

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Presentation of Credentials by Ambassador Aurel Dragos Munteanu of Romania (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Robert Hutchings, Director, European Affairs, NSC Staff, Notetaker
Richard Kauzlarich, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs

Aurel Dragos Munteanu, Ambassador of Romania to the U.S.

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: May 5, 1992, 3:05 - 3:12 p.m.
The Residence

The President: I am sorry that Barbara is not here to greet you. How are things at home? We know your problems and want to be helpful. (U)

Ambassador Munteanu: We have great difficulties but are fully confident we shall overcome them. (U)

The President: What are your main problems now? Economic? Ethnic minorities? (U)

Ambassador Munteanu: In my estimation the greatest problem is the transition from a centralized to a market economy. There has to be an educational process of learning the system of private ownership. This is difficult after so many years. Ethnic problems are not so bad; they are under control. We believe Romania is a stable country and can be a stabilizing factor in the region. (U)

The President: The Hungarian problem is one concern: the better their treatment, the more we will be able to help. You know the concerns in Congress. I know it is difficult, but we are glad things are moving in the right direction and we wish you well. Where were you before coming here? (U)

Ambassador Munteanu: I was in New York as Romania's representative on the Security Council. (U)

The President: Has someone taken your place? (U)

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Ambassador Munteanu: There will be someone soon. I was very honored to have been there and to have worked with the U.S. Mission. It is sometimes hard to remember that I am Romanian. I came to the United States before the revolution. I would like to thank you personally for your help. (ϕ)

The President: I loved my service at the UN. It is so different working in a multilateral situation like that. May I ask you: what ever happened to Ceausescu's children? He had a son and a daughter, I believe. (ϕ)

Ambassador Munteanu: His son was sentenced. His daughter is free; her husband is an assistant professor. Another son, Valentin, is a researcher and still works in that capacity. (ϕ)

The President: That chapter is closed. We wish you great success. (U)

Ambassador Munteanu: I was educated in the U.S. long before, so I see my country from that perspective. The Romanian nation is a Latin nation. Its traditions are with the west; only geographically is it in the east. It had the worst case of Communism. Now we are groping to progress, and we would ask for your understanding. (ϕ)

The President: We want to be understanding, and we know it is not an easy transition. If Romania stays on the path of democracy and market reform and makes progress on this other question of human rights, we will try to be helpful. We want to see you succeed. (ϕ)

-- End of Conversation --

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