

# HISTORICAL SCIENCES

## ROMANIA AND HUNGARY IN THE CONTEXT OF 1989

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### Abstract

The article below tackles the relations between Hungary and Romania in the context of the internal and external political developments of the two states during 1989. An old and historical rivalry regarding the historical ownership over Transylvania, taking a turn for the worse after 1918 and especially after 1945, would influence the relations between Budapest and Bucharest despite the fact that both states embraced the same ideology and social-economic development model. The very good relations between the leaders in Budapest and those in the Kremlin, especially after 1956, would serve to uphold Hungary's increasingly belligerent attitude towards Romania, having as a pretext the situation of the Hungarian minority in Romania. Hungary tried to take advantage of certain mechanisms of the Warsaw Treaty in order to internationalise this issue regarding the Hungarian minority, while the political regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu became increasingly isolated within the international relations arena. Nicolae Ceaușescu rejected any formula for reforming Romanian political and economic life and accused Hungary of taking part in an effort to destabilise socialist Romania through the help of intelligence and security services in partnership with the Soviets. The article tackles the various forms of Hungarian political-diplomatic involvement that ultimately led to the reaction of the regime in Bucharest, as well as the concern affecting the power structures (Securitate, Militia, Army) and the Romanian Communist Party regarding a potential uprising of the Hungarian minority together with a huge majority of the Romanian population, and more, which had become increasingly hostile towards the type of socialism promoted by Nicolae Ceaușescu.

**Keywords:** Ungaria, Ceaușescu, România, 1989, Kremlin

### Introduction

As the Soviet "new political thinking" in terms of international relations was implemented, socialist Romania fell into a complete silence where only the voices that could be heard were those of the PCR secretary general and of the semi-official sources of propaganda, "Scânteia" and "România Liberă" respectively. The hope for a political evolution that favoured the processes of *perestroika* and *glasnost* had dissipated, especially after the 14th Congress of the PCR, and the possibility of involving the power structures (the Army, the Ministry of the Interior and the Department of State Security/DSS) into overthrowing the Ceaușescu regime had become a dream that would likely never come to pass. In Hungary, on June 16, 1989, 200,000 people witnessed the reburial of Imre Nagy and other victims of the 1956 events in a cemetery on the outskirts of Budapest. Referencing this moment, Traian Pop, the Romanian ambassador in Budapest, recorded that: "**The day of June 16, 1989 can be deemed Hungary's peak moment in its process of breaking down the socialist order**" [1, p. 112].

Starting with the summer of 1989, Hungary had begun to further its own agenda within the Warsaw Treaty, using the issue of human rights and of the rights of other minorities, with the aim of enforcing its own interests and a privileged authority over the Romanian territory. The Budapest government insisted on "**coordinating the progress**" of a new *Warsaw Pact Special Committee for Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues*. Given the special relations between Moscow și Budapest, amplified by János Kádár's personality, the officials in Budapest recommended the establishment of these new bodies and the rollout of certain "**common**

**obligations**" concerning the rights of minorities, during the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty in July 1989, with the hope of a failure that could be ascribed to "**Romania's firm positions in terms of human and minority rights, and ensuring that the international public was informed via the appropriate channels**" [2, p. 603].

One of the relevant aspects for these "special" relations is provided by the ceremony of November 7, 1987, celebrating 70 years since the start and unfolding of the Great Socialist Revolution of October 1917 in Russia. In Budapest, wreath-laying ceremonies were organized at the statue of V. I. Lenin, in the City Dumbrava (Varosliget), at the Soviet Soldier Monument, on Gellért Hill, followed by a festive evening at the Hungarian National Opera. Many Hungarian party and state leaders attended the reception organized by the USSR Embassy in Budapest.

Moreover, Hungary had authorized the *Radio Free Europe* station to establish an office in Budapest, therefore, on October 13, 1989, the Bucharest Department of State Security (DSS) reported that the American specialised bodies anticipated that the Radio Free Europe station would only serve to enhance their espionage, diversion activities, as well as further their ideological propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Romania. At the same time, Nicolae Ceaușescu was being informed that the American specialised bodies continued to put forward versions according to which Romania would become the target of military incursions from their neighbours, given that the Hungarians stressed that the units deployed on the Debrecen airfield, considered as a shield between Hungary and Romania, should be withdrawn.

*Romanian-Hungarian Relations Become Extremely Tense*

The DSS was on full alert considering the Hungary's political and diplomatic game, which displayed, once again, its revisionist intentions, given the changes occurring in the Eastern European space in the summer - autumn of 1989. **"The information skills of Directorate I in the issue of revisionist actions made enabled the identification of the reconfiguration of risks of this kind from on Hungary's part, with the revisionist-irredentist circles in this country striving to include the issue of Transylvania into the equation of the inevitable political changes in Romania"** [3, p. 19], said Brigadier General (r) Vasile Măureanu of the former DSS.

The number of people who sought political asylum in Hungary increased from 6,500 in 1987 to 15,000 in 1988, while 1,700 people were recorded in 1985, and 3,300 were recorded in 1986, respectively. In 1988, a number of 13,400 Romanian citizens received temporary residence permits in Hungary, of which only 8% were Romanians, the rest being Hungarians from Transylvania. In August 1989, a number of 25,000 people had taken refuge in Hungary, of which 25% were Romanians, and a number of 5,000 people had taken refuge in Yugoslavia between January and May 1989. After Hungary signed the United Nations Refugee Convention in March 1989, only 29 asylum seekers were sent back in July 1989, compared to the 1,650 refugees sent back in 1988. According to official data, a number of 24,000 Romanian citizens were living in Hungary in November 1989, one sixth of them being ethnic Romanians.

In August 1988, Hungarian television invited as a guest on a show Vladimir Petrovski, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, and historian Roy Medvedev, in order to discuss on the need for territorial autonomy for the ethnic Hungarians residing in Transylvania. The senior Soviet diplomat underlined similarities between the Romanian-Hungarian tensions and the issue of nationalities in Transylvania with the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, while Roy Medvedev criticized the Ceaușescu regime for **"acts of repression against the Hungarian minority"** and demanded the re-establishment of the **"autonomous region of Transylvania"**. Encouraged by these statements, the political leaders in Budapest moved to a permanent reiteration of their demand for Transylvanian autonomy.

In July 1989, Mátyás Szűrös, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Workers' Party of Hungary (PMSU) responsible for international issues and later President of the Hungarian Parliament during the second part of 1989, went on to tell a journalist from *Radio Free Europe* that **"the best solution for the issue (of Transylvania - n. n.) would have been for Transylvania to be granted "autonomy" after the Second World War"** [2, p. 621]. The Hungarian political and state official stated quite clearly that: **"We must do everything within our power to protect the equal rights of the Hungarian national minorities in**

**Transylvania... In actuality, Hungary does not harbour any genuine irredentist or revisionist tendencies"** [2, p. 621].

Following the hostile statements made by party and state officials in Budapest, Hungary's Ministry of Defence redrafted the new Hungarian military strategy so that, as a *Radio Free Europe* analyst noted, Budapest imposed the redeployment of troops from the Austrian border to the Romanian border, troops that for four decades had been stationed on the Austrian border, to the West, towards the south-eastern region. It worth mentioning that, in early July 1989, a Hungarian army officer told the media that Hungary was no longer able to meet the military requirements of the Warsaw Treaty as all defence investment had been ceased. No new planes had been purchased, and the tanks that had to be replaced ten years ago were still in service. Certain observers of the Hungarian military phenomenon had mentioned that Hungary's armed forces had to be reduced by 30-40% if a balance between performance and efficiency was to be maintained. In January 1989, Hungary announced that it was scheduled to perform a 8.8% reduction of its armed forces over the next two years.

Moreover, on June 14, 1989, Csaba Tabajdi, the deputy of the leading party relations division within the International Department of the PMSU, would go on to state for the Italian newspaper *La Stampa* that **"the vast majority of Hungarians know that an attack will not come from the west, but from the south-east"** [2, p. 623], meaning from socialist Romania. On June 26, 1989, his colleague from the International Department of the PMSU, Geza Kotai, went on to state for *Radio Budapest* that **"Tabajdi had ally made a «tactical error» when speaking about such issues occurring abroad"** [2, p. 623]. After a careful analysis, the Documentation Service of Radio Free Europe stated that the Romanian threat to Hungary was practically non-existent, so the statements made by the Budapest officials can be considered as part of a political game.

Everything was related to the diplomatic failures between Hungary and Romania on July 8, 1989 in Bucharest, therefore, the Hungarian Foreign Minister Gyula Horn chose to join the voices that claimed a potential military, or even nuclear threat from Romania against Hungary was on the cards. During a press conference organised in Budapest on July 10, 1989, Gyula Horn showed his support for the idea that high-ranking Romanian officials had announced that Romania was capable of producing nuclear weapons and that Romania would soon be able to manufacture medium-range missiles. On August 28, 1988, during a meeting with Károly Grósz in Arad, Nicolae Ceaușescu boasted that Romania could produce or manufacture anything, even nuclear devices. On April 1989, Nicolae Ceaușescu had informed the Central Committee of the Socialist-Democratic Unity Front about the fact that **Romania has the "technological capacity" to manufacture nuclear weapons, but that it chose not to discontinue its research in the field because "we support the elimination of nuclear weapons from all states worldwide and we desire a world without weapons and wars"**

[4]. Analyst Douglas Clarke concluded that: **“It is possible that Horn's concern about the possible missile threat was based on an article published in the May 8, 1989 edition of the German weekly “Der Spiegel” which claimed that a plan to build medium-range nuclear missiles was underway in Romania, using designs provided by a West German company. No government or private agency has confirmed these assumptions, and even the Hungarian media provided a sceptical to the rumours”** [5, p. 2 - 3].

Historian and diplomat Alexandru Ghisa, cultural attaché at the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Romania in Budapest between 1987 and 1989, and later political advisor between 2000 and 2005, believes that: **“The Hungarian offensive against Romania was carried out during the 1987-1989 period on three planes: 1) a cultural and historical one, in order to prove that Transylvania belonged to the Hungarian space; 2) a “Refugee phenomenon”, which featured constant attacks against the state administration and Ceaușescu's dictatorship; 3) and support for the Hungarian community in Romania, invoking its deprivation of rights and freedoms”** [6, p. 276]. Addressing the “refugee” issue, diplomat Alexandru Ghisa claims that it is an emigration founded on economic, rather than political reasons. Many Hungarian citizens emigrated to the West, and their specialist positions in schools, hospitals, universities, etc. were taken over by other specialists, mainly Romanian citizens of Hungarian ethnicity, who were integrated into the Hungarian society. In 1987, Hungary recorded 9,000 refugees, a number rising to 36,000 Romanian citizens in 1990, therefore, *“notwithstanding the dramatic situation faced by many of them, they made up an easily manoeuvrable crowd for propaganda purposes”* [6, p. 278].

The largest anti-Romanian rally took place on June 27, 1988, in Budapest, when about 200,000 Hungarian citizens protested in front of the socialist Romanian Embassy against the Ceaușescu regime, but, but above all, for Transylvania, with **“all the revisionist propagandistic elements”** [6, p. 279] obviously being used with the consent of the Hungarian party and state leadership. In response, on June 28, 1988, Bucharest closed the Consulate General of Hungary in Cluj-Napoca by unilateral decision. The staff was to leave the building and the Romanian territory within 48 hours. The reason invoked by the regime in Bucharest was the “anti-Romanian”, “nationalist and chauvinist” rally in Budapest from the previous day, while the Central Committee of the PCR **“even considered the convenience of the RSR Embassy in Budapest”** [6, p. 280].

Moreover, the Soviet troops stationed in Hungary and the Hungarian troops began their redeployment from the western border with Austria to the eastern border with Romania, with the aim of creating a “zone of peace” with Austria. On April 25, 1989, Soviet troops in Hungary officially began their partial withdrawal from the Hungarian space in the presence of foreign journalists and Ilona Staller, the Hungarian-born representative of the Italian Parliament. In early July 1989, the Hungarian Minister of Defence, Ferenc Karpati, stated that the reports covering the redeployment of Soviet troops from the border with Austria to the border

“with Romania were unfounded **«scaremongering reports»**” [2, p. 641], overlooking the fact that a motorised rifle regiment had been redeployed only two weeks before from Szombathely, in the western half of Hungary, to Debrecen. The North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) had been notified that 62,000 Soviet soldiers were stationed within the Hungarian territory, but NATO officials believed the number of Soviet soldiers to be upwards of 65,000, and even 85,000, according to certain sources. On April 26, 2005, the Secretary General of the Warsaw Treaty, Soviet diplomat Ivan P. Aboimov, confirmed before a Russian journalist that **“Hungary wanted us to intervene in Romania, because it hoped that it would thus settle the issue of Transylvania”** [2, p. 642].

On December 20, 1989, Hungary's interim president, Mátyás Szűrös, stated in an interview for *Radio Budapest* that his country supported Transylvania's “autonomy” and “independence”. Speaking about the redeployment of Hungarian troops towards the Romanian border, Károly Grósz, the Prime Minister of Hungary and the leader of the PMSU, admitted, after December 22, 1989 that: **“At the time, our relations with Romania were extremely tense, due to the issues incurred by the Hungarians in Transylvania. As we had received nuclear threats from Ceaușescu, we ordered the transfer of troops from the Austrian border to the Romanian border. These troop movements were most likely interpreted as preparations for a military action by the Western intelligence services”** [2, p. 642]. On December 1, 1989, Hungarian Prime Minister Miklós Németh publicly announced that **“a considerable part of the armed forces will be redeployed from the western region of the country”** [2, p. 643] and that the troops will be transferred to the Romanian border.

In the context of the events and public statements within the Hungarian space, the information community of socialist Romania (DSS and the Army Information Directorate/DIA) started to worry about the turn that the events could take given the presence since the '80s of a Soviet broad-gauge railway in eastern Hungary, capable of fast deployment of military forces from the USSR directly at the Hungarian - Romanian border. Recalling those tense moments from the Romanian-Hungarian confrontation, Brigadier General (r) Vasile Mălureanu recorded: **„Beginning with 1987, the Hungarian authorities engaged in managing the phenomenon** (of refugees from Romania – n. n.). **At the «St. Stephen» Church in Budapest, reformed priest Nemeth Geza received Romanian defectors and directed them to camps specially organised in military establishments. After being questioned by the Hungarian authorities, they were sorted according based on professional training, and only those approved by the receiving countries were allowed to continue their journey towards the US and Canada. The rest were to remain at their disposal for special operations. In 1989, the number of defectors stationed in Hungary rose to approx. 6,000”** [3, p. 19 - 20].

Confronted with a wave of propaganda actions, public statements by Hungarian party and state leaders,

as well as political, diplomatic and military pressure, the DSS officers had noted with concern that even leaders of the World Union of Free Romanians (UMRL), especially Doru Novacovici and Sandu Pobereznic, had agreed to support the “*Free Romania*” organisation alongside officials from Budapest. Supported by Hungarian officials, UMRL would go on to establish camps for Romanian defectors on Hungarian territory, starting from 1988, given that Hungary had joined the Geneva Convention for refugees, which involved receiving subsidies from the UN Committee for Refugees. **“Information officers found it hard to figure out why the Western powers, especially the USA and France, found Hungary to be the perfect ally and partner against the Ceaușescu, especially taking into account that the mere presence of Hungary in this equation generated fears or at the very least question marks for all Romanians** [3, p. 22 - 23], wrote Brigadier General (r) Vasile Mălureanu.

#### *Information and Political and Diplomatic Strains*

In light of the refusal by the Ceaușescu to reform, even in the sense of the *perestroika* and *glasnost* ideas, and the DSS’ effort to prevent, by any means necessary, the establishment of a reformist wing within the PCR and, at the same time, of a genuine political opposition in Romanian society, we can understand why the Western chancelleries and their intelligence services made deals with the reforming and, at the same time, revisionist Hungary. It then becomes obvious from this perspective why President François Mitterrand and Chancellor Helmut Kohl decided, during their meeting of November 7, 1989, to boost the **“enforcement of measures prepared within NATO in order to stimulate progress in Eastern Europe, especially by establishing a unified front of the opposition forces in the socialist countries”** [7, p. 20 - 21].

Note no. 00257/815 of the Foreign Intelligence Centre (CIE) within the DSS, dated November 13, 1989, submitted with the leadership of the Romanian state, stated that the US Administration informed its NATO allies that, taking into account that *“events in Eastern Europe are unfolding at a rapid pace”* [7, p. 21] an even closer coordination between the North Atlantic Alliance Member States was necessary in order *“to seize control of the situation and accelerate the course of action favouring Western interests”* [7, p. 21], thus a relaying of the roles of the Western states and a greater involvement by the same in the actions aimed at influencing developments in different socialist countries became necessary. The CIE analysts stated that *“The USA would pay particular attention to the situation in the USSR, while the FRG and United Kingdom would focus more on the issues relating to the GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and France and Italy would focus on the issues concerning Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania”* [7, p. 21].

Sometime on November 16, 1989, UM 0544 ((External Information Centre/CIE) informed Nicolae Ceaușescu by Note no. 00260 on the fact that President François Mitterrand **“through the initiative to convene an emergency meeting of the state and government**

**leaders of the member countries of the Common Market in Paris”** [7, p. 21] aims **“to promote some of France's points of view with regards to the events unfolding in some Eastern European countries”** [7, p. 21]. The CIE analysts warned that France would insist on *“adopting a unified position at the EEC level in relation to the developments in some Eastern European countries, starting from the premise that the current situation provides favourable conditions for the introduction of new coordinated measures that enable the obtaining of increasingly influential positions within the respective states; increasing the involvement of the EU countries in actions aimed at destabilising the situation in Eastern Europe and the prevention of separate agreements between the USA and the USSR regarding the enforcement of a new balance on the continent that takes into account the long-term objectives of the Western European Community; supporting Eastern European countries that have gone through reforms, both by granting limited financial aid, and especially by determining the adoption of measures enabling the expansion of the application of the market economy within such countries; refraining from further stimulating the flow of people from East to West, on the one hand in order to avoid the generation of economic issues and even social conflicts in Western Europe and, on the other hand, in order to directly encourage the establishment in socialist countries of a «puppet crowd», made up of dissatisfied citizens, ready to take part in protesting movements”* [7, p. 21].

Nicolae Ceaușescu’s concerns regarding a potential overthrow attempt were fuelled by the CIE by Note no. 00263/22 November 1989, which stated that, given the concerted positions of the USA and USSR on Romania, the state and government leaders of EEC Member States had decided on **“boosting actions aimed at creating destabilising internal tensions, by using states of dissatisfaction and incitement within the Hungarian minority environment, believing that this course of action could lead to Romania ceasing its obstruction of processes carried out in the East”** [7, p. 21].

Brigadier General (r) Vasile Mălureanu, one of the former leaders of the 1<sup>st</sup> Internal Intelligence Directorate within the DSS, stated the following with regards to the restlessness and concern that reigned within the security apparatus of socialist Romania: **“Upon also learning that Hungarian troops were conducting manoeuvres along the border with Romania in mid-December 1989, the fears regarding the country's territorial integrity did not seem farfetched at all”** [3, p. 21].

At the same time, on December 11, 1989, Nicolae Ceaușescu was informed by Petre Gigea, the Romanian ambassador in Paris that François Mitterrand and Mikhail S. Gorbachev reached a decision in Kiev (December 6, 1989) whereby **“new mechanism were required in order to build the Common European House”** [1, p. 426]. The talks between François Mitterrand and Mikhail S. Gorbachev also addressed the role of the USA in the new international relations dynamic considering **“the participation of the United States of America - as a necessary and high-profile element - in the new**

**stage of European construction**" [1, p. 423]. The two political leaders also approached the hottest topic at the time, the reunification of Germany, **"in great detail"** [1, p. 424]. Mikhail S. Gorbachev used this opportunity to express his concern about **"the future of «our» continent, manifesting an ever-active approach in favour of a so-called new mentality, new political thinking, as well as in favour of developing cooperation on multiple levels, in order to consolidate peace on the continent and strive for disarming"** [1, p. 424].

As part of the round table entitled *The Revolution of December 1989 - Facts and Controversies* (organised by the Institute for the Romanian Revolution of December 1989 on May 13, 2009), General (r) Nicolae Spiroiu, former Minister of National Defence between April 30, 1991 and March 6, 1994, declared that the information the MApN personnel had with regards to the political-strategic developments in Eastern Europe, were highly superficial, almost non-existent, because external information was under the control of the Supreme Political Council of the Armed Forces (CSP) and the DIA. Head of the DIA since December 1989, Vice Admiral (r) Ștefan Dinu, recorded in his memoirs that in October 1989, Lieutenant General Georgio Iovici, head of the Intelligence Service of the Yugoslav Federal Army provided Colonel Manea Dumitru, the Romanian military attaché in Belgrade, with a set of information regarding what would happen in December 1989 in Romania. Based on the information obtained as a result of trip that included Moscow, Budapest and Sofia, the head of the Yugoslav Military Intelligence Service believed that **"a series of destabilising actions were going to take place in Romania"** [8, p. 231]. The party and state leadership of socialist Romania would be informed by MApN and DIA that, **"initially, groups of specially trained individuals would be organised and then infiltrate the country under the guise of tourists, visiting relatives or friends. And when the time came, they would cause unrest and panic among the people, inciting them to revolt and disobey the Romanian authorities"** [8, p. 231]

By telegram no. D.10-015201 of November 29, 1989, 2:30 p.m., the MApN and DIA management were informed that **"the current anti-socialist rallies and demonstrations in Czechoslovakia were also initiated and provoked by the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia"** [7, p. 23]. The MApN and DIA decision-makers were informed that **"the ringleaders of these anti-socialist rallies were the Czechoslovak intellectuals and students of Hungarian origin, who, among other things, demanded the creation of an autonomous Hungarian province in Czechoslovakia (the area of Bratislava, Nitra, Banska-Bystrica, and to the south the border with Hungary)"** [7, p. 23], and **"the actions and rallies organised by the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia are propagandistically and materially supported by Hungary and by certain Western countries"** [7, p. 23].

The military intelligence officer drafting the aforementioned telegram pointed to the fact that **"Hungary is preparing a comprehensive plan in order to initiate and provoke rallies by the Hungarian minority in our country (Romania - n. n.) in certain towns in**

**Transylvania and even in Bucharest"** [7, p. 23], and therefore **"in order to trigger these anti-socialist and anti-national rallies in Romania, for the purpose of destabilising the internal political situation and to further its claims, Hungary, with the help of other countries, would propagandistically and materially support these events, including actions of espionage"** [7, p. 23]. The leaders from Budapest hoped to also convince other national minorities from socialist Romania, and even Romanian citizens to take part these rallies. It is worth noting that at the end of the high-level meeting of the EEC in Strasbourg, on October 10, 1989, François Mitterand declared that **"the issue of some provinces such as Silesia, Moravia, East Prussia, etc. must remain untouchable"** [9, p. 64], however, **"the issue of Hungarian-Romanian disputes with regards to Transylvania, or Bessarabia, must not be left out"** [9, p. 64]. President François Mitterand would be extremely explicit when declaring that **"France and the USSR must resume their role of ensuring the European balance, as they have done for centuries"** [9, p. 64].

Speaking about the behaviour of the Hungarian party and state authorities during the years 1988-1989, in the relationship with the Romanian state, Colonel (r) Ioan Todericiu, former Romanian military attaché in Budapest in December 1989, stated that: **"What was happening in terms of diplomatic activities between the two countries could no longer be described as diplomacy, it was full-blown harassment. If the Romanian ambassador were to go to their Ministry of Foreign Affairs and file a protest against the press releases regarding the idea of injustice they had presumably incurred at Trianon, the Hungarian diplomats would claim that there was nothing they could do, as their press was free. Diplomatic activity had almost been reduced to protests on both sides, either verbal or written, regarding non-compliance with the bilateral agreement and human rights. Even worse, things had escalated to such an extent that the two countries had begun a mutual expulsion of diplomats, something that had never happened before between two members states of the Warsaw Treaty"** [10].

On December 9, 1989, MApN and DIA were informed that Hungary **"sought to turn the Transylvania issue into an international one and to isolate Romania in political and economical terms"** [7, p. 22] and, moreover, **"at the same time of causing rallies by the population of Hungarian origin in Transylvania, Hungary intended to cause incidents at the border"** [7, p. 22] with Romania **"aimed to degenerate into a military conflict between the two countries, followed by the response of some countries part of the Warsaw Treaty, especially the USSR, with the purpose of a so-called «reconciliation» between the parties"** [7, p. 23]. The DIA informed the MApN leadership that while carrying out this project, Hungary was to rely on Austria, as well as on other Western states, but all while keeping USSR in the loop.

*On High Alert*

DIA's monitoring of troop manoeuvres by Warsaw Pact member countries revealed the following aspects: 1) during the June 6 - June 8 period of 1989, a joint Hungarian, Czechoslovak and Soviet drill was organised, which meant the deployment of command elements and marked troops, however, this did not present any major danger; 2) during the October 14 - October 28 period of 1989, the Soviet troops stationed in Hungary (the 102nd Division and the 3rd Army Corps, together with the anti-aircraft defence troops, amounting to a total of about 13,000 soldiers) organised a drill in the Budapest-Tokay district; 3) in the period from October to November 1989, from the north-eastern region, in the USSR, three drills were to be carried out in the field with marked troops: The 656th Soviet Mechanised Division in North Bucovina between 4 and 17 October, followed by the 118th Mechanised Division in southern Bessarabia between 15 and 16 October and, later, by the 33rd Mechanised Guard Division in the Bălți district between 2 and 4 November; 4) conducting a naval drill in the Black Sea: southeast of Snake Island, south of Yalta, west of Sukhumi and south of Sabla, in the eastern waters of Bulgaria; 5) the **Balkan 89** (June 1989) and **Marița 89** (August 1989) drills, both directed southwards, towards Greece. Despite the fact that **“none of the aforementioned activities - wrote Vice Admiral (r) Ștefan Dinu, head of the DIA in December 1989 - represented a serious threat to our country”** [8, p. 229], DIA would establish an uninterrupted assessment and surveillance service of the radio-military networks of Romania's neighbours.

Speaking about the existing situation at Romania's borders in December 1989, Commander (r) Eng. Ioan Stoleru, former commander of the Radio-electronic and Observation Centre within the Navy High Command in December 1989, part of the DIA assessment and surveillance system, declared: **“The activity carried out by the radio research networks and directorates, circular around Romania, incurred no particular intensification and no significant deployment of forces or equipment were identified”** [11, p. 148]. An entire series of information from radio-electronic and surveillance assessments, as well as a series of testimonies by the participants in the events, outlined the image of intense preparations for Soviet military intervention in socialist Romania between December 17 and December 22, 1989. *DIA Newsletter no. 4.454* as of December 19, 1989 stated that: **“A series of notified Drills as well as some drills carried out by large tactical units in the Chernivtsi area between December 14 and December 17, 1989 are reported in the USSR. Moreover, an intensification of the practical activities carried out by some naval and aviation units belonging to the FMM was observed, especially in the month of October, also marked by naval and aerial firing sessions. During the 18 - 22.12.1989 period, rocket launches were carried out in a maritime district located west of the Crimean Peninsula by the Soviet Military Maritime Forces”** [7, p. 28].

The DIA analysts reported to the General Staff and the Minister of National Defence that drills by reconnaissance-diversion battalions of the Hungarian army had been carried out, including specific exercises for

conducting combat actions behind enemy lines. **“According to some of the available data, it appears that such an activity was recently carried out by the battalions of the 1st and 3rd Army Corps (between December 16 and December 18), concluded with a march that ended in the districts, located 15-20 km from the border with SR of Romania. In the months of March - June, by rotation, the same units carried out a special training at the training base in mountainous area of Rezi (12 km north of Keszthely), activity concluded with the performance of tactical drills”** [7, p. 28] reported the DIA. At the same time, the DIA had identified a parabolic antenna for a radiolocation station, that had started its uninterrupted operation, since November 19, 1989 in the Podvorievka forest (USSR) on the Rădăuți - Prut - Lipcani direction. A Bulgarian radiolocation station had also begun to operate on the right bank of the Danube, in the Bechet - Oreahovo direction, **“probably for the purpose of ensuring navigation on the Danube”** [7, p. 28], but it was quite **“possible that this station was also used for other military purposes”** [7, p. 28].

At the Hungarian-Romanian border, numerous civilian and military representatives who had been observing the Romanian territory, even by trespassing, had been observed, as well as numerous recon groups of five to seven soldiers led by military staff. Hungary's involvement in a sustained effort to support the active dissidence of the Hungarian minority in socialist Romania against the Ceaușescu regime, as well as the encouragement of actions and attitudes that denied the existence of a Romanian unitary national state, should be construed as part of Budapest's plan to provoke, at any cost, a conflict with Nicolae Ceaușescu's Romania, so that the intervention of the West and the USSR, as arbitrators, would be needed to help cancel the Treaty of Trianon (from June 4, 1920) in the context of redesigning the architecture of international relations in the year 1989. **“I will say it, although I have my reservations, Hungary would have wanted a civil war in Romania and would have wanted a confrontation between the state powers, the Army and the forces controlled by the Ministry of the Interior. This war would have served as an excuse for the intervention in Transylvania, with the stated purpose of protecting its minority. There is no doubt that once these forces entered the Romanian territory, it was difficult to predict what turn things would have taken. A civil war would have enabled the violation of the treaty to not intervene concluded between Presidents Bush and Gorbachev. However, the intervention of foreigners in Romania could occur unless this civil war commenced”** [10], concluded Colonel (r) Ioan Todericiu, former Romanian military attaché in Budapest between 1979 and 1990.

On December 20, 1989, the Bulgarian Navy forces would begin combat training activities in a district located in the southwest of the Black Sea. *“For us, in Tulcea, the situation started to become dire when, on December 18, the border guards at Isaccea informed us that preparations were being made for the deployment of a pontoon bridge across the Danube, on the Soviet side. A pontoon bridge over the Danube could*

*serve only one purpose: the entry into Dobrogea of a military force with great offensive potential. (...) This action by the Soviets was a classic intimidation and psychological influence manoeuvre, and until December 21 they kept pretending that they were preparing to launch the bridge. Combined with the significant increase in aerial target flights in southern Bessarabia, this manoeuvre gave us clues that led us to believe that they were preparing for a military intervention in our territory. The number of planes flying the north of the Black Sea was also on the rise, and the radio technical battalion from Sulina was constantly keeping us informed of the air situation, which could also be interpreted as dangerous”* [11, p. 87], stated Commander (r) Vasile Nicolăescu, former head of Operations with the 27th River - Maritime Brigade in December 1989 and, moreover, by cumulation, Commander of this Great Unit.

Throughout the day of December 18, 1989, 2nd rank Captain (equivalent to the rank of lieutenant-colonel) Corneliu Rudencu, commander of the 50th Submarine Hunter and Minesweeper Division, located in the port of Sulina, received the order to execute the **“commissioning of the ships located in this position”** [11, p. 93] and to get them in combat readiness. At the same time, Submarine Hunter 2 was launched out to sea to strengthen the maritime surveillance unit intended to ensure the security of marine oil platforms in the Black Sea and on the Romanian coastline. **“On December 18, 1989, I received an order to leave with the ship I was commanding, Vedeta Blindată 78, to Isaccea to survey the Soviet bank. We also had Captain Coman on board, head of the minesweeping brigade. There, we saw about 15-20 trucks, some loaded with 4 pontoons each, others with boats, which were conducting drills for setting them afloat. The vehicle column was constantly moving behind a treeline and one by one approached the bank of the Danube, simulating the setting afloat of the pontoons. The drill on the Soviet bank was concluded on December 22, 1989”** [11, p. 101] says Captain-Commander (r) Virgil Grigoraş, former commander of the 78th Vedeta Blindată armoured brigade within the 118th Vedeta Blindată Division during December 1989.

All these movements of Hungarian, Bulgarian and Soviet troops constituted factors intended to put pressure on the Ceauşescu regime, who had to be “encouraged“ to accept the enforcement of internal reforms according to the perestroika and glasnost model, and, at the same time, to support a hostile, rebellious attitude against the communist regime in Bucharest. It was also meant as a signal to the Romanian Army, considered to be nationalistic and loyal to Nicolae Ceauşescu, as well as to the bodies of the Ministry of the Interior (Militia and Securitate), on reassessing the reason for the power structures of the Romanian state getting involved in the support and reinforcement of the Ceauşescu regime.

Vice-Admiral (r) Ştefan Dinu, former head of the DIA, mentions the existence of discussions with his counterparts, during his visits abroad, and more, where he was reminded of the “benefits of the economic and social life reforms in the respective countries” [8, p.

225]. In May 1988, the Soviet military attaché in to Bucharest, Rear Admiral Terentiev, requested a confidential audience with the head of the DIA as a result of an express wish of the Soviet General Staff. During the audience, the Soviet military attaché provided an ample display, *“based on a printed material, of the reforms in the USSR and other socialist countries, asking himself after each issue review, rhetorically of course, why such programs would not be possible in Romania”* [8, p. 226]. The Soviet military diplomat requested that his information be brought to the attention of the Romanian General Staff and to the leadership of the Ministry of National Defence. The supreme party and state leadership demanded that the Soviet military attaché be informed that he would be declared persona non grata should he overstep his responsibilities again.

The head of the DIA recalled that during a mission in Warsaw in May 1989, his Hungarian counterpart, Lieutenant General Sucs Ferenc, informed him that he had received the order from his superiors in Budapest to provide him with *“the most detailed briefing” on the internal situation in Hungary and the political and economic guidelines recently adopted by the leadership of his country”* [8, p. 226]. Following the discussions with his Hungarian counterpart, the head of the DIA concluded: **“first of all, that the information provided, probably agreed with the other signatory allies of the Warsaw Treaty, constituted yet another collective warning given to the dogmatic, conservative politics in Romania, and secondly, it turned out that Hungary did not pose any threat to our country at the time”** [8, p. 227]. The briefing provided by the head of the DIA and the Minister of National Defence, Colonel-General Vasile Milea, led to them being subject to harsh reproaches from Nicolae Ceauşescu, who criticized them for **“excessively lending their ear to outsiders who do not favour Romania”** [8, p. 227].

In the volume *Armata Română în Revoluția din Decembrie 1989* (The Romanian Army during the Revolution of December 1989), the group of authors supports the idea according to which, at the time, the MAPN leadership was **“unable to obtain a more extensive set of data from various sources, which would have allowed for a more comprehensive and realistic assessment of the political-military situation in our geographical space”** [12, p. 30], and, at the same time, **“consistent with modern military concepts, in order to really achieve the element of surprise, an invasion cannot be carried out solely based on deployment of forces close to the border of the targeted state, but by bringing in troops from deep, using wide-scale airborne deployments”** [12, p. 30]. In an attempt to find an excuse for the MAPN leaders for their lack of political and strategic vision, repeatedly and discreetly requested by their counterparts from the Warsaw Treaty member states, the authors of the cited volume believe that, however, **“even if conclusive aspects about the scenario that was being prepared for Romania had been presented to the Army Intelligence Directorate, such information circulated in a very restricted loop at different higher levels”** [12, p.

32], therefore **“the triggering of the protest movement in Timișoara took the Army as a whole by surprise”** [12, p. 32]

Speaking about the avalanche of political and military information that foreshadowed a power strike on the territorial integrity of socialist Romania, combined with an internal revolt of the population dissatisfied with the Ceaușescu regime, Vice Admiral (r) Ștefan Dinu the head of the DIA, went on to record: **“In terms of Army leadership, the official diversion of the external military danger had no effect. The people responsible for knowing what was happening around the borders were well aware of the situation and were utterly convinced that nothing constituted a genuine threat to Romania”** [8, p. 228]. The head of the DIA mentions the fact that the propaganda apparatus of the Ceaușescu regime would launch a comprehensive propagandistic campaign about the military dangers at the north-western and north-easter borders of Romania, particularly during 1989, aiming to reignite the spirit of crowd solidarity of August 1968 around Ceaușescu.

### Conclusions

As an internal revolt was looming large, considering the living conditions, the political and military, as well as the “intelligence” elite of socialist Romania refused to accept the new realities. Despite all the signals received through various political-diplomatic formulae and more, the perception of the Western diplomatic chancelleries and of the Warsaw Treaty member states was the same: in Bucharest, no one can, no one tries or, in fact, wants to change something. In the context of the triggering of the revolt of the people of Timișoara against the Ceaușescu regime, the MAPN forces in the Timișoara area would be involved in actions to suppress the popular revolt against the Ceaușescu regime long before the CPEX meeting of the Central Committee of the PCR on December 17, 1989.

Given that the Cold War was in full swing, without a predictable outcome in sight, we can understand the behaviour of certain Western diplomats and of certain embassies in Bucharest, of encouraging active dissent against the political regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu, as well as of monitoring the political and diplomatic, economic, social and military developments of socialist Romania. Such a perspective helps us understand the statement of Ghennadi I. Ianaev, vice-president of the USSR, regarding the monitoring of the progress of events in Romania at the end of December 1989, by Washington and Moscow, taking into account the fact that Hungarian nationalists were inciting an intervention by the two military blocs in Ceausescu's Romania. The stake: protecting the identity of the Hungarian minority, severely affected by Ceausescu's socialism, all the while hoping that the European borders, in this particular case, the Romanian-Hungarian one, could be called back into question.

On December 24, 1989, Gyula Horn, Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, opposed the request lodged by the Hungarian Democratic Forum to get in touch

with the CFSN with the aim of deploying some international anti-terrorist units to Romania. Taking the aforementioned into account, we can now get a better grasp of the statements of Mikhail S. Gorbachev, from the interview with journalist Felicia Meleşcanu, regarding the fact that **“Romania was in danger of splitting up during the events”** [13, p. 325] of December 1989, as well as the opinions of Ghennadi I. Ianaev, with reference to President Ion Iliescu, respectively: **“He managed to provide for Romanians what no one else could given such circumstances”** [14, p. 314].

Throughout the day of December 18, 1989, the head of the Romanian General Staff, Major General Ștefan Gușă, would be informed about the fact that two air targets were heading towards Romania, from the northwest to the southeast, and that they had veered left near Romania's aerial border and started flying parallel to such border. Were these actions meant to suggest something was being prepared, the foreshadowing of an attack or political and military manoeuvres aimed at intimidating and distracting an armed force that was at the time engaged in a fight with its own people? A question that remained unanswered at the times and even beyond.

In the context of political-diplomatic developments in Central and Eastern Europe, the political regime in Budapest, which had accepted the new political and ideological changes, tried to take advantage of the inability of the political regime in Bucharest, unable to accept the reform of its state and society, of fulfilling, to the extent possible, an older desire of the Hungarian state foreign policy: the reconsideration of the provisions of the Treaty of Trianon (June 4, 1920). In the face of this outside threat, assumed and partially confirmed, the force structures of socialist Romania would eventually open fire, arrest and mistreat Romanian citizens chanting against Nicolae Ceaușescu and his political regime, in a word, they would do their duty until almost the very end, an end so fragile that upon its occurrence, it could have brought with it anything from a civil war to a foreign intervention, a Western or Warsaw Pact intervention, as well as unimaginable repression. During 1989, the Romanian-Hungarian relationship would once again prove to be extremely fragile, tense and prone to unsuspected dangers for both sides, as well as for the other actors of the international relations stage.

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