

## ASPECTS OF ROMAN DIPLOMACY DURING THE COMMUNIST ERA

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**Abstract:** The study analyzes the evolution and importance of Romanian diplomacy during the Cold War.

The 1965-1989 period is marked by the intensity of technological progress known only to a part of the international world, plus the nuclear threats generated by the dispute between the United States and USSR, both intent of expanding their sphere of influence. Against the backdrop of the dynamics of international rivalries that saw a rapid and competitive increase in the arms race, Romania's foreign policy, based on economic cooperation and development, gained wide international recognition.

**Keywords:** communism, Romanian diplomacy, Cold War, negotiations, political ideology.

The prestige of the Romanian policy in the friendship and partnership relations with other states was manifested by the support and promotion of the principles of international law. In general, the diplomatic conventions signed by the Romanian side were based on the following: respecting the independence and sovereignty of all states, accepting equality of rights, territorial integrity and non-interference in the affairs of other states, mutual benefit, and respecting the right of every nation to choose the way of development<sup>1</sup>.

From an economic point of view, Romania was considered a developing country, a position from which it has requested and received from UN technical assistance provided to countries in this category. Moreover, by granting the „most favored nation clause” by the United States of America, Romania has obtained a number of advantages, materialized in loans and commercial benefits.

The encouragement of national liberation movements by accepting their representatives in Bucharest and supporting the economic and social progress of the new independent states through diplomatic efforts at the UN headquarters in New York or in the capitals of Washington, Moscow, Beijing or Paris generated a

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<sup>1</sup> Monitorul Oficial al României, *Declarația solemnă comună a Republicii Socialiste România și a Republicii Guineea-Bissau*, 16 aprilie 1976.

series of bilateral collaborations established at embassy level. Until 1968, as mentioned by the diplomat Marcel Dinu, former MFA director during the communist era, were recorded about 5-6 bilateral agreements per year, most of them focusing on cooperation with Asian states, including India and Iran. On the external side, the Romanian policy will tend to depart from the directives imposed by Moscow, especially after Nicolae Ceaușescu took over power, a fact noted as well in his public discourse condemning the Soviet invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia from the night of 20-21 August, 1968. The more prominent opposition of our country than that of the democratic countries, which were limited to a simple critique of the invasion, strengthened Romania's respect in the West. This appreciation led to new orientation of the Romanian foreign policy and the expansion of relations with developing countries, reflected in the rapid growth of bilateral diplomatic relations to 10-12 per year<sup>2</sup>. In fact, Ceaușescu continued his policy of independence in relation to the Soviet authority, launched by Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej in the 1960s against the backdrop of the Sino-Soviet polemics and the tension created by the location of Soviet missiles in Cuba.

One of the key issues for international political activity was the negative effects of the arming race, a context in which a new world war had to be avoided. The most critical moment when the world was on the brink of a nuclear confrontation began on October 14, 1962, due to the placement of Soviet strategic weapons in Cuba. No one wanted a war of this magnitude, but each party involved in the conflict was interested in gaining an advantage. Given that US threats to Cuba and the USSR became visible through the establishment of maritime blockades, after long negotiations, a compromise of acceptance of the Soviet proposal was reached, considering that they were planning to invade the GDR. Negotiations on the withdrawal of Soviet nuclear missiles from Cuba have resulted not only in ensuring that Cuba will not be invaded but also in the dismantling of US military bases in Turkey. The political crisis could be resolved much faster, but due to the difficult and interpretable communication between Kennedy and Khrushchev, the strain spread to 38 days. To avoid such uncontrollable events, it was decided to create a direct telephone line between the two presidential residences<sup>3</sup>.

After this crisis, a period of detente followed, where treaties and agreements were signed to limit and prevent the confrontation between capitalism and communism, a dispute that divided the world into two ideological camps. Through the United Nations, together with the great powers, small and medium-sized states have had the opportunity to express their views on the evolution of international relations.

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<sup>2</sup> Marcel Dinu, *Unele considerente referitoare la extinderea relațiilor României cu statele din Africa, Asia, America Latină și Orientul Mijlociu în a doua jumătate a secolului XX*, Institutul Român de Studii Euro-Asiatice, available at <http://www.irsea.ro/Rela-355-ii-externe-secolul-XX/>.

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas R. Miller, *The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Political Analysis*, Political Science, University of California Berkeley, 1964, pp. 12-27.

### **The role of Romanian diplomacy**

The political events of the 1960s also had an impact on Romania, which wanted a climate of peace and security in the region. Since 1964, the regime led by Gheorghiu Dej has chosen to change its foreign policy trajectory towards the West, claiming publicly that national interest is a priority over that of the Soviet Union.

In many situations, Romanian diplomacy played a double role. On the external side, national interest had priority, but fidelity to the Kremlin had to be shown, as a result of the withdrawal of Russian troops from Romania in 1958. In March 1964, a Romanian delegation, including Ceaușescu, went to China to mediate Soviet-Chinese ideological divergences. From the accounts of the former Prime Minister Gheorghe Maurer, the main objective was to convince the leaders of China that “Romania is closer to their point of view of Marxism than that of the Soviets”. Ceaușescu was bolder during the talks, first he criticized both conflicting camps, then proposed a pact. Returning to the true purpose of the diplomatic mission, he has assured the Chinese leaders that Romania also supports the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and agrees with them that the relations between the socialist countries must be based on the principle of equality and non-interference in internal affairs<sup>4</sup>. Practically, based on this principle, the Romanian diplomacy sought to impose its views both in the CAER economic organization and in the framework of the Warsaw Treaty.

The statement that any state has the right to promote its external interests, without overlooking the interests of the socialist community, but also the insistence of Romanian diplomacy in developing its own projects, disturbed Moscow and placed Romania in opposition to the other States within the alliance<sup>5</sup>. The attempt of the new Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev, to reform the communist alliance by transforming the Warsaw Treaty Advisory Political Committee into a decision-making body on foreign policy issues of the Member States, was not agreed by Romania. A common command system meant a massive presence of the Soviets in the internal governing structures of the states, which disturbed Ceaușescu. He had become the new leader of Romania and could not compromise the diplomatic relations he had begun with the Western powers. During the negotiations held in Bucharest in July 1966, it was discussed the functioning of the Warsaw Treaty. Without a consensus on reforming the alliance, the stormy debates have ended in favor of the Romanian government, by signing a protocol with the delegations of the USSR, Poland and East Germany. The document expresses Romania's point of view on European security issues: promoting cooperation and good neighborly relations

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<sup>4</sup> Lavinia Betea, *Maurer și lumea de ieri: mărturii despre stalinizarea României*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Publishing, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> See the memoirs of the former Romanian ambassador, Valentin Lipatti, *În tranșeele Europei. Amintirile unui negociator*, Bucharest, Military Publishing, 1993.

with all European states, withdrawing foreign troops from the territories of European states, inviolability of frontiers, giving up the division of Europe into military blocs<sup>6</sup>.

Although there were no presidential visits between Israel and Romania, relations between the two nations, which were part of hostile camps, represented an exception for the Romanian state. In the six-day war in June 1967, ended with the Jews' victory over the Arab coalition of Syria, Egypt and Jordan, the Romanian diplomacy refused to sign the Moscow Declaration condemning Israel as the sole aggressor. Because of hostile attitudes, the Romanian delegation was not invited to the July 1967 Conference in Budapest, where the Socialist states debated the Middle East issue. In this situation, Romania has seen itself marginalized by its own allies. The scarcity in the six-day war is explained by the large number of Jews in our country and their gradual emigration to Israel, which has customized the bilateral ties between the two states. By maintaining friendly relations with all combatants of war, Ceaușescu's prestige on the international stage is growing. Romanian ambassadors also played an important role in the acquisition of image capital, and they were trained to send similar messages to counterparts in the West, the USA and the United Kingdom, regarding the anti-Soviet attitude of Romania<sup>7</sup>.

Distancing from Moscow's policy, through formal or informal actions, has led to the improvement of Romanian-American relations. The two heads of state met in Bucharest in August 1969, then followed Ceaușescu's visit to the US in October 1970, following which the Romanian leader was appreciated for the intelligence and courage to face Moscow. The meetings with Nixon were not just co-operation between states, the main objective of the Americans was to strengthen their geostrategic position, while Romania sought to obtain commercial facilities and economic independence in relation to the Soviet Union.

The debut of the 1970<sup>s</sup> led to a re-evaluation of bipolar international relations. The Americans realized that their domination compared with Soviet influence in the communist countries had come to a strong deadlock with the economic power growth of Western Europe and Japan. The emergence of a multi-polar world order has led to major changes in the thinking of the diplomatic act and the negotiations on the international arena. As the US capabilities were declining, appeared the Nixon doctrine that underpinned the international relations of America's NATO allies. This was a statement by which the US tried to harmonize its global interests and commitments, moving from its supreme position to partnership, in order to limit the burden of US aid and assistance programs. The reduction of obligations came in the context in which the resources allocated to foreign policy were decreasing. This was due to the Vietnamese issues encouraged

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<sup>6</sup> Mioara Anton, *Documente diplomatice române. Seria III. România și Tratatul de la Varșovia. Conferințele miniștrilor Afacerilor Externe și ale adjuncților lor (1966-1991)*, Bucharest, Alpha MDN Publishing, 2009, pp. 12-17.

<sup>7</sup> For details, see Silke Kelner, *Ceaușescu and the Six-Day War: The View from Washington and London*, available at [www.wilsoncenter.org](http://www.wilsoncenter.org).

by the USSR, which put increasing pressure on the defense budget. Nixon had two options to leave the impression that US power is shrinking and the opponent might think he might become stronger, or maintain the (fragile) supremacy and draw new conflicts with the USSR<sup>8</sup>. The political strategy aimed at strengthening diplomatic relations, the gradual withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, and the creation of a peace structure with the USSR and China have contributed to the success of the period of detente that led to the end of the Cold War.

Romanian diplomacy has played an important role in mediating relations between the US and China, although there is talk of Pakistani involvement. It is, however, considered that Ceaușescu was the main carrier of messages in both directions in the 1970-1971, as proof of the friendly relations with the Chinese people and the meeting with President Mao in June 1971. It should then be remembered that among all American leaders, Nixon was Ceaușescu's favorite. The result of the mediators had a major impact on international public opinion due to President Nixon's visit to China in February 1972 and the signing of the Shanghai Treaty establishing the framework for Sino-US relations<sup>9</sup>. However, diplomatic relations at the embassy level came much later due to the scandal in the Watergate affair that led to the resignation of President Nixon. Analysts believe the US President's eight-day historic visit and the tightening of turbulent relations created by the dispute over Taiwan's status strengthened America's image of the world leader and helped China become an integral part of the world's economy today<sup>10</sup>.

The Romanian-Chinese relations intensified even further by bringing both states closer together, who were the main enemy of the USSR. The results of the Chinese Cultural Revolution as well as the mega-festivities and shows Ceaușescu has met in China and North Korea seem to have had the greatest influence in changing the domestic political directives in Bucharest<sup>11</sup>. In the early years of the Ceaușescu regime, politics was characterized by de-Sovietization and relative liberalization, which led to the improvement of the Romanians' life. After returning from the Asian tour in June 1971, Ceaușescu adopted a neo-Stalinist policy of control over all activities, the opponents were systematically removed by loss of office or exclusion from the party, and the population underwent an ideological process imposed by political authoritarianism<sup>12</sup>.

Throughout the period that followed, foreign policy was in contradiction with the internal one. Ceaușescu tried to make known Romania's fame abroad, while

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<sup>8</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976*, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969-1972, Washington, Government Printing Office, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Diplomația*, Bucharest, ALL Publishing, 2007, p. 70.

<sup>10</sup> Bobby Aiyer, *Documentary: The Awakening of the Sleeping Giant*, National History, 13 jun 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Adam Burakowski, *Dictatura lui Nicolae Ceaușescu 1965–1989. Geniul Carpaților*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Iași, Polirom Publishing, 2016, pp. 150-152.

<sup>12</sup> Comisia prezidențială pentru analiza dictaturii comuniste din România, *Raport final*, Bucharest, 2006.

Romanians had restrictions on free movement outside the country. Generally speaking, on the international political scene, the leader declared himself a reformer and supporter of progress and well-being. An example of this is Ceaușescu's speech at the European Conference, broadcast at the time by the only television station that had become a Ceaușescu propaganda provider. At the beginning of the message to the Heads of State, the President of Romania stated that we can not talk about freedom, equality and democracy without ensuring the necessary material conditions, drawing attention that the form of democracy in our country is much superior to that of the previous speakers<sup>13</sup>. The reality in Romania was totally opposed, even if the leader was always addressing the people with the same guiding ideas (eg advancing to new heights of civilization and progress), people only lived with the illusion of an improvement in living standards.

The change of the US presidential administration has somehow confused Ceaușescu's plans based on Nixon's promise to grant the Most Favored Nation clause, for which it has resumed talks in this regard. After many years, the US State Department released a series of documents from which we found out how this commercial status was achieved. In the bilateral talks held in Bucharest in November 1974 between Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and President Ceaușescu, the US delegation agreed with the Romanian partners' demands on trade and the award of the clause, requesting the granting of the right to emigration to families in Romania who had relatives in America, and for Romanians with dual citizenship (Jews). The Romanian President has promised to pay more attention to this issue and, in the aftermath of the talks, has called for long-term cooperation in the technical and scientific field, recalling that such agreements exist with all Western European partners.

The need for loans to help the development of Romanian agriculture and industry was another important topic of the debates, in which Ceaușescu assured that the advantages would be in favor of both countries, and Romania would not remain owed. In the field of foreign affairs, Kissinger was informed that our country has good relations with almost all Latin American states. Regarding the situation in Europe, Ceaușescu insisted on the need to reduce military troops, but also on signing a peace treaty that never existed since the end of the world war. Drawing attention to the fact that life in the region took place under the Potsdam ceasefire, the president demanded the cancellation of the act to eliminate the traces of the war and the withdrawal of the armed forces from the territories of other states<sup>14</sup>.

On 11 June 1975, following a trip to Latin America, the President of Romania paid a visit to the US to be sure of the implementation of the trade agreement between the two countries. The talks with President Gerald Ford

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<sup>13</sup> The speech appears in Nicolae Ceausescu's Autobiography, Andrei Ujică (filmmaker), 2010.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of State, Documents on Eastern Europe, Foreign Relations of the United States 1969-1976, *Memorandum of Conversation*, Bucharest, Volume E – 15, Part. 1, November 3, 1974, Washington, Government Printing Office, 2010, available at <https://history.state.gov>.

covered bilateral economic relations, CSCE, the Middle East, Korea, Spain, and disarmament. Although the economic collaborations of recent years have been appreciated, the US president has demanded in return for granting the most favored nation clause, evidence that there is an increase in emigration in Israel and the United States. Ceaușescu assured that there were no problems with emigration, but he rejected the American proposal on the adoption by congressmen of an amendment that would allow free immigration to Romania, noting that he was not interested. The proposal for free immigration probably came in the context in which it was known that emigration from our country had turned into a business. Having been asked for his opinion on the prospects of the CSCE, the Romanian president considered that the results of the conference should strengthen confidence and relaxation. In this regard, he stressed the need for firm commitments by states to renounce force and interference in the internal affairs of other states, as well as military agreements between states that are binding and not voluntary. Believing that internationally gained success brings new benefits, Ceaușescu proposed to the American counterpart that this body be headed in turn by several Member States, mentioning the US, Romania and of course not forgetting the USSR alliance partner, but the idea was not agreed<sup>15</sup>.

In order to gain access to the Middle East and African markets, Ceaușescu had to first strain relations with the Muslim world, disturbed that Romania did not condemn Israel for the six-day war. A first step in this direction was the support of the Palestinian cause and the closeness to EPO President Yasser Arafat that he met in Africa. For the formation of an independent state, Ceaușescu proposed that the Palestinians first obtain, through negotiations, a territory to strengthen their institutions. It is well known that, following UN requests, Romania has sent material aid and medicines to Palestinian refugees. The trip to Africa, scheduled in March 1972, lasted for about a month, during which Ceaușescu met with heads of state, visited economic objectives and brokered signing commercial contracts. In this African tour, he also met with the leaders of other national liberation movements that he encouraged. As former Foreign Minister Stefan Andrei confessed in the media interviews, besides the fact that Romania supported the protesters' claims, even some actions of Nelson Mandela's movement in the fight against apartheid were financed.

The shock in diplomatic relations came after the Jews' victory in front of the Arab coalition, when OPEC<sup>16</sup> member countries decided to put an embargo on oil supplies for the countries that supported Israel.

The effects of the "oil crisis" were felt most in the US, Western Europe and Japan. This situation meant for the President of Romania a new opportunity to climb into the world leadership hierarchy. Solving Middle Eastern issues has

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<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, *Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, June 11, 1975*, Washington, Government Printing Office, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries of which Egypt and Syria participated.

become a priority for Romanian diplomacy. A first step in this direction was the meeting between Ceaușescu and Begin (Prime Minister of Israel) in August 1977 in Bucharest. The translator of the conversation, of Jewish origin, said in an interview that the official representatives of Romania came very often to Israel to discuss the conflict with the Egyptians. Although the Romanian president, seen as a trained man and much better informed than other heads of state, has mediated the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt, for many years this aspect has been kept secret. The intensification of the contacts with the Arab world and the important role of the Romanian diplomacy in mediating tensions in the Middle East meant another success in front of the great powers and the economic and political advantages were not delayed for Romania<sup>17</sup>. Initially, under the aegis of the United Nations, there have been negotiations between Israeli and all neighboring Arab states, and then the US State Department has considered that peace can only be achieved if Israel negotiates separately with each country. Thus, after six years of negotiations in the UN, with the involvement of Romania and Mexico, but also through secret services, the Israeli-Egyptian Agreements at Camp David in 1978<sup>18</sup> were reached. Partial peace agreements were the beginning of a long process of negotiations that continues today.

The Carter Administration has appreciated Romania's role internationally, but considered it necessary to redefine the relations of the two states. Prior to meeting with the Romanian leader, President Jimmy Carter was interested in knowing the situation in Romania. The report mentioned the following internal aspects<sup>19</sup>:

- ✓ Ceaușescu runs a very centralized energy system;
- ✓ The main objectives of the policy are to maintain economic independence towards the Soviet Union and to achieve a competitive industry as quickly as possible;
- ✓ There is no known political opposition, and the regime, which includes several Ceaușescu relatives, is stable;
- ✓ The population is under control and there is some freedom of expression;
- ✓ Although there is discontent among workers, intellectuals and minorities (Hungarians) there are no indications that would endanger the existence of the regime in the coming years;
- ✓ Although Romania has established political and trade relations with many countries to become a strong and independent state in relation to the Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact is considered a weak link because it has a limited loyalty to its allies and does not have a well trained army;
- ✓ Ceaușescu is a good tactician in solving difficult problems and has good health;

<sup>17</sup> Lavinia Betea, *Ceaușescu – mediator în Orientul Mijlociu*, in "Jurnalul Național" paper, 23 May 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Diplomația*, Bucharest, All Publishing, 2000, p. 630.

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Department of State, Intelligence Information Cable, National Archives, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, March 31, 1978.



✓ The leader confuses the international world with impressive statistics in terms of population, although Romania has the poorest Eastern European nation after Albania;

✓ Forced industrialization has created a labor shortage and has transformed Romania from the producer into a net importer of energy, as also observed in the resource constraints;

✓ The management recognizes that there are problems, but considers decentralization measures and new reforms that do not seem to be achieved soon;

✓ Exist certain standards of good living, free education, cheap medical and social services, but there is a lack of basic food, although Romania is a net exporter of food;

✓ The regime boasts the great economic achievements presented by the media, while the population still expects to benefit from these improvements through salary increases that would improve living standards;

✓ Ceaușescu may be forced to reorganize his priorities in order to avoid violence before entering the developed countries;

✓ Romania is considered the most totalitarian state in Eastern Europe, and reduced dissent is explained by the fear of the efficiency of the security organs.

The report also presents Romania's foreign policy. For the most part, it is known only the active role of the Romanian diplomacy at the international level and the contribution to establishing the American-Chinese ties.

Besides the fact that on the table of talks is trying to conceal the internal problems by attracting attention to the problems of other countries, it is also mentioned the African countries' dissatisfaction with the poor quality products received from Romania.

The meeting between Ceaușescu and Carter took place in Washington on April 12, 1978. Officially, there were talks about the situation in Israel, the Palestinian issue, and other international policy issues where the Romanian president expressed his views. Discussions between the two chiefs continued on the second day in private. One of the subjects was the most favored-nation status. It has been appreciated that Bucharest must continue to benefit from economic and diplomatic support in order to maintain its foreign policy independence, but at the same time the US must have a guarantee that human rights in Romania are respected<sup>20</sup>. After this visit, Romania's relations with the US are experiencing some tensions in the event of extradition to Pacepa, and Foreign Minister Stefan Andrei will try to resolve them, as evidenced by the declassified documents.

### **International relations between 1980 and 1989**

The debut of the 1980s marks the first riots against communist ideology. The emergence of the "Solidarity" trade union organization in Poland will mark the

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<sup>20</sup> Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980, Volume XX, Memorandum of Conversation 200, Washington, April 12, Memorandum of Conversation 203, Washington, April 13, 1978.

beginning of the social revolution. Initially, the organization was a union of unions, formed following a mass protest at the Gdansk shipyard, against the dismissal of a union member. Due to the wave of dissatisfaction that had swept across the country, after the announcement of the rise in food prices, the authorities needed to accept the victory of Solidarity, which became the first independent trade union in the Communist bloc. Later, this organization turned into a national liberation movement that was seen as a hope in the fight against communism and Soviet domination. Although it was banned in the following year, the organization's activity went on in secret until 1989, when the government, under the pressure of a new wave of strikes, agreed to legitimize Solidarity and allow it to participate to free elections<sup>21</sup>.

Economic and social problems in the country have led Ceaușescu to ensure that riots will not occur in Romania as well. In this respect, it will ask Moscow, although many years have not paid attention to it, to organize a conference of Communist parties in order to adopt a unique position condemning the movement of Polish workers. This, in fact, was the beginning of Romania's rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the isolation of the Romanian leader externally.

New issues have begun to emerge in US relations in 1980. The Americans have questioned whether the World Bank may grant a loan to Romania as human rights are not being respected<sup>22</sup>. Relations with other countries have had a normal course, being based more on trade.

After almost two decades in which Romania struggled to gain its autonomy in relation to the Soviet Union, in 1983 Ceaușescu decided to join the "Brezhnev Doctrine". The new political orientation has further affected the life of Romania, where everything was under control, and the consumption of the population had to adapt to the Ceaușescu directives on rational nutrition. The Voices of America and Free Europe radio stations, secretly listened to by the Romanians, were considered the only real sources of information that increasingly presented problems in the communist states. Gradually, with the Romanian leader, the image of the country internationally begins to enter into a process of isolation.

The main personalities that spurred international relations and diplomacy at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were presidents Mihail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan.

Came to power in 1985, the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev introduced a comprehensive restructuring and reform program (glasnost and perestroika) that put the states in the communist bloc in difficulty. In May 1986, Ceaușescu signed an economic, technological and scientific collaboration agreement<sup>23</sup>, with Gorbachev.

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<sup>21</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Article History, Michael Ray, Polish Solidarność, Officially Independent Self-Governing Trade Union, 2009, available at <https://www.britannica.com>.

<sup>22</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980*, Volume XX, *Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (Derian) and the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Holmes) to the Deputy Secretary of State*, Washington, December 18, 1980.

<sup>23</sup> Vlad Georgescu, *Istoria Românilor. De la origini până în zilele noastre*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing, 1992, p. 308.

Although he understood what the reformist current in Moscow meant, Ceaușescu did not want to give up the principles on which he built a “neo-Stalist, megalomaniacal and corrupt dictatorship” as a former KGB officer had noticed. Although the Kremlin had announced that it was giving up the Brezhnev Doctrine, precisely Ceaușescu who had fought it in 1968, when the Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia, this time asked the Consultative Political Council that based on it, Member States put an end to the reforms in Poland where the first free elections took place<sup>24</sup>. While the fame of the Bucharest leader lost its value, Gorbachev’s popularity was on the rise. The echo of the new reforms has generated widespread movements in almost all communist countries.

The first anti-communist demonstration in Romania was triggered by the workers in Brasov in November 1987, but the rapid repression made a large part of the population find out much later. The US administration again draws attention to human rights in Romania and warns Bucharest with the withdrawal of the most favored nation clause. If internally cold and lack of basic food affect the whole country, the isolation of the Ceaușist regime became total after the loss of the clause<sup>25</sup> in 1988. Conscious that things were too complicated and had no reason to convince the United States Congress, Ceaușescu decided to give up the clause before being withdrawn, arguing that the US has been arbitrarily and unacceptably involved in Romania's domestic politics<sup>26</sup>.

The year 1989 meant for the international world the collapse of communism in Europe and the end of the Cold War. The Kremlin’s announcement that it will not use military force to support communist regimes has further encouraged revolutionary movements. Hungary has benefited from a peaceful process of regime change. The immense events in the GDR led to Honeker’s resignation and the unification of Germany by the fall of the Berlin Wall. In Czechoslovakia, the general strike has prompted the Communist Party to abandon power. Bulgarian President Todor Jivkov was dismissed following a coup d’état.

The events in Europe have led Ceaușescu to find understanding in Gorbachev. In the dialogue between the two heads of state, the leader in Bucharest tried to convince his counterpart of the role of the Soviet Communist Party, which should be involved in the problems of the socialist states to stop the collapse of communism. In economic matters, Ceaușescu insisted on working with the Soviet Union. At the same time, he said that Romania has paid off its \$ 11 million debt accumulated in 1980 and currently has \$ 2.7 million in cash from developing countries. Moreover, our country would have properties in the US where it invested \$ 100 million<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Ion Bucur, *Cartea represiunii 1989*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Bucharest, IRRD Publishing, 2014, pp. 16-17.

<sup>25</sup> Jean Scurtu, *Structuri politice în Europa Centrală și de Sud-Est (1918-2001)*, Vol. I, Bucharest, Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, 2003, p. 257.

<sup>26</sup> Roger Kirk, Mircea Răceanu, *Romania versus the United States: Diplomacy of the Absurd 1985-1989*, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University 1994, pp. 167-186.

<sup>27</sup> Lavinia Betea, *Ultima întâlnire dintre Nicolae Ceaușescu și Mihail Gorbaciov, 4 decembrie 1989. Stenograma întâlnirii cu Gorbaciov*, in “Jurnalul Național” paper, 10 decembrie 2008.

Ceașescu's last action on the international stage has been the long interpreted visit to Iran at the very beginning of events in Timisoara, which led to the collapse of the regime. From the companions' declarations we find that it was an ordinary visit scheduled a long time ago. Discussions focused on the Romanian-Iranian economic cooperation and aspects of the international political situation. In the second round of official talks, the Iranian president did not pay attention to bilateral relations and asked to be informed of the bloody events in Timisoara. At Ceașescu's departure, although he denied what happened, some of the foreign ambassadors accredited to Tehran, in protest, refused to comply with the protocol to come to the airport<sup>28</sup>.

Although he has managed and solved many external problems, the failure to understand the pain of his own people has brought him to an end. The steps towards achieving a developed state have led to some economic independence from the Soviets. Romanian diplomacy successfully represented Romania's interests, but the image of the country and the fame of the external leader were based on the sacrifice of the obedient people. The strong industrialization and agricultural investment results contributed to the payment of Romania's external debt, but the mistaken mentality and lack of reforms of the centralized politico-economic system led to a decline in the standard of living of the population. From the American declassified documents, we notice that Ceașescu was more proficient at the external level, but in domestic politics he failed to raise Romania on new heights of civilization and progress, as he hoped through the speeches addressed to the people. The social problems in the country may not have been sufficiently known or represented the importance of international life for which it was much better informed. His interest in foreign policy issues and his ability to solve them even determines the world's leading leaders to ask for his opinion.

In general, any success of the Romanian diplomacy has only reported the personality of Nicolae Ceașescu, who successively assigned the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Government, in order to be recognized as a world leader. Although he attracted the sympathy of many heads of state and was appreciated as a good diplomat because of his role in peace talks and the preservation of friendly relations with all countries, the Bucharest leader failed to fully break off from Moscow. Failure to respect human rights was the main cause that has eroded its international fame. The policy of the regime was more autonomous than the "imperialist mentality". True economic and social independence can be said to have been won by the Romanian people through the rebellion against communism in the winter of 1989.

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<sup>28</sup> Vasile Surcel, *Ultima excursie în Iran a lui Nicolae Ceașescu*, in "Jurnalul Național" paper, 18 noiembrie 2009.