

The protection of romanian national interest against soviet arbitrary demands. A case document: a note of the Romanian government, led by general Sănătescu

Protejarea interesului național al României în fața solicitărilor arbitrare sovietice. Un document de caz: o notă a guvernului român condus de generalul Sănătescu

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Abstract

After 23 August 1944, Romania withdrew from the alliance with Germany and soon its armies began to fight on the United Nations side, represented in Eastern Europe war theatre by the Red Army. The Soviets occupied Romania and imposed an Armistice Convention, signed at Moscow on 12.09.1944, that diminished the national sovereignty of Romania, in favour of United Nations, represented by Allied Control Commission of Romania (hereinafter: ACC), dominated by Soviets.

ACC issued a note on 2.11.1945 addressed to the Romanian Government, led by General Constantin Sănătescu, concerning Soviets' reproaches in regard to the untrustworthy behavior of Romanian Government. The reply, presented in review, denied Soviet accusations.

This note, issued by the Romanian Government, was translated by Romanians into English and sent to the British Mission at Bucharest by the Romanian delegate to ACC (the British dispatch did not mention the name, but we believe he was Ion Christu and not his successor, Savel Rădulescu). It represented enclosure 2 of a British (Diplomatic) Mission dispatch of 10.11.1944, which was addressed to Anthony Eden, British Principal State Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Romanians showed their discontent in regard to the removal to the Soviet Union of high quantities of oil equipment, the interference of Red Army in the local economy, the impossibility to restore the authority of the Romanian Government in some parts of the country, the limitation of Army Divisions kept in the country to three, Soviet confiscation of the Romanian war fleet, the Soviet custody of German, Hungarian and Italian diplomats which prevented their exchange with Romanian ones and other Romanian-Soviets discords in applying the armistice.

Keywords: Armistice, Communism, Cold War, United Nations, World War Two

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Rezumat

După 23 August 1944, România s-a retras din alianța cu Germania și curând armatele sale au început să lupte alături de Națiunile Unite, reprezentate în teatrul de război al Europei de est de Armata Roșie. Sovieticii au ocupat România și au impus Convenția de Armistițiu, semnată la Moscova în 12.09.1944, care a diminuat suveranitatea națională a României în favoarea Națiunilor Unite, reprezentate de Comisia Aliată de Control (se va cita: C.A.d.C.), dominată de sovietici.

C.A.d.C. a emis o notă în 2.11.1944 adresată Guvernului Român, prezidat de generalul Constantin Sănătescu, referitoare la reproșurile sovieticilor în privința comportamentului neserios al Guvernului Român. Răspunsul, prezentat în revistă, a negat acuzațiile sovietice.

Această notă, emisă de Guvernul Român, a fost tradusă de români în limba engleză și transmisă Misiunii Britanice de la București de delegatul român pe lângă C.A.d.C (raportul britanic nu a precizat numele persoanei, dar presupunem că a fost Ion Christu și nu succesorul acestuia, Savel Rădulescu). Ea a reprezentat anexa 2 a raportului Misiunii (Diplomatice) Britanice din 10.11.1944, care a fost adresat lui Anthony Eden, Secretarul de Stat Principal al Afacerilor Externe Britanice.

Românii și-au exprimat nemulțumirea în privința trimeriei în Uniunea Sovietică a unor mari cantități de echipament petrolier, a implicării Armatei Roșii în economia locală, imposibilitatea exercitării autorității Guvernului Român în anumite părți ale țării, limitarea diviziilor păstrate în țară la trei, confiscarea de către sovietici a flotei de război, arestarea de către sovietici a diplomaților germani, maghiari și italieni, ceea ce împiedica schimbul lor cu cei români, și alte neînțelegeri româno-sovietice referitoare la implementarea armistițiului.

Cuvinte-cheie: Armistițiu, Comunism, Războiul Rece, Națiunile Unite, Al Doilea Război Mondial

Sir,

After a careful study of your note of November 2nd, I wish to reply as follows:

The charges raised by the Allied Control Commission with regard to the unsatisfactory way the Armistice Clauses are being fulfilled are not only unfounded but also deeply unjust if are taken into account all efforts made by different departments as well as by the Roumanian Commission for the Application of the Armistice, although we have had to meet with many difficulties which we have always tried to overcome.

You accuse us of wrong execution of Article 2 of the Armistice Convention namely:

a. That all German and Hungarian subjects living on Roumanian territory are not yet interned.

Our answer is as follows:

All German and Hungarian subjects which could be identified up to now have been interned; exception was made for certain categories of people as owners of German passports of Czech origin, ill and invalids of over 60 years of age, certain specialists necessary to the industries or enterprises where they are employed. These exceptions have been brought to your knowledge as far back as October 19th, in a memorandum of the Roumanian Commission for the execution of the Armistice which has been sent to the Allied Control Commission (see Article 2). With respect to those indispensable to the enterprises special communiqués have been made.

On the morning of November 2nd, Counsellor Demetrescu got in touch with Colonel Borisov, in order to explain the above mentioned exceptions asking for an approval of the procedure which had been used, as no reply had been received from the Allied Control Commission to our previous communication.

While these conversations were in progress, the Allied Control Commission had reproached in writing to the Ministry of Internal Affairs its lack of severeness in applying Article 2 of the Armistice Convention. On the same day the Department of Internal Affairs had ordered the arrest of all those, who had previously been exempted.

On the evening of November 3rd, at Minister Christu's request, General Vinogradov had admitted that Czechs must be exempted and orders to this effect have been given by Minister Christu from the very office of the Vice Chairman of the Allied Control Commission that the other categories of those exempted, General Vinogradov has promised that he will reply after studying the case. On the morning of November 4th, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has brought to our knowledge that the Soviet officials in Orșova have arrested the local chief of police on a charge of having arrested the German skilled workmen responsible for maneuvering ships on the Danube without the help of which these ships could not navigate.

It can be ascertained from the above mentioned facts that the exceptions we have made to the internment of German and Hungarian citizens have been quite normal and they could not be interpreted as an evil-minded application of Article 2 of the Armistice, as the Allied Control Commission itself has admitted some of the exceptions while others have not yet been dealt with and on the other hand Soviet officials are arresting those who are responsible for a too strict application of the text of this article.

b. That those interned are treated in too mild way.

To this we reply that the treatment they received is the normal treatment for such cases as indicated in International Conventions and the parcels which they have received have always been remitted in the presence of the chief of the

concentration camp. The Ministry of Internal Affairs advises me that they do not know of any case of evasion. I have asked that a severe inquiry be made of these statements of yours and I would be grateful to you if you could quote precise cases.

As regards Article 5 I reply:

Categorical orders have been given to the District Prefects that they should give us the names of all Soviet citizens who could enter into this category.

As this information came in, it was immediately transmitted to the Allied Control Commission. It is true that some information had not yet arrived from certain parts of the country but this is due to the great difficulties of communication and also to the fact that in these parts of the country the Roumanian Administration has not yet been restored and has no normal communication with Bucharest.

The date fixed for the enlistment of the Soviet citizens for repatriation and for the granting of means of living and clothing, had been many times postponed at the request of the Allied Control Commission, the last date being fixed for November 15th, 1944.

In a special note we have been requested to present these lists up to November 10th; I ask you how could complete lists be presented by November 10th, if the date of enlistment fixed by the Allied Control Commission itself is November 15th?

I definitely affirm that no instruction has ever been given which could influence the Soviet citizens or convince them not to repatriate themselves in the Soviet Union.

I have been informed that Mr. Christu in his conversation with General Vinogradov on the evening of November 3rd, has given explanations which have been considered by you as satisfactory and that he has undertaken to let you have in a few days a complete legal memorandum on the problem.

As regards the unkeep, equipment and clothing, necessary steps have been taken and are being carried out, at the same time orders have been given that inquiries should be made whether some defects in the application of the Armistice have been observed in the provinces, in order that immediate steps may be taken.

As regards Article 8 concerning the freezing of any kind of enemy property, the imputation which is made to us that we are not executing the clauses of the Armistice, is so much the more unjustified as the laws for the freezing of these properties have been passed by the Roumanian Government on its own initiative before the signing of the Armistice. We think that not a single case exists of evasion of such properties except of course, if we are to consider as such the numerous removals made by the Soviet officials in the whole country, from goods in the custom houses and in stores, enterprises and even funds from the banks.

With reference to Article 11 we are informed that the Roumanian Commission,

at your request, has presented a number of suggestions, of course incomplete because the impossibility in which is found itself to know the agricultural and industrial situation of the country as well as the obligations we have undertaken to feed and maintain the Soviet Army as per Article 10, made it extremely difficult to rapidly draw up a plan on a real basis so much the more a plan which had to be valid for six years.

Later on at your repeated request, the Commission has presented a detailed study which, starting with the figures we had at our disposal of the Roumanian production and export gives you a number of proposals for the export of various goods per quantities, which total without taking into account the goods taken directly and the deliveries which come under Article 11, was certainly greater than our obligation to furnish you goods of a total value of 50 million dollars.

At the same time the Roumanian Commission has presented a number of proposals referring to the prices at which the respective goods should be calculated. As I am told, no objection has been raised from the Soviet part against the fact that the prices were too high but some objections were made that the prices, according to Soviet experts, should not be the actual prices but the prewar ones. The question has not yet been settled as the problem reminded to be reexamined at a future meeting. Such being the facts, your accusation that we have acted in this respect is an unserious and unwilling manner, seems to me completely unjust. I must act that quite apart from the settlement of the definite plan and solving the problem of the prices, in fact, exports of oil are under way, negotiations are in progress for the delivery of important quantities of timber, proposals have been made as a reply to some request expressed on the Soviet part, to export on account of war damages not only goods produced by the Roumanian economy but even instruments of production from the existing stock and important quantities have been taken directly by various officials of the Soviet Army, which certainly have to be accounted for under the obligation of Article 11.

With reference to Article 12, the Roumanian Government has given a communiqué, in agreement with the Allied Control Commission in which the date of November 10th, has been fixed for the declaration of all goods provenient from the U.S.S.R. under the penalty of criminal law.

As a fact, with all the existing transport difficulties, important quantities of such goods have already been transferred to Constanza at the disposal of Allied Control Commission and other quantities are scheduled, waiting for transport facilities.

We do not deny that some attempt of camouflage has been made by some owners of such goods; as the date fixed by the Allied Control Commission for the declaration of such goods is November 10th, the existence today of such camouflage goods cannot be reproached to the Roumanian authorities that it can be seen from the above mentioned communiqué, understands to apply severe

sanctions in such cases but can only apply them after the expiration of the fixed date. Such being the case the accusation that unsatisfactory and incomplete figures have been presented before the expiration of the given delay, falls by itself.

In view of the above, I consider that the accusation brought against the Romanian Government to have followed a policy of slowing down the fulfilment of the obligations undertaken under the Armistice Convention is completely unfounded.

On the contrary I consider that the efforts made by the Roumanian Government for the fulfilment of the the Armistice obligations is considerable, especially if are taken into account the very difficult conditions under which it has to be carried out.

Thus we will only refer to the obligations of the imposed under Article 1, to collaborate to military obligations against the common enemy, the contribution of the Roumanian Army, which has begun before the signing of the Armistice, has been more fulfilled.

The part taken by Roumania is so much more evident as the officers and N.C.O.s and rank and file left in Moldavia, have not been returned to us but on the contrary have been sent across the Pruth, war materials belonging to these troops also have not been returned to us, military stores in the interior of the country have been blocked to a great extent and last but not least, instead of leaving us liberty of action, the number of the Roumanian Army Divisions in the interior has been limited to three. (Here is the case to state that our war fleet has been taken from us).

In respect to the obligation to feed and maintain Soviet troops which have operated on Roumanian territory, the effort made on account of the first month of the application of the Armistice, i.e. when the country was not yet rebuilt after the destructions and when its administration was not all in the Government's hands, amounts in figures, according to the provisional and incomplete information at our disposal, to roughly 50 000 000 000 lei, amount which represents the total value of our export of last year and equivalent to twice the total monthly expense of the Roumanian State.

This figure is in fact much overtaken if we consider the value of the goods taken by the Soviet Army, amounts on which our information is up to now quite insufficient.

We have to draw your attention to the fact that massive effort has been made in the most unfavourable conditions out of which we quote:

- 1.The Roumanian Administration could not yet be restored in a great part of the country. (The situation is even more serious for Moldavia, Transylvania and Dobrodgea).
- 2.The railways, notwithstanding all efforts we made up to the present, cannot yet be under control.

3.The industry, generally speaking, and especially the oil industry cannot work freely because of the interference of the Soviet local authorities (massive removals of factory installations, tools and raw materials, control of Soviet army guards etc. All these have been brought by Mr. Christu to the knowledge of General Vinogradov in writing and verbally without any result for us.)

4.The state of insecurity existing in the whole country because of the continuous mixing up of Soviet local military elements, which has hampered the retaking of the economic life in general, and especially the agricultural activity. I do not insist here any more on some special questions which in due course have been brought to the knowledge of the Allied Control Commission, as for instance, the refusal of the Soviets to return to us the German, Hungarian and Italian diplomats, in order to proceed to an exchange with Roumanian diplomats.

But I think that it is easy to gather from the above mentioned facts that neither the Roumanian Government nor the Commission for the Application of the Armistice convention, can be accused of delay or lack of interest in the Application of the Armistice convention even if some faults could be found in the execution of some clauses which raise multiple and delicate problems, and I wish to renew the assurance which has been given to you on many occasions, by all those qualified, that we are firmly decided to fulfil the obligations which we have taken under the Act signed at Moscow on September 12, 1944 with a maximum of loyalty and firmness.

xxx Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office, 371, 44033, microfiches 171-176 (studied at Romanian National Archives, Bucharest, Collection Microfiches England 1940-1945, envelope no. 51).