

NATO FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAMME

Democratic Institutions

MOLDOVAN SECURITY CONCERNS: DEVELOPMENT AND PERSPECTIVES

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid demise of the Soviet Union, which had exercised rigorous control over Central and Eastern Europe as an imperial superpower in the post-war period, produced a dramatic decentralization of political and military power. It transformed this part of the old continent into a zone perceived as a vacuum of security and solid guarantees for further development. Unstable situation in the post-Soviet territories, internal conflicts and tensions between CIS member states aggravated by deep economic crises and contradictions of the transition period to free economy and democracy, present real risk to security in Europe.

The majority of former communist countries are now passing through a period high in risks and dangers, but low in potential for independent recovery and development which should improve the living conditions for millions of their citizens. However, it is clear to almost all, that the security of the continent can be ensured either together with Eastern Europe or not at all, or at least in the foreseeable future.

Since its declaration of independence on 27 August 1991, the Republic of Moldova has confronted many of the same challenges facing the other ex-Soviet republics - economic decline, political turmoil, inter-ethnic discord, and an uncertain relationship with the Russian Federation. Moldova's history, though, places it in a unique position among the post-Soviet states.

Regretfully, the end of the cold war could not replace the geo-political imperatives and the political dictate towards "small nations" (the examples of Yugoslavia, Iraq and ex-USSR speak for this sad suggestions).

The euphoria of 1989 disappeared. The optimistic spirit has frozen. In strategic terms the countries of Eastern Europe become "orphans" that are looking for institutional attaching. As the Warsaw Pact broke up, both the member states of the Pact and the newly formed independent states of the ex-USSR had to face the problem of urgent settlement of issues regarding national security, defense, doctrine and army.

The three major processes, the Eastern Europe undergoes when solving these problems, are as follows: desovietization, renationalization and demilitarization.

Desovietization is aimed to getting rid of traditional Soviet domination. Renationalization presupposes the process of forming the national army (an extremely acute problem especially for independent states of ex-USSR) and the maintenance of defense capacity.

Factors that characterized these processes in Moldova are as follows:

- the beginning of military construction from zero level: with no legislative and legal basis, staff, equipment and armament;
- the necessity to transfer former military units and the whole patrimony of the ex-Soviet Army under state control;
- the anti-military campaign carried on in Moldova in 1989-1991 and directed against the ex-Soviet Army that determined serious changes in the public opinion regarding the image of military service;
- the transition period to the market economy characterized by phenomena of crisis, decrease of GDP and acute lack of financial means to state defense sector;
- contradictory political processes, determined on one hand by unionist tendencies and on the other hand by chauvinistic and imperialist nostalgia that caused the separatism phenomenon in the eastern and southern regions of the republic.

The appearance in the Eastern regions of Moldova of the Transnistrian republic, non-recognized by anyone, similar to the self-proclaimed "republics" from Srpska Kraina and Abhazia, the Dniester armed conflict from 1991-1992, the continuous presence of the Russian Federation troops in Moldova have substantially determined the solutions adopted by Moldova's management and political elite on the elaboration of strategy to develop and ground the national strategy principles, set in 1994 in the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova. The promulgation of the permanent neutrality status, the non-adhering to military blocks and the ban on the presence of foreign troops on the territory of the Republic of Moldova became the basic pillars of national security.

Modifications in the political and military situation on the European continent due to NATO extension and the development of the dialog and multidimensional cooperation within "Partnership for Peace" program, made Moldova change some characteristics of the state strategy, set new orientations and reaffirm checked fundamental principles.

The conflict of government bodies from March 1996 following the unsuccessful attempt to dismiss the minister of defense and the hot debates on army forces issues, that covered practically the entire society, made the newly elected President of the Republic of Moldova launch in 1997 the program of military reforms.

THE MILITARY CONFLICT IN THE TRANSNISTRIAN REGION OF MOLDOVA

International interest in the Republic of Moldova has been, to say the least, rather sparse. As the second smallest of the former Soviet republics (after Armenia), it has not normally warranted the international attention given to geographically more important successor states such as Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, or to states such as the Baltic whose relatively successful economic transitions have been a continual source of interest to Western investors. From late 1990 through to mid-1992, the Moldovan government was involved in army conflicts with separatist republics in the south and the east, and for a time Western policy-makers focused their attention on Moldova for fear that these local conflicts might eventually pull in Romania, Ukraine and other states along the Black Sea. But with the cessation of open warfare in summer 1992, Moldova's strategic importance diminished relative to other continuing conflicts in the Balkans and the Caucasus.

Moreover, in strategic terms Moldova has become the most visible example of the realities of Russian military policy towards the "near abroad". The Russian former 14th Army (now so-called "The Operative Group of Troops of Russian Federation") - the elite fighting force of the Soviet Union's former southwestern command - remains stationed in Moldova. Since 1992, additional Russian peacekeepers have been deployed in the region to help keep Moldovan and Transnistrian forces apart, and voices in Moscow have called for a permanent military presence to protect the republic's sizable Russian minority and to guarantee regional stability.

Conflict in Moldova quickened with the nationalist ferment over matters of language, culture and identity which consumed the Soviet republic in 1989 and surfaced with the secession of Transdniestria in 1990. The conflict has since deepened, festered, flared up, and been frozen, but today remains far from defused.

In contrast to many of the other areas of interest in post-communist Europe, however, the confrontation on the River Dniester is not primarily a matter of inter-ethnic strife, but is essentially a political conflict and, moreover, one that bears considerable ideological resonance.

In Moldovan eyes, the political and ideological forces that underpin the abortive coup of August 1991, viz. hard line communism, Russian nationalism, the military-industrial complex and the determination to preserve the union state, have retained a power base in the heavily militarized region and Russified industrial centers on the left bank. Troops of what has now become the Operative Group of Troops of Russian Federation commanded by Russian officers with a political axe to grind, so the Moldovans say, are furthering the cause of local Russian or other non-indigenous fractions, in a former Soviet republic against the properly constituted state authorities of the newly-independent host country.

The highly sovietised population of the Dniester left bank, reinforced by a Russian industrial work force, suspicious of the peasant free-market mentality of the right bank, alarmed by the restoration of the Latin alphabet, and by the declaration the Moldovan (i.e. Romanian) was to be an official language of the Republic together with Russian by the adoption of the Romanian flag as the Moldovan flag, and by the Moldovan Supreme Soviet's decision to replace the Russian language version of the country's name - Moldaviya - with the Romanian language version - Moldova, and fearful of the possibility of unification of the new state with Romania, naturally enough, sees things very differently.

The politico-ideological discord of the Dniester is complicated by left bank links with the Gagauz ethnic grouping concentrated in the southern part of right bank Moldova: the political confrontation also occurs, of course, within the context of Moscow's determination to protect the interests of Russian citizens and of the people in the "near abroad", who identify ethnically and culturally with Russia.

Moldova's assertion of national identity spurs on nationalist and separatist groups in Gagauzia and Transdnistria.

Gagauz deputies in Comrat vote to recognize only Soviet and not Moldovan citizenship and approve a "Declaration on the Freedom and Independence of the Gagauz people from the Republic of Moldova" (19 August 1990). Transdnistrians declare their secession from Moldova and create the "Moldovan Dniestr Soviet Socialist Republic" (2 September 1990). Mircea Snegur is appointed to the newly created office of President and suspends military conscription of Moldova (September 1990).

Under threat of Soviet invasion President Snegur decrees that Soviet laws be considered valid in Moldova (January 1991). The Moldovan government boycotts the Union Treaty referendum but 14th Army is used as a coercive tool to persuade people to vote (March 1991).

Snegur openly oppose the coup against Gorbachev, while the leaders of the Dniester and Gagauz "Republics" with 14th Army welcome it (August 1991). The Republic of Moldova declares its independence on 27 August 1991.

The first battalion of the Dniester Soviet Socialist Republican Guard becomes fully operational in September 1991 and from then on there are covert transfers of weapons from 14 Army to the Republican Guard, which is trained by army officers on military bases. Guard and workers' detachments embark on a gradual armed takeover of Moldovan police stations, local Soviets, administrative bodies, radio stations and newspapers offices on the left bank. Unlawfully, but under the threat of force, the Guard insists that the institutions switch from Moldovan to "Dniester Republic" subordination.

Seven Moldovan policemen are killed and more than 20 wounded while 3 Dniester guardsmen are killed and 3 wounded in November and December 1991.

The "Dniester Republic" established a "Directorate for Defense and Security", headed by Lt-Gen Gennadiy Yakovlev, the commander of the 14 Army, in December 1991. 14 Army continues to provide training and weapons to the "Dniester" Guard and supports their continuing takeover of the left bank administrative bodies and their establishment of a bridgehead in Bendery on the right bank. The Soviet military high command is slow to react, and slower still to discipline and condemn. Yakovlev's support of the "creeping putsch" is said to be "his own business", and Moldovans are cautioned to "very carefully distinguish between the Soviet Army and people merely dressed in the uniform of the Soviet Army and carrying weapons". Cossaks irregulars arrive in Tiraspol ("capital city of PMR") to protect "the Slavs".

Moldova joins the Commonwealth of Independent States in December 1991. In January 1992 the Soviet 14 Army is transferred to the CIS Armed Forces. At the CIS summit in Kiev (20 March) leaders say that the preservation of Moldova's territorial integrity is the "cornerstone of their policy". Meanwhile, the

fighting on the Dniester leads to more than 40 deaths. The Moldovan government declares a state of emergency on 28 March and Snegur vows to "liquidate and disarm" the "Dniester" militia.

President Yeltsin's decree (1 April) transfers 14 Army to Russian jurisdiction. Inexperienced Moldovan Interior Ministry Troops launch their first unsuccessful large offensive against the separatists in Bender. This is followed by the outbreak of full-scale local civil war culminating in the battle for Bender (won by the Dniester insurgents with the substantial support from 14 Army) from 18-25 June 1992. Between November 1991 and July 1992 more than 500 people are killed and many more wounded. Moscow equivocates and prevaricates with respect to 14 Army involvement in the conflict. The Russian army is said to have remained neutral, to have disobeyed orders, to have intervened as a local initiative, to have been ordered to make a show of force, to defend Russian-speaking areas, and to take retaliatory action against Moldova for committing crimes against Russians. In late May President Yeltsin has observed, "If the people in the Dniester region want to live autonomously, that is the business of the people themselves".

At the same time Republic of Moldova began to create its own Armed Forces.

The new political forces that took power in the CEE countries, and their new governments had to find no effective means of exercising control over the military and their institutions. But there were at least three factors that played a positive role in the initial period of reforms that stopped the military going out of control. The first, initiative in providing all the liberal reforms were coming from Moscow, making "little brothers" of the local Communist elite of the CEE nations be obedient in the application of "Perestroika". This paralyzed any resistance of the old guard, including the top commandants of the army and military elite as a whole. Secondly, with the armed force being extremely centralized, purely military institutions from the bottom to the Ministries of Defense, they were relatively easy to take control of, by changing the top officers of the army and other armed structures. The third, the break up of the Warsaw Pact happened at the moment, when the military establishments from CEE countries were able to identify their own security interests and initiate the reforms as genuine national armed forces. The sole exception was the Red Army, or more exactly its high ranked officers, who were in opposition to Gorbachov, especially at the final stages of Perestroika. By this time the ruling party and military elite of the former USSR already had the impression of losing control of the situation in the country and in eastern Europe because of a total failure of the policy of limited reformation.

In the Republic of Moldova, the creation of armed forces started just after the first democratic parliamentary elections in May 1990, more than a year before the republic declared its independence from the USSR. The main task of the Department of State for Military Problems, the first state authority in defense and security matters, at the initial stage of its activity was to establish constructive relationship with the Soviet Ministry of Defense. It was hoped that this would avoid useless confrontations over the command of Red Army troops located in the republic. At the same time, the Department initiated the process of creation of a new legislative framework for the National Armed Forces, based upon the new perception of defense. By the end of autumn 1991, the four basic laws on National Defense, The Armed Forces, Military Service and the Concepts of their constructions were adopted by the first Moldovan Parliament.

The creation of the parliamentary Commission for Military and Security problems, responsible for national security as a whole and the activity of force structures in an emerging Moldovan state, began the process of putting the military under political control. During the armed conflict with Russian separatists in Transdnistria in 1991-1992, the Supreme Council of Security, headed by the President, also the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, assumed the role of the supreme military authority. It had the right to start and conduct the operations of the armed forces and of the units of Ministries of internal affairs and security, and the right to make decisions in this field. The members of this council were the Speaker of the Parliament, the Prime Minister, the heads of the main Parliamentary commissions and the Ministers responsible for the security services, foreign affairs, economy and finance. Such a composition of the Council avoided potential contradictions between the representatives of the different branches of state power at a vital stage of the struggle of Moldovans in terms of territorial integrity and independence. After the end of the military conflict, the Supreme Council of Security became a consultative institution to the head of state.

Shortly after the Department for Military Problems was formed, with the view to implementing the Presidential Decree on Formation of Armed Forces, the Parliament and the Government of the Republic of Moldova have issued a number of official documents that brought into effect the idea of military constitution in the state. The President's decree from 5 February 1992 stipulates the setting up of the Ministry of Defense headed by General Ion Costa[, professional military man, former minister of Internal Affairs. Another presidential decree delegated to the new minister the entire complex of buildings and military cantonments of the former Supreme Commandment of Southern-Western Bridgehead of Warsaw Pact. Confronting the tacit opposition of Soviet officers that remained in the Commandment, having a staff of only 20 officers of the former Department, the Ministry of Defense has set the following pressing targets:

- to select and to complete the army with staff;
- to practically pass under the jurisdiction of Moldova the Soviet military units dislocated on the territory of the state, to take over permanent military camps and cantonments, to catalogue military belongings; to control the state of military patrimony, real estate and communication lines declared as property of Moldova;
- to form new structures of the Ministry of Defense, of Headquarters of Armed Forces, regular troops of the National Army; to work out draft laws, decrees, decisions in the field of state security;
- to financially assist and urgently settle social problems related to autochthonous military persons that came back home after the combat service in the Soviet Army;
- to house the troops and to ensure officers and sergeants with floor space;
- to work out new regulation instructions, orders of the day, needed for a normal functioning of military structures, etc.

In February - March 1992 minister Costa[held intense negotiations with Deputy Commander-in-Chief of CIS troops General-Colonel Boris Piankov. As result of these negotiations it was decided to leave 90% of the military patrimony on the right bank of the Dniester and the third part of the patrimony located on the left bank in the possession of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Moldova. The 14th Army had, as agreed, to be withdrawn in two years period.

Taking into consideration the aggravating situation in the Dniestrian region, President Snegur has, as mentioned before, set in April 1992 an operative body by the Supreme Council of Security - the

Operative Headquarters, headed by Gen. Pavel Creanga, with the view to coordinating the activity of regular troops in the subordination of force ministers from the conflict zone. During the armed conflict this secret body was dislocated in the following places: Holercani (right on Dniester), Peresecina (7-10 km from Dniester) and then in Chişinău (30-50 km from Dniester).

Considering that in March 1992 the Ministry of Defense was in its incipient stage of formation and did not have in its subordination military units, it was decided to form 10 battalions of moto-infantry in reserve. During April 1992 in the area of Cobuţna Nouă, Cobuţna Veche, Speia and on the territory of the military firing ground Bulboacă combat instructions and battalions interaction were held and further redislocated in the conflict zone. Simultaneously with the formation of battalions, structures of the Ministry of Defense and of the Headquarters of Armed Forces were developed and completed, former Soviet military units were taken over. This process developed with great difficulties as sabotage by officers of Russian origin during the transmission of goods and armament was very frequent. Documents were destroyed, equipment and armament were transmitted in a spoil manner.

On 20 March the 86th regiment of fighter planes passed under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Moldova; on 6 March - the 153d avia mixed independent squadron. On 27 May the fighters MIG-29, that have during the conflict made 31 fight flights, took off for the first time.

At mid-May 1992 four tactic groups were formed:

- bridgehead Chişinău - 1st tactic group, commander Col. Mihai Mămăligă;
- bridgehead Bender - 2nd tactic group, commander Col. Leonid Carasiov;
- bridgehead Coşniţa - 3d tactic group, commander Col. Anatol Cociug;
- bridgehead Cocieri - 4th tactic group, commander Col. Nicolae Petrica.

The Operative Headquarters has organized the logistic and medical assistance of these groups. As paramilitary separatist forces had about 30 tanks and over 50 units of heavy artillery, tactic groups had to be reinforced with artillery subdivisions. On 13 April the antitank artillery battalion and the antitank artillery battery were formed and dislocated on bridgehead Cocieri.

On 8 June 1992 additional artillery subdivisions were formed and directed to the bridgeheads. The grouping of artillery forces and means on all directions was completed by mid-June 1992 and represented artillery subdivisions of different caliber (152 mm PO-20, 120 mm GM-30, MAT MT 12; PTP MT 12; RAGT-turm, "Concurs"; mine-thrower 120 mm).

On 19 and 21 May 1992 detachments of guards and Cossacks have, with the assistance of tanks and artillery, attacked the positions held by the 4th tactic group near Cocieri village. The attacks have been repulsed; separatists registered human, artillery and armored equipment losses (6 mine-throwers 120 mm, 1 tank T-64; 1 tank TB were destroyed). During June-July 1992 Transdniestrian separatists did not strongly embark upon this direction, with the exception of bombardments from closed positions by 14 Army.

Direct implication actions of the 14 Army in the armed conflict start when on 12 May 1992 the president of Transdniestria issues a decree that stipulates the passing of the 14 Army under the jurisdiction of Transdniestria. On 24 May 1992, 7 armored units are sent from Bender fortress to Dubăsari zone. A company of units dislocated in Rarcani village on the left bank of Dniester comes to the conflict area. On

the same day the deputy Commander-in-Chief of CIS Armed Forces, Gen. Stolearov comes to Tiraspol and declares in front of separatist leaders and the management of 14 Army that Transdniestria and 14 Army represent the geo-political interests of Russia in this zone.

During the same period the management of the Republic of Moldova undertakes the following measures to improve the situation in left bank Moldova:

- on 26 May 1992 the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova launches an appeal to the parliaments and nations of the world to undertake measures to discourage the aggressor and to support the legitimate request to immediately and unconditionally withdraw 14 Army of the Russian Federation and Cossacks and Russian detachments from the territory of the Republic of Moldova;

- on 27 May 1992 the Parliament approves the decision on Measures to improve the situation in Dniestrian region following the foreign armed intervention;

- on 11 June 1992 the Parliament approves one more decision on measures to solve the armed conflict from eastern region of the Republic of Moldova. Pursuant to this decision a joint commission formed of people's deputies from the Republic of Moldova and representatives of armed formations involved in the conflict is set up. The target of this commission is to work out up to 16 June 1992 the mechanism to free from engagements the belligerent parts;

- on 16 June 1992 the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova approves the basic principles to peacefully regulate the armed conflict, to set up peace and understanding in the eastern regions of the Republic of Moldova.

Despite these attempts to peacefully regulate the conflict, on 19 June 1992 in Bender city separatist forces make with the support of "Dniestr" battalion an ample provocation and attempt to withdraw legitimate police units from the city. The state management decides to deblocate the city police office with combined forces of the 2d tactic group and a special police brigade and to set defense positions on access ways to the bridge over Dniester with the view not to allowing the redislocation in the city of additional separatist troops. Executing the order, the 3d and 4th moto infantry Battalions, supported by the subdivisions of the special police brigade, deblocate the premises of the city police office and take the position of defense. The 1st moto infantry battalion comes to the bridge over Dniester and starts the activity of defense organization. On 20 June in the morning the separatist military forces regroup and, being supported by tanks and artillery, storm the city; this storm results in significant human losses among peaceful population. The battalion manages to maintain the positions during the whole day of 20 June and repulse 5 fierce attacks with tanks, armored units and infantry. As forces are exhausted and reserves lacking, the positions are surrendered and taken over by separatists.

Maj-Gen Aleksandr Lebed is appointed Commander of 14 Army in late June. He accuses Moldova of being a "fascist state", says its leaders are "war criminals", calls the Defense Minister a "cannibal", refers to Moldovans as "oxen" and "sheep" and describes his army as "belonging to the Dniester people". Lebed predicts the end of Moldova's independence and its return to a reconstituted Union and declares that 14 Army will remain in Moldova indefinitely.

With the view to stopping hostilities in the Transdniestrian region of the Republic of Moldova and following keen discussions with the supreme management of the Russian Federation, on 21 July 1992, the Presidents of Moldova and of Russia, Mircea Snegur and Boris Yeltsin, signed in Moscow the Agreement on Principles to Peacefully Regulate the Armed Conflict in the Transdniestrian Region of the Republic of

Moldova. The Agreement provides as follows: "Art. 1. 1. Since the signing of the Agreement, the belligerent parts assume the responsibility to undertake all measures to completely cease the fire and any other armed activities against each other"; p.2 of this article stipulates that within 7 days from Agreement signing, all the military formations and equipment be withdraw and the security zone be formed; p.3 of the Art.2 of this Agreement sets: "With the view to implementing the above mentioned measures, the Unified Control Commission is given in subordination the voluntarily formed military contingents that represent the counterparts of this Agreement..."

Thus, on 28 July 1992, following an additional protocol, the Unified Control Commission, formed of representatives of three parts: the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Transdnistria has decided upon the introduction in the security zone, determined by UCC, of military contingents participating at the conflict peaceful regulation and of the Observers Corps, whose target is to ensure the cease of fire, the withdrawal and disarmament of all military formations, the maintenance of peace and legal order in the post-conflict zone.

The security zone with the length of 255 km and breadth of 12-20 km has been formed to implement the entrusted tasks. The zone is divided in three sectors: North (85 km long and up to 12 km wide); Center (85 km long and up to 20 km wide) and South (80 km long and up to 14 km wide). It has two districts of high security regime - the cities of Bender and Dub=sari. Peace was maintained here by the military contingents of the Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation and Transdnistria. From the very first days the control has been kept at 41 posts: 10 posts of joined tripartite control, 24 posts of joint bipartite control, 5 common tripartite posts, 2 posts of the Russian contingent. The service has been carried on by 426 military persons, armed with light arms and endowed with transmission means.

Here is the case to remind that there were other variants regarding the peace forces composition. Having failed to secure any UN involvement in a peacekeeping role, President Snegur appeals for a CIS peacekeeping force at the Moscow Summit on 6 July. (This was to be the first ever CIS peacekeeping task, and Moldovan, Russian, Belorussia and Ukraine troops, but not 14 Army, were to be deployed.)

Russia's involvement into the regional peacekeeping (very often much more suitable term is peacemaking, which to a greater extent answers to the real character of Russian activity) has different interfaces and carries different tasks. Some general typical features for the peacekeeping process on the former USSR territory may be outlined:

1) the operations being held here may be only conditionally called to be peacekeeping, for they combine peace-making and peace-enforcement functions at the same time (actually addressing this issue Russian experts very often draw no difference between peacekeeping and peacemaking). Sometimes, though with the title of "peacekeepers" being attributed by the CIS authorities, the operations has nothing to do at all (like, defense of the border I Tajikistan) with peacekeeping, but represent a military defensive operation. So, the compliance with the UN understanding of such type of operations is at least not always obvious;

2) Russia mainly carries all the military and financial burden of peacekeeping on the CIS territory, which causes political difficulties and allegations in "neo-imperialistic" moods. Though being called as peacekeeping, Russian troops being engaged in such operations are not professional peacekeepers at all - usually paratroopers are used for these purposes.

One of the main aims of Russian "professional peacemaker" is still to get the UN approval - mandate - for the operations within the CIS territory. In the view of Russian officials it would provide mainly undertaken by Russian peacekeeping process not only with the UN mandate. In February 1994 the representatives of two ministers of defense and of foreign affairs addressed the president Yeltsin to compel him in the necessity to provide certain units of Russian troops with the status of the UN peacekeeping forces. The reason for this was twofold: first, according to their understanding it would legally confirm the geographical space around Russia to be the zone of special interests of Russia and, secondly, economic considerations - the ability to acquire UN financial support for this type of activity ("Rossiyskaya Gazeta", April 7, 1994).

In his rather tough Annual Address to the Federal Council president Boris Yeltsin was affirmative saying that nobody in the former Soviet Union, but Russia "is ready to take the burden of peacekeeping". According to him, Russia participates in this activity with the consent and at the request of the neighboring countries in full conformity with the UN Charter. And thus, "there is no need to ask international community every time for the allowance to undertake this or that operation".

The identification of military contingents introduced in Transnistria was largely mediated as this issue has a strongly marked political and diplomatic character. The point is that on one hand the Unified Control Commission has from the very beginning elaborated the statute of tripartite peace keeping forces that would in all aspects adhere to "classical" UN standards. This was the matter, the Moldovan delegation, headed at that time by the military counselor of president Snegur, Nicolae Chirtoac= and further on the OSCE permanent Commission that started the international monitoring process in the zone, definitely insisted on. Yet, on the other hand, years that followed the hostilities cease have evidently showed the biased negative effect of the Russian Federation "pacifiers", that have not only once violated the statute of the Unified Control Commission and of peacekeeping Forces by tolerating and even directly supporting the separatist forces in the violation of constitutional rights of Moldovan citizens.

Although the first meeting of the Unified Control Commission from 28 July 1992 decided on the peacekeeping Forces formation as follows: Russian Federation-6 battalions (1 in reserve); Moldova-3 battalions, Transnistria-3 battalions (1 in reserve), these contingents and the number of posts have gradually considerably decreased. The Russian forces comprise 3 battalions each from 76 and 106 Guards Airborne Divisions. Three battalions are deployed in Bender, two are dispatched in Dubasari, and 1 is held in reserve. Moldova's military contingent is dislocated in Cocieri, Co[n]i[la] and Varni[la]. To military coordinate and command, the first Commanders-in-Chief were named: on behalf of Moldova-Col. Petric=, of Russian Federation-Gen.-Col. Vorobiov, of Transnistria-Col. Hajeev. Altogether, 2.400 Russians, 1200 Moldovans and 1.200 members of the " Dnester Guard" are deployed and they are able to separate the warring fractions, to stop the fighting and establish a demarcation line.

The military contingent have been deployed at dislocation places on 1 August 1992; still, one of the main targets was achieved- the setting up in the zone of peace, calm and relative stability. As a proof for this is that, practically, no serious incident of armed confrontation between groups of people from both banks of Dniester has been registered up to now. During 5 years pacifiers disarmed 11.000 explosive objects, confiscated and withdrawn from the population 600 units of unauthorized fire-arms, more than 100.000 cartridges and other fire-arms. An enormous work was done by the sapper subdivision of the Moldovan contingent of peacekeeping Forces: on 1 August 1992 the area to be demarcated constituted

about 140,5 square kms; Moldovan sappers were given the area of 71,9 square kms. in the perimeter of Chiłcani, Cocieri and Coșnița villages; already on 10 October 1992 Moldovan sappers reported that the given territory was completely demined. Altogether the subdivision traced out and neutralized more than 4.000 explosive objects, including the demining of 4 bridges over Dniester.

Another pressing target of peacekeeping Forces was to trace out and disarm unauthorized owners of fire-arms, withdrawn in different ways during the conflict from dumps and battle fields. Following the presidential decree from 1 August 1992 many citizens have voluntarily handed over the arms and ammunition to state legal bodies. Since 1 August 1992 the population handed over about 700 revolvers, more than 1800 grenades, mines and explosive objects, 648.000 cartridges. At the same time, the "speznaz" from left Moldova, headed by the Russian colonel Mihail Bergman disarmed over 1500 persons and took over 325 revolvers, machine-guns, 2 radio stations and even 1 unit of missiles launching "Alazany"

Before drawing final conclusions to this chapter, it should be mentioned that the so-called "Armed conflict in Transdnistria" continues up to now and is the central concern of many countries. The matter is the top problem in the determination of strategy and national security of the Republic of Moldova because of the following:

In military terms, the break up of Warsaw pact and break-down of USSR made NATO not have any major potential opponent and redefine in a strategic concept in November 1991 its political and military objectives.

In the situation of independent states, former Soviet republics, the Russian Federation has initially tried to perpetuate the joint defense based on the strong military and industrial complex and the Soviet military mechanism; yet, nationalized tendencies generated serious variances in the interior of military structures inherited from the former Union state. All these together and the evolution of struggle for power made the communitar headquarters by CIS be dissolved; as a result the confusion in the issue of defense increased.

Military experts have, as reaction, elaborated a new military doctrine of the Russian Federation that presents an updating, an adjustment of the Soviet military doctrine to the new situation, without renouncing to basic principles and objectives. Although this refers to Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, the setting up in December 1993 of Headquarters of coordination of CIS Members Military Collaboration denotes the constraint of this doctrine to the other CIS countries at least in the field of major objectives.

Political observers estimated that the presence of 14 Army in left Moldova makes Moldova a "polygon" for Moscow's political experiments. The tergiversation of Russian troops retreat from different ex-USSR regions was justified as a rule, by matters of social character and by the necessity to defend Russians and Russian speaking minorities, in both cases with Soviet nostalgia. Another justification of Russian geo-political interests origin would be the sine qua non role of pacifier of the Russian soldier in conflict zones.

Transdnistria may be the only one region where even these more or less official explanations failed to be supported. The defense of "Transdnistrian people" in condition of "danger of extermination" represents only the populist facade of the political objective assumed by 14 Army. The need to negotiate the withdrawal of the 14 Army is unquestionable. More than this, the mentioned doctrine stipulates the reorganization of forces: the first stage that should have been completed in 1996 provided the completed withdrawal of forces from abroad.

The Moldo-Russian Agreement from 21 July 1992 on peaceful regulation of the conflict from Eastern region of Moldova granted 14 Army the state of neutrality during the conflict.

Following intensive negotiation between groups of military experts and meetings of governmental delegations of the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation, a considerable amount of work has been done that resulted up to 10 August 1994 in 9 additional documents, and on 21 October 1994 in the signing of Moldo-Russian Agreement on the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova. The Ministers of defense of both countries signed 2 agreements in the field of military issues that were completed in February 1995 with 4 more.

Yet, as known, the Russian State Duma did not up to now ratify the Basic Agreement; after the signing and sanctioning of the above documents the work in this field continued with different successibility.

It should be mentioned that immediately after the signing of the Agreement from October 1994, the management of the republic formulated its insistent wish to manage this process with the assistance of international observers, that would guarantee its correct development. This intention was exposed at the 40th session of North Atlantic Meeting in Washington by the Vice Chairman of the Parliament Nicolae Andronic; the same matter was raised almost at the same time and in the same city by the Prime Minister Andrei Sanghely, and in Bruxelles, at the meeting with high officials of European bodies - by the President of the Republic of Moldova Mircea Snegur.

Snegur promoted the above mentioned idea within the CSCE summit in Budapest following the decision of the Supreme Council of Security of the Republic of Moldova.

What happened to be found out?

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation has taken official note of this declaration, but mentioned, the international supervision of 14 Army repatriation is not motivated, this very process being, in the opinion of Moscow diplomats, the business of Moldova and Russia, that shall supervise the process normal unfolding by themselves.

The current situation regarding 14 Army withdrawal implies the argument of international monitoring as instrument of relative pressure on involved parts in case assumed responsibilities are not obeyed.

The organization's mixed results elsewhere in the former Soviet Union notwithstanding, the CSCE has seen some modest success in promoting a political settlement of Moldova's crisis in Transdnistria

though only since the fighting in 1992 subsided. On the heels of a CSCE fact-finding mission, in early 1993 the organization's political bodies authorized the establishment of an in-country mission with multiple goals: to promote dialogue among the main political actors in Moldova, including the Transdnestrian leadership; to encourage the withdrawal of foreign troops (that is, the Russian former 14 Army); and to monitor human rights conditions and the implementation of any political settlement.

A complicated aspect of the situation in the geo-political area of the former USSR is the issue on huge dumps located not only on the territory of the Russian Federation, but also on that of newly formed independent states of former USSR. Moscow mass-media estimates them as hundreds and draws the attention on the danger generated by the security, unexistent at the moment, of these dumps, as a result of which the possibility of arms withdrawal and explosions with catastrophic effects for the zone is very high.

Such a dump, a real power keg, is situated in Kolbasna village, in the north of Transdnestria, near the border with Ukraine. The dump that served the Military District Odessa became more congested as a result of bringing here of tens of trains with ammunition and missiles withdrawn together with Soviet troops from some member countries of the former Warsaw Pact.

Experts underline that to evacuate the dump in security conditions, taking into account that there is only one rail road and the loading of about five wagons requires 24 hours, the evacuation of Kolbasna military material requires more than 5 years!

To add here, about 30% of ammunition made in 1938-1940 is not transportable and should be destroyed on place. Transdnestria leaders vehemently oppose to such a solution, maybe not for the reason of high risk massive and reiterated explosions may generate to the environment but because they do not want to loose one provisioning sources for their military formations. This dump provides the largest amount of missiles and other categories of military equipment and ammunition of Transdnestrian military formations; besides this, there are other circles that are interested in the perpetuation of this powder keg, especially those within arms trade mafia.

A remarkable progress has been achieved in this field following the visit to Moscow of the President of the Republic of Moldova Petru Lucinschi and the signing on 8 May 1997 of the Memorandum on Principles to Normalize the Relationship between Moldova and Transdnestria. Referring to the Russian leadership position, Lucinschi mentioned: "Boris Yeltsin and Victor Cernomyrdin ensured us that the problem of withdrawal does not exist. Russia acknowledges the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova that stipulates the permanent neutrality and the non-admission of foreign troops dislocated on the territory of the Republic of Moldova".

The president of Moldova has estimated the situation regarding the withdrawal of Russian troops from the east of the Republic as "a problem that should be solved together with interested parts, first of all with Russia, but also Ukraine, on whose territory the evacuation shall be practically made. Chişinău and Tiraspol should solve political aspects of conflict results regulation".

Technical aspects mentioned by Lucinschi have been materialized at the meeting between the delegation of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, headed by Prime Vice Minister of Defense Gen. V. Toporov and the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Moldova Valeriu Pasat.

As for the Agreement of Legal Statute, Terms and Conditions of withdrawal of Russian troops of the Russian Federation, it is necessary to mention that, as this document has not been yet ratified by the State Duma of the Russian Federation, the mechanism of its implementation, stages and concrete schedule of withdrawal are not defined. There are many cases when, contrary to Agreement stipulations, many units of military equipment, considerable amounts of armament and ammunition are illicitly transmitted to Transdniestrian military formations and thus Art. 5 of the Agreement is violated; reshuffles of forces and manoeuvres of troops of the Russian Federation are made without coordinating them with competent authorities of the Republic of Moldova.

The absence of a real control on transmission of Transdniestrian formations military patrimony caused permanent problems to the republic authorities. In 1995 the commandment of the Operative Group of Russian troops transmitted to Tiraspol contrary to agreements some tens of transport units, including tonnage motor vehicles "Ural" and 5 armored units "Ceaika". In Slobozia, in 1995 a military cantonment of OCRT with all the real estate and technical patrimony was illegally transmitted.

Almost in all cases, military patrimony transmission coincided with the next stage of distraction through exploding of old ammunition.

One of the most complicated aspects of Agreement implementation, to which authorities of local management always oppose, is the modality to divide, commercialize and transmit the military patrimony from Transdniestria to the Republic of Moldova.

NATIONAL DEFENCE POLICY IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Following the break-down of the USSR, the world map has been introduced a number of independent states, that, as part of the old empire, did not up to that moment raise the question of national security and defense. Being delegated now such a fundamental attribute, these countries seek to materialize it by coming closer either to the old power center (Russia) or to another one (Euro-Atlantic structures), or be changing their traditional statute and becoming zonal powers (the case of Ukraine).

The cycle initiated in the period of super-powers by-polarity with regard to armament reduction has finished with the withdrawal of the last Russian troops from Germany. This process resulted in the neutralization of the conventional military potential that kept Europe divided, as, according as the Soviet military presence in the center of Europe decreased, countries that have contributed to the destruction of the old geo-strategic ordinance kept for about 50 years, undertook reply measures.

Now, the geo-political context has new features, the most important ones being as follows:

- the non-existence in the center of Europe of large grouping of forces and means formed and prepared for confrontation, that allowed significant reductions, reorganization and remodeling of national armies;

- the decrease of military budgets and their orientation to “intensive” articles that allow armies retechnologization and training for new missions;

- the proliferation of different geo-strategic disposition on the continent within which Central European countries seem to be reserved the role of zone-buffer; the concern accent is displaced to the Mediterranean region; the disposition is only “marked” with much reduced and less offensive forces respected somehow by power centers; yet, the experience shows that this zone assumes the risk of conflict source as its modification may cause the instability of the geo-strategic and security context;

- the considerable decrease of a major military confrontation possible release on the continent but the aggravation of local conflict up to armed operations with important consequence on the security and stability in the zone.

These characteristic features of the geo-strategic context vis-à-vis the absence of a concrete potential “enemy” that would determine the unit of defense efforts, brought about a “crisis” not only in geo-strategy, but also in national strategies.

When analyzing the degree of a nation (state) security, the following counterparts should be considered: neighboring nations (zone); regional security; global security. Any encroachment of a state national security has impact on zonal, regional and even international security. At the same time, a state security cannot be ensured as long as the matter is not settled at a zonal-regional-global level. This correlation is unfortunately very well illustrated in the case of Yugoslavia (national) - Balkans (zonal) - European (continental) and even international (the tendency to involve Islamic countries, the USA, etc.)

In the case of the Republic of Moldova, this correlation is shown in the complex of problems related to the so-called “Transdniestrian knot”, referred to in the previous chapter.

From political and military point of view, Moldova represents a very convenient bridgehead. The Headquarters of the Southern-Western Bridgehead of Warsaw Pact was not accidentally set in Chişinău. Now, in the light of the forthcoming NATO extension following the adherence to the Alliance of countries from Central and Eastern Europe, among which Romania and Bulgaria, the matter of Moldova’s political orientation becomes of great importance both for the West and for Russia - especially on the background of not quite simple relationship between Moscow and Kiev. Yet, the point is not the military aspect of the problem, although the issue of keeping the military contingent on Dniester turns for Moscow from a merely military influence factor into a geo-political one. The economic factor is not less important: in the last instance, the very degree of Moldova’s dependence on this or that foreign partner shall determine the country political orientation. This fact makes Moldova from now on an arena for potential disagreements between Russia and the West.

Nevertheless, the new Constitution of the Republic of Moldova adopted in 1994, determines the country’s strategic options in lasting terms; the Constitution stipulates that Moldova is a neutral state, does

not adhere to any military blocks and does not admit the dislocation on its territory of foreign troops; with the view to defending the independence, sovereignty and state territorial integrity, it shall have its own Armed Forces. These major desiderata are further developed in the Military Doctrine of the Republic of Moldova, adopted by the Parliament (after two readings) in 1995.

To better understand the essence of the military Doctrine and the state military policy, the concept of permanent neutrality that stays at the basis of the Doctrine and that is proclaimed by the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova should be deciphered.

There is no dictionary unanimously recognized that would strictly define the neutrality. In the international law this term is generally considered as legal statute of states that during armed conflict do not take part in it and maintain peaceful relationship with third countries, including the belligerents.

The essential obligations that characterize the legal statute of a neutral state are abstention and impartiality.

Besides classical neutrality that has direct relation with armed conflict, there is the permanent neutrality, characterized by the fact that it is set in advance, in conditions of peace, through an international treaty, or a unilateral act (an internal law, or a state declaration, in our case - the basic law - the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova), that sometimes is acknowledged or even guaranteed by the international community.

Pursuant to the public international law, states that have declared their permanent neutrality assume, by rule, the following additional obligations: not to participate in political or military alliances or to assume obligations aimed to war preparing; not to allow the use of their territory for placement of foreign military bases (installations); not to possess, produce and experiment weapons of mass annihilation; to conduct a policy of peaceful collaboration and maintain relations of friendship with all the countries.

At the same time, the neutral state is free to take any measures it deems necessary to protect its territory and to implement its foreign policy.

Responsibilities assumed during peace time as state with statute of permanent neutrality shall not be ambiguously treated by third states during war-time.

Declaring its neutrality during peace-time and defining it as permanent, the Republic of Moldova assumes its obligation to correspond to requirements towards states with such kind of statute and to be able to fulfill specific obligations with the view to being in position to claim the observance of its rights.

Thus, by promoting foreign and domestic policy according to strategic options and avoiding possible ambiguity in the policy of neutrality consolidation, the state can not side-step the issue of neutrality guarantee during war-time, demonstrating the capacity (capability) to keep through defense its army.

Eloquent examples from the modern history show that in the majority of cases a simple unilateral declaration of permanent neutrality statute happened to be insufficient for its observance.

An important role in the issue of the republic neutrality statute observance shall be played by the recognition (guaranty) of this statute by the international community or by third parties.

Such an act is not obligatory, still in the case of the Republic of Moldova it is necessary because of the important geo-strategic position and the risk of pressure and instability in the region. Another reason is the balance between foreign guarantees of a permanent neutrality statute and the internal effort devoted to the formation and consolidation of the defense system. It is obvious that the economic situation of the republic does not allow to direct important means to this purpose.

Proclaiming its permanent neutrality, the Republic of Moldova solicits from the world states and international organizations the recognition and observance of this statute.

In conclusion analyzing what said before and following the activity of the state and of the Ministry of Defense in the field of foreign policy, it can be said that this activity does not have a spontaneous, emotional etc., but a consistent fundamental character and corresponds to the targets set and aimed to consolidating the statality, to ensuring its territorial sovereignty and independence, to guaranteeing the national security.

These are not simple declarations, on the contrary, these are provisions that should be efficiently implemented in the state activity.

After 5 years of existence, Moldova is not involved in any relationship with a state or international body that would run counter to the principle of neutrality; this principle is strictly observed.

The Military Doctrine determines also other basic directions of the military policy of the Republic of Moldova; these directions are implemented through legislative and normative acts in effect.

The basic target of Moldova's military policy is to ensure the military security of the state and population, to prevent wars and armed conflicts.

This target is fulfilled on the basis of international law, through a system of political and military measures of global, regional and national character, that shall ensure the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the state, the security of its population and the public order in the country. The state security in the future is conceived as an effective joining of the political and diplomatic components on foreign plane and the military component on the internal one.

The Republic of Moldova does not treat the neutrality statute of the country as an occasion of self-isolation; on the contrary, the foreign military collaboration that provides an active participation at the formation of an unique international system of collective security, is given great significance. This path has been chosen to set mutual trust, sincerity and transparency in the regional military zone, on the European continent and also providing that conditions that would allow the Republic of Moldova to apply for international entities assistance in case of aggression danger without being member of a military block are set.

This position of Moldova was highly appreciated by the General Secretary of NATO Javier Solana, that declared during his visit in Chişinău in April 1997: "NATO salutes the fact that Moldova did not close itself within its frontiers and promotes a policy of transparency. We respect Moldova's constitutional neutrality but hope this fact shall not stop the country be involved in the security process. Adhering in March 1994 to the Partnership for Peace, Moldova has demonstrated that its neutrality policy is perfectly compatible with the constitution of new relations of friendship with other countries and organizations"

As for the military component of the state military policy, the Republic of Moldova performs the military construction in a volume sufficient to prevent an aggression or armed conflict, or, in case such a thing happens-to perform operations of defense that would guarantee the country independence and sovereignty.

The country military infrastructure, the structure and composition of Armed Forces, their equipment and training are determined by the possible military danger, it does not exceed, but also can not be lower the necessary level for the organization of the state effective defense.

Now the basic source of the possible military danger for the state is the presence on its territory of foreign troops (of the Russian Federation) and the illegal armed formations in Transdnistria, that under certain circumstances may generate an armed conflict.

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova are formed of the National Army, Frontier Guard Troops, Carabinnners Troops, designated respectively to ensure military security, frontier guard and maintenance of state public order.

During peace-time Frontier Guard acts under the Ministry of National Security, Carabinnners Troops- the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Army- the Military of Defense.

During war-time all the above mentioned troops are under direct commandment of the Headquarters of the National Army, that organizes and perform activities to defend the country.

The structure of the National Army is set under the strict control by civil authorities and bodies of military command and officials within them.

The equipment and material provisioning of Armed Forces is done on State Budget account. The armament military and special equipment shall be acquired from abroad, in cases justified from economic point of view shall be produced in the republic.

The equipment shall consist of only conventional battle means.

Troops are completed on the basis of mixed principle following both contract and recruitment, in perspective it is provided to completely move to contract completion. The training of officers and sergeants is held at the military College of the republic, abroad and also among graduates of civil education institutions after a proper training at special courses.

The cornerstone of the country military potential is the National Army, that has in case of aggression, the target to repulse the enemy's air and ground attacks, to bring maximum possible losses to

the aggressor, to set up conditions to cease military actions and to bring peace in conditions that correspond to Moldova's sovereignty and independence interests.

The National Army is formed of regular troops and the reserve trained from the military point of view.

Regular troops form the army basis and includes:

- land defense units;
- anti-aircraft divisions and subdivisions;
- aircraft divisions;
- logistics technical and medical insurance divisions;
- instructions of the Ministry of Defense.

The operative and tactic unity of regular troops is the brigade.

Trained reserve is constituted of human resources designated to complete the regular troops divisions and subdivisions up to war staff, to form territorial defense troops, to cover losses. The trained reserve is formed and completed following the territorial principle, directly on reservists living place.

The basic tactic unit of territorial defense troops is the battalion.

The main type of the National Army military actions is the defense performed by regular troops and troops of territorial defense in form of defense operations. A special attention is given to the mobile defense.

At the same time military units shall be trained to carry on battle offensive actions within defense operations.

The organization of defense is made following the principle of basic efforts concentration to the direction of danger as a result of organization and simultaneous command of territorial defense on one part or the entire territory of the republic.

Reservists training is provided in training centers by military units, in the republican center for military specialists education, in centers of compulsory military education.

Trained reserve is completed on compulsory basis in accordance with the legislation.

As for the current situation of the National Army, regular troops are generally formed, completed, equipped and trained. The forces have normal living and activity conditions. The battle training is planned. The moral state and physical training of troops is satisfactory. The legislative and normative basis for army's ordinary functioning exists and develops. The gradual conversion to forces completion on contract basis is carried on.

The National Army is formed of three motorized infantry brigades, artillery brigade, anti-aircraft defense brigade, mixed air craft brigade, other independent divisions and subdivisions and military institutions.

Altogether, regular troops consist of about 10.000 military persons.

Troops are completed with officers and sergeants by about 70%, with soldiers - by 95%.

The command staff has good training at academies and military schools of the former USSR. Now army officers are trained in Greece, France, USA, Romania, Germany.

The National Army is practically completely equipped with anti-tank units, anti-aircraft units, light arms, artillery aircraft's with auto- and special equipment; at the same time, with armored units - by 50% and no tanks at all.

The situation in the field of reserve is more difficult. Now practically we do not have armament and equipment to ensure the reserve.

On 10 January 1994, in Brussels, the heads of states and governments that participated at the session of the North-Atlantic Union, have unanimously approved and signed the program "Partnership for Peace" (P.f.P.). All the East Europe countries have practically expressed their solidarity with NATO, confirming their wish to adhere to this Program.

The Republic of Moldova has signed the Document framework on 16 March 1994 and became the 12th country that adhered to the Program. At the Document signing ceremony the President of the Republic of Moldova has mentioned: "The Republic of Moldova pays special attention to the mechanism of security consultation stipulated by P.f.P., especially in the case when a participating state considers, it perceives direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence and national security. More than this, these principles are now jeopardized by the presence on our territory of foreign military troops that, in our point of view, represents the main obstacle to find the definitive political solution of the conflict from east regions of Moldova.

We are interested to effectively participate at this Program having the certainty that it shall grant us favorable possibilities to set up a professional modern army in conformity with international requirements, standards and democratic principles.

On short and medium term, the P.f.P. has contributed to the maintenance and consolidation of stability in the zone, although the zone is still marked with conflict situations and risk factors.

Even if the P.f.P. does not grant explicit and immediate security guarantees, the clause set in p.8 of the Document-framework on Consultancy with Alliance in case of a direct threat perception against participating states, it has distinct significance for the Republic of Moldova.

P.f.P. has contributed to an intense interaction between political and business circles of partner states by enhancing trust to each other, as a result of which the transition period may be shortened, by granting assistance and encouragement to overpass numerous obstacles faced by countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

Among constitutive elements of P.f.P. political dimension with implications on national security of the Republic of Moldova are those that refer to the obligation of all states members of the Alliance and states that adhere to partnership to observe the principles of international law and those stipulated in different documents of international and European significance. This aspect is extremely important, especially regarding the abstention to use force or threat of force use, the observance of current frontiers, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the fulfillment of liabilities and obligations assumed in the field of disarmament and armies control.

The adherence to P.f.P. of all states neighboring to the Republic of Moldova and the assumption by them of the obligation to observe its principles, is to grant certain indirect guarantees of the national security consolidation.

The introduction document of the Republic of Moldova has been submitted to NATO Headquarters on 10 September 1994. In a month the document has been approved by NATO.

On 25 January 1995, on the basis of the Introduction Document, the draft of the Partnership Individual Program of the Republic of Moldova with NATO has been worked out.

On 25 May 1995 the Supreme Council of Security of the Republic of Moldova has approved the Partnership Individual Program; on 25 October 1995 the Program has been adopted by NATO.

The Partnership Individual Program is amended on an annual basis.

Pursuant to the Partnership Individual Program (PIP), the priority directions of Moldova's collaboration within P.f.P. are as follows: control on armament and disarmament, civil protection, prevention and settlement of crisis situations, planning and joint implementation of peacekeeping operations, staff training and other military activity aspects.

Pursuant to PIP, Moldova assumes the following obligations:

- to prepare a subdivision for peacekeeping operations under UN aegis;
- to provide military-medical staff for peacekeeping operations;
- to provide M=rcule[ti airport for planes landing and parking pursuant to P.f.P. actions, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance operations;
- to provide the training center "Bulboaca" for training and tactic manoeuvres within P.f.P.;
- to provide a cargo-aircraft and two transport helicopters for activity within P.f.P..

With the view to coonating the activity within Partnership, the Ministry of Defence has nominated a messenger officer at the Coordination Unit by the Headquarters of NATO Armed Forces in Europe with the venue in Mons (Belgium).

The Republic of Moldova considers also the P.f.P. as an instrument to encourage investments, business and economic development. In fact, thoughts about "Partnership for Prosperity" simultaneous with P.f.P. are not accidental. Within this context reference is made to the necessity of an economic partnership; the concept of its feasibility should have surpassed the limits of the European continent and

gradually spread over at international level. Partnership for Prosperity is surely a concept that should be developed and that has big chances in the future.

The program implementation presupposes expenditures, that is why the participation of the Republic of Moldova in 1995 was limited, due to financial reasons, to three activities.

During the visit to Warsaw (June 1994), the President of the USA Clinton made the suggestion to allocate financial assistance to countries-partners with the view to supporting their participation in P.f.P. ("Warsaw Initiative").

Following this initiative the Republic of Moldova has benefited in 1996 of about 1 mln USD.

Due to this, Moldova's participation in the implementation of the Partnership Program in 1996 registered a qualitative leap. The National Army participated at 63 activities within P.f.P. (seminars, courses, training).

Moldovan military men participated at 15 military training operations within peacekeeping exercises. Subdivisions of motorised infantry participated at operations "Peace Shield" (Ukraine), "Cooperative determination" (Bulgaria), "Cooperative Osprey" (USA), "Cooperative Best Effort" (Czechia), 3 aircrafts (one AN 72 aircraft and two MI 8 helicopters) have participated at "Cooperative Key" (Romania).

Altogether 163 military men of the National Army, including 47 officers, 116 sergeants and soldiers, have taken part at the above mentioned operations.

In 1997 the National Army representatives are provided to take part with the USA government support at 86 Program activities, including "Cooperative Nugget" (USA), "Cooperative best Effort" (Latonia), "Cooperative Neighbour" (Ukraine) - with infantry subdivisions, and at "Cooperative Key" (Slovakia) - with three aircrafts.

An important part of Moldova's military policy is the development of bilateral relationship of collaboration between the National Army and armed forces of other countries. Within this context, first of all, relationship with the Russian Federation, especially the conclusion of agreements on withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of the republic, with Romania and Ukraine stand out. Second, an intensive activity has been developed with the view to fulfilling international obligations Moldova assumed following the adherence to acts on armament control - Pact on European Conventional Armed Forces (ratified by the Parliament of Moldova on 3 July 1992) and Vienna Document from June 1993.

Considering the necessity to set up military relationship with neighbouring countries, in December 1992 the Republic of Moldova signed the first bilateral agreement of collaboration with Romania; in a time, on the basis of this agreement, the Protocol on collaboration in military education was signed. In 1992-1993 Moldova was visited by ministers of defence from Romania, Ukraine and Belorussia; mutual visits of experts groups were paid. During this period the country has set contacts with the USA, France, Greece. The USA grants assistance for staff training within IMET Program.

Bilateral military relations extended in 1994 when Turkey and Bulgaria became partners of collaboration.

Military relations with the USA play an important role in Moldova's cooperation. This relationship got proportion following the signing in Washington by the ministers of defence of the both states of the Memorandum on cooperation in the field of defence and military operations (4 December 1995).

Raising the issues of state military security and realistically evaluating the results achieved in the consolidation of stability of the Republic of Moldova, the decisions previously approved on the unique defence system, on national armed forces, on formation and consolidation of the National Army are fully justified. The Armed Forces were and continue to be the main factor to discourage threatening of national interests, to set and keep equal rights interstate relationship. The current and future political and military situation within which the Republic of Moldova exists does not leave space for doubts in this regard.

As part and basis of the united system of state military security, the National Army continues to be the guarantor of the Republic of Moldova permanent neutrality. This task is similar to missions of armies of states with traditional neutrality, to armies kept and developed with the view to ensuring the internal and external security of these states.

**THE DISMISSAL OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE,
THE CRISIS AROUND IT IN 1996
AND THE PERSPECTIVES OF MOLDOVAN ARMED FORCES REFORMATION**

The title of this chapter has been brought up from Moldovan newspapers issued in the last year. Deterioration in the relations between the Minister of Defense Gen. Pavel Creanga and the President of Moldova Mircea Snegur when the last wanted to dismiss the first, led the country to the lengthy political crisis (since March to November 1996), which attracted the attention of foreign observers and mass-media to the possible consequences of this so-called "made-home cold war". In position of actors in this play appear practically all the branches of power, which are widely elucidated by the "Forth Power" - mass-media.

After the collapse of the Soviet empire, Mircea Snegur and other former Communist leaders have united in the Democrat-Agrarian Party to reorganize the state budget and to strongly privatize the centralized economy. Agrarians sought also to clarify the dispute between Moldovans, whose language and culture are identical with the ones of neighbouring Romania and groups of ethnic minorities.

In July 1995 Snegur disintegrated the consensus policy between high rank leaders of the state, broke apart from Agrarians and formed his own party. Vladimir Socor from "Jamestown Foundation" from Washington, that is considered expert in Moldovan matters said Snegur faded away from the Agrarian Party because he considered the latter might nominate another person and not support him during re-elections. At the same time Snegur noted that one of the main reason of his decision was to modify the Constitution from 1994 so that the power be transmitted from Parliament and Prime Vice Minister to the State President. Western analysts found in this an analogy between current restriction of Snegur mandate and the mandate of Italy President, so, as a matter of fact, it is only a ceremonial function.

Setting up the Party of Revival and Conciliation, Snegur has practically deprived the Agrarians from the political majority and weakened their capacity to follow reformist initiatives.

On 14 March 1996, President Snegur, Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces, convoked the minister of defense Gen. Creanga and required his resignation. Snegur motivation of this demand provided that Creanga "has not taken sufficient measures to ensure the integrity of the National Army patrimony, has inefficiently used budgetary financial means and has overpass the age of military service". The second day, on Friday, Gen. Creanga holds at the Ministry of Defense a press conference at which repeats the president arguments and invokes the real reason of attempts to dismiss him: "his refuse to political forces around the President to imply the army in political games". In the same day, Mircea Snegur issues a decree pursuant to which Gen. Creanga is dismissed from office and Gen. Tudor Dabija-Kazarov is named deputy minister of defense. Gen. Creanga refuses to obey the decree, considering it anti-constitutional, as the document is not counter-signed, as the Constitution stipulates, by the Prime Minister Andrei Sangheli, that, in his turn, comes to the Ministry of Defense showing his assertion of Creanga position. These flashing events caused a situation, evaluated by many analysts as "coup d'etat attempt"; the conduct of the "two ministers of defense" was strongly followed by the mass-media.

On Saturday, 16 March, till late at night, the Parliament has discussed at a closed session the legality of the presidential decree, while "minister #2" Dabija-Kazarov made unsuccessful attempts to take over the command of large divisions of the National Army. The bodies of the Ministry of Defense and of the Headquarters of Armed Forces divided into two approximately equal groups, that lead to the right supposition that "the country is one step from civil war". After hot debates, the members of Parliament decided to establish a moratoria on the execution of the presidential decree up to the final decision of the Constitutional Court.

The decision of the Constitutional Court from 4 April 1996 was in the detriment of President Snegur: the decree was declared non-constitutional and Gen. Creanga remained the "only one" minister of defense. At the same time, other orders issued by Snegur as Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces deprived Gen. Creanga of many rights, and introduced a kind of "direct commandment" of the National Army.

The style of this struggle for power has dominated during the campaign of presidential elections, won on 1 December 1996 by the counter-candidate of Snegur, the Speaker of the Parliament Petru Lucinschi. During the electoral campaign the pro-Snegur mass-media has launched a number of tough critics against Gen. Creanga, in the majority of cases indefeasible, as no confirmation was found neither during countless controls of arbitrage bodies, nor in judicial entities; yet, it made the public to seriously change the opinion about the National Army. Still, despite Snegur councilors declarations that the President actions would have the West support, influence publications from Washington "The Washington Post" and "the Jamestown Monitor", the British, French and German press published more objective material in which accused Snegur for anti-democratic actions.

Following the inauguration ceremony of the new President on 15 January 1997 and the formation on 26 January of the new Government headed by Ion Ciubuc, Valeriu Pasat, former Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova in the Russian Federation is named Civil Minister of Defense. Launching his pre-

electoral Program, President Lucinschi conveyed the idea of necessity to implement serious reforms of Armed Forces and set with this purpose a state Commission to elaborate the Concept of Armed Forces reform. President Lucinschi reform path is supported and actively promoted by the new minister of defense, the only one civil minister in the CIS region at the moment. According to him, the setting up and the development of the military construction on the whole is impossible within the limits of Armed Forces reform simply because these ones present only one element of the national defense system that needs modifications. Pasat considers the reform should cover also other component parts: the system of management entities that ensures military security and contributes to its maintenance; the system of material resources accumulation and economy preparation for mobilization; the territorial infrastructure. These very elements of the military defense system requires a special attention due to their current imperfections.

Thus, the promoters of the military reform conceived it as a complex of measures aimed to modifying the whole national system of defense taking into account geo-political, socio-political and economic realities.

On the other hand, there is the problem, common in a number of ex-Soviet republics, of the public opinion of the armed forces. Currently, there is common consent in Moldovan society that the republic does not need any sort of defense force, and security can be ensured by units under the command of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and by the border patrol service. this negative perception of defense can be explained by economic difficulties, by other pressing strategy. These are considered to be understandable and acceptable reasons for the majority of the citizens.

The population, educated in the spirit of military super-power is still suspicious of the feasibility of an efficient national defense system in a small country. At the same time, new politicians rarely show the wish and capacity to create a defense system based on their perception of the new threats, and adjusted to the needs to counter them. Political consensus in these matters, public support and willingness of citizens to make a long term effort in the creation of an effective defense and security system, are of vital importance to former communist countries and especially for the new independent states.

In this context, civil-military relations can be significantly improved by an open discussion in society, centered on how Moldova can defend itself in the new strategic environment and identified threats using small resources but dynamic and mobile armed forces.

In Moldova, like in other Soviet republics, the security concept is no longer a dogma, and remains open for discussion in society. This context allows politicians, government officials, military personnel and media to use a positive and constructive approach to the basis principles of the national security concept. They can use common attitudes and opinions on the important problems of society and so to ensure its further development.

To this extent, the security concept, being a national message sent to internal and external audience, has to be a product of consensus from political players above narrow politics. The common strategy course and understanding of security needs, and perspectives set above corporate interests should contribute to reach stable, mutual confidence between civil and political on one side and the military on the other.

CONCLUSIONS

For 40 years, Soviet and Warsaw Pact military organizations reflected not their own national historical and cultural background but an ideologically driven system which kept socialist countries in a permanent semi-mobilized state. In military terms, this was doubtless the most effective system but it contributed to the destruction of the socialist countries' national economy.

This artificial situation has now been ended, yet, it has left the painful task of realignment. The army has to get used to the idea that its entire basis for operation and even existence have been fundamentally changed. In the meantime, society has to understand that it has to build up and nourish a new kind of army.

In evaluation of Chris Donnelley, NATO Special Adviser for Central and East European Affairs, no post-communist countries has yet achieved a totally satisfactory degree of democratic control and good civil-military relations. In all cases, as societies transform, their armies lag behind. Moreover, in many countries, this gap is getting bigger. It has become clear that this is a long-term and complex problem that shall be difficult to solve ("Defense Transformation in the New Democracies: A Framework for Tackling the Problem", NATO Review, #1, January 1997).

In the countries with established democratic system, the armed forces represent a stable element and source of order. In the post-totalitarian societies, especially in those which continue to be dominated by political radicalism, intolerance and rivalry, the military may yet become involved in the internal political process and used by political parties or grouping to enforce their dominance. The possible restoration of an authoritarian regime in one or more of the CEE countries depends on an entire range of factors of economic, social, cultural and historical nature and on the level of development of democratic institutions and constitutional arrangements.

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