

Committee: Special Political and Decolonization Committee

Issue: The issue of territorial forces in the Republic of Moldova

Student Officer: Ioulianos Kotsios

Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

It is an honor for me to serve as the Co-Chair of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee at the 4th session of the American College of Greece MUN. My name is Ioulianos Kotsios, I am 16 years old and currently attending 11th grade at Pierce – The American College of Greece and this conference will be my third time in a Student Officer position. So far I have participated in 9 conferences, and I can honestly say that MUN has been a life changing experience.

Through this study guide I aim to assist you in order to understand the second topic of the 4th Committee of the General Assembly. Hopefully, it will provide you with all the necessary information you will need. Of course you will also have to research in order to know where your country stands on this topic, by knowing its policy. Furthermore, your research and the solutions that you will come up with will help us have a fruitful debate. If you have any questions, or you need any help, do not hesitate to contact me through my email, i.kotsios@acg.edu.

Looking forward to meeting you all in April!

Best regards,

Ioulianos Kotsios

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

In September 1990 ethnic minority Russians, who lived in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR), proclaimed their independence from MSSR. This had as a result the creation of a new autonomous, as well as disputed, nation the Dniester Moldavian Republic, or Transnistria. On August 27th, 1991, Moldova left the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and became independent.

The self-proclaimed Republic of Transnistria, or as it is officially known Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMC) is a strip of land located at river Dniester and the border between Moldova and Ukraine. From the moment its independence was announced many countries recognized this region as a part of the Republic of Moldova and not as an autonomous state.

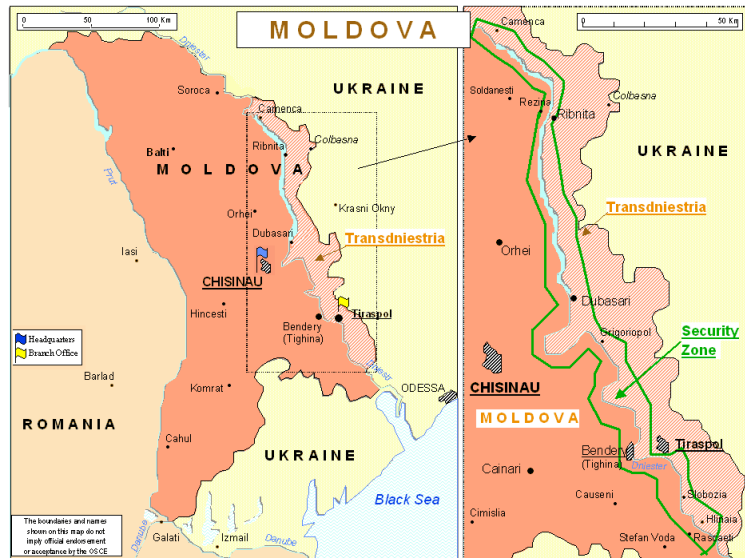


Figure 1 Map showing the area where Transnistria is in the Republic of Moldova

The big problems between the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria began in the autumn of 1991 when the second officially announced its independence when the Declaration of Independence from the Republic of Moldova was drafted. The main army at the region at that time was the Operational Group of Russian Forces, or Russia's 14th Army.

During 1991, separatists of Transnistria blocked the bridges that pass over river Dniester, leaving close by areas, that were part of Moldova, without necessary supplies. This was said to be a reaction to Transnistria not being recognized internationally as an independent state.

On March 2nd, 1992 the Transnistrian War broke. There were two sides; Transnistria with the help of Russia and the support of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and on the other side was Moldova with the support of Romania.

The forces that were seeking to earn their independence in the Transnistrian region had very close relations to the Russian 14th Army. During the Transnistrian

War the 14th Army had an active role in supporting the separatists' decisions. In late 1992, the 14th Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Alexander Lebed, had been restored and taken control over the Transnistrian region.

As a result of the end of the war the Joint Control Commission was formed. It was a commission whose members are Moldova, Transnistria and Russia and its role was to control all the security arrangements in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

14th Guards Army

The 14th Guards Army was a field army of the Red Army, the Soviet Ground Forces, and the Russian Ground Forces, active from 1956 to 1995. According to sources the majority of its troops came from the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic.¹

Separatism

The belief held by people of a particular race, religion, or other group within a country that they should be independent and have their own government or in some way live apart from other people.²

State Duma of the Russian Federation

The State Duma is one of the chambers of the Russian parliament, the Federal Assembly. It is a legislative authority that consists of 450 members elected for five years. Its main tasks are adoption of federal constitutional and federal laws, control over the activity of the Russian Government, declaration of amnesty, and issues of international parliamentary cooperation.³

Operational Group of Russian Forces (OGRF)

The Operational Group of Russian Forces in Transnistria (OGRF) is a sizable overseas military task force of the Russian Armed Forces. It served as part of the trilateral Joint Control Commission in the region. In 2018 the UN General Assembly called for the withdrawal of the OGRF from the Moldovan territory.⁴

¹ 14th Guards Army,

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/14th_Guards_Army

² SEPARATISM: meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary,

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/separatism>

³ Status and powers, composition and Regulations of the State Duma,

<http://duma.gov.ru/en/duma/about/>

⁴ Operational Group of Russian Forces,

https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Operational_Group_of_Russian_Forces

Joint Control Commission (JCC)

The Joint Control Commission (JCC) is a tri-lateral peacekeeping force and joint military command structure from Moldova, Transnistria, and Russia that operates in a demilitarized zone on the border between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The disputed territory between the two is controlled by the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (Transnistria, PMR).⁵

Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)

A Demilitarized Zone is an area in which is forbidden to station military forces or maintain military installations.⁶

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is a regional intergovernmental organization of nine (originally ten) post-Soviet republics in Eurasia. It was formed following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. It was one of the parties that help Transnistria during the War between her and Moldova⁷

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

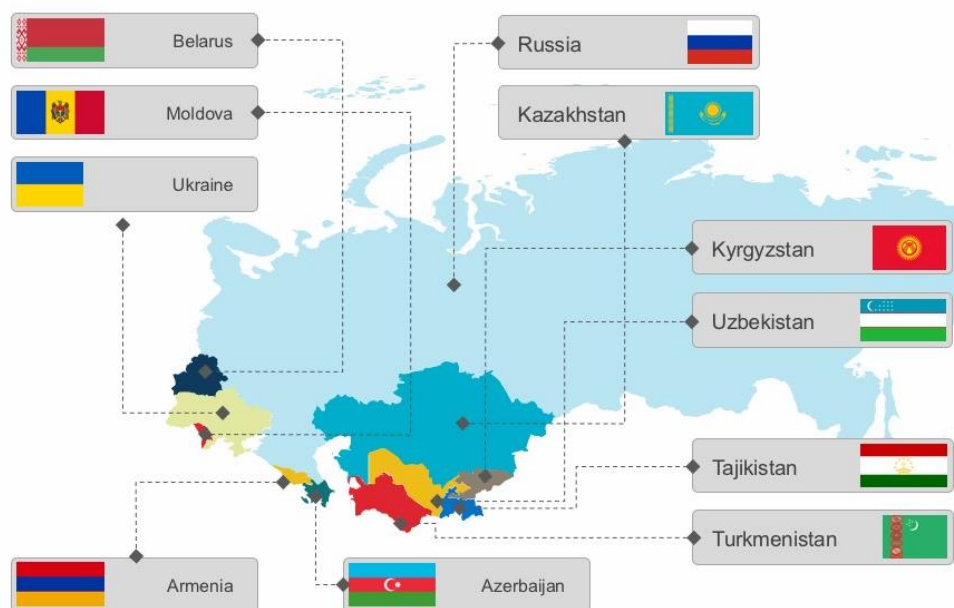


Figure 2 Map depicting the Commonwealth of Independent States

⁵ Joint Control Commission,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_Control_Commission4

⁶ Demilitarized Zone definition and meaning: Collins Dictionary,
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/demilitarized-zone>

⁷ Commonwealth of Independent States,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Independent_States

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Transnistrian War

On March 2nd, 1992, the Transnistria War broke and lasted for more than four months. According to data during the first days of the war, there were 500 casualties and 80.000 injured.

Many officials agreed that Moldova started to take the upper hand was on the June 23rd, 1992. It was on this day that the CIS Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief, Yevgeny Shaposhnikov, replaced the commander of the 14th Guards Army, General Yakovlev, with Major General Alexander Lebed. The change of the commander had as a result the 14th Guards Army gaining back the power it had lost. Under the command of Major General Lebed the Army officially entered the war. During that time the Army showed the most violent face towards the citizens of Moldova.

When Alexander Lebed was asked about the violence of the actions of the 14th Guards Army under his command, he stated that such actions would continue if the separatists in Tiraspol and the fascists in Chişinău wouldn't stop killing each other. He added that the tanks that the 14th Army had at its disposal would be used to end this situation, even by killing the members of both parties. Journalists associated what he stated with the position of the Russian government as well as the CIS. Both parties' position influenced the 14th Guards Army, and probably led to the actions it took.

On July 21st, 1992, a ceasefire agreement was signed. The two signatories was the Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, and the Moldavian President, Mircea Snegur. Under the agreement the JCC was created and a peacekeeping operation in the DMZ was established.

Events after the end of the Transnistrian War

Russia and Moldova agreed to the withdrawal of the 14th Army in October 1994. This was because they wanted Transnistria to finalize its political status before any other actions were taken. Such a decision had to pass first from the State Duma in order to become official. However, the members of the Russian



Figure 3 The flag of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic; organized by ethnic Russians opposed to being part of newly independent Moldova

legislature jeopardized the whole agreement by not making it official. This resulted in the 14th Army not being withdrawn from the region and thus the agreement between the two countries was never implemented.

At the end of October of the same year the Moldovan and Russian Prime Ministers signed an agreement which stated that the 14th Army would withdraw three years after the agreement was ratified. In April 1995 the 14th Army was renamed to Operational Group of Russian Forces (OGRF) in Moldova. In mid-1995 the then head of the OGRF, Lieutenant General Lebed resigned his position as he thought that the rename of the 14th Army meant its downgrading. Major General Valeriy Gennadyevich Yevnevich was appointed the head of the OGRF.

Negotiations began between the Transnistrian Government and the Government of Moldova in order to discuss the political status of the region. At that time Slavic nationalists were controlling the Transnistrian region along the Ukrainian border and the Russian forces were still at the area.

The Government of Moldova alongside other Western Governments considered the presence of foreign armed forces in the area a serious threat to the stability as well as security of the region. The presence of the forces was considered to be a very big obstacle in the discussions about the status of Transnistria.

Chief of the Russian General Staff, General Anatoly Kvashnin, decided, in October 2002, to withdraw a number of soldiers from Transnistria. However, he stated that not all of them should withdraw, so he decided to leave 500 soldiers in the region, in order to continue the peacekeeping mission. Even though, Kvashnin didn't believe that withdrawing all the soldiers was a good idea, Russia had the obligation to do so. Three years prior of that decision, the Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, signed an agreement called Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty during a summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Istanbul. In this agreement it was mentioned that the Russian Federation would have to withdraw all the armed forces from the Republic of Moldova by the end of 2002.

In November 2003 the President of Moldova, Vladimir Voronin decided not to sign an agreement between his country and Transnistria, as it was believed to have been drafted by Russia. Russia at that time hadn't removed its forces from Moldova, as it should according to the treaty signed in 1999 in Instabul.

On January 20, 2010 the Deputy Foreign Minister and well know Russian diplomat, Grigori Karasin stated that the Russian forces wouldn't leave the Moldovan region until the status of the Republic of Transnistria had been finalized. The Moldovan President, Mihai Gimpu, assured the Deputy Foreign Minister for

neutrality from his government and called for negotiations between his country, Transnistria, Russia, Ukraine and OSCE.

Boris Yeltsin

Boris Yeltsin is one of the people that was the most involved in the issue. He was the first President of the newly formed Russian Federation, and under his Presidency the Transnistrian War broke. Yeltsin had expressed many times his belief that the 14th Guards Army should be withdrawn from Moldova, and also believed that adopting a treaty would mark a new beginning of cooperation between the nations. President Yeltsin also believed that Ukraine could be a part of the aforementioned treaty. Lastly, all his plans were never implemented due to Transnistrian nationalists standing against him.

Lieutenant General Alexander Lebed

Alexander Lebed was a Russian military officer who participated in most of the military conflicts in the last decade of existence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). He held high positions in many military divisions and was a trusted as well as influential colleague. In June 1992 he was appointed commander of the 14th Guards Army, succeeding General Yakovlev, and played an important role during the last phase of the Transnistrian War. After the ceasefire agreement was signed and the war ended, Lebed was one of the many military officials who stood against the decision of President Yeltsin to withdraw the 14th Guards Army from Moldova. He stated that such a move would hurt the stability at the region, which he and his division had established.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Republic of Moldova

The republic of Moldova is the country mostly affected from this issue. In 1990 a group of nationalists proclaimed their independence from the nation and established their own country. Russia helped the nationalists during the Transnistrian War and even though a ceasefire agreement has been signed as well as a treaty, a final solution has yet to be found.

Russian Federation

Russian Federation is the second most important party in the issue. Russia in 1992 provided help to the nationalists of Transnistria, who sought to achieve their independence from the Republic of Moldova. Russia provided help by sending the 14th Guards Army to the Transnistrian region, and ordered it to help the nationalists and use their firearms when they believed that it was necessary. Russia has violated many treaties as well as the sovereignty of Moldova. Even though the withdrawal of

the 14th Guards Army was proposed by President Yeltsin none of the high positioned military officials, such as Major General Lebed, agreed with that idea.

Romania

Romania from the beginning appeared to be a strong ally to Moldova. The country's government provided Moldova with a good amount of troops that were needed during the Transnistrian War. When negotiations began, prior of the ceasefire agreement being signed, Romania stood by Moldova and supported the country's sovereignty over the region. Romania is still being a supporter of Moldova.

Ukraine

Ukraine didn't have a major role during the Transnistrian War. However, it was an important party during the negotiations after the ceasefire agreement. Ukraine, as it was a nation continuously coming into conflicts with Russia, supported Moldova, its independence and sovereignty over the disputed area. Ukraine also stood by Moldova during the negotiations as it was a country affected by this issue as well. As mentioned previously territorial forces had also been stationed on the Ukrainian border.

Georgia

Even if Georgia is not a country directly affected by the issue, government officials have stated that Moldova is the country supported by their nation. Russia has stationed territorial forces in Georgia as well and didn't withdraw them as stated in the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE). Because Russian troops are still on Georgian soil, the government has shown support towards the Republic of Moldova.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed in 1949 to threat the expansion of Soviet Union's influence in Europe. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 NATO was left with no purpose. Since then it has used its role to justify the safety of its member, stating that any kind of instability in the European region would be a threat to them.

The issue of territorial forces in Moldova was an issue that was discussed a lot during the 29th annual NATO summit, in Brussels. As a result, the NATO members drafted a declaration that stated; "In accordance with its international commitments, we call on Russia to withdraw the forces it has stationed in all three (Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia) countries without their consent"⁸. Moldavian officials

⁸ NATO Urges Russia to Withdraw Troops From Moldova,

stated that Moldova would welcome a declaration that helps a non-NATO member, and recognizes the country's sovereignty. However the country's pro-Russian President condemned such an action, as he had done in the past with any other moves the Moldavian government had made to get closer to the European Union and NATO. NATO's declaration comes after a resolution (A/72/L.58) passed by the UN General Assembly that also called Russia to withdraw its forces from Moldova.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is the largest security-oriented intergovernmental organization in the world. It consists of 57 participant countries and 11 partners for cooperation and it expands all over Europe, North American and a big part of Asia. OSCE mainly focuses on security-related issues such as: arms control, human rights, national minorities, democratization, counter-terrorism and economic and environmental activities.⁹

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
September 1990	Russian ethnic minority members living in the Dniester region of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR) proclaimed their independence.
November 19 th , 1990	The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty was signed.
August 27 th , 1991	The MSSR declared its independence from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and created a nation under the name Republic of Moldova.
September 2 nd , 1991	The Russian ethnic minority members of the Dniester region proclaimed, for once more, their independence, now from the newly formed Republic of Moldova.
December 11 th , 1991	Elections for the position of the President of Transnistria were held for the first time. Igor Smirnov, a Transnistria nationalist and at that time Chairman of the Republic, was elected by getting 65% of the votes.
March 2 nd , 1992	Moldova became member of the United

<https://balkaninsight.com/2018/07/12/nato-urges-russia-to-redraw-its-troops-from-moldova-07-12-2018/>

⁹ Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, <https://www.osce.org/whatistheosce>

	Nations and President Snegur of Moldova authorized military actions against the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic.
March 2 nd , 1992	The Transnistrian War broke and lasted until July of the same year.
June 23 rd , 1992	The commander of the 14 th Army, General Yakovlev, was replaced by Major General Lebed.
July 21 st , 1992	The Transnistrian War ended and had as a result the death of more than 1000 people and the injury of almost 2000.
July 21 st , 1992	A Ceasefire Agreement was signed between the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation. The JCC was established.
November 1999	Russian President signed the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty which obligated Russia to withdraw all the forces from Moldova by the end of 2002.
January 1 st , 2003	Russia officially failed to meet the deadline for the withdrawal of its troops from Moldova, as stated in the 1999 Agreement.
November 2003	The Moldavian President, Voronin, decided to not sign the agreement between his nation and Transnistria as he believed it was drafted by Russia.
January 20 th , 2010	Russian Foreign Affairs Minister, Karasin, stated that the Russian forces wouldn't be leaving the region until the status of Transnistria was finalized.
June 22 nd , 2018	The United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/72/282.

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The establishment of the Joint Control Commission

The Joint Control Commission (JCC) is a peacekeeping and military command that was established by Moldova, Russia and Transnistria in 1992. It operates in the disputed territory between the border of Moldova and Ukraine, where the self-proclaimed Republic of Transnistria is located. It was established when the cease-fire agreement was signed in 1992 by President Yeltsin and it consists of soldiers from the Moldavian Army, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the

Transnistrian Army. Originally Russia provided more troops than Moldova and Transnistria together. As of 2006 the last participate with more troops than Russia. The main mission of the JCC is to ensure stability in the region and make sure that the cease-fire agreement is followed.

Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty

The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty is an agreement that was signed in 1990. It was negotiated during the final years of the Cold War and it is often called “the cornerstone of European security”. The treaty aimed to minimize the overwhelming advantage of Soviet Union in weapons in the European region. According to the CFE: “It set limits on the amount of tanks, armored combat vehicles (ACVs), heavy artillery, combat aircraft, and attack helicopters that NATO and the Warsaw Pact could deploy between the Atlantic Ocean and the Ural Mountains”¹⁰

In 1999 the signatories of the CFE Treaty signed an amendment to the treaty in order to update its structure to reflect on the breakup of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the continuous expansion of NATO. The amended treaty will enter into force when all 30 parties will sign it. At the moment only Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine have signed, meaning that the previous treaty is still in force.

General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/282

On June 22nd, 2018 The United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/72/282, named “Complete and unconditional withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova”. The signatories of the resolutions called Russia to withdraw without further delay the Operational Group of Russian Forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova. It also calls OSCE to oversee the withdrawal of the Russian Forces from the region.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

The 1992 Ceasefire Agreementⁱ

On July 21, 1992 the President of Moldova, Mircea Snegur, and the President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, after more than four months of war in Transnistria, signed a ceasefire agreement. The agreement’s main aim was a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the area. 20 years later some of the articles have been breached. A great example is Article 5, which states that; “the two sides should not allow any hindrances in the free movement of goods, services and people”¹¹. Today crossing the DMZ has become a great challenge.

¹⁰ Fact Sheets & Briefs

<https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheet/cfe>

¹¹ Moldova.org

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Negotiations

The committee can call for new negotiations between the two major parties and other organizations that are involved in the issue. Those negotiations should have as an outcome the final political status of the Republic of Transnistria.

Signing a new treaty

A new treaty could be a very practical solution. The most recent agreement was signed in 1992, and many things have changed in the political as well as economic scene. A modern and up to date treaty should be drafted to tackle the issues that came up after the 1992 ceasefire agreement. In this treaty, the final status of Transnistria should be indicated. Finalizing the status would mean that the Russian forces would have to leave the area, as it was stated, in 2010, by the Russian Foreign Affairs Minister. The most involved parties, Moldova and Russia, should be those which will draft it.

Reaching a condominium

A condominium would be an effective solution but at the same time, not the best for all the parties. While it would grant Russia legal access to the region, Moldova's sovereignty would be put in a critical place. Transnistria also might not become a fully independent nation, if a condominium is reached, as both Moldova and Russia will try to establish their political system over the region.

Establish a joint economic zone

The Moldova-Ukraine border, where Transnistria is located, could become a joint economic zone. A Moldavian-Japanese authority could be established to administer the commercial activities in the region. In that way, both parties will be benefited and also share sovereignty over that area.

Establishing peacekeeping forces by the UN Security Council

The UN Security Council can be urged to take action in the area where the Russian forces are. A good solution would be for the Security Council to send the UN Peacekeeping Forces, a neutral force, where the DMZ is, so as to protect the agreements that were made between the parties.

<https://www.moldova.org/en/moldova-russia-ceasefire-agreement-of-1992-on-transnistria-respected-only-on-paper-video-236857-eng/>

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