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Romania: Overcoming Isolation, Seeking Security

Romania views itself as an island of stability in the Balkans, threatened by violent regional conflicts and at the mercy of powerful European states such as Russia and Germany. Bucharest's preeminent foreign policy goal in 1994 is to improve relations with Western institutions such as NATO and the EU, followed closely by better relations with the United States. □

Hungary: The Regional Rival

Most Romanians consider Hungary the primary threat to their country.

- Bucharest is suspicious of Budapest's intentions regarding Transylvania, home to some 1.6 million Hungarians and the site of ethnic riots in 1990.
- A bilateral friendship treaty remains stalled over Romania's insistence on explicit border guarantees and Hungary's demands for guarantees regarding the treatment of Romania's Hungarian minority. □

Romanian-Hungarian military relations reportedly are good, however, and the return to power of Hungary's ex-Communists following last month's election may pave the way for improved political ties.

- Leaders of the two former Communist parties met amiably in southern Hungary prior to the election, and the Hungarian Socialists have signalled that they will take a less confrontational approach to supporting the Hungarian minority in Romania. □

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Concern over Balkan Crisis, Fear of Germany

The violent disintegration of Yugoslavia has presented Bucharest with a sobering worst case scenario for Romania's own ethnic problems, especially the Hungarians. Furthermore, the perception that Germany played a role in redrawing borders, by pushing for the premature recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, has awakened memories of Romania's treatment during World War II.

- While Romanian officials generally discount Hungary as a military threat, they remember that Hungary used Germany's backing to force Bucharest to surrender northern Transylvania. □

Bucharest has used Western interest in the enforcement of economic sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro to upgrade ties to Western institutions.

This memorandum was prepared by the Office of European Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome □

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- Romania approached the US, NATO, and the CSCE to invite international monitors to monitor Romanian compliance with the embargo and is cooperating with a WEU mission monitoring compliance on the Danube River.
- Nevertheless, Bucharest views Serbia as a key regional economic partner and is likely to quietly encourage efforts to have them lifted. [redacted]

Relations with Russia, Moldova

Romanian officials perceive Russia's continued presence in Moldova and Moscow's reemergence as champion of the Serbs as evidence of continued imperialistic designs, [redacted]

- Senior MFA officials protested in early April that the latest Russian proposals for solving the conflict in Moldova were aimed at gaining permanent basing rights there to pressure Ukraine. [redacted]

Bucharest, feeling the absence of security guarantees from the West, is seeking to improve relations with Moscow.

[redacted]

Ties to the West

To gain international support in its regional disputes, Bucharest has focused on improving relations with the United States and Western economic and security institutions.

- Bucharest has endorsed Partnership for Peace, viewing it as an acceptable compromise providing Romania an opportunity to work towards closer ties with NATO.
- Romania signed an association agreement with the EU last year committing both parties to harmonize trading regulations and economic policy during a 10-year integration period.
- Romanian officials obtained most-favored-nation status from the U.S. in late 1993 and received a commitment for a \$50 million Romanian-American Enterprise Fund. [redacted]

Bucharest remains concerned, however, that Romania will be relegated to a second tier of East European countries. In particular, a Hungarian success in joining NATO ahead of Romania would be viewed as a major setback, one President Iliescu warned would destabilize Eastern Europe. [redacted]