

TED ANTALYA MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2019



Forum: DISEC

Issue: Complete and unconditional withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova

Student Officer: Bora Yelkenbiçer

Position: Co-Chair

INTRODUCTION

To the west of Ukraine lies Transnistria, also known as the Trans-Dniester Republic and (officially) the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, an unrecognized state that broke away from the former Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic of the Soviet Union in 1990.

Today it retains its independence thanks largely to the military support provided by the Russian 14th Army, which has been stationed there since the 1950s, when the whole area was part of the USSR. Russia also provides Transnistria with financial assistance. It must be noted that the Russian Federation financially aids Transnistria for their military and general expenses (1 million dollars a year).

The tiny breakaway republic of 4,163 square kilometres consists of a narrow strip of land located to the east of the Dnieper River (hence the name), plus the city of Bender and its surrounding localities were placed on the western side. The country borders Ukraine to its east.

In total, Transnistria comprises more than 500,000 people, with Russian and Ukrainian Slavs making up %59 of the population and Moldovan Romanians %32. The capital, Tiraspol, a city of 203,000, is almost three-quarters Russian and Ukrainian.

Transdnistria was separated from Moldova (And the USSR), in September 1990, as a result of speculations that Moldova was likely to be preparing to reunite with Romania. The resulting, brutal civil war lasted from 1991; to July 1992 which is when a ceasefire was offered and put into action. The mentioned ceasefire is still maintained by a collective peacekeeping force, bringing approximately 1,200 troops. Consisting of 402 Russian, 492 Transdnistrian, and 355 Moldovan troops and 10 Ukrainian military observers, the peacekeeping forces are located in 15 checkpoints in key areas of the security zone, as known as the borderland stretching along the Dniester River. In a 2006 referendum, the major parts of the Transdnistrian citizens voted not to integrate with Moldova and to retain their 'independence'. However, Moldova is still recognized as sovereign. As Russian troops and officers positioned in Moldova, they started interfering with internal affairs of the Moldavian Republic, by airing partisan broadcasts or hosting meetings against the opposing groups. Regarding to the issue, the Parliament of Moldova, accepted the declaration which claimed the removal of Russian troops, in May 2017. Yet the declaration remains unfulfilled.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Sovereign/Sovereignty: The word “Sovereignty” stands for, -not to be mixed with democracy- a country being able to conduct itself.

Ceasefire: A temporal/permanent state of peace between two or more fighting sides, provided with or without a written treaty.

Military Observers: Troops/Officers tasked with keeping the order within the highlighted territory.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Regardless of the decisions that were taken in UN, Russia currently holds 2 military battalions in Kolbasna, Moldova; however Russia -completely discarding the actions taken and the warnings given by the UN- does not intend to remove any of the troops along side of the 150.000 Russian Passport owners who serve the role of strategic advantage. Touching upon a "difficult situation" in relations between the two countries, Pavel Philip, the Prime Minister of Moldova expressed hope for "Russia's sincere intention to help in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict and withdraw its armed forces and ammunition from the territory of the Republic of Moldova". The Moldovan government has repeatedly raised the issue of the withdrawal of Russian troops from Transnistria and the transformation of the peacekeeping operation into a civilian mission under an international mandate. Supporting the country's stronger neutrality Moldovan President, Igor Dodon, said that before reorganizing the peacekeeping operation, it is necessary to settle the Transnistrian conflict, negotiations on which have been stalled for many years.

The authorities of Transnistria are against the withdrawal of Russian military, who are considered guarantors of peace. Looking at the issue as a whole, the current case of military presence of foreign nations is a huge threat to the sovereignty of Moldova. As much as this topic has been discussed several times in UN and the Moldavian Parliament; the result remains unclear for now.



MOLDOVA

THE ISSUE

- **Russia maintains troops in a separatist region of Moldova**, Transnistria, that is not recognized as independent by the international community
- Russian troops **regularly organize joint military exercises** with Transnistrian paramilitary troops
- There has been a **sharp increase in the number of exercises and military activity** close to the demarcation with Moldova, from 48 in 2016 to almost 300 in 2017

CSIS

MAJOR PARTIES INVOLVED

A list of the major and mostly involved parties or individuals would include:

Sergey Lavrov: Russian Minister of foreign affairs, who visited Moldova in 2016 and stated military presence in Moldova was necessary

Russia: Russia currently is the party with most troops present in the region.

Moldova: The, country which is under a threat in the means of national sovereignty.

Ukraine: Currently holding 12-15 military observers in the region.

Trans-Dniester Republic: Transnistria, a region half as big as the Greek island of Crete, is a narrow strip of land along the Dniester River and the border to Ukraine. The self-proclaimed republic separated from Moldova after a military conflict in Moldova. A ceasefire was declared but a frozen conflict has existed since 1992. International diplomatic efforts – recently intensified by Germany – to resolve the conflict have not brought about any changes. Today, about half a million people live in the breakaway republic.

Operative Group of Russian Troops (OGRT)

Igor Dodon: Moldova’s Russian origin president who was stripped of his powers after we refused to endorse new ministers and a political standoff.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1991 - Moldova declares independence. It joins the Commonwealth of Independent States, the successor to the Soviet Union.
An upsurge in fighting in the Trans-Dniester region leads to a state of emergency being re-imposed. Hundreds die in the fighting. Russian peacekeepers are deployed after a ceasefire agreement.
1996 - Petru Lucinschi elected president.
1997 - Negotiations resumed with Trans-Dniester. Agreement is signed granting further autonomy and calling for more talks.
1998 - Elections see communists emerging as biggest party, but a centrist, reform-minded coalition forms the government.
2001 February - Elections see the communists under Vladimir Voronin win just over 50% of the vote.
2002 January - Announcement of plans to make Russian an official language and compulsory in schools sparks months of mass protests which end only when the scheme is shelved.
2002 December - OSCE extends deadline for withdrawal of Russian weapons from Trans-Dniester until end of 2003. The deadline is later extended into 2004. Russia says its troops will stay until a settlement is reached.
2006 March - Trans-Dniester leadership reacts angrily to new regulations requiring goods entering Ukraine from Dniester to have Moldovan customs stamp. Moldova says the rules, backed by the EU, US and OSCE, aim to stop smuggling.
2006 September - Trans-Dniester referendum overwhelmingly backs independence from Moldova and a plan eventually to become part of Russia.
2009 July - New parliamentary polls. Communists lose their majority.

2011 December - Anti-corruption campaigner Yevgeny Shevchuk defeats pro-Russian candidates in Trans-Dniester's presidential election. Pledges to establish "friendly relations" with Moldova while continuing to press for the independence of the separatist region.

2014 June - Moldova signs association agreement with the European Union, prompting Russia to impose import restrictions on the country's agricultural produce.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE

TUDOR ULIANOVSKI, Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, introduced the draft resolution titled "Complete and unconditional withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova" (document A/72/L.58), noting that it focused on decelerating the legal and political distress against the backdrop of the protracted and externally-generated conflict in the eastern part of the country. The resolution addressed the fact that the Operational Group of Russian Forces and its armaments were still stationed in Moldova without its consent. That was incompatible with its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the rules of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

NATO's position against Russian troops on Moldovan soil comes after a recent draft resolution of the UN General Assembly proposed by Moldova and adopted on June 22(2018).

"An ex-vice premier of Russia, Dmitry Rogozin reiterated this in his book "*Vrag Naroda*" [*Enemy of the People*"], writing that in 1992, he gathered volunteers in Moscow and travelled to fight against the Moldovan military in the Transnistrian war."

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The first and most reasonable suggestion would be of course an official condemn by UN, however it has been already made and was discarded by Russia. There are not many ways to end the issue without more foreign forces or violence yet there is still hope.

I personally would suggest an extensive UN investigation in Russian officer-lines and key-points in Moldova to go deep down in the reasons and goals of the issue. Moving on, still at official condemn, recognized by all UN member countries would allow Russia to see how important the removal of the mentioned troops is. Regardless from the issue, I shall also mention UN's direct involvement with the issue(such as increasing the amount of peacekeepers located in the area or relocating them which could offend the current forces located in the region) could end up with many different and harmful results. The issue, should be handled with diplomacy and diplomacy only.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Qhacomua. (2019). QHA. Retrieved 7 April, 2019, from <http://old.qha.com.ua/tr/askeriguvenlik/sozde-transdinyester-cumhuriyeti-nden-bm-kararina-iliskin-aciklama/171708/>

Tasscom. (2019). TASS. Retrieved 7 April, 2019, from <http://tass.com/world/990587>

Moldovaorg. (2017). Moldovaorg. Retrieved 7 April, 2019, from <https://www.moldova.org/en/moldova-asks-un-withdraw-russian-troops-transnistria/>

Theguardianpeca. (2019). Theguardianpeca. Retrieved 7 April, 2019, from <https://www.theguardian.pe.ca/opinion/letter-to-the-editor/the-frozen-conflict-between-moldova-and-transnistria-111461/>

John pike. (2019). Globalsecurityorg. Retrieved 7 April, 2019, from <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/transdniester.htm>

Csisorg. (2019). Csisorg. Retrieved 7 April, 2019, from <https://www.csis.org/blogs/kremlin-playbook-spotlight/kremlin-playbook-spotlight-moldova>

Independentcouk. (2018). The Independent. Retrieved 7 April, 2019, from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/moldova-pro-russia-president-igor-dodon-stripped-duties-powers-a8552856.html>

Balkaninsightcom. (2018). Balkan Insight. Retrieved 7 April, 2019, from <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/07/12/nato-urges-russia-to-redraw-its-troops-from-moldova-07-12-2018/>

Bbcom. (2019). BBC News. Retrieved 7 April, 2019, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17601579>