

on. The countdown is continuing to move. I have fewer than six hours to go and I think I'm going to make it. This article is from the Christian Science Monitor, as I said. It's called Births Controlled, the subhead, Previous Regimes Abortion Policies Reversed, and it's about Romania. Marcica, I think is the pronunciation, M-a-r-c-i-c-a Negru, N-e-g-r-u, married four years ago and already has two girls. The family lives in a one-room apartment, sharing the kitchen and toilet with 16 other families. When she became pregnant for the third time last August, she decided to abort. But abortion was illegal, punishable by a prison term of one to five years. "I was so frightened, I couldn't tell anyone so I decided to do the abortion myself," she recalls. "You have to realize that my living conditions are not proper to raising one child let alone three." Mrs. Negru's tragedy in Romania is Romania's tragedy. Deposed Dictator Nicolae Ceausescu's attempt to boost the population not only failed in its stated goal to produce more babies, it resulted in the highest infant mortality rate in Europe, a huge number of orphans and the deaths of countless pregnant women. Romania's new government has reversed its predecessor's social measures. "We finally can change this madness," says the head of the gynecology department at Bucharest's Municipal Hospital. "You hardly can imagine what these Draconian policies did to people. It's beyond belief." Ceausescu launched the ambitious natality scheme soon after coming to power in 1966. His goal was to boost the country's population from 22 million to 30 million by the end of the century. The government said the people...the policy was essential for economic and national survival. Surrounded by Slavs, Romanians feared for their Latin culture. A great nation, Ceausescu said, needs a great number of people. For similar reasons, other former communist governments also have promoted pro-natality policies. Hungarians wanted to protect their unique Magyar identity and Bulgarians tried to increase the Slavic majority over the Turkish minority. To encourage large families, financial incentives were offered. Throughout Eastern Europe, women received a monthly 'family allowance' for each child. They also have been given generous maternity leaves and priority on apartment lists. Enticing as these offers may have been, they only compensated for an estimated 20 percent of the cost of rearing a child. Ceausescu outlawed abortions in Romania in 1966, excluding women who already had five children. In 1986,...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.