

December 23, 1989

Romania: Situation Report□□□

Citation:

"Romania: Situation Report", December 23, 1989, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Approved for Release by the Central Intelligence Agency, October 29, 2019.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/209519>

Summary:

An analysis of the National Salvation Front and their decisions to reform Romania.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

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6.2(d)

ROMANIA: Situation Report

Struggling To Form a Government

Ion Iliescu, former Foreign Minister Corneliu Manescu, and prominent dissident Doina Cornea have joined in a provisional government called the National Salvation Front. They have issued a sweeping program that calls for a free election in April and continued participation in the Warsaw Pact. Scattered resistance by Ceausescu supporters continues in Bucharest and elsewhere. [redacted]

6.2(d)

Comment: Longtime Western-oriented opponents of President Ceausescu, backed by top military personnel, appear to be rapidly filling the power vacuum. The new leaders are already demonstrating their ability to pull together quickly a comprehensive program under extreme pressure. Their ability to complete the agenda depends on maintaining unity. [redacted]

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Ceausescu's Fate

Unconfirmed Romanian press reports indicate Nicolae Ceausescu and presumably his wife were arrested in Tirgoviste yesterday while attempting to flee the country. His son Nicu was captured later in the day and paraded on Romanian television after allegedly trying to rally security forces in Sibiu and to take hostages. [redacted]

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[redacted] the new government has deputized citizens to arrest pro-Ceausescu agitators; security forces are already the target of popular vengeance. [redacted]

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Comment: The Ceausescu family and political cronies are likely to be the first targets for popular retribution. Although the government is calling for due process, the potential for indiscriminate violence and executions is high. [redacted]

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Soviet Response

The Congress of People's Deputies yesterday adopted President Gorbachev's proposal declaring support for the Romanian people and a desire for continued close relations. A Foreign Ministry spokesman said Moscow hopes there will be a peaceful resolution as soon as possible and expressed concern about instability. The Soviets reportedly are protesting the regime's violence to the Romanian Ambassador in Moscow. During yesterday's session of the Congress of People's Deputies, Gorbachev noted Moldavian concern about the volatile situation in Romania. The leader of the Moldavian Popular Front has implicitly called for more democracy in Romania. [redacted]

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Comment: Most Moldavians are ethnic Romanians and receive Romanian television and radiobroadcasts; they undoubtedly are following events there closely. The Moldavian Republic consists of

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the Soviet Moldavian ASSR, established in 1924, and Bessarabia, annexed by the USSR from northeastern Romania in 1940 under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Soviet leaders fear, probably correctly, that a more liberal regime in Romania will fuel Moldavian nationalism and induce nationalists to seek reunification with Romania. [redacted]

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Other Foreign Reactions

East European governments unanimously welcomed Ceausescu's overthrow and expressed hope it would lead to the democratic renewal of Romania. Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria expressed optimism that their currently strained relations with Bucharest will improve. [redacted]

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Comment: Ceausescu's fall will probably bring about an immediate decrease in the tension between Hungary and Romania. Any long-term improvement in ties, however, requires pledges from the new Romanian regime that it is prepared to protect the cultural rights of Hungarians living in Transylvania. Romania's neighbors almost certainly are concerned that the collapse of a authority may unleash a wave of refugees. [redacted]

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Foreign Aid Needs

One of the new government's priorities probably will be to improve economic and political relations with its neighbors and the West. Hungary has already shipped some humanitarian assistance, probably medical aid to Timisoara, and Bulgaria is discussing measures for providing aid, including food. [redacted]

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Comment: Initially, the new government is likely to call for immediate shipments of food and other humanitarian aid to relieve domestic shortages. Over the longer term, the government probably will use Ceausescu's ouster to seek trade concessions and broader financial and technical assistance. [redacted]

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