

Joint Statement on United States-Romanian Relations *July 16, 1998*

President Clinton and President Emil Constantinescu met today at the White House to discuss ongoing efforts to strengthen bilateral relations through the U.S.-Romania Strategic Partnership, as well as common efforts to advance regional cooperation, security and stability in Southeast Europe. They also discussed NATO's open door policy and Romania's aspirations to join the Alliance.

The two Presidents expressed great satisfaction with the status of the bilateral relationship, which has expanded significantly over the past year. They noted in particular the deepening of relations through the development of the U.S.-Romania Strategic Partnership, announced during President Clinton's visit to Bucharest last July, and the key role it plays in the U.S. Action Plan for Southeastern Europe as well as for the overall stability of Central and Eastern Europe.

The Presidents reviewed the outcome of the latest round of Strategic Partnership talks, held July 15 at the Department of State. A wide variety of joint projects have been completed successfully in the first year of the Partnership. The two militaries collaborated on Partnership for Peace and bilateral exercises, exchanged students at military institutions, and agreed to establish a regional center for defense resources management in Romania. U.S. and Romanian law enforcement agencies are working closely together in the fight against global threats such as drug trafficking, money laundering, illegal migration and organized crime. The two sides also discussed plans to establish a center for regional cooperation in the fight against cross-border crime in Bucharest. Bilateral agreements on civil aviation, on scientific and technological cooperation, on customs cooperation, and on peaceful nuclear cooperation were signed during President Constantinescu's visit.

In the coming year, the two governments have agreed the Partnership will place greater emphasis on the economic sector, focusing on energy,

information technology and on the development of small- and medium-size enterprises. President Clinton reiterated the U.S. commitment under the Strategic Partnership to help make Romania the strongest possible candidate for NATO membership and integration into other Western structures. Partnership activities aimed at increasing political cooperation, and coordinating efforts to combat non-traditional threats will also continue to progress.

The Presidents reviewed the pace of free market reforms in Romania as a part of Romania's efforts to consolidate its political transition, reinvigorate its economic transition, and hasten its full integration into Euroatlantic institutions. They emphasized the crucial need to accelerate privatization of large state enterprises and banks, to push forward restructuring of privatized companies, and to refocus reforms with the aim of negotiating a new IMF agreement. The Presidents agreed that these reforms, combined with a stable legal environment, will attract greater U.S. investment, which in turn will further Romania's overall development. President Constantinescu noted that Minister for Privatization Sorin Dimitriu has been named Trade and Investment Ombudsman, to help U.S. and other foreign investors expedite and streamline bureaucratic procedures to successfully do business in Romania.

President Clinton expressed appreciation for Romania's ongoing assistance on issues affecting the two countries' security, including participation in Dayton implementation efforts in Bosnia and offer to contribute to the post-UNPREDEP mission in FYR Macedonia as well as to other missions in the region. The two Presidents expressed their mutual concern over the situation in Kosovo and reiterated their determination to work together with other interested parties to promote a diplomatic resolution of this crisis.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.