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EAST EUROPE

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BONN-BUCHAREST RELATIONS -- AN ANNIVERSARY

The first anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the FRG and Rumania deserves attention, not only because it comes on exactly the same day as the resumption of diplomatic ties between Bonn and Belgrade, but also simply because it provides a convenient opportunity for taking stock of the expansion of German-Rumanian relations in the past year.

The journey by Rumanian Foreign Minister Corneliu Manescu to Bonn in January, 1967, was designed to consecrate a formula which had already been proposed during the visit of the then Economics Minister Kurt Schmuecker to Bucharest in 1966 -- to agree to disagree on certain aspects of the German question simply by not raising them. Now, one year later, it can be said that this formula has served its purpose of creating a political climate in which relations between the FRG and Rumania in such fields as trade and culture could be promoted. Moreover, the not unexpected emphasis on economic cooperation has not excluded the appearance of a certain similarity of views also in such political areas as nuclear non-proliferation. Bucharest has reportedly promised to support the admission of the FRG to the Danube Commission and, above all, has carefully refrained from making any attacks on the FRG. The fact that Rumania did not join Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland in signing 20-year friendship treaties with the GDR last year -- and that there is no indication at present that such a treaty is in the offing -- certainly also deserves to be mentioned here.

In a typical "go-it-alone" fashion -- and against the open opposition of the Ulbricht regime -- Rumania acted as a trail-blazer in the normalization of relations between the FRG and Eastern Europe (the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bonn and Moscow, in 1955, does not fit into this present context). It is certainly no coincidence that Rumania has now been followed by Yugoslavia, for these are the only two Communist-ruled countries of

Eastern Europe (aside from Albania, which, of course, is a special case) to have boycotted the Karlovy Vary meeting of April, 1967 -- a meeting which was openly designed to block Bonn's new Ostpolitik initiatives. Thus far, Rumania's liberal interpretation of the European security declaration issued by the Warsaw Pact meeting in Bucharest in July, 1966, as giving the go-ahead signal to much more freedom of maneuver in the fields of multilateral and bilateral cooperation, and its corresponding initiatives in these fields, have not been matched by the other Pact member countries. But, at least to a limited degree, Czechoslovakia responded to Bonn's proposals, by agreeing to the establishment of trade missions in Prague and Bonn (such missions already existed in Budapest, Warsaw and Sofia). Even after the recent changes in Czechoslovakia, which could well lead to a reappraisal of the country's external economic relations, it is not easy to predict exactly when Prague, Budapest or Sofia will feel in a position to move in the direction of normalization of relations with the FRG. But it can be assumed that, now that Bonn has diplomatic relations with three Communist-ruled East European countries (Rumania, Yugoslavia and the USSR) and after the resumption of such relations with a number of Arab countries -- without the once feared unleashing of a chain reaction in favor of the recognition of East Berlin), it will become increasingly difficult for an Ulbricht or a Gomulka to delay at least a process of economic and cultural normalization in Europe and what the Italian Socialist leader Pietro Nenni called (during Maurer's recent visit to Italy) a "modern Europeanism, open and free of ideological prejudices." After all, even Ulbricht was finally compelled to call a halt to his polemic with Rumania over relations with the FRG.

Politically speaking, the visit by Foreign Minister Brandt to Rumania last August and the expected forthcoming visit of Maurer to Bonn show that, both in East and West, an attempt can be made to achieve a better understanding of mutual position, and that there are strong and persistent desires to open new avenues of cooperation.

Trade Problems

In drawing up a balance sheet of the development of German-Rumanian relations since the establishment of diplomatic relations last January, it is not necessary to list all the numerous exchanges. Suffice it to say that it is estimated that trade in 1967 was 42 per cent higher than in the preceding year. To be sure, the figures again revealed a serious Rumanian trade deficit. Thus, in the first 10 months of 1967, according to reliable, unofficial Western reports, exports from the FRG to Rumania amounted to 783 million DM, while West German imports from Rumania totaled only 266 million DM. The

Handelsblatt of October 18 reported that the Rumanian deficit had amounted to 173 million DM in 1965, 260 million DM in 1966, and 62 million DM in the first six months of 1967. (In the 1962-1966

1967. This was the case during Brandt's visit to Rumania, and, more recently, Chancellor Kiesinger, addressing the CDU convention in Westphalia-Lippe (DPA of January 6), assured his audience that "Rumania's refusal to take part in the Soviet defamation campaign against the FRG is a mark of success for Bonn's Ostpolitik."

Rumanian Unit

It was in connection with this trade deficit problem, and specifically in order to explore possibilities for larger Rumanian exports to the FRG, that Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Albrecht was sent to Bonn in May, 1967. The agreement on economic and technical-scientific cooperation, signed last August during Brandt's visit to Rumania, was also believed to provide opportunities for larger Rumanian participation. Shortly after the above-mentioned Handelsblatt report of an accumulated Rumanian deficit of 495 million DM for the period 1 January 1965 to 30 June 1967, a Bonn government spokesman announced, on 25 October 1967, that, in order to enable the expansion of trade between the two countries, especially because of the German interest in exports to Rumania, the FRG government had decided to raise the limit on the volume of credits granted to Rumania. The current trade agreement between the two countries, signed last November 8, covers the 1968-1969 period. More recently, there were reports on plans to construct a gas pipeline linking Rumania to the FRG. Such a project could, in the long run, help improve Rumania's trade balance with the FRG, provided the equipment to be delivered by the West Germans could be paid for by Rumanian deliveries of methane gas.

A cultural agreement has yet to be signed between the two countries, although it had been agreed last August that one would be concluded in the following months. Nevertheless, there has been a lively exchange in the fields of science and the arts, with the Rumanian contribution being larger than the German one (DPA of 29 January 1968). As for the emigration of Rumanian citizens of German origin, this remains a more tickle, but the figure has increased from a former 20 to 25 per month to 40 per month. The number of Rumanian travelers visiting relatives in the FRG had increased, from an earlier level of 100 per month, to 370 by this January.

Despite the difficulties which remain in the field of trade and the repatriation of ethnic Germans, both governments have, on various occasions, expressed their satisfaction over the way relations between their countries have developed since 31 January