Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee

Issue: Territorial Integrity of Former Soviet States

Student Officer: Eleni Theochari

Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

It is with utmost pleasure that I welcome you to the Disarmament and International Security Committee of the first ACG MUN. My name is Eleni Theochari and it is my honor to be serving as your Co-Chair. I am a student at Pierce-The American College of Greece and I am 17 years old. Hence, this will not only be my first time chairing but also my last MUN Conference.

My MUN career started three years ago when I decided to join my school's club and it has been one of the biggest parts of my life ever since. Although, I was only given the chance to participate in 5 conferences, I feel that my involvement in MUN has given me more than I would ever imagine. So, being your chair I would like to urge all of you to take advantage of not only this, but every MUN conference you get to attend.

Now, as a Co-Chair, it is my duty to enhance your efforts in researching, forming your resolutions and give you a general understanding of the topic. This year's Disarmament and International Security Committee topics are very interesting but at the same time demanding. Therefore, you should not rely solely on this study guide but also further research upon, but not limited to, your country's policy.

In any case, if you need help with your preparation or if you have any queries concerning the topic do not hesitate to contact me on my e-mail: eletheoch@gmail.com or my Facebook account: Eleni Theochari.

I hope this study guide proves to be helpful. I expect to see well prepared delegates and above all interesting and fruitful debates. Looking forward to meeting you all at the conference!

Best regards,
Eleni Theochari

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of the Soviet Union was followed by a severe economic contraction and catastrophic fall in living standards in the post-Soviet states, including a rapid increase in poverty, crime, corruption, unemployment, along with decreases in life expectancy and literacy. Violent political and ethnic conflicts have also arisen because the sudden division of land did not take into account the ethnic groups that occupied the area. The majority of these groups have tried to gain their own official control over the land by initiating separatist movements to break away from one of the successor states, and have partly succeeded. Because they are unrecognized by most of the other states though, they are not considered as independent states. Due to this complication, various successor states are left sovereign over the entirety of their territory in name only, ending the conflicts in dead end. For that reason they are referred to as frozen conflicts.

An aspect that fuels these frozen conflicts is Russia's constant involvement. Russia often appears to be active in separatist movements as unofficial sponsors or mentors. Since the Russian population is diffused all over the land, the country intervenes in other states' conflicts with the claim that is trying to "protect the Russian population" in the area by methods that violate the states' territorial integrity and undermine their sovereignty. Although the principal of territorial integrity is underpinned by the international law, the UN has not been able to halt or even reduce Russia's illegal interventions due to the country's constant use of veto power in the Security Council.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Territorial Integrity

"Territorial integrity is the principle under international law that nation-states should not attempt to promote secessionist movements or to promote border changes in other nation-states".[1]It "reflects the fundamental international objective in the stability of boundaries."[2]

Also, Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter stipulates that "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the

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[1]"Territorial integrity." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 02 Jan. 2017.
[2]"Article 8, 8.1.3 Territorial Integrity." *UN Watercourses Convention*.N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Jan. 2017.

territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."[3]

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)

"A former northern Eurasian empire stretching from the Baltic and Black seas to the Pacific Ocean […]. The USSR was the successor to the Russian Empire of the tsars […].During the period of its existence, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was the world's largest country. It was also one of the most diverse, with more than 100 distinct nationalities living within its borders. The majority of the population, however, was made up of East Slavs (Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians)."[4]

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics - Soviet Union
(USSR)

■ USSR

#1: The Soviet Union before the dissolution

Former Soviet Union (FSU) States or Successor States

The 15 independent states that emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet Union (all mentioned below). All three Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) were admitted to the United Nations on 17 September 1991. These three states focused on obtaining European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) memberships. The remaining 12 all subsequently seceded and formed the Common Wealth of Independent States (CIS).

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[3] "Charter of the United Nations , Chapter I." *United Nations*. United Nations, n.d. Web. 02 Feb. 2017.
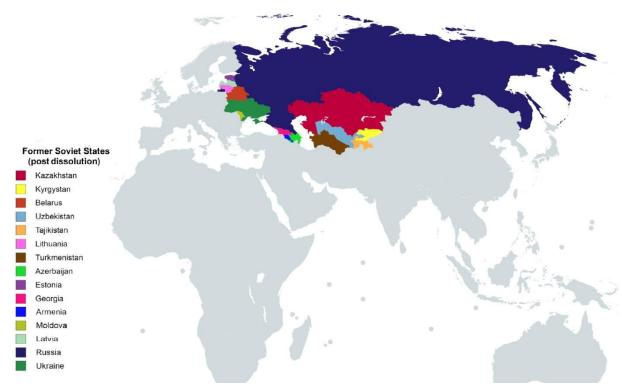[4] "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Establishment and dissolution of the Soviet Union

Following the 1917 Russian Revolution, four socialist republics were established on the territory of the former empire: the Russian and Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republics and the Ukrainian and Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republics. On December 1922, these republics signed the Declaration and Treaty on Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for the establishment of the USSR. By 1940, 12 other republics joined the Union as well.

The Soviet Union was dissolved on December 26, 1991, as a result of the declaration no. 142-H of the Soviet of the Republics of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union. With the dissolution fifteen independent states emerged: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

#2: Former Soviet States after the dissolution

Russo – Georgian War

The Russo-Georgian War was a war between Georgia, Russia and the Russian-backed self-proclaimed republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The war took place in August 2008 and although it started as a domestic conflict of Georgia, with the rebel groups South Ossetia and Abkhazia fighting for freedom, it evolved into a

violent war between Georgia and Russia. Russia recognized the legitimacy of the two states and sent peacekeeping operations in both areas.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union, South Ossetia in 1991 and Abkhazia in 1992 declared their independence from Georgia and heavy fighting broke out, forcing thousands of people to flee their homes. Although a ceasefire was agreed between the Georgian government and Abkhaz separatists, fighting resumed in October 2001. In 2000, Russia sent several hundred unarmed troops to Abkhazia, saying they were needed for railway repairs. Georgia, however, accused Russia of planning a military intervention. When in 2008, South Ossetian separatists started attacking Georgian peacekeepers, Georgian President deployed troops into South Ossetia, while Russia responded by moving its troops to the border and beginning airstrikes in the region. Later, through the help of mediators, a peace treaty was signed between Russia and Georgia in 2008. However, the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed an order recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in the same year. Although the US along with many other nations strongly condemned the order, the UN did not intervene in the issue due to Russia's veto. Many states critiqued Russia's involvement to be driven by the desire to control the oil supply of Georgia.

The Crimea Crisis

The Crimean Peninsula, also known simply as Crimea, is a major land mass on the northern coast of the Black Sea that is almost completely surrounded by both the Black Sea and the smaller Sea of Azov to the northeast. In 1783, Crimea was annexed by the Russian Empire. Following the Russian Revolution of 1917, Crimea was declared to be an independent democratic republic. The peninsula was reorganized as the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1921. But following World War II, Crimea was downgraded from an autonomous republic to an oblast region of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, and in 1954 it was transferred to Ukraine. In 1991 it was once again made an autonomous republic within the Soviet Union, but with the formal dissolution of the U.S.S.R. in December of that year, Crimea was passed to the newly independent Ukraine.

Russia had agreed to respect Ukraine's borders and not threaten it with force, in the Budapest Memorandum, signed by Russia, Ukraine, the United States, and the United Kingdom in December 1994.

Nevertheless, in early 2014 Crimea became the focus of "the worst East-West crisis since the Cold War" (BBC).In February 2014 the leader of the Pro-Russian Party, after months of popular protests toppled his government. Due to the fact that ethnic Russians constituted a majority of the population in the Crimea, Kremlin-backed forces seized control of the Crimean peninsula, allegedly to protect the ethnic

Russian population there. As Russian and Ukrainian forces maintained a delicate standoff, the Crimean parliament voted unanimously to secede from Ukraine and join the Russian Federation. A referendum on the matter was held in Crimea on March 16, 2014 resulting in an overwhelming 97% in favor of joining Russia. The poll was not recognized by Ukraine, while the United States and the EU immediately moved to impose sanctions on a list of high-ranking Russian officials and members of the self-declared Crimean government. On March 18, Putin signed a treaty incorporating the Crimea into the Russian Federation, a move that was formalized days later after the treaty's ratification by both houses of the Russian parliament. Most of the international community, except from 6 states including Russia itself, do not recognize the annexation and consider Crimea to be Ukrainian territory.

On June 20th, a peace plan was proposed. However, insurgency broke out the next month in southern Ukraine. Although another ceasefire was initiated by the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France, heavy fighting continued. Ukraine insisted that the domestic conflicts were triggered by Russia, accusing the Russians to be regular forces in the fighting in Ukraine.

Many believe Russia's motive behind the annexation of Crimea included the direct access to the Black Sea as well as the expansion of land.

#3 Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Russia and the separatist regions

Moldova Conflict

Another ex-Soviet republic, Moldova, has been sharing the same fate as Crimea due to the breakaway territory known as Transnistria. In 1992, after the War of Transnistria, an intense conflict between ethnic Russians and the central

government, the Moldovan authorities virtually lost control over the region. Since then, Russia has deployed troops to the region with the stated aim of protecting fellow Russians from possible armed conflict. At that point, the fact that the majority of the people living in the region is of Russian ethnicity and hold Russian citizenship has to be mentioned. While seeking international recognition, Transnistria is designated by Moldova as autonomous within a unitary state. After the Crimean referendum, the Transnistria region demanded a referendum to join Russia as many residents of Russian descent favor Russian accession, which the Moldovan government is severely against.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Russia

In the aftermath of the USSR break-up, relations between Russia and the FSU states are in a fix. Russia's major interest is to maintain its influence due to geographical proximity and the need to protect the interests of ethnic Russians residing in the FSU states. Russia is strongly against these countries' inclusion in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as well as in the European Union (EU). Although the territorial integrity of the FSU states is guarded by the international law, Russia still deploys its troops in neighboring states with Russian minority regions and has been noticed to participate in numerous post-Soviet states conflicts throughout the years. Apart from frontier states, Russian intervention is spreading, growing fear among ex-Soviet Baltic States as well. Since the summer of 1992, there have been numerous public statements at all levels of the Russian government to suggest that Russia's intervention in the republics of the former Soviet Union is part of a general policy to further Russia's strategic objectives.

Ukraine

Russia and Ukraine are the two big powers of the former Soviet bloc. For Ukraine, one of its main objectives is the desire to reduce the influence of the Russian Federation. Russia on the other hand likes to consider Ukraine as part of its sphere of interest and is inclined to show a big brotherly attitude. Thus, the relations between the two countries are often not very pleasant. The rejection of an EU agreement in 2013 by the president of Ukraine started a revolution amongst the population and ignited a fight between the pro-Russian cities and the rest of Ukraine. Many of the cities have hosted referendums, and have announced themselves to be independent states, an act that is not recognized by Ukraine and the rest of the world. Russia is known to be participating in joining the rebel groups of Ukraine. It is also accused of sending heavy weaponry and volunteers to bolster the rebel's power.

Additionally, the Ukrainian Prime Minister spoke at the NATO parliamentary assembly, blaming the Russian Federation for increasing tension in the conflict-torn eastern region by allegedly backing and financing rebel groups. "A P-5 member violated the United Nations Charter," he said, targeting Russia and condemning its actions, which are "absolutely and entirely unacceptable," referring to the violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Georgia

Georgia is one of the post-Soviet States that is in conflict with Russia. During its civil war, Russia has intervened by employing methods to increase the rebels' powers. The violent fighting between Russia, Georgia and the rebels has led to a refugee crisis as 40,000 fled from their homes to find safety and peace in other places. Georgia has cut off all trade and diplomatic relations with Russia after Russia's support for the rebel groups.

United States of America

The United States maintains peaceful to close relationships with most Post-Soviet States. One of the reasons the US gets along well with the FSU is that it recognizes Russia's constant infringement on other state's sovereignty. The US maintains a friendly policy aiming to protect FSU states from Russian involvement. When the Russian government began to help the rebels of Georgia, the United States took measures to help the Georgian government. Moreover, the U.S. government's response to the Crimean Crisis mainly focused on bolstering the Ukrainian government and penalizing Russia with the objective of promoting a change in Russian policy. The US is obligated to meet their commitments under the Budapest Memorandum by supporting Ukraine and pressuring Russia to halt actions that violate it.

The Baltic States

Since Latvia has the largest minorities of Russian speakers in Europe, it is especially endangered from Russia's schemes to "protect the Russian population". Due to the fact that two-third of the Russian speaking population is categorized as "non-citizen" thus officially stateless, they have limited rights. Russia has long since accused Latvia for suppressing the rights of the Russian population, so it is expected to become the next country to be intruded.

Estonia is in a very similar situation. With a large Russian minority mixed with the Estonian population, it is exceptionally noticeable to Russia. However, its close relationship with NATO and especially the US ensures some degree of stability in their future.

In Lithuania, the Russians make up more than 10% of the population. Like the other Baltic States, it is vulnerable to Russia's attack. Lithuania has actively showed its support for Ukraine by being the first country to provide arms for them.

Germany

Germany is especially engaged in the situation of Ukraine. The German Chancellor was one of the first to declare Russia's annexation of Crimea to be unacceptable. Germany has become the leader of the project because of its economic wealth. With its massive market, sanctions will lead to extremely negative economical influences in Russia. Furthermore, Germany is working with the EU and the United States closely to help Ukraine defend itself against Russia.

European Union

Due to Russia's constant infringements on territorial integrity, many of the Post-Soviet States are either already part of the EU or striving to become a part of the EU. The EU is also one of the forces trying to reduce Russia's violations of international laws. After Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, the EU designed sanctions on Russia, stopping trade between the two sides. Unfortunately, the sanctions did not bring many positive influences but instead increased Russia's negative feelings toward the West. Nevertheless the EU, after observing no significant changes, decided to add more to the sanction. This plan has not been carried out due to disagreements on details between the member states. Regarding the Russo – Georgian War, an EU investigation into the roots of the conflict has reserved its harshest criticism for Georgia's military assault on the breakaway region of South Ossetia.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1922	Declaration and Treaty on Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
1991	The Soviet Union dissolves into fifteen succession states
1991-1993	Georgian Civil War
1992	Transnistria War
1992-1997	Civil War in Tajikistan Conflict between the government and underrepresented ethnic groups
1994	Budapest Memorandum

1994-1996	First Chechen War
2008 -2009	Multiple insurgencies emerge in the North Caucasus region (including Russo- Georgian War)
2010	South Kyrgyzstan ethnic clashes
2010-2011	Fighting breaks out between the rebels and the Tajikistan government
2014	Ukrainian Revolution
2014	Annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation
March 2014	Crimean Referendum
March 2014	Adoption of General Assembly Resolution 68/262

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances (1994)

The Budapest Memorandum is a political agreement providing security assurances against threats or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. As part of the agreement by which Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons, the United States, Britain and Russia committed to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the states. Russia's illegal seizure and annexation of Crimea and its support for separatists in eastern Ukraine constitute a gross violation of its commitments under that document.

United Nations Security Council Resolution (A/RES/68/262)

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 68/262 was adopted on March 27, 2014 by the United Nations General Assembly in response to the Russian annexation of Crimea. The resolution, which was supported by 100 United Nations member states, affirmed the General Assembly's commitment to the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and underscored the invalidity of the 2014 Crimean referendum. Eleven nations voted against the resolution, while 58 abstained, and a further 24 states were absent when the vote took place.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

All previous attempts to solve the issue of the Russian involvement in the FSU states have proven to be ineffective. Almost all UN attempts to sanction Russia and protect the territorial integrity of post-soviet states have been blocked by Russia's hold of veto power in the Security Council. The project of sending UN peacekeepers

to post Soviet states whose territorial integrity have been infringed on, could also not be extended due to Russia's veto. The EU and member states of NATO along with the United States have set sanctions on Russia after its illegal annexation of Crimea. However, the sanctions failed to limit Russia's intervention of post Soviet states but only led to even more detrimental relationships between Russia and the West.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

One of many reasons conflicts in the Former USSR states have been arising and are left unresolved is the absence of a clear and official definition of the term "territorial integrity" and what the right to reserve it means. So, one first step could be an international convention including a detailed definition and entailing the sanctions and punishments to those who violate it. This would also be a way to limit Russia's interpretations of the existing international law.

Also, having in mind that all cases of Russia's infringement on post Soviet states' affairs is a revolution led by an ethnic group that wants to become independent, you need to consider whether or not there should be a reevaluation of borders and if rebel groups should be granted their independence.

Last but not least, since all efforts by other states to limit Russia's actions have failed until now, another possible solution could be for the International Court of Justice to rule each case, separately for each country, in order to reach a verdict that the Russian Federation cannot disregard and force it to recompense for any violations of international law.

ANNEX

For some additional help with your research on the USSR states follow the link: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/09/-sp-profiles-post-soviet-states

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