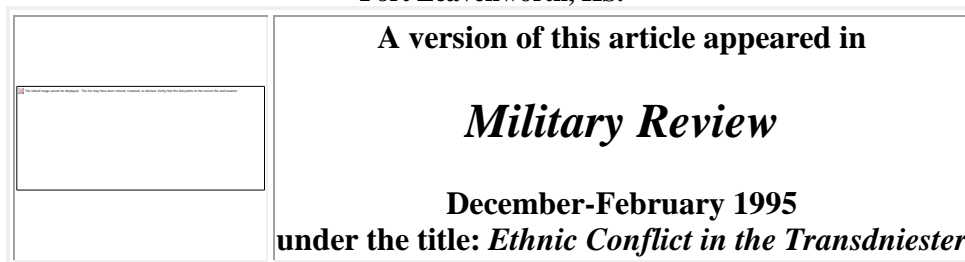

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TERRITORIAL DIMENSIONS OF ETHNIC CONFLICT: THE MOLDOVAN CASE

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Daily you hear or read about armed conflicts occurring or new hostilities breaking out in areas of the former Soviet Union. Soviet newspapers and television carry regular reports of these conflicts. One of those regularly interviewed is Lieutenant General Alexandr Lebed, the commander of the Russian 14th Army in Moldova ¹ and an outspoken advocate of decisive action to support Russian interests in that region. The failed Soviet Empire is a region of diverse nationalities possessing different backgrounds, religions, customs and traditions, which has been pulled apart by complex inter-ethnic disputes. Lebed and his Army are symptomatic of this problem. Although introduction of democratic institutions, thoughts and practices has produced some positive changes, in fact, the very pace of this reform, in some measure, has contributed to turmoil and strife that threatens the stability of this huge and critically important region.

One aspect of this complex problem is the resolution of border conflicts among the new states created when the former Soviet Union dissolved. There are numerous regions in the former Soviet Union and areas surrounding it where borders were drawn for a number of arbitrary--but carefully calculated--reasons. Now there are attempts underway to redress this situation and pressure is mounting, coming from those living there, for immediate, positive change.

This paper focuses on the situation in Moldova where tensions have caused war to break out between the armies of the Moldovan Republic and the combined armies of the self-proclaimed "Dniester Republic" and Russia. Recent statements by General Lebed, whose troops reportedly have the mission to "restore order and protect the lives of Russian citizens," indicate that direct military intervention to replace "Dniester Republic" president Igor Smirnov's government may be on the horizon. Lebed has accused Smirnov and the other leaders of the "Republic" of being corrupt and therefore not worthy of the power entrusted to them. Nezavisimaya gazeta recently

reported that Lebed told governmental leaders he was "sick and tired of guarding the sleep and safety of crooks."² This seems to indicate that the "ante has been upped" in this area, that bad may soon turn to worse, and that Russian involvement in this crisis may be greater rather than less in the near future. Amidst calls for its removal, Lebed claims that it will take at least 10-15 years to pull the Russian 14th Army out of Moldova and says further that approximately 60% of the army's officers have apartments with modern conveniences in the region which they will be reluctant to leave.³

The problem in this region, which seems difficult for the people of the former Soviet Union to understand, is why the population cannot realize immediately the good things democracy supposedly "promised." The key problem is defining the role of national self-determination and how it works against the rights of democratic citizenship in multi-ethnic states. Populations in the West recognize that democratic institutions and practices do not develop overnight since there is always a degree of sacrifice incurred with every gain. Many citizens of the former Soviet Union, however, argue that "Westerners have been encouraging us to accept their system for years. Now that we have done so, do not expect us to wait patiently for another ten or twenty years to enjoy the benefits you said would follow. We have been suffering for the past 75 years. Now it is our turn to have 'our way' and receive the reward 'you promised'."

But there are more difficult challenges. Recent assessments of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) problems postulate that future relations among its component states will develop along three lines: as allies (Belarus-Russia); rivals (Ukraine-Russia); or adversaries (Armenia-Azerbaijan).⁴ Events in Moldova, the former Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldavia located on the border between Ukraine and Romania and northwest of the Black Sea, have shown that such a simplistic view can be misleading. In the Moldovan case, we see that rivals can soon become adversaries, as is illustrated by the relationship between Russia and Ukraine over the issue of the "Dniester Republic." Moreover, the initiative for turning political, ethno-national crises into armed confrontation may not rest in the hands of major state governments. It may instead be seized by para-military groups struggling for power on the periphery.

It is clear that this topic is of preeminent and immediate importance, for unless the West becomes more sensitive to it and more effective in dealing with it, civil, regional, and perhaps, global war may result.

ORIGINS OF THE DNIESTER CONFLICT AND CIVIL WAR

The roots of this current crisis along the Dniester River run deep. The immediate cause, however, can be traced to the Moldovan proclamation of sovereignty and independence in 1991. The Moldovanization of national life, i.e., replacement of Russian as the dominant language, and de-Sovietization aroused some fear among the Slavic [Russian/Ukrainian] minority within Moldova. This population, which formed a majority within the Trans-Dniester region [see Figure 1]⁵, was also fearful of ethnic ties of the majority of the Moldovan population to Romania and agitation by some nationalists in Romania and Moldova for eventual union of the two states. All the developments described above raised fears of a loss of national identity, social status, and economic security. In response to these fears, Slavic nationalists called for creation of the "Dniester Republic" and proclaimed their independence from Moldova, even as the other states

of the former Soviet Union sought to keep the lid on the Pandora's box of massive nationalistic independence movements and further frontier changes. Igor Smirnov, the President of this newly-proclaimed Republic, explained the move this way:

This was the legitimate consequence of the spreading nationalism on the territory of the former Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic. In our view, individual rights have priority. However, national rights are given priority over anything else in Moldova. Considering the national composition of the population living beyond the Dniester River, this controversy would have led to the current conflict sooner or later. At the very beginning, the Dniester area parliamentary deputies proposed the creation of a free economic zone in this area. They called us secessionists and accused us of trying to dismember Moldova, this 'Ancient Romanian land.' Later, we proposed the creation of autonomy here. Why? Because in the euphoria following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Moldovan parliament adopted laws that discriminated against some of their population. On top of it, they also declared the need to create Greater Romania. Naturally, all this alarms our population, because the area beyond the Dniester River has never been a Romanian land. We recognized the right of nations to self-determination, but a referendum should be held on issues of independence or unification with other countries. I am convinced that most Moldovans would oppose a union with Romania. [6](#)

At question was, and still is, the legal right of Russians, or any other minority outside the borders of the Russian Republic, to declare their independence and virtually form a sovereign state. Russia's ultimate conduct will represent an extremely important preview of possible future Russian relations with other states which also have large Russian minorities (for instance, Kazakhstan and Ukraine). It may also be the catalyst that initiates future formation of security blocs either within or outside the CIS. Thus, its importance must not be underestimated.

The Moldovan Republic's problem consists primarily of three issues: resolving Romanian claims to Moldovan territory taken by Stalin from Romania during World War II; resolving Ukrainian claims to Moldovan territory which they say legally belongs to Ukraine; and pacifying a Russian army and a Russian/Slavic population that resided on the eastern side of the Dniester and which at the end of World War II found itself incorporated into Moldavia and not Ukraine.



Figure 1 - Moldovan, Dniester and Gagauz Republics

Since the 19th Century, when Russian armies liberated it from Turkish control, Bessarabia had been part of the Russian Empire. During the Russian Civil War, (1919-1922), the territory that is currently Moldova (also called Bessarabia) was seized and annexed by Romania. On Stalin's orders, the territory west of the Dniester River was "liberated" from Romanian occupation in the summer of 1940 and arbitrarily declared to be the Soviet Republic of "Moldavia" without organizing elections. When Romania later joined Nazi Germany in the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union, it was with the express purpose of seizing these territories and expanding Romanian control to include Odessa and all territories east of the Dniester. When the Red Army again liberated these areas in 1944, Stalin chose to re-subordinate the Trans-Dniester territories of the Ukraine to Moldavia to strengthen Russian/Slavic influence in the region.

Today, in the wake of Moldova's newly-declared independence, Romania has stated that "the addition of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR in 1940 amounted to occupation and an undisguised act of aggression." Romania has been somewhat cautious about recommending

reunification with Moldova, however, fearing that it may upset Romanian-Russian relations and set a precedent for Hungary to declare that Transylvania is part of its territory and should be returned.

After World War I, Bessarabia was incorporated into a greatly expanded Romanian state. In 1940 Stalin, under the terms of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, claimed and invaded Moldavia and Bukovina. The Soviets explained why they "liberated" both Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina in an August 1991 article in *Military Thought* stating, "historical facts and documents indicate that the Bessarabian question arose not in 1940, but in 1918, when Romania occupied Bessarabia, which had been part of Russia back since 1812, i.e., several decades before the formation of the Romanian state." In addition, they argued, the aggression was committed not by the USSR, but by the Kingdom of Romania, which had invaded the territory of Bessarabia in 1918, stifled Soviet authority with the help of the local bourgeoisie and the Entente, and annexed it. The very same situation occurred, the Soviets argued, in Northern Bukovina, whose population, following the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, expressed itself on 3 November 1918 at the Bukovina Popular Assembly as being in favor of reunification with Soviet Ukraine.⁷ Thus, the historical controversy over possession of Moldova persists today.

The most contentious issue affecting Moldovan-Russian conflict is the population. According to Soviet Census figures, more than half of Moldova's population is Moldavian.⁸ The remainder is mainly Russian and Ukrainian. Tensions are particularly high on the east bank of the Dniester River, where the Russians and Moldovans directly clash and where even Ukrainian expatriates have protested against "Russification."⁹ The 1989 census revealed that of 3.3 million Moldavians living in the USSR, 83% lived in the Moldavian Republic. Of 4.3 million inhabitants of the Moldavian Republic, 2.8 million or 64% were Moldavians, 14% were Ukrainians and 13% were Russians.¹⁰ The other 9% are from the Gagauz nationality and other minority groups. According to Ukrainian sources, some 250,000 Ukrainians live in the Dniester region.¹¹

MATURATION OF THE CONFLICT (MARCH-AUGUST 1992)

Events of the final few months of 1992, in particular armed clashes between Moldovan police and "Dniester irregulars" and the seizures of arms from military arsenals, have raised the prospect that communal violence may turn into civil war. Since December 1991 it has been difficult to determine the loyalties of the Russian 14th Army. The 14th Army commander has announced his intention to become Commander of the Armed Forces of the "Dniester Republic" and to transform 14th Army into the nucleus of that state's armed forces. In addition, paramilitary forces in the region have grown with the arrival of Slavic volunteers and "Cossacks" from the Don region.

Fighting escalated in mid-March 1992 when "Dniester Republic Guards" and "Don Cossacks" attacked Moldovan police units in three villages in Dubosari region [rayon] in an attempt to eliminate the last remaining Moldovan police presence on the left bank of the Dniester.¹² Russian forces also blew up two highway bridges over the river. The death toll was estimated to be six "Dniester" guardsmen and three Moldovan policemen, with a score of injured on both sides. The government in Tiraspol, the capital of the "Dniester Republic," however, claimed that

the government in Chisinau [Kishinev], the capital of Moldova under-counted the Moldovan dead. ¹³

The "Dniester Republic's" Russian and Cossack forces deployed a substantial force of infantry combat vehicles (BMPs) for the first time in these clashes and six BM-21 "Grad" multiple rocket-launching systems, one of which was captured by Moldovan police. Raiding a military depot near Tiraspol, in obvious collusion with garrison personnel who guided them through a mine field protecting the depot, Dniester guardsmen and Cossacks carted away 1,100 Kalashnikov assault rifles along with 1.5 million cartridges, 1,300 grenade and mortar rounds, and 30 portable rocket launchers in military trucks. ¹⁴

Reaction to the fighting came rapidly. On 15 March the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry issued a statement expressing concern about the involvement of "Cossack" volunteers from the Don region in the armed conflict in Moldova. The statement described Cossacks fighting on the side of the "Dniester Republic" as "mercenaries," whose involvement violated international legal norms. The following day, the Foreign Ministry called for a cease-fire in the Moldovan conflict over the "Dniester Republic" and offered to mediate, adding that refugees were crossing into Ukraine. Warning both sides not to violate its border, it said it would take steps to protect its frontier. Within a week the number of refugees who had fled to Ukraine numbered 3,000. ¹⁵

On 16 March representatives from the large indigenous Ukrainian population living in the self-proclaimed "Dniester Republic" appealed to the Ukrainian Supreme Council and to Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk to help prevent conflict in their region from spreading. Heavy fighting continued with the initiative in the hands of the "Dniester" volunteers. Moldovan police were no match for the attackers' firepower, logistics, and military professionalism. At the same time, mass demonstrations in Chisinau (Kishinev) demanded arms and criticized Moldovan President Mircea Snegur and his government for not declaring a general mobilization. The same day, Snegur announced a unilateral cease fire to go into effect at 0700 on 18 March and asked Dniester" forces to honor it. Kravchuk responded to the crisis by imposing a special regime in a 50-km zone along the Moldovan-Ukrainian border to prevent infiltration of arms and armed troops. ¹⁶

This temporary cease fire did not end the conflict. Rumors and protests multiplied, especially as it became more evident that Russia was supporting the "Dniester Republic." On 18 March the Moldovan government protested the Russian State Bank's decision to open accounts in the self-proclaimed "State Bank of the Dniester Republic." ¹⁷ On 24 March the Moldovan parliament described the 20 March appeal from the Russian parliament on the conflict in the Dniester region as an "unfriendly act" and blamed it for interfering in the "internal affairs of another state." ¹⁸

At the Helsinki Foreign Ministers' conference, Moldova protested the activities of insurgent forces operating on the left bank of the Dniester River. They were supported by the Romanian government which issued a statement condemning these activities. ¹⁹ On 24 March, following the CSCE meeting in Helsinki, the foreign ministers of Romania, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine issued a joint statement saying they would continue their efforts to resolve the conflict in Moldova and announced that they planned to meet again in April. ²⁰

None of these diplomatic moves put an end to the fighting, which in the last week of March escalated from sporadic raids into planned acts of sabotage and large-scale fighting. On 26 March Igor Smirnov, President of the "Dniester Republic," signed a decree ordering partial mobilization of men up to the age of 45. Smirnov justified the action on the grounds that the Moldovan government was "actively preparing for combat operations" and cited as evidence Moldovan seizure of armaments and materiel from CIS military units stationed in Moldova, mobilization of men liable to call-up, and terrorist acts. ²¹ In response to escalating violence, on 29 March Snegur declared a state of emergency throughout the Moldovan Republic and called on separatists of the "Dniester Republic" to surrender their arms and acknowledge the Moldovan government's authority. He also ordered Moldova's security forces to "liquidate and disarm the illegitimate armed formations" which were backing the Dniester "pseudo-state." The leadership of the "Dniester Republic" responded with a call to arms and appealed to Russia for protection. ²²

Ukrainian, Moldovan, Russian, and Romanian responses to the threat of open warfare between Moldova and forces of the self-proclaimed "Dniester Republic" reflect the rising tide of ethno-nationalist tensions which has set off an entire series of conflicts in the lands of the former Soviet Union. They also make clear how these local conflicts are interconnected, how they relate to what appears to be a deeper-seated competition between Russia and Ukraine, and raise the prospect of escalation along horizontal lines. The perspectives of the main actors shed considerable light on potential dynamics of the conflict.

The fighting that erupted in Moldova on 2 April 1992 grew out of weeks of escalating violence. On 29 March President Snegur declared a state of emergency throughout Moldova, calling on separatists of the "Dniester Republic" to surrender their arms and acknowledge the authority of the Moldovan government. He ordered Moldova's security forces to "liquidate and disarm the illegitimate armed formations" which were backing the Dniester "pseudo-state." ²³ Snegur told parliament on 31 March that the time for negotiations between the two sides had run out, and that it had become apparent that the leaders of the "Dniester Republic" were not interested in resolving the conflict in a peaceful manner. ²⁴

Each side called upon the other to back down but prepared for the worst. On 30 March, Snegur warned that his government would take "all the necessary measures" to restore its authority in the breakaway "Dniester Republic" and threatened to take back an offer to grant the region the status of a "free economic zone." The leader of the "Dniester Republic," Igor Smirnov, stated on the same day that his supporters would do everything possible to protect their region, to include turning part of the area's industry over to military production. There were also reports of more sporadic violence and a number of new casualties. ²⁵

The "Dniester Republic" leadership responded with a call to arms and appealed to Russia for protection. ²⁶ The Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement calling on Moldovan authorities and all parties concerned to act strictly in accordance with the norms of international law, legality, and respect for the rights of individuals and ethnic minorities. ²⁷

Within 48 hours, however, Boris Yeltsin, the Russian President, took more drastic steps, signing a decree on 1 April that placed the 14th Army and several other units deployed in Moldova under Russian jurisdiction. The report said all troops in Moldova had been subordinated to the CIS

Commander-in-Chief and that Colonel General Vladimir Semenov, then commander of CIS Ground Forces and now commander of the Ground Forces of the newly-formed Russian National Army, had been named Russia's representative for all Russian troops in the area. ²⁸ A Moldovan Deputy Defense Minister immediately labeled the decree illegal, stressing that all forces in Moldova, except those on the left bank of the Dniester, have been placed under the legal jurisdiction of Moldova. ²⁹

Subordinating these troops to Yeltsin's control permitted him to use that part of the armed force that is Russian and perhaps even obtain military cooperation from several other states. Statements by leading officials implied that Yeltsin was considering use of force. Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, for example, was quoted by ITAR-TASS on 1 April as saying that Russia "will be protecting the rights of Russians in other states of the CIS. This is top priority. We shall be protecting their rights firmly and will be using powerful methods if needed." ³⁰

Ukraine's reaction was swift and strong. On 29 March, the Presidium of the Ukrainian Supreme Council issued a statement warning that escalation of the Moldovan conflict could have dangerous consequences for the republic's neighbors, especially Ukraine. That same day, the head of the Ukrainian parliamentary commission on external affairs, Dmytro Pavlychko, who had just returned from Moldova, told Radio Ukraine that Ukraine considered the existing border with Moldova as inviolable. ³¹

Experts from the ministries of foreign affairs of Moldova, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine gathered in Chisinau on 31 March to discuss a solution to the "Dniester" conflict. The participants were quoted as saying before the meeting opened that they would be guided by the Helsinki agreements on the stability of borders and would seek peaceful resolution while preserving Moldova's integrity. These talks continued on 1 April. ³² They did not, however, lead to a breakthrough and appear to have achieved little in the way of resolving the conflict as the fighting continues. ³³ Special Moldovan MVD units attacked Bendery on 1 April, leaving at least ten people dead. The attack was described as one of the heaviest onslaughts on the breakaway "Dniester Republic" during that month and the possibility of another meeting being scheduled later that month [April] between the four countries was proposed. ³⁴

While there had been widespread rumors of Romanian arms reaching Moldova, a short communique from the Romanian Defense Ministry on 1 April rejected speculation in both the Russian and Romanian media about Romanian military involvement in this conflict. The note reiterated the defensive nature of the country's military position and promised to keep the concerned populations informed about any planned maneuvers. Patriarch Teoctist, the head of Romania's Orthodox Church, called on the Patriarch of Moscow and on the Metropolitan of Kiev to pray for a peaceful solution to the Moldovan conflict. ³⁵

Russian Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy addressed the opening session of the Russian Congress of People's Deputies on 6 April and urged lawmakers to take a stand on the question of sovereignty for the breakaway "Dniester Republic." In what was described as a strongly nationalistic speech, he argued that the Congress had to act to defend Russians throughout the former Soviet Union, maintaining that the self-proclaimed "Dniester Republic" did not want to

secede from Moldova, but instead was interested in a new federative structure. ³⁶ This statement is important and informative as this federative structure is the key to achieving a political solution. Ruskoy's statements during a spring visit to the Crimea resulted in a sharp reaction from Ukraine. Radio Ukraine reported on 6 April that Levko Lukyanenko, head of the Ukrainian Republican Party and a deputy to the national parliament, demanded that because of his statements and actions Ruskoy should be declared persona non grata in Ukraine and thus not be allowed to enter the country. A roundtable with representatives from various political groups in Kiev also raised the question of initiating criminal proceedings against the Russian vice-president [although the legal basis for such charges has not been clearly spelled out]. ³⁷

The officer who was then the commander of the Moldova-based 14th Army, Major General Yuri Netkachev, told Moldovapres on 6 April that his troops were ready to act as a buffer force in the region, but only with the consent of those states directly and indirectly involved in the conflict. His comments were echoed by Colonel General Boris Gromov, first deputy commander of CIS Ground Forces, during a Novosti broadcast on 6 April. Gromov, who also handled the withdrawal of CIS units from Nagorno-Karabakh, favored setting up UN-style CIS peacekeeping forces in the republic, and suggested that 14th Army might be used for that purpose. Meanwhile, Major General Nikolai Stolyarov, at that time an aide to the CIS high command and a Ruskoy ally who has since fallen from favor, said on 6 April that the 14th Army was in a difficult position, and called for a concerted CIS effort to bring about a political settlement. ³⁸

Moldovan President Mircea Snegur told a press conference in Chisinau on 7 April that statements by Ruskoy while visiting the breakaway "Dniester Republic" were "irresponsible." He added that he hoped the majority of Russian deputies did not share the position of Ruskoy and Yeltsin adviser, Sergei Stankevich. Snegur said that if Russia recognized the "Dniester Republic," it must also recognize Tatarstan and Chechenya, referring to the Russian Federation's own separatist-motivated nationalities, which Yeltsin has also been unable to control in their drive for autonomy and sovereignty. ³⁹ It should be noted, however, that this is neither Yeltsin's nor Ruskoy's position and will not likely be looked upon favorably.

The situation in Moldova thus continued to be very fluid and was filled with periods of tension separated by short periods of relative calm as the two (or more) sides attempted to sort out their interests and make attempts, however feeble, to resolve the conflict. On the other hand, it should also be noted that as this crisis deepened, on 9 May, the forces that previously belonged to the Confederation of Independent States (CIS), reverted to the control of the newly-formed Russian National Army, which created direct confrontation between Russian and Moldovan interests.

Additionally, more violations of the cease-fire were reported on 9, 10 and 11 May. As a result, 6 Moldovan policemen and 2 Russians died when the "Dniester rebels" attacked the bridgeheads over the Dniester River held by Moldovan police. ⁴⁰ President Snegur appealed through the UN Security Council for the world to intervene and stop Russian aggression in his country, which he claimed was causing Moldova's search for a political solution to the country's problems to fail. ⁴¹

A day or two later, Major-General Netkachev, 14th Army Commander, retracted his statement of 19 May, in which he said he had lost control of some of his troops. In a later interview on Russian TV, unidentified military spokesmen were quoted by the Washington Post as saying that

Russian "soldiers had been ordered out of the barracks to 'defend' Russian-speaking areas." ⁴² Controversy continued as the Russian authorities would not admit involvement of their troops in combat operations, while Moldovan authorities charged that Russian supporters of what they call the "Dniester insurgents" had attacked their troops. ⁴³

On 22 May, however, an unidentified Russian military spokesman "acknowledged that soldiers had been ordered out of the barracks to 'defend' Russian speaking areas." ⁴⁴ Meanwhile, on 25 May the U.S. State Department declared that it found reports of 14th Army involvement in Moldova disturbing and urged the proposed peace plan be put into effect. ⁴⁵

After a detachment of Russian Cossacks from the Don region landed at the Russian Army's airport at Tiraspol on 21 May, the Moldovan Ministry of Defense closed its air space, citing as justification Russian military violations. While banning all flights in and out of that airport and all overflights of the combat zone of the "Dniester," Moldova also appealed for UN help. ⁴⁶ The transport of Russian troops into Moldova had long been a point of contention, not only for the Moldovan government, but also for Ukraine, which viewed this activity as a means for the Russians to gain a foothold in the area.

In a more positive move, on 27 May, President Yeltsin told a Russian audience in Barnaul, Siberia, "not to worry that there will be a war. We are going to withdraw the 14th Army to Russian territory and will not let Russia be dragged into war." ⁴⁷ Yeltsin's comment was received skeptically in Moldova, where officials pointed out that he had failed to keep previous promises of non-interference. This interpretation appeared to be well founded when, on 27 May, General Pavel Grachev, Russia's Defense Minister, told press representatives, while receiving Moldova's permanent representative in Moscow, that the 14th Army "may be withdrawn following a special bilateral agreement, [but] only after the conflict in the area has been defused." ⁴⁸ Thus, he re-emphasized that the key to solution of the crisis was a negotiated settlement and not unilateral Russian disengagement. Like most other proposals, however, there was no indication of what each side specifically wanted or what they were willing to give up to get their way.

Signalling a further breakdown in "communications," it was reported that numerous attempts by President Snegur to reach President Yeltsin in the aftermath of the 18 May escalation of combat in the Dniester area were unsuccessful. None of the four cables or various others attempts to reach Yeltsin by telephone were acknowledged. In addition, the Russian Defense Ministry refused to answer a protest note from Moldova's Foreign Ministry over Russian involvement in the area, saying that 14th Army remained neutral and consequently the Defense Ministry has nothing for which to answer. ⁴⁹ Finally on 27 May, contradicting his Defense Ministry's statements, President Yeltsin acknowledged that some of Russia's 14th Army troops had joined the "Dniester Russian forces" but said they had done so on their own initiative and not on his orders. ⁵⁰

In June, Yeltsin offered to withdraw the 14th Army from Moldova, but his plan encountered heavy opposition from Russian military officials. They claimed that over half of the army's personnel were local inhabitants who wanted to defend their "homeland" and that even if this were not the case, there were no apartments in Russia for servicemen, should they be returned. ⁵¹ Moldovan President Snegur was cautiously optimistic about Yeltsin's announcement, but said he

thought "Russian hard-liners might block the withdrawal." ⁵² President Igor Smirnov of Trans Dniestria declared he was not especially concerned should the 14th Army be withdrawn, because with their ties to the area he expected its officers and soldiers to stay in the area and join the Dniester Armed Forces. ⁵³

Adding to this uncertainty over the withdrawal of the 14th Army, General Pavel Grachev, Russia's newly appointed Defense Minister, charged that "political mistakes made by Moldova's political leaders in the Dniester region had exacerbated the situation" and demanded that Moldovan President Snegur order a unilateral cease-fire. Grachev conspicuously failed to mention that several cease-fire agreements signed in the recent past had been violated by Dniester-based, Russian forces trying to eliminate Moldovan bridgeheads on the left bank of the river. ⁵⁴ He further warned Moldovan politicians that "should they initiate military action against the Dniester region and Russian 14th Army units, he would find it difficult to restrain the military units subordinated to him." He went on to reassure the Russian population living in Moldova that they had no need to worry as Russian forces would not leave them "in the lurch." ⁵⁵

To provide some sense of objectivity to the assessments of the situation and a more credible source of information, a Quadripartite Joint Group of Military Observers was set up. This group, working in Moldova, consisted of 25 officers each from Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Romania. For three consecutive weeks it concluded that nearly all violations of the cease-fire in eastern Moldova were the fault of Dniester forces. ⁵⁶

The purported remarks by Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev in the 7-8 June edition of the French newspaper, Le Monde, fueled the controversy. When asked if Moldova's Dniester area "would someday become part of Russia," Kozyrev said he "would not rule that out." He also recommended that Ukraine, Moldova, and the Baltic states accept the creation of certain "regions of their territories which would have a special status and "very close links, privileged links, with Russia." ⁵⁷

In another attempt to consolidate and give more structure to its government, the "Dniester Republic" then announced that it was forming its own army. At the Army's head was former deputy chief of staff of Russia's 14th Army, Colonel Stefan Kitsak, who had been promoted to Major General and appointed defense minister by "Dniester Republic" President Igor Smirnov. Kitsak, an ethnic Romanian native of Northern Bukovina, was a veteran Soviet paratroop officer who had participated in the invasions of Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Afghanistan. ⁵⁸

In a statement essentially agreeing with a previous comment made by Vice President Rutskoy, Evgenii Ambartsumov, Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet's Committee on International Affairs and a member of the Democratic Russia movement, commented to Russian TV on 22 June that "the Dniester was never part of Moldova." He went on to say that "if any national-territorial community wants to become part of the Russian Federation, it should not be denied the right." On their behalf, the Moldovans maintain that since the left bank of the Dniester had been legally a part of the Moldavian Autonomous SSR [which then was part of the Ukrainian SSR] in 1924, it should now be part of Moldova, Moldavia's "heir apparent." Ambartsumov also failed to point out that Russians were only the third largest ethnic group in the region, a fact which lent

credence to the Moldovan argument. He did seem to try to justify Russian actions by saying that in his opinion "we sometimes overrate the principle of the inviolability of borders," and that changing the borders of the newly independent states can be justified by both human rights considerations and "the general geopolitical interests of Russia." ⁵⁹

On 23 June Radio Ukraine reported a change in its position toward the Moldovan conflict. President Kravchuk called for the left bank of the Dniester to be given the status of an autonomous republic within Moldova. ⁶⁰ This was the first time Kiev had recognized or supported the "Dniester Republic's" calls for federalization of Moldova.

A Russian "government source" told a newspaper reporter on 24 June that "the order for 14th Army to engage Moldovan forces was given by the High Command in Moscow, although the aim was to make a show of force rather than to wage war." Commanders on the ground had admitted two days earlier that some of the 5,000 soldiers of the 14th Army stationed in the area of Bendery had participated in the May fighting, but said the "Army as a whole has not intervened yet." ⁶¹ They attempted to make clear that their troops participated in the fighting on their own initiative without orders from above, but said the actions were justified by existing circumstances. ⁶² Moldovan President Mircea Snegur responded by telling Moldovapres on 23 June that "our state is being destroyed by the Russian military, Cossacks, and mercenaries." He said, however, he "will not be frightened and will not bow [his] head to the Russian leadership's threats." ⁶³

A 42 year-old airborne forces commander, Major General Aleksandr Lebed, was then named to replace Major General Netkachev as commander of the Russian 14th Army in Moldova. Lebed had sided with Boris Yeltsin during the August 1991 coup attempt and had played a major role in the defense of the Russian "White House." After his appointment, Lebed said 14th Army would pursue a policy of "armed neutrality," meaning the Russian Army would not stand by and watch "as peaceful inhabitants are killed, wounded and maimed before our eyes." ⁶⁴ In his first news conference in Tiraspol on 1 July, Lebed reinforced his hard-line, calling the right-bank city of Bendery "an inalienable part of the 'Dniester Republic'" and said that the "'Dniester Republic' itself was just a small part of Russia." ⁶⁵

On 3 July President Yeltsin held talks with Moldovan President Snegur in the Kremlin in an attempt to defuse the conflict, and during the meeting they reportedly agreed in principle on a sequence of steps designed to settle it. The agreement included: implementing a cease-fire, creating a demarcation corridor between the forces, introducing "neutral" peacekeeping forces, granting a "political status" to the left bank of the Dniester by the Moldovan parliament, and ultimately, scheduling bilateral negotiations on withdrawing Russia's 14th Army. Yeltsin also agreed to resume deliveries of Russian goods to Moldova, which had been previously agreed to but had since been halted. Although these agreements were a step in the right direction, they failed to address more basic, broad and deep-seated differences between the two states. ⁶⁶

In what was to be a routine news conference on 4 July 1992, Major General Lebed generated considerable controversy when he criticized Yeltsin's policy of, what he termed, "going with an outstretched hand to the world's cabinets, instead of building up a great power capable of imposing its will," Moldovapres reported. He called for an end to "political blathering and

begging for aid around the world." Lebed said that President Snegur of Moldova was "negotiating with Yeltsin only in order to mislead public opinion, while in reality [he is] preparing for war." ⁶⁷ He charged that Snegur had "created a fascist state" and accused Moldova of "committing genocide on the border between Moldova and the 'Dniester Republic.'" ⁶⁸

In a 6 July Moscow meeting, the heads of state from the CIS agreed to create and deploy what they called a joint "peacemaking" force of between 2,000 and 10,000 soldiers to eastern Moldova within the next few weeks. This force, consisting of soldiers from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Romania and Bulgaria, would have the mission to enforce and monitor a cease-fire and keep the forces of both sides in the Dniester region separated. ⁶⁹

On 7 July Colonel General Vladimir Semenov, Chief of Ground Forces for the Russian Army, arrived in Moldova to sign a cease-fire with Moldovan First Deputy Minister of Defense, Pavel Creanga and "Dniester Republican Guard" commander, Stefan Kitsak. The cease-fire was to become effective at midnight on 8 July. ⁷⁰ Only a day later, at a 9 July meeting called to assess compliance with the cease-fire agreement, it was determined that Moldovan forces had complied completely with the cease-fire provisions, but "Dniester" forces had committed numerous violations. ⁷¹ The "Dniester Republic" Supreme Soviet then turned down an offer from the Moldovan government for four governmental seats for "Dniester" representatives, and instead, proposed that Russia and Ukraine assume duties as "protecting powers" to represent the "Dniester Republic." ⁷²

In yet another example of continuing intransigence by Dniester leaders, the chairman of the "Dniester Republic Supreme Soviet" told the Russian media that his nation's leaders "saw no point in negotiating with Chisinau over the political status of their area." Further, he stated that "the continuation of the war is the only real course in relation to Moldova." ⁷³

Despite continuing controversies, on 21 July a peace agreement was signed in Moscow by Presidents Yeltsin and Snegur. Igor Smirnov of the "Dniester Republic" was at the meeting, but did not sign, further either indicating that support for the plan was not shared unanimously by regional leaders or that his signing was opposed by Snegur since that would make Smirnov his (Snegur's) equal in the eyes of the world. ⁷⁴ Just after this agreement was signed, in a 31 July 1992 interview printed in Literaturnaya Rossiya, Major General Lebed fueled the controversy by criticizing the Moldovan government as being "criminal" and "fascist" and calling for a "Nuremberg trial." He said that his army was a "local" army and the "Dniester people have a right to this army." ⁷⁵

In early June, the "Dniester insurgents" proposed "remaking Moldova into a federation of 3 republics--Moldovan, 'Dniester,' and Gagauz," (a Turkic speaking Christian minority region--see Figure 1). Moldovan President Snegur immediately rejected the proposal, stating that "it lacks any ethnic, historic, or legal basis and would be unacceptable." He reiterated that Chisinau (Kishinev) had offered to negotiate some form of territorial autonomy, but something short of federalization. ⁷⁶ This proposal, in turn, was dismissed as unacceptable by the "Dniester government." On 13 and 14 August, the President of the "Dniester Republic" announced that the Republic intended to form its own army and at the same time Major General Lebed said his (14th

Russian) army would help create this new army. ⁷⁷ There was no immediate response from Moscow concerning Lebed's statement.

In a show of support for the insurgent "Dniester Republic," ultra-nationalist Russian politician Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, while on a trip to Germany, was quoted in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung as saying Moldova should be reduced "to the size of Liechtenstein" when the borders were readjusted in favor of Russia. In the same interview, he praised Major General Lebed as "a true patriot." The territorial views of these two controversial figures seemed to coincide since Lebed had been quoted as saying that Moldova should be reduced in size "by annexing areas on the right bank of the Dniester to the left-bank 'Dniester Republic.'" ⁷⁸

In late August, Russia again seemed to hasten progress toward resolving the crisis. On 26 August, General Pavel Grachev, Russian Defense Minister, signed an agreement with Major General Pavel Creanga, the Moldovan Defense Minister, on withdrawal of Russia's 300th Paratroop Regiment from central Chisinau. This regiment is a subordinate element of the 98th Guards Airborne Division that had for many years been headquartered in Bolgrad Ukraine. ⁷⁹ Shortly after, in a "formal slap on the wrist," Major General Lebed was given "additional written instructions" by General Grachev on "the impermissibility of making political statements." Grachev's instructions seemed to be linked to a Moldovan complaint over Lebed's public statement which was reported on 1 September saying that the Moldovan government was "criminal" and "fascist." ⁸⁰ In a news conference held on 26 August in Moscow, Moldova's ambassador to Russia said that Moldova fears "a situation on the Yugoslav model in which Moldova's eastern area would be cut off" from the rest of the country. He catalogued possible consequences for the rest of the country as a result of a chain reaction from the independence movement of the "Dniester Republic." ⁸¹

THE FALL INTERLUDE (SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 1992)

By early September, it seemed as if the Moldovan government was seeking to "soften the crisis" through compromise. On 2 September, in a rather contradictory revelation, Moldova's ambassador to Russia told Nezavisimaya Moldova that "unlike the Baltic States, Moldova does not insist on an immediate withdrawal of Russian troops and is prepared to reach agreement on the conditions of their temporary presence on Moldova's territory." These comments seemed to indicate increasing Moldovan concern over the economic consequences of taking too firm a stance on troop withdrawal while at the same time maintaining some sort of military balance. ⁸²

Casting a further shadow on the controversial support of the Cossacks for the insurgents in the "Dniester Republic," it was reported that anti-Semitic and "Red-Brown" sentiments "were widespread among the Russian Cossack volunteers." Other reports described these Cossacks as both "Bolshevized" and "Red-Brown" and still others said they were a combination of "Reds" and "Black Hundreds," ⁸³ further fueling fears of atrocities being committed on the Moldovan people. ⁸⁴

In spite of all the controversy surrounding him, Lebed the commander of the Russian 14th Army stationed in Moldova, was promoted to Lieutenant General on orders from President Boris

Yeltsin. This seemed to indicate that despite his highly antagonistic statements for which he had been officially warned, some sources in the Kremlin seem to favor his actions. ⁸⁵ Yeltsin may also have been trying to thwart nationalist opportunism in other of the former republics using the Moldovan example.

On 16 and 17 September, the second round of bilateral talks to decide the terms of the withdrawal of the Russian 14th Army from Moldova were held in Chisinau but "ended without any results." The Moldovan ambassador to Russia said future negotiations would be "lengthy and difficult," underscoring the continuing stalemate in discussions. ⁸⁶

Asked to speak out in support of the unification of Romania and Moldova, Romanian President Ion Iliescu said that "pro-unification propaganda [not further explained] in Romania has backfired in Moldova, and not just among the Russian-speakers, but among the Romanian Moldovans themselves. "During the last two years," he said, "one has witnessed there a movement away from unification. . . . The Moldovan people's reservations on the issue of unification have grown." Later, President Mircea Snegur of Moldova told visiting Hungarian journalists that, "Moldova's independence is the choice of its people and no one has the right to conduct a policy opposing that choice. . . . The existence of a Moldovan independent state is in the interest of all its neighbors, including Romania." ⁸⁷

On 2 October Colonel Stanislav Khazheev was appointed "Minister of Defense" of the "Dniester Republic" by President Igor Smirnov. Additionally, the age limit for serving officers was raised from 50 to 60 years. This permitted more veterans to join the approximately 35,000-strong insurgent forces and to enjoy full wages and benefits. ⁸⁸ It also provided a larger pool of veterans for future mobilization.

In a 15 October interview with Izvestiya, Russian Defense Minister, General Pavel Grachev, added to the uncertainty over 14th Army intentions, when he stated that "the withdrawal of the 14th Army from the Dniester area will only be possible when the conflict in the region is settled." He also noted that "14th Army units [were] manned by personnel from the region and that they would refuse to accept withdrawal unless the conflict was over." ⁸⁹ Moldovan President Snegur told a group of Russian journalists visiting Chisinau on 16 October that "Moldova will continue to resist its transformation into a 'federation of republics' and the creation of a 'Dniester Republic' with an army, security services, border guards, and other attributes of statehood. He reiterated, however, Moldova's willingness to grant the left bank of the Dniester self-government, with political, economic, and cultural autonomy, within an 'integral and indivisible' Moldova. ⁹⁰ This was yet another example of Moldova's unwillingness to recognize any insurgent attempt to formally divide its republic.

The Moldovan and Ukrainian presidents signed a "Treaty of Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation" on 23 October. This treaty was designed to safeguard the "rights of Moldovans in Ukraine and of Ukrainians in Moldova in accordance with internationally recognized standards; to expand cooperation in the fields of education and culture; to establish bilateral coordination of customs procedures and transit facilities across Moldova for Ukraine's western trade and across Ukraine for Moldova's eastern trade; and to prohibit the formation and transit of armed groups hostile to one of the sides on the territory of the other." ⁹¹ It signified further

formalization of relations between these two bordering states that helped benefit foreign trade and at the same time limited Russia's ability to move troops across Ukraine to support its forces in Moldova.

"Dniester Republic" President Igor Smirnov told reporters that he had notified Chisinau that "negotiations toward settlement of the conflict were conditional on Moldova's adherence to the CIS and the ruble zone." This seemed to represent the hard-line views of those who were trying to force the Moldovan government to comply fully with CIS requirements, with which it had only a loose association. That the Moldovan government accepted any association at all with the CIS was apparently motivated by the need for economic help and security guarantees offered by this body.⁹² Any compliance with the "Dniester Republic" demands would also cause Moldova to give up their move to introduce a Moldovan national currency and recognize the confederation which the "Dniester Republic" had proposed.⁹³

On 31 October in Tiraspol Lieutenant General Lebed addressed the Joint Council of Work Collectives (OSTK), the Russian Communist organization which forms the single strongest political force in the "Dniester Republic." He criticized the "Dniester" leadership's recent proposal that Chisinau turn Moldova into a confederation rather than having the "Dniester Republic" formally secede and in his speech called the "Dniester" leadership's proposals "servile." He went on to say that they were spending too much time becoming bureaucratized, while at the same time allowing their main military force to "die a slow death."⁹⁴

Exposing its political underpinnings, on 7 November the "Dniester Republic" celebrated the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution with rallies and demonstrations. In Tiraspol President Igor Smirnov "praised Soviet achievements and chastised other parts of the former [Soviet] Union for renouncing them." He went on to pledge the continued build-up of the "Dniester" armed forces, saying the "republic's very existence strengthened the political forces in Moscow that sought to restore a 'Greater Russia.'" Communist demonstrators passed out leaflets proclaiming the Dniester's struggle against Snegur reflected a "determination to restore the USSR."⁹⁵

At this same time Ukrainian President Kravchuk, during a visit to Moldova, expressed grave concern that the "Dniester Republic" would secede from Moldova thus permitting 14th Army to remain there permanently. Ukraine viewed this situation as creating a "forward base for Russian aggression" and resolved to work harder in the future against expansion of Russian influence in the area.⁹⁶ This situation was a cause of great concern to both Ukraine and Moldova, especially in light of the recent reports of an increase in the transfer of weapons and equipment from the 14th Army to units of the "Dniester army." Ukraine also considered this situation very dangerous since the 14th Army Commander, Lieutenant General Lebed, seemed to plan the transfer of all his Army's materiel to the Dniester Army. Such an occurrence was all the more serious since Lebed and others claimed that the vast majority of the troops serving in the 14th Army were native Russians who assumedly desired to remain should the Army be sent back to Russia. This would create the permanent "Russian army" presence which both Moldova and Ukraine were worried about. This fear was confirmed by Colonel Nicolae Kirtoaca, State Advisor to the President of the Republic of Moldova, who said "the transfers [of 14th Army military equipment]

may render any future agreement on the withdrawal of the 14th Army from Moldova 'symbolic and purely formal'." ⁹⁷

As a result of this turmoil, the third round of negotiations for withdrawal of the Russian 14th Army from Moldova, achieved no concrete results. The proposals of both sides were rejected: the Russian side offered to "disband" some of their units and transfer their equipment to "local authorities" rather than withdraw units; the Moldovan authorities insisted that units be withdrawn and "left bank" residents not be drafted into the Russian Army for compulsory military service. ⁹⁸ Consequently, the stalemate continued.

Another point of contention was the transfer of equipment from the Russian 14th Army to the army of the "Dniester Republic." In a 2 December article, Nezavisimaya Moldova reported that there was an ongoing operation to transfer this equipment. It was also reported that Lieutenant General Lebed "has signed relevant documents with 'Dniester Republic' President Igor Smirnov." This supported earlier reports announcing that "equipment of 14th Army units slated for eventual withdrawal from Moldova would be turned over to the 'local authorities' in the 'Dniester Republic' or sold locally and that the units themselves would be 'disbanded' locally instead of being withdrawn." ⁹⁹ This would permit Dniester forces to not only obtain the 14th Army's equipment, but also its personnel.

In support of the controversy, on 1 December, an official in the Romanian Foreign Ministry declared to Western journalists that his country hoped "to unite with the former Soviet republic of Moldavia within a few years." He said that "Bucharest favors a policy of gradual integration with the neighboring republic rather than a quick 'German-style' unification" and added that his government had no firm date for reunification, but he personally believed "it could happen within eight years." ¹⁰⁰ The Romanian Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies, Adrian Nastase, added that "Russia was trying to bind Moldova to its side through membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States." To show its displeasure with this comment, the Russian Foreign Ministry "denounced Nastase's appeal to Moldovan legislators to 'think twice' before voting for Moldova to join the CIS as an attempt to scare them." ¹⁰¹ This issue was not new and could be further explained as a ploy by Nastase to discourage Moldovan legislators from maintaining the status quo which was as a participating, but non-voting member of the CIS.

The question of semantic differences in the meaning of reunification and integration has been one that continues to creep into the discussion between Romania and Moldova. In the beginning there was a great deal of attention paid to, and many things written about, reunification. Over time, however, historical enmity has caused both sides to resent this idea. Lately the term integration has been used more frequently. In April 1993 State Advisor to the President of the Republic of Moldova, Colonel Nicolae Kirtoaca, explained that the idea of gradual integration is being proposed as a way of bringing the two countries together both economically and culturally since this is in both sides national interests. In addition, there is the significant advantage of not having to defend against arguments involving "national threats" caused by reunification which seem to doom any discussion or proposal to sudden death. ¹⁰²

One sign of potential integration was the signing of a military agreement between Moldova and Romania on 15 December 1992. This agreement provided a "legal framework for cooperation

between the two armies." The proposal included Romanian help in training and equipping Moldovan armed forces, as well as promoting contacts in the areas of culture, sports and science. ¹⁰³ This fits the gradual integration of culture and economics of which Colonel Kirtoaca spoke.

The intensity of the Moldovan feelings concerning Romanian calls for unification increased at the end of December when Moldovan president Snegur criticized such calls as "a campaign against Moldovan statehood" and called for a referendum to decide the issue. ¹⁰⁴ The plot thickened when Bucharest newspapers reported that the head of the Romanian Information Service (successor to the Securitate-the former internal security organ) informally told journalists that "his Service was 'spearheading' Romania's efforts to reunify with Moldova, and was using 'its specific methods' in this effort." The Moldovan government strongly protested this policy. The response by the Romanian Information Service was quick and strongly worded saying that the Moldovan government's reaction "can only poison bilateral relations." ¹⁰⁵

At the end of the year opinion polls placed this debate in perspective. The Moldovan Press reported polls which showed that between 7% and 10% of the population said that unification with Romania was "necessary," 10-15% called it "possible after a long transition period," and about 70% said it was "undesirable" and that they "firmly favored independent Moldovan statehood." This was followed by a statement from Victor Puscasu, the Vice-Chairman of the Moldovan Parliament, which "refuted Romania's thesis about the need to 'repair the historic injustice of 1940' (when the Soviets annexed Bessarabia from Romania). He went on to say "there is no need to restore the status-quo of 1940 because Moldova existed as an independent state long before that." ¹⁰⁶ As is evident from this debate, this was yet another case of both sides "talking past one another."

STALEMATE (JANUARY-MARCH 1993)

In his New Year's Eve address to the nation, President Snegur said, "The year of 1992 was a difficult one, and yet it was the year in which the nation has reasserted its wish to return to its true traditional values and to democracy." He hoped 1993 will be a turning point where everyone will understand that "the fate of the country is indissolubly linked to the success of the reform and to the industrious labor of each citizen." Finally, he appealed for "peace and unity and for all efforts to be directed toward reaching those goals." ¹⁰⁷

In spite of this call for positive efforts, the new year in Moldova began with a continuation of the "war of words" that characterized events in previous months. Lt. General Lebed continued the "war" by accusing Ukraine of making repeated attempts to discredit the Russian 14th Army. ¹⁰⁸ Previously it had been reported that Lebed invited Ukraine to rejoin Russia in a single state, but this appeared to be the first time he had come out so directly against the Kiev leadership. In the same address, Lebed charged the USA with conducting "an imperial policy vis-a-vis Russia and the 'Dniester Republic; suggested that the dismantled monument to Feliks Dzerzhinsky [founder of the KGB] in Moscow ought to be replaced by one of US President George Bush, the winner of the Cold War; and called US Ambassador to Moldova, Mary Pendleton a 'mediocre woman' for having rejected invitations to visit the "Dniester Republic." ¹⁰⁹

To show his displeasure with the course of events in the area, in a 6 January interview with Rossiiskaya gazeta, Lebed denounced what he called:

. . . governmental mismanagement, corruption, and the merger of state and mafia structures in both Russia and the Dniester Republic, and urged that compromised officials be resolutely removed from their posts. He went on to say, 'it is precisely the army which must fight the mafia structures. Enough of pretending that the army is destined for external functions only. Once a decision has been made to use the troops, we have to abandon diplomatic somersaults and monkey-like grins in order to save the state from the unbridled rascals and adventurers, who ought to clearly know that there is an authority over them.' ¹¹⁰

This focus on anti-corruption was a consistent theme for Lebed. The opportunity to combine it with a chance to discredit the "Dniester leadership," which he accused of incompetence, corruption, and complicity with the Mafia, and whose resignations he called for, ¹¹¹ and the chance to place greater emphasis on his desire for a larger role for his Army and himself can only be viewed as serendipitous. He concluded his 7 January speech to a working collective in Tiraspol by saying, "I have always supported and will continue to support everything that I believe are true manifestations of democracy. The Moldovan 'Dniester Republic' is an expression of the will of the people. This republic is really here and will stay here for many years to come." ¹¹² Lebed confirmed this idea in a Tiraspol news conference on 11 January when he said it would take years to withdraw the 14th Army from Moldova since "approximately 60% of the army's officers have apartments with modern conveniences in the region . . . which he said . . . they would be reluctant to leave." ¹¹³ To punctuate the strength of his feelings, Lebed warned the "Dniester Republic's corrupt leaders in a news conference in Tiraspol that he is "sick and tired [of] guarding the sleep and safety of crooks." ¹¹⁴

At the end of January, representatives from Moldova and Transdniester held another round of negotiations in Bendery. At the conclusion of the session they approved the basic principles for settling the conflict in the region. According the Colonel Nicolae Kirtoaca, the State Advisor to the President of Moldova, the text of the agreement, when finalized, will include principles for "recognition of distinctive features of the formation of regions and will dictate what kind of status the Transdniester region receives in the Republic of Moldova." He went on to say, "Mainly we agreed that the Transdniester region is a part of the Republic of Moldova. We reached a general consensus that Transdniester has its distinct features in comparison with other regions of the republic. Therefore, it should be given special status, but not at the expense of the republic's territorial integrity and sovereignty." ¹¹⁵

Details of the agreement were later released in a statement from Chisinau on 11 February. Anatol Tsaran, the leader of the Chisinau delegation from the mixed parliamentary commission established to oversee a peaceful settlement of this conflict, further clarified the Dniester region's status. He stated that the region would be granted "administrative self-government on condition that the unity and integrity of Moldova is maintained." He went on to say that there would be other efforts to resolve related international issues in both Moscow and Kiev. ¹¹⁶

This agreement came at a time of great turmoil in the Moldovan government since the Chairman of Moldova's Parliament and three of the most senior members of the Parliament Presidium resigned citing differences of opinion between them and President Snegur. The differences appeared to have been over President Snegur's call for a referendum concerning Moldovan independence rather than unification with Romania. The four who resigned supported gradual unification, which they believed the referendum would block, and claimed the issue had "paralyzed" the parliament. In a communique released on 29 January, they highlighted the fact that "after President Snegur's 24 December 1992 statement, forces of the former totalitarian regime have become active again." [117](#)

At the same time, General Lebed remained active, with some observers reporting the possibility of a military move to replace Igor Smirnov's compromised group at the head of the self-proclaimed republic. [118](#) Lebed later warned in a Pravda interview that "hostilities may resume 'at any moment' in the city of Bendery on the right bank of the Dniester and called for a referendum to determine whether the city should belong to Moldova or to the left-bank 'Dniester Republic.'" [119](#) In an interview carried by INTERFAX on 1 February, he stated that with circumstances as they were "his army's withdrawal from the Dniester is ruled out." He then explained that the major difficulty concerns housing problems in Russia. Thus, "officers of my Army have honor and it will not let them leave the region until peace is settled and internationally recognized agreements are signed." [120](#)

In a surprising turn of events, Petru Lucinschi, First Secretary of the Moldovan Communist Party from 1989-1991, was elected chairman of the Moldovan Parliament. Lucinschi was reputed to be liberal-minded and pro-reform and was closely tied politically with Mikhail Gorbachev when he was General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In his inaugural address to the parliament Lucinschi "pledged to focus on settling the Dniester conflict politically and on pursuing balanced relations with Romania and Russia." [121](#) Providing his perspective, Alexandru Mosanu, the previous chairman of the parliament, noted "an anti-democratic tendency is appearing towards a return to the totalitarian regime and establishment of the power of one person." Mosanu, and the others who resigned with him, accused Snegur of "corruption, illegal exemption from taxation of a number of enterprises and groundless placement of his relations into key posts in the organs of state power." [122](#)

Clarifying his new policies, Lucinschi said that he desired "stronger relations between Moldova and Russia so as to 'overcome existing difficulties by joining forces.'" He added that:

Russia and Trans-Dniestria should proceed from the idea that the situation in Moldova has changed greatly. 'The republic's leadership is now ready to make serious concessions in determining the status of the region on the Dniester's left bank.' He continued by saying that the 'Dniester Republic' leaders 'must pull back from their fixed ideas, be more flexible, and come to a compromise instead of insisting upon the foundation of a separate state.' [123](#)

In a policy statement released the following day, Lucinschi listed the following urgent tasks for the parliament: "adoption of laws on elections to organs of power at all levels and on the status of the Left Bank [of the Dniester] and the resolution of the problem of the Gagauz south." He

went on further to say that "there exists a real possibility for resolving the conflict in the Dniester Region and that the point of view of those deputies who maintain that Moldova has lost the Dniester Region is wrong." [124](#)

The same day that President Snegur and his Prime Minister departed for talks in Moscow, ITAR-TASS reported that "attempts at withdrawing the Russian Fourteenth Army and machinery from the Dniester area will run against fierce resistance on the part of the inhabitants of the region." The OLVIA press agency also reported that inhabitants were worried that the Army's weapons would simply be passed to Dniester inhabitants causing serious destabilization in the area. In reaction, inhabitants polled by the news agency said they did not intend to stay unarmed in the face of the Moldovan Armed Forces. [125](#)

Adding his voice to those of the strong communist and pro-Russian forces already at work, "Black" [126](#) Colonel Viktor Alksnis and two Russian Supreme Soviet deputies told a news conference in Tiraspol that "the peoples of the former USSR 'are bound to restore the unitary state" and that the "'Dniester Republic' is 'that sliver of land on which the Union's spirit has survived and from which the Union's restoration will begin.'" [127](#) In a change in Moldova's previously stated position, Chairman Lucinschi announced that "Chisinau is prepared to make serious concessions and compromise on the status of the Transdnestr region." Reportedly he "believes that following the changes in the top bodies of Moldova's parliament 'the situation in the republic has radically changed.' Still a meaningful dialog between Chisinau and Tiraspol was out of the question because, in the speaker's words, 'the leaders of the self-proclaimed Dniestr Moldovan Republic do not wish to abandon their political ambitions and continue to insist on making Moldova a federal state.'" In spite of this, Lucinschi expressed optimism that a peaceful solution can be worked out. [128](#)

In a move seemingly designed to create uncertainty and move the negotiations along by focusing on the seriousness of the situation, 14th Army command headquarters announced plans to conduct tactical exercises from 15-19 February. These exercises included artillery firing, based on plans developed by Russian Defense Minister General Pavel Grachev. The Army warned the Moldovan population in villages surrounding the area to "stay out of the troops' way." In response to this announcement, Lt. General Pavel Creanga, Moldovan Defense Minister, sent a cable to Grachev asking him to rescind the order, which Creanga said violated Moldova's sovereignty and heightened tensions in the area. Creanga's protest was ignored, and 5 days of maneuvers were held by "Dniester" units under the command of officers transferred to them from the 14th Army. Locally-conscripted troops also participated. An anonymous spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry claimed that they acted in accordance with established rules which merely required them to coordinate these actions with "local self-government bodies," interpreted in this case to be the "Dniester Republic" leadership. Moldova viewed this as a cover for violating their republic's parliamentary resolution, which required such actions be coordinated with the Moldovan government. [129](#)

President Snegur, on 12 February, charged that those advocating unification with Romania were planning a coup. He said, "As President of the Republic I must warn the people of this clear and present danger." He claimed that parliamentary leaders who had resigned were trying to "destabilize the situation in the country, trigger manifestations in Chisinau, establish a

dictatorship of the street mob, and stage a coup." He concluded by saying that the leaders in Tiraspol "await like manna a call by certain politicians in Chisinau for a merger with Romania," for otherwise "the setting up of parallel authorities in that area would make no sense." ¹³⁰ This referred to one of the major justifications the "Dniester Republic" gave for separation from Moldova -- protection against Moldovan unification with Romania.

To emphasize disagreement with the methods of conducting operations in the area, in a ceremony on 18 February, Lieutenant General Lebed was given the "keys" to Bendery, the heavily disputed right-bank city controlled by Russian and left-bank forces. "Dniester" media reported that the award was for Lebed's merits in "introducing 14th Army units in Bendery prior to the arrival of the peacekeeping forces" and confirmed the fact that 14th Army units were involved in driving Moldovan forces out of Bendery last June. ¹³¹

The issue of Moldovan-Romanian unification again took center stage on 17 February 1993, when Moldovan governmental officials asked Romania to replace its envoy to Chisinau, Ion Bistreanu, because of public statements treating Moldova as a temporary state and a prospective part of Romania. ¹³² A week later Chairman Lucinschi met with Romanian President Ion Iliescu in Bucharest where Lucinschi told Iliescu that "Moldova has two priorities: economic improvement and a new constitution." Iliescu told his Moldovan guest that "regardless of how Romania and Moldova develop in the future, their bilateral ties must be close and friendly." ¹³³

The Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs was concerned when President Boris Yeltsin said the time was right for organizations with international authority, including the United Nations [UN], to offer Russia "special powers" to allow her to guarantee the peace and security of the territory of the former USSR." ¹³⁴ This statement was viewed by Moldovan government officials as a way for Russia to take the lead in "resolving" problems outside the Russian state without the specific approval, sanction, or review of international authority.

On the positive side, Moldova and Ukraine approved a package of draft agreements on ethnic minority rights and cooperation in education, culture, energy, transport, and agriculture. Radio Kiev reported that Ukraine was "satisfied with the favorable conditions for the organizational life and activities of the Ukrainian community in Moldova." In addition, Ukraine announced it would no longer "accept the transit of goods produced in the 'Dniester Republic' unless they are cleared by Moldova." ¹³⁵

At the same time, the Presidiums of both the "Dniester" and Gagauz Supreme Soviets demanded that the "Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic" be changed "into a federation of three equal republics--Moldova, Dniester, and Gagauz--and its accession to the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS]." ¹³⁶ This rejected Chisinau's previous offer of a "special status" for the region. Virtually simultaneously, Russian television aired a discussion between President Smirnov, General Lebed and other local Russian leaders calling for the "Dniester Republic" to be attached to the Russian Federation. They said the area was Russian soil and claimed that "local Moldovans desire incorporation in the Russian Federation." They also "urged the reconstitution of a unitary state in the former USSR." The participants labelled the area as "Russia's key to the Balkans" and a "strategic crossroads affecting Ukraine, Romania, and the Black Sea." Lebed added that, "if Russia leaves this area it will lose its influence on the whole region." The

participants gave human rights and peacekeeping duties as justifications for a "permanent Russian military presence on the Dniester." ¹³⁷

At a meeting between the Moldovan Parliament chairman Lucinschi, Prime Minister Sangheli and "Dniester Republic" President Smirnov, the sides agreed to "pursue a political dialogue and to focus at this stage on restoring economic links." The 'Dniester' camp says this means that Moldova cannot establish its own national currency in place of the ruble. President Snegur reported on 22 March that Chisinau was urging Tiraspol to sign an agreement agreeing not to use force under any circumstances and will keep negotiating with "Dniester" leaders in spite of their initiatives to gain entry into the CIS and even become part of the Russian Federation. ¹³⁸

In a seemingly politically expedient statement and coming after expressions of concern at the uncertainty of the outcome of events in Moscow and what that could do to the situation in Moldova, President Snegur explained that,

'Moldova is directly interested in Russia becoming a truly democratic country, as only this could permanently block the restoration of the communist system and of the Soviet empire. . . From our standpoint the fall of Russian democracy would mean the takeover of power by the organizers of the territorial dismemberment of Moldova, the promoters of the imperial ideology.' He further urged that 'any measures taken to defend democratic achievements and to unblock radical economic forces reform should in no way impair civic rights and freedoms or lead to violence.' ¹³⁹

In what might appear to be a response to concerns over what Moldova will be or is doing, the "Dniester Region authorities" issued a statement explaining that they created their own armed forces over "fear of new operations by the Moldovan Army." This message, by the way, was identical to one issued by Lieutenant General Lebed to a different news source. Sources note that this was not too surprising since after Lebed's last disagreement with "Dniester leaders" he sent what he called an "ultimatum" to President Smirnov calling for him and the rest of the Dniester government to resign. ¹⁴⁰ This action by Lebed came shortly after it was reported that 14th Army had taken over a local, independent short-circuit television studio and given it "reinforced protection" at the request of the studio director who said he and his staff had received frequent cases of blackmail and threats. According to the report, "Lebed threatened to deal ruthlessly with anyone, regardless of rank or title, who would resort to such actions." The report quoted Lebed as declaring "I will chop their heads off within hours, letting [sic] their relatives to complain against me to the UN, CSCE, God, or any other place." ¹⁴¹ This action served as a reminder that even during times of relative inaction militarily, the possibility and proclivity for violence and strict military actions still endures with the 14th Army Commander and consequently is also likely to be shared by at least some of his soldiers.

CONCLUSIONS

The crisis of the "Dniester Republic" is another manifestation of the potential corrosive power of conflicting nationalism in the successor states of the former Soviet Union. In this case, Russia has committed its military power ostensibly to the protection of a Russian minority bent on

establishing its national autonomy even at the risk of serious complications and confrontations with Moldova, Ukraine and Romania. This speaks only to the internal problems, and says little of the international problems and threats that could arise. Considered within the context of other events and struggles within the former Soviet Union, the Trans-Dniester crisis is but one example of a revived Russian nationalism which is taking up the burden of protecting the 25 million Russians living outside the borders of the Russian Federation.

Additionally, there seems to be a Russian desire to maintain territory that is also being claimed as rightfully belonging to area neighbors on one side or the other. At the same time Russia desires to keep a military presence in the area to support the people and achieve the desired outcome without becoming embroiled in a full-scale war. The specter of Yugoslavia looms large in the maneuvering of all sides. The problem is that, as in Yugoslavia and potentially many other places throughout the world (but particularly in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe), paramilitary formations with ethnic loyalties and little central control have the potential to ignite a "Peoples' War."

The other major problem apparent in the context of the Moldovan crisis is that of how to resolve peacefully the questions of which regions belong to whom. There has been no agreement on how to resolve the complex boundary disputes between Moldova, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary and Russia. Moreover, there appears to be very little genuine interest in the kind of political compromise that will be necessary to allow this to take place. There is considerable dialogue indicating that all sides desire some sort of settlement, but the "evidence" presented here indicates that these claims are rarely followed up by concrete actions, to include diplomatic actions, which will resolve the problems.

As a result, this crisis is no closer to being resolved than it was a year ago. The situation is in a period of stagnation where both sides seemingly have agreed to a long-term stalemate that will continue into the foreseeable future. In the meantime, lives are still being lost and emotions are becoming more piqued as patience wanes. Only when all participants are willing to put individual interests and agendas aside in favor of a collective, peaceful solution will this crisis end. But, as has been shown in Yugoslavia, this does not seem to be likely in the near future. The question for the future is how many more Moldovas are there in the wings. In the former Soviet Union alone, names like Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia, Azerbaijan, North and South Ossetia, Chechen-Ingushetia, Tajikistan and others come to mind. The Moldovan crisis definitely provides a prelude to the challenges of what appears to be a less than bright future for areas where these kinds of conflicts are occurring.

In the end, it is unclear whether there is an area where conflict can be classified as purely "ethnic." If Moldova is any example, there is not. This conflict, as has been shown, is multi-dimensional. It certainly includes territorial issues, but is also wrapped in questions of ethnicity, security, ownership, national identities and idiosyncracies, pluralism, ideology, religion, power and undoubtedly other factors.

The one thing, however, that is indisputable and undeniable is that this is the kind of struggle where people die and lives and nations change, not always for the better. Learning to understand

and manage this type of conflict is critical and will be the key to shaping the type of world in which we will live in the 21st Century.

Endnotes

1. In a discussion with the State Advisor to the President of the Republic of Moldova, he explained that Moldova is the Moldovan pronunciation of Moldavia. He further explained that when Moldavia declared its independence from Russia, the name of the state was changed from Moldavia (Russian pronunciation) to Moldova (Moldovan pronunciation).[BACK](#)
2. "Lebed Turning Against Dniester Leadership," Nezavisimaya gazeta, 14 January 1993. Translated in SOVSET Computer Bulletin Board, RFE/RL Daily Report, hereafter referred to as SOVSET, 19 January 1993. [BACK](#)
3. Interfax, 11 January 1993, as translated in "No Early Withdrawal of the 14th Army," SOVSET, 12 January 1993.[BACK](#)
4. "Scenarios For The Preservation and Disintegration of the Armed Forces," paper given to Strategic Studies Research Center (SSRC) by Major General A. Vladimirov in January 1992.[BACK](#)
5. Adapted from a map appearing in Jane's Intelligence Review, June 1992 (Vol 4 No 6), in an article entitled "14th Army and the Crisis in Moldova" by Michael Orr.[BACK](#)
6. "Snegur, Smirnov Interviewed on Conflict," FBIS-SOV-92-065, 3 April 1992, p. 59.[BACK](#)
7. A. V. Antosyak, "For the Question on the Liberation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina," Military Thought, No 8 (August 1991), pp 53-63, as translated in JPRS-UMT-91-009-L, 18 November 1991 p 31.[BACK](#)
8. "Moldavian" is a category created by Soviet ethnographers to encompass the native population of the region who speak Romanian. These same ethnographers, however, claim that Moldavian and Romanian are distinct, although related, languages.[BACK](#)
9. "Charting the Depths of Soviet Disunion," Jane's Defence Weekly, 21 December 1991.[BACK](#)
10. Raymond E. Zickel, editor, Soviet Union: A Country Study (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), p. 174.[BACK](#)
11. Radio Ukraine broadcast, 15 March 1992 as translated in "Ukrainian Concern Over Conflict in Moldova," SOVSET, 17 March 1992.[BACK](#)
12. When first considered, the explanation of left and right banks of the Dniester is somewhat confusing because we in the West tend to view things from south to north. Also, when talking about rivers it is a somewhat common belief that the majority of rivers run from north to south, using a simplistic assumption that in the mind north is higher than south so rivers would flow

downhill. Using this "logic," when you look at a map the natural conclusion is that the left bank would be the western side. In the case of the Dniester River it is the opposite. In the first place, the Dniester runs from north to south, thus making the view of left (east) and right (west) looking from a northern view correct. Many experts agree, however, that an additional explanation for the left and right bank description is that it was normal in the former Soviet Union to look at things as it would be viewed from Moscow. Therefore, since the Dniester River is west and Moldova is south of Moscow, the left bank would be the eastern side and the right bank the western.[BACK](#)

13. "Russian Insurgency in Eastern Moldova Escalates," as translated in SOVSET, 17 March 1992.[BACK](#)

14. Ibid.[BACK](#)

15. As translated in "Spillover into Ukraine," SOVSET, 20 March 1992.[BACK](#)

16. As translated in "Russians Continue Offensive in Eastern Moldova," SOVSET, 18 March 1992.[BACK](#)

17. As translated in "Moldova Protests Russian Support for 'Dniester' Bank," SOVSET, 20 March 1992.[BACK](#)

18. As translated in "Moldovan Parliament Criticizes Russian Parliament's Appeal" SOVSET, 26 March 1992.[BACK](#)

19. Ibid.[BACK](#)

20. Communique released in Helsinki on 24 March 1992 as reported in "Romania's Relations with Moldova," SOVSET, 25 March 1992.[BACK](#)

21. As translated in "'Dniester Leader Signs Decree on Mobilization," SOVSET, 27 March 1992.[BACK](#)

22. Los Angeles Times report, 30 March 1992 as cited in "Moldova Declares State of Emergency and Issues Ultimatum to Rebels," SOVSET, 30 March 1992.[BACK](#)

23. Los Angeles Times report, 30 March 1992 as cited in "Moldova Declares State of Emergency and Issues Ultimatum to Rebels," SOVSET, 30 March 1992.[BACK](#)

24. CIS and Western news agencies reports as cited in "Snegur Says Time For Talks Over," SOVSET, 1 April 1992.[BACK](#)

25. "Tension Mounts in Moldova After Chisinau's Ultimatum to Rebels," SOVSET, 31 March 1992.[BACK](#)

26. Los Angeles Times report, 30 March 1992, as cited in "Moldova Declares State of Emergency and Issues Ultimatum to Rebels," SOVSET, 30 March 1992.[BACK](#)
27. "Russia On Settlement of Dniester Problem," SOVSET, 30 March 1992.[BACK](#)
28. The initial report was somewhat confusing because the CIS command structure was formally separated from the Russian structure. General Semenov's most recent appointment, however, makes more sense of the issue.[BACK](#)
29. ITAR-TASS report, 1 April 1992 as cited in "Fourteenth Army Under Russian Control," SOVSET, 1 April 1991.[BACK](#)
30. Nezavisimaya gazeta interview reported in ITAR-TASS, 1 April 1992, as cited in "Russia Will Protect the Rights of Russians," SOVSET, 2 April 1992.[BACK](#)
31. Radio Bucharest broadcast, 28 March 1992, as translated in "Ukrainian Reaction to Developments in Moldova," SOVSET, 30 March 1992.[BACK](#)
32. "Foreign Affairs Experts Meet in Chisinau," SOVSET, 1 April 1992.[BACK](#)
33. "Fighting Continues in 'Dniester Republic,'" SOVSET, 2 April 1992.[BACK](#)
34. Ibid.[BACK](#)
35. Romanian Defense Ministry communique as reported in "Romanian Authorities on the Conflict in Moldova," SOVSET, 2 April.[BACK](#)
36. "Rutskoy on 'Dniester Republic,'" SOVSET, 7 April 1992.[BACK](#)
37. Ibid.[BACK](#)
38. Ibid.[BACK](#)
39. President Snegur Chisinau press conference, 7 April 1992, as translated in "Moldovan Reaction to Rutskoi Visit," SOVSET, 8 April 1992.[BACK](#)
40. Moldovan and Russian media reports as translated in "More Casualties on the Dniester," SOVSET, 12 May 1992.[BACK](#)
41. Moldovan media reports, 20 May 1992, as translated in "Snegur Appeals to the World," SOVSET, 21 May 1992.[BACK](#)
42. RFE/RL Institute report, 21 May 1992, as cited in "More on Russian Military Involvement in Dniester Fighting," SOVSET, 22 May 1992.[BACK](#)

43. Ibid. This policy, if it is policy, is in keeping with the new draft "Russian Military Doctrine" that calls for the Russian State to defend all Russian citizens living outside its borders.[BACK](#)

44. Ibid.[BACK](#)

45. Moldovapres editorial, 23 May 1992, as reported in "US State Department Disturbed," SOVSET, 25 May 1992.[BACK](#)

46. Moldovan military authority announcement as translated in "Moldova Closes Air Space After Russian Military Violations," SOVSET, 25 May 1992.[BACK](#)

47. "Yeltsin Suggests Withdrawal of Russian Army From Moldova," SOVSET, 29 May 1992.[BACK](#)

48. Moldovapres reports, 27 and 28 May 1992, as translated in "Grachev Qualifies Yeltsin's Remark," SOVSET, 29 May 1992.[BACK](#)

49. Moldovan Presidential Office report to RFE/RL Research Institute reported as "Russia Ignores Moldovan Messages," SOVSET, 26 May 1992.[BACK](#)

50. Komsomolskaya Pravda report, 27 May 1992 as translated in "Yeltsin Confirms Servicemens' Involvement in Moldova," SOVSET, 27 May 1992.[BACK](#)

51. "Russian Generals Digging In On Moldova?" SOVSET, 1 June 1992.[BACK](#)

52. "Moldova Cautiously Optimistic," SOVSET, 1 June 1992.[BACK](#)

53. "'Dniester Republic' Not Worried by Withdrawal Prospect," SOVSET, 1 June 1992.[BACK](#)

54. Radio Moscow broadcast, 31 May 1992, as reported in "Grachev Threatens Chisinau," SOVSET, 2 June 1992.[BACK](#)

55. ITAR-TASS report as translated in "Grachev Again Warns Moldova," SOVSET, 4 June 1992.[BACK](#)

56. Quadrapartite Commission report released by the Moldovan Foreign Ministry as cited in "'Dniester' Forces Violate Cease-Fire," SOVSET, 10 June 1992.[BACK](#)

57. Le Monde report, 15 June 1992, as translated in "Kozyrev's Territorial Claims Protested by Moldova," SOVSET, 16 June 1992.[BACK](#)

58. Nezavisimaya gazeta report, 18 June 1992, as translated in "'Dniester Republic' Forming Own Army," SOVSET, 19 June 1992.[BACK](#)

59. "Russian Official Advocates Border Revision," SOVSET, 24 June 1992.[BACK](#)

60. Radio Ukraine broadcast, 22 June 1992, as translated and reported in "Ukraine Urges Autonomy For Breakaway 'Dniester Republic,'" SOVSET, 23 June 1992.[BACK](#)
61. "Russian Military Officials Admit to Some Involvement," SOVSET, 25 June 1992.[BACK](#)
62. "Who Gave the Orders?" SOVSET, 25 June 1992.[BACK](#)
63. Moldovapres report, 23 June 1992, as translated in "Moldovan President on Russian Pressures," SOVSET, 25 June 1992.[BACK](#)
64. "New Commander for 14th Army," SOVSET, 29 June 1992.[BACK](#)
65. Moskovskie Novosti report, 1 July 1992, as translated in "14th Army Commander on 'Shift in Russian Policy,'" SOVSET, 3 July 1992.[BACK](#)
66. "Russian-Moldovan Meeting," SOVSET, 6 July 1992.[BACK](#)
67. Moldovapres and Radio Bucharest reports as translated in "14th Army Commander Criticizes Yeltsin," SOVSET, 7 July 1992.[BACK](#)
68. Moldovapres and Radio Bucharest reports as translated in ". . . and Assails Moldovan Government," SOVSET, 7 July 1992.[BACK](#)
69. "CIS Summit Decides to Send Peacemaking Force to Moldova," SOVSET, 8 July 1992.[BACK](#)
70. "Cease-Fire Agreement in Moldova," SOVSET, 8 July 1992.[BACK](#)
71. Quadrapartite Commission Report released by the Moldovan Foreign Ministry as translated in "'Dniester' Forces Violate Cease-Fire," SOVSET, 10 July 1992.[BACK](#)
72. "'Dniester Republic' Sets Negotiating Terms," SOVSET, 16 July 1992.[BACK](#)
73. "Vesti" report, 15 July 1992, as cited in "'Dniester' Leader Vows to Continue War," SOVSET, 17 July 1992.[BACK](#)
74. "Moldovan Peace Agreement Signed," SOVSET, 22 July 1992.[BACK](#)
75. Literaturnaya Rossiya (no. 31/1992) as translated in "Moldova Recognizes 'Dniester Republic,'" SOVSET, 5 August 1992.[BACK](#)
76. Moldovapres report, 4 June 1992, as translated in "Moldovan President on Settling the Conflict," SOVSET, 5 August 1992.[BACK](#)
77. "'Dniester Republic' Forming Own Army," SOVSET, 11 August 1992.[BACK](#)

78. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung report, 19 August 1992, translated in "Zhirinovski, Lebed on Reducing Moldova's Size," SOVSET, 21 August 1992.[BACK](#)

79. Moldovapres report as translated in "Russian Regiment to be Withdrawn from Chisinau," SOVSET, 28 August 1992. It appears the regiment, which was not part of Russia's 14th Army, was transferred to Siberia.[BACK](#)

80. Izvestiia, 1 September 1992, as translated in "Lebed Again Cautioned Against Political Statements," SOVSET, 1 September 1992.[BACK](#)

81. "Moldova Fears 'Yugoslav' Scenario," SOVSET, 2 September 1992.[BACK](#)

82. Nezavisimaya Moldova report, 2 September 1992, as translated in "Moldova Softer On Russian Troop Issue," SOVSET, 4 September 1992.[BACK](#)

83. The term "Black Hundreds" goes back into medieval Russian history when the guilds were referred to as "hundreds" and the "black hundreds" designated the unskilled labor guild. In this context, however, the term is used to refer to a rightist active squad who were known for helping the Army and the police "restore order" by beating and even killing Jews, liberals, and other intellectuals in the final stages of the Russian Revolution of 1905. The term "Red-Brown" is used to refer to Hitler's SA prior during his coming to power before World War II. Berlin's comics would ask, "how is an SA man like a hamburger?" The answer was, "brown on the outside (referring to their brown shirts) and red on the inside (referring to their radical socialist beliefs)." The Russian "Red-Browns" are those authoritarian ultra-nationalists, who are red on the outside (referring to their Communist orientation) and brown on the inside (referring to their authoritarian ideology which is both xenophobic and ultra-nationalist. This group is more likely to make reference to Stalin and Pinochet than to Lenin and Marx.[BACK](#)

84. Nezavisimaya gazeta report, 1 September 1992, as translated in "Cossacks on the Dniester Described as Anti-Semitic and Red-Brown," SOVSET, 8 September 1992.[BACK](#)

85. Interfax report, 18 September 1992, as translated in "Promotion for Lebed," SOVSET, 21 September 1992.[BACK](#)

86. "Russian-Moldovan Troop Talks," SOVSET, 22 September 1992.[BACK](#)

87. ECO Magazin, September-October 1992 issue, as reported in "Romania, Moldovan Presidents on Moldovan Statehood," SOVSET, 2 October 1992.[BACK](#)

88. Izvestiia, 15 October 1992, as translated in "No Plans to Withdraw Troops from Dniester Region," SOVSET, 15 October 1992.[BACK](#)

89. Ibid.[BACK](#)

90. Nezavisimaya gazeta interview translated as "Moldovan President on Left Bank's Status," SOVSET, 22 October 1992.[BACK](#)

91. "Moldovan-Ukrainian Treaty," SOVSET, 27 October 1992.[BACK](#)
92. In an April 1993 discussion with the State Advisor to the President of the Republic of Moldova, Colonel Nicolae Kirtoaca, he provided the following clarification of the reasons for their association with the CIS. He said Moldova had decided on this kind of association because they needed the economic markets the other CIS member states could provide; they wanted to "send a message" to Russia that they were participating with them, even though not fully; and wanted to buy some time to get their feet firmly on the ground and get their military structures well in place. [BACK](#)
93. Nezavisimaya gazeta report, 22 October 1992, as translated in "'Dniester' Leader Escalates Demands on Moldova," SOVSET, 30 October 1992.[BACK](#)
94. Nezavisimaya gazeta report, 3 November 1992, as translated in "Lebed Wants Stronger 'Dniester' stance," SOVSET, 4 November 1992.[BACK](#)
95. "'Dniester Republic' Celebrates Bolshevik Revolution," SOVSET, 10 November 1992.[BACK](#)
96. Nezavisimaya Moldova report, 14 November 1992, as translated in "Moldova On Ukraine's Concern Over Russian Forces in Moldova," SOVSET, 17 November 1992.[BACK](#)
97. "Moldova Reacts to 14th Army Equipment Transfers to 'Dniester' Forces," SOVSET, 7 December 1992.[BACK](#)
98. "Russian-Moldovan Troop Negotiations in Impasse," SOVSET, 24 November 1992.[BACK](#)
99. Nezavisimaya Moldova report, 2 December 1992, as translated in "From Russian to 'Dniester' Army in Moldova," SOVSET, 4 December 1992.[BACK](#)
100. "Romanian Official on Union With Moldova," SOVSET, 3 December 1992.[BACK](#)
101. "Russia Criticizes Statement by Romanian Official," SOVSET, 4 December 1992.[BACK](#)
102. Information received during an April discussion with the State Advisor to the President of the Republic of Moldova, Colonel Nicolae Kirtoaca. [BACK](#)
103. Radio Bucharest interview of Romanian Defense Minister Lt. General Nicolae Spiroiu, 15 December 1992, as translated in "Romania, Moldova Sign Military Agreement," SOVSET, 16 December 1992.[BACK](#)
104. "Moldovan Backlash Against Romanian Calls for Unification," SOVSET, 28 December 1992.[BACK](#)
105. "Moldovan-Romanian Polemic Escalates," SOVSET, 30 December 1992.[BACK](#)

106. "Moldovan Polls on Hypothetical Unification with Romania," SOVSET, 30 December 1992.[BACK](#)
107. Bucharest Radio Romania Network report, 1 January 1993 in Romanian as translated in "President Snegur Delivers New Year's Eve Message," FBIS-SOV-93-001, 4 January 1993, p.52.[BACK](#)
108. Address to the "Dniester Republic" Supreme Soviet as translated in "Lebed Accuses Ukraine," SOVSET, 5 January 1993.[BACK](#)
109. Bucharest COTIDIANUL in Romanian, 7 January 1993 in Romanian as translated in "Commander on Dniester's Independence," FBIS-SOV-93-010, 15 January 1993, p. 60.[BACK](#)
110. Rossiiskaya gazeta, 6 January 1993, translated as "Lebed Favors Military Action to Restore Order," SOVSET, 11 January, 1993.[BACK](#)
111. BASAPRESS, January 1993, reported as "14th Army Rift with 'Dniester Leadership,'" SOVSET, 11 January, 1993.[BACK](#)
112. Bucharest COTIDIANUL newspaper article in Romanian, 7 January 1993, as translated in "Commander on Dniester's Independence", FBIS-SOV-93-010, 15 January 1993, p. 60.[BACK](#)
113. "No Early Withdrawal of 14th Army," SOVSET, 12 January, 1993. [BACK](#)
114. Nezavisimaya gazeta, 19 January 1993, as translated in "Lebed Turning Against 'Dniester Leadership'," SOVSET, 19 January, 1993. [BACK](#)
115. "'Basic Principles' Approved for Transdniester Settlement," FBIS-SOV-93-018, 29 January 1993, p.56.[BACK](#)
116. Moscow ITAR-TASS report, 10 February 1993, as translated in "Granting of Special Status to Dniester Conditioned," FBIS-SOV-93-027, 11 February 1993, p.41.[BACK](#)
117. Bucharest Radio report, 29 January 1993, as translated in "Parliament Chairman Mosanu, Others Resign," FBIS-SOV-93-018, 29 January 1993, p.54.[BACK](#)
118. Nezavisimaya gazeta, 19 January 1993, as translated in "Lebed Turning Against 'Dniester Leadership'," SOVSET, 19 January, 1993. [BACK](#)
119. Pravda, 20 January 1993, as translated in, "Lebed Urges Territorial Changes in Moldova," SOVSET, 25 January, 1993. [BACK](#)
120. "General Lebed: 14th Army Should Receive 'Adequate' Status," FBIS-SOV-93-020, 2 February 1993.[BACK](#)
121. "Ex-Communist to Head Moldovan Parliament," SOVSET, 5 February 1993. [BACK](#)

122. "Mosanu Accuses Snegur of 'Anti-Democratic Tendency'," FBIS-SOV-93-022, 4 February 1993, p.44. [BACK](#)

123. "Lucinschi Cited on Russian Relations, Dniester," FBIS-SOV-93-025, 9 February 1993, p.43. [BACK](#)

124. "New Chairman of Parliament Sets Goals," FBIS-SOV-93-028, 9 February 1993, p.53. [BACK](#)

125. Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA report in Russian, 5 February 1993, p.1, as translated in, "Dniester Inhabitants Opposed to Russian Army Withdrawal," FBIS-SOV-93-025, 9 February 1993, p.44. [BACK](#)

126. The label "Black" Colonel refers to Alksnis' inclusion in a group of active military officers who were elected as Soviet People's Deputies to the newly formed Congress of People's Deputies in the waning hours of the Gorbachev era in the late 1980s. These deputies exercised the right to speak about the military in the highest tribunals of the Soviet Union and many became known for their conservative, open opposition views or impatient approach to official policies regarding the processes of glasnost and perestroika. In general, they viewed the process as occurring too slowly and pressed for military reform when the upper levels of the military leadership said it was unnecessary. As the infamy of this group grew among the military leadership and their popularity grew among the Russian and Soviet people, the term "Black . . ." became associated with them as descriptive of their reactionary, pro-Soviet approach to problem solving. [BACK](#)

127. "Pan-Russian Forces See 'Dniester Republic' as Embryo of USSR," SOVSET, 15 February 1993. [BACK](#)

128. "Lucinschi: Chisinau Prepared to Compromise on Dniestr," FBIS-SOV-93-031, 18 February 1993, p.58. [BACK](#)

129. "Government Criticizes Russian Army Exercises," FBIS-SOV-93-035, 24 February 1993, p.63. [BACK](#)

130. "President Warns of Pro-Romanian Coup," FBIS-SOV-93-029, 12 February 1993, p.51. [BACK](#)

131. BASAPRESS Report, 18 February 1993, as translated in, "Dniester Republic' Rewards Leading Russian Supporters," SOVSET, 24 February 1993. [BACK](#)

132. RFE/RL Research Institute Report, February 1993, as cited in, "Moldova Objects to Romania's Envoy," SOVSET, 17 February 1993. [BACK](#)

133. Radio Bucharest Report, 23 February 1993, as translated in Iliescu, Lucinschi Meet," SOVSET, 24 February 1993. [BACK](#)

134. BASAPRESS Report, 6 March 1993, as translated in, "Foreign Ministry Worried About Yeltsin Statement," FBIS-SOV-93-043, 8 March 1993, p.66. [BACK](#)

135. Radio Kiev Report, 7 and 8 March 1993, as translated in "Moldovan-Ukrainian Rapprochement," SOVSET, 11 March 1993. [BACK](#)

136. BASAPRESS Report, 10 March 1993, as translated in "'Dniester,' Gagauz Leaders Demand Federal Moldova," SOVSET, 11 March 1993. [BACK](#)

137. INTERFAX Report, 18 March 1993, as translated in "Annexation of Transdnistria Urged on Russian TV, " SOVSET, 18 March 1993.[BACK](#)

138. "Commission on Dniester Established," FBIS-SOV-93-052, 19 March 1993, p.52. [BACK](#)

139. "Moldovan President Supports Russian Democracy," SOVSET, 25 March 1993. [BACK](#)

140. BASAPRESS report in English, 29 March 1993, as translated in "Dniester Region to Set Up Own Armed Forces," FBIS-SOV-93-060, 31 March 1993, p.67. [BACK](#)

141. BASAPRESS report in English, 24 March 1993, reported as "Russian Commander Refuses to Comment on Russian Events," FBIS-SOV-93-057, 26 March 1993, p.74. [BACK](#)
