

RUXANDRA ALEXIANU*

ROMANIA AND THE TRANSNISTRIAN WAR

The outbreak of conflict occurring simultaneously with the collapse of the Soviet Union constitutes an important research topic for various disciplines in social sciences. Regarding our subject, namely the evolution of the Romanian state's reporting to the issue of the emergence and evolution of this conflict (March–July 1992), international approaches are generally of political nature, while in historical studies regarding post-communist Romania's foreign policy which address the relationship with Moldova, the subject of positioning towards the conflict in Transnistria is treated only in terms of Romania's direct involvement in the quadripartite mechanism for peaceful settlement, starting with March 1992, positioning which was later identified as the third foreign policy decision sequence on the conflict in Moldova.

The appearance of the separatist region of Transnistria topic in many recently studies is explained by the scientific interest which they give rise to through the analysis of developments that occurred after the conflicts in the former Soviet spaces tangent to the Black Sea; as it is known, among the former Soviet republics, Georgia, Moldova and lately, Ukraine, have manifested the most important gaps in the maintenance of Russian influence within the borders of the former Soviet empire. The evolution of conflicts in the last two decades provides the framework for a thorough reflection, focused primarily on the construction of the methodological model applicable to ethno-political conflicts, as part of utmost importance for contemporary and recent history of the previously mentioned area.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the particular consequences of this phenomenon on the system of international relations caused by the shift in the bipolar paradigm led to a foreign policy rearrangement of most of the states, individually. The three almost simultaneous phenomena, but which had specific dimensions – the shift in foreign policy of states at the periphery of the Soviet bloc towards Western structures – global dimension; national liberation movements in Soviet republics which led to their sovereignty and later to their independence – regional dimension and the appearance of intra-state ethno-political conflict in some of these republics – internal dimension – have constituted fundamental references for this analysis.

Using fundamental concepts of foreign policy analysis (foreign policy process, sequence and action¹) we managed a chronological and thematic delimitation of the

* Phd in History, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iași.

¹ Regarding the foreign policy analysis concepts see also: Valerie M. Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2014, p. 4–6; Richard C. Snyder, *Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan,

main sequences of foreign policy decisions of the Romanian state on the internal evolutions of the Moldovan SSR in general, and its reporting towards the conflict in Transnistria in particular, as follows: 1) Considering the developments in the Moldovan SSR as an internal affair of the USSR (1990–August 27, 1991); 2) Supporting the independence and territorial integrity of Moldova (August 27, 1991 – March 1992); 3) Direct involvement in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict (March–July 1992), and 4) De facto disengagement from the conflict settlement process after the Snegur – Yeltsin meeting in July 1992.

If the first two sequences concern the general reporting to Moldova, the last two sequences are directly linked to the conflict in Transnistria. Next, we will analyze the main directions of the Romanian state's foreign policy concerning the developments left of the Nistru river starting with the outbreak of the conflict between separatists and the authorities in Chişinău (March 2nd 1992) and leading up to the Snegur – Yeltsin ceasefire Convention (July 21st 1992).

The documents used², which cover in terms of the provided information the three fundamental references necessary for a consistent foreign policy analysis (foreign policy decision making process, foreign policy decision and action), provide a critical mass of information necessary for a detailed understanding of the evolution of the Romanian state's reporting to the evolutions in the Moldovan SSR/Moldova during 1990–1992 and to the issue that interests us – the conflict in Transnistria (March–July 1992). The thus available documents for this period, show the picture of Romania's foreign policy in general for the first two years following the Revolution in December 1989 and, moreover, largely provides the information needed for outlining the decision-making process as well as the decision sequence and foreign policy actions of the Romanian state on the ethno-political conflict in Transnistria.

Regarding Transnistria, levels of analysis of Romania's foreign policy concerning this matter for the period between 1990–1992, derives directly from the evolution steps of Romania's foreign policy towards the Moldovan SSR/Republic of Moldova for the same period³. The four identified foreign policy decision sequences are founded based on precisely this link and subscribe, obviously, to the evolution of Romania's foreign policy towards the USSR, Russian Federation starting with 1991, but are also a result of the decision maker's perception of the transformations in the region.

The beginning of 1992 is marked by the continuous efforts of the Romanian diplomacy to get closer to Western structures. Policy towards developments in the Soviet space (the USSR – CSI transformation) accounted for the second set of concerns for the Romanian MFA, relations with Moldova and the policy concerning the evolutions left of the Nistru river occupying a central role in this context. At the beginning of this year we could notice a deeper closeness between Romania and Moldova, a resurgence in Romania's foreign policy to support the newly independent

2002; James N. Rosenau, *Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy*, in R. Barry Farrell (ed.), *Approaches to Comparative and International Politics*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1966, p. 115–169; Scott Burchill, *Theories of International Relations*, fourth edition, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 23.

² Adrian Năstase (ed.), *România după Malta. 875 de zile la Externe* [Romania after Malta. 875 days at Foreign Affairs], Vol. 1–10, Bucureşti, Fundația Nicolae Titulescu, 2006–2012.

³ See also Ion Calafeteanu (coord.), *Istoria politicii externe româneşti în date*, Bucureşti, Editura Enciclopedică, 2003, *passim*; Dragoş Zaharia, *Politica externă a României de la izolare la începerea negocierilor de aderare la Uniunea Europeană*, Târgovişte, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2014, *passim*.

state and to amplify discussions and diplomatic actions aimed at pursuing the „German model” in terms of the issue of unification with Moldova⁴.

All of these measures aimed at bringing Moldova closer to the Romanian state, at an internal level along side with the support of the cause of Moldova’s independence and territorial integrity, were overshadowed by the outbreak of the Transnistrian conflict on March 2nd 1992, the same day that Moldova, with Romania’s support, was to become a UN member, thus receiving its much sought international recognition.

The onset of the conflict represents the chronological reference point for the third sequence of foreign policy decision – direct involvement in the conflict regulation (March–July 1992). Thus, regarding the implementation of Romania’s foreign policy decisions concerning the external phenomenon – the conflict in Transnistria – this period coincides with the one of foreign policy action. This is why the majority of the works referring to Romania’s policy towards the conflict in Transnistria stop at presenting only this period in which the Romanian state’s positioning is visible through the direct involvement in conflict resolution. The analysis of the first two decision sequences shows that the foreign policy towards the phenomenon of conflict transposed into inaction as a result of variables arising during the decision-making process, particularly those related to the transformations of the USSR and later of the former Soviet space.

Romania was involved in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict throughout its development (March–July 1992), diplomatic efforts which consisted in the participation in the quadripartite Commission alongside the Russian Federation, Moldova and Ukraine, but also in the support of the territorial integrity of Moldova towards Western officials. The statements of the Romanian MFA are also an important indicator of Romania’s direct involvement in supporting Chisinau’s position towards the conflict.

The first official reaction of the Romanian diplomacy toward the armed conflict has resulted in an official statement by the Romanian MFA two days after the start of the violent confrontations⁵. Throughout the month of April, three more such documents were issued (the second of which bore the letterhead of the Government of Romania), while for May and June, the concerns were exposed through a single declaration per month.

For the international community, the message sent by Romania in these statements was related to the possibility of destabilization in the region by assessing

⁴ See also: *I do not want to judge the reasons why President Snegur signed the act*, Liviu Vălenaș interview with Adrian Năstase, in “Baricada”, No. 3 (106), January 21st, 1992, and *Brainstorming cu ziaristii*, January 21st, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 164–165. In the first official meeting of that year with Romanian journalists, Romanian Foreign Minister presented the measures to be adopted in the near future on the relationship with Moldova. The stated goal was the “solution that goes to the union”, but using language that does not “scare” Europe and does not “sound like a territorial claim”. A proposal from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the voice of Foreign Minister, was that the press should create “the necessary pressure” so that Foreign Affairs *apparatus* will appear to be forced into taking concrete measures regarding Moldova. A new structure set up for approximation to Moldova, after the dissolution of the Undersecretariat for Moldova, was the Interministerial Committee for Moldova, a structure much more important institutional hierarchy and which constitutes an important indicator of the evolution of increasing Romania’s interest in the left bank of the Prut river. Another approach in this respect for 1992 was the integration of Moldova into the structures or in regional cooperation projects that Romania took part, for example in terms of economic cooperation between the countries bordering the Black Sea.

⁵ *Declarația MAE referitoare la acțiunile violente din Republica Moldova*, March 4th 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 484–485.

separatist actions as “an attempt to violate the territorial integrity and to politically destabilize Moldova”. Gradually, diplomatic language will evolve to direct condemnation of Russia’s involvement in the conflict in Transnistria in the last of the series of statements issued by the Romanian MFA.

Since March 1992, we can state, after going through all the available sources, that the first item on the Romanian MFA’s agenda in the months that followed the outbreak of hostilities was related to the Republic of Moldova and regarded, in particular, the conflict in Transnistria.

In the period immediately following the outbreak of hostilities in the districts left of the Nistru river, diplomatic efforts of the Romanian MFA were directed mainly towards Washington, in order to receive U.S. support, and to Moscow, asking for the termination of support for Transnistrian leaders. On the other hand, the Bucharest diplomacy had to face the wave of propaganda from Moscow which accused Romania of direct involvement in the conflict by supplying weapons and personal for the fights.

In the months that followed, there was a considerable Romanian diplomatic effort mainly directed towards the situation in Transnistria. An important decision in this regard was presenting in all political, diplomatic and academic manifestations of Romanian diplomats, especially those of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a message related to the fighting in Moldova; initially, the first month, within the message indicators we do not find the direct involvement of Russia’s 14th Army in the conflict. Romania therefore became the main ally of Moldova in defending the status quo and a good ambassador of Moldova’s interests at the table of the most important regional and universal vocation organizations.

At the first meeting of the quadripartite Commission at the expert level (March 1992), the proposals of the Russian Federation were presented and concerned the need to involve representatives on the left bank of the Dniester in the process of peace consultations, but also the stopping of any forceful measures of the leadership at Chisinau.

Immediately after this first meeting of the quadripartite Commission at the expert level, at the Romanian MFA level, a crisis cell concerning Transnistria was created, the first special internal mechanism convened for the conflict in Transnistria and which states the importance given by the decision maker to the important evolutions and implications including on internal security. The first meeting⁶ took place on March 2nd 1992 with the participation from the MFA staff and national security officials. Information is transmitted through these channels without nominating the participants in the discussion. The scenario of Romania’s military involvement was becoming, in the eyes of the participants at this meeting, worrying both in terms of automatic involvement of Ukraine, but also in terms of the rumors circulating at that time in Western embassies in Romania. One of these, the most dangerous for the Romanian state, resumed the older threat to the territory of Romania, which Moldova (the historic region) would have to be ceded to the Republic of Moldova, in case of adverse developments and a direct war involving Romania, Russia and Ukraine. Also from the category of threats to Romania’s security is the idea of federalization, to which there was apparently interest in Moldova to form a confederation of Romanian states, but also from representatives of Hungarians which insisted on the “internationalization of the issue of minorities”. Moreover, all diplomatic signals from outside the country, “from all sides”, warned about the risk of the actual involvement of Romania, with “fantastic consequences”⁷.

⁶ *Celulă de criză privind Transnistria*, April 2nd 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 14–16.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

The 14th Army's passing under the command of Russia (April 3rd 1992) caused a change in the foreign policy speech on the actors involved in the conflict in Transnistria. Hence the thesis we will find in almost all further declarations of Romanian diplomats that the 14th Army's intervention can be interpreted as an act of aggression against an independent state.

In this difficult context, including in terms of internal security, as results from comments of representatives of secret services in Romania, in his initial phase of the conflict, an attempt was made to get closer to Ukraine, whose interests seemed, at least at this stage, to coincide with those of Romania, of stability in Moldova in the context in which Romania declared it was against the internationalization of the conflict at the CSCE or UN.

Diplomatic prerogatives in connection with the process of conflict settlement fell, for this first stage, in the task of the Romanian and Russian MFA. And in what concerned the diffusion of Moldova's position abroad, at the request of the Moldovan diplomats⁸, communication channels from Romania were used, namely the *Rompres* press agency.

In accordance with the Helsinki Understanding of March 23rd 1992, between the Foreign Ministers of the member countries of the quadripartite Commission, political consultations between experts from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs were held between March 31st and April 1st 1992⁹. At this level, it was established that the process of settlement in the quadripartite formula of the Transnistrian conflict was to continue, respecting the territorial integrity and independence of Moldova.

All internal mechanisms with foreign prerogatives were activated in this period: Advisory Council, crisis cell, the Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs. In the transcripts of interventions in such meetings we can also find the principles that were the basis of Romania's involvement in the settlement process: the first, "to avoid any military involvement" primarily due to the lack of Western support for such measures and second, which referred to the operability of the interdepartmental crisis group, body created this time within the MFA, with attributions strictly related to the conflict in Moldova.

An interesting scenario released in early April by some representatives who participated in discussions on the developments in Moldova was the one related to the idea of the stated constituted of Novorussia, Transnistria, Odessa, southern Basarabia – Gagauzia, and Crimea with access to the Black Sea. Another scenario was the one also argued in a mission of the crisis cell, according to which there was an Eltin – Kravciucuk understanding concerning conflict hot spots with the goal of maintaining Russian influence in the region. Lack of information on the Russian real purposes and interests behind the conflict in Transnistria led to different scenarios concerning the Russian sphere of influence.

Regarding the international involvement, Romania further focused especially on seeking American support for Romania's policy regarding the situation in Transnistria, through informing the American officials on mission in Bucharest¹⁰. From these discussions it appears that the United States have urged the moderation of Romania's position, while opting, at that time, for the local solution rather than the internationalization

⁸ *Telefon Chişinău*, April 4th 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 46.

⁹ *Declaraţia MAE privind situaţia din Republica Moldova*, April 2nd, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 30-32.

¹⁰ *Adrian Năstase, ministru de Externe al României, primeşte în audienţă pe John R. Davis, ambasadorul SUA la Bucureşti, şi pe Robert Hutchings, directorul pentru Europa de Est de la Departamentul Securităţii Naţionale al SUA*, April 6th, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 48-52.

of the conflict, the same position as Romania. Although in this period immediately after the conflict, the Romanian diplomacy tried to draw attention to the vital role of the 14th Army in this conflict, these statements have not received any echo at least not from Americans, who did not consider at that time, April 1992, that the 14th Army was affecting the territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova.

Immediately after informing U.S. officials, the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs headed to Chisinau, where he was to take place at the second quadripartite Reunion of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The Reunion's works were opened on April 6th 1992, this time with the participation of ministers of Foreign Affairs: Adrian Năstase – Romania, Andrei Kozirev – Russian Federation, Anatoli Zlenko – Ukraine and Nicolae Tau – Moldova¹¹.

The proceedings of the quadripartite Commission Reunions (of April, May, June) lead us to the conclusion that the items on the discussion agenda were imposed by the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs who, starting with the work of the first Reunion (April 6th 1992), throughout his interventions, marched for the idea of granting a guarantee from all four participating countries, so that if there would be changes in the status of Moldova as an independent state, these four would recognize the right to self-determination of the population in the districts left of the Dniester. Thus, no more and no less, Russia demanded expressly that, in case of unification, Romania had to take a public commitment to respect the right to self-determination in Transnistria. Moreover, also as a suggested solution for the dissipation of “fears of the people of Transnistria”, Russia proposed the granting, by all four sides, of a mandate for the 14th Army to fulfill the peacekeeping operations. If Ukraine was willing to accept all Moscow's proposals¹², the Romanian representative vehemently opposed all of them, therefore pleading for Moldova's sovereignty, noninterference of external factors in this conflict, the lack of basis for such required guarantees, further marching for the idea that the 14th Army, once placed under Russian jurisdiction, became a “foreign army on the territory of a sovereign state”¹³, which represented, in less diplomatic terms, foreign occupation. The first Commission Reunion was also the occasion for the first diplomatic contact of Romanian officials with representatives of the people in Transnistria, who, as expected, supported Russia's position concerning the status of the region and the involvement of the 14th Army in resolving the conflict.

The Romanian Foreign Affairs Minister's interventions in all these Reunions were strong, given the usage of diplomatic language; legal issues were taken into consideration, regarding international law, respect for the independence and sovereignty of Moldova as a recognized state.

The interests of the leadership of Moldova in Romania's involvement in resolving this conflict were quantified and expressed by the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs as follows: connecting Moldova to the international community and the use of Romania as “element of pressure” in negotiations with Russia, which wouldn't risk total deterioration of the relations with Romania, given the improved relations with the US in the last period. The delimitation at the diplomatic level initiated by the Romanian President Ion Iliescu, from the existence of an interest of the Romanian state for

¹¹ *Reuniunea cvadripartită a miniștrilor de Externe ai Federației Ruse, României, Republicii Moldova și Ucrainei, cu participarea reprezentantului CSCE*, April 6th, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 53–63.

¹² See conversation in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 60–61.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 58.

Transnistria, which “has never been Romanian land”, a vision shared by at least a certain part of the mass media interested in territorial exchanges with Ukraine, did not coincide, for obvious reasons, with the Chisinau vision for the future of this region.

For the journalists’ questions about the future Romanian – Russian relations in the context of the escalating conflict, Adrian Năstase launched the scenario whereby, if the 14th Army would be directly involved in the conflict, on the separatists side, then the process of unification would be accelerated. Interestingly, a benefit of the outbreak of this conflict, noticed by Romanian diplomacy, was the propagation in West of historical information with the role of “propaganda for the union”.

Starting with late April, the existence of a “tendency of marginalization of Romania” was noticed within the quadripartite Commission and the change of position by Ukraine in the favor of a UN solution after it had proposed bringing into question the issue of conflict within the CSCE¹⁴. Furthermore, on April 25th, Russia forced the placing on the agenda of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSCE) of the situation in Transnistria as a distinct point¹⁵; Thus, the internationalization of the conflict in Transnistria was practically realized by Russia, after the diplomatic failure in the quadripartite Commission where it failed to impose its views mainly due to the strong opposition of Romania.

One important and necessary diplomatic message for the support of the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova was the visit of President Ion Iliescu, along with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adrian Năstase, in Moldova on May 18th–19th 1992¹⁶.

As of the end of May, in the MFA statements or those of the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the involvement of the 14th Army in the conflict was strongly condemned and formal demands were made for the beginning and urging of the withdrawal of the 14th Army from the territory of Moldova, which, according to the Romanian party, had become the “third party in the conflict”¹⁷.

In the following period, the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs started a campaign of interviews in the Romanian and Western press on the Romania – Republic of Moldova relation, in particular on developments in Transnistria. It is within these interviews that for the first time, the direct accusation of Ukraine for supporting separatists was made, in the larger context in which explanations were given concerning the mechanism of Romania’s exclusion from the quadripartite format of negotiations, due to “the effects of the participation”¹⁸ of the Romanian party and the tendency to transfer the competence of conflict settlement from the quadripartite Commission to the CSCE.

Also in the second Reunion of the quadripartite Commission with the participation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (May 24th 1992) Romania’s position was oriented towards the withdrawal of military equipment and the immediate start of discussions on the status of the presence of an army of a foreign state on the territory of a sovereign state, the 14th Army on Moldova’s territory.

¹⁴ *Celula de criză*, April 24th, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 258.

¹⁵ *Telefon Helsinki*, April 28th, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 277.

¹⁶ *Președintele României, Ion Iliescu, însoțit de Adrian Năstase, ministrul Afacerilor Externe, efectuează o vizită în Republica Moldova (18–19 mai)*, May 18th, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 375–376.

¹⁷ *Adrian Năstase, ministru de Externe al României, face o declarație de presă la întoarcerea de la Lisabona*, May 25th 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 422–423.

¹⁸ *Fără eforturi și tenacitate, tezaurul nu va reveni în țară*, interview Adrian Năstase for Radu G. Țeposu, in “Cuvântul”, No. 22 (121), May 25th–31st, 1992; *Poligonul transnistrean și principiul bicicletei*, Michael Milcah interview with Adrian Năstase, in “Românul”, May 25th–31st, 1992.

Shortly after the completion of the works of this Reunion, the Romanian MFA was informed by telephone by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova that the Russian and Ukrainian Presidents had agreed to exclude Romania from the settlement process, passing to a format of three¹⁹, but also of the proposals from Moscow regarding direct Moscow – Chisinau meetings for discussions regarding the 14th Army²⁰, while at Moscow, including at the official level, through declarations of the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, accusations against Romania concerning deliveries of weapons²¹ were resumed.

In the context of the idea of initiating a referendum in Moldova on the unification with Romania, idea which the Romanian MFA did not consider as an option for that moment²², the Parliament of the self-proclaimed Transnistrian republic proclaimed on June 2nd 1992, the republic's independence.

In the discussions with Russian officials that followed, the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs has firmly assumed the position of continuing joint efforts in the established formula of four, understanding Romania's presence in this format "as a valve to take over existing tension in the Romanian society (towards the relations with Moldova)"²³. It is the second time in the context of the development of Romanian-Moldovan relations, when the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adrian Năstase, chooses this policy of "open valves" in the context of existing pressure from a part of the public opinion in Romania and the opposition.

The London Reunion of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in June 1992 focused on the regional conflicts, primarily the ethno-political conflicts which emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union. CSCE involvement with logistical support from NATO in these conflicts will involve: sending CSCE observers, developing mechanisms and institutions specialized in settling such conflicts that emerged after the collapse of the USSR, the establishment of CSCE as having the leading role in regional conflicts, debating the conflict with the presence of all involved parties, of states as subjects of international law. At this decision it was decided that for the presence of foreign armies on the territory of a state, a understanding of the states in whose territory they are located was needed, which was a blow for Russian policy. The political decision that followed this reunion was that of the support for Baltic States in their effort to pressure Russia into withdrawing its troops, without any reference to the status of these troops in Moldova or Georgia.

Resumption of hostilities in June 1992 in Moldova required a new convocation of the Romanian CSAT (National Council for Security and Defence) in a meeting on the subject. Although the transcripts of this meeting are missing, in the notes of state secretary of Foreign Affairs, Traian Chebeleu, we find the two measures taken immediately at the political level, namely: Ion Iliescu – Boris Yeltsin and Mircea Snegur meeting for an immediate ceasefire and the measure of informing NATO member states ambassadors on these new developments right of the Prut river²⁴ given the decision of refusing participation of the Republic of Moldova to the CSI Collective

¹⁹ *Telefon Chişinău*, May 27th, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 427.

²⁰ *Telefon Chişinău*, May 28th, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 445.

²¹ *La Adrian Năstase*, May 31st, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 460.

²² *La Adrian Năstase*, June 2nd, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 474.

²³ *Adrian Năstase, ministru de Externe al României, primeşte în audienţă pe Felix Bogdanov, ambasadorul Federaţiei Ruse la Bucureşti*, June 3rd, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 478–483.

²⁴ *La Adrian Năstase*, June 22nd, 1992, în Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 594.

Security Treaty (May 1992) which clearly irritated the the Russian Federation, seems, as our clues confirm, was taken in consultation with or even at the recommendation of Romanian diplomacy²⁵.

In the context of the Conference on economic cooperation between the countries bordering the Black Sea²⁶ (with the participation of Georgia and Moldova), the most important meeting concerning the situation in Transnistria was held, one attended by the four presidents: Ion Iliescu, Mircea Snegur, Boris Yeltsin and Leonid Kravciuk²⁷ on June 25th, 1992. The positioning of the two sides emerged clearly and decisively during this meeting: on the one side, Ukraine and Russia demanding a special status of autonomy, independence for Transnistria²⁸, and on the other side, Romania and Moldova who believed that the key to solving the conflict lied in the withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory of Moldova²⁹. Following the tensioned discussions between Boris Yeltsin and Ion Iliescu concerning the final text of the Declaration on the quadripartite meeting and after the finalization the text by the four Ministers of Foreign Affairs who attended the meeting, from the press release³⁰ given to the press we remember the following points: an immediate ceasefire, disengagement of armed formations, ensuring the neutrality of the 14th Army and the establishment by the Moldovan Parliament of a special status for the districts in Transnistria.

One of the immediate measures taken, of particular importance with regard to Romania's position on the Transnistrian conflict, was the decision to prepare a letter, by the Romanian diplomacy but from Moldova, in order to notify the Security Council of the UN about the situation in Transnistria³¹. Thus, at this moment, Romania's policy was changed from the idea of regional solving of the conflict to the internationalization of it through the UN, decision for which the critical point was this meeting where Ukraine's positioning on Russia's side was made clear.

The US Secretary of State's initiative³² at the beginning of July 1991 towards the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Romania, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine was the first of the actions taken by the international environment on the internationalization of the conflict in Transnistria. Immediately after followed the CSCE. Decision on the situation in Moldova³³ of direct involvement in the conflict resolution, occasion with which, through this document, for the first time this institution expressed concern for the conflict in Transnistria. This document can be considered a turning point in the internationalization of the conflict and therefore in the removal of Romanian

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 595.

²⁶ See the text of the Declaration in *ibidem*, p. 616–620.

²⁷ *Întâlnire cvadripartită, la nivel înalt, a președinților Republicii Moldova, Mircea Snegur, al României, Ion Iliescu, al Federației Ruse, Boris Elțin, și al Ucrainei, Leonid Kravciuk, în legătură cu situația din Republica Moldova*, June 25th, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 622–631.

²⁸ See interventions of the two presidents, Ukrainian and Russian, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 625–627.

²⁹ View Mircea Snegur and Ion Iliescu interventions in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 622–624, 628–630.

³⁰ *Comunicat privind întâlnirea președinților Republicii Moldova, României, Federației Ruse și Ucrainei*, June 25th, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 631–643.

³¹ *La Adrian Năstase*, June 27th, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 645.

³² *Scrisoare adresată lui Adrian Năstase, ministru de Externe al României, de James A. Baker III, secretar de Stat al SUA, prin intermediul lui John R. Davis Jr., ambasadorul SUA la București*, July 1st, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 5–6.

³³ *Decizia Comitetului Înalților Funcționari ai CSCE privind situația din regiunile din estul republicii Moldova (Helsinki)*, July 2nd, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 17.

diplomats from the direct negotiation table, on which the influence of the change of position by the US, in favor of internationalization, was obvious.

Romania's participation at the CSCE Summit (June 8th–10th, 1992) at the highest level with President Ion Iliescu and Minister of Foreign Affairs Adrian Năstase, was marked, in all discussions with foreign representatives, by the question of the conflict in Moldova³⁴. The international environmental concerns against the outbreaks of conflict following the collapse of the USSR were also found in the final document of the CSCE Reunion, The challenge of change. Despite the insistence of the Romanian representatives, in the final document on the question of the withdrawal of foreign troops stationed in another state, only the Baltic States were mentioned, without Republic of Moldova.

Romania's support, all the diplomatic efforts undertaken by Bucharest were overshadowed by the Russo-Moldovan Convention on the principles of peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the Transnistria region of Moldova³⁵ signed by Boris Yeltsin and Mircea Snegur, July 21st, 1992 in Moscow, through which the quadripartite Commission was replaced with a Joint Control Commission composed of "representatives of the three parties engaged in the settlement", therefore eliminating Romania from the Transnistrian conflict settlement process. Thus, Romania, forced by these circumstances – the conflict internationalization and the pass from the quadripartite frame of negotiation to a bilateral Russia-Moldova one through the deal of the two Presidents – had to reorient its policy towards the conflict in Transnistria to a de facto disengagement from the settlement process, the last decision sequence which closes the Romanian state's reporting cycle on the phenomenon of the conflict in Moldova. Further efforts concerning the relation with the Republic of Moldova focused on supporting the independent paths through further expressed strong opposition internally, and especially in discussions with Western officials, against Moldova's accession to CIS.

Regarding the unification, it is gradually excluded from the diplomatic agenda of Romania, and in this discussion fundamental arguments are evoked in the opinion of foreign policy decision makers: Romaniano-phobia present in the Moldovan Parliament, economic problems related to Moldova's relations with states which were already members of the CIS, but also Russia who, at that time, according to the Romanian foreign policy maker was struggling "to dominate the area with the blessing of the great powers"³⁶.

Regarding the conflict in Transnistria, the last reference in 1992 is found in the dialogue between the Romanian Foreign Affairs Minister with the US Sub-secretary of State at the 47th session of the UN General Assembly (September 1992). On this occasion Năstase explicitly asked for US support for maintaining independence in the context of Russia's practice of "a sort of blackmail in Transnistria. They started the fire and now they pretend they want to extinguish it through peace-keeping" in order to

³⁴ See also Adrian Năstase, *ministru de Externe al României, are o întâlnire cu Catherine Lalumiere, secretar general al Consiliului European*, July 9th, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 75–78; Ion Iliescu, *președintele României, și Adrian Năstase, ministru de externe al României, au o întâlnire cu Barbara McDougall, ministrul Afacerilor Externe al Canadei*, July 9th, 1992, in Adrian Năstase (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 79–82.

³⁵ *Russia-Moldova agreement on the principles of peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the Transnistrian region of Moldova*, July 21st, 1992, in Anatol Țăranu, Mihai Gribincea (eds.), *Conflictul transnistrean. Colecție de documente și materiale (1989–2012)*, Vol. I (1989–1993), Chișinău, "Lexon-Prim" Publishing, 2012, p. 420–421.

³⁶ *Consiliul Consultativ al MAE*, September 1st, 1992, in Anatol Țăranu, Mihai Gribincea (eds.), p. 473.

attract Moldova in the C.I.S., an attempt to restore the Warsaw Treaty with a reduced number of members made up of only former Soviet republics³⁷.

In the months that followed, an attempt to resume the intensity of Romania's diplomatic activity on Moldova was made, but there is no more direct involvement in the settlement process of the Transnistrian conflict which will remain an internal matter of Moldova.

These foreign policy decision sequences should be regarded as peak moments of state involvement in the ongoing process of action, reaction and future actions at different levels and involving a number of different players, depending on the international situations at that time, but also through the process of decision making, essential in understanding the foreign policy of a state to a foreign entity of phenomenon such as the conflict in Moldova.

The stages of the decision-making process which range from the simple inquiry of information, or, in other words, from the recognition of the problem, to the framing and perception of the problem, to the most advanced stages which presuppose prioritization of goals, planning to account for unforeseen possibilities and evaluating options were thereby fully achieved in terms of Romania's reporting to the question of the appearance and evolution of the Transnistria conflict.

The Transnistrian conflict was the only one of a series of intrastate conflicts that erupted after the collapse of the USSR regarding which there was a deep interest and a direct involvement from Romania in order to "support the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Moldova". Participating, along with Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine in the Quadripartite Commission for peaceful settlement of the conflict constituted one of the most important foreign policy actions of the Romanian state towards the territories on the left side of the Prut river during 1990–1992. The Snegur – Yeltsin political deal on July 21st, 1992 showed the limits of Romanian policy towards the Republic of Moldova.

ROMANIA AND THE TRANSNISTRIAN WAR

(Summary)

Keywords: Romania, Republic of Moldova, Transnistria, armed conflict.

The intrastate ethno-politic conflict, as an evolution specific to the ex-Soviet space, has generated international interest in terms of historiography and political science through its regional, geostrategic implications. These studies and analyzes focused on the main role played by Moscow in the apparition and support of the separatist/secessionist entities and the geostrategic motivations. Romania's involvement in the conflict resolution process throughout its carrying out offers the possibility of extending analyzes also to the state actors not directly involved in the conflict, but which are interested in these developments. Romania's efforts and participation in the quadripartite mechanism of the Transnistrian conflict settlement (March 2nd – July 21st 1992) were, therefore, the subject addressed in this study. In-depth understanding of the Romanian state's positioning against the war and of the limits of action involved a contextualization regarding the foreign policy of post-communist Romania towards the Republic of Moldova and the relations of the Romanian state with Russia.

³⁷ Adrian Năstase, *ministru de Externe al României, se întâlnește cu Arnold Kanter, subsecretar de Stat al SUA pentru probleme politice*, September 22nd, 1992, in Anatol Țăranu, Mihai Gribincea (eds.), p. 624–627.