent it from taking revenge after the defeat of 1870.

Such secret negotiations and treaties characterized Bismarck's policy that Emperor Wilhelm I, too, backed.

That is why the foreign policy of Romania after 1883 and until the outbreak of the First World War, in 1914, was built on the principles drafted and agreed upon with the European partners in the Triple Alliance. But, in order better to understand how the Romanian foreign policy evolved, one needs to consider another two elements:

- The way the foreign policy decision-making group came into being. The fact that the Treaty of alliance with the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary plus Italy) was not made known by the king and was not known to most politicians in Bucharest shows that actually that group was very small, comprising first of all King Carol I, then the ministers of foreign affairs and the presidents of the Council of Ministers. The latter were only informed when the king considered the holders of the respective portfolios as safe from his point of view, as in the case of Ion C. Bratianu, Dimitrie A. Sturdza, Petre P. Carp or Lascar Catargiu. Diplomatic documents preserved in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, published today in the monumental three-series of *Romanian Diplomatic Documents* attest to the prevailing role King Carol I played in the conduct of the Romanian foreign policy.
- The existence of a major political project consistently pursued by the Romanian society, i.e. achievement of the nation state in its maximum form, by bringing to the kingdom the historical provinces inhabited mostly by Romanians. The political elite adopted pragmatic viewpoints that materialized in political decisions, as had happened in 1883. The outbreak of the war in 1914 made it necessary to reassess the situation and find new means to secure the above-mentioned project. The more so as, after 1867, as the Austrian-Hungarian dualism was achieved, the nations in the Eastern part of the empire, Romanians included, had to cope with an increasingly

aggressive policy of forced *Hungarianization* promoted by the governments in Budapest. Moreover, early in the 20th century, there were indications of a rapprochement, timid at first, between the Russian Empire and Romania. The guarantees offered by Britain and France in connection with agreement on Transylvania's union with Romania proved to be decisive and eventually prompted Romania's entry into the war by the side of the Entente and not of the Triple Alliance.

The foreign policy, conducted by a professional diplomatic corps, according to the Western model, provided the political means decision-makers in Bucharest needed in order to put into practice and support the general interests of Romanian society.

Romania's Foreign Policy in the Interwar period (1919 – 1940)

The State is represented in history by the diplomat and the military man, Raymond Aron wrote, and Romania's situation at the end of 1917 perfectly illustrates what the French philosopher thought.

The 1917 events in Russia accounted for the military men's place being taken again by the diplomats, because, given its isolation, Romania could no longer continue to fight. Although it had pledged – under the Treaty signed with the Entente on 4/17 August 1916 – not to conclude a separate peace, Romania did sign the Peace Treaty of Bucharest on 7 May 1918. That peace meant the end of Romania's participation in the First World war.

Whereas the outcome of the conflict seemed to favour Romania, internationally two very important events took place:

- The dismemberment of the Russian empire as a result of the action of the principle of the nations' right to self-determination that Lenin had proclaimed. Thus, on 27 March / 9 April 1918, the Council of the Country in Chisinau voted on Bessarabia's union with Romania.

- The collapse of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, in the wake of which, on 15/28 November 1918, the General Congress of Bukovina voted on union with Romania and on 18 November/1 December, the 1228 delegates rallied at the Great Assembly in Alba Iulia voted on Transylvania's union with Romania.

The year 1918 saw the Bucharest Peace cancelled, and the vote cast at those three assemblies resulted in completion of the Romanians' national unity. In the new context, the main goal of the Romanian diplomacy was recognition of the Great Union. To obtain recognition, the decision makers in Bucharest had to solve several problems: having signed the Bucharest Peace, the Entente no longer recognized Romania's status as a belligerent, and the United States of America, having joined in the war in December 1917, had no intention to recognize the Entente's commitments versus various states; another issue had to do with the directorate of the great powers (France, Britain, the USA and Italy), instituted by the Paris Conference of Peace, which had divided the participating states into states having general interests and states with limited interests; the question of minorities proved to be another very difficult matter, Prime Minister Ionel I.C. Bratianu stating he did not agree to the emergence of two categories of citizens, those who obeyed the laws of the Romanian state and those who "complained" in international bodies. The Romanian prime minister therefore refused to go on participating in the peace talks and left the conference, promoting a policy of national resistance.

It was the peace treaties (1919-1920) that eventually sanctioned the union of Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania to Romania. In the case of Bessarabia, against the background of Soviet Russia's revolutionary messianism, France, Britain, Italy and Japan signed a treaty with Romania, on 28 October 1920, whereby they recognized Bessarabia's union with Romania. The document would be ratified in 1922 by Britain, in 1924 by France, and in 1927 by Italy! Wishing to maintain good relations with the Soviet Union, Japan would not ratify the treaty. Although the US Congress did not ratify the peace treaties of Paris, the USA indirectly recognized

the union of Bessarabia with Romania as late as 1933, by including the immigration quota for Bessarabia in that established for Romania.

During the negotiations in Paris in 1919, Christian Rakovski, a Romanian internationalist communist of Bulgarian ethnic origin, drew up a plan according to which the Red Army was to attack Romania from the North and the East (on 21 March, in Hungary, the power had been taken by the communists headed by Bela Kun), to the end of establishing a communist regime. The plan failed (because of a lack of sync between the Russians and the Hungarians) and on 4 August 1919, the Romanian troops entered Budapest. That campaign was to end the war for the reintegration of Romania.

In the 1920s, the main goal of the Romanian foreign policy was to secure the country's borders, the Romanian diplomacy working along three lines to that end:

- Consolidating the relations with France, Britain and possibly Italy;
- Creating a system of alliances of its own, to counteract the actions of the revisionist states;
- Participation in the League of Nations, which was seen as a true shield of the international legality, a defender of the small and medium-sized states in face of the big powers' expansionist and domineering tendencies.

Thus, to be able to withstand any possible action Hungary might take, Romania allied with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia – based on bilateral treaties signed in 1920-1921 –, laying the foundations of the Little Entente. A response to the threat of Soviet Russia (the USSR as of December 1922) came through the signing of the Romanian-Polish Treaty of alliance in 1921. The response to Bulgarian revisionism was the creation of the Balkan Entente on 9 February 1934, when Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey signed the treaty setting up the organization. This network of treaties relied on the Romanian-French Friendship Treaty (signed on 10 June 1926), France being perceived by the new states in Central and Southeastern Europe as the main guarantor of the Versailles System.

On 16 October 1925, when the Treaty of Locarno was signed, it seemed France and Germany had a “historical reconciliation, although for the Eastern countries the absence of guarantees as to the inviolability of Germany’s eastern borders was ominous. The states in Central and Southeastern Europe proposed to the Great Powers that an Eastern Locarno be signed, whereby Germany would recognize its eastern borders as well. The Western states, however, did not insist with the Weimar Republic, and the initiative amounted to nothing.

Unfortunately, the activity conducted by member states within the League of Nations, and the demarches concerning disarmament (the disarmament conferences) were but rhetoric exercises, failing to curb the ambition of the revisionist states.

The revisionist policy received a decisive boost when Adolf Hitler came to power on 30 January 1933. His arrival to the leadership of Germany lent a new impetus to the revisionist propaganda. In that context, one of the weaknesses of France’s alliances in Eastern Europe resided in the fact that the economies of Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia (which had bilateral treaties with France) were complementary to that of Germany. To put it differently, the good political relations had not been consolidated through equivalent economic cooperation. Realizing which was Achilles’ heel in the system of France’s alliances in Central and Southeastern Europe, Adolf Hitler – determined to undermine the Versailles System – told members of his entourage that, from Germany’s point of view “foreign trade must be a means of pressure in order to dismember France’s system of alliances in the East, so long as we do not have military means.” Consequently, in May 1933, the authorities in Berlin announced they were no longer willing to maintain trade relations with the states not promoting a policy favouring the Third Reich. Despite German pressure, Romania stuck by its traditional alliances with France and Britain. More than that, after the Soviet Union’s joining the League of Nations in December 1934, the Romanian state supported the signing of the French-Soviet Treaty on 2 May 1935, and of the Czechoslovak-Soviet one on 16 May

1935, and Nicolae Titulescu initiated talks on a Romanian-Soviet mutual assistance treaty. The main goals the Romanian diplomat had in mind were: a) recognition of the fact that Bessarabia belonged to Romania, and b) obtaining guarantees as to the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Bessarabia, in case the Soviet Union would have backed Romania, should the latter have been attacked.

In his foreign policy demarches, Nicolae Titulescu was forced to withstand very powerful adversaries both abroad and at home. Externally, Poland was worried about the normalization of Romanian-Soviet relations, seeing it as a premise for a weakening of the Romanian-Polish alliance. Italy – which had not forgotten that Nicolae Titulescu had been one of the most vocal supporters of the sanctions the League of Nations had slapped on it following the start of the Italian-Abyssinian conflict (October 1935 – May 1936) – was conducting an intense campaign against the Romanian diplomat. Germany, an avowed opponent of the Soviet Union that pursued to create a sphere of political and economic influence in Southeastern Europe, was not pleased with the rapprochement between Romania and the USSR. Internally, Nicolae Titulescu was forced to counteract the harsh criticism coming from the right-wing or centrist forces hostile to the Soviet Union. What did Nicolae Titulescu obtain through his diplomatic efforts? The fact that, in the text of the future Romanian-Soviet Treaty, which he and his Soviet counterpart Maksim M. Litvinov initialed on 21 July 1936, the Soviets admitted the river Dniester as a line of demarcation.

All the efforts of the Romanian diplomacy were to be thwarted by a major event on 7 March 1936. The remilitarization of Rhineland ruined all this diplomatic activity in the field of covenants and treaties. Rhineland's remilitarization had three geostrategic consequences: a) it closed the "door" France could use to enter the territory of Germany, so that France's Eastern allies (Romania was one) were deprived of French military support; b) it ensured defence of the Ruhr area, the industrial heart of Germany; c) it posed a direct threat to the French territory (the city of Strasbourg).

This dramatic turn in the geostrategic configuration in Europe resulted on 29 August 1936 in the dismissal of Nicolae Titulescu, who had made the alliance with France – a country that had proved unable to defend itself – and the policy of collective security the groundwork of his foreign policy at the helm of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Romania's goals remained the same but new hues surfaced in the foreign policy of the Romanian state, the "excitement" of pacts promoted by Titulescu being abandoned. In December 1937, poet Octavian Goga became prime minister of Romania, his name being associated with a first attempt to redirect the Romanian foreign policy toward Germany and Italy.

The annexation of Austria by Germany on 12 March 1938, the Czechoslovak crisis, solved through the Munich Agreement (signed on 29 September 1938), under which a part of the Czechoslovak territory (the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia) was annexed by Germany, and the Prague coup d'état of 15 March 1939, after which Slovakia became a state on Berlin's orbit, and Bohemia and Moravia were annexed by Germany, as a protectorate, caused great concern in international public opinion. That *drang nach Osten* (drive to the East) of Germany was to climax with the outbreak of the Polish crisis: on 21 March 1939 the Reich demanded that Poland cede not only the city of Danzig/Gdansk but also a "corridor" connecting it to Eastern Prussia, which should benefit by an extraterritoriality status.

Under the circumstances, on 16 and 17 March 1939, the "Tilea incident" took place: Romania's envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to London, Viorel Virgil Tilea, informed the Foreign Office that Germany – which was having economic talks with Romania – had served an ultimatum to Romania, thus hinting that after the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, Romania would be next. Although Grigore Gafencu, Romania's Foreign Minister, denied it, the statement of the Romanian diplomat deeply worried British public opinion. This whole string of events caused the Western powers to give up the conciliatory policy promoted until

then in relation to Germany. Britain therefore offered security guarantees to Poland on 31 March 1939, to Romania and Greece on 13 April 1939, with France too taking part in the latter case. By that, Britain undertook to guarantee independence and *not* the borders.

With Romania in a state of diplomatic isolation, on 23 August 1939 news came of the “coup de theatre of the German-Soviet agreement,” as Romanian Prime Minister Armand Călinescu put it. Indeed, after a time when they had “called each other names”, as Stalin said, Hitler and Stalin relegated ideology to the background in favour of political realism. Under the secret additional Protocol accompanying the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Germany and the Soviet Union had delimited their spheres of influence in Central and Southeastern Europe, and under article 3, the Reich had agreed to the annexation of Bessarabia by the USSR. The Crown Council of 6 September 1939 decided on Romania’s neutrality, Nicolae Iorga best describing the situation of this country: “Today we are conducting a different policy than the one we care for. We can do no other way.”

On the background of France’s collapse, on 22 June 1940, Stalin decided to apply article 3 of the secret additional Protocol, demanding on 26 June 1940 that Romania relinquish Bessarabia and Bukovina and threatening he would resort to force in case Romania did not comply. After an exchange of diplomatic notes – of an ultimative nature, on the part of the USSR – Romania, “in order to avoid the serious consequences of resort to force and of hostilities in this part of Europe, had to accept the terms specified in the Soviet reply.” Thus Bessarabia, northern Bukovina and Hertza County came to belong to the Soviet Union.

On 1 July 1940, Carol II asked Adolf Hitler to send a German military mission to Romania, and on 2 July Romania gave up the French-British guarantees.

The Soviet Union’s demarche paved the way for other claims, coming from Hungary and Bulgaria. The Romanian-Hungarian negotiations conducted between 16 and 24 August 1940 at Turnu Severin failed, the parties being unable to reach an agreement. An impending Hungarian-Romanian conflict – which would have

interfered with deliveries of oil and agricultural produce from Romania to Germany – forced Germany, seconded by Italy, to take the initiative. Summoned to Vienna on 30 August 1940, Romania and Hungary had to face the *fait accompli*: Germany and Italy made Romania cede 43,492 square kilometers of Transylvania's territory, with a population of 2.6 million (50.2% Romanians, 37% Hungarians, 2.8% Germans). To sweeten the pill for Romania, Germany and Italy granted it a guarantee for the Romanian borders as they were at that very moment.

Under the Romanian-Bulgarian Treaty of Craiova, signed on 7 September 1940, Romania ceded the so-called Quadrilateral to Bulgaria.

From the Diplomacy of War to the Diplomacy of Defeat and Subordination to the USSR, 1941-1947

When Gen. Ion Antonescu had become “leader of the state” and King Carol II was forced to abdicate, on 5/6 September 1940, the Romanian foreign policy would rapidly and decisively cover the last of the road to integration in the political and diplomatic system of the Axis. Shortly after the arrival of the German troops in the Romanian territory, in October 1940, in preparation for the war against the USSR, Ion Antonescu signed in November 1940 Romania's accession to the Tripartite Pact. A few months later, on 12 June 1941, in Munich, during a meeting with Adolf Hitler, Ion Antonescu pledged, on behalf of the Romanian people, that Romania would participate alongside Germany, with all its forces, in the war in the East.

At the end of military actions that helped liberate the Romanian historical provinces that the USSR had annexed after the ultimative notes of June 1940, Gen. Ion Antonescu opted, in contradiction with the position expressed by the representatives of Opposition historical parties, for continued armed participation in the war in the East. In his opinion, only this way could Romania hope, after the

defeat of the USSR, to determine Germany to annul the Vienna Arbitrage of August 1940.

Externally, as Hungary and Finland continued their active participation in the anti-Soviet war, Britain declared war on those states and on Romania, on 5 December 1941. A few days after the USA entered the war, after the Japanese attack against the US Navy base at Pearl Harbour, Romania, following the example set by Germany and Italy, in its turn declared war on them. The USA, upon Moscow's insistence, considered itself at war with the Romanian state as of 5 June 1942, and a few days later, on 12 June, the Americans first bombarded the oil-rich region of Ploiesti, in Romania.

The unfavourable evolution of the war in the East, beginning in late 1942, determined Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mihai Antonescu to seek solutions with a view to Romania extricating itself from the war. To this end the Romanian official obtained the support and collaboration of the Italian minister in Bucharest, Renato Bova Scoppa, with whom he shared the firm belief that Germany's allies, Italy included, had to try and avoid the disaster looming ahead for the Reich and the Axis states. Scoppa handed the Memorandum agreed with Mihai Antonescu to Count Ciano, Italy's Foreign Minister in January 1943. The latter failed to convince Il Duce, Benito Mussolini, of the rightness and opportuneness of Mihai Antonescu's proposals, the result being that the proposals were rejected and he was dismissed from the office of foreign minister.

This first failure of the attempt to render more flexible the political-diplomatic coordinates set by accession to the Tripartite Pact and participation in the anti-Soviet war did not discomfit Mihai Antonescu. The Romanian minister opted for a new approach, which amounted to Romanian diplomats posted abroad attempting to put to good use the opportunities neutral states offered for the initiation of direct contacts with the representatives of the Anglo-Americans.

This ebullience of the Romanian actions in diplomatic circles in the neutral states did not go unnoticed in Berlin. During the meeting at Klessheim on 13-14

April 1943, Hitler showed Marshal Ion Antonescu a comprehensive document about the Romanian diplomatic initiatives in the neutral states, underscoring that responsibility for those actions lay with the Romanian Foreign Minister, Ion Antonescu. The Marshal appeared astonished and reiterates Romania's loyalty to Germany until the end of the war, but made a point of defending his main collaborator, stating that it was not possible he might have initiated peace talks with the Anglo-Americans.

Mihai Antonescu was to reorient his demarches to Italy and, on 1 July 1943, he set forth the proposal, during the meeting he had with Mussolini at his mansion at Rocca della Caminate, that the latter take the initiative of offering peace to the Anglo-American allies, with support from and on behalf of all of Germany's small allies. Il Duce manifested his availability but on 25 July 1943 he was removed from power, and the project the Romanian minister had in mind came to naught.

The defeats inflicted on the German armies on the Eastern front and the Red Army's generalized offensive determined Marshal Ion Antonescu to become involved in the attempts to enter direct negotiations with the Anglo-Americans, to the end of persuading them to enter Romania with armed forces before the Soviet troops arrived. On the Marshal's order, on 30 September 1943, Col. Traian Teodorescu, Romania's military attaché in Ankara, informed the British military attaché, Gen. A. C. Arnold, that the Romanians would cooperate with the Anglo-American troops that would enter Romania and that considerable financial and food resources, fuel and 22 fully equipped divisions would be made available to those troops.

Romanian hopes for an Anglo-American landing in the Balkans, a variant supported by British Premier Winston Churchill, would however be dashed at the Conference of the "Big Three" in Tehran on 28 November – 1 December 1943. As of that moment, the Soviet Union was the one that would decide on the future of Romania and also of the South-East European area.

The impending arrival of the Red Army in the Balkans and the prospect that the Russian troops cut their way to the Mediterranean prompted the Britons to start talks with the Soviets on the delimitation of spheres of influence in South-Eastern Europe. On 5 May 1944, Britain's Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and Soviet Ambassador F. Gusev began negotiations in London with a view to recognition of the Soviet prevalence in Romania, in exchange for British prevalence in Greece. US President F.D. Roosevelt, ignoring the Department of State, agreed to a British-Soviet understanding valid for three months.

The Romanian government and the Opposition in Bucharest, unaware of those developments in the Allied camp, continued to hope an understanding would be reached with the Anglo-Americans. In Cairo, Prince Barbu Stirbey, envoy of the Opposition who had left in the spring of 1944 with the approval of Marshal Ion Antonescu, was negotiating, later seconded by Constantin Vișoianu, with the representatives of Britain, the USA and the Soviet Union. The Western Allies, however, saw those talks as nothing but a way of misleading the Germans as to where the Allied landing in Europe would take place. After the landing in Normandy (6 June 1944), the Allied powers would no longer continue the Cairo negotiations with the Opposition, although the latter had conveyed the plan of action for removing the Antonescu cabinet from power.

In parallel with the talks in Cairo, the Soviets were negotiating in Stockholm concomitantly with the representative of the Antonescu cabinet and with the one of the Opposition. Ambassador Alexandra Kollontai and diplomat Vladimir Semionov had talks with Romania's minister in Stockholm, Frederic Nanu, and with Legation counselor George I. Duca, respectively, the latter acting without his head of diplomatic mission knowing. Diplomats close to Iuliu Maniu, the leader of the National Peasant Party, who were active at the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were directed by the Head of Cypher, Grigore Niculescu-Buzești. He knew about all the diplomatic reports sent to Bucharest, informed Iuliu Maniu

and sent the Opposition's instructions to diplomatic representatives siding with the Opposition.

The USSR's armistice terms, communicated to Nanu in Stockholm, and to Stirbey and Vișoianu in Cairo on 12 April 1944, provided for: return to the Romanian-Soviet border having resulted from the June 1940 ultimatum; participation of the Romanian army in the fight against Germany; payment of unspecified war reparations and the obsolete character of the Vienna Award. During the negotiations in Stockholm, the Soviets agreed to the requests conveyed by Marshal Ion Antonescu: a 15-day period to be granted for settling the relations with Germany, at the end of which, if Germany did not agree to withdraw its troops from Romania, the Romanian troops would start military operations; delimitation of a zone not occupied by the Soviet troops, where the Romanian government would be headquartered; understanding of the difficult situation of the Romanian economy, when the Soviets determine the war reparations to be paid.

The Government and the Opposition reacted differently to the offensive the Red Army started on 20 August 1944 on the Iași-Chișinău line and to the real prospect of Romania being occupied by the Soviet troops. Ion Antonescu further claimed that armistice talks could only be initiated after Germany had been informed, and Mihai Antonescu wanted the Turkish government to mediate the armistice between Romania, the USA and Britain. The Opposition, the National Democratic Bloc, backed by King Mihai and some of the military commanders, decided to take action and overthrow Antonescu's regime. During the meeting on 23 August 1944, upon the Marshal's refusal to start armistice talks immediately, the King ordered the two Antonescus and then the Marshal's closest aides arrested. A new cabinet was formed, headed by Gen. Constantin Sănătescu, chief of the King's Military House, with Grigore Niculescu-Buzești as minister of Foreign Affairs.

For the new power in Bucharest, the moment's pressing need was to discuss the terms of the armistice. To that end, a delegation led by the Communists' representative in the government, Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, joined by those who had

negotiated in Cairo on behalf of the former Opposition, Barbu Stirbey and Constantin Vișoianu, travelled to Moscow. The armistice convention, signed on 12/13 September 1944, took over the terms communicated on 12 April 1944, set the war reparations at 300 million dollars to be paid over six years through deliveries of goods, and imposed – among other things – that war criminals be punished and fascist organizations be dissolved, with these obligations to be supervised by the Allied (Soviet) High Command.

The stationing of the Soviet troops in Romania and Bulgaria, and the danger that the Red Army reach as far as Greece and the Mediterranean, determined British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to suggest to Soviet leader I.V. Stalin the partitioning of spheres of influence in South-Eastern Europe. Under the percentages agreement of 9 October 1944, to match the Soviet influence in Romania, established at 90%, the same percentage was established for the British influence in Greece.

In November 1944, the Romanian administration in Northern Transylvania was replaced with Soviet military authorities. With such a measure, Moscow increased its pressure on the Romanian government in relation both to fulfillment of the economic obligations under the Armistice Convention and to Romania's domestic and foreign policy.

The direct and brutal intervention of the Kremlin was decisive in imposing, on 6 March 1945, the cabinet headed by Dr Petru Groza, a cabinet actually controlled by the Communist Party of Romania. Deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs was Gheorghe Tătărescu, former prime minister under Carol II (1934-1937), a politician who wanted to show Moscow that in Romania there were other political forces, aside from the communists, willing to promote cooperation with the USSR. Right after it took office, the new cabinet was informed that the Soviet Union agreed to the return of Romanian administration in Transylvania.

King Mihai insisted for a representative government and Moscow eventually accepted that the cabinet comprise also one representative of the National Peasant Party and one of the National Liberal Party, as ministers without portfolio, so as to obtain Washington's and London's recognition of Dr Groza's cabinet.

At the Paris Peace Conference in 1946, the official Romanian delegation headed by Gheorghe Tătărescu, assisted by the communists Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Ion Gheorghe Maurer, conducted its activity under the Soviet delegation's strict control. Speaking in defense of Romania's legitimate interests were also certain great Romanian diplomats and politicians who were in exile, including former foreign ministers, former heads of legation and a former prime minister: Grigore Gafencu, Grigore Niculescu-Buzești, Al. Cretzianu, Constantin Vișoianu, Viorel Tilea, and Gen. Nicolae Rădescu. Their memoirs, the articles in the press and the interviews in which they described for international public opinion and western officials the situation of the country under the Soviet occupation failed to produce results.

The peace treaty signed by Romania on 10 February 1947 sanctioned the loss, to the USSR, of Bessarabia, northern Bukovina, Hertza county and a couple of islands on the Chilia arm of the Danube, as well as the stationing of Soviet troops in the Romanian territory, until the Soviet Union would sign a treaty with Austria.

By the end of the year, Romania was to become a satellite of the USSR, which forced upon it, through the Romanian communists, the Soviet model of socialism. On 6 November 1947, the PNL – Tătărescu grouping was ousted from the government, and Ana Pauker, secretary of the central committee of the Communist party, became foreign minister. The coordinates of Romanian democracy – political pluralism and the constitutional monarchy regime – would disappear when King Mihai was forced to abdicate, on 30 December 1947 and Romania was proclaimed a people's republic.

From Conformism to Defiance: the Foreign Policy of the Gheorghiu-Dej regime

In the first years of the communist power, the government in Bucharest appeared as one of the most submissive satellites of the Soviet Union, the Soviet factor prevailing in any foreign policy moves. The treaty of friendship, collaboration and mutual assistance concluded with the USSR on 4 February 1948, valid for 20 years, provided the obligation of consulting with the Soviet government on all foreign policy matters. Under that act, Romania gave up a foreign policy of its own, and its diplomatic relations, except with the states of the same camp, were entirely frozen. Under the circumstances, ties with western states almost ceased to exist, and diplomatic representations in the capital of Romania, particularly the American, British and French ones, were subjected to constant pressure on the part of the repression machinery.

Between 1948 and 1954, Romania's diplomatic isolation was almost total. Any Soviet decision was applied without reservation. A first alignment with Moscow's decisions was occasioned by the Soviet-Yugoslav schism (1948), the event turning Romania into one of the main centres of the anti-Tito campaign. A direct consequence was that the Cominform headquarters moved to Bucharest and the treaty concluded with Yugoslavia was denounced.

Wishing to consolidate its strategic positions at the Mouths of the Danube, the Soviet Union took over the Serpents Island on 23 May 1948, the provisions of the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty being thus violated. The island was ceded based on simple minutes signed by Nikolai Pavlovich Sutov, first secretary at the Soviet Embassy in Bucharest, and by Eduard Mezincescu, representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Romania.

Total subordination to the USSR and the accelerated rate of Sovietization led to rumours that Romania would soon be turned into a republic of the Soviet Union. Appointed ambassador (May 1952) to Moscow, George Kennan considered the

changes Romania had undergone in the four years since the communist takeover made it an ideal candidate for merging into the Soviet Union. The American ambassador considered that an additional argument in favour of union was the strategic position of Romania, which strengthened the Soviet defense system on the Danube and the Black Sea. The rumours persisted until the early 50s, when Stalin's death determined a review of the Soviet strategies in relation to consolidation of the Stalinist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe.

As a result of Stalin's demise, the USSR launched, in the early 50s, a genuine pacifist offensive: it reconciled with Yugoslavia, it promised – in the spirit of Geneva – peaceful cooperation between the East and the West, and it withdrew its troops from Austria. Skeptical about the “new course” and about de-Stalinization, the leaders in Bucharest espoused the Soviet directives in the area of foreign policy. This time again Gheorghiu-Dej's Romania stood out not only by hastily ceasing its lashing at Yugoslavia but especially by its fast action to normalize relations with Tito. On 19 June 1954, Romania resumed diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia, and in August a convention was signed with a view to reopening the communications between the two countries, which had been interrupted in 1950. Between 1954 and 1956, Romania concluded several agreements and conventions on railway, air, customs, postal, cultural connections and relations, that regulated border issues and traffic on the Danube.

Normalization of the Soviet-Yugoslav relations made it possible to resume contacts with the West. The USA responded favourably to the Romanian government's request of 7 March 1956 to “start talks on pending financial problems,” and to reopen other litigated issues (settlement of the status of the American information office in Bucharest, the problems of US citizens in Romania, the restrictions imposed on the US legation, lifting of the trade embargo). Moreover, on 16 May 1956, the Romanian diplomats in Moscow sent information to Bucharest that there were signs France was interested in normalizing its economic and cultural relations with Romania. Under the impact of de-Stalinization,

communist Romania initiated the first timid demarches aimed at resuming diplomatic relations with the Western countries.

The opening of talks with the Western countries (notably France, Britain and the USA), even in marginal fields such as culture, did not go unnoticed by the Soviets. Word from Moscow was that the cultural opening was threatening the primacy of Russian culture, which would have diluted the achievements obtained in Romania after 23 August 1944. One of the officers at the Russian foreign ministry's 5th Directorate, G. Galicenko, held information that French continued to be one of the Romanians' favourite languages and the revival of cultural relations with the West suited the "inimical" goals of the three capitalist states. On 15 August 1956, the Soviet chargé d'affaires a.i. in Bucharest, F.V. Nikolaev, demanded, during an audience with the locum tenens of the foreign minister, Stefan Cleja, that the Romanian foreign ministry provide him with information attesting to "meddling by the USA and Britain in the domestic affairs of Romania."

Gradually, after 1956, the leaders of the Romanian Workers Party began undermining all the levers of Soviet influence existing in Romania. The events in Hungary and especially the forceful intervention of the Soviets convinced Gheorghiu-Dej a change was needed in the policy towards Moscow. According to Silviu Brucan, Romania's ambassador to Washington, Gheorghiu-Dej, had asked him to prepare, for the Political Bureau, an analysis of the international situation and to indicate how Romania would be able to develop an independent political course that "should show, in particular, to the Romanian people that we give priority to our national interests and not to the Soviet ones as so far." Concurrently, the party leader asked for an economic and cultural program to be outlined, which should help free Romania from "the Soviet bear's embrace."

In his turn, Foreign Minister Grigore Preoteasa informed, during the meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers on 28 February 1957, that the Political Bureau had decided to take certain "practical measures" in the area of foreign policy by breaking the inertia of the diplomatic machinery: "The issue arose

of the need to do away with this fear of coming into touch with various reactionary political circles that play a certain role in the respective countries, of not isolating ourselves by only discussing with the communist circles in those countries. (...) That means that our foreign policy should increasingly become an active policy.” The foreign minister underscored that the Political Bureau had requested that the foreign policy of the Romanian state reflect the national interests and have a distinctive character. Romania was to abandon the embarrassing status of a satellite and to take its own path.

Against the background of the Soviet leadership’s ambiguities, the leaders in Bucharest sought formulas to assert a foreign policy of their own. The dismantlement of SovRoms in 1954, withdrawal of the Red Army troops in 1958, of the advisers and specialists were measures the Soviets agreed to, given that the Bucharest regime no longer needed external military support in order to stay in power.

The early 60s marked a new stage in the Romanian-Soviet relations. The policy of distancing from Moscow developed along three lines: the country’s economic development (heavy industry in particular); consolidation of the domestic regime based on a pact with society and on opening to the West and international assertion of the Romanian state. After 1958, the tendency to control and coordinate the economies of member states became more and more oppressive for a state like Romania, which was seeking ways to narrow the gaps separating it from the other, much more developed countries of the communist bloc (Czechoslovakia, the GDR, USSR, Poland).

Khrushchev’s plans to coordinate the economies of the communist countries through the agency of COMECON came against opposition from Romania. Taking advantage of the détente in East-West relations, the Bucharest leaders launched a genuine programme of opening to the West, being mainly interested to acquire high technologies to support the industrialization drive. Plans on coordination, creation of the uniform single body for that purpose and the specialization of

economies came into contradiction with the development strategies designed by the Romanian leaders. Encouraged by the economic growth rate, by the interest of western states in opening new markets, particularly in the fields of heavy industry, the Romanian leadership interpreted the attempts to coordinate the national economies, as envisaged within the COMECON, as possible obstacles to the economic growth that would have freed them of the Soviet control.

Individualization of the Romanian leaders in the communist bloc manifested during two major events: the missile crisis and the Sino-Soviet split. In the first case, the Soviet decision to deploy missiles in Cuba compromised Romania's plans to normalize its relations with western countries, particularly with the United States. Bound to the Soviet Union by the provisions of the Warsaw Treaty, Romania, the same as the other communist states, was forced to make good on the obligations deriving from the treaty and to become involved in a possible conflict. Though not officially, the Romanian leaders expressed disapproval for the actions of the Soviets. From the angle of Romania's interests, association with the Soviet Union's aggressive intentions would have blocked the plans on opening to the West. Having embarked on the path of distancing itself from the USSR, based on opposition to the COMECON integration plans, Romania risked to land in an impossible situation: in an economic war with Moscow and compromised in the eyes of the West.

That was the reason why, one year later, on 4 October 1963, Romania's representative to the UN, Corneliu Mănescu, told US Secretary of State Dean Rusk that, "in case of a conflict triggered by the USSR, similar to that in Cuba, Romania would remain neutral." The Romanian foreign minister assured the US official that the Bucharest government, as member of the Warsaw Treaty, had not been consulted about the decision to deploy missiles in Cuba, and that no nuclear weapons were deployed in the territory of Romania. The meeting between Corneliu Mănescu and Dean Rusk was considered the first major opportunity the Bucharest government had used in order to revive the official relations with the USA.

The Sino-Soviet rift offered the leaders of the RWP the opportunity to intervene in the ideological dispute and assert their own position. Even if in the first years of the conflict, i.e. 1961-1962, Bucharest further stated its loyalty to Moscow, in the following years the RWP leadership nuanced its position on the conflict, and that resulted in certain “misunderstandings” in the relations with the Soviet power. This change can be explained, on the one hand, by the RWP’s need to find an ally having the same ideological orientations and supporting the economic (industrial) development programme and, on the other hand, by China’s wish to create a breach in the Soviet area of influence. As of 1964, especially after republication of the April declaration, Romania publicly manifested its opening to China. Diplomatically, the leadership in Bucharest continued its demarches for recognition of People’s China as a member of the UN, which led to improved bilateral relations. The position on the Sino-Soviet rift allowed Gheorghiu-Dej to build his own zone of autonomy while distancing Romania from Moscow. The opening to the West was gradual, being achieved in the form of cultural and scientific exchanges with three former traditional partners of Romania: France, Britain and the USA.

The plenum of the CC of the RWP of 5-8 March 1963 confirmed that Romania began having a distinct evolution in the communist bloc. Consequently, the US ambassador to Bucharest became very active in supporting the Romanian demarches. He informed the Department of State, on several occasions, that bilateral ties had to be boosted and trade encouraged. Based on information received from Bucharest, President Kennedy mentioned on 26 June 1963, in a speech at the Free University in West Berlin, that Romania was “an example of political and economic dissidence in the Soviet bloc.” One month later, the Political Planning Council at the Department of State considered that from an economic viewpoint, expanding trade with the communist countries was of little importance. Politically, though, it would have led to weaker Soviet positions in Eastern Europe. On 15 July 1963, a CIA report noted the increasingly obvious orientation of

Romanian foreign trade to West European markets (35% of the total), Romania being able to cope with a possible Soviet embargo.

Another important episode of the Romanian-American rapprochement was the visit to Bucharest, on 3-5 August 1963, by Secretary Orville Freeman of the Department of Commerce. After having visited certain agricultural objectives in the regions of Brasov, Banat and Dobrogea, Orville Freeman met with the RWP leader, at the latter's request. Gheorghiu-Dej insisted on Romania's interest in acquiring industrial equipment, notably in the field of chemical industry. The Romanian officials announced a new course of the Romanian-American relations, owing to elimination of travel restrictions for American diplomats (imposed in autumn 1956) as well as to the raising of legations to the rank of embassy. The signing of the nuclear-test-ban treaty was a good opportunity for Gheorghiu-Dej to gauge the American reactions to the development of bilateral relations. Gheorghiu-Dej let US Secretary of State Averell Harriman know that the Romanian state had its own foreign policy and was not subordinated to the Soviet Union and that, inside the communist bloc, the states were planning their relations proceeding from the principle of equality and sovereignty. Mircea Malița was sent to the USA to establish the terms in which Romania could obtain on the US market equipment, machines, patents and licenses for such fields as chemistry, oil, pulp and paper, rubber, radio and television.

Improvement of the Romanian-American relations showed in the fact that, in the autumn of 1963, Dean Rusk invited Romanian foreign minister Corneliu Mănescu to the USA. One of the latter's conclusions when he returned from the tour to the US, Argentina, Brazil and France was that Romania's prestige had grown a lot, this country being considered an "interlocutor of international standing".

After the assassination of J. F. Kennedy, the opening to the countries in Eastern Europe continued under the new administration as well. In a synthesis achieved by the Department of State in February 1964, entitled "The political conduct of the United States towards trade with Eastern Europe," Romania was

labelled a test-case, in a special chapter. According to that document, the goals of the US administration were to prevent communism from expanding; to limit the sources of conflict between the two blocs and encourage independence movements. Romania was an example both by its distancing itself from Moscow and especially by its (official and informal) demarches to improve the relations with the USA. The declaration of April gave a fresh impetus to the Romanian-US relations. In this connection, a governmental delegation, headed by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, negotiated a trade agreement in Washington, between 18 May and 1 June 1964. Although they did not get all they had asked for – two rubber mills, three glass factories, installations for producing synthetic glycerin, ammonium and synthetic leather, turbines, oil processing equipment, a nuclear power station – the Romanians symbolically obtained the American confidence.

The Bucharest government did not limit its actions to the USA. It also took steps to normalize relations with other Western states, notably with the traditional partners – Britain and France. In March 1963, France announced, through its foreign minister, Maurice Couve de Murville, that it meant to expand its political ties with Romania. Détente with Western states became visible as restrictions to diplomatic personnel were lifted and legations were raised to the rank of embassy (as in the case of the French and the British one, in December 1963).

Opening to the West was not the outcome of singular action by the Bucharest leadership. East-West détente and reassessment of the US policy towards East European countries were the chief coordinates of the Romanian leaders' policy.

In 1964, Romania's opposition to the Soviet Union acquired unexpected forms following two spectacular moves: public rejection of the Valev Plan and the Declaration of April 1964. Sovereignty and independence were the two core ideas of the Declaration. Under the title of the "just norms," with the Declaration of 22 April 1964, the RWP formulated the principles of relations between communist states: equal rights, noninterference in domestic affairs, the exclusive right of a party to

solve its own political and organizational problems, to elect its leadership and establish its foreign and domestic policy orientation. The declaration exposed the abusive practices of the last period in the Comintern's existence, as well as those at the time of the Cominform, as well as the personality cult that had gained ground in interstate relations. The Soviet Union ceased to be the centre of the international communist movement. "No party has or can have a privileged place, no party may impose its line and views on other parties."

The declaration was a premise for maintaining autonomy within both COMECON and the Warsaw Treaty. With that declaration, the Bucharest leadership redefined the principles of its domestic and foreign policy. Pursuing to gain political capital, the RWP leaders eased the regime, by setting free a large part of the political detainees, and completed the process of de-Russification, by eliminating the mandatory study of the Russian language, closing Russian language institutes, and rewriting history from national positions. By its actions – promoting a foreign policy of its own while consolidating the domestic policy that focused on economic development, in particular – the leadership in Bucharest pursued to distance itself from and not to break with Moscow. Romania remained a member of the Warsaw Treaty and the COMECON. The efforts of the communist leadership in Bucharest helped singularize Romania and increase western interest in its actions.

Romania's Foreign Policy between 1965 and 1989

For an accurate assessment of the foreign policy Romania conducted between 1965 and 1989, there are a few elements that can provide the opportunity to make a relevant analysis. The elements of continuity are obvious. Important artisans of the new foreign policy line in the last years of the Gheorghiu-Dej regime – Ion Gheorghe Maurer and Corneliu Mănescu, who were prime minister and foreign minister, respectively, beginning in 1961 – would continue their work in the

most auspicious period of the Romanian state's international policy under communism. Economic nationalism and its corollary, large-scale industrialization – which determined the particular position Romania held within COMECON and the opening to the West, through Maurer's visit to France in the summer of 1964 (he was the first prime minister of a Soviet bloc country to visit France in the post-war epoch) – were maintained and developed. But there were new things, too, about the foreign policy of the Ceausescu regime: unprecedented activism and utter personalization. Quantitatively, the former meant a rise in the number of states with which Romania had diplomatic relations from 67 in 1965 to 138 in 1985 (the same can be noticed about the economic relations, in the same interval, when the rise was from 120 to 155 states). Personalization of the foreign policy and confiscation of the real or imaginary successes are undeniable facts and part of the personality cult which was growing exponentially. Indeed, Nicolae Ceaușescu – president of the Council of State as of 1967 and president of the Socialist Republic of Romania as of 1974 – did not just exercise royal powers but aimed to be acknowledged internationally as a world leader. In foreign policy decision-making, from 1965 to 1989, the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the Government, in general, shrank markedly to the benefit of the restricted party circles, where the leader was sovereign.

In the 80s, the propaganda machinery invented a Ceaușescu doctrine, a simple synthesis of the Romanian head of state's declarations, stands, initiatives and proposals. The ingredients of this bushy, commonplace doctrine, often deprived of originality, included high-level dialogue, "as a fundamental method of political decision in the sphere of bilateral collaboration." To be sure, Ceaușescu was good as far as high level dialogue was concerned. On the other hand, the Ceaușescu doctrine, in no way warranted internationally, coincided with the basic lines of the Romanian foreign policy, obvious since the 60s: development of relations with all socialist states (including China, with the help of which the Bucharest regime wanted to reduce its dependence on the USSR), intensified

relations with developing countries, in the framework of the policy combating imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism – concepts the official rhetoric never gave up, which however were often used in a duplicitous and ambiguous way – and multilateral relations with all states, regardless of “social order.” Basically, Nicolae Ceaușescu’s Romania was willing to collaborate with all countries of the world, yet starting from a precondition that turned into a ritual of the rhetoric, on the verge of acceptability for almost all potential partners, that is, based on the principles of fully equal rights, observance of national independence and sovereignty, noninterference in domestic affairs, mutual advantage, refraining from force and the threat of force. A faithful reflection of international law principles that was. Adding to that list of principles were Romania’s commitments in favour of disarmament – nuclear disarmament above all, a phrase having become a speech mannerism –, of doing away with underdevelopment and promoting the new international economic order, a greater role of the UN and participation of small and medium-sized countries in the settlement of international issues, quenching hotbeds of tension and conflict and settling all disputes exclusively by peaceful means.

Beyond assumption of these principles, many of them correct, lie the realities of international life, which introduce a different perspective of the Romanian foreign policy in 1965-1989. A simple chronological view of the period reveals stages corresponding to a dynamic and even spectacular intermediate phase grounded on the benefits derived from the first phase and, finally, the last phase, that of loss of credibility and isolation. This perspective seems more enticing and more suggestive, given the resort to events pertaining to common knowledge of recent diplomatic history.

In the first years of the Ceaușescu regime, foreign policy initiatives and moves enhanced the feeling that Romania was a maverick of the Soviet bloc. In 1967, Romania established diplomatic relations with West Germany (but then also with Spain, which was still under Gen. Franco, a thing less publicized) and refused

to follow the example of its Warsaw Treaty partners, which severed the relations with the State of Israel during the Six-Day War. In 1968 President de Gaulle came to Romania, the visit being intensely used also for enhancing the regime's prestige internally, the fact being overlooked that the French leader allotted Romania, in his Eastern strategy, just the third place after the USSR and Poland, which he had visited in 1966 and 1967. Yet the same year brought the most outstanding event of the regime, aside from its own collapse, an event that earned the country huge empathy in the West: vehement condemnation of the invasion of Czechoslovakia on 21 August 1968 by the Soviet Union and another four Warsaw Treaty member states. Under the circumstances, the visit of US President Richard Nixon in August 1969 was not unusual. Romania's foreign policy between 1967 and 1969 and the attitude of its main advocate enabled this country to enhance the cooperation with the Western world and obtain access to loans and technology.

Ceaușescu used to have frequent dialogues with western leaders who set up careful welcomes for him, which satisfied the hypertrophic vainglory of the leader. In 1970, Ceaușescu was received by Georges Pompidou, in 1973 he visited Italy and was received by Pope Paul VI, as well as West Germany and the USA; meanwhile Westerners did not avoid Romania, either. Much to the manifest displeasure of the USSR – despite the efforts of the authorities in Bucharest, Brezhnev had failed to travel to Romania in 1970 to renew the Romanian-Soviet treaty, and undertook a first official visit as late as 1976 – the regime substantially improved its ties with the USA and obtained the most favored nation status in 1975. Although inducing the feeling that Romania was conducting an independent and even risky foreign policy, that Western option did not entail a calling into question of Romania's membership of the Soviet bloc or lead to atrophy of internationalist reflexes and of the solidarity with states and political forces sharing similar ideologies. Both within the Warsaw Pact and within COMECON Romania promoted its own, often pragmatic positions, which were not irreconcilable with those of its partners, the Bucharest regime permanently keeping a convenient distance from the critical threshold.

His ambition to be perceived as a principled world leader always ready to offer solutions and help, apparently asking for nothing in return, made Ceaușescu turn to states in Africa, Asia and Latin America, generically grouped in the Third World. The first appearance on such a deceiving and vulnerable stage took place in 1972, when Ceaușescu – actually the presidential couple, who monopolized international representation – visited Algeria, the Central African Republic, Congo, Zaire, Zambia, Tanzania, the Sudan and Egypt. From that moment, his African tours became a sort of ritual that went on almost until the end of the regime, out of the naïve belief they could serve to legitimate the leader's international stature. The following year was devoted to Latin America, with visits to Cuba, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru (a visit to Chile, too, had been planned but Pinochet's coup d'état spoiled the Romanian president's agenda). Ceaușescu frequently travelled to the wider Middle East, visiting Libya, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq in 1974. The visits to Third World states were not aimed exclusively at collecting the most often insincere eulogies Ceaușescu enjoyed genuinely. Recognition of Romania as a major actor in international life was one of the goals pursued. In their relations with those states, the Bucharest authorities tried to apply economically correct schemes for commercial exchanges and the transfer of Romanian technology, wherefrom the Romanian state hoped to derive considerable benefits.

The components of the so-called Ceaușescu doctrine included European security, Romania enthusiastically insinuating itself into that process, especially as, for the communist authorities in Bucharest, the idea had been launched at the meeting of the Consultative Political Committee in 1966 (actually the European security process began with the appeal of the Political Consultative Committee that convened in Budapest in 1969). Romania was extremely active from the very beginning of the talks, in 1972, came up with many proposals at all stages, and even the Helsinki Final Act signed in 1975 contained contributions of the Romanian diplomacy. But the reckoning of the USSR and the allies at the moment they

triggered the CSCE process was annulled by the obligation of signatory states to promote human rights, which proved lethal for the European communism.

Whereas, before that, Romania had not put off the Western chancelleries with the Stalinist nature of its political regime, with the nationalistic slips and the growing personality cult, public opinion in the democratic world became increasingly worried by the failure to observe human rights, such worries gradually being passed on to the Western governments. Moreover, the fast decline of the Romanian economy, inefficient utilization of loans, the poor quality of products, the growing foreign debt and possible bankruptcy made Romania an economic partner to be avoided.

Nevertheless in the 70s, the intermediate stage, Romania continued to be a valid interlocutor, to stimulate certain illusions, and continued autonomy versus the USSR and within the bodies integrated in the Soviet bloc was still bringing certain advantages from the West. Owing to its particular position in connection with the Middle East conflict, Romania could act as a mediator between 1977 and 1979, and the West liked that. In 1978 Ceaușescu went on official visits to the USA and Britain, in 1979-1980 high-level visits were exchanged with France and in July 1980 Romania was the first Soviet-bloc state to conclude a trade agreement with the EEC and to set up a joint commission.

By contrast, the 80s came as a reverse of the previous situation, the Ceaușescu regime ending up in autarky, disdain for international obligations and managing the counterperformance of completely losing international credit. The reason lay in the changing international setting, which Ceaușescu was unable to grasp, as also in the leader's bad decisions. In this third and last stage, the domestic situation exerted a substantial effect on the foreign policy and eventually compromised it beyond repair. In 1982 Ceaușescu decided to repay the foreign debt, the propaganda machinery reviving the old demons of dependence on foreign powers, of the detrimental effect of capitalism and the loss of sovereignty. The decision, made in circumstances of foreseeable economic bankruptcy, entailed a

worsening of the oppressive effects, diminished the quality of life beyond the limits of bearability, and turned Romania into a genuine adversary of human rights, treated as such by international organizations and bodies. The fact that a reforming team that took the helm of the USSR in 1985 completely ruined Romania's international status.

In 1987-1988 the regime suffered more and more defeats that announced the final disaster. In 1987, Gorbachev's visit to Romania revealed the contrast between a modern leader and an obsolete character, paralyzed by his own fixations, who was behind the intolerable situation of his own people. In the autumn of the same year, Pacea's memoirs were published, with a devastating effect on the regime. Then, in 1988, as the Romanian-US relations kept deteriorating, the USA withdrew the most favoured nation status for Romania. Obviously, Ceaușescu's 1987 tours in India, Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, Angola, Zaire and Congo or the 1988 tour that took him to Ghana, Liberia, Guinea, Mauritania and later to Kenya and Tanzania could not make up for his ostracization, but even increased it.

Ironically, Ceaușescu, desperate and bewildered, took proletarian internationalism out of mothballs and temporarily gave up, after nearly twenty-five years, his rhetoric about independence and sovereignty. Therefore, in August 1989, at the time when in Poland a non-communist prime minister was forming the cabinet, Ceaușescu suggested to the "brotherly parties" a meeting should be held to debate the situation of Poland and of socialism in general. In fact, his own circumstances, part of them caused by himself, totally invalidated the only two possible situations for Ceaușescu: the one of an intransigent communist and that of a fierce nationalist, and implacably doomed him to oblivion. After December 1989, successors would have to rebuild what had been compromised, to shape a new Romanian foreign policy and make the most of what positive aspects had discreetly survived.

Romania's Foreign Policy after 1989

The collapse of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, in 1989, undoubtedly had major consequences both for the states in point and for the overall system of international relations. East-European societies dramatically altered their hierarchies once again within a half century. And older or newer ethnic or religious fractures disturbed the evolution of political regimes discovering or rediscovering the values of freedom and the rules of democracy. The Warsaw Treaty organization, which had secured the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, soon fell to pieces and the young democratic states experienced a new, major security deficit, at a time marked by the complex events at the end of the Cold War. The economic systems of states in this area, centralized and inefficient, were rapidly replaced by a tempting, profitable business environment which however was also the source of strong social disequilibria affecting domestic political affairs, as well as international relations.

In brief, after 1989, Romania, just like other states in Eastern Europe, had to cope with huge domestic and external challenges, its foreign policy inherently evincing both elements of continuity and thorough changes.

Romanian diplomacy further promoted the principles and traditional values characteristic of a responsible international actor – observance of independence, territorial integrity and national sovereignty, cooperation based on mutual confidence and respect, observance of international law principles and norms – both in the constant action geared at consolidating and developing the relations with neighboring states and as a member of various international organizations and institutions. Concurrently, Romania's foreign policy was gradually resized, according to new principles – loyalty to the values of democracy and freedom, modernization to the benefit of Romanian citizens, fostering democratic stability standards in the region – and therefore reoriented toward attaining new strategic goals.

At the same time, as a direct result of the changes after 1989, foreign policy decision-making was substantially altered, according to the specifics of modern democracies. Thus, alongside the head of state, a much more complex decision-making role went to various ministries and governmental agencies, as well as to Parliament's standing committees. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was reshuffled and given a broader mandate, comprising not only representation and management of Romania's foreign affairs, but also planning and implementation of strategies concerning action in the international environment. A national security decision-making unit appeared (the Supreme Defence Council of the Country), and so did several European integration departments in the structure of ministries – clear proof as to a new, professional and democratic approach in the Romanian foreign policy after 1989.

Joining NATO

Situated in a problematic zone of Europe, Romania needed stability and security, and its option on closer cooperation with the North-Atlantic Alliance was shared by all major political forces and an overwhelming majority of the population. Romania's move to join the Euro-Atlantic security structures was initiated as early as 1990 with the request that the then Prime Minister, Petre Roman, addressed to and was accepted by the NATO Secretary-General, with a view to accreditation of a permanent ambassador of Romania to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In the ensuing period, different institutions with foreign policy responsibilities (Presidency, Government, Parliament) continued their combined efforts toward this fundamental strategic goal. Romania became, on 26 January 1994, the first postcommunist state to be admitted into NATO's Partnership for Peace programme; in June 1996 and April 1997, in a political consensus

unimaginable in relation to domestic issues, the Parliament of Romania called on NATO member states to support Romania's accession. In full agreement with the parliamentary demarches, Presidents Ion Iliescu and Emil Constantinescu stated, on the occasion of official visits or receptions, the desire and will of Romania to join the Alliance. In their turn, the members of the Romanian diplomatic corps made considerable efforts to persuade Western partners of Romania's capacity to comply with the status of full NATO membership.

When the Kosovo crisis broke out and NATO's military intervention against Yugoslavia took place, Romania provided tangible proof of its will to integrate and, in April 1999 – after Parliament, the Government and the Presidency of Romania decided to make available its air space for military operations – at NATO's Summit in Washington a Membership Action Plan was presented, which lay the foundations for the individual preparation and assessment of Romania and other candidate countries.

The historical context of Romania's bid for NATO membership suffered a dramatic change, from the angle of international security, with the 11 September 2001 terror attacks against the United States, a strategic partner of Romania since 1997. In those circumstances, another very important Romanian gesture, based on consensus, was the initiative of 19 September 2001 when the Parliament of Romania adopted two significant decisions for the self-assumed condition of a de facto member of NATO: to participate, alongside the Alliance and the American partner, in the war against international terrorism, using all means, military included, and to increase Romania's contribution to NATO-led missions at that moment (SFOR and KFOR). In the new global context, Romania's efforts to step up the reform of its military capacities, as well as the substantial contributions of the Romanian diplomacy (such as the "Spring of New Allies" summit organized in Bucharest in March 2002) were crowned with success when, in November 2002, at NATO's Summit in Prague, Romania was invited to start accession talks. Two years later, in 2004, when all technical standards had been met and the accession protocols had

been ratified, Romania became a full member of the North Atlantic Alliance – one of the biggest post-1989 achievements of the Romanian diplomacy, of the successive cabinets and of the whole society.

That strategic goal attained, the foreign policy of Romania and especially its national security dimension acquired new instruments and set new objectives, proportional to its status as a NATO member. Supporting the Alliance to respond efficiently to the new security threats, strengthening the transatlantic partnership, developing cooperation with the European Union and the United Nations, backing NATO's transformation process and participating in the operations and missions of the Alliance are the avowed goals Romania has pursued after 2004.

A confirmation of the role Romania played in the evolution of the North Atlantic Alliance came with the NATO Summit in Bucharest, on 2-4 April 2008, an outstanding event in the history not only of Romanian foreign policy but also of the Organization. For the first time, along with the summit, a meeting of the states and organizations taking part in the Allied operation in Afghanistan was held. It was the biggest summit in NATO history and it was organized faultlessly, which certainly was a major success of the Romanian diplomacy in the first decade of the 21st century.

European Integration

Another fundamental goal of the Romanian foreign policy after 1989, supported by all the political forces, pursued by all governments and wished for by most of the people was European integration. Romania's efforts to join the European Union sprang not only from the political-diplomatic area but from a more profound zone, from Romanian society and the collective mindset, where this goal was perceived as a natural reunion, after a half-a-century forced separation, with the European political, cultural and economic identity. Therefore, in February 1993 was signed the Europe Agreement establishing an association between

Romania and the EU, and in 1995 Romania submitted its formal application for joining the Union. Meanwhile, in October 1993 this country had become a member of the Council of Europe. Integration in an economic and political union which was undergoing a difficult process of redefining its own institutional, procedural and legal elements was one of the most difficult and complex tasks of the Romanian foreign policy in the post-communist era. A cursory review of the milestones of Romania's "road to Europe" would include, besides the above-mentioned events, the decision of the Helsinki European Council of December 1999, to start accession talks with Romania (alongside six other candidate countries), and then the official launch of the accession negotiations at the Romania - EU Intergovernmental Conference in February 2000, establishment of the accession schedule for Romania and Bulgaria, by the European Council held in Brussels in 2003, and the completion of negotiations in 2004, the signing of the Treaty of Accession in 2005 and actual accession to the European Union on 1 January 2007.

The common treaty on Romania's and Bulgaria's accession to the European Union was the outcome of painstaking negotiations concerning the 31 chapters and the signing of that treaty on 25 April 2005 can be considered as completing Romania's difficult transition from communism to democracy. Nevertheless, Romania's accession to the EU both formally and in essence was but a first step to full integration. The Romanian foreign policy agenda still features adoption of the single currency, the euro, expected in January 2015, as well as accession to the Schengen Area. Moreover, as a member state of the EU, Romania has been actively involved in debating the major themes related to how the Union will evolve and in implementing, broadening and deepening the common policies, which actually means that Romanian foreign policy has become European in the true acceptance of the world.

Relations with Neighbour States and Regional Cooperation

As these fundamental strategic objectives were being pursued, Romania's foreign policy towards the neighbouring states focused, after 1989, on regulating the diplomatic relations and developing the previously opened cooperation axes, as also on concluding agreements, conventions, understandings and treaties with the states having emerged in the wake of Yugoslavia's dismemberment and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Thus, the treaties of collaboration and good neighbourliness signed between 1992 and 2006 helped regulate the relations with Bulgaria, the states of the former Yugoslavia and Hungary.

The good neighbourliness policy conducted by the Romanian diplomacy was placed in difficulty in the case of relations with neighbours to the East, the litigious past and the regional upheavals generated by the dissolution of the Soviet Union adversely affecting, at least in a first stage, Romania's relations with Russia, Ukraine and Moldova. Whereas Romania signed, in April 1991, a Treaty of mutual assistance and mutual aid with the Soviet Union (which was to disappear as such just a few months later, a fact seriously censured at home, the basic treaty between the Romanian state and the Russian Federation was more than a decade late in appearing, particularly because of the issue related to denunciation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the question of the Romanian treasury, both representing historical disputes. Although those have not been entirely resolved, in July 2003 Romania accepted the signing, in Moscow, of a political treaty regulating reciprocal relations.

In the case of Ukraine, though Romania had been one of the first countries to recognize Kiev's independence, in February 1992, the territorial disputes (the Serpents Island) or the different legislation on minority rights compounded the regulatory settlement of diplomatic relations between the two states and the talks with a view to signing the basic treaty. In 1997, after Ukraine had accepted Recommendation 1201 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe,

dating back to 1993, and both states agreed to submit their disputed territorial problems to the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the Treaty on good neighbourliness and cooperation was finalized and signed.

Relations with the Republic of Moldova, too, were intricate, depending on the nature of the political regime in Chisinau, on the regional political context and the goals and related strategies of Romania. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in August 1991, Romania recognized the new state's independence and, through various voices, acknowledged an undeniable fact: the special character of this relationship, springing from the common language, history, culture and traditions. In the context of Romania's drive to join NATO and the European Union, the Romanian diplomacy settled on a pragmatic strategy in relation to the Republic of Moldova, wishing to build substantial closeness between the two states in the framework of the Euro-Atlantic political, economic and security architecture.

Regional cooperation was another important objective of the Romanian foreign policy. In the framework of regional initiatives Romania promoted European and national policies, contributing substantially to regional projects.

Strategic Partnerships and Special Bilateral Relations

After 1989, while pursuing the priority foreign policy goals and promoting national interest, the Romanian diplomacy continued – on a broader scale and with more precise substance – developing special bilateral relations with states like Hungary, Poland, Britain, France, Italy, Japan, China and the United States. In the case of the USA, after have regained the most favoured nation status in 1993, which spelled greater opportunities as far as economic relations were concerned, the Romanian diplomacy assiduously advocated closer collaboration with the USA, the main strategic player at world level. In keeping with that point, in July 1997, when US President Bill Clinton visited Romania, a Strategic Partnership between Romania and the USA was launched, and that was a major success of the Romanian

foreign policy in respect of interests in the international arena, as also an important incentive for continuing internal political, administrative, legal and economic reforms. After the 9/11 terror attacks Romania decided to join the US-led international coalition in the struggle against terrorism, contributing logistics and troops to operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. At present, among other gestures that lend consistency to the Strategic Partnership, one can list the decisions of the Romanian authorities to sign with the USA first the Agreement on the activities of US forces stationed in the territory of Romania (2005) and then in 2011 the Agreement on deployment of the missile defence system.

More than two decades after the revolution of 1989, a look back at the Romanian foreign policy, with an avowed evaluation tinge, would certainly take more pages and a closer analysis. However, a few general considerations could be set forth: decision making factors in post-communist Romania's foreign policy had to grapple with an international context much different than in the previous period but the priority strategic goals, resulting from the national will, have been pursued consistently, despite inherent difficulties and errors. The successes of Romanian diplomacy in promoting and securing the national interests externally were reaped following combined and often consensual efforts and initiatives of the Romanian political leaders and forces; the complexity and dynamic of the problem area Romanian foreign policy has to cover at present requires diversification and continuous modernization of specific structures, strategies and operations.

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