

December 21, 1989

Romania: Ceausescu Faces the Nation□□□

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Summary:

An analysis of Ceausescu's public recognition of the demonstrations.

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~~Top Secret~~

ROMANIA:

Ceausescu Faces the Nation

President Ceausescu yesterday publicly acknowledged continuing disturbances in Timisoara amid growing signs of concern within the security forces over their ability to control the unrest. [redacted]

During a nationally televised speech, Ceausescu appeared visibly shaken and tired. [redacted] He claimed hooligans, organized by "irredentist" and "foreign intelligence" forces, were behind the unrest. Ceausescu also decreed a state of emergency in the Timisoara area, banned public gatherings of more than five people, and placed security forces on full alert.

[redacted]

[redacted] crowds of several thousand gathered in the center of Timisoara yesterday afternoon for the fourth straight day. Workers have occupied and threatened to destroy a chemical plant in the city if troops are not withdrawn. [redacted]

[redacted] An unidentified telephone caller, being interviewed on state television, said last night all the tanks had been pulled out of town. [redacted]

Comment: The fate of the Ceausescu regime may depend on a quick end to the disturbances. If they continue to spread—particularly if they reach the capital—some security officials may lose their nerve and balk at obeying orders to continue using deadly force against their fellow citizens. Any break in the discipline of the security forces—the critical pillar of the regime—could cause its sudden and swift collapse. [redacted]

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