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Internal and External
Sources of Romanian Security
After 1989

Wally Bacon

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SOURCES
OF ROMANIAN SECURITY AFTER 1989

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Internal and External Sources of Romanian Security After 1989

The concept of "security" is idiosyncratically defined, but like pornography, is known when it is seen. Daniel Nelson has added some definition to the concept when he configured "security" in two dimensions, "objectives" and "capabilities," and asserted that:

For states, as much as for individuals, security is an ongoing effort to sense and assess threats, to diminish or limit them if possible, and to always retain capacities equal to or greater than the threats to one's environment. 'Capacities,' in this context, are the raw ingredients of power - human and material resources - that have been fashioned into economic, military, political, or social strengths.¹

If threats are external to the state, internal capacities to counter the perceived risks are often paired with external capacities, such as alliances, symbolic international support, and reduction of dependency on and penetration by potential sources of hostility. If threats are internal, internal capacities, both coercive and persuasive, may be complemented by external capacities which, among other functions, may preempt foreign support of domestic risks and economically and politically support the

¹ Daniel N. Nelson, "Europe's Unstable East," Foreign Policy, 82(Spring 1991), p. 138.

endangered regime.²

I would propose that the "objectives" of Romanian security policy changed little since well before the collapse of communism in East Central Europe until the last years of the millenium. Only in June 1999 were objectives redefined in ways significantly different than the implicit objectives of the communist and immediate post-communist periods. Capacities have changed to meet the challenges of dynamic perceived external and internal threats and Romania's ability to pay for them.

Sometime during the mid-1950s, the communist regime of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej perceived its retention of power as intimately linked to the assertion of national distinctiveness within the Soviet Bloc.³ That assertion, motivated as much by Gheorghiu-Dej's, and later Nicolae Ceausescu's, defiant Stalinism in the face of Soviet reformism, as by nationalism *per se*, generated support within previously acquiescent or inherently inimical strata of Romanian society and created something approximating regime legitimacy in the late 1960s.⁴ The "objectives" of

² The conceptual similarities to Karl Deutsch's external and internal domains of power (The Analysis of International Relations, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968, pp. 24-39) are entirely intentional

³ Florin Constantiniu, "Interesul national al Romaniei: perceptia postbelica (1945-1989)," in Interesul national si politica de securitate (Bucharest: Institutul roman de studii internationale, 1995), pp. 268-9. Constantiniu thus splits the difference between some analysts, such as Stephen Fischer-Galati, who date the assertion of autonomy from the purge of the Muscovites in the early 1950s, and most of the rest of Western commentators, such as Kenneth Jowitt, who date the drift away from Moscow as occurring in about 1960.

⁴ The most lucid analysis of this process remains Francois Fejto, "Socialisme et nationalisme dans les democraties populaires (1971-1978), Defense Nationale, XXXIV, (aout-septembre, 1978), especially pp. 37-9.

Romanian security policy during much of the communist period were, therefore, defined in terms of preserving national autonomy against the constraints imposed by the exercise of hegemonic power within the Soviet bloc. For much of the period policy tested the limits of Soviet tolerance for deviation. The Romanians became masters at identifying precisely where those limits were.

Threats to Romanian political sovereignty and territorial integrity were perceived on two levels, both contradictory to the patently absurd Soviet assertion that the Bloc constituted a "security community" and a "socialist commonwealth," but very much in keeping with interwar Romania's foreign policy precepts. The first level, implied in the famous Romanian Workers Party "declaration of independence" of April, 1964, was that the Soviet Union constituted the foremost threat to regime legitimacy, and thus national security, in its desire to reassert control over virtually all aspects of Romanian foreign and domestic policies. The Romanian Party rejected Soviet hegemony. Fearful that Bloc integration would interrupt the achievement of a vertically integrated, multilaterally developed, society (as dictated by the Stalinist model), Romania carefully distanced itself from the USSR without repudiating the ultimate guarantee of all European communist regimes, the threat of Soviet military intervention. It thus retained formal links with those "international regimes" defining the Bloc (i.e., the CMEA and the WTO) without allowing Soviet penetration of Romanian policy-making structures. Robert Farlow aptly referred to this posture as "partial

alignment.”⁵

The Romanian military doctrine of “the struggle of the entire people,” articulated after the Warsaw Pact suppression of the “Prague Spring” and resembling Yugoslavia’s territorial defense system, was a deterrent strategy which was clearly targeted at discouraging similar “fraternal assistance.”⁶ In keeping with its military doctrine, Romania developed an arms industry which produced weapons tailored to its, rather than the Pact’s, needs. Romanian military units did not participate in Pact exercises, beyond token representation at map simulations, and Romanian officers were no longer sent to the Soviet Union for advanced training. During the 1970s, particularly after the implementation of the National Defense Law of 1972,⁷ the primary defense role of the standing army was eroded in favor of the territorial units, the Patriotic Guards, with a resulting resentment on the part of professional soldiers.⁸ William Crowther goes still further, arguing that Ceausescu’s low cost, “low tech” security policy alienated the officer corps and that “. . . Ceausescu clearly

⁵ Robert L. Farlow, “Romania and the Policy of Partial Alignment” in James A. Kuhlman, ed., The Foreign Policies of Eastern Europe: Domestic and International Determinants (Leyden, the Netherlands: A. W. Sijthoff, 1978), pp. 191-207. See also Ronald Haly Linden, Bear and Foxes: the International Relations of the East European States, 1965-1969 (New York: East European Quarterly, Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 177-203.

⁶ See Walter M. Bacon, Jr., “Romanian Military Policy in the 1980s,” in Daniel N. Nelson, ed., Romania in the 1980s (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981), pp. 202-218.

⁷ “Legea Nr. 14/1972, privind organizarea apararii nationale a Republicii Socialiste Romania” (n.p.: Consiliul de Stat, 1973).

⁸ Walter M. Bacon, Jr., “Civil-Military Relations in Romania,” Studies in Comparative Communism, XI, 3(Autumn 1978), pp. 242-5.

chose not to base the security of his regime on an assumption that he could hold the loyalty of the armed forces."⁹ Crowther's analysis proved prophetic as the army deserted the dictator in December, 1989.

Romania's security policy for the two decades preceding 1989 was, therefore, a policy of autonomy and measured distance from the Warsaw Pact, correctly viewed by Ceausescu as an integrative organization, adherence to which could only undermine his nationalist (read, "Stalinist") base of legitimacy. Here the parallel with DeGaulle's similar rejection of NATO falters. The French president never regarded the alliance's leading power, the United States, as a physical threat to the political sovereignty of France. Ceausescu clearly viewed the Soviet Union in far less favorable light.

On a second level, regime security was seen as dependent upon "homogenization" of Romanian society.¹⁰ From the atomization of state terror, fostered by the ubiquitous *Securitate*, would come a new community in which no distinctions of gender, social origin, or ethnicity would be recognized, only the individual's unflinching devotion to the state. Such a homogenized society would not brook minority ethnic assertiveness nor its external sponsorship. It asserted the continuing, but ideologically questionable, relevance of "nation" as the natural and

⁹ William Crowther, "'Ceausescuism' and Civil-Military Relations in Romania," Armed Forces and Society, XV, 2(Winter 1989), p. 220.

¹⁰ I am indebted to Gail Kligman for her elaboration of the concept. "The Politics of Reproduction in Ceausescu's Romania: A Case Study in Political Culture," East European Politics and Societies, VI, 3(Fall 1992), p. 367.

historically evolved expression of community.¹¹ Ceausescu's assimilationist policies toward Romania's sizeable Hungarian minority elicited protests from the "fraternal" regime in Budapest and supplied the Romanian dictator with ample opportunities to raise the possibility of once again (as in 1940) losing Transylvania to the Hungarians. In this light, provocation of the Hungarians served Ceausescu's purpose of constructing "others" who were portrayed as constantly seeking to victimize the innocent Romanians. Iron discipline and unquestioning subservience to the state were required to fend off the threat. Dissent of any kind was akin to treason. Ironically, during the last paranoid years of the personality cult and the terroristic state, in the eyes of the long suffering population the "others" perceptually evolved into the repressive state itself.¹²

Hungary (and, by extension, Romania's Hungarian minority) were not only the Western flank of the integrative organizations of the Bloc, but she and her "fifth column" also harbored irredentist pretensions to Transylvania. Unfortunately, the last governments of communist Hungary did little to undermine Ceausescu's credibility.

Romania had to depend on herself, and herself alone, if her security were to be protected. Threatened by the Warsaw Pact and its hegemonic power, confronted by Hungarian revisionism, and distrustful of the

¹¹ E.g., Constantine Vlad, Essais sur la nation (Bucharest: Editions Meridiane, 1973). Trond Gilberg, Nationalism and Communism in Romania: the Rise and Fall of Ceausescu's Personal Dictatorship (Boulder, San Francisco, and Oxford: Westview Press, 1990), pp. 173-179, labels Ceausescu's attitude toward ethnic minorities as "chauvinism."

¹² See Katherine Verdery, "Nationalism and National Sentiment in Post-socialist Romania," Slavic Review, LII, 2(Summer 1993), pp. 179-203.

democratic West, the last years of Ceausescu's Romania were characterized by international isolation and the occasional visit by other international pariahs. The security policies of the Ceausescu *fin de régime* sought to assure state autonomy and to perpetuate the dictatorship's power through self-imposed international isolation, economic austerity, minority assimilation, and state terror, all of which led to the rest of the world's opprobrium. They were policies which demanded of the Romanian people material deprivation and strict social conformity. No tears were shed in Washington, Moscow, or Budapest when the regime was overthrown and few Romanians mourned its passing.

The chronicle of the "events" of December, 1989, in Romania is well enough known to require no repetition. Zoltan Barany has, in my opinion, correctly emphasized Romanian exceptionalism concerning the role of the Romanian armed forces in the overthrow of the communist party-state.¹³ Only in Romania (and perhaps Bulgaria) did the armed forces play an important, if not crucial, role in ousting a communist regime. After behaving ambivalently in Timisoara, the armed forces joined the anti-Ceausescu crowds and elite conspirators in eliminating the dictatorship.¹⁴ The roots of military discontent were deep and it should not have

¹³ Zoltan Barany, "East European Armed Forces in Transitions and Beyond," East European Quarterly, XXVI, 1(March 1992), especially p. 14, and "The Military and Security Legacies of Communism," in Zoltan Barany and Ivan Volgyes, eds., The Legacies of Communism in Eastern Europe (Baltimore and London; the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 101-117.

¹⁴ The clearest, most concise, and best documented version of the "revolutionary" events, including the activity of a few armed forces cadres in the conspiracy, is Michael Shafir, "Preparing for the Future by Revising the Past," Report on Eastern Europe, I, 41(October 12, 1990), pp. 29-42.

surprised observers that the army wrote the final chapters of Ceausescu's regime and life.

The security objectives of the post- (and not necessarily "un-") communist government of Romania were remarkably like those of communist Romania but the instrumentalities through which those objectives were pursued were significantly different. While one might argue that, in the post-Bloc, post-Cold War era, Romania had no credible external threats to its territorial integrity or political sovereignty, many Romanian leaders left little doubt that the Russian Federation, or at least certain Russian political groups, had the potential of rekindling Romanian fears.¹⁵ The same held true for Romania's fear of alleged Hungarian irredentism.¹⁶

Here the similarities with the *ancien régime* begin to fade. The response of successive Romanian governments, under Ion Iliescu's and Emil Constantinescu's presidencies, has been to seek integration with Euro-Atlantic institutions, first and foremost of which, NATO. At first Romania's westward inclination was impeded by a series of events which tarnished its initial post-"revolutionary" welcome by the West -- the

¹⁵ That this was the case was emphasized on April 8, 1996 when General Dumitru Cioflina, the Chief of the Romanian General Staff, was quoted as saying that an extra-NATO regional alliance, composed of former Soviet republics and former Warsaw Pact members, might be initiated were Communist Party candidate Zupanov to triumph in the June presidential elections in Russia. AP/FLUX dispatch rom3082, April 9, 1996 (received electronically). Needless to say, official Bucharest breathed an audible sigh of relief when Boris Eltsin was re-elected.

¹⁶ On April 9, 1996, Romanian Defense Minister Gheorghe Tinca told Magyar Hirlap that if Hungary were granted NATO membership before Romania, there could be a regional arms race. Open Media Research Institute, Daily Digest, April 10, 1996 (electronically received). Tinca's Hungarian counterpart, Gyorgy Keleti, quickly discounted the idea. CET ON-LINE, 1, 326(April 11, 1996), electronically received.

several invasions of Bucharest by Jiu Valley miners, the Tirgu Mures incidents, the sullied elections of May, 1990, and the brutal suppression of the student protest in Bucharest.¹⁷ The prolonged dependence of the Vacaroiu governments (November, 1992 - November, 1996) on extremist parties delayed privatization, encouraged rampant corruption on all levels of government and business, continued ethnic tension and did nothing to assuage Western doubts. These negative images facilitated what appeared to be a two-track approach to Central and Eastern Europe by the Euro-Atlantic institutions: the Visegrad Group would be admitted first because more progress in economic and political reform had been made, and was projected to be made, in these countries. Romania was relegated to the second echelon of potential admissions. Yet consistently huge majorities of surveyed Romanians as well as non-partisan political-civil society working groups favored integration with the West.¹⁸

The Romanian logic during the Ilescu governments, as explained by Foreign Minister Melescanu, was simple. The countries of East Central Europe had only three choices: to gravitate toward whatever emerged in

¹⁷ Walter M. Bacon, Jr., "This Is Not A Romania,' The Foreign Policy of a Weak State," a paper presented to the twenty-fourth annual convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Phoenix, Arizona, November 21, 1992, p. 4.

¹⁸ Teodor Viorel Melescanu (Romanian Foreign Minister), "Romania and Europe - A Historical Overview of Romania's Long-Standing Vocation," Romanian Journal of International Affairs, I, 1-2(1995), p. 9. Melescanu cites 1994 data that show 88% supporting membership in the EU and 83% membership in NATO. Anneli Ute Gabanyi and Elena Zamfirescu, "Romania," in Werner Weidenfeld, ed., Central and Eastern Europe on the Way into the European Union (Gutersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers, 1995), p. 193, cite data showing that these levels of support for integration into the EU and NATO do not significantly vary over time. The most modest numbers, 60-70% support, are from a military source, Commander (R) Constantin Alexandru, "Extinderea NATO: Romania la portile Alientei," Lumea, 9(September 1996), p. 28.

the East; to remain uncommitted and thus invite external dominance; and, to become part of the Euro-Atlantic world, the political, social and economic structures of which matched the aspirations of those who had overthrown communism.¹⁹ The first two choices were incompatible with Romanian security "objectives."

On January 24, 1994, Romania became the first former Warsaw Pact member-state to sign up for NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP). The promptness of the Romanian reply to NATO's offer of PFP as an intermediary step toward full membership, albeit it without the security guarantees enjoyed by full members, not only re-emphasized the Romanian orientation toward the West but also allowed Bucharest some relief from its anxiety that Hungary would enter NATO first.²⁰

Ioan Mircea Pascu, State Secretary in the Ministry of Defense and among the most theoretically informed of Romanian foreign policy spokespersons, clearly placed the relationship with NATO within a intensifying Euro-Atlantic system of complex interdependence. In that respect, he argued, Romanian adherence to the North Atlantic alliance must be viewed as just one international regime which would complement others, such as the West European Union, the Council of Europe, and, ultimately, the European Union, applications for membership in all of

¹⁹ Melescanu, "Romania and Europe," pp. 8-9.

²⁰ Dan Ionescu, "Romania Adjusting to NATO's Partnership for Peace Program," RFE/RL Research Report, III, 9(March 4, 1994), especially pp. 43-4.

which Romania made.²¹

Association with NATO has required a restructuring and reform of the Romanian armed forces to insure doctrinal, training, mission, and armaments compatibility. These reforms included a thorough reorganization of the Ministry of Defense, the linking of the armed forces with the "democratic" political norms of post-communist Romania, reductions in personnel and material, and the establishment of cooperative relations with other Euro-Atlantic armed forces. The reform was to be accomplished in three stages: a preparatory stage, 1991-2; a stage of restructuring, 1993-5; and, a stage of completion, 1996-2000.²²

Those with long experience in East Central Europe might discount the Romanian government's promises of military reform. Permit me a personal note in this regard. In October, 1992, I spoke with a United States military mission at the Hotel Bucharest. They despaired of being able to bring the Romanian army into the late twentieth century. The

²¹ Ioan Mircea Pascu, "NATO Expansion: A View from Romania," Romanian Journal of International Affairs, I, 1-2(1995), pp. 62-63, and "Relatiile Romaniei cu NATO, componenta a interesului national," in Interesul national si politica de securitate, 290-3.

Gabanyi and Zamfirescu ("Romania," p. 182) note that the acceptance of "complex interdependence" and the necessity of interlocking Euro-Atlantic memberships puts to rest an earlier impulse to upgrade the OSCE's status as the primary provider of security. This was the direction former Foreign Minister Adrian Nastase seemed to want to follow in 1990. See Walter M. Bacon, Jr., "Security as Seen from Bucharest," in Daniel N. Nelson, ed., Romania After Tyranny (Boulder, San Francisco, and Oxford: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 194-5.

²² An interview with General Dumitru Cioflina, Chief of the General Staff, in Curierul National, November 8, 1995, as translated and reproduced in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report, East Europe, (hereafter cited as FBIS) November 15, 1995, pp. 53-6. See also his earlier "Restructuring and Modernizing the Romanian Armed Forces," NATO Review, XLII, 4(August 1994), pp. 32-5.

On the parameters of force reductions see a report on a press conference given by Defense Minister Gheorghe Tinca. Romania libera, October 14, 1995, p. 9.

armed forces were lacking in organization, training, modern weapons, even practical uniforms. Today, after successful deployments of specialized troops to Kuwait, Somalia, Angola, and Bosnia, and after dozens of joint PFP exercises, the trimmed down Romanian armed forces are considered among the more effective military establishments among the former Warsaw Pact member-states, an assessment that encouraged Romania, with backing from a number of NATO members, to apply for membership on April 2, 1996.²³

Because the Romanian leadership retained a corporate concept of security basically unchanged from that of the Ceausescu era, Romania did not make progress in economic and political reform comparable to its significant achievements in military reform. The NATO document on expansion clearly articulated social, political and economic conditions which the regime was unwilling or unable to meet.²⁴

The important irony is that Ceausescu's Romania rejected meaningful participation the Soviet Bloc's integrative institutions, and consequently developed inefficient idiosyncratic military, economic, and social structures, for fear of compromising national autonomy and the regime's claim of nationalist legitimacy. Ion Iliescu and his governments,

²³ E.g., Ambassador Alfred Moses' statement to this effect reported in Adevarul, March 27, 1995.

For another positive assessment, see Dan Ionescu, "Hammering at NATO's Door," Transition, II, 16(9 August 1996), pp. 37-41.

²⁴ "Study on NATO Enlargement," September 1995, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/enl-9501.htm>.

Chapter 5 of the document contained the economic, political and social standards which candidates for admission had to meet or had made significant progress in meeting. While Romania was perhaps better qualified to meet the military requirements for admission, it lagged far behind the Visegrad group in these non-military requirements.

still claiming a nationalist base for legitimacy, could not wait to become as integrated as possible into organizationally similar Western structures, requiring an abandoning of idiosyncratic national institutions. It is that paradox which drew the fire of the Vacaroiu government's former extremist coalition partners, Corneliu Vadim Tudor's Greater Romania Party (PRM), Gheorghe Funar's anti-Hungarian Party of Romanian National Unity (PUNR), and Ilie Verdet's neo-communist Party of Socialist Labor (PSM), all of which declined to vote for one or another of the legislative acts enabling Romania's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions.²⁵ Thus, when once Romania defined security objectives and capacities in terms of close to complete autonomy, even isolation, after 1989 those objectives and capacities were superficially linked with Romanian integration into a system of "complex interdependence."

As ironic, the relations between the military establishments of Hungary and Romania could hardly have become more cordial, with regular meetings between the ministers of defense and high ranking officers, an efficient functioning "open skies" regime, and effective cooperation within the frameworks of the PFP and the IFOR deployment. At the same time, the West had long held Romanian-Hungarian animosity as incompatible with either country's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.²⁶

On September 16, 1996, in Timisoara, Prime Ministers Vacaroiu and

²⁵ Walter M. Bacon, Jr., "Romanian Civil-Military Relations after 1989" in Constantine P. Danopoulos and Daniel Zirker, eds., The Military and Society in the Former Eastern Bloc (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), p. 193, fn 72.

²⁶ See Catherine Durandin, "Bucarest et les relations roumano-hongroises: un test de l'européanisation," Armement, 4(July-August 1993), pp. 18-24.

Horn signed the Romanian-Hungarian Basic Treaty which aimed to enhance both countries' security by overcoming one of the last impediments to their integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures. Negotiations had been going on for four years. The sides could not overcome either the Romanians' insistence on an explicit Hungarian recognition of existing borders or the Hungarians' insistence upon recognition of the collective rights of minorities. The final breakthrough seems to have started with President Iliescu's August, 1995, proposal of an "historic reconciliation," on the post-war Franco-German model. The ruling Party of Social Democracy of Romania's (PDSR) right and left-wing coalition partners denounced the overture as did the Democratic Union of Magyars of Romania (UDMR). The democratic opposition criticized the way in which the proposal was launched but they were also frustrated by the President's agile attempt to blunt their often repeated contention that as long as the *nomenklaturists* remained in power, Romania would never be admitted to NATO and the EU.²⁷ Michael Shafir was undoubtedly correct in his assessment of the August 14, 1996, announcement that the Basic Treaty was ready for signing:

The sudden change can be explained mainly by foreign-policy considerations that have little to do with the long-standing conflict and animosity between Hungary and Romania. The two countries' quests to join NATO and the European Union brought about a compromise on issues that appeared to be insurmountably divisive.²⁸

²⁷ Matyas Szabo, "Historic Reconciliation' Awakens Old Disputes," Transition, II, 5(8 March 1996), pp. 46-50.

²⁸ Michael Shafir, "A Possible Light at the End of the Tunnel," Transition, II, 19(20 September 1996), p. 29.

The immediate cause was the negative Western reaction to some unguarded comments made by Hungarian officials to a Congress of the Hungarian diaspora in July which seemed to endanger Hungary's "fast track" to NATO membership. In the meantime, the PDSR had shed its extremist allies in preparation for November's national elections. The Europeanist democratic opposition could hardly topple the now minority government on the basis of a treaty, much urged by the West, containing a specific mutual pledge of support for both countries' integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. Only the extremist former PDSR coalition partners voted against ratification in the Romanian Senate. The UDMR senators abstained.²⁹

The democratic opposition's exclusive claim upon Romanian Europeanism was thus undermined. The PDSR drew clear lines of distinction between its westward orientation and its extremist former partners' eastward or inward orientations. The UDMR, the target of the extremists' venom, was left with diminished Hungarian government support and isolated from its potential allies in the Romanian democratic opposition. The West praised both Romania and Hungary and resolutions were introduced in the U.S. Congress to support both countries' entry into NATO.³⁰ It was an adept political and electoral move by Iliescu. Both Romania's internal and external capacities were enhanced and her security

²⁹ Ziua, September 27, 1996, <http://www.ziua.ro>. On September 30, extremist maneuverings notwithstanding, the Treaty was forwarded to the full Chamber of Deputies for consideration. Open Media Research Institute, Daily Digest, October 1, 1996 (received electronically).

³⁰ The Washington Post, September 19, 1996; Mediafax dispatch cited in TELEGRAMA, Buletin de Stiri, September 30, 1996 (received electronically).

objectives were perceived as being closer to being realized.

Similar treaties with the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova were the objects of prolonged and difficult negotiations but inched closer to realization after the Romanian demand for an explicit renunciation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was circumvented, an impediment which initially impeded progress on Ukrainian-Romanian basic treaties as well.³¹ The latter treaty was signed shortly before NATO's July 1997 expansion summit in Madrid.³²

If Romania were to make progress toward integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions, internal Romanian "capacities" related to national security could no longer be conceptualized as requiring "homogenization" of Romanian society. Rather, criteria for membership required the pluralistic and democratic norms of civil society. If there remained a weakness in Romanian security policy, it was here. Despite much progress, the former "nomenklaturists" who governed Romania from 1989 to 1996 retained, and occasionally exercised, some of their pre-democratic habits.³³ Privatization was sluggish at best. Abuse of the

³¹ FLUX dispatches rom3111 and rom 3112, April 10, 1996 (received electronically).

³² June 2, 1997. Therefore, the Romanian government argued, the criterion according to which potential NATO members had to establish cooperative and neighborly relations with all the candidate's bordering states had been achieved. "Romania's Views on NATO Enlargement," Romania Today, 11 July 1997, <http://www.embassy.org/romania/press/rtoday11>.

³³ For objective evaluations see *Human Rights and Democratization in Romania* (Washington, D.C.: Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1994) and Gabanyi and Zamfirescu, "Romania," pp. 178-181 and 184-193.

media was sometimes heavy handed.³⁴ The government appeared powerless to combat endemic corruption. There were isolated instances of intolerances toward ethnic minorities, especially Romi. As long as the West perceived these problems, there would be hesitation about integrating Romania into the Euro-Atlantic security structures. Without integration, the "capacities" to achieve the security "objectives" would have to reassessed and, perhaps, reoriented.

* * * * *

The elections of November, 1996, brought the democratic opposition to power, both in Cotroceni Palace, where Emil Constantinescu replaced Ion Iliescu as President, and in the Parliament and Government where a broad center-right coalition, including the UDMR, replaced the PDSR and its erstwhile extremist allies. If anything, the new governments, headed by Victor Ciorbea (December 1996 - April 1998) and Radu Vasile (April 1998 -), have emphasized the necessity of integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions for Romanian security even more than had their predecessors.

During the first six months of 1997 the new government devoted a disproportionate amount of its energy to diplomatic and media campaigns to convince audiences, both abroad and at home, that post-Iliescu Romania merited first round inclusion in NATO's eastward expansion. Ministers, diplomats, and even former King Michael fanned out across Europe and North America, hoping to persuade NATO members that the elections and the government's political and economic reform policies, coupled with the

³⁴ See Henry F. Carey, "From Big Lie to Small Lies: State Mass Media Dominance in Post-Communist Romania," East European Politics and Societies, X, 1 (Winter 1996), pp. 16-45.

relatively advanced restructuring and interoperability of the armed forces, made Romania's case for admission with the Visegrad group at Madrid.³⁵

American opposition to Romanian admission in the first wave crushed whatever hopes the new government had raised during its vigorous campaign. While a calculation of the U. S. Senate's willingness to pay for NATO expansion beyond the three successful candidates may have ultimately scuttled Romanian chances, Romania's relatively short record of democratic government on a Western model and the political constraints which impeded genuine economic reform were the stated reasons for the rejection of Romania's application.³⁶ Perhaps in compensation, President Clinton paid a triumphal visit to Bucharest immediately after the Madrid summit and launched the concept of a U. S.-Romanian "strategic partnership" as an intermediate step between PFP participation and NATO membership which, he assured his hosts, would most likely be granted in the second wave, perhaps as early as April

³⁵ Walter M. Bacon, Jr., "Romania and NATO: Political and Diplomatic Aspects," Presentation for the East European Studies Program, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, April 9, 1997. Jeffrey Simon and Hans Binnendijk, "Romania and NATO: Membership Reassessment at the July 1997 Summit," Strategic Forum, 101 (February 1997), raised the same cautionary note as the present author; that while progress was being made, the reform process was far from complete.

³⁶ See Alfred H. Moses [former U.S. Ambassador to Romania], "Romania's NATO Bid," SAIS Review, XVIII, 1 (1998), pp. 137-152, who stresses both the progress made politically and militarily as well as the deficits in economic reform prior to Madrid. Predictably, Mircea Geoana [Romanian Ambassador to the U. S. and an Ilescu appointee], "Euro-Atlantic Integration and Economic Reform," Fordham International Law Journal, XXI, 1 (1997), pp. 12-23, argues that alleged raising the bar for admission detracts from the incentive potential membership has on the pace of economic reform. Both ambassadors implicitly agree that the objective of Euro-Atlantic integration acts to reformulate concepts of security away from the corporatist emphasis of the Ceausescu and Ilescu eras.

1999. While the "strategic partnership" may have momentarily soothed Romania's bruised pride, the Romanian political elite did not immediately grasp the implications of the United States' initiative in terms of criteria for advancement to the next stage, full NATO membership. While appreciating Romania's geo-strategic importance and the restructuring of the armed forces, Washington and NATO expected nothing less than substantial demonstrable progress toward a liberal democratic society which was capable of accommodating minority ethnic and socio-economically distressed groups within a system which legally guaranteed individual rights.³⁷

In the summer of 1998, after the fragile governing coalition had withstood a crisis sparked by international doubts about and internal resistance to the pace and genuineness of economic reform, the Supreme National Defense Council (CSAT) set about drafting a "National Security Strategy" which both incorporated the still popular corporatist notions of territorial integrity and political sovereignty and addressed the political criteria for Euro-Atlantic integration imposed by the West. The draft stipulated that:

³⁷ While few Romanian politicians were quick to grasp these requirements, many intellectuals were. E.g., Dan Pavel, "Contractul cu Europa," Sfera Politicii, 51 (1997), <http://www.dntb.ro/sfera/51>; Mihai Muset, "Perspectiva relatiilor romano-americe," Sfera Politicii, 62 (1998), <http://www.dntb.ro/sfera/62>.

Romania's security strategy primarily aims at defending the sovereign, independent, united, and indivisible Romanian national state; consolidating law and order and democratic institutions; protecting its citizens and guaranteeing their basic rights and individual freedoms; and, protecting and promoting Romania's interests in the world. This is achieved by political, legal, diplomatic, economic, social and military means as well as through cooperation with other countries and security bodies in the European, Euro-Atlantic, and international sphere[s].³⁸

President Constantinescu was to present the policy before Parliament but the speech was not made until June 1999. In the interval, two series of events tested the government of Radu Vasile and required a reexamination of the draft policy.

One of the consistent impediments to further Romanian integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures has been Western skepticism about the pace of economic reform, signalled by both the lack of enthusiasm of foreign investors and the conditionality imposed by international lending institutions. Required reforms include the closing of overstuffed and inefficient state enterprises, among the most budgetarily draining of which are Romania's coal mines. The government's January 1999 attempt to close down some of the least productive mines triggered massive demonstrations and undisguised threats against the government by the militant Jiu Valley miners who four times previously had brought their violent protests to the streets of Bucharest. The miners embarrassed the ill-prepared police in a number of skirmishes. Their case against reform was supported by parties of the former Iliescu coalition, precisely those groupings most suspicious of the shift away from the corporatist definition of national security. Prime Minister Vasile was forced to

³⁸ Romania Libera (internet version), August 24, 1998, as translated by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Article dreeu08241998001254, and accessed through World News Connection at <http://chaos.fedworld.gov>.

accept a compromise brokered, in part, by the Romanian Orthodox Church, but not before he sacked the irresolute Minister of Internal Affairs and ordered a thorough purging of the Ministry's leadership. The incident demonstrated the weakness of the Romanian state against well organized extra-constitutional challengers to its administrative authority.³⁹

The second series of events was the Kosovo crisis of 1999. From the beginning of the NATO air campaign against Yugoslavia, Romanian political elites were of two distinct opinions about the conflict. Those who saw in the potential success of NATO the dramatic weakening of the legal status of state sovereignty in favor of global enforceable standards of human rights, suggested the tortured analogy of the Hungarians of Transylvania being Romania's Albanian Kosovars. More realistically, they feared that territorial revision would be the end product of the NATO campaign. This opinion was expressed by Ion Iliescu's PDSR and his former allies in the PUNR and PMR as well as by more centrist opinion articulated in the daily Adevarul. At the outset of the bombing campaign public opinion polls revealed a strong majority against Romanian participation in the NATO action. On the other hand, the governing coalition leaders supported the NATO action, with greater or lesser degrees of enthusiasm, while reiterating the need to bring the violence to a quick negotiated end.⁴⁰ In mid-April NATO asked for and received

³⁹ The most readable summary of these events is found in East European Constitutional Review, XII, 1-2(Winter-Spring 1999), pp. 31-32.

⁴⁰ Nine O'Clock, 1886, March 31, 1999, <http://www.nineoclock.ro/ARCHIVA/ARCH.html>.

unrestricted use of Romanian airspace.⁴¹ Until the conflict's end, Romanian opinion remained divided, each position being intelligently stated within contexts defining the objectives of Romanian national security.⁴²

On June 23, 1999, President Constantinescu presented the revised version of Romania's National Security Strategy to the Parliament. Among other statements closely paralleling the draft of August, 1998, it stated:

The national security strategy of Romania has as its primary objectives the guarantee of the fundamental rights and liberties of its citizens, the defense of the Romanian national state, sovereign and independent, unitary and indivisible - in the spirit and letter of the Constitution, the consolidation of the legal order and democratic institutions, the amelioration of the living standards of the population, [and] the protection and promotion of Romania's interests in the world.⁴³

The significant change is the preeminence of individual rights among the strategy's objectives. Not only does this reprioritization reflect NATO's agenda in Kosovo, which subordinated state sovereignty to human rights, but it also announces the ruling coalition's acceptance of a liberal democratic paradigm of ultimate political values. In his presentation to Parliament President Constantinescu articulated this paradigm shift:

⁴¹ TELEGRAMA, Buletin de stiri, 1282, April 20, 1999, and 1283, April 21, 1999, received electronically.

⁴² The best public articulation of the arguments were three essays in the foreign affairs monthly Lumea by former foreign ministers Adrian Severin (pro), Adrian Nastase (anti) and Teodor Melescanu (anti). Lumea, VII, 73(May 1999), pp. 16-21.

⁴³ "Strategia de securitate nationala a Romaniei," EuroAtlantic Club, <http://www.fortunecity.co/meltingpot/cranley/387/nato/strategy.htm>. Translation by this paper's author.

From at least two perspectives this document expresses a new vision of the concept of national security. In the first place, it is the first time that the concept of national security does not start with the state, but from the citizen, of his interests and rights. In place of the old centralized vision according to which the state represented everyone, . . . we adopted a new idea according to which national security begins with the guarantee of a secure future for every man. We started on this path taking into consideration the diverse legitimate interests of different people, such as age, social situation, sex, religion or ethnic identification, but united through their common quality of being citizens of this country, Romania.

In the second place, it is the first time that Romania's national security is not limited to a predominantly military problem, but a process which encompasses all of society's problems: economy, defense, diplomacy, administration, public order, social stability, education and health. This vision is closely connected [not only] with the aforementioned principle but also with contemporary international reality. Today a nation is threatened not only by foreign armies, but even more by financial-economic, social or ecological crises, [by] organized crime, terrorism and corruption, and by biological and computer viruses.⁴⁴

As one might expect, the former Iliescu coalition members expressed doubts about the strategy, finding it superficial and unrealistic in terms of Romania's present capacities.⁴⁵ But one might suspect more basic objections to the strategy as it challenges the opposition's corporatist and nationalist electoral appeal and defines democracy in Western terms identical to the values of the member-states of the Euro-Atlantic institutions. It is a strategy with clearly defined objectives, if not yet realized capacities, which both complement the democratic and market reforms on which Romania is embarked and address internal and external threats with a combination of national and international defenses.

⁴⁴ Romania libera, June 24, 1999, <http://www.romanialibera.com/1POL/24c4pint.htm>. Translated by this paper's author.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, <http://www.romanialibera.com/1POL/24c5ppre.htm>.