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**Romania's Defense Minister: Problems at Home,  
Seeking Friends Abroad**

*Romania's new civilian Defense Minister Gheorghe Tinca is attempting to cope with an increasingly contentious political system and a shrinking defense budget while simultaneously seeking to strengthen ties to NATO and improve relations with Russia and Ukraine.*

Tinca, an experienced diplomat who served at the UN in the early 1980's, in March replaced popular career officer General Nicolae Spiroiu, who fell victim to a prolonged vituperative campaign by the nationalist press. Tinca was backed for the post by President Iliescu's Party of Social Democracy in Romania (PDSR).

- The PDSR, a party of former-Communists, has a plurality in parliament and rules through an informal coalition with extremist and ultranationalist parties.

Tinca is likely to be an advocate for active Romanian participation in Partnership for Peace and membership in NATO.

- He shares the Romanian elite's concern that national security would be at risk if regional rival Hungary entered NATO before Bucharest.

Romania has demonstrated its support for Partnership for Peace by being first to sign the framework document. To support its bid for NATO membership, the military is taking steps to improve its peacekeeping capabilities and establish links to Western militaries.

- Bucharest is cooperating with Warsaw to train Romanian units slated for peacekeeping and rapid deployment operations. The Romanian military also provided field hospitals during the Persian Gulf war and in Somalia.
- Romania hosted SACEUR in early April and the French Defense Minister in early June.

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Bucharest's ability to bring its military up to NATO standards, however, will remain constrained by Romania's economic problems.

- The local press reports that Parliament rejected Tinca's 1994 budget request for additional funds to support Partnership for Peace.
- Military enterprises controlled by the Defense Ministry have suffered as procurement has fallen, and an official has warned of major layoffs. [redacted]

Tinca is also working to ease Bucharest's sense of isolation by improving relations with Moscow and Kiev, according to press reports.

- The introduction of Russian peacekeepers into Bosnia last winter strengthened Romania's concern by creating two flashpoints--the former Yugoslavia on the western border and Moldova in the east--with a Russian military presence.
- Tinca has hosted both the Russian and Ukrainian Defense Ministers to discuss cooperation and purchase of spare parts, [redacted]

Tinca almost certainly shares Bucharest's continuing concern about Yugoslavia.

- Bucharest has cooperated with UN economic sanctions against Serbia, undermining its relationship with a traditional ally as part of a calculated bid to improve ties with the West.
- Officials worry that Romania faces some of the same problems that plagued former Yugoslavia--dissatisfied minorities and lingering border disputes, [redacted]