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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Blind Memo on Visit of Romanian Defense Minister Milea (25-31 October 1986)

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The attached Blind Memo was written by [redacted] the Office of European Analysis at the request of Lt. Col. Kevin Culhane of the European Division, Policy and Plans Directorate. It is intended for inclusion in a briefing book for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

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Eastern Europe Division
European Analysis

EURA/EE/CE/[redacted] (20 October)

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MEMORANDUM

Visit of Romanian Defense Minister Milea
(25-31 October 1986)

Colonel-General Vasile Milea, the first Warsaw Pact Defense Minister to pay an official visit to the US, arrives a mere 11 months after he succeeded Constantin Olteanu in that post. He represents the most independent-minded member of the Warsaw Pact. Since the 1960's, the government of President Nicolae Ceausescu has followed a foreign policy which, within the limits of Soviet tolerance, differs at times from Moscow's. Romania has tried to distinguish itself by pushing a number of arms control ideas which at times are at variance with those of the USSR. Milea can be expected to make some of these arms control proposals a centerpiece of his Washington discussions. Ceausescu has also tried to maintain good relations with the US and China as a way of counterbalancing the influence of his enormous Soviet neighbor, [REDACTED]

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Romanian Foreign Policy

Since the early 1960's, Romania has distinguished itself by pursuing a nationalistically-minded foreign policy that sometimes deviates from the Soviet line while retaining an orthodox Stalinist internal regime. Such highly visible acts of defiance as its refusal to break relations with Israel following the 1967 War, support for Chinese and Yugoslav challenges to Soviet supremacy in the world Communist movement, and open opposition to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia have occasionally strained Romania's relations with its Soviet ally. Bucharest also has advocated Third World positions in international fora even when they opposed both both US and Soviet interests, supported the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel, and joined the US in opposing name-calling resolutions in the UN. [redacted]

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In recent years, however, Romania's severe economic difficulties have decreased its room for maneuver in foreign policy. Increased reliance on Soviet energy supplies and the inability to rapidly expand its trade with the West have made Bucharest more reluctant to antagonize Moscow, and more willing to seek out areas of possible agreement. Additionally, harsh economic times at home have reduced domestic enthusiasm for Ceausescu's foreign policies. Nonetheless, Bucharest continues to try to stake out unique positions on arms control and other issues, and has attempted through symbolic gestures, such as its defiance of the Soviet boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, to demonstrate its independence.

- o Romania's policies stem from a flinty, sometimes xenophobic nationalism which has made alliance with traditional enemies Russia and Hungary difficult.
- o These tendencies have been accentuated by the personality of Ceausescu, Romania's leader since 1965. A strong nationalist as well as a committed Communist, Ceausescu desires to carve out a role for himself as a major international statesman, especially on arms control issues.

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- o Ceausescu tries to maintain good relations with the US and China, to counterbalance the Soviets, and with the Third World, [redacted] He encourages similar divergence where possible by the other Warsaw Pact governments. 25X1
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- o Romania's relations with the West (especially the US), and thus its ability to keep up this balancing act, have suffered in recent years from Western abhorrence of its abysmal human rights record. [redacted] 25X1

Romanian Defense Policy

While a full member of the Warsaw Pact, Romania's military policies, particularly since the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, have been essentially defensive. They are geared towards discouraging and delaying an invasion of the country--particularly by its ostensible ally the Soviet Union--and towards minimizing participation in offensive Warsaw Pact operations. In the event of a NATO-Warsaw Pact war, Romanian forces would be limited to protection of internal lines of communication. Bucharest's military doctrine, officially known as "The Total Defense of the Homeland by the Entire People," is based on Chinese and Yugoslav models. It is aimed at raising the cost of an invasion for any potential aggressor by fighting a prolonged guerrilla war in the country's partially mountainous terrain. Romania's economic troubles, however, have limited its forces' preparedness and potential effectiveness. Bucharest has sold some of its best equipment abroad in order to raise hard currency, and skimps on equipment maintenance and training. The widespread use of troops for such economic tasks as road building and crop harvesting has seriously weakened morale. [redacted] 25X1

Romania participates minimally in Warsaw Pact activities. It has refused for the past 20 years to allow joint Pact land exercises on its territory and, while allowing command personnel to participate in map exercises outside Romania, has not contributed land forces to joint exercises beyond its borders. It does, however, take part in joint air defense and limited naval exercises with its allies, and allows limited and tightly controlled transit of Soviet troops through its territory. No large contingent of Soviet troops has been stationed in Romania since 1958, and Bucharest rarely allows its military officers to accept any training in the Soviet Union, as is common practice for other Warsaw Pact states. We believe the Romanians have resisted Soviet efforts to more efficiently centralize command and control of Warsaw Pact troops. [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] 25X1

[REDACTED]

Romanian Arms Control Initiatives

Ceausecu regards his arms control agenda as being of paramount importance, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Gen. Milea almost certainly will make these proposals a central focus of his US presentations. In general, while Romania has almost invariably supported Soviet arms control initiatives, it has also noted that the US has made useful suggestions and emphasized that final agreements will come from a compromise between the US and Soviet positions. Bucharest has also called repeatedly for the smaller European states to push Washington and Moscow towards such compromises. [REDACTED]

During the European debate over INF emplacement, Romania called on the US not to deploy INF and on the USSR to "freeze" new SS-20 deployments and not to prepare "countermeasures." Bucharest suggested that once Washington had backed down, discussions should begin on limiting Soviet SS-20 forces. While this position was far closer to Moscow's than Washington's, Bucharest also sharply criticized the Soviet pullout from the Geneva INF talks. Recently, Romania has supported Gorbachev's nuclear testing moratorium, and called on the US to respond in kind. It has consistently condemned SDI. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The centerpiece of Ceausescu's arms control policies in recent years has been the call for the freezing and eventual reduction of military budgets in both East and West, and for conventional as well as nuclear disarmament. Romania has officially frozen its military budget for the past two years at 1983 levels, and announced last month that it would unilaterally cut its budget next year by five percent, while calling on all other Warsaw Pact and NATO nations to follow suit. While we cannot verify that a complete freeze of the budget has been effected, the Romanian military has clearly cut corners in training, equipment acquisition and maintenance, and supplies in recent years. Romania has claimed that it was behind recent Warsaw Pact proposals for a general agreement on cutting military budgets. [REDACTED]

Romania also has unsuccessfully advocated a Balkan Nuclear-Free Zone (opposed by Turkey) since 1958. Last year, Romania and Bulgaria proposed the establishment of a Chemical Weapons-Free Zone in the Balkans. This has also met Turkish opposition

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Despite its strong advocacy of arms control, Romania has become a leading second-tier arms exporter to the Third World. It produces its own tanks, APC's and small arms and has tried unsuccessfully to develop a light jet fighter/trainer jointly with Yugoslavia. The Romanians have not followed a strictly ideological pattern in choosing their customers; they have sold small arms to both sides in the Iran-Iraq War and have made sales in the Near East to both moderate and radical states. As pressures on Romania's economy continue, we expect that it will seek to expand this activity.

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In Romania's highly centralized government, Milea and other cabinet ministers are executors of policy rather than policymakers. Ceausescu makes virtually all important decisions on his own,

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- o Other Warsaw Pact nations noted with concern that Milea's visit here, in response to an invitation originally issued to his predecessor, would have been his first official visit abroad as Defense Minister. In response, a brief visit to Poland was hastily arranged earlier this month.

- o Besides pushing Ceausescu's arms control proposals, Milea will want to establish a basis for continuing dialogue between the US and Romanian defense forces. This year, following the US air raid on Libya, Romania abruptly cancelled the annual visit of a delegation of students and instructors from the National Defense Univeristy; Milea will probably be receptive to suggestions that this program of several years standing be resumed.
- o Romania's main objective, however, in sending Milea here is to demonstrate once again its independence from the Soviets and to strengthen its US ties.

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