

Original article

Romania and Poland – at the forefront of defending the Versailles security system in the years 1919-1932 Landmarks of political, diplomatic, and military relations

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ABSTRACT

During the interwar period, the relations between Romania and Poland had, as a common factor, major interests to counter an unprovoked attack from Soviet Russia – USSR. Meanwhile, the rich medieval tradition, the cultural, political and spiritual interferences, assured the substance of mutual relations between the two countries.

Romanian-Polish relations were supported and encouraged by France, which had the incentive to achieve and maintain a “sanitary cordon” against the danger of the Bolshevik/Soviet Union. Romania and Poland evolved into a complex and sensitive geopolitical space in Central and Eastern Europe which took political, diplomatic and military actions to build relationships based on the mutual recognition of borders and the support for the two major Western democracies, France and The United Kingdom.

The Romanian-Polish relations bore the unmistakable imprint of political and diplomatic figures who succeeded to the leadership of the two countries, in Poland – Marshal Jozef Pilsudski and in Romania – King Ferdinand, Queen Mary and the scholar Nicolae Iorga.

KEYWORDS

traditions, common interests, alliance, cooperation, solidarity



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Motto

“The Alliance of hearts is represented, from the Baltic to the Black Sea,
by a single people with two flags.”

Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, Sinaia, September 15, 1922

“A joint Romanian-Polish front. This is the only way to ensure us our very existence,
and also that of the borders we have gained which with so much effort and sacrifice
and now look to consolidate and guarantee.”

Nicolae Iorga, Romanian-Polish Front, The “Romanian nation” no. 117, June 6, 1919

Introduction

Placed in the Ponto-Baltic region, a buffer zone where the Eastern or Western interests of the Great Powers intersected over time, Romania and Poland had a relatively common historical destiny.

Bilateral relations have a long tradition, the Polish chronicles attesting their existence since the last three decades of the 14th century. Among the Romanian territories Moldova had extensive ties with Poland. Thus, the relations of vassalage, equality and alliance existed between the Kingdom of Poland and Moldova throughout the centuries. Moldavian Princes preferred Polish suzerainty because as *typical feudal lordship* it was manifested by clearly established rights and duties on both parties [See more: 1, p. 7].

Good neighborly ties favored Romanian-Polish economic relations, this fact was reflected in the alliance treaties signed in 1495, 1499 and 1510, in which there are references to commercial aspects [2, p. 158]. Relations with Moldova were influenced by the fact that Poland was interested to have access to the Black Sea in order to expand trade [3, p. 26].

Also, in the eighteenth century, Poland was one of the sources on ancient Latin culture for Romanians. The cultural and institutional influences of the Latin West came into the extra-Carpathian Romanian Principalities from Catholic Poland, rather than Transylvania ruled at that time by the Hungarians [4, p. 45. See also: 5, p. 28].

One of the areas in which the Polish influence was particularly visible is historiography. The great Moldavian chroniclers, Grigore Ureche and Miron Costin studied Polish and Latin in Poland, in Bar. The knowledge of these languages facilitated their access to the works of great Polish historians: Jan Dlugosz, Martin Kromer, Martin and Joachim Bielski, Piasecki Paul Martin Paszkowski, Matthew Stryjkowki, etc. [2, p. 158]. Meanwhile, the works published in Krakow by Dlugosz, Kromer, Bielski or Gorski Jacob, due to their Latin origin, contained ample information about Romanians [6, p. 242].

Thus, Grigore Ureche, besides the Moldavian Chronicle, uses in his work the Chronicle of Poland by Joachim Bielski. In turn, Miron Costin, a constant militant for good Moldavian-Polish relations, asserted that the alliance between the two countries would lead to Moldova's liberation from the Ottoman occupation and to the elimination of the Turkish danger for Poland [2, p. 159].

In order to inform the Polish side about the situation in the Romanian Principalities and to persuade the Polish king to assist them against the Turks, Miron Costin writes in Polish, in Iasi in 1677, the Chronicle of the Countries of Moldavia and Wallachia (the Polish Chronicle), and in 1684 in Doszow The History in Polish Verse about Moldova and the Romanian Country (The Polish Poema), which he dedicates to Jan III Sobieski, his protector. In terms of their importance, these works of Miron Costin exceed the Romanian culture and place the Moldavian chronicler in the Polish literary history among the Polish writers of the eighteenth century [2, p. 159].

Nicolae Costin continues his father's work and uses Polish sources, especially Stryjkowski's chronicle and campaigns for the strengthening of the Polish-Romanian relations.

To Nicolae Costin we owe the first overview of Poland in Romanian which tells us about the origin and creation of the Polish state, the church, about Polish cities and customs [2, p. 159].

The close spiritual ties between Moldavians and Poles will be continued in the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century by Tadeu Hasdeu (1769-1835), who leaves interesting works in Polish, a heritage that enriches the Polish Enlightenment [2, p. 160].

The revolutionary year of 1848 is an important moment of the Romanian-Polish collaboration, the Romanian revolutionary leaders maintaining relations both with the conservative wing of the Polish emigration, headed by Prince Adam Czartoryski, the official representative of Poland in France and England, and with Polish Democrats without interfering in conflicts between them [7, p. 122].

Although the Polish and Romanian revolutionaries did not support each other, joint actions undertaken by both countries led to greater closeness between the two nations [7, p. 124, 125].

After the defeat of the 1848-1849 revolution, the ties between Poles and Romanians who emigrated to Paris, London and Constantinople continued, aiming to coordinate the actions of the Romanian, Polish and Hungarian revolutionaries to trigger a new revolution [8, p. 60; See also: 9, p. 136-42].

The movement for the Unification of the Romanian Principalities was also supported by the Polish, relevant in this respect are favorable articles published in 1859, by the novelist Jozef Ignacy Kraszewski in "Gazeta Warszawska" [8, p. 62].

A significant moment for the development of relations between the Romanian state and the Polish emigration is represented by political, military and diplomatic support offered by Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza to all the Polish refugees after the defeat of the Polish uprising of 1863 [10, p. 27].

In the second part of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, the evolution of Romanian and Polish national ideologies was identical and joint projects – independence, sovereignty and the creation of a unitary national state – have stimulated and accelerated closeness. The outbreak of World War I, the collapse of empires in Central and Eastern Europe and the political will of political and military leaders to develop future cooperation, the establishment the joint border, and the diplomatic and military mutual support determined the start of one of the most interesting page in the long Romanian-the Polish relationship at the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919 [10, p. 28].

1. Poland *Restituta* and Unified Romania

– common destinies in a new era of their historical accomplishment

At the end of the First World War, Romania and Poland fighting with the Entente achieved almost simultaneously their national ideal: the Polish state – after the three

territorial divides experienced during the eighteenth century and a persistent diplomatic and military struggle – regained its independence and sovereignty on 11 November 1918 [11, p. 27], and the Romanian state achieved its national unity on 1 December 1918, following the liberation and reunification of the historical provinces which were until then occupied by the neighboring empires. Thus Romania and Poland became neighbors again with a common symbolic border, one of destiny, which transforms the two countries into a barrier between the Bolshevik communism and Europe, where in the years 1918-1921, in the middle of revolutionary turmoil, the fear of the new ideology created by Lenin amplifies.

“On 11 December 1918 Jozef Pilsudski notified the Romanian executive about the independent and sovereign existence of Poland and reassured him that it intended to establish friendly relations with Romania” [12, p. 225].

In turn, the government in Bucharest responded on the 4th of January 1919 that Romanians were pleased to observe “Europe restoring Poland in its rights and independence. The injustice of the past is repaired.” [13, p. 19; 14, p. 112]. On 17 January 1919, Romania officially recognized the independence of Poland.

The subsequent developments require the participation of the Romanian Army in liberating the southeast of Galicia [15, p. 31], claimed equally by the Ukrainians and the Poles. Military cooperation preceded the mutual support of the Romanian and Polish delegations at the Peace Conference in Paris in the years 1919-1920 [See more: 16, p. 23-76].

The Romanian and Polish borders recognition by the Peace Conference was to boost their status internationally and integrate them properly in the new geopolitical architecture of Europe.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established at an interim level of representation on 9 February 1919. On 16 July 1919 the Romanian Council of Ministers decided to set up the Romanian legation in Warsaw, headed by an extraordinary envoy and plenipotentiary minister. The person holding this post was Alexander Florescu. The missions were elevated to the rank of embassy in May 1938 [See more: 17, p. 13-8].

Throughout the interwar period, diplomatic missions were genuine link channels and instruments that contributed to a better understanding between the two countries, they also promoted mutual interests [17, p. 18-28].¹

Since 1919, the Romanian-Polish relations experienced a positive development in the political, military, economic, commercial, cultural and human contacts, regardless of the fluctuations caused by the decision makers in Warsaw and Bucharest [2, p. 164].

¹ On 17 December 1929 Romania and Poland signed a Consular Convention, under which until 1933 Romanian consulates were established in Warsaw, Lwow, Poznan and Danzing (Gdansk). In July 1934, it was decided to establish the honorary consulates of Romania in Lodz, Wilno, Katowice and Gdynia, so in the fall of 1934 in Poland were eight Romanian diplomatic offices. For its part, Poland established consulates in Constanta, Braila, Galati, Chisinau, Chernivtsi and Cluj in addition to the General Consulate in Bucharest.

In the first phase the relationships were strictly determined by several major objectives: the recognition by the Great Powers of the borders of the two countries, a defensive policy in Eastern Europe and a common defense against an attack by the Red Army. The efforts of the diplomats from Bucharest and Warsaw were concentrated on the “construction of a sanitary cordon”, a defensive political system capable of facing the threats of Russia (Union), the USSR and Germany [10, p. 76-94].

A researcher Wladyslaw Stepniak is the first Polish historian who unequivocally emphasizes the favorable attitude shown by Romania on the critical situation in Poland in the years 1919-1921. At the same time, new aspects can be identified in the reports sent from the Bucharest’s first extraordinary envoy and plenipotentiary minister, Polish Count Aleksander Skrzynski, the future head of the Polish diplomacy (1925-1926) and Chairman of the Council of Ministers [18, p. 19]. Remarkable because of his political vision, Aleksander Skrzynski never hesitated to convince the decision makers in Warsaw about the importance of close, friendly relations with Romania [19, p. 47, 48].²

The diplomacy of the two countries held an extensive program of high-level negotiations and consultations in conjunction with mutual political and military support. During the Polish-Soviet crisis of 1919-1920 Romania accepted and supported the Polish military transit on its national territory [20, p. XVI].

The leading personalities of public life from the two countries contributed to creating and strengthening the bilateral relationship. Among the architects of this process were the Romanian King Ferdinand and Queen Maria, Nicolae Iorga, Ion BC Bratianu, Take Ionescu, General Alexandru Averescu, the diplomats Alexandru Florescu and Alexander Iakovaki (the first diplomatic representatives in Poland) and Polish Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Prince Eustachy Sapieha, Foreign Minister of Poland, Count Aleksander Skrzynski, Marian Seyda [20, p. XVI].

2. Reason and pragmatism. Common regional interests reflected in the political and bilateral military agreements in the years 1921-1932

Between 1920 and 1921 in the post-Versailles international context, the first regional defensive ties were created with the participation of the countries situated in Central and South-Eastern Europe: Little Entente – formed by Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania – and the Romanian-Polish alliance. The four governments were determined to find common solutions that would guarantee the preservation of the national borders. Similarly to the League of Nations, the new political groups aimed, besides the

² In one of his reports sent from Warsaw, Aleksander Skrzynski emphasized that “the 1919 military aid from Romania for Pokutia region, the restitution to Poland the transfer of emigrants from Russia, of the ammunition and weapons when Poland was encircled from all sides, the supplies of grain, four times cheaper than cereals from the US, so necessary that their delivery this year was discussed by Prime Minister Witos as a matter of life and death.” N. Mares. *Alianta romano-polona. Intre dea-mare si solidaritate (1938-1939)*. Bucuresti: Biblioteca Bucurestilor; 2010, p. 26.

antirevisionist objectives, to establish a balance in the relations with the Great Powers [21, p. 29].

In August 1920, Foreign Minister Take Ionescu made a trip to the capitals of the Great Allied Powers to present the objectives for the creation of “the alliance of the five new eastern nations to close the road for Germany: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Serbia and Greece” [21, p. 30; 22, p. 465] and thus to establish a new balance of forces in Central Europe. Take Ionescu went to Warsaw hoping for an amicable resolution of the Czech-Polish disputes – after the Western stage of his trip. The discussions showed that, due to the existing territorial problems, Czechoslovakia (the controversy over the region Cieszyn/Teschen, claimed both by Poland and Czechoslovakia), the decision makers in Warsaw did not want Poland to enter the Little Entente, however, they favored an alliance with Romania in order “to guarantee the future peace treaties that could be signed with the Soviets” [23, p. 52].

According to the assessments of Aleksander Skrzynski, Polish diplomacy had realized that without the alliance with Romania, Poland “would be a closed island, isolated, a continental island located in a hostile setting” [17, p. 30].

A special impression in the hearts of Poles was left by Take Ionescu’s appreciation of the role played by Poland as a martyr in the world and the historical importance of winning the battle of Warsaw against the Bolsheviks on August 15, 1920 [18, p. 23]. It is known that this battle was the result of the tactical and strategic genius of Jozef Pilsudski, who, through a Napoleon inspired maneuver, surprised and rejected the Soviet troops before they entered Warsaw; thus protecting Poland and Europe from communism [24, p. 33]. The Polish victory, called “the miracle on the Vistula” was described by Lord Viscount D’Abernon, in a personal hierarchy, as “the eighteenth battle in world history” [25, p. 78-80], together with the Tours victory (732), fought by Christians against Muslims or the Marne victory (1914) of the French against the Germans [Apud: 3, p. 145]. France watched carefully the Romanian-Polish relations, because it was interested in the alliance between the two states as a counterweight to the Berlin – Moscow Axis. Immediately after the Peace of Versailles, one of the French publicists – Jacques Bainville – warned about the danger this axis claiming that the Paris decisions linked Germany to Russia, although the Germans and Russians did not love each other, however, they needed to be permanently together in order to destroy Poland and divide it again [Apud: 26, p. 11].³ This is why, in December 1920 at the meetings between Marshal Ferdinand Foch and Romanian General Alexander Gorski, the objective of which was the Romanian Army mobilization in case of an unprovoked attack,

³ “After her defeat – writes Bainville – Germany must naturally want the alliance with Russia. And all this would be a sufficient reason for her to be sure it will get it. Poland seems to have been invented to speed this closeness” J. Bainville. *Les consequences politiques de la Paix*. Paris; 1940, p. 163, 164. Grigore Gafencu a very talented journalist and an exceptional diplomat, the future foreign minister of Romania (December 21st 1938-30 May 1940) warned, since 1922, in “Revista vremii” about the fact that **“as long as Bolshevism will endure, Russia will undermine Europe with subversive propaganda, supporting Germany in all its attempts and in all its efforts to attain retaliation”** (subl. n.), G. Gafencu. *Criza europeana si politica Romaniei*. Revista vremii, 21 mai 1922.

the Marshal stressed “the need for a defensive convention with Poland” [Apud: 21, p. 31].

France had a major interest in the region, considering the states in this area as a possible bulwark against the potential German eastern expansions and the Soviet expansion westward. As a result, in the 20s and early 30s of the twentieth century, Paris was seeking to build a “sanitary cordon” comprised of countries favoring the status quo through agreements signed with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Greece and Turkey [27, p. 38]. Adam Michnik concludes that the “sanitary cordon” policy was supported by the citizens of Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia, this attitude was determined by the Soviet threat awareness [27, p. 38].

Paris support for these countries, transformed France into the main guarantor and protector of the Versailles rule in Eastern Europe and the Balkans at this time [28, p. 303].

A Polish military commission headed by General Stanislav Haller arrived in Bucharest in January 1921 to determine the details of the military cooperation. The guidelines developed by the Romanian Government on this occasion stand out because of their defensive focus. They took into consideration only unprovoked aggression. The negotiations advanced rapidly and hence at the end of January 1921 General Dumitru Stratiulescu was appointed to elaborate a military convention [28, p. 303].

On 3 March 1921, in Bucharest, the Defensive Alliance Convention was signed between Romania and Poland by the two foreign ministers, Prince Eustachy Sapieha and Take Ionescu accompanied by the Military Convention (Fig. 1) [29, p. 14; 30, p. 20].

It was the first interwar agreement in which one state guaranteed another state’s borders, which was a significant aspect if not a defining one for the foreign policy of the two countries. The document contains eight articles and three secret protocols.

The defensive nature of the alliance was defined in Article 1: “Poland and Romania undertake to assist each other if their current eastern borders of either of these countries were attacked without any provocation” [31, p. 109; 32, p. 116]. Due to the complexity of the international situation, Protocol A stipulated that neither of the “two parties will enter into an alliance with any of the Central Powers without the consent of the other” [33, p. 112]. The purpose of Protocol B – the Convention which was “to be kept secret as long as the Polish-Soviet peace treaty will not be signed” [33, p. 112] – was to prevent any insistence from France or England to straighten the two countries against Soviet Russia, and mostly not to arouse suspicion in Moscow. Regarding Protocol C, he recorded the need to study the means by which the Little Entente could be concluded between five parties “so as to give mutual guarantees against any aggression and to aid in maintaining those treaties or some of them” [34, p. 84].

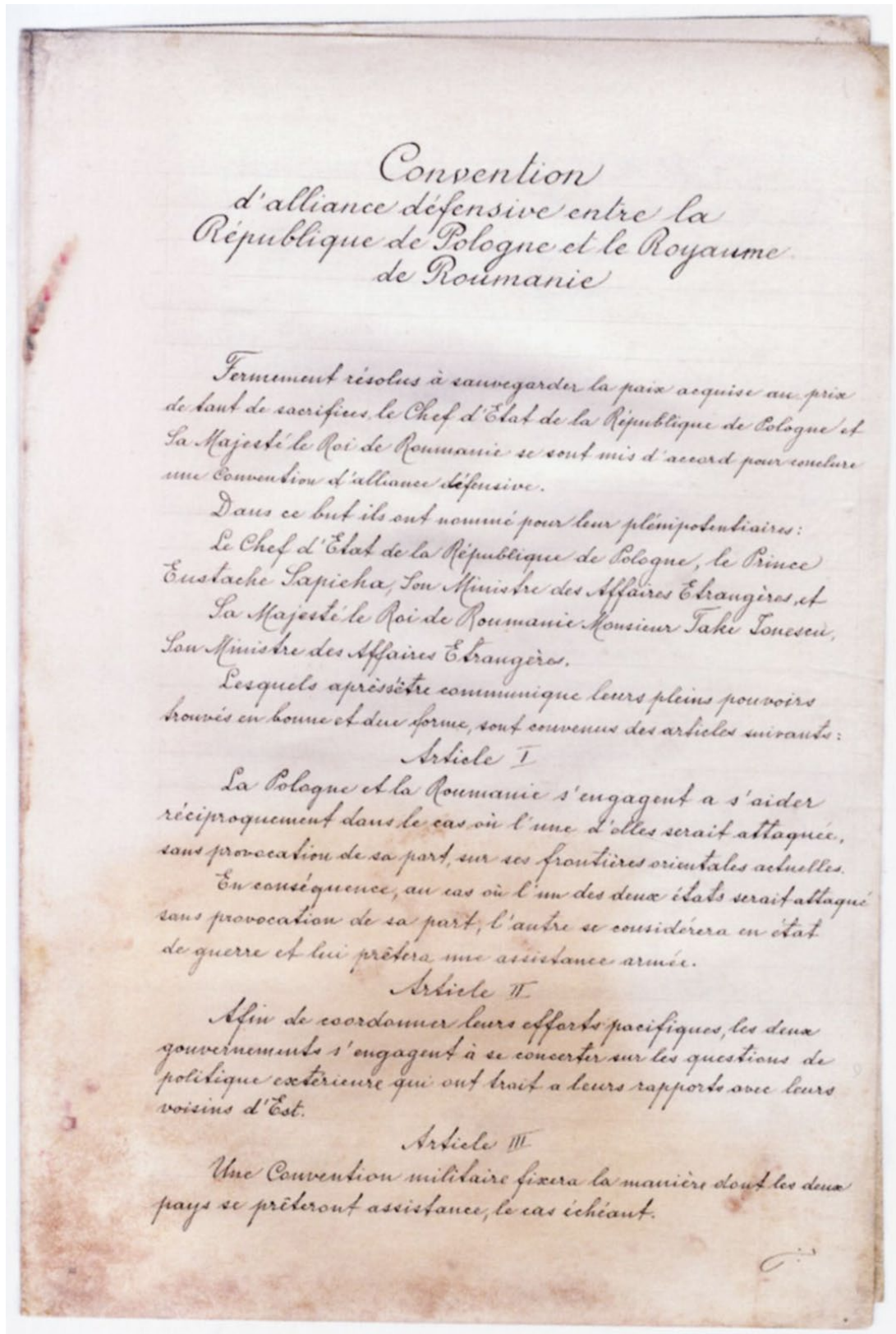


Fig. 1. The first page of Polish-Romanian Alliance Convention
signed on 3 March 1921 in Bucharest
Source: [30, p. 20].



Fig. 2. The cartoon appeared in the “Adevarul” newspaper on 3 March 1921 satirizing the reaction of the Bolsheviks to the appearance of the Roman-Polish alliance
Source: [30, p. 14].

The Military Convention, part of the Political Convention, signed by the generals Tadeusz Rozwadowski and Constantin Christescu, chiefs of the two General Staffs, specified the initial set of measures in the context of separate or simultaneous aggression from the eastern direction faced by the two states [35, p. 7-15]. It was stipulated that for each country and in relation with the scale of the aggression, the number of operational troops was to be: 14 infantry divisions (normal type, four infantry regiments and two artillery regiments) and two cavalry divisions, which had to be conscripted in 18-24 days after the general mobilization was declared. In the exercise of command, the Romanian point of view prevailed: each army acted under its own command; if the strategic situation required that a military unit was to operate in the other's area, they were placed under the command of the latter [Apud: 21, p. 32].

A summary analysis of the Convention reveals the military defensive style in which it was drawn. The hypothesis considered was that the two countries could form “subject and not subject to any aggression” [21, p. 33].

The Defensive Romanian-Polish Alliance was the axis around which the inter-war relations between the two countries developed. The Convention Defensive Alliance, signed on 3 March 1921, based on political and strategic grounds was renewed with new features every five years (1926, 1931 and 1936), then converted into the Guarantee Treaty in 1926, in this form it remained in force until the dramatic circumstances of the fall of 1939 fall changed the situation completely [2, p. 167].⁴

According to the Military Convention, in order to determine the conditions and possibilities of cooperation between the two allied armies, the need for close and constant contact between the Romanian and Polish Joint Staffs was outlined from the beginning, the fact was manifested particularly in the correspondence and the conferences that took place in the two capitals [36, p. 420].

From the beginning, the works of the military delegations from these conferences resulted in a series of special studies, which, based on their contents, constitute conclusive evidence regarding the purpose of the alliance [36, p. 420].

The first study was submitted to the two General Staffs on 21 September 1922. This project included the Romanian-Polish operations in four hypotheses of the action of the Russian troops, and obviously the response of the Romanian and Polish troops (Fig. 3-5) [37, p. 4-6]. Also through this study the dividing line between the two armies was established: Svaniec on Nistru, Grozinei, Rohozna (North Chernivtsi), Lencauti on Prut, Storojinet on Siret, Ciudin, Straja on Suceava [37, p. 4-6]. All these places belong to Romania and the Romanian territory in the north this line was defended by Polish forces reinforced by a Romanian detachment [36, p. 421].

The Romanian and Polish Chiefs of the General Staff signed this study which also approved Study No. 2 defining the way both armies would work together. In this document, the two armies determined that each would send missions or liaison officers using a certain rail transit and that mutual naval bases would be installed [36, p. 422].

The constant concern of both of the General Staffs on the enemy from the east was reflected in subsequent years by the exchanges of views, discussions and conferences which led to the preparation of Studies No. 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 containing various hypotheses on the actions of the Romanian and Polish troops in case of Red Army attacks (Fig. 6-14) [36, p. 423-40; 37, p. 7-46].

⁴ Along with the political and military agreements, Romania and Poland signed a series of agreements, including the Arbitration Treaty of 24 October 1929 by which the two countries pledged to submit to arbitration any dispute which could not be settled through diplomatic means. Another bilateral document was the Convention on mutual aid and legal protection in civil matters, signed in Bucharest on 19 December 1929 together with a final protocol which guaranteed legal protection to goods and people from the other State in the same manner as for their own countrymen, N. Dascalu. *Relatii romano-polone In perioada interbelica (1919-1939)*. Bucuresti: Academiei Romane; 1991, p. 54-5. Also on March 26, 1930 the Convention on extradition of criminals and legal assistance in criminal matters was signed, and in May 1935 two important documents related to common border demarcation were adopted: the Convention on the Conservation and Replenishment of the Border Landmarks and the Final Act of the Romanian-Polish Border Delimitation, N. Dascalu. *Relatii romano-polone...*, op.cit., p. 55.

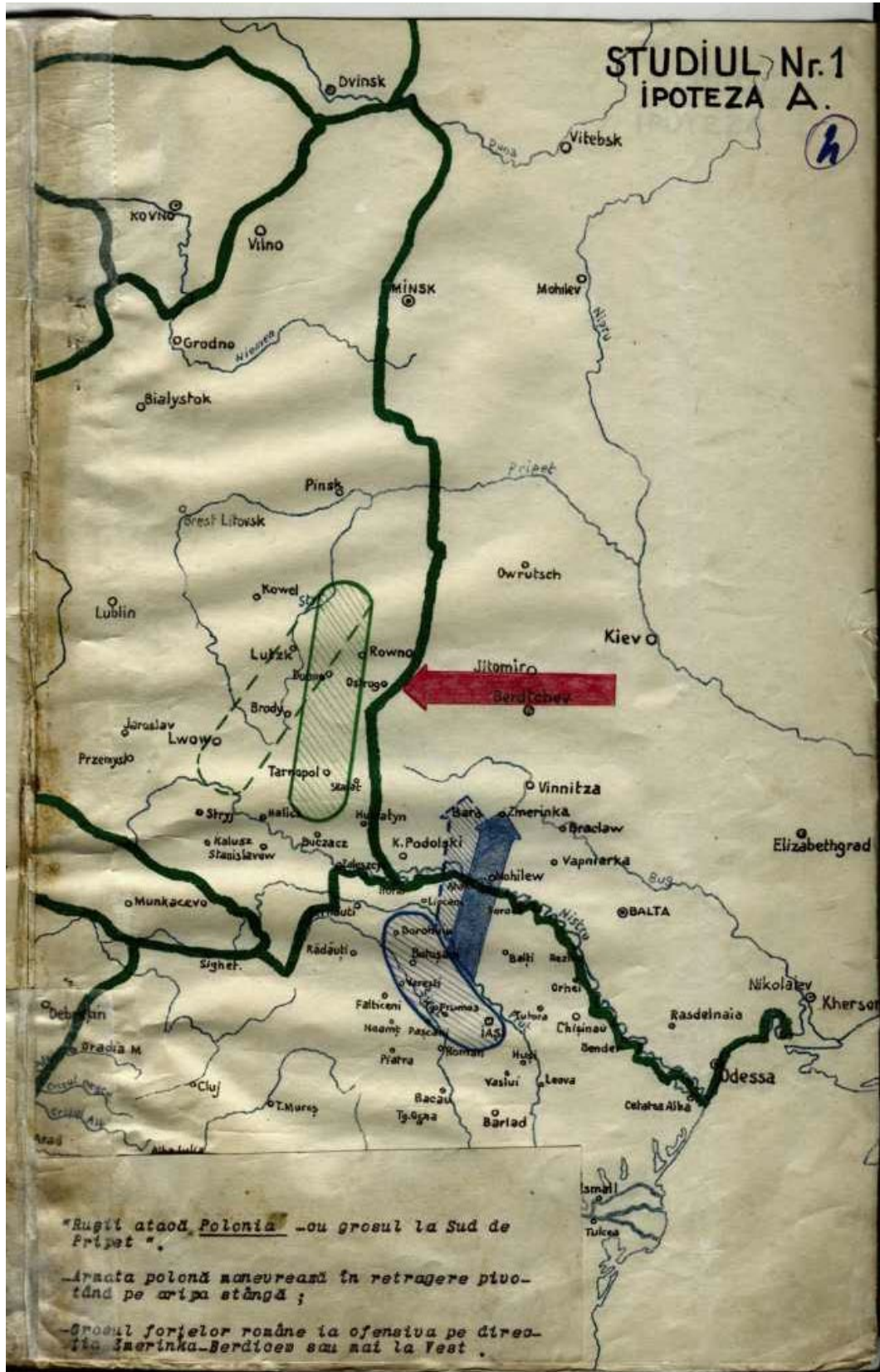


Fig. 3. Romanian Military Archives, fund of the General Staff 3rd Operations Department, file 1120, p. 4

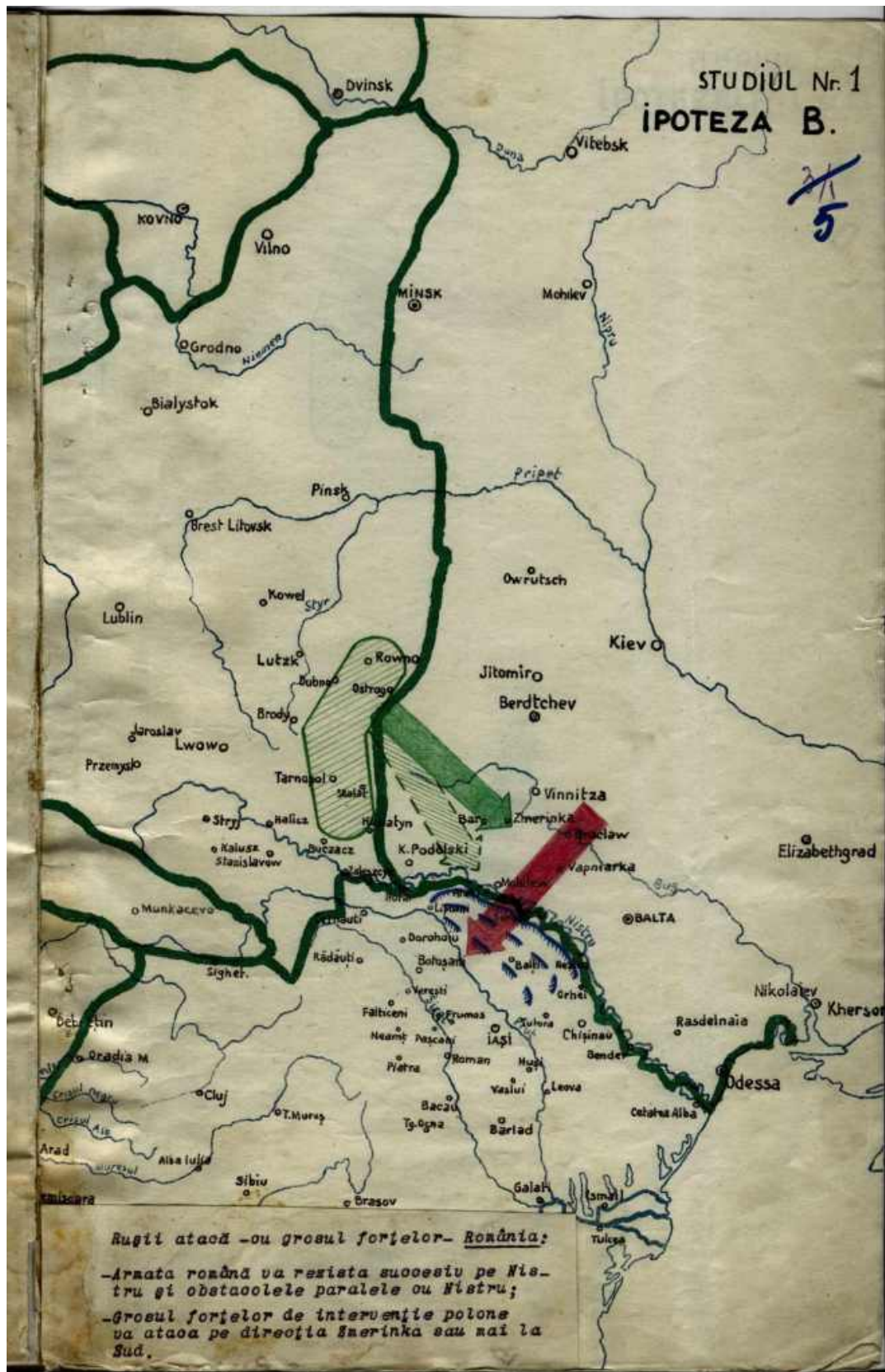


Fig. 4. Romanian Military Archives, fund of the General Staff 3rd Operations Department, file 1120, p. 5

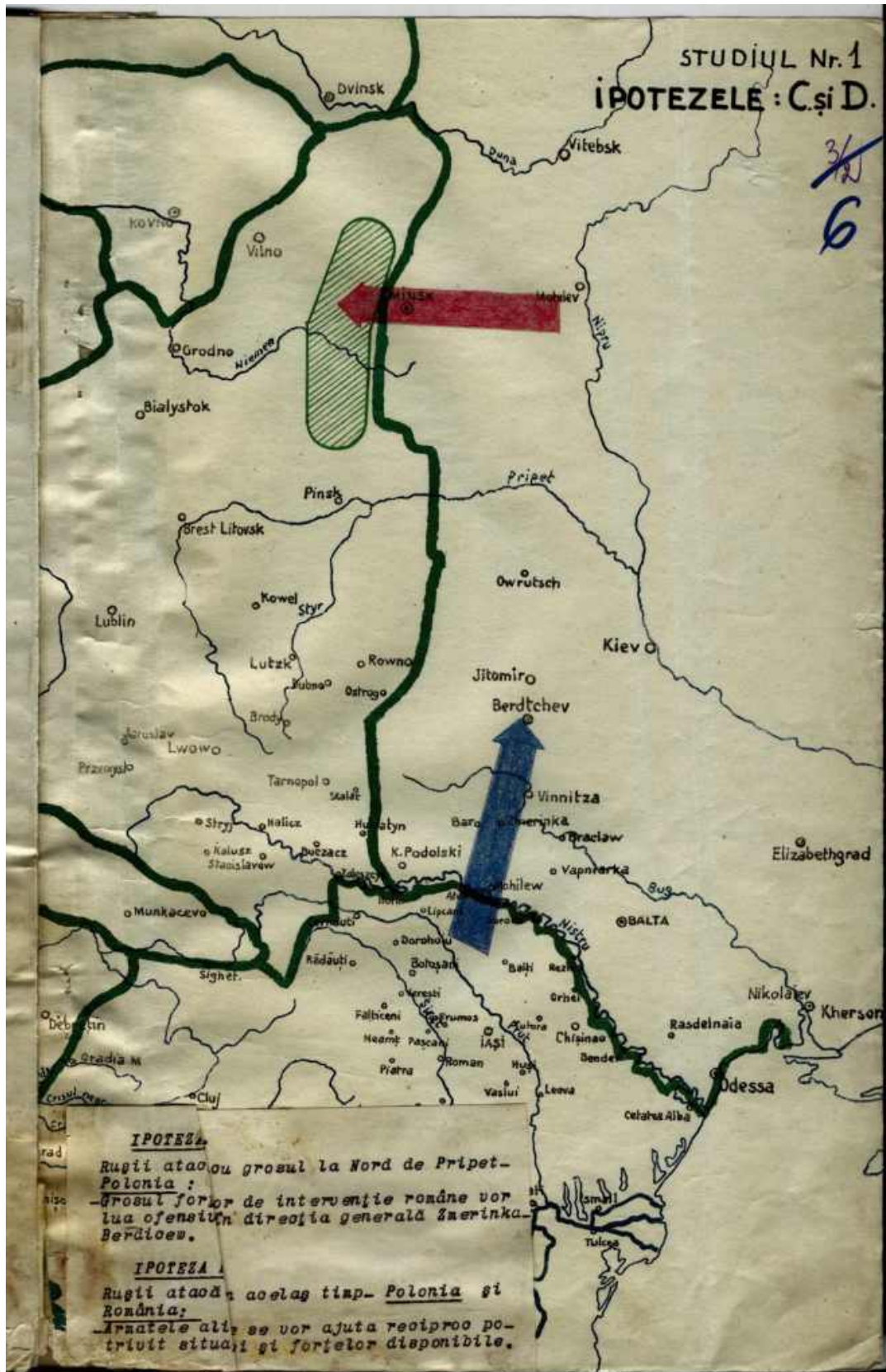


Fig. 5. Romanian Military Archives, fund of the General Staff 3rd Operations Department, file 1120, p. 6

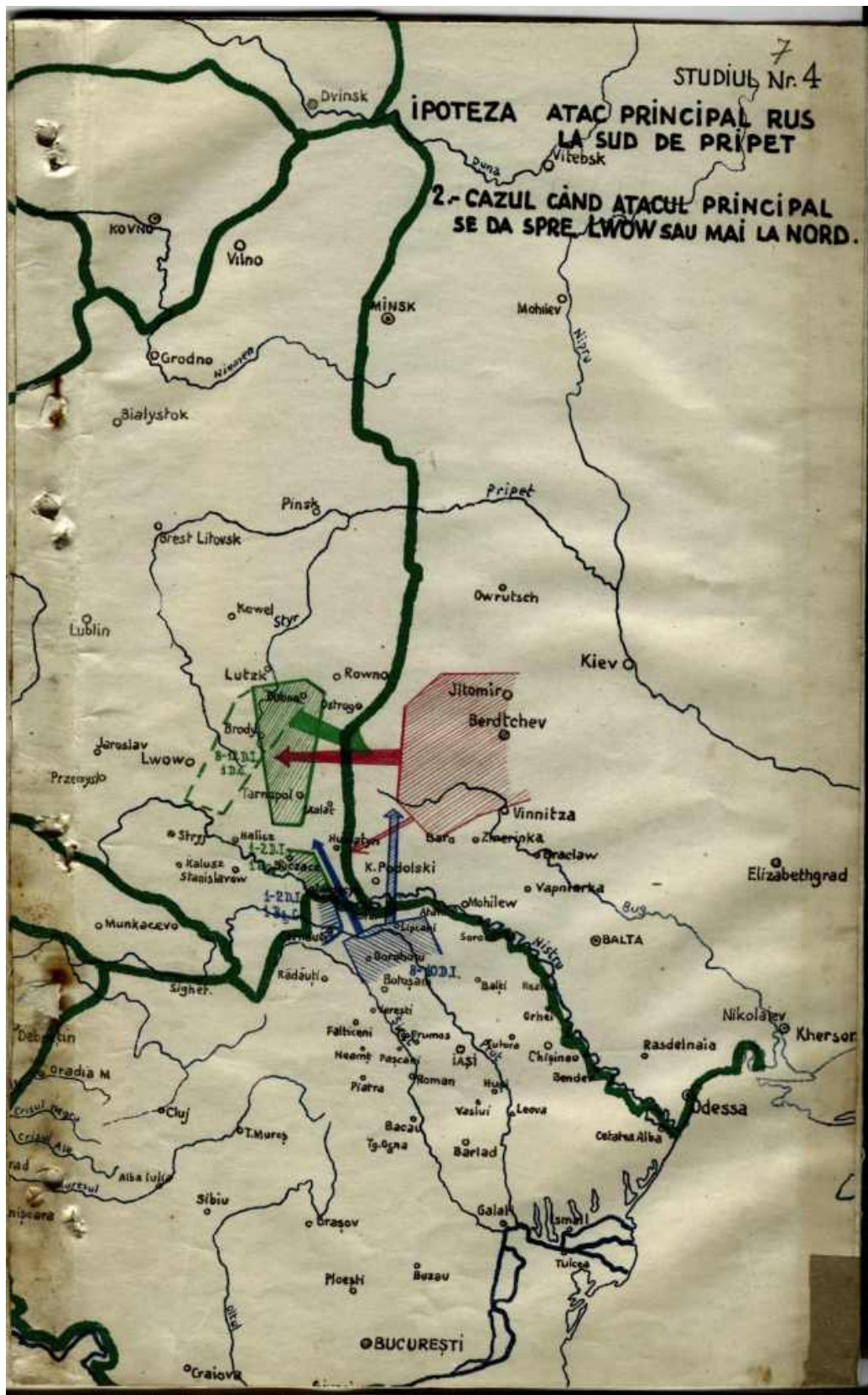


Fig. 6. Romanian Military Archives, fund of the General Staff 3rd Operations Department, file 1120, p. 7

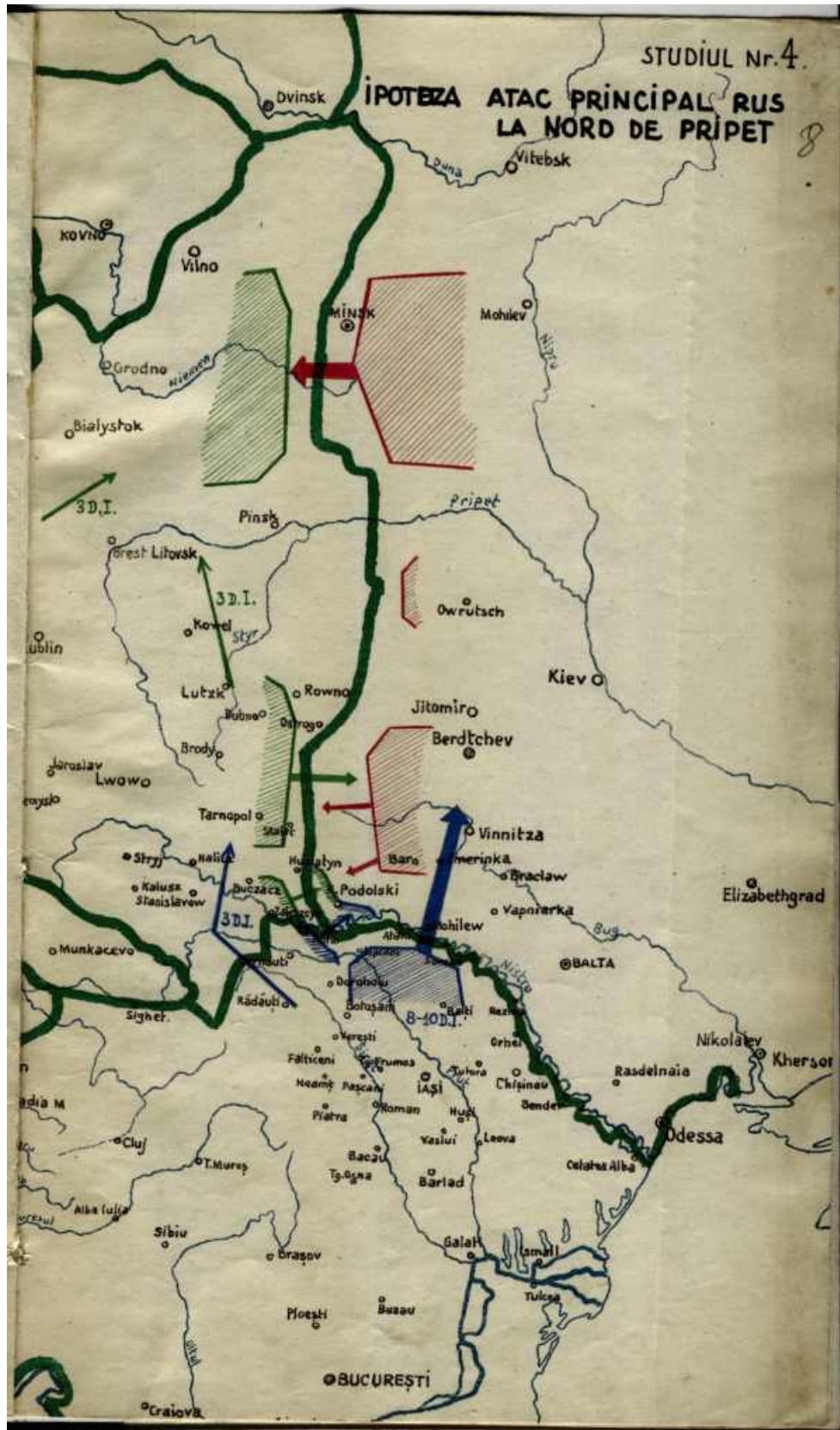


Fig. 7. Romanian Military Archives, fund of the General Staff 3rd Operations Department, file 1120, p. 8



Fig. 8. Romanian Military Archives, fund of the General Staff 3rd Operations Department, file 1120, p. 9



Fig. 9. Romanian Military Archives, fund of the General Staff 3rd Operations Department, file 1120, p. 11

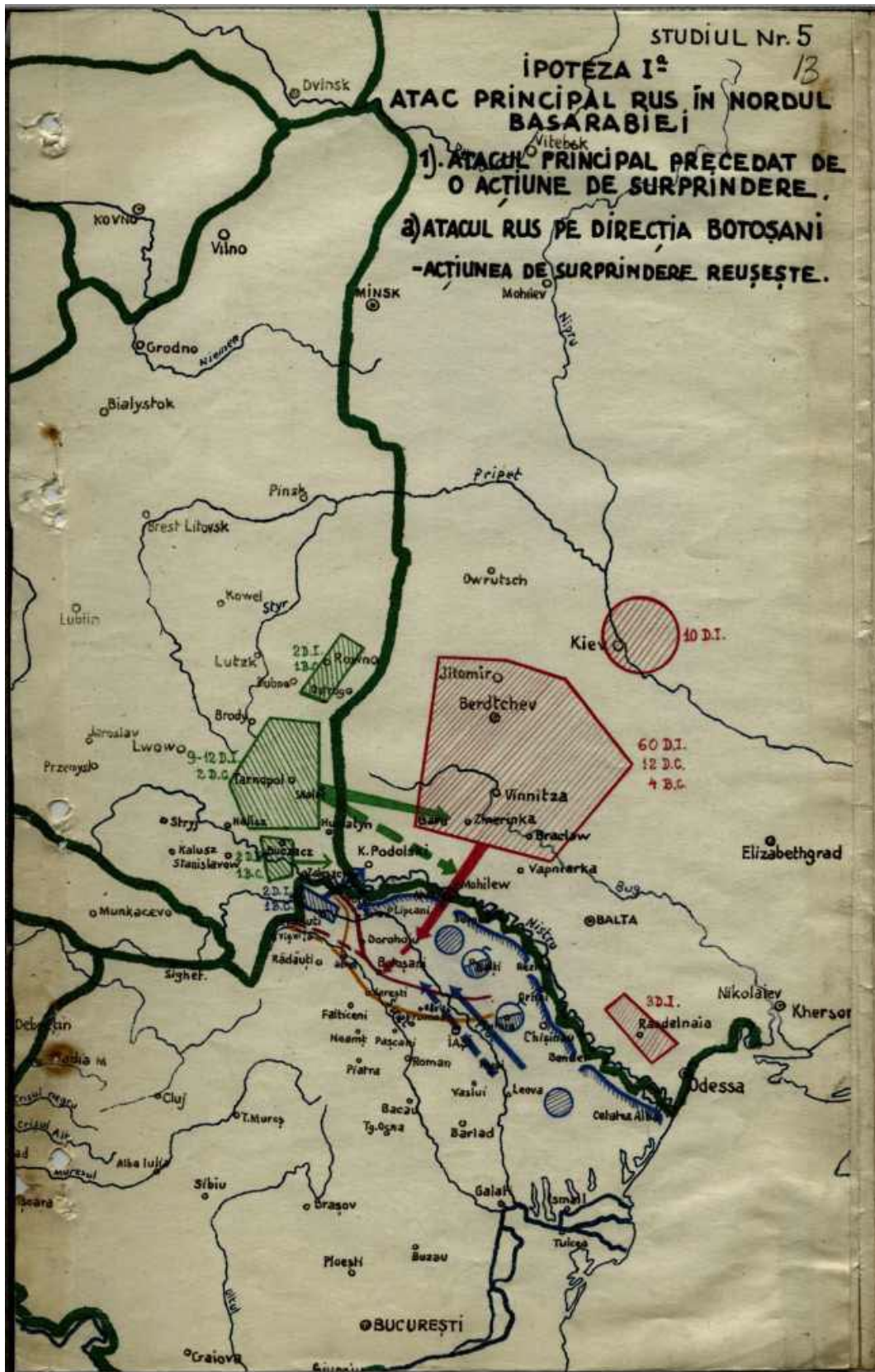


Fig. 10. Romanian Military Archives, fund of the General Staff 3rd Operations Department, file 1120, p. 13

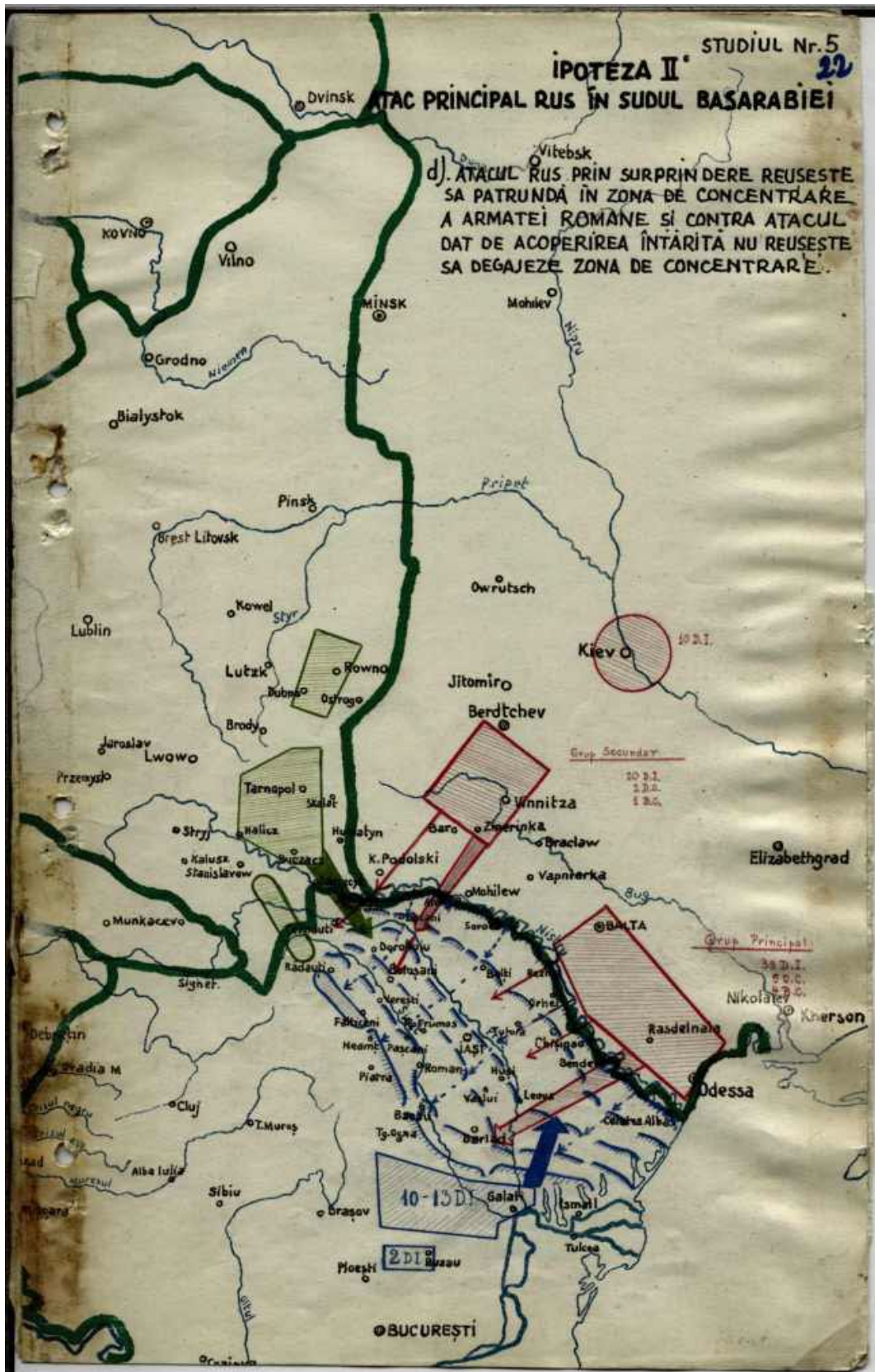


Fig. 12. Romanian Military Archives, fund of the General Staff 3rd Operations Department, file 1120, p. 22

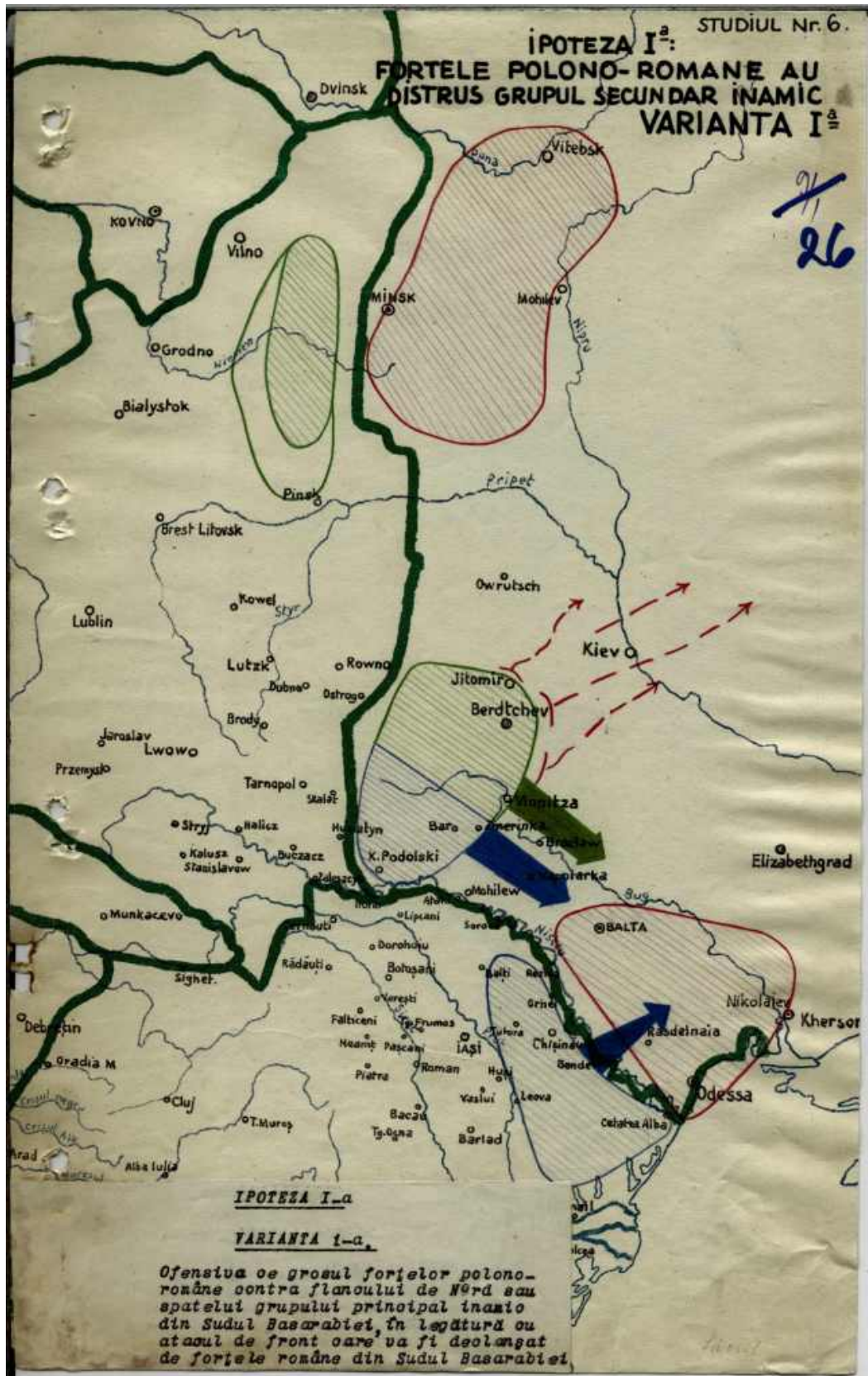


Fig. 13. Romanian Military Archives, fund of the General Staff 3rd Operations Department, file 1120, p. 26

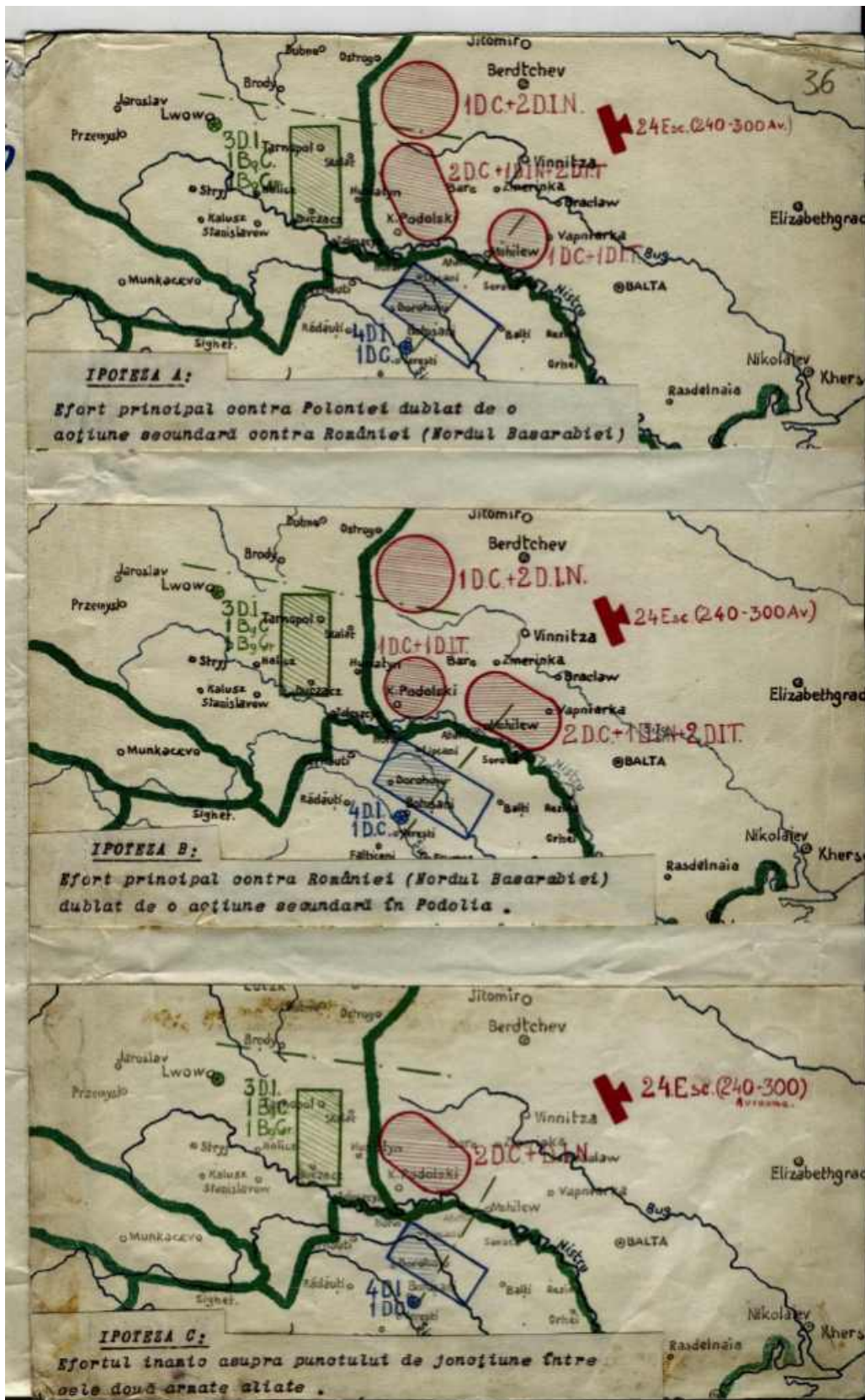


Fig. 14. Romanian Military Archives, fund of the General Staff 3rd Operations Department, file 1120, p. 36

These actions reveal that in the interwar period, the main threat to Romania and Poland was the Soviet Union. The Kremlin consistently issued revisionist claims on Bessarabia, on the one hand and Eastern Galicia, on the other hand [2, p. 167].

The alliance with Poland was of special importance for Romania because it was one of the few guarantees of its border on the Dniester. Soviet Russia did not participate in the Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920) and throughout the interwar period it challenged the union of Bessarabia with Romania. The Act of March 27/April 9, 1918 from Chisinau received international recognition by the Treaty of Paris of 28 October 1920 being signed by France, Britain, Italy and Japan and ratified earlier on by the first three states. Japan interested in certain economic advantages in its relations with the Soviet Union, refused to ratify the Paris Treaty [38, p. 16].

The conclusion of the alliance with Poland meant for Romania not only ensuring the Eastern border, but also important support in the alliance system designed to guarantee territorial integrity of Unified Romania [2, p. 167; 39, p. 174].

In turn, Poland had essential strategic and military interests as through this alliance it hoped to secure its eastern borders, combat expanding influence of pro-Russian in the Balkans, improve Romanian-Hungarian relations and raise Romanian awareness in the relations of Poland with the neighboring Great Powers, especially by blocking German influences [40, p. 64; 32, p. 79]. From the Warsaw perspective, the alliance represented "the guarantee of maintaining ties with Western Europe if the Polish seaside was blocked as a result of a wide armed conflict with Germany" [41, p. 177-9].

With the consolidation of the alliance, particular attention was paid to obtaining information about the enemy for the purpose of analysis and to have the possibility to inform the responsible officials early enough to sustain political and military decisions [42, p. 23]. To this end, between the special services of Poland and Romania, fruitful collaboration was initiated in the exchange of intelligence, documentation as well as counteracting and neutralizing Soviet espionage on the territory of the two countries [See: 43, p. 187-97].

After 1921 with the attainment of the international recognition of the borders and the conclusion of the Convention alliance by both countries, bilateral and military relations brought beneficial results, especially in trade and transit from the Baltic Sea, the Danube and the Black Sea to and from the Balkans, Middle East and the Mediterranean [20, p. XVI].

The interest in developing bilateral economic relations led to the establishment of friendship associations, such as The Polish-Romanian Society in Warsaw, founded on 22 January 1926. At its inauguration, the Plenipotentiary Minister of Poland to Bucharest, Jozef Wielowieyski, highlighted the continued solidarity of interests that united the two countries: "Romania and Poland constitute a single economic and political front and their defense depends on the solidity of the links that unite them". Regarding economic issues, the Polish diplomat stressed that as the Romanian ports on the Danube and Constanta are "the natural outlet of Polish trade to the Middle East, so Gdansk is the port that allows Romanian goods to reach Baltica". However, Jozef Wie-

lowieyski denied that “Russia is the only market for Poland”, claiming the opposite, showing that Polish industry “did not sell in Russia itself, but especially in Armenia, Georgia and Anatolia. The road to these lands does not go through Russia; the nearest route passes through Galati and Trebizond, so Russia is not an indispensable bridge to the Orient for Polish trade, but Romania” [44, fi. 233; 2, p. 170].

Frequent high-level contacts had an outstanding contribution to the development bilateral relations which allowed for the permanent harmonization of views and joint action in addition to mutual information and consultation, especially in matters regarding cooperation and security in Central and Eastern Europe.

Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, the main architect of the rebirth of Poland, was a popular guest at the Royal Court of Romania. The marshal, in love with Romanian lands, contributed decisively to the strengthening of the relations between the two countries. As head of the Polish state, he visited Romania several times (1922, 1928, 1931, 1932), boosting some of the military cooperation joint projects [45, f. 12. See also: 3, p. 203-12, 263-74]. At one point he suggested that a dynastic union between Poland and Romania was a feasible possibility [29, fi. 124].



Fig. 15. Marshal Pilsudski in Sinaia in September 1922 amid the Romanian royal family
Source: [30, p. 12].

During his visit to Romania, in Sinaia in September 1922, Marshal Pilsudski presented an impressive and meaningful analysis of the geopolitical position and the relations between the two countries, highlighting the following: “the link between Poland and Romania is that both countries came out of the throes of the great world War, Romania – united and Poland – resurrected. Both are the living embodiment of the victory of justice and equity. From the similarity of pathways linked by this shared past comes, logically, a common way to be pursued currently, no doubt, also in the future, because it embodies the common fate of both of our peoples, linked both by their needs and interests, and by the same appreciation of freedom justice and peace (...) We want to emphasize

that the alliance of hearts is represented from the Baltic to the Black Sea by one people with two flags" [20, p. XV; 46, p. 167. See also: 47, p. 169-76].

Between August 19 and October 3, 1928, Marshal Jozef Pilsudski paid a visit to Romania [48, p. 7-32]. Arriving at Targoviste he was housed in the villa of Dr. Lucjan Skupiewski (the great-grandfather of the late President Lech Kaczynski and his twin brother, Jaroslaw Kaczynski). On this journey, Marshal Pilsudski was accompanied by Ludwig Wlodzimirz, Poland's military attache in Bucharest, and his daughters, the eleven-year old Wanda, and the eight-year old Jagoda [3, p. 263-7].



Fig. 16. Marshal Pilsudski on the steps of the Military Museum in Bucharest during his visit in 1928. Flanked by General Angelescu, Romanian Minister of War (right) and Jan Szembek, Polish Ambassador in Bucharest (wearing a suit)
Source: [30, p. 22].

Between the 11 and 28 October 1931, Marshal Jozef Pilsudski visited Romania again. On October 11, 1931 he arrived in Techirghiol [49, p. 273], Constanta, the visit here was prepared by Dr. Lucjan Skupiewski [49, p. 298]. On October 13, 1931, in Bucharest Marshal Pilsudski met with Queen Marie and Prince Nicholas, on this occasion he was named the honorary commander of the 16th Infantry Regiment deployed at the Fal-ticeni garrison [3, p. 270].

Marshal Jozef Pilsudski visited Romania between 2 and 13 of March 1932. On March 2, 1932 in Buzau, he met the president of the Council of Ministers, Nicolae Iorga, and from there he went to Constanta and then Egypt on board of The "Romania". On April 13, 1932, he returned from Egypt, and on April 14 had official meetings in Bucharest with King Charles II, Prime Minister Nicolae Iorga and other military and civilian Romanian officials [49, p. 305].



Fig. 17. Marshal Pilsudski in Sinaia, accompanied by Jan Szembek, the Polish ambassador in Bucharest (first left) and Lt. Col. Roman Michalowski, military attache (October 14th 1931)
Source: [30, p. 23].



Fig. 18. Pilsudski, welcomed at the Gara de Nord in Bucharest, on his return from Egypt to Poland in April 1932. At the wagon door is the adjutant of the Marshal, Captain Mieczyslaw Lepecki. On the left, on the platform: dr. Lucjan Jan Skupiewski
Captain Dereck, deputy military attache in Romania
Source: [30, p. 23].

Later on, he visited the 16th Infantry Regiment, where he was greeted warmly by officials, military men and other participants of the event. During the reception a brass band played the song “We Are the First Brigade” (the anthem of the 1st Brigade of the Polish Legions, commanded by Pilsudski during the First World War) and also a speech was given in honor of the Polish high official: “Marshal, the officers and the troops of the Baia16th Infantry Regiment are proud and consider it an honor to be under your Excellency’s command, we would like to ensure you of their solemn commitment and promise you that they will always live up to this distinction. Harnessing the most beautiful and pure feelings of respect and devotion to Your Excellency, we all hail: Long live Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, our beloved chief” [49, p. 73]. Jozef Pilsudski was deeply impressed and moved by the military attire and attitude and the whole atmosphere manifested during the visit [48, f. 76].

On April 22, 1932, Marshal Jozef Pilsudski returned to Poland. It was his last trip abroad [49, p. 305; 50, p. 16; See also: 51, p. 57-8].

In June 1923 the Romanian sovereigns paid several visits to Poland. Ever since the end of the First World War, Queen Mary and King Ferdinand advocated proximity to Poland based on establishing a common border, the completion of the political and military alliance and the development of economic and cultural relations [2, p. 169].



Fig. 19. Rembertow military maneuvers near Warsaw on 26 June 1923 during the visit to Poland of the royal family of Romania

Source: [30, p. 21].

During this period, fruitful relations were created and developed between the diplomatic representatives in Bucharest and Warsaw, lawmakers from both countries, businessmen, scientific personalities and young people from different stations and professions [2, p. 169].

One of the most energetic and devoted friends of Poland was a great scholar and historian Nicolae Iorga. The Great War was not over yet, Romania was in a dramatic situation, and Poland showed no obvious signs of revival when, during the Iasi refuge that took place in the terrible winter of 1917-1918, Nicolae Iorga triggered a press campaign for Poland in “*Neamul romanesc*”, it was an event without precedent in the history of local journalism. This step of the Romanian scientist was, in terms of consistency and goals, comparable to what was going on in American, British or French newspapers. It was a series of articles dedicated to the history of Poland with the stated purpose of advocating the independence of this state in every way possible [10, p. 31].

After the comprehensive presentation of the key moments in the evolution of Poland - from the glorious Middle Ages to the revolutions of the nineteenth century – Nicolae Iorga warmly welcomed the rebirth of the Polish state so that, immediately, through a prediction bordering geniality, he could militate in “*The New Europe*” for the common Warsaw-Bucharest front” [10, p. 31]. “*The common front*” – this was the urge he launched on the eve of signing the Peace Treaty of Versailles. According to this theory, the Romanian state imperiously needed a link with its neighbor to the north “because this is the only way to ensure our very existence, and that of the borders, which with so much effort and sacrifice, we have gained and look to consolidate and guarantee” [52].

In one of the most prestigious publications from Krakow “*Przegląd Współczesny*” from June 26, 1924, Nicolae Iorga published a highly suggestive article that argued that the traditions of the two countries were joined by common interests that constitute the base for future Romanian-Polish relations [53].

Also on June 10, 1924, in the most prestigious newspaper in Warsaw, “*Rzeczpospolita*”, “Nicolae Iorga expressed his scientific and political concept regarding the bilateral alliance”. At the end of the article, the Romanian scholar highlighted that “there is no more durable policy than that imposed by necessity (...) Romania’s alliance with Poland is a bulwark for all that is behind it and is one of the major factors of civilization in our time” [44, p. 124; 54].

Also at that time, Polish media commented positively on the conclusion of the alliance with Romania considered to be rising from the community of interests of the two countries. Appreciative opinions to this effect were published in “*The Journal de Pologne*” of 10 June 1924 “*Bydgoski Dziennik*” of 24 June 1924, “*Rzeczpospolita*” from June 10, 1924 [44, p. 196].

At the same time, the newspaper “*Messenger Polonais*” from October 20, 1925 considered that “beyond their common destinies, because of their geographical location, Romania and Poland complement one another. Although their area of action is special, their interests are never opposed” [44, p. 196].

Nicolae Iorga’s persevering views to give cultural relations a much more important role which should be a true bridge between the two peoples, was implemented in the period in which he held the position of the President of the Council of Ministers (April 18, 1931 May 31, 1932) in the extremely harsh conditions of the global crisis that began in

1929. The newly established Romanian-Polish Cultural Association in Poznan, founded in 1931 [29, p. 38], and the League of Polish-Romanian from Lviv [55, p. 80-6]⁵ were financially supported by the Romanian government and sustained by Romanian intellectuals.

Beyond the special relationship between the two creators and founders – Marshal Jozef Pilsudski and Nicolae Iorga – the Romanian scientist was the one who, immediately after regaining the independence of Poland, boosted and effectively developed the relationship between the two countries and peoples based on cultural, historical and civilization models. He continued this activity until his death on 27 November 1940 [10, p. 36].

From the political and military perspective the alliance between Romania and Poland was driven primarily by the need to counter any attack by the Red Army. Soviet aggression could not be prevented, it took place in separate steps against both countries, initially against Poland when, defeated by the Nazi Germany, it did not have any possibility to defend itself and then about a year later against Romania which was completely isolated and unable to defend its borders which were threatened from all directions.

The dramatic evolution of the events fully justified the need for this alliance, meaning that the Soviet danger threatened not only Poland and Romania but, as it turned out later, it was encompassed the whole of Europe.

In conclusion, we can say that in the interwar period and especially during the period under review, the Romanian-Polish relations bore the unmistakable imprint of political and diplomatic personalities who succeeded at the head of Poland and Romania. In Poland, it is about Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, the creator of the independent Polish state, a charismatic and highly complex personality, because of the originality of his methods of ruling the state often compared with prominent personalities of world history, such as Oliver Cromwell, George Washington, Napoleon Bonaparte or Charles de Gaulle [56, p. 19]. With regards to Romania, the interwar history of the Romanian-Polish relations will record in its pantheon King Ferdinand, Queen Mary and the scholar Nicolae Iorga.

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Conflict of interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

Author contributions

The author contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

⁵ Members of the organization affiliated to the University of Lviv were, among others, the exceptional Romanian historians George Duzinchievici, Ilie Corfus, PP Panaitescu and the linguist and man of culture Grigore Nandris.

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

ORCID

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Biographical note

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**Rumunia i Polska – na czele frontu obrony
systemu bezpieczeństwa wersalskiego w latach 1919-1932
Punkty zwrotne stosunków politycznych, dyplomatycznych i wojskowych**

STRESZCZENIE

W okresie międzywojennym stosunki pomiędzy Rumunią a Polską miały jeden wspólny mianownik, polegający na przeciwdziałaniu niesprokowanemu atakowi ze strony Rosji Radzieckiej – ZSRR. Bogata wspólna tradycja wywodząca się jeszcze z czasów średniowiecznych, ingerencja kulturowa, polityczna i duchowa wpłynęły na umocnienie się wzajemnych relacji obydwu krajów.

Stosunki rumuńsko-polskie były inspirowane i wspierane przez Francję, która miała na celu utrzymanie tzw. „kordonu sanitarnego” przeciwko niebezpieczeństwu grożącemu ze strony bolszewickiej Rosji. Rumunia i Polska przekształciły się w złożoną i wrażliwą geopolityczną przestrzeń w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej, która podjęła działania polityczne, dyplomatyczne i wojskowe w celu zbudowania relacji opartych na wzajemnym uznawaniu granic przy wsparciu dwóch głównych zachodnich demokracji, Francji i Wielkiej Brytanii.

Stosunki rumuńsko-polskie nosiły wyraźne piętno postaci politycznych i dyplomatycznych, które przewodziły obu krajom w tym czasie, a mianowicie w Polsce – marszałkowi Józefowi Piłsudskiemu, natomiast w Rumunii – królowi Ferdynandowi, królowej Marii i rumuńskiemu uczonemu Nicolae Jorga.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE tradycje, wspólne interesy, sojusz, współpraca, solidarność

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