

**ASPECTS REGARDING THE RELATIONS
BETWEEN CHINA AND ROMANIA (1949-1965) (PART 2)**

Abstract:	<p><i>The inclusion of Romania in the sphere of influence of the USSR and the takeover of power in China by the Communist Party was followed by an acceleration of political cooperation between Romania and China. Cooperation intensified as both states fought for national sovereignty against the USSR, which wanted to exercise coordinating authority over the other states with state socialist regimes.</i></p> <p><i>After the dispute degenerated into a conflict between China and the USSR worsened, Romania tried to mediate between the two states to end this conflict. Also, at the request of the US government, Romania mediated the establishment of contacts and then diplomatic relations between China and the US. Starting with the eighth decade of the last century, the economic relations between Romania and China experienced an ever-greater development.</i></p> <p><i>The Romania-China relationship had the depth and continuity typical of strategic partners, in its meaning today, with the parties providing mutual support and showing solidarity in difficult moments. This bilateral and multilateral relationship, adopted by the socialist state regime in Bucharest, exceeded the limits of a political game designed to erode Soviet hegemony, by supporting the second pole of power within the world socialist state system. During several generations of leaders, the Romanian side promoted a friendly relationship with China, which was also taken over in the collective mind.</i></p>
Keywords:	Diplomatic relations between China and Romania; Nicolae Ceaușescu; Mao Zedong; Emil Bodnăraș; Henry Kissinger; the Sino-Soviet conflict; Oleg Kalugin; Corneliu Bogdan; Deng Xiaoping; Hua Guo-Feng; Hu Jintao
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In the previous issue of the "Studia Securitatis" magazine, I showed how, in the period from the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, on October 1, 1949, until Nicolae Ceaușescu came to power in Romania, the relations between China and Romania experienced a special development, the two states becoming close, loyal, sincere partners and involved in solving some political-diplomatic objectives of great international importance, such as the objective of promoting relations of full equality between the socialist states, by rejecting the hegemonic role of the USSR within the area of influence which this superpower held, following the treaties concluded by the victors in the Second World War, or the effort to smooth out the conflicts between China and the USSR. Also, the relations between China and Romania, from the period 1949-1965, were a catalyst factor for the promotion of a policy of national independence by the Romanian leadership.

In the continuation of our series, we will show how this political-diplomatic course of Romanian Chinese relations will develop even more, in the next period, to the benefit of both states.

In March 1966, in Moscow, at the reception offered by the hosts in honor of the delegations present at the XXIII Congress of the CPSU, the secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Alexander Nikolaevich Șelepin, first vice-prime minister of the USSR, former chairman of the KGB, asked Nicolae Ceaușescu for advice on how the Soviets could enter dialogue with the Chinese side, which was rejecting diplomatic communication with Moscow. The seriousness of the situation in Sino-Soviet relations, perceived as such by Ceaușescu, also emerged from Ceaușescu's advice, which told Șelepin that he could not expect immediate results. On the same occasion, with the same problem, Brezhnev addressed to Ceaușescu. Ceaușescu told Brezhnev that the Soviet-Chinese rift had a complex character and appreciated the Soviets for wanting to remove the differences, expressing his disagreement with the representative of China who spoke at the congress stating that the USSR had betrayed the cause of socialism. Ceaușescu told Brezhnev that, indeed, the Chinese were right that some mistakes had been made in the internal politics of the USSR, but their repair was not the problem of China, but of the CPSU and the Soviet people. Ceaușescu proposed giving up insults in the Soviet-Chinese dialogue. Brezhnev asked Ceaușescu to request the vice-chairman of the CC of the Chinese Communist Party and chairman of the State Council of China, Zhou Enlai, who was to visit Romania, not to make anti-Soviet statements. Ceaușescu guaranteed this, stating that the Chinese dignitaries come to Bucharest as guests, and he does not allow Romania to become an anti-Soviet tribune or an anti-Chinese tribune. Brezhnev asked Ceaușescu to intervene alongside the Chinese premier for the normalization of China's relations with the USSR, which Brezhnev regarded as "a huge blow to imperialism". The same problem was also

addressed by Brezhnev in the meeting with the Romanian Foreign Minister, Corneliu Mănescu, on June 11, 1966¹.

In 1966, Zhou Enlai visited Romania. The visit had an important international echo, at a time when the visibility of Romania and Nicolae Ceaușescu was growing significantly. The visit also generated an incident between Nicolae Ceaușescu and Zhou Enlai. The Chinese leader came prepared with a speech that included an attack on the leadership of the USSR. Informed, Ceaușescu protested volcanically towards Zhou Enlai, not allowing Romania to become a tribune for attacking the USSR. The adversarial discussions took place in the Palace Hall and lasted for 3 hours, during which the full hall, the written press from the country and abroad, and the Radio and Television waited without any explanation being given to them. In an extremely harsh gesture, Ceaușescu took the papers containing Zhou Enlai's speech from his pocket and, in front of him, tore them up and threw them on the floor. Things calmed down when Ceaușescu threatened to suspend the rally at which the high dignitary of China was supposed to speak, and he agreed to give up attacks against the USSR. In the end, Zhou Enlai agreed to speak only of the bilateral relationship with Romania and not to make any reference to the relationship between China and the USSR. Paul Niculescu-Mizil, at that time a member of the CPEx and secretary of the CC of the RCP, emphasized that the relations between China and Romania were so strong that these divergences and the stormy incident Ceaușescu had with Zhou Enlai were not able to shake this relationship. Moreover, the following year, on October 1, 1967, the anniversary of the victory of the communist revolution, China's biggest holiday, an RCP delegation returning from Vietnam made a stopover in Beijing. Zhou Enlai was absent from the great popular gathering dedicated to China's national day and went to the airport to receive the Romanian delegation. In 1967, Deng Xiaoping returned to the top of China's leadership after being ousted by Mao Zedong's wife Jiang Qing, and Marshal Lin Biao, China's Minister of National Defense, during the Cultural Revolution. He sent Nicolae Ceaușescu a message reminding him that, at the 9th Congress of the RCP, the leader of Romania advised Deng Xiaoping to shake the hand of the representative of the Yugoslav delegation, the Slovenian Edvard Kardelj, in a historic moment when relations between the two countries and between the Chinese Communist Party and the League of Communists of Yugoslavia were broken. In 1967, two years later, Deng Xiaoping told Paul Niculescu-Mizil that Ceaușescu was right and thanked him for his efforts to bring China and Yugoslavia closer together. Three years later, at the 10th Congress of the RCP, the same divergence as that between Ceaușescu and Zhou Enlai arose between Ceaușescu and the head of the USSR delegation at the congress, Konstantin Katuşev, who, in the speech with which he came from Moscow to

¹ Vasile Buga, *Sub lupa Moscovei. Politica externă a României (1965-1989)*, Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, București, 2015, pp. 135-136. The author cites documents from the CC Chancellery of the RCP

Bucharest, wanted to attack the leadership of China, a fact that the ruler of Romania did not allow¹.

Romania has been successful in mediating the conflicts between the USSR and China, between the USSR and the USA, and between China and the USA and due to the advantages, that its policy of equidistance between China and the USSR created for it, as well as the general policy of independence of Romania, recognized internationally².

In June 1967, President Lyndon Johnson asked Prime Minister Ion Gheorghe Maurer for Romania to support the mediation of US relations with China, assuring him that the US did not want war with China and did not want to change the form of government in China, but only better economic and diplomatic relations. On this occasion, Lyndon Johnson told Ion Gheorghe Maurer that he could make their discussion public and use any of his remarks if it would be useful for the project of establishing diplomatic relations between the US and China.

During the talks in Bucharest, between US President Richard M. Nixon and Nicolae Ceaușescu, on August 2 and 3, 1969, one of the important topics was the issue of Sino-American relations and China's future active presence in international relations. President Nixon assured Nicolae Ceaușescu and Ion Gheorghe Maurer that the US was not interested in creating any bloc or entering any arrangement with anyone to try to contain China. President Nixon stated that the US does not recognize the People's Republic of China and opposes its admission to the UN not because of its domestic policy but because of its policy towards its neighbors. He said he was referring to China's behavior towards Korea, Taiwan and Indonesia in particular and in general and other neighbors. Next, the high-ranking American guest declared that the USA would not make any arrangement with the USSR against China. He was aware that within 25 years China would have a population of one billion and be a major nuclear power. If this state is walled off and isolated from all sides, it will become an extremely dangerous explosive force that would endanger the entire international peacekeeping structure that was built with painstaking efforts after the Second World War.

Nixon also said that the US would not interfere in the conflicts that the USSR had with China. The US wants to maintain good relations with the USSR, and to the extent that China will change its relations with its neighbors, then the US will also want to have relations with Communist China. Nicolae Ceaușescu told the US president that although Romania is not a nuclear power, is not an Asian country and has no special interests in Asia, but he believes that the world has become so small that if there is no peace in Asia, this it will have a negative impact in Europe and the rest of the world, of course, including Romania. Ceaușescu said that the

¹ Paul Niculescu-Mizil, *Un mare om al secolului nostru*, in “Dosarele istoriei”, Vol. II, No. 6 (11), 1997, pp. 55-57

² Ion Buzatu, *RP Chineză – o superputere pentru mileniul trei*, in “Dosarele istoriei”, Vol. II, No. 6 (11), 1997, p. 35

problems of Asia cannot be solved without considering the existence of China and without involving this country in solving the problems facing Asia. Ceaușescu emphasized that for many years China has not had any wars with other states that it has started.

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger intervened in the discussion, who said that if you look at China's history you will see that it has always treated its neighbors as vassals and that this country has no historical experience in treating other states on an equal footing. Confirming the ideas expressed by Nicolae Ceaușescu, Richard Nixon said that although the US position towards China cannot be changed immediately, "now", the US treats China as a reality of the contemporary world and is aware that there can be no peace in the world if China will not also participate in building this peace.

Nicolae Ceaușescu said that he did not want to engage in a dispute with his guests about history, but after the Second World War, China did not and does not threaten anyone. "In Korea, you know very well what happened... China withdrew its troops from Korea, which represents, I think, a conclusive proof of its respect for the sovereignty of other states", said Ceaușescu. The Romanian leader continued with long arguments favorable to China, by which he offered the US leadership legal and political motivations for the decision-making bodies of the US to want to establish relations with the Chinese people. Ceaușescu also said: "We appreciate that, if a rational, respectful policy will be followed towards China, if its equality and rightful place in the concert of nations will be recognized, a great step will be taken in the direction China's involvement in solving international problems. At the end of the visit, President Richard Nixon said that the discussions held in Bucharest will go down in history because of their importance¹.

After Richard Nixon's visit to Bucharest in 1969, Romania conveyed to Beijing that the US was ready to negotiate with China "through any channels, in any location and at any time". It was obvious that bringing China out of isolation and establishing good relations with the US was leading to a change in the international balance of power. Romania was aware of the very big role it was playing, on this occasion, in international relations. On the other hand, the approach being a secret one, unknown to American public opinion and the US

¹ Constantin Moraru, *N. Ceaușescu: "Îmi exprim satisfacția în legătură cu vizita pe care o faceți în România" și R.M. Nixon: "Am așteptat cu interes să vă întâlnesc din nou"*, article comprising the document *Notă. Convorbirile dintre tovarășul Nicolae Ceaușescu, Președintele Consiliului de Stat al Republicii Socialiste România și Richard M. Nixon, Președintele Statelor Unite ale Americii ("I express my satisfaction about your visit to Romania" and R.M. Nixon: "I looked forward to meeting you again," item containing the Note document. Conversations between Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu, President of the State Council of the Socialist Republic of Romania and Richard M. Nixon, President of the United States of America)*, in "Dosarele istoriei", Vol. IX, No. 11 (99), 2004, pp. 27-51. The document was discovered in the National Archives of Romania, CC fund of the RCP, External Relations Section, file no. 51/1969, ff. 113-166 (provisional quota, at the time of study and publication of the document).

Congress, the Romanian leaders knew that Romania would not be able to benefit from support from the US Congress to achieve some of its national interests. In this situation, the main motivation of Romania's involvement in this diplomatic approach at the highest level in the world was to succeed in detaching Romania from Soviet domination. The Romanian leaders would have wanted even more, namely the liberation of the whole of Eastern Europe from Soviet domination. This last desired, proved to be unattainable. These were the desires that made Romania get involved in matters that did not concern it directly. In 1968, before leaving office, Lyndon Johnson told President-elect Richard Nixon that he would like to pursue diplomatic relations with China if the new president agreed. Nixon asked him to leave the continuation of diplomatic efforts to the new administration¹.

The American government had noticed the progress of Chinese society and, sensing the transformation of this country into a very great power, wanted to have economic relations, on the one hand, to help create a counterweight to the power of the USSR, on the other hand, and to undermine it from interior. Then, it is known that regarding US relations with the world of socialist countries, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, one of the most influential and long-lived politicians of the Cold War period, strongly supported the doctrine that the US should have both with the USSR and China, better relations than the USSR had with China. In this way,

¹ Larry L. Watts, *Ferește-mă doamne de prieteni...Războiul clandestin al blocului sovietic împotriva României* (published in English with the title *With Friends like These*), English translation Camelia Diaconescu, pp. 270; 274-277. The American historian also clarifies Pakistan's role in establishing diplomatic relations between the US and China, namely only the role of the transmitter of some messages. In his memoirs, Henry Kissinger, who made a secret visit to China in 1971, lines up with Richard Nixon, attesting to the idea that the initiative belonged to the Nixon administration, not its predecessors. Kissinger does not mention Romania as a mediator between China and the US, but only Pakistan. It is true that after the establishment of direct contact between the Chinese and the Americans, at the suggestion of China, the Pakistani channel was used for the transmission of secret messages. This is because the Chinese leadership knew that the Soviets have many "eyes" and many "ears" in Bucharest. The support offered by the Romanian side to the restoration of Sino-American relations was revealed in all its importance by the appreciation of the American president in the context of Ceaușescu's second visit to the USA (December 1973), on which occasion Nixon publicly praised and thanked the head of the Romanian state for his contribution to the normalization of Sino-American relations.

¹ The launch by the US, during the presidency of George W. Bush, of the so-called "anti-terrorist" wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, made it impossible to further promote the *Kissinger Doctrine* and led to the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and then the economic organization BRICS, which led to a multipolarity of world power. At the time of writing these lines, in the midst of the war in Ukraine, the political, economic, and military relations between Russia and China are particularly close, which proves that, from the point of view of the US interests of international dominance, Henry Kissinger has thought deeply and was right, and the abandonment by American governments of the third millennium of the *Kissinger Doctrine* was not beneficial to maintaining the US as the sole world superpower, as it had been in the last decade of the last millennium.

throughout the following period the US ensured that the two largest socialist state powers would not ally against the US¹.

In February 1968, during the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty, which took place in Budapest, Mihail Suslov, secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, harshly criticized China. Nicolae Ceaușescu defended China, and when he saw that the other heads of state-supported Mihail Suslov's position, he left the room, considering that the servility of the other participants in the conference was abject. On this occasion, Poland proposed sanctions against Romania². No sanctions were applied to Romania, the Soviets fearing a withdrawal of Romania from the Warsaw Pact, as Albania had done.

During the crisis in Czechoslovakia, in August 1968, the Romanian Embassy in Beijing organized a reception with the entire diplomatic corps accredited in China. The reception was attended by Zhou Enlai himself, who sent a very strong message to Romania, stating that "The Chinese people support you"³.

After the invasion of Czechoslovakia by five socialist states led by the USSR in August 1968, China accused the USSR of treading the path of "socialist imperialism". The CPSU's launch of the Brezhnev Doctrine, of limited state sovereignty, was criticized both in China and the West, but also in Romania. Among the other socialist states, only Albania and Yugoslavia have been criticized⁴.

On March 2, 1969, an armed border conflict began between the USSR and China over the possession of Damansky Island, the Russian name, Zhenbao, the Chinese name, which was part of the Pozhara district of Primorsky Krai and is located on the Chinese side of the main channel of the river Usury. Its dimensions are 1500-18 m from north to south and 600-700 m from west to east, this area being about 0.74 km². At certain times of the year, during the rainy season and rising river levels, the island is completely flooded. Otherwise, it is only used for grazing, vegetation exploitation, and fishing. On March 2, 1969, the Chinese

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² *Ibidem*, p. 281

³ Florin Constantiniu, *Revoluția culturală maoistă și minirevoluția culturală ceaușistă*, in "Dosarele istoriei", Vol. II, No. 6 (11), 1997, p. 53

⁴ For the Western view of the *Brezhnev Doctrine*; Michelle Parks, John L. Moore, *The Soviet Union*, Congressional Quarterly Inc., Washington DC, 1986, pp. 297-298

military invaded Damansky Island to establish Chinese control over the island. The conflict over this island ended only in May 1991, through an agreement between the Russian SFSR and the Chinese PR, with the island officially receiving the status of Chinese territory.

After fighting that resulted in hundreds of deaths, on September 11, 1969, Prime Minister Kosîghin, who had attended the funeral of Vietnamese Communist leader Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi, made a stopover in Beijing, and met the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai at the airport, the two high officials agreeing to end the border fighting.

In June 1970, Emil Bodnăraş paid a visit to China, with the important object of mediating the improvement of relations between China and the USA. The US wanted to support China as a counterweight to Soviet power, and China also saw the US as a counterweight to Soviet power. Romania encouraged the rise of China, to which it felt very connected, a rise that could block the exercise with the great authority of Moscow's relations with all the satellite states, including Romania.

In 1970, Romania was faced with catastrophic floods. On this occasion, China offered Romania a large amount of money, representing a third of the total aid received from around the world. Also, China offered Romania credits worth 500 million Swiss francs to recover from the great destruction caused by the floods¹.

During November 20-26, 1970, Gheorghe Rădulescu, vice-president of the Council of Ministers, paid a visit to China, at the head of an official delegation. On this occasion, the Romanian side brought to the attention of the Chinese leadership the express desire of President Richard Nixon to undertake a visit to China to discuss with the Chinese leaders the issue of normalizing relations between the Chinese Republic and the USA. The Romanian delegation was entrusted with Zhou Enlai's answer: "if he wants to come, he is welcome". Zhou Enlai's message was reviewed by Mao Zedong and Marshal Lin Biao, Vice Chairman of the CCP and Minister of Defense of China. The message was also transmitted on the Pakistani link of China-US communication. In this revised version, it was stated that the Taiwan issue was a matter of utmost importance between the US and China, and if the US was prepared to resolve the matter, a special envoy would be welcome in Beijing. The message also included a very important mention by Zhou Enlai, namely that if US President Richard Nixon had already visited Romania and Yugoslavia, he would have been welcome in Beijing as well. Zhou Enlai conveyed in his remarks that, regardless of what was conveyed to Washington regarding the important issue of Taiwan, he was primarily interested in the Soviet threat to China. He also said that the Vietnam War, which was in full swing, was not an obstacle to the establishment of normal relations between China and the US. In his

¹ Ion Buzatu, *RP Chineză – o superputere pentru mileniul trei*, in "Dosarele istoriei", Vol. II, No. 6 (11), 1997, p. 35

memoirs, the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, was surprised by the delay with which the Romanians conveyed the Chinese message to Washington¹.

On the first visit of the Romanian leader to the USA, in October 1970, one year and three months after Richard Nixon's visit to Romania, during the talks between Nixon and Ceaușescu, the topic of China covered a significant part of the time allocated to international relations. The US President expressed the appreciation of the American side to the Romanian government regarding the communication to China of Washington's views on the intention to start talks with Beijing and the conviction of the Chinese leadership that it is good to take this step, at a time when China he had proposed remaining in isolation and internal development so that when he entered into relations with the great powers of the world he could negotiate from the position of a state that had become stronger.

On Ceaușescu's visit to the USA, in a speech delivered on October 26, 1970, President Richard Nixon used for the first time the correct and complete name of the People's Republic of China. In the same circumstance, on October 26, 1970, Nicolae Ceaușescu sent President Nixon a message from Mao Zedong requesting an end to the war in Vietnam².

During his first 6-7 years at the head of the CPSU (1964-approx. 1971), Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev was concerned with organizing a world communist conference, in which the hegemonic role of the Soviet Union in the international communist movement would be established. This approach failed primarily due to Romania's opposition, a follower of national sovereignty, an opponent of proletarian internationalism, and the hegemony of a single center of power. In this way, the globalization (proletarian internationalism) of the Soviet sphere of influence around power in the Kremlin failed. Despite the very good general cooperation between China and Romania in the direction of blocking Soviet hegemony, on this line, there were also divergences between the leaderships of the two countries³.

Nicolae Ceaușescu was the first head of state from Eastern Europe to arrive in Beijing, after the break between China and Russia, caused by the border war of 1969. Ceaușescu's visit to China took place during June 2-11, 1971.

On June 3, 1971, the discussions of the Romanian delegation with Zhou Enlai took place. The issue of Romania's mediation of relations between China and the USA was also discussed. Ceaușescu was in a privileged position. He had been visited by President Richard Nixon in August 1969 and had also visited the USA on a long visit in 1970. During the discussion on June 3, 1971, Nicolae Ceaușescu told Zhou Enlai that he had been also visited by Richard Nixon in 1967 as a private individual on a world tour. On that occasion, in a discussion of several hours, held at the headquarters of the CC of the PCR, the issue of relations between China and

¹ Laurențiu Panaite, *Partenerii regăsiți: RP Chineză și Statele Unite ale Americii*, in "Dosarele istoriei", Vol. II, No. 6 (11), 1997, p. 21

² "Scînteia", October 27, 1970

³ Paul Niculescu-Mizil, *Op. cit.*, p. 55

the USA was discussed as a priority, although, at that historical moment, the war in Vietnam occupied most of the interest of international diplomacy. Ceaușescu told Zhou Enlai of Richard Nixon's special interest in establishing normal diplomatic and economic relations between the US and China¹.

Ștefan Andrei² accompanied the Romanian delegation and reported that, upon returning from Asia, the Soviets requested a meeting with Romanian officials. Thus, the Romanian presidential plane stopped at Vnukovo Airport in Moscow. The Romanian delegation met with Prime Minister Aleksei Kosîghin, Mihail Andreevichi Suslov, and Konstantin Fiodorovich Katushev, secretaries of the Central Committee of the CPSU. The Soviet leaders formulated reproaches and threats to the Romanians. First, because the Romanian delegation visited China, a country that is the enemy of the Soviet Union. The Soviets criticized Nicolae Ceaușescu for declaring in Beijing that China was an important factor in the struggle for peace. Kosîghin asked the Romanian delegates: "what were you looking for there, what did you do? You cannot be friends with an enemy of the Soviet Union and, in fact, of the community of socialist countries". Ștefan Andrei said that, on the plane flying from Moscow to Bucharest, the atmosphere was oppressive and that Maurer apostrophized Ceaușescu, reproaching him for not listening to him when he advised him not to visit China. During the travel, in the plane, Ceaușescu didn't say anything³.

George Macovescu, first deputy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a member of the delegation, also present at the meeting at the Moscow airport, then drew the conclusion that: "The danger of an invasion like the one in Czechoslovakia is not removed"⁴.

The tension with the Soviets was fueled by the leader of Mongolia, Lumjaagiin Țedenbal. During the visit to Mongolia, Țedenbal had provoked Ceaușescu, probably at the request of Moscow, complaining about the attacks of the Chinese with "imperialist ideas" on the Mongolian borders. Ceaușescu, imprudent in this case, consoled him with the example of the "Soviet imperialists" who confiscated Romania's treasury. Also, when Țedenbal asserted that the military intervention of the five socialist states in Czechoslovakia, in August 1968, prevented the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the imperialists, Ceaușescu told him: "I did not come here to listen to your sermons about Czechoslovakia or to

¹ In his memoirs, Richard Nixon will recount his 1967 tour, held in Europe, East Asia, and Southeast Asia, which had an important role in preparing some elements of foreign policy during the presidential term.

² At that time, Ștefan Andrei held the position of first deputy head of the External Relations Section of the Central Committee of the RCP.

³ Ștefan Andrei related this historical moment in the book Lavinia Betea, *Stăpânul secretelor lui Ceaușescu. I se spunea Machiavelli. Ștefan Andrei în dialog cu Lavinia Betea*, Adevărul Holding, București, 2011, pp. 225-228

⁴ George Macovescu, *Jurnal*, vol. I (1952-1982), Editura Domino, București, 2006, p. 90; Florin Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*, IV-a edition, Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2008, pp. 505; 549

teach me lessons, because we are the ones who know better." Ţedenbal's report had arrived in Moscow before Kosîghin's meeting with Ceauşescu at Vnukovo airport.

Two months later, in August 1971, Brezhnev met in Crimea with the leaders of the Warsaw Pact member states, except for Ceauşescu, who was not invited. On this occasion, Leonid Ilich Brezhnev said about Nicolae Ceauşescu that he is leading the fight against the USSR and is the main obstacle to Moscow's political line. Leonid Brezhnev told the Warsaw Pact heads of state that Ceauşescu's most insolent attitude was that of Mongolia, and that the Soviets were patient with Romania's behavior, but must try to exert influence on developments inside Romania. There, in Crimea, it was decided to involve all the leaders of the Warsaw Pact states in the anti-Ceauşescu action. The leaders in Bucharest had information through various diplomatic channels about Brezhnev's position towards Ceauşescu and Romania. At the conference in Crimea, other heads of state also spoke, all condemning Romania for its attitude of disobedience. Bulgaria's leader, Todor Jivkov, whose secret service was tasked with blocking Romania in the entire Balkan region, said that China relies on Romania and Romanians support Chinese policies. The Czechoslovak leader Gustáv Husák spoke about the complicated nature of the socialist countries' relations with Romania and emphasized that in the conditions in which communication with Ceauşescu does not work, another man must be sought to support them. Janos Kádár spoke about Ceauşescu's betrayal and exemplified his visit to Beijing, through which he created a China-Romania-Yugoslavia-Albania axis¹.

These operations to remove Nicolae Ceauşescu, which Brezhnev had referred to at the Crimea conference, did not appear only in 1971. They had already been started in 1969, when, after the abandonment of a military intervention of the type of the one of August 1968 in Czechoslovakia, the Dniester Plan was developed, which provided for the removal of Nicolae Ceauşescu from the head of Romania and his replacement with a socialist leader devoted to Moscow. In this sense, the operations in Romania came under the direct responsibility of the intelligence services².

Romanian security, which was a creation of the Soviet secret services, never disconnected from the relationship with the KGB, not even after the Romanian leaders forbade it to collaborate with the Soviet services. From this point of view, Security violated the law and official orders permanently. In 1972, during a trip to Romania, the head of counterintelligence in the KGB's First Directorate, which dealt with international espionage operations, General Oleg Kalughin, contacted the leaders of the Security. He was warmly received by Minister Ion Stănescu (Szilagy), by the head of the Foreign Intelligence Directorate, General Nicolae Doicaru, and by the other heads of the State Security Council. On this occasion,

¹ Larry L. Watts, *Op. cit.*, pp. 540-543

² Corvin Lupu, *Trădarea Securităţii în decembrie 1989. Secrete ale intervenţiei străine împotriva României*, Elion, Bucureşti, 2015, pp. 73-74

the leadership of Security notified Oleg Kalugin of its intention to remove Nicolae Ceaușescu from the leadership of Romania¹.

After several years since those events, after having held the positions of Foreign Minister and Secretary of the Central Committee of the PCR for a long time and having gathered a great deal of political experience, Ștefan Andrei declared that, in his opinion, the tough talks at Vnukovo Airport from Moscow were the element that stopped the continuation of the positive evolution of the Romanian society. Ceaușescu was concerned with the fact that, as the Soviet Prime Minister Kosîghin had insisted, the economy was subordinated to the political. In his briefing at the CPEx, after returning to Bucharest, Ceaușescu introduced Kosîghin's basic idea: "Don't forget that economic relations are determined by political relations, Comrade Ceaușescu. I mean don't come to me to develop economic relations with the Soviet Union, where to get raw materials and sell us cars, if you do such a policy"².

Romania was 50% economically dependent on the USSR and the other CAER states. Romania was afraid that the Soviet Union would stop imports of light industry, furniture, oil equipment, and others, which would have triggered an economic crisis in Romania that would be difficult to overcome.

In addition to the fear of being replaced by the Soviets, Ceaușescu feared a military intervention against Romania. Because of this, he abandoned the exceptional economic liberalization started after taking power, which allowed the expansion of the economic space for private enterprises, which had made possible the appearance of trustees, the flourishing of the internal market etc. These measures had been adopted during the National Conference of the PCR in 1967. Ceaușescu feared that the existence of these stimulating and profitable economic activities for the population, which had not been implemented in other socialist states, not accepted by the Bolshevik ideology, could be a reason for Romania to be accused by the Soviets of endangering socialism, reason enough for a forceful intervention against the country and its leaders.

So Nicolae Ceaușescu's visit to China represented a moment with great implications and security risks for Romania, from the USSR and its satellites. These security risks have changed both the Romanian political line in the economic field, as well as a heightened ideological rigor, manifested by the establishment of a set of rigid measures, called "Cultural Revolution", proposed in July 1971 by the CC secretary of the RCP with propaganda problems, Ion Iliescu and adopted by the Plenary CC of the RCP from July 3-5, 1971. Romania, by the unanimous decision of the collective leadership, decided to return to the very rigorous Marxist-Leninist ideological dogma, in order not to endanger its national independence which he had conquered it with difficulty and to be able to continue the accelerated development of the country, without brutal intervention from the USSR. The entire socio-economic and political life of Romania took a different

¹ Larry L. Watts, *Op. cit.*, p. 583

² Lavinia Betea, *Op. cit.*, p. 226

turn after Ceaușescu's visit to China and after the conflict with the Soviet Union generated by the visit to China.

In August 1971, after Henry Kissinger had made a secret visit to China (July 9-11, 1971), in a meeting, the Romanian ambassador to the USA, Corneliu Bogdan, congratulated the US Secretary of State for this visit. Corneliu Bogdan mentioned that the Romanians and the Chinese discussed the US on a constructive basis, on Ceaușescu's visit to China in June 1971. The Romanian head of mission stated that Ceaușescu considered the trends at the global level to be positive, one of the arguments being the normalization relations between the USA and China. The Romanian ambassador emphasized the Romanian side's concern for the reaction of the USSR following Nicolae Ceaușescu's visit to Beijing, visible through various gestures or attacks in the press, directly or through intermediaries. Romania's relations with China and the mediation of China's relations with the USA led the USSR to announce that they would carry out military maneuvers of the Warsaw Treaty on Romania's borders.

That year, 1971, Henry Kissinger abandoned the old practice, begun during the terms of President Francis Delano Roosevelt, of briefing the Kremlin authorities on their diplomatic and geostrategic endeavors. Moscow was not informed from Washington about the US Secretary of State's visit to China¹.

¹ Certainly, the Soviets found out, possibly also from the Romanian ambassador in Washington. In fact, the Romanian ambassador to Washington, Corneliu Bogdan, of Jewish ethnicity, real name Corneliu Grünberg, was being pursued by the anti-KGB counter-espionage unit of the Romanian Security, suspected, and then proven of providing secret information to the USSR and the USA. He was married to the ex-wife of one of the first Soviet advisers to the Romanian Security Service, herself a KGB officer. General Ioan Talpeș, former director of SIE and deputy prime minister of Romania with national security issues, said that Ambassador Corneliu Bogdan was a double agent, representing "the most damaging Soviet penetration" of Romanian diplomacy. Because of this, in 1976, after nine years of the diplomatic mission in Washington, Corneliu Bogdan was recalled from his post. Corneliu Bogdan, fearing not to give accounts for his triplesinformation activities, remains in Washington DC, under the protection of the American secret services and asks for political asylum and American citizenship. The granting of US citizenship to an official of a foreign state, other than the sphere of influence of the USSR, is evidence of the fact that he had previously rendered important services to the US government. The State Department protested this replacement of the Romanian ambassador in Washington DC. In his youth, Corneliu Bogdan had worked in the censorship of the press in Romania, then as the chief of staff of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ana Pauker (Hanna Rabinsohn). In 1989, although he was retired, he was reactivated by the US secret services and sent to Romania, with a view to actions related to the overthrow of the Ceaușescu regime. He was protected and hidden with the knowledge of the Security, which cooperated with foreign secret services for the removal of Nicolae Ceaușescu. On December 22, 1989, he was appointed minister secretary of state at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the first FSN government led by Petre Roman. On January 2, 1990, he was found dead in his office, probably murdered. The death certificate noted "aortic aneurysm". See Larry L. Watts, *Op.*

The difficult situation in Romania had reached because of the privileged relations with China and the mediation of the establishment of relations between China and the USA, which led President Richard Nixon to receive Ambassador Corneliu Bogdan on September 17, 1971, in a symbolic gesture of attention special granted to Romania¹.

In October 1971, during the 26th Session of the UN General Assembly, the People's Republic of China became a full member, including a member of the Security Council. In this way, the People's Republic of China replaced the Republic of China (Taiwan) in the UN. Romania was among the states that initiated the UN Resolution that gave the People's Republic of China the world influence previously held by Taiwan.

On March 21, 1972, President Richard Nixon received Manea Mănescu, Deputy Prime Minister of the Romanian government, at the White House and referred to his historic visit to China in February 1972, emphasizing that the leaders of some socialist states did not regard this visit with good eyes, considering that it was directed against the USSR. President Nixon showed that Romania had a unique position, having good relations both with the USSR and with China, and President Nicolae Ceaușescu correctly evaluated the visit. Manea Mănescu told the US president that his visit to Beijing was publicized at the level of public opinion in Romania, including the full text of the joint communiqué, emphasizing that this diplomatic moment had historical importance for international relations.

In August 1973, a new meeting of the Consultative Council of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty took place. And on this occasion, the leaders of the socialist states subject to the USSR went on an attack against China and complained that Romania repeatedly blocks the critical point of view of the socialist states regarding China. Ceaușescu protested, defended China, and threatened to leave the meeting if the delegates to the conference continued to criticize China.

As early as July 1973, Mao Zedong had designated the Soviet Union as enemy no. 1 of China, and Romania being friend no. 1 of China had to bear the negative impact on its relations with Moscow and the states totally subject to it. The fact that Romania was friend no. 1 of China was also signaled by a diplomatic report of the Embassy of the German Democratic Republic in Bucharest, Political Section, entitled "The relationship between RS Romania and China and its position towards the current policies of the Chinese leadership". The report indicated that Romania considered China as a counterweight to the power of the Soviet Union.

In May 1974, Emil Bodnăraș had a 2.5-hour discussion with the US ambassador in Bucharest, Harry Barnes Jr. On this occasion, Bodnăraș showed that

cit. pp. 280, 444, 517. The important American historian also showed how Corneliu Bogdan misinformed the American authorities, in that case, in the interests of the USSR.

¹ According to the usual protocol at the White House, ambassadors were not received by the president, but only by the secretary of state

in a meeting between Brezhnev and Ceaușescu, which took place in Warsaw, the leader of the Soviet Union wasted two hours trying to get Ceaușescu to agree to the condemnation of China in an official OTV statement. Considering the principle of unanimity of decisions within the OTV, Romania's veto blocked the approach of the others¹.

On November 3, 1974, Nicolae Ceaușescu received in Bucharest Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State of the United States of America. The conversation was attended by George Macovescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Harry Barnes jr., US Ambassador to Bucharest, and Sergiu Celac, interpreter.

Among the international political issues raised by the Romanian leader was China, which he said can no longer be neglected and kept aside in international negotiations. Ceaușescu emphasized the fact that in the coming year China will play an increasingly important role on the world political stage, will become an increasingly powerful force, and will have an increasingly difficult word to say. Also, Ceaușescu said that wrong assessments are being made on some internal problems in China. Kissinger said that he fully agreed with Ceaușescu and that the US had informed the People's Republic of China that it was ready to negotiate with it everything it had negotiated and was still negotiating with the Soviet Union. As for China's rise, Kissinger said it was also due to the US, which diplomatically helped China out of isolation. He said: "We take the Chinese very seriously"².

Since the beginning of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Romania and China, the economic component has been given importance. However, partly due to distance, economic exchange developed much more slowly than political cooperation. It was not until 1976 that these exchanges reached the value of \$1 billion, a value of the dollar approximately 15 times greater than the value of the dollar at the time of writing³. The peak reached by the economic exchanges between China and Romania was the year 1980⁴, when the volume of commercial exchanges exceeded two billion \$⁵.

In May 1978, Nicolae Ceaușescu visited China, and during August 16-21, 1978, the Chinese president, Hua Guo-Feng, visited Bucharest. Prior to this last visit, Radio Moscow and the Soviet press criticized China's aggressive policy, presented in the same context as the aggressiveness of the US and NATO and its

¹ Larry L. Watts, *Op. cit.*, pp. 671, 679 și 686. On this occasion, Bodnăraș told the US ambassador that Romania had considered leaving the Warsaw Pact, as Albania had done in 1968, but decided to stay in order to be able to ask questions, be informed of the intentions of its "allies" and means, to veto certain initiatives that they consider harmful. Bodnăraș also lamented in harsh terms the continuity of Russian and Soviet imperialism. This was a favorite subject of Mao Zedong.

² România BreakingNews – RBN Press / romaniabreakingnews.ro., (12.07.2022)

³ During 1976 the value of an ounce of gold averaged \$120. In January 2022, the value of an ounce of gold was \$1,806, and in July 2022, an ounce of gold cost almost \$2,000.

⁴ Florea Dumitrescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 7

⁵ Ion Buzatu, *RP Chineză – o superputere pentru mileniul trei*, in "Dosarele istoriei", Vol. II, No. 6 (11), 1997, p. 35

support by some partner politicians, alluding to the Romanian leaders. Also, the Soviet press mentioned that Romania has historical debts to the Soviet Union, as the Western powers supported the territorial dismemberment of Romania, an approach blocked by the USSR. It was an allusion to the fact that Stalin was the one who, contrary to the views of the USA, Great Britain, and France, imposed, at the end of the Second World War, that Transylvania should belong to Romania. These assessments from the Soviet press were made one day before the meeting of Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev with Nicolae Ceaușescu, from Crimea.

As a result of these criticisms, Nicolae Ceaușescu broke the usual protocol of the meetings of the leaders of the socialist states with the leaders of the USSR and stayed in Crimea for only a few hours. After returning to the country, the daily newspaper "Scînteia", the official newspaper of the PCR, criticized the fact that artificial problems are being created among the socialist states, which do not exist, and which are harmful to the prestige of the socialist states worldwide. In "Scînteia" it was stated that these artificial problems are created to justify interference in the internal problems of socialist parties and states.

At the same time, the "Spark" rejected the Soviet claim that the Chinese PR was an enemy and that it had turned some socialist states against others. It was shown that the Romanian and Chinese people are linked by "old traditions of solidarity in the fight against foreign domination and oppression"¹.

At the same time, the newspaper "Hsinhua" from China made a report from Bucharest, in which it was reported about the struggle of the Romanian people for freedom against the Roman, Ottoman, and Russian empires, emphasizing that the Russian Empire was "the most cunning and deceitful of all three". The Soviet press, like that of the European states, did not let itself down and in the days following President Hua Guo-Feng's visit to Bucharest, it launched repeated attacks on China's policy and, without mentioning Romania, on the joining states China, selling for "twenty pieces of silver". The Soviets harshly criticized the existence of a Romania-Yugoslavia-Albania "axis", behind which China would have been².

On December 16, 1978, the document titled the Joint Communiqué of the People's Republic of China, and the United States of America on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations was published simultaneously in Washington and Beijing. It was the culmination of two decades of efforts, to which Romania made an essential contribution³. Taiwan protested vehemently and considered this a betrayal by the Washington administration.

¹ "Scînteia", August 8, 1978

² Larry L. Watts, *Cei dintâi vor fi cei din urmă. România și sfârșitul Războiului Rece* (published in English with the title *Extorting Peace. Romania, the Clash within The Warsaw Pact & The End of the Cold War*), pp. 168-172

³ The proceedings were secret, unknown to public opinion, and not too many politicians from the states involved. US President Richard Nixon was keen to take credit for establishing these diplomatic relations with China. Because of this, although he asked for

The establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the US led to a chain reaction. More than a hundred other states have established diplomatic relations with China, which, as I have shown, entered as a member of the UN. This change in the political orientation of China, in the sense of its exit from the isolation in which it had voluntarily placed itself, from political strategies, led to the crystallization of the political line initiated by Deng Xiaoping, known as "One country, two systems". The model had already been implemented with great success in Yugoslavia, a country that had come to have social-economic indicators above the European Union average. In justifying the political decision of the Chinese leadership, Deng Xiaoping started from a very old Chinese proverb that says that it does not matter what color the cat is, but whether it catches mice or not. China abandoned the Maoist "cultural revolution" and initiated, after 1978, a long series of reforms and openness to the world, which led to remarkable transformations, especially in the economic sphere.

The Ceaușescu regime, under pressure and fear of Moscow, maintained the rigid system implemented in 1971. After 1985, Mihail Gorbachev came to the leadership of the USSR, a leader who switched "with guns and baggage" to the side of the experimental promotion of social-economic models that did not fit the Soviet Union. Romania considered that the Gorbachevist model did not suit it, it considered that the country had gone through some of those experiences, it felt even more threatened by Gorbachev's policy and closed itself even more inside the political line triggered after 1971. China understood Romania's reasons and the good relations were still preserved, until the collapse of the regime in 1989 and the takeover of Romania by the West and the multinational corporations that control it today.

Thus, after 1978, clear differences appeared between China and Romania regarding the approach to the economic model. China was moving towards the Americanization of its expanding economy, and while Romania was becoming increasingly isolated from its adversaries in the socialist camp, Moscow's active measures to isolate Romania gave the expected results. Romania's leadership had decided in 1971 that the deviation from the political-economic line of the Soviet Union was a major risk factor for national security and feared a military intervention against it, which deprived it of important economic-social prospects.

However, in December 1989, the secret services of the USSR and its allies, in close cooperation with the Western secret services, will attack Romania and canceled its sovereignty and independence through which the country had managed to develop economically and socially, and will push the long and destructive road of transition to a colonial-type regime, today the country is at the

Romania's support, although he knew everything that was done in the decade before he took over the US presidency, he presented the events as if they were his work, also invoking Pakistan's support, which he had called, but which had been accepted by China only as a messenger (postman) between the two sides, while Romania had been a negotiator.

mercy of multinational companies that have seized all its natural and human resources. In fact, the whole propaganda against the "communist" regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu was not specifically directed against the political ideology, but especially against the sovereign nationalism promoted by the leadership in Bucharest.

The political lesson of Deng Xiaoping was not ignored by Romania, but it was not implemented for the reason of not giving reasons for aggression to Moscow. No country subject to Moscow has adopted the highly successful Chinese model that has turned China, at the time of writing, into the world's third-largest military power and second-world economic and financial power.

In the 40 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the US and China and the launch of China's "One Country, Two Systems" policy, the US economy has grown 10 times, and China's has grown 100 times.

In 1979, when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan to prop up the client government there, the Chinese saw it as an aggressive move by Moscow to surround their country with satellite states of the USSR. As a result, the Chinese allied with the US and Pakistan to support the Mujahedeen, respectively the Afghan guerrillas who successfully opposed the Soviet invasion.

When Saddam Hussein invaded Iran, causing the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), the US, USSR, and France supported Iraq. China, North Korea, and Libya helped the Iranians. Before the war, Romania had sold weapons to both states. As a result, during the war, both states requested the Bucharest government for equipment, armaments, ammunition, and servicing, Romania selling these products to both belligerent camps.

In the last years of the socialist state regime in Romania, several official visits took place between the party, state, and government leaderships of the two countries. These visits were in line with the very good relations between the two countries and parties but did not bring new elements to bilateral and international relations. Nicolae Ceaușescu's visits to China from April 13-17, 1982, October 7-12, 1985, and October 14-18, 1988, are worth mentioning. From May 5-10, 1983, the general secretary of the CPC, Hu Yaobang, visited Romania. On August 27-29, 1984, the president of the Chinese Republic, Li Xiannian visited Romania. During July 2-6, 1986, the Premier of the State Council of China, Zhao Ziyang, visited Romania. Also, during November 21-25, 1983, the Prime Minister of Romania, Constantin Dăscălescu, made an official visit to China.

The Romania-China relationship had the depth and continuity typical of strategic partners, in its meaning today, with the parties providing mutual support and showing solidarity in difficult moments. This bilateral and multilateral relationship, adopted by the socialist state regime in Bucharest, exceeded the limits of a political game designed to erode Soviet hegemony, by supporting a second pole of power within the world socialist state system. During several generations of leaders, the Romanian side promoted a friendly relationship with China, which was also taken over in the collective mind.

Romania's relationship with China was not one that should be viewed only from the perspective of determining an erosion of Soviet hegemony, by supporting the second pole of power among the socialist states, but a much broader one that went beyond the strict framework of specific political and economic interests.

During the Euro-Atlantic regime, Romania also maintained the red thread of respectful relations with China, including the recognition of one China and the fact that Taiwan is a component part of China. The consolidation of traditional political relations, supported by all Romanian political leaders, regardless of political color, led in 2004, Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to Romania, to the signing of the Joint Declaration on the establishment of an Ample Partnership of Friendship and Cooperation. Its implementation has always been tacitly blocked by the European Commission and the Western states which, for over two decades, have been making the most important decisions concerning the political, economic-financial, and social-cultural life of Romania.

Abbreviations

CC = Central Committee
CPEx = RCP CC Executive Political Committee
CPSU = Communist Party of the Soviet Union
FSN = National Salvation Front
KGB = USSR State Security Committee
NATO = Organization of the North Atlantic Treaty
RCP = Romanian Communist Party
SIE = Foreign Intelligence Service
USSR = Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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