

The defiance

Written by Administrator
Monday, 16 January 2012 17:45 -

The president was dissatisfied with the specialists' and people's reluctance to a new health law, that would have shared responsibilities between the existent SMURD (emergency state service) and newly set private companies. So dissatisfied, that he lashed at the under-secretary of state Raed Arafat (MD specialist of Palestinian origin that set up SMURD during the '90s). So, Arafat resigned. Rather soon after that, president Traian Basescu publicly called on PM Emil Boc to withdraw the draft law from public debate.

It was too late. The Romanian public opinion received the blow as a blow against good sense, against every one of them. Arafat was seen as a professional, a person that has become more Romanian than many of the native Romanians.

This had been the spark that triggered street protests.

More than forty cities in Romania were witnesses of peaceful street protests during the last three days. Other protests are to follow. Unfortunately for Traian Basescu and the current government, the protests have become more demanding. Demonstrators are bringing to the street their personal discontents regarding salaries' cuts, pensions' cuts, the way reforms are carried out according to the president's interests, the way laws have been passed through parliament (by assuming government responsibility instead of discussing them), lack of dialogue between the government and the civil society and the fact that the austerity measures have fallen heavily on the poorest Romanians.

Now the demands hint at the government's resignation, suspending the president and so on. As the opposition calls for early elections, it seems for many that this would be the only solution to calm down spirits. But the ruling party (democrat-liberal) representatives refuse to see the reality.

Some of the party members are criticizing the street movements. One of the called the demonstrators as being 'worms', another one called them 'neurotic.'

Is this the way to carry on a constructive dialogue with discontent people?

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Bucharest is an exception against all other cities. In Bucharest violent clashes were registered between demonstrators and gendarmes. Several people and gendarmes have been injured and rushed to the hospitals. Ironically, the ambulances carrying them were SMURD ambulances. On facebook, twitter and other social networks there are hundreds of calls for people to come downtown Bucharest at University Square or Unirii Square – the latter being the place where heavy clashes were registered Sunday night. It seems people are getting ready for long-term demonstrations of discontent.

Odd enough, the president has disappeared from the public scene. No word has been heard from Traian Basescu for days. For three days not even the executive has had a position. Monday, by noon, PM Boc called for peaceful demonstrations and called on the interior minister to arrest violent demonstrators.

That's all. Oh, sorry, I forgot. Boc added he understands Romanians are dissatisfied with the economic situation, but violence is not a solution. Of course violence is not a solution. Early elections are.

President Basescu defied the citizen. Now the citizen is defying the head of state. Years ago Basescu was enjoying mass supporters in public places. Now he is afraid to even have a public appearance. I do believe it's the beginning of the end for Traian Basescu.

My only regret is that violence is spreading in Bucharest. In fact there are two categories of demonstrators. The peaceful ones and the violent ones. But let's not forget that infiltrating groups of violent individuals into large masses is an old and traditional technique of manipulation. I wonder if this is not just another case, in order to justify the gendarmes' interventions.

Maxy