

ROMANIA AND THE WARSAW TREATY ORGANIZATION: 1968

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1968 was a very busy year: international party conferences stipulated by the Warsaw Pact, bilateral visits, different kind of activities, and so on. Among these, the Non-Proliferation of Armament Treaty occupied a central place; intense negotiations were held in Geneva, aiming at adopting an appropriate text that would be accepted both by the countries which possessed this type of armament and by those with no nuclear capabilities. Nicolae Ceaușescu was not happy with the negotiations. He had been demanding, since the summer of 1967, the convocation of the Political Advisory Committee of the Warsaw Pact in order to discuss the positions that were to be adopted in Geneva. His proposal was rejected under the pretext that the discussions had already taken place between the representatives of the 18 signatories in Geneva; their duplication by the socialist countries was deemed unnecessary¹.

Meanwhile, the Committee of "the 18" presented a new proposal, which the authorities in Bucharest objected to. The Romanian Communist Party renewed, at the end of January, the demand for a convocation of the Czechoslovak Communist Party at the Warsaw Pact². The initial negative position manifested by the Czechs was also shared by the Germans who replied that the purpose of such a

meeting was not clear to them. But Moscow's answer was an affirmative one. Consequently, the opening of the session was established for 6 March in Sofia.

Why did Ceaușescu insist so much on the convocation of the Political Advisory Committee? The new proposal contained a number of prerequisites that upset the leaders in Bucharest, because, as Ceaușescu said in the Central Committee Plenum on the 1st of March, "It is practically unacceptable" as "it leads to the perpetuation of the atomic monopoly both in the military and the political field. It allows the countries in possession of nuclear weapons and American imperialism to intrude upon the domestic affairs of other states. There is no guarantee that nuclear weapons will be given up..."³. Taking into account all these aspects, Ceaușescu proposed that the Plenum approve the following amendments at the summit in Sofia and to develop them further at the Geneva session:

a) Even after the signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, states possessing nuclear armament should continue their efforts of disarmament, this should begin as soon as possible, and five years after signing the treaty, the results should be analyzed.

b) The countries whose armies are equipped with nuclear armament should

guarantee the other states (which do not and will not have this technology) that nuclear weapons will not be used against them.

c) The application of the stipulations of the treaty should be periodically verified⁴.

The amendments proposes two additional statements concerning the exercise of control. "The present draft attempts to prevent the non-nuclear states included in the treaty to use special fissionable materials in order to produce nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices. Peaceful nuclear activities of the nuclear states included in the treaty, which, by their nature or by the quantities of raw and special fissionable materials they process or use may lead to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, should be controlled". A second statement read: "The states included in the treaty agree to the proper regulations by the Security Council. These nuclear states guarantee that the foreign military bases of nuclear states on their territories will not have access to nuclear weapons through the mediation of these bases"⁵.

What made the discussion of these amendments even more difficult was the fact that: "The Soviets and the other comrades were of the opinion that all the proposals made on this occasion - and which were also analyzed in Geneva - were the best we could get, that the Americans would never agree to other propositions and we would have be contented with what we had"⁶. Even in these circumstances Ceaușescu did not seem very willing to stop: "Even if we do not agree - he declared in the Central Committee Plenum on 1, March - we should present these proposals to Geneva and insist upon them in the United Nations, where the introduction of amendments to the treaty will be deliberated upon. At the same time, we shall try to discuss the issues openly with other states the United States included, in order to explain our view and to improve this treaty"⁷.

At the beginning of February, Moscow agreed to the organization of a summit during which the Non-Proliferation Treaty would be discussed. The Soviets proposed that two more problems should be included in the agenda: the Vietnamese question (an issue on which the seven members had the same opinion) and a military problem. The military questions constituted an obstacle in the relationships between Bucharest and Moscow. One should regard these military questions through the perspective of Romania's efforts for independence within the Soviet bloc, and from its economic and military (national and foreign) policy. Equally important was Romania's independence in its reconsideration of the Soviet military doctrine which put an even greater stress on the satellite forces, while the positions of command were monopolized by the Soviet marshals. Ceaușescu wanted Romania's independence to be recognized not only by the West, but by the Soviet Union as well.

It has been said that one of the reasons that determined Khrushchov to withdraw his troops from Romania in 1958 was Romania's secondary strategic position. Although this is true, the Romanian territory remained important for anti-aircraft Soviet defense, partly due to the Romanian radar installations. The Kremlin also thought that in certain strategic circumstances, Soviet troops could be introduced again into Romania and thus exercise a constant pressure upon Yugoslavia. This is also the reason which determined Brezhnev to accelerate the transformation of the Warsaw Pact into an institutional mechanism that would assure the Soviet hegemony in the region. In 1965 the Kremlin leader had asked for the further improvement of the Warsaw Pact, especially in the field of "coordination of the foreign politics of socialist countries"⁸.

However, Romania took the opposite course, representing a military challenge.

“For almost two decades Romania has declined to cooperate with Moscow when the latter has called for 'strengthening' of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the Romanians had a common theme: control over troops in Romania should be exercised by Romanian authorities, and the actual orders to fight should be administered by Romanian authorities. After the 1963 exercises, Romania never again permitted maneuvers on Romanian land, although it has sent to the WTO exercises personnel whom the Romanians have described as observers, and the Soviets have described as participants”⁹. In the last couple of years, the duration of military service in Romania has been reduced from 24 to 16 months, and the army has been given a basically internal doctrinal orientation.

The Romanian leadership also attempted to limit the actions of the Pact to a reduced number of scenarios (an attack from NATO) and to oppose the Soviet intention to use it against China. According to its leaders, Romania would only fulfil its obligations in the first case. The Romanian options materialized in the counter-proposals made in 1966 (regarding Brezhnev's program), which suggested that the function of the chief - commander of the Pact should be occupied by all the members in turn, and the decisions concerning nuclear weapons should be the result of open discussions¹⁰. Moscow was soon to be confronted with the demand for a substantial reduction of its Military Mission in the Romanian capital¹¹.

Taking advantage of Ceaușescu's proposal, Brezhnev agreed to the meeting and overbade the Vietnamese problem (which did not create any dispute, anyway) and the military one (which hurt him the most). What was his purpose? He actually wanted to gain control over the military organisms of the satellites, especially Romania's, whose negative example might be followed by other states.

Ceaușescu's perspective could be explained by the following words: “The real purpose was the creation of a central headquarters for the armies belonging to the member states of the Warsaw Pact, so that all armies would be subject to a central headquarters and become parts of a united army. We demanded a united headquarters of national armies belonging to the countries of the Warsaw Pact. We voted for a headquarters that would coordinate the activity, of national armies. The party and the government of each country was to be held responsible for the equipment and the deployment of armies in case of war. We could coordinate all these activities and adopt a unified policy from a common headquarters, but we cannot accept a position of subordination. We do not want the Romanian army to take orders from either Greciko or someone else. The Romanian army can only take orders from the Romanian party and government”¹².

There is obviously a conflict between the two organizational strategies here. The strategy argued for by Ceaușescu, demanded national control over the forces of cooperation, and the other plan emphasized military efficiency, which had become fundamental after the World War II. According to the latter “accepting certain sacrifices of national sovereignty” was necessary for the fulfilment of their military missions in case of a coalition war¹³. Consequently, before the opening of the sessions of the Political Advisory Committee in Sofia, the Romanian-Soviet file was quite sizable.

The Bulgarian capital hosted the leaders of the communist parties from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Romania, Hungary, and the Soviet Union, accompanied by their ministers of Foreign Affairs and ministers of Defence. Marshal Iakubovski, the supreme commander of the united army of the Warsaw Pact states, was

also present at the discussions¹⁴. The agenda included the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Vietnamese question, and the military problem.

According to the public communiqué¹⁵, “during the discussions a powerful exchange of opinion took place regarding the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The participants in the conference, taking into account the positions expressed by the Political Advisory Committee in Bucharest and Warsaw, confirmed the absolute importance of avoiding the proliferation of nuclear weapons. They examined the project of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which had been elaborated during the negotiations and discussions of the Committee for Disarmament of “the group of the 18”, and they expressed their positions regarding this matter. The meeting took place in an atmosphere of friendship and comradeship”¹⁶.

Not even the most attentive reader of *Scântea*, accustomed to these encoded formulas could suspect what was happening in Sofia behind the festive atmosphere in the Peoples' Opera hall.

Several documentary sources exist for the meeting in Sofia. They include the minutes of the Executive Committee of the session of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party¹⁷, the report of the common session of the Political Committee of the Socialist Hungarian Workers' Party and of the Hungarian Council of Ministers¹⁸, and the information presented by Dubcek to the leading party forum¹⁹.

Let us begin with the results.

There were two communiqués. The former was signed by all the participants in the meeting, whom we quoted earlier, and the latter bears only the six signatures belonging to the chiefs of delegations, except Ceaușescu (the communiqué was published only in the press of the signatory

countries). This was the first time in the history of the Warsaw Pact when a session ended in disagreement. Yet it wasn't the last one, the very fact that there were two communiqués was the consequence of serious conflicts regarding the subjects under discussion: the agenda, the Military Council and the General Staff, the Treaty of Non-Proliferation, and the responsible partners.

Concerning the agenda, the position of the Romanian Communist Party was: “We have agreed to the following formula for the third point of the agenda: ‘Certain military problems to be discussed at the meeting between the assistants of the ministers of Defence in Prague’ - and this is how we referred to it until the last moment. But on Wednesday, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when the agenda was announced, only the first two points were as established, while the third had a different formula: ‘The Creation of the Military Council and the General Staff’. I replied that the agenda and the protocol had been decided upon in Berlin. Then Comrade Gomulka, the president of the session, asked: ‘Has anybody signed the protocol?’ And, indeed, nobody had signed it. All the other participants agreed to the agenda proposed by Comrade Gomulka. We declared that we would make a decision when the third point was brought up for discussion. From the very beginning they tried to impose their point of view, which they had previously made public in Prague, to create the General Staff and the Military Council”.

The position of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party was: “The agenda included three problems previously agreed upon: the problem of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, brought into discussion by the Romanian comrades, the attitude concerning the Vietnamese problem, shared by all the participants, and the last one - suggested by several parties - the report of

the Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Pact". The formula referring to the military problem - suggested by several parties - should be noted, as it refers to the majority, and not to a unanimous decision.

The position of the Czechoslovak Communist Party is not referred to regarding this matter.

The position of the Romanian Communist Party on the establishment of a Military Council and General Staff was: "As we have already stated, we have nothing against the creation of these two military structures, yet we think that the problem of the Statute for the United Command should be solved first, and only then should we consider the General Staff and the Military Council. Everybody agreed, and thus we solved the disputes created by the third point (this was prepared and discussed six months later)".

The position of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party on the Military Council and the General Staff was: "In the report presented by the commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact some ideas were expressed regarding the development of a General Staff and Headquarters, but, as we did not reach a common opinion, the discussion was postponed. The commander-in-chief of the united organization and several ministers of Defence were authorized to solve this matter. The authorization was given for a six month period".

The position of the Czechoslovak Communist Party on this same issue was: "The question of a united military command should have been finalized by now. We are directly interested in solving this problem".

The position of the Romanian Communist Party on the Non-Proliferation Treaty was: "Comrade Brezhnev reached the conclusion that the Non-Proliferation Treaty must be sanctioned as soon as possible. We took floor immediately after

him. We presented our amendments and ended our speech stressing the importance of this Treaty - of course, in the form Ceaușescu proposed - for the communist movement, and the fact that we should militate for the improvement of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Czechoslovak took the floor after us, and, although we did not understand very much of his speech (as he kept writing something), we can describe his opinion in the following way: He feels that the Treaty is, without any doubt, necessary, that Comrade Ceaușescu's propositions cannot be disputed and that they are extremely good, but they can hardly be put into practice. The Czechoslovak thinks that we should be contented for what we have acquired so far and sign the Treaty. Gomulka's speech was quite brief, stating that we should sign the Treaty, since this was the best we could do; Kádár also thought that the Romanians' amendments were interesting, yet that the Treaty should be signed in its present form. Jivkov's discourse followed the same course, but it was shorter, and eventually Kosighin took the floor, referring to our proposals for about half an hour. He disagreed with some of our points, thinking that the control was very good, and in the end, he invited everybody to reconsider the situation and unanimously sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty and then to launch a disarmament program. We made it very clear that these questions should only be decided upon by the Central Committees of the parties, and according to the Authorization of our Central Committee we shall present our amendments to the Committee of "the 18" from Geneva. We specified that we were not in a position to decide whether we should sign the Treaty or not, as this decision could only be made by the Central Committee. We had limited authorization. They could not approve the Treaty in a meeting, since this was a question that regarded each and every party

and government. We were there to consult each other, not to make decisions”.

The position of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party was: “There has been a quite serious conflict of opinions between the Romanians and the rest of the participants, and we could not reach a common conclusion. The Romanians have offered different observations and suggestion for change. These suggestions take into account basic problems - so they have nothing to do with style - that would be in the best interest of the pacifist socialist countries to resolve. The nature of the proposals is the following: first of all the projected agreement does not stipulate the obligation of the countries possessing nuclear weapons to destroy these weapons, that is, to stop producing them and then to eradicate the armament stocks and the means of transportation. Another basic problem is that of the guarantees. The Romanian motion suggests that the powers possessing nuclear weapons should pledge themselves not to use these weapons against non-nuclear countries. The third essential obligation ascribes the control of our obligations regarding the agreement. The Romanian party proposed an amendment which stipulated that these controls be modified in the following way: the nuclear activity of a country should be controlled if this activity reaches the point - from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective - where the material produced could be used for the production of weapons. And the agreement stipulated one more aspect, the fourth essential observation: according to the projected agreement, the Treaty is valid 25 years. Related to this aspect, the Romanian initiative suggests the organization, after five years, of a meeting reuniting the representatives of all states, and if no progress in the destruction of nuclear weapons is noted, the essential elements of the agreement would be reconsidered. The six members, including

us, were of the opinion that these Romanian amendments are generally approved, or that they would generally be acceptable, but that they are illusory, as there is no chance that our adversaries would accept them or include them in the agreement. Far-fetched conclusions cannot be drawn, but we can define the Romanian attitude by the everything or nothing formula. They prefer not to sign the agreement at all rather than to sign something in the detriment of their country; the rest of the participants thought that anything is better than nothing. This is the fundamental disagreement between the two views”.

The Czechoslovak Communist Party did not make any reference to this subject, which was actually the reason for the meeting.

The position of the Romanian Communist Party on who was responsible for the situation was: “How can we talk about negotiations when, while we were analyzing the problem of non-proliferation, they presented to Geneva a projected agreement, together with the Americans and the British. We have to analyze the content of this projected agreement which seems to be against China. According to France Press, up to now we were guarded by a gendarme, now we are guarded by two (Ceașescu must have been very upset to describe the Soviet Union as an international gendarme). A good thing is that, willy-nilly, they have to understand that the Political Advisory Committee should be satisfied with this new role - the role of a forum where problems are discussed - instead of the one it played up to now, rubber stamping everything the Soviet Union did”.

The position of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party concerning the situation was: “This session pointed out again, from a certain perspective, the differences of opinions which have appeared lately between the People's Republic of Romania - was Kádár really

unaware of the fact that the official denomination of Romania had changed three years earlier? - and the other members of the Treaty”.

The position of the Czechoslovak Communist Party was: “The evolution of Romania must not be similar to ours. Yet we are worried that this may have bad effects. In the future was consider if necessary to agree upon the fact that we must deal very carefully with our Romanian comrades in order not to give them the opportunity of claiming that we exclude them²⁰ but also in order to exploit all possibilities”²¹.

The consequences of Czechoslovak Communist Party session in Sofia, held in an “atmosphere of comradeship”, were: the appearance of the “the group of the six”; the exclusion of Czechoslovakia, whose internal evolutions began to be doubted; the successful attempt of Ceaușescu to transfer the decision from the Political Advisory Committee to the authorized forums in the respective countries. This encouraged the actions of the military organizations with a nationalist bias (Czechoslovakia, for instance, but also Poland and Hungary)²².

But where did Ceaușescu's desire to amend the Non-Proliferation Treaty come from? Perhaps the Americans were his real aim; it is possible that he wanted to prevent their control and espionage. Was he really worried that the West-German revanchists might “steal” American nuclear capacities deployed in the German Federal Republic? Or did he want to show, by means of his plans for the future, that his intentions were good? His position must be judged taking into account the energetic profile of Romania. The next five-year plan stipulated the commencement of a peaceful nuclear program. “Romania has decided to go in the direction of obtaining plants which can use Romanian uranium and this will involve obtaining heavy water plants. The Ambassador indicated that this subject had

been taken up with the Canadians and that there was some interest in obtaining a heavy water plant from Canada”²³. This project had been proposed a few years before to the United States, which had rejected it, probably doubting that the secret would be kept²⁴ Ambassador Corneliu Bogdan's interlocutor, John M. Ledy, assistant of the secretary for European problems, promised that these matters would be reconsidered.

Above all, the position adopted at Sofia had immediate consequences on the military level. Feeling Romanians' lack of reliability, and wanting to exclude them, the Moscow authorities cancelled a military exercise that was to take place in Romania. It was supposed to have been a common exercise at the operative-strategic level, led by Marshal Iakubovski, commander-in-chief of the United Army Forces. Operative groups of three command centers - Romanian, Bulgarian, and Soviet - as well as operative groups of the Anti-aircraft Defence Department of the Romanian Territory and Military Navy of the three states were to take part in the maneuver which was to take place between 18 and 26 March (the last days of the operation coincided with the Dresden conference).

On 12, March the chief of the General Staff of the United Commandment announced in Bucharest that the Romanian operation was postponed until further notice, without any further information. The Ministry of Army Forces of Romania demanded explanations, but its representative at the Pact was told that the postponement was possibly due to multiple reasons, namely that the Defence minister of the Soviet Union was to leave for Iraq and Syria, and Marshall Iakubovski was named to replace him. Furthermore, the Romanians were told that a large exercise was to take place in the Soviet army, although not much was known about and that there were also political reasons. When Colonel Iacob Ion demanded to be made

acquainted with these political reasons, the Army General Kazakov defined them as the problem of Europe and added no further explanation. Two days later, Kazakov announced that the military maneuvers would not take place in the near future²⁵.

Returning to the Sofia conference, "the group of the six" wanted to make itself heard in the first session, which was to be held in the same place where the group was created. The improvised agenda included: CEMA, the Political Advisory Committee, and the international communist movement. The conclusions reached at the end of the discussions represented a step forward on the way to the creation of a leading center of the socialist states, which would control the international communist movement, would be formed of the Soviet Union and its closest satellites. The unwanted were to be excluded from the table of the gods. Ceaușescu's exclusion was made without Moscow worrying that he would give up communism.

At the Sofia free composition meeting, as Dubcek called it, it was stated that "practice confirmed that the CEMA measures concerning the economic division and other matters - Bârlădeanu's reactions during other sessions of this organization were still fresh in everybody's mind - could not always be solved. No resolution has been found for the problem of a united command center within the Warsaw Pact". And, as the Sofia meeting confirmed, no agreement was reached concerning the measures taken by the United Nations regarding the non-proliferation of atomic weapons²⁶. But, according to a participant of the smaller conference, the basic conclusion was that: "We should meet more often in this setting"²⁷.

This high society met again in Dresden (23 March). Yet, there was a great discrepancy between the way some of them (Dubcek, for instance) viewed this reunion and what really happened²⁸. In this case the

problem of sources reappears, since the published communiqué is actually a lie. The newspapers asserted that "the six" discussed the problems of CEMA, the problems of the economic collaboration, the united leadership of the Pact forces, the question of the military council, the technical committee, and the situation within each party. Through the perspective of this communiqué, Ceaușescu's reaction, expressed in the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party in April 1968, seems to be perfectly justified²⁹. "We think that the discussions about the problems of the military command center of the Warsaw Pact and about CEMA that took place in Dresden, contradict the spirit of the relationships between socialist states of the Warsaw Pact and CEMA. Our opinion is that a group of countries, members of an international organization, do not have the right to meet separately and discuss the activity of international organizations of which other countries are members, as well. Because, no matter how lenient or sensitive we want to be, we must admit that what they did was an unilateral action which undermined these international organizations. [...] We think it is not fair that the problems concerning our country were debated in our absence, and we suggest that these discussions be held in the presence of all the members"³⁰.

The Romanian reaction would have been a natural one if these had been the real facts about what took place in Dresden. But too little of what was published in the socialist press was discussed afterwards. This is a typical example of the manipulation of public opinion which frequently occurred in the states mentioned above, and generally in all the countries.

Yet, one more obstacle was presented by Alexander Dubcek's report to the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party on the occasion of his return from Dresden³¹. According to

newspapereditors, his report was a "distorted presentation of the way the Dresden conference was held and the way it ended [...] The agenda of the Dresden meeting did not include any problem relating to 'the united leadership, the military council, or the technical committee', even if these matters were mentioned in the final communiqué of the Dresden meeting"³². Why Dubcek slipped and in reality misinformed the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party is a problem that belongs to the Czechoslovak historians.

But what happened in Dresden, after all?

This question is partially answered by the previous report. Dubcek communicated that. "During the meeting certain people were worried that, by a certain kind of activity, others could take advantage of the developments in our country. [...] can state that these concerns and our comrades' advice were the expression of their best intentions and care"³³. The communist leader must have been really naïve to make such a statement! Or maybe he was an expert in the psychology of the people who were listening to him, and among whom were many supporters of Novotny (who had just been forced to resign from the function of president of the republic) and of Moscow. Another supposition would be that he simply wanted another kind of socialism, and the team around him was actually the driving force of action³⁴. Other speakers (Drahomir Kolder, for instance) were more direct: "Our comrades seemed to be seriously worried that the party would not be able to handle the situation".

Partial explanations can be found in the telegrams of Romanian diplomats on missions in different capitals. Of course, in Bucharest, the most awaited were those coming from the firing zone, Prague, where Ambassador Obradovici and his team, Răuceanu and Vlăsceanu, tried to and

succeeded in obtaining the most useful information for the Head Office of the Ministry of Foreign Defense.

On 23, March, two days after Novotny's resignation and on the very day of the Dresden reunion, an analysis of the events was telegraphed from Prague: "Novotny's resignation from the function of president of the Republic and the changes in personnel will continue to take place in the Central Committee Plenum on 28 March this year. They mark on a large scale the conclusion of the first stage of the democratization process started by the Central Committee Plenum in December and January and indicate the consolidation of the progressive wing within the Czechoslovak party leadership, providing it with public support. To reach this goal, the progressive forces within the Central Committee, supported by the mass-media (press, radio and television) started with district party conferences and passed on to the direct mobilization of the population against the conservative elements. Consequently, in the last few weeks, the democratization process has involved all social strata. [...] The influence of the conservative elements has decreased considerably. Their representatives have resigned from their functions in the party or in the state, or have been replaced. [...] The second stage of this process will be commenced after the Central Committee Plenum on 28, March this year, which will adopt the plan of action of the party up to 1970. It is characterized by concrete measures, first of all in the economic field and by the symmetrical reorganization of Czechoslovak society, made up of two nationalities". The communist leader in Bucharest did not mind these aspects, but others he regarded with apprehension: "Improper attitudes were manifested during the meetings with the students, among which was the request to take out of the Constitution the article stipulating the

leading role of the Romanian Communist Party, hostile statements against the army, the suggestion that the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia should promote a neutral politics, and so on". Eventually, the Romanian diplomats appreciated that the conclusion of this process of democratization would depend on the way the party succeeded in recovering the national economy and in avoiding the negative effects of an exaggerated freedom (which could create the premises for anti-socialist activities)³⁵. Concerning this particular aspect, Ulbricht Gomulka, Tito, Brezhnev, and Ceaușescu seemed to have the same goal. Ceaușescu, exactly as his predecessor, was a liberal outside, but inside, he acted like a Stalinist (made of a more and more resistant steel). There was no getting out of the system, and seeing that the Romanian Communist Party had things under control, Brezhnev gave Ceaușescu a kind of liberty of movement³⁶, of which the latter took the best advantage, by rushing over to Czechoslovakia.

The possibility of the situation getting out of control was also mentioned by the diplomats of non-socialist states, accredited in Prague, who considered that excesses having a rightist bias might appear, which would lead to "internal and external

reactions contrary to present tendencies". They also considered it essential that: "As soon as the critical objectives are attained, they must be replaced by positive actions which, in order to hold the masses' interest and adhesion, should follow each other in an accelerated rhythm. We refer basically to the economic field"³⁷.

On the basis of the telegrams received by the Ministry of Foreign Defense, Ceaușescu took the floor at the Plenum held in April 1968, speaking against the organizers of the Dresden conference and pointing out that: "A group of countries has no right to meet, especially when their aim is to exert pressure upon the Czechs, regarding their internal situation, as some of the countries wanted to do at Dresden"³⁸.

Ceaușescu's reaction was made public, as the authorized Romanian forums did not make a secret of their positions. All opportunities were used in order to promote the Romanian standpoint. Why? Maybe because Ceaușescu wanted to replace the Soviet imperialist communism by the communism of small countries and needed support from all over the world. Or maybe he wanted smaller parties to escape Moscow's influence.

NOTES

¹ ANIC, fond CC al PCR/Cancelarie, dosar nr. 31/1968, f. 40.

² Concerning the Romanian position vis-à-vis the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the American Embassy expressed the following view: "It is hard to say how seriously the Romanians consider their own objections to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Although the treaty confronts Romania with the same type of problems that the other non-nuclear countries encounter as well, it is most probable that these objections aim at pointing out to Moscow that Bucharest should be consulted when such questions are decided upon" (FRUS, vol. XVII, folder no. 158).

³ ANIC, fond CC al PCR/Cancelarie, dosar nr. 31/1968, f. 41.

⁴ *Ibidem*, ff. 43-44.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 45.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

- ⁸ Robert L. Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations. Consolidation and Conflict, 1968-1980*, Wisconsin, 1983, p. 32.
- ⁹ William Zimmerman, "Soviet Relations with Yugoslavia and Romania", in *Soviet Policy in East-em Europe* (eds. Sarah Meiklejohn Terry), New Heaven and London, 1984, p. 138.
- ¹⁰ When we present Ceaușescu's position concerning nuclear weapons, we are not referring to its productivity from the coalition point of view.
- ¹¹ A. Ross Johnson, "The Warsaw Pact. Soviet Military Policy in Eastern Europe", in *Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe*, pp. 263-264.
- ¹² ANIC, fond CC al PCR/Cancelarie, dosar nr. 31/1968, f. 46.
- ¹³ C.P. Stacey, *Armes, hommes et gouvernements. Politiques de guerre de Canada, 1939-1945*, Ottawa, 1970, p. 227.
- ¹⁴ *Scântea*, no. 7635 from 7, March 1968.
- ¹⁵ *Ibidem*, no. 7637 from 9, March 1968.
- ¹⁶ *Ibidem*.
- ¹⁷ ANIC, fond CC al PCR/Cancelarie, dosar nr. 34/1968, ff. 2-14.
- ¹⁸ MKS, 288, fund 5, folder no. 449, ff. 3-12.
- ¹⁹ *Ceskoslovenske krize*, vol. 4/1, folder no. 13.
- ²⁰ "Which would be to their advantage", is stated later in Dubcek's report.
- ²¹ The accommodation of Czechoslovakia to the fractional practice, proposed by Ulbricht, turned against Czechoslovakia later on.
- ²² A. Ross Johnson, *op. cit*, p. 273.
- ²³ FRUS, vol. XVII, folder no. 159.
- ²⁴ Similar problems had occurred in 1965, when the Romanians wanted to buy technology from Firestone to produce synthetic rubber. At that time, the Firestone representatives stopped the negotiations because of a campaign organized against sales to Romania (16 April). Four days later, David Klein, from the National Security Council staff, presented a memo to McGeorge Bundy, the special assistant of the president for National Security. Several aspects should be noted: "It is increasingly clear that neither the Secretary of Commence nor Secretary Mann have looked carefully at the problems of Rumania to examine the characteristics which distinguish it from other Communist countries. The Firestone deal is over. But we may be able to save some of the political pieces. It is not clear at this juncture just how the Rumanians read the cancellation action. Bucharest sent in a cable this morning indicating that Vietnam has left the paged of the Rumanian papers - which could indicate that Rumanians consider the cancellation a reaction to their position on Vietnam" (*Ibidem*, folder no. 151).
- ²⁵ *Arhivele Militare Române*, fond Direcția Operații, dosar nr. 3, vol. I/1968, ff. 156-157.
- ²⁶ *Ceskoslovenské krize*, vol. 4/1, folder no. 25.
- ²⁷ *Ibidem*.
- ²⁸ Cosmin Popa's article, "Succes militar, eșec politic", în *Dosarele Istoriei*, nr. 5/1998, pp. 28-35, is illustrative regarding the Soviet decisions on the Czechoslovak problem.
- ²⁹ ANIC, fond CC al PCR/Cancelarie, dosar nr. 67/1968, ff. 142-144.
- ³⁰ *Ibidem*, ff. 143-144.
- ³¹ *Ceskoslovenské krize*, vol. 4/1, folder no. 25.
- ³² *Ibidem*, note 3.
- ³³ *Ibidem*.
- ³⁴ Smrkovsky's testimony is interesting in this respect, quoted from Giorni by *Dosarele istoriei*, nr. 5, 1998, pp. 23-27.
- ³⁵ AMAE, fond Telegramme Praga (march 1968), telegrama nr. 77203/23 March.
- ³⁶ These aspects must be reconsidered when documents from the former Soviet Union are available.
- ³⁷ AMAE, fond Telegramme Praga (March 1968), telegrama nr. 77232/23 March.
- ³⁸ ANIC, fond CC al PCR/Cancelarie, dosar nr. 67/1968, f. 143.