

*The Belonging of Basarabia to Romania and the Inter-War Romanian Soviet
Relationships as Reflected in
Diplomatic American Documents*

The post World War I Peace Conference led to the solving of most of the territorial problems of Romania, as well as of those of some other small and medium size countries belonging to Central and Eastern Europe which succeeded in solving most of their national aspirations without becoming at that historical moment politically subordinated by other larger countries. This political success was possible because Austro-Hungaria broke up, and the great political powers, Germany and Russia, could not promote their ruling interests which have characterized them throughout history. On the other hand, even under the conditions in which the Soviet State was not acknowledged by the political powers playing the greatest role in taking decisions at the Peace Conference, the fusion of Basarabia and Romania was not acknowledged by the U.S.A. and this attitude led to various consequences in the years to come. Thus, the U.S.S.R. was encouraged to disagree to this historical fusion. In 1940, the American public opinion and the political class were not against separating Basarabia and the Northern Bucovina from Romania and annexing them to the U.S.S.R., in 1947, the U.S.A. agreed to the belonging of Basarabia to the U.S.S.R., in 1975, together with the other countries which took part in the OSCE Conference, America signed the final act which legalized the existent borders in Europe, and in 1991, the United States acknowledged the Republic of Moldova as an independent and sovereign state.

The relationship between Romania and the Soviet Russia were compromised from the beginning of the existence of the Russian communist state. The collaboration failed and it has marked the political relationships between the two countries for a very long time, we may say even until today. The Romanian political class, being exclusively represented by owners and showing a very deep anticommunist attitude, refused their collaboration with the Bolsheviks, and were skeptical regarding the possibility of the communists' being rulers in Moscow for a long time. Besides the lack of the Romanian's will to collaborate with the Bolsheviks, there were also the Russians' abuses and their needs characteristic to the period they were fighting against the common enemy on the area between the Carpathians and the Prut river. During the months of the disaster, almost one million Russians invaded Moldova. The behavior of the Russian army was a violent one, characteristic to the autocratic Asian empires. In the Danube Delta, the strategically area very much dreamed of throughout history by Russia, Poland, Hungary, Austria, France, and other countries, the Romanian leaders were done away with, the gendarmes soldiers were arrested and the native population was banished. Only the Lippovans and a few representatives of some other minorities were not forced to leave this territory. In the city of Iași, the Russian officers would buy houses or rent them for several years, thus proving their intention of not leaving Romania in the after-war period. The Russians needed special food and care. Whenever the slightest discontentment was present, the Russian army threatened the natives with their leaving of the battlefield and their retreat eastwards to the Prut River.¹

¹ Constantin Kirișescu, *Istoria războiului pentru întregirea României 1916-1919 (The War History for the Unification of Romania-1916-1919)*, Vol. II, Bucharest, 1989, pp. 7-14. It is worth to mention that during the World War I Romania has lent to Russia 100.000 railroad trucks of provisions, which were neither given back, nor paid by now.

This situation aggravated the food crisis in Romania and the strengthened the anti-Russian feelings which came to transcend the reason of the necessity of keeping very good relationship with this political power and to minimize the consciousness of the public opinion according to which Romania was taking great interest in Russia. These huge interests required great sacrifices, which were not on the taste of either the Romanian political class or the elite of the society. This will be paid for at a high cost. The much expected Russian help brought about not only the chance of the military salvation of our country, but also many dissatisfactions and tensions against the Russians. Russia's contribution to the maintaining of the existence of Romania was only partially acknowledged by the Romanians, and this was also done in an undertone.

During the months of November and December 1917, throughout Moldova there began a process of breaking up the forces inside the Russian army. General Scerbacev, the leader of the Russian troops in our country, asked for help from the government. In the beginning, Ionel I. C. Brătianu strive to stay out of it, trying no to interfere in the domestic controversies of Russia. The situation was beyond control and the Russian army began to plunder the Moldavian settlements, to rape the women and to commit robberies. Some representatives of Bolshevism under the leadership of Simion Grigorovici Rochal, the French communist internationalist, well known for his slaughters in the historical city of Kronstadt, near Petrograd, planned a coup d'état against the Romanian royal system. This is the reason why since the end of the World War I and the beginning of the civil war in Russia, the Romanian army got orders to fight all around Moldova together with the white Guards and against the Red ones. In spite of all the objectivity, it is difficult to understand the absence of some increased measures of political and diplomatic precaution taken by our governors, in case Bolsheviks will keep the leadership for a longer time. Romania's interest was that Russia should agree to the annexing of Basarabia and Bucovina to the Romanian territory, and also that it would recover its national thesaurus, taken to Moscow by the end of 1916 and the beginning of the next year. In spite of all these extremely great historical interests, the Romanian political class acted as if blind, we could say even fanatically, against the Russian Bolshevik government, excluding any possible future perspective of collaboration. In fact, during Romania's historical past there also existed some moments when the Romanian diplomats proved to be amateurs, and acted according to their leaders' feelings, likes and dislikes, group interest, or under the cover of some political and financial powers from abroad, which sometimes supported the various political regimes in the then Romania. During the inter-war period, own country was permanently encouraged by France and Great Britain to adopt this attitude.

On November 8, 1917, in front of the Congress of the Soviets, Lenin addressed to the neighboring people and governments, suggesting peaceful relationship and the signing of some treaties clearly drawn up which should ignore confidential diplomacy. He also confessed that he had in mind to make public all the secrete agreements signed by the czars with various countries. Romania received the Russian offer, which was of a great interest for all its neighbors, too, with no special reaction. The country, which answered promptly to the Russian proposal, was Finland. By the end of November 1917, Iosif Visarionovici Stalin, appointed commissary of the nationalities in Russia, went to Helsinki. Finland had been a Great Russian dukedom since 1809. Stalin promised the independence to the Finns and he launched an appeal to sign an honest alliance treaty between the too countries and people. The treaty was signed in October 1920, after several delays, due to the fear of Bolshevism, which could have spread within the bourgeois parties. Finland's national

independence was preserved till nowadays, in spite of the numerous conflicts, which developed in the course of time between Russia and Finland. Meanwhile, on November 20, 1917, the Russian government informed its allies about its intention to make peace with Germany, giving also the reason for it. Romania, as well as its allies, gave no answer to this mail.² On December 31, 1917, Lenin himself sent an ultimatum to the Romanian Government asking them to cease all the military operations against the Bolsheviks, underlying that he was waiting for the answer in the next 24 hours; otherwise “a new breaking off” was to take place. The Romanian government didn’t answer this time either. The insult was direct and hard to be forgiven by an outstanding political power like Russia. If the Western countries could afford such an offensive position, for Romania, a middle-sized country and one of Russia’s neighbors, this gesture led to negative effects for a long time. To Lenin’s order, Constantin Diamandy, the Romanian minister in Russia, was arrested together with all the members of the legation and arrested together with all the members of the legation and imprisoned in the fortress of Petropavlosk. The whole diplomatic corps accredited in the capital of Russia asked for and obtained a meeting with Lenin and protested vehemently. The Romanian diplomats were set free in several hours.

As a result of the highly tensioned relationship between Romania and the new government in Russia, out of the Russian initiative, the diplomatic relationship between the two countries were broken off. The Russians’ indignation increased when they heard about Rochal’s assassination in Moldova. Their hatred was directed against the Romanians, although French Military Mission in Romania murdered the Russian communism. The Soviet government sent a note to the Romanian government in Iași which said that Russia “put under distraight for the Romania oligarchy the gold stores belonging to Romania and kept it in the city of Moscow; the Soviet power takes the responsibility to keep the stores and it obliges itself to give it back in the hands of the Romanian people. “The shock was pretty great in Bucharest. The Romanian politicians realized that they had to suffer the consequences/reprisals. Romania gave up military actions against the Bolsheviks, and in spite of the French and English pressures/oppression it didn’t take part in the military intervention against Russia. As time passed by, and the Soviet Russia resisted against the attacks of the greatest powers of the world, the Romanian governors began to make conscious the fact that they cannot avoid Russia and looked for solutions. Two years later, Romania reconsidered its attitude and decided to negotiate with the Soviet Russia. By the end of the year 1920, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod and Gheorghii Cicerin, the Russian commissary for the foreign affairs, have sent radiograms to each other agreeing upon the beginning of some negotiations. When in 1920, in Russia there still was taking place the civil war, and it was still invaded by American, English, Japanese, French and Polish troops, it was not too late for Romania to acknowledge the supremacy of the Soviet state, to guarantee its peaceful attitude, to establish diplomatic relationships, to negotiate a bilateral treaty, and all these in exchange of the acknowledgement of the belonging of Basarabia and Bucovina to Romania, and of the process of giving back of the national thesaurus. This time, the country that was very much against it was France. The opportunity of reopening a new dialogue was lost again. In 1921, Romania tried again to establish negotiations with Russia, but no definite results were reached. In March 1924, in Viena, it was organized a Russian-Romanian conference which failed, because during that year the communists

² See Andree Fontaine, *Istoria Războiului Rece (The History of Cold War)*, Vol. I, Bucharest, 1992, pp. 34-38.

consolidated their political power, had won the civil war and the war against the foreign interventionists, and Russia was no longer ready to admit the affiliation of Basarabia to Romania.³ The historical opportunity had been lost. It was too late.

During the fourth decade, the American diplomacy was active in Romania, mainly out of the interest in/for the neighboring area with Russia, the country which had scored much progress in various areas and promised to be a future political power engaged in the competition for the world domination. That is why the American Legation in Bucharest has closely followed the problem of Basarabia and the Romanian-Russian relationship with respect to it.

On June 2, 1931, Charles S. Wilson sent an information letter to the Department of State about his travel through Moldova, Basarabia and Dobrogea, together with Holmes, his companion.⁴ The journey was described pretty minutely, the report consisting in more than six pages. Wilson wrote that Basarabia was a continuation of the Russian steppes. Its population was less dense than that of the Old Kingdom, the fields were vaster and less cultivated. On the other side of the Prut River the atmosphere was different, the travel report said. In Moldova the country people were joyful, and were greeting the American car with smiles, while the Basarabians were gloomy and sad and were looking at the passers-by suspiciously. The great majority of the inhabitants were natives, they didn't call themselves Romanians, and their strange attitude was the result of a century of Russian domination, during the old Russian Empire. The population wore in Russian clothes, the houses differed from those belonging to the Old Kingdom, and the churches were more numerous and were built in the Russian style. The city of Chişinău seemed "very Russian", both regarding its streets and its houses and its churches, bells and low-spirited people. It had 200.000 inhabitants but it was less active than other smaller cities from the other parts of Romania. The American document said that a great part of the business in Basarabia was in the hand of Jewish merchants who were not the best representatives of their nation. It also referred to the illiterate population of the province, the merchants advertising their products accompanied by photos, and the customers not being able to read them. The inscriptions on the shop windows and the menus in Restaurants were written in Russian and Romanian. Charles Wilson seemed surprised by the indifference of the native population towards the problem of the belonging of Basarabia to Romania or to the U.S.S.R., even if, the American diplomat thought, the population would have preferred Romania to the Soviet Union.

On March 10, 1930, the American Legation in Riga sent a cable⁵ to Washington signed by Louis Sussdorff Jr. It insisted on the military preparations of Russia and it drew the attention upon Romania as being a fertile territory of the communist propaganda. The report made also some military speculations. It was shown that the press body of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. published an article of almost half a page (length) under the title "How Romania Is Preparing for War against the U.S.S.R."

The report also said that Romania was confronted with a deep economic crisis. In the cities there were over 200.000 unemployed people. There existed two possible political orientations. The first one consisted in the fascistization of the country, the second one in

³ See also Ioan Scurtu, Gheorghe Buzatu, *Istoria Românilor în secolul XX, (The History of the Romanian People in the 20th Century)*, Bucharest, 1999, p. 12 and Petre Otu, *Între baionetele iubiţilor noştri aliaţi (Among the Bayonets of Our Beloved Allies)*, in "Dosarele istoriei" ("History Files"), year 6, nr. 11 (63), 2001, p. 17.

⁴ R.N.A. (=Romanian National Archives), U.S.A. Stock, Microfilms, roll 660, nr. 871.00/347

⁵ R.N.A., U.S.A. Stock, Microfilms, roll 627, nr. 6.839

starting a war against the U.S.S.R.⁶ The Romanian bourgeois press⁷ was blamed for the advertisement “the redeeming of Basarabia and its clearing up of strangers and Moscow agents”. With respect to the war preparations of Romania and Poland, whose leaders were overlooked as being anti-Soviet, it was said that they had agreed on mutual help in case one of them were engaged in a war against the U.S.S.R., and the conferences of their general staffs would take place under the supreme leadership of the French Army headquarters. The Romanian army and the military budget developed very fast and the attention was directed towards the mobilization plans of the war industry. The Armstrong-Vickers, Schneider-Creusot and later on Skoda concerns were invested in offering assistance.

The idea of a possible Soviet-Romania conflict was also signaled from the European capitals. On September 4, 1930, Walter E. Edge, the American ambassador in Paris, sent an information report⁸ to the Secretary of State which said that major Ord, the military attaché in France, had heard from a confidential and well-documented source that Prince Dimitrie Ghica, the Romanian ambassador in Rome, had met the Romanian Minister of Foreign of Affairs in Venice. The report said that by means of Basarabia Romania intended to develop an aggressive attitude against Russia and to sign several agreements with Italy, which was supposed, to fusion with the French and English diplomacies and to exert pressure on the Soviets. On Thursday, August 28, 1930, Prince Dimitrie Ghica met Dino Grandi⁹, and on Friday, August 29, 1930, he got the final answer regarding this matter from Benito Mussolini. The answer did not specify Germany’s position in case a Romanian-Russian conflict was present in Basarabia, but it said that the Romanian government wanted this conflict.

On October 25, 1930, a strictly confidential report¹⁰ of the American Embassy in Paris, addressed to the Secretary of State, and signed by the special assistant Warrington Dawson, informed about the Italian interference in the anti-Soviet plot planned in Romania.

The document is extremely interesting. It reveals to us that in the summer of the same year (1930), when the world economic crisis was dominating over Europe and its effects were deeply felt in Romania, too, a continental war was thought out. On one hand, Romania and Poland, supported by France, had in view a war against the U.S.S.R., whose diplomacy was dangerously close to that of Germany. The starting of the war had to be caused by border troubles provoked by Romanian secret agents, troubles that would have led to the U.S.S.R. sharp rebuff and the beginning of the military operations. Meanwhile, Bulgarian army, supported by Italy, was to intervene in Dobrogea. Under these circumstances the collaboration between the Italian and the Romanian agents appeared.

We have not found this extremely important event mentioned in the Romanian historiography the same way it was described in the American diplomatic documents. It is hard to believe that the American information we have mentioned was based on totally

⁶ In fact, under the influence of the English, French and Polish Governments, the Romanian Government led by Iuliu Maniu made outstanding progress in preparing a war against the U.S.S.R.

⁷ The phrase belongs to Louis Sussdorff Jr.

⁸ R.N.A., U.S.A. Stock, Microfilms, roll 627, nr. 761.71/78

⁹ Dino Grandi (1885-1957) was an Italian diplomat and politician. He became Count in 1937/He was appointed Count in 1937, Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1929-1939, ambassador in London between 1932-1939, minister of Justice and president of the Chamber of Deputies between 1939-1943. After the breaking down of the regime led by Benito Mussolini he left for Portugal and then for Brazil, where he spent the rest of his life.

¹⁰ R.N.A., U.S.A. Stock, Microfilms, roll 627, nr. 761.71/80

wrong information or on misinformation of some agents who had no direct access to the primary sources. It must be noticed that the American special assistant has discussed this matter both at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with other foreign diplomats accredited in Bucharest who were familiar with the matter. This action is not characteristic of the political orientation of peace, collaboration, general security and obeying of the international treaties promoted and propagated by the inter-war Romanian government. This is the reason why this action could be interpreted as a result of the dissatisfaction of the Romanian leading political class versus the fact that the Soviet leaders turned down all the discussions regarding the belonging of Basarabia to the national Romanian state and their refusal of giving back Romania's thesaurus, preferring to infiltrate the country with agents, to make communist propaganda, in Basarabia particularly, and to promote anti-Romanian policy by means of the underground communist fighters in Romania.

The Romanian historiography has not referred by now to the preparations of a war against the U.S.S.R., made in 1930, war in which Romania would have played the part of an initiator. Nevertheless, we tend to believe that the information in the American documents were based on reality, mostly because, as it has been seen, they also referred to the American diplomacy sources of information which were outside Romania. The Romanian initiative, based on military collaboration with other countries, was, as we have shown before, a violation of the Romanian general policy of promoting peace and security and that is why the Romanian politicians and army secret agents who have heard about this matter to be willing to "bury" it as deeply as possible, especially after the year 1944. We consider it natural not to make public, for almost seven decades, this important military conflict which had been prepared and, fortunately, in the end, abandoned by the Romanian leading class. Meanwhile, out of the mentioned documents we think that the planning, in 1930, of a war against the U.S.S.R. was well known inside various Europeans political and military circles and, no doubt, in Kremlin, too. The top Soviet communist press has launched attacks against Romania on various opportunities, assert-intended to instigate the Balkan countries against the U.S.S.R.¹¹. The Soviet press accused Romania of war intentions, as we have already mentioned. Carol II's mounting the throne of Romania and Nicolae Titulescu's increasing role in the world political life and particularly in Romania's foreign policy brought about a change of the political attitude towards the U.S.S.R., which will exclude the existence of an anti-Soviet Romanian aggression for a decade.

During the years of the efforts to sign a peace treaty with the U.S.S.R., the Romanian diplomats have tackled this problem with their American mates, the more the U.S.A. had in view to sign a similar treaty with the U.S.S.R. The efforts of the Romanian diplomats to obtain American assistance in solving the Romanian-Soviet conflict were obvious. This conflict was nothing else but the refusal of the Moscow government to acknowledge in a treaty the affiliation of Basarabia to Romania.

Hoping to get American help, on January 28, 1932, the leader of the Eastern wing of the Romanian Foreign Affairs, Dinu C. Arion, got in touch with Louis Sussdorff Jr., the leader of the U.S.A. Legation, informing him that beginning with the latest Romanian-Russian dialogues in Riga, the Soviet leaders assured the Romanian government indirectly that on this opportunity they would not discuss the problem of Basarabia. The Romanian diplomat confessed to his American interlocutor that the achievement of some dialogues with the Soviets during which the problem of Basarabia was postponed for further

¹¹ R.N.A., U.S.A. Stock, Microfilms, roll 627, Nr. 761.71/80

discussions was a great surprise for the Romanian government. According to the Soviet proposal, this problem was to be included in a protocol annexed to the pact. The Romanian government turned down the Russian proposal. At that moment, commissary B. S. Stomoniakov, the representative of the U.S.S.R., asked the Prince Mihail R. Sturdza¹² to cease the discussions for several days and the negotiations were suspended.¹³

At the same time, the Romanian diplomats tried to influence directly the Department of State.

On February 4, 1932, Wallace Murray informed the Secretary of State that the ambassador the Romanian ambassador wanted to talk to him with regard to Basarabia, matter which according to Carol Davila, the leader of the Romanian Legacy in Washington, will play an important role during the Disarmament Conference in Geneva, which was taking place at that time. In this respect, Carol Davila asked Wallace Murray to insist to the Secretary of State regarding this matter. The Secretary of State told his superior all the details concerning Basarabia. According to what Henry Stimson knew, there had taken place French-Russian negotiations for the signing of a nonaggression treaty. Reaching an agreement was under the condition of signing of some similar treaties between the U.S.S.R. and Poland and the U.S.S.R. and Romania. Wallace Murray was well informed about the fact that there were no problems in signing the treaty with Poland, and that the only problem was the Russian-Romanian disagreement with respect to Basarabia.

The Romanian negotiations with the U.S.S.R. were in difficulty when Carol Davila asked for the help of the U.S.A. On January 13, 1932, in the city of Riga, B. Stomoniakov, the representative of the Soviet government, conditioned the signing of the non-aggression treaty with Romania on the writing down of the attitude of the Soviets regarding Basarabia and on the elimination of the words "integrity", "inviolability" and "sovereignty" from the text of the pact.¹⁴

Carol Davila told Henry L. Stimson about the fact that Maxim Litvinov refused to talk about the justified occupation of Basarabia by Romania and to sign a non-aggression treaty. Within the negotiations, the difficulty consisted in establishing the borders where any aggression should stop existing. Carol Davila said that the border between Russia and Romania was the Nistru River. Henry Stimson showed to his subordinates that his border includes the province of Basarabia into Romania. Romania wanted to have that river constituted in a straight line, from which any aggression coming from either Romania or Russia should stop. Russia wanted this line delimiting the non-aggression area to be drawn on the western side of Basarabia. This moment represented the standstill of the negotiations, and this standstill, according to Davila's opinion, had a very strong effect upon Romania's disarmament availability within the Disarmament Conference. The Romanian minister pointed out the importance of the successful beginning of the conference and expressed his wish that the Secretary of State should have the same positive thoughts towards this political objective. Stimson replied that he could not express an opinion regarding such a subject, except the one that all the obstacles against a successful disarmament should be removed. Because of the insurances of the Romanian minister,

¹² Prince Sturdza was the Romanian chargé d'affaires in Riga, authorized by the Romanian government to negotiate on the non-aggression pact with the U.S.S.R.

¹³ R.N.A., U.S.A. Stock, Microfilms, roll 627, Nr. 761.7111/12

¹⁴ The Archives of M.F.A., Stock 71/U.S.S.R., 1921-1933, vol. 134

Henry Stimson said that he would like to talk to Wallace Murray¹⁵. Not long ago Carol Davila had had a dialogue with Wallace Murray about the matter under discussion¹⁶.

It seemed that these dialogues have come to an end, so that on May 13, 1932, Cordell Hull wrote to Mr. Castle, the American diplomat, about the position the U.S.A. should adopt with respect to the problem of Basarabia. The Secretary of State said that before his leaving from Washington, Carol Davila¹⁷, the Romanian minister, would like to talk to Mr. Castle, his American fellow, about Basarabia, as a result of the acknowledgement by the U.S.A. of the possession of Vilnius by Lithuania, in spite of the Polish-Lithuanian contradictions on this subject. Under the circumstances, the U.S.A. could have agreed on the domination of Romania over Basarabia. Having in view three main reasons, the Romanian minister in Washington was going to ask, in the near future, for an acknowledgement of the affiliation of Basarabia. Carol Davila's first argument was in connection with time imposing the acknowledgement of the status quo in Basarabia by the U.S.A., more than twelve years later after the end of the World War I. He would bring the argument that even the most severe critics of Romania didn't claim manifestations of the Basarabians versus their present incorporation into Romania, and did not want any change in their present situation. He would probably quote from Franklin Pierce, the American president whose declaration made in 1856 referred to the change of sovereignty by means of a foreign power intervention. Secondly, Mr. Castle, the American diplomat, was put on his guard that the Romanian Minister Carol Davila would defend his point of view by saying that when the U.S.A. included Basarabia in the consular jurisdiction of the American Consulate in Bucharest, with the aim of giving visas on Romanian passports to the person born in Basarabia, and looked for the protection of the American interests or rights in this province, it had actually acknowledged the existence of the status quo. Thirdly, Carol Davila will link the acknowledgement by the U.S.A. of the Soviet Russia. This last acknowledgement was on the verge of becoming true. If the problem of Basarabia didn't reach a solution before the acknowledgement of the U.S.S.R., later on there would be contradictory opinions in the Congress, and it would be more difficult to solve the problem. In the end, the Secretary of State transmitted also diplomat Flournay's opinion who, by analyzing this problem from a strict administrative point of view, suggested to apply a method of acknowledging a fact as such, namely that of demonstrating the belonging of Basarabia to the Romanian territory. Flournay said that they could easily motivate their gesture due to the necessity of the regularization of the consular jurisdiction in that province. In the end of the document, Wallace Murray showed that this problem had been lasting for at least a decade and its solving was a necessity if it did not affect the American interests. He considered that, regarding Basarabia, the U.S.A. did not get any advantage from rigidly maintaining Colby's principle. Wallace Murray asked for Castle's opinion regarding all the problems he had explained so far.¹⁸

¹⁵ Undersecretary of State and leader of the wing "Near Eastern Affairs" in the Department of State.

¹⁶ R.N.A., U.S.A. Stock, Microfilms, roll 627, Nr. 761.7111/9

¹⁷ The direction has left for was not mentioned, but he probably came to Bucharest.

¹⁸ R.N.A., U.S.A. Stock, Microfilms, roll 627, Nr. 871 A.014 Bessarabia/170. On the microfilm, between the documents Nr. 761.7111/17 and 871.A.014 Bessarabia/170 there are two sheets of paper of a smaller format bearing the heading of the Department of State, of the office of the Secretary Assistant and respectively of the Undersecretary of State, which could be related to each other and refer to Romanian-American talks regarding the problem of Basarabia and the Romanian-Soviet relationship. On the first paper there is a note in handwriting, signed undecipherable, addressed to "Mr. Castle", in which the author suggested the future

The city of Kremlin had admitted the border between Poland and the U.S.S.R. and the project of the Polish-Soviet treaty said that all the problems and the controversies of any kind that might have appeared between them had to be subjected to conciliation and arbitrariness. Under the circumstances in which the U.S.S.R. government hadn't acknowledged the Soviet-Romanian border, such a stipulation in the treaty became dangerous. Nicolae Titulescu was aware of the danger as soon as the Poles had informed him about the stage of the Polish-Soviet negotiations. Consequently, Nicolae Titulescu adopted an independent policy required by Romanian interests, although he had been accused of taking decisions by himself and of having forced to sign, with the U.S.S.R., the non-aggression treaty in its Polish-Soviet variant.¹⁹

The imminence of the establishing of diplomatic Soviet American relationship determined the representatives of the Romanian diplomacy to try to intervene at the Department of State to find a support in getting the acknowledgement of the fusion of Basarabia with Romania. On March 16, 1933, William Philips, the American Undersecretary of State, informed the American Legation in Bucharest about the discussion he had had with the Romanian ambassador in Washington, in the same day. The latter asked the American Government to be allowed first to talk about the controversies between Romania and Russia, and only then to acknowledge the U.S.S.R. authority. In this respect, the Romanian Minister had first left a written statement at the Department, which later on he would bring up to date and give it a new form. He referred both to the financial situation in Romania which he considered to be much superior to the one existent in France, and to a series of some American business in Romania, like the American Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, the oil companies a.s.o.²⁰ The information report, sent in strict confidence to Charles Wilson, in Bucharest, consisted also a copy of the Romanian written statement.²¹

It is easy to understand then why the Romanian authorities were worried regarding the process of signing diplomatic relationships between America and the U.S.S.R. without forcing the U.S.S.R. to respect the borders with its neighbors and before the U.S.A. to have acknowledged the belonging of Basarabia to Romania.

The American part noticed the importance of this problem for Romania and treated it seriously. On April 12, 1933, Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State informed the president in a written report²² that Romania had made several steps in obtaining the acknowledgement of the belonging of Basarabia to it. All the political powers acknowledged the then Romanian State borders. Japan did not confirm the treaty with Romania, and, in 1920, the U.S.A. declared that they had not acknowledged the fusion of Basarabia with Romania without having previously discussed it with the U.S.S.R. Later ON, Cordell Hull pointed out that the U.S.A. acknowledged the belonging of Basarabia to Romania, the American Consulate in Bucharest giving visas for the citizens living between the Prut and the Nistru rivers. The Secretary of State suggested that Basarabia should not be

fusion of the Basarabians with the Romanian population as an illustration of the American laws. The second paper, typed and dated May 14, 1932, addressed to the same person, who has been informed that the Romanian minister was to be received next Monday, 11 a.m.

¹⁹ "Anale de Istorie" ("Annals of History"), 1981, Nr. 5, p. 174

²⁰ R.N.A., U.S.A. Stock, Microfilms, roll 627, Nr. 761.71/92. The talk took place in the presence of several employees of the Romanian Embassy. See also Ion Stanciu, *În umbra Europei (In the State of Europe)*, Bucharest, 1996, p. 141

²¹ The copy of the written statement is not among the documents/is missing from the documents.

²²"F. D. Roosevelt Library", Hyde Park, Official File 428/Rumania, unpainted.

mentioned separately any longer within the figures referring to immigration, only Romania, since it included the figure assigned for Basarabia, too, his being the acknowledgement de facto of the belonging of Basarabia to Romania. The document was signed by the president of the U.S.A. Having this consent, on May 15, 1933, Cordell Hull asked for the erasing of the immigration figures of Basarabia beginning with July 1, 1933.²³

Under the circumstances, the great importance of the latest Romanian step made on March 16, 1933, was obvious.

On June 8, 1934, William C. Bullitt, the American ambassador in Moscow sent a cable, in strict secret, with triple priority to the American Secretary of State which said that he had been informed by Nikolai Nikolaievici Krestinski²⁴ that Romania and Czechoslovakia would sign diplomatic relationship with the U.S.S.R. the following day or the days to come. Yugoslavia would do the same thing soon.²⁵

The inter-war and the post World War II Romanian historiography have congratulated for years the Romanian foreign policy, oriented exclusively towards France and Great Britain. A deep and objective analysis of the events, facilitated by the access of the historians to various documents leads to the conclusion that, during the two World Wars, the Romanian governs, the political class by and large, have given too little attention to the fact that the peace treaties which accomplished Romania's requirements were not agreed upon or acknowledged by the greatest three world political powers: the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. and Germany. Little and belated effort was done in order to establish strong diplomatic relationships with these countries.

By the end of the fourth decade, when King Carol II tried to improve this situation, it was too late. The war was imminent and the Enlarged Romania was breaking down lacking the help of the three great world political powers that she had nothing in common with.

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²³ Ibidem.

²⁴ Nikolai Nikolaievici Krestinski (1883-1938) was, beginning with 1903, an outstanding member of the Social Democrat Party. In 1907 he joined the Bolsheviks. Between 1919-1928 he was ambassador in Berlin. In 1938, after a trial which abroad the U.S.S.R. was viewed for a long time as having been unfair and “staged”, he was sentenced to death and executed. The note suggested very obviously that N. N. Krestinski supplied the American Embassy with secret information.

²⁵ R.N.A., U.S.A. Stock, Microfilms, roll 627, Nr. 761.71/98.