

„*Ante Portas – Studia nad Bezpieczeństwem*”

2018, Nr 2(11)

DOI: 10.33674/2201812

Marina GORBATIUC¹
Moldova

THE TRANSDNIESTRIAN CONFLICT AS A PHENOMENON OF HYBRID WAR

Abstract:

Hybrid warfare is predominant tendency in the 21st century, therefore all states should take into consideration the possible threats and results caused by hybrid warfare strategies and tactics. Likewise, the elements of hybrid warfare are discussed from the recent conflicts. With all ensuing consequences, the article analyzes all possible evidence to detect future expansion of untraditional warfare. The important role the OSCE plays in supporting the Transdniestrian conflict. We underline the need to advance the work of the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transdniestrian Settlement in the “5+2” format as the only mechanism to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable resolution of the conflict. Emphasize the need to achieve tangible progress in the negotiations on all three baskets of the agreed agenda for the negotiation process. Express satisfaction with the commitment of the political representatives and programs of political parties to meet on a regular basis and encourage the sides to increase the continuity and effectiveness of the process. To this end, the Mission facilitates co-operation in Moldova is to help achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova and a special status for Transdniestria.

Keywords:

Transdniestria, Moldova, Russia, conflict, hybrid war

¹ Marina Gorbatiuc is a scientific researcher, Institute of Juridical and Political Researches of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova. Email: marina.gorbatiuc@mail.ru.

The Transdnistria War was a limited conflict that broke out in November 1990 at Dubossary between pro-Transdnistria forces, including the Transdnistrian Republican Guard, militia and Cossack units, and supported by elements of the Russian 14th Army, and pro-Moldovan forces, including Moldovan troops and police. Fighting intensified on 1 March 1992 and, alternating with ad hoc ceasefires, lasted throughout the spring and early summer of 1992 until a ceasefire was declared on 21 July 1992, which has held. The conflict remained unresolved, but in 2011 talks were held under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The term frozen conflicts is deceiving; it erroneously suggests that a conflict could be put on hold as one could press the pause button of a remote control. Nothing remains unaltered and infinitum in either the physical world or in the political world, either in a home refrigerator or in the Black sea-south Caucasus area. The very existence of any form of life inescapably involves alteration and is manifestly placed under the sign of change territorial conflicts without lasting solutions could not escape the alterability of a lingering situation in which almost all sides, far from idly waiting, are attempting to differently affect a status quo that all directly involved parties equally find unattractive and distant to their ultimate goals. This profound discontent seems not to have a natural tendency to act as stimuli for negotiation and compromise as some players find this blurred situation to their interest.

Since 1997, the OSCE has managed a conflict resolution process which now engages 7 parties in the “5+2” format: Moldova and Transdnistria, with Russia, Ukraine, and the OSCE as intermediaries, and the US and the EU as observers. The OSCE-brokered talks have helped to defuse occasional crises and to keep the sides in dialogue, but no framework agreement has yet been accepted by all sides. The closest the talks came was in 2003, when the Russian-brokered “Kozak plan” was rejected at the last minute by Chisinau. The parties have met both officially and unofficially at various times, with the talks currently in an unofficial phase which may change to official following a June 21 meeting of the parties in Moscow.

When analyzing the causes of protracted conflict, it is often revealing to ask, “who benefits?” In the case of Transdnistria, the biggest beneficiaries are arguably not states but powerful private interests, many of whom exert influence over state policies. There is much to covet in the region as it was, during Soviet times, a privileged economic zone within the Moldovan SSR, containing

at least 40% of Moldova's industrial capacity, and the only large power plant in the region².

According to Max Weber, one of the characteristics of the state is its territory³. Weber argued that a state is an organization that wields power over people and territory. In other words, the state is defined by a certain territory within which governments exercise the "monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force."⁴ If one applies this criterion to the Republic of Moldova, then it can be concluded that Moldovans have failed the test on state-building. Not once since independence has official Chisinau fully controlled the entire territory enclosed within the boundaries it proclaimed as state frontiers in August 1991⁵. The eastern part of the country along the left bank of the Nistru River did not recognize the legitimacy of the central government in Chisinau and remained under the control of local authorities. It can be argued, though, that the population in Transdnistria has never been given the possibility to express their allegiance to central government. All attempts by Chisinau to have the population of the Transdnistrian region participate in elections were obstructed by the separatist regime.

The conflict over the Transdnistrian region dates back to the end of the Soviet Union and the establishment of an independent Moldovan state. However, until recently very little tangible progress has been made towards a sustainable conflict settlement. With the resumption of official talks in the 5+2 conflict settlement process, the Transdnistrian issue is now relatively high up on the political agenda of all the parties involved, and the need for maintaining this current positive momentum and developing creative solutions has taken on added importance.

Perestroika and glasnosti had a great impact on Moldovan politics and society, and two distinct movements, a reform movement and a national movement, emerged. The former took shape in the summer of 1988, through the creation by reform-minded Moldovan journalists, writers and teachers of the Mol-

² C. Borgen, *Thawing a Frozen Conflict: Legal Aspects of the Separatist Crisis in Moldova: A Report from the Association of the Bar of the City of New York*, "Record of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York", Vol. 61, 2006, p. 14.

³ M. Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, [in:] *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*, ed. P. O'Neil and R. Rogowski, New York-London 2004, p. 34.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ After the proclamation of independence, the central government in Chisinau of newly emerged state the Republic of Moldova has claimed legitimate rights over the territory within the borders of former Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (including Transnistrian region).

dovan Democratic Movement in Support of Perestroika, which organized mass demonstrations and soon acquired a large following. The democratic movement demanded socio-political reforms and democracy as espoused by Gorbachev, as well as more important positions for ethnic Moldovans.

Talk of unification with Romania continued in Chisinau, as well as in Bucharest, although in public opinion, only a small minority supported unification. The Front lost many of its leading personalities and constituents as a result of this radicalization of the movement, as well as aggravating relations with Transdnistria and Gagauzia⁶. By early 1991, most of political élite in Chisinau had come to a consensus around a “two state” doctrine, with a completely sovereign Moldova.

The Russian forces stationed in Moldova, the 14th Soviet army, played a decisive role in the brief military conflict in Moldova. While Chisinau got jurisdiction over the former Soviet army stationed on the right bank in March 1992, the forces on the left bank were integrated into the Russian armed forces. In addition to its direct intervention in the battle of Bender, the 14th army provided arms to the Transdnistrian paramilitary groups, including the transfer of an entire battalion to the Transdnistrian authorities, as well as training for the “Republican Guard”. General Aleksandr Lebed, commander of the Russian forces in Moldova from June 1992, supported the Transdnistrian leader Igor Smirnov, denouncing the Chisinau leadership as “war criminals” and accusing Moldova of being a “fascist state”⁷.

Various international mediation attempts had been made as fighting escalated in spring 1992. On March 23, the Foreign Ministers of Moldova, neighbours Ukraine and Romania as well as Russia, met on the sides of a CSCE ministerial meeting in Helsinki and adopted a declaration on the principle of peaceful settlement, agreeing to establish a joint consultative mechanism to coordinate their efforts.

One of the main concerns about the Russian military presence has however been the more than 40,000 tonnes of equipment and ammunition stockpiled in Transdnistria. While both the Russian and Moldovan governments agree that these should either be destroyed or removed, the Transdnistrian leadership

⁶ S. D. Roper, *Regionalism in Moldova - The Case of Transnistria and Gagauzia*, [in:] *Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: Regions in Conflict*, ed. J. Hughes and G. Sasse, London 2002, p. 105.

⁷ See: T. Waters, *Security Concerns in Post-Soviet Moldova*, “Conflict Studies Research Centre”, April 2001, pp. 5, 8; *Report No. 13 by the CSCE Mission to Moldova*, 13 November 1993, <<https://www.osce.org/moldova/42307>> (30.05.2018).

insisted that it should be turned over to the Transdniestrian authorities; However, this issue was not addressed in the 1994 agreement on withdrawal⁸.

The current population of Moldova and Transdniestria and its ethnic divisions are uncertain, as there has been no official tally since the Soviet census of 1989. There has been considerable migration into, through and in particular out of Moldova since the census, and estimates vary significantly. These indicate important differences in the trends between Transdniestria and the rest of Moldova, although figures are disputed. While some sources claim that Transdniestria has seen an increase in population since the conflict of approximately 10%, others claim that the population in Transdniestria has decreased by more than 10% in the 1990s⁹. The Republic of Moldova has seen an enormous emigration since independence. According to official figures, 600,000 Moldovans have left Moldova to work abroad (many to Western Europe and often illegally), while unofficial estimates indicate that the real number may be one million, or almost 25% of the 1989 population. A large number of the emigrants are from rural districts, which are predominantly ethnic Moldovan¹⁰.

The year 2016 was a special year for examining the Transdniestrian dispute given the fact that it was an election year both in the Republic of Moldova (election of the President of the Republic of Moldova), and in Transdniestria where presidential elections also took place. As a result, the political situation was complicated by different approaches of the vector of development, first of all that of the Republic of Moldova.

There are many disputes, analysis, points of views held by Moldovan journalists, politicians, scientists which are worth comparing as many distinctions which differentiate the Transdniestrian dispute from other “frozen” conflicts resides the fact that it is not an inter-ethnic one. still up to the present no solution has been found because as an artificial external character as the President (at that time) Vladimir Voronin said: “From the moment of the dissolution of the USSR the key to the problem was and still is in the hands of the leadership of the Russian Federation”¹¹.

⁸ T. Vaux, J. Barrett, *Conflicting Interests – Moldova and the Impact of Transdniestria*, London 2003, p. 13.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 11-12; D. Lynch, *Crisis in Moldova*, “ISS-EU Newsletter” No. 2, May 2002.

¹⁰ Moldovans account for 80% of the rural population, but only 46% of the urban population of Moldova. On the various figures on Moldovan emigration, see: T. Vaux, J. Barrett, op. cit., pp. 5, 10; T. Waters, *The ‘Moldovan Syndrome’ and the Re-Russification of Moldova Forward into the Past!*, “Conflict Studies Research Centre”, February 2002, p. 2.

¹¹ *Moldova’s Balancing Act between Russia and Europe*, Euronews, December 14, 2007, <<http://www.euronews.net/index.php?page=interview&article=459585>> (30.05.2018).

Grigoriy Tarasenko recently mentioned “the interests of Russia extend much further than the aspiration to annex a piece of a former USSR republic”. furthermore, “Russia’s doctrine in the post-soviet space is exactly consisting in the fact that all neighbouring countries are to become part of the Eurasian community, without any coercion”¹².

As the politologist Anatol Taranu declared in an interview for Radio Free Europe, Tiraspol is a lever Russia is using for influence on the Republic of Moldova, in order to keep Moldova in its area of geopolitical influence, but also in order to create the impression, that there is a conflict between Chisinau and Tiraspol. The reality is totally different. Moscow created this conflict in order to keep Moldova under control and not to allow it to move too fast in the direction of European integration¹³.

As Jeffrey Gedmin, the ex-president of “Radio Liberty” noted, the active rearming and military construction of Russia has as a goal to demonstrate its power, to belittle and intimidate, to secure for itself at least the spheres of influence if not territories¹⁴.

During the internet conference from July 6, 2006, the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin declared trenchantly that if the international community wants to solve the issue of the so called unrecognized republics democratically, then the opinion of the population of any territory regarding the organization of its life should be respected/agreed upon.

The most complicated question is if the 5 from 5+2 are equal to the same extent regarding the solution of the Transdnestrian dispute. We consider that Russia, participating in the 5+2 format does not find its proper place in this format, given the fact that Russia is a participant interested in more than the performance of its mission of mediator or arbiter; who, at the same time wants to enter (in essence) the conflict for facilitating the conditions of collaboration among the conflict parties and, finally, the solution of the conflict.

¹² Grigoriy Tarasenko: *Discussions in Transnistria about joining Russia. Pre-election PR*, <<http://super-nep.ru/blog/43878174353/razgovory-v-vpridnestrovie-o-prisoedinenii-k-rossii>> (30.05.2018).

¹³ Anatol Țăranu: *Prognozez o schimbare de retorică la Chișinău în privința reglementării transnistrene, dar fără consecințe reale* <<http://www.europalibera.org/a/28170058.html>> (30.05.2018).

¹⁴ Džefferi Giedmin: *Rossija umiejet eksportirovat' zamorožennyje konflikty*, <<http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/gedemin-on-russia/3380735.html>> (30.05.2018).

Thus, the vice-director of the Russia and Eurasia Program of the Carnegie Fund, Matthew Rojansky, considers that Russia holds a monopoly in solving the conflicts¹⁵.

First, at that initial stage of conflicts in earlier 90s and even during their hot phases this involvement was, according to Claus Neukirch, a German researcher appointed Deputy Chief of the OSCE mission in Moldova (2005), “Too Little, Too Late” and “the preventive effect of the OSCE and the UN was quite limited”¹⁶.

Second, the international community indifference and lack of political will played quite a negative role. “The inconsistent approach of the international community has contributed to the entrenchment of the status quo in these conflicts”, as Dov Lynch stressed it. Moldova, as well as other ex-Soviet countries involved in conflicts, faced just one external force – Russia, which definitely imposed the existing status quo, endorsing the evolution of separatist regions into the de-facto states by all means¹⁷.

In order to understand the current situation, evolution, and prospects for solution of the “frozen and forgotten” conflicts in the post-Soviet space, it is important to focus on their genesis, to re-claim their past through the revival of national history and collective memory, and to search their historical roots in the pre-Soviet and post-Soviet legacy of imperial systems. The recovery of national history was the first step toward the national revival, toward the recovery of national identity and dignity on the thorny path of transition from totalitarianism to democracy, from command-administrative system to market economy, from imperial mentality to the freedom to choose.

The main causes and historical roots of ethno-political conflicts lie in the administrative-territorial divisions of the former Soviet republics and autonomous regions, arbitrarily drawn without regard to their natural boundaries, ethnic, cultural and historical traditions.

The disputes over the language, cultural and historical problems, and the evolution of a new public discourse reflected the struggle for a new political identity among nations and peoples of the Soviet Union and became the most

¹⁵ *Zamorozhenye konflikty*, <<http://gazeta.zn.ua/international/zamorozhenye-conflikty-igry-s-nulevoy-summy-.html>> (30.05.2018).

¹⁶ C. Neukirch, *Russia and the OSCE: The Influence of Interested Third and Disinterested Fourth Parties on the conflicts in Estonia and Moldova*, [in:] *National integration and Violent Conflict on Post-Soviet Societies*, ed. P. Kolsto, Lanham 2002, pp. 237-238.

¹⁷ D. Lynch, *Engaging Eurasia's Separatist States: Unresolved Conflicts and de Facto States'*, Washington 2004, p. 112.

potent basis for political mobilization of the nationalizing “periphery” against the colonial “Centre”. At the same time the “revenge” of the Centre was in the creation of pro-imperial movements as *Interfronts* that ignited the inter-ethnic hatreds by not accepting the revival of national language, culture, new national history, and, in general, by rejecting the right of union republics for independence and sovereignty, democratic changes and reforms.

The most appropriate characteristic of the current status of these conflicts is the word “stagnation.”¹⁸ For the Republic of Moldova “frozen conflict,” at least two key factors perpetuate the status quo: the vested interests of corrupt regional elites and the presence of foreign (mainly Russian) military. With this in mind, let us consider the case Transdnistria.

We will notice that the term “frozen conflict” does not reflect entirely the state of affairs, because it is created the impression of total lack of changes both in the conflict and in the efforts made by the international community. In this respect there is necessary a long term strategic approach, not based on the illusion that a conflict or another may be started/stopped like a car for example. The terminology in itself does not solve the problem, but it reflects to a greater extent the dialectics of the situation or using a newer term: post-truth.

It is important to understand from this post-truth that such a conflict is a very complex one: from politics, economy to mentality and human life. At the same time any proposal for negotiations, solution must take into account the position of Russia. At the same time it is imposed to overcome the attitude of naive expectation that the separatism will bankrupt on its own as a result of the measures of isolation. The strategic paradigm of the politics of Moscow regarding prolonged conflicts was formed as “controlled instability”¹⁹.

It may be claimed that at the present moment Transdnistria is to some extent an independent actor in its external politics, given the interaction of Transdnistria with other countries (Russia) and the international community. Namely this interaction may be seen as a factor/support for their relative independent existence. This situation is animated by the existence of contradiction between the principle of territorial unity and the right to auto determination, caused by the imperfection of international law in this respect. In recent circumstances

¹⁸ The subject is well analyzed by Vladimir Socor in the December 2003-January 2004 series of materials originated from his presentation (December 18, 2003) at John Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS).

¹⁹ V. Socor, *The Foreign Conflicts: a challenge to Euro-Atlantic interests. Report prepared by the Marshall Fund in Germany on the occasion of the NATO Summit from 2004 for “A new Euro Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea region”* p. 2; <http://www.marshallcenter.org/mcpublicweb/MCDocs/files/college/F_Publications/perConcordiam/PC_V1N2_ru.pdf> (30.05.2018).

regarding the evolution of the EU, we consider it advisable that the RM should intensify its bilateral relations with key actors in the European arena such as Germany, France, etc.

This is due to the very individualized nature of conflict that depends on external and internal factors. The external factors, either global ones (EU, USA, NATO, etc.) or regional ones (Romania and Ukraine) were, and permanently will be, present in the elucidation of the Transdnestrian conflict and finding ways/solutions for its settlement. It is very important that in the new conditions the interests of Ukraine and Romania regarding the security in the region be harmonized, Ukraine being more vulnerable due to the fact that it is facing a similar conflict of its own.

It is worth mentioning that if the role of the main actors engaged in the Transdnestrian problem – Russia, EU, USA, OSCE and NATO, are quite largely clarified in the specialty literature, then the role of Ukraine in the circumstances it got into after the case of Crimea and the proclamation of the Donbas “republics” is at this moment not as described. Namely, in the new conditions Ukraine sees in Transdnestria first of all a Russian enclave which may be used by Moscow to attack the southern regions of Ukraine.

The internal factors are more fluctuating given the fact that there are the economic and political interests of the elites on both banks of the Dniester, which sometimes coincide and at other times are in contradiction and may be easily influenced.

Regarding the political elite from the Republic of Moldova, we are going to mention that this is divided geopolitically and by identity. Thus, the Liberal Party considers that the Transdnestrian problem exists due to the fact that at the base of the conflict are the interests of Russia²⁰.

At the same time, the Party of Socialists considers that the Transdnestrian conflict may be solved with the assistance of Russia via federalization of the Republic of Moldova

The current Government of the Republic of Moldova considers the Transdnestrian conflict as a conflict in which the main role in its outburst was played by an external factor and it is “a product of geopolitical interests in the region”. regarding this, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova Pavel Filip declared, speaking in September of the current year at the session of the General

²⁰ F. Morar, *Transnistria: Black whole? The EU is trying to melt the “frozen conflict”. Myth about “frozen conflicts”. Beyond the illusionary dilemmas*, <<https://news.pr-gid.com/archive/79-news/news-md/4596-gimpu-v-osnove-pridnestrovskogo-konflikta-lezat-interesi-Rosii>> (30.05.2018).

Assembly of the UN. The Prime Minister characterized the situation in the area as precarious in the domain of security in the region, intensified by the destabilization sources from the East of Ukraine. In June, 22 the UN adopts the Resolution on withdrawal of Russian troops from Transdniestria. The resolution urges Russia to withdraw its forces from the Transdniestrian region, which are stationed there without the permission of the official authorities²¹.

Regarding the withdrawal of Russian troops and armaments, the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova declared that there is an agreement with the Ukrainian side about the creation of a mutual “green corridor” for withdrawal²².

It must be taken into consideration that the historical roots of Transdniestria are “strong”, starting with the support of Tsarist Russia, then with that of the USSR making the region into an outpost of the empire. As a result of self proclamation Transdniestria has become a strategic-military foothold for Russia, which allows it to influence South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans, let alone influence on Ukraine. In spite of the fact that the Transdniestrian Russians occupy the second place among the ethnicities of the region, Transdniestria may be considered a “Russian republic”. This, in our opinion makes the conflict last without having finality. Even if solutions of the political-juridical type (Federation, Confederation, large autonomy etc.) are to be found, the population of Transdniestria will not be reconciled for a long time. As Fiodor Lukyanov, main editor of the journal “Russia in global politics” mentions, the impulse given by a short, but bloody conflict, until the present creates a basis for what may be called Transdniestrian self-conscience. There has long been no real threat of a clash even less of an “Anschluss”, however the spectre of “Romanian danger” hovers²³.

We consider that a major impediment is also the fact that during this period two educational systems existed, which practically led to the formation of two systems of values and representations etc. In our opinion, federalization or the large autonomy will preserve the situation further. At the same time, the last period has also increased the number of eurosceptics on the right bank of the Dniester. The results of the Presidential elections from November 13 have con-

²¹ UN adopts resolution on withdrawal of Russian troops from Transnistria, <<https://112.international/ukraine-top-news/un-adopts-resolution-on-withdrawal-of-russian-troops-from-transnistria-29635.html>> (30.05.2018).

²² A. Salaru, *Ukraine ready to offer “green corridor” for the evacuation of Russian troops*, <https://deschide.md/ru/russian_news/politic_ru/2821/> (30.05.2018).

²³ *Gazeta.ru*, <<https://www.gazeta.ru/column/lukyanov/4100585.shtml>> (30.05.2018).

firmed this tendency due to the errors (and high corruption) the Alliance from the governance.

Recently the EU has also understood that there are changes in the social consciousness of the population in the Republic of Moldova, not only regarding the positive perception towards the EU. Resulting from the fact that the perception of the EU is in decline, partially due to Russian propaganda, the EU has launched a project which foresees to carry out research regarding the European discourses in the countries of the Eastern Partnership. In other words a new “Europeanization” of the population is needed.

In this respect it is important to note that Germany, which holds the chairmanship of the OSCE, suggested moving the accents in the Transdniestrian settlement. As it is obvious that it is impossible to obtain a quick definitive political solution to this conflict, Germany suggests concentrating on the problems of the inhabitants of both banks of the Dniester. This idea was voiced in June 2016, during his visit in the Republic of Moldova the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier²⁴.

Regarding Transdniestria, all the 6 candidates had the same objective – independence of Transdniestria and subsequent annexation to the Russian Federation.

The most explicit was the newly elected president of Transdniestria Vadim Krasnoselski: “We protect including via criminal law the *national idea* (author’s emphasis). It was voiced in Transdniestria at the referendum from 2006, when the people unequivocally expressed their wish for the independence of Transdniestria with the subsequent annexation to the Russian Federation²⁵.”

When it is desired there may be found solutions for boosting the negotiation process regarding the Transdniestrian dispute. Thus, in the last period Russia has supported the position of Germany regarding the unblocking of negotiations in the 5+2 format, which started on June 2-3, 2016 in Berlin.

According to the position of the Russian Federation in relation to the Transdniestrian dispute, it is necessary alongside the official position regarding the support of sovereignty and integrity of the Republic of Moldova, that the Russian Federation be more specific regarding the principle of neutrality declared in the Constitution of the country, and thus, finally the fate of the mili-

²⁴ *Giermanija oczelowieczwajet pridniestrowskij konflikt*, <<https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3048660>> (30.05.2018).

²⁵ *Pnp.ru*, <<http://www.pnp.ru/interview/2016/06128/vadim-krasnoselskiy-nacionalnaya-ideya-pridnestrovyabyt-vmeste-s-rossiei>> (30.05.2018).

tary contingent deployed on the territory that is not controlled by the Republic of Moldova.

At this moment we have to emphasize that the future status of Transdnjestria are shaping 4 variants:

1. Independence of Transdnjestria. This independence is promoted by the leaders of Transdnjestria. The new President of the Transdnjestrian Moldovan republic, Vadim Krasnoselski, declared recently that he would not discuss with the authorities from Chisinau about a special status for the “republic”. In prospects Transdnjestria is to be annexed to the Russian Federation.
2. Transdnjestria a component part of the Republic of Moldova with a large autonomy. This variant may have the support of the democratic forces from the Republic of Moldova.
3. Accepting status-quo. This variant is accepted by Russia, taking into consideration keeping under its influence not only Transdnjestria, but de facto also the Republic of Moldova.
4. Waiting for the solution of the conflict. This variant suggests waiting for the determination of geostrategic positions (interests) between the West and Russia in the context of the ulterior evolutions on European level and within Russia regarding the economic sanctions (and not only) from the international community, the solution/non-solution of the problem of Crimea etc.

Although the causes of the Transdnjestria conflict are complex, and linked to broader international issues that cannot easily be resolved in the short term, there is good reason to believe that we now face a new window of opportunity to bring conflict resolution back into focus for each of the relevant parties and the international community as a whole. Russia and Ukraine have expressed a renewed serious interest in solving the conflict, while Europe and the United States have the ability to help Moldova grow and develop in ways that will make it a more appealing partner for Transdnjestrians. Recent but sustained political change in Moldova and the possibility of an imminent change of leadership in Transdnjestria could also combine to enable a renewed drive to resolve the conflict within the OSCE 5+2 framework. Moldova is certainly a positive example in a region with more than its share of hard cases. The new government has made a concerted effort to deepen ties with Europe, while maintaining historically close and cordial relations with Moscow. Moreover, Moldovans are still among the most moderate and flexible people in the region in their attitudes toward the complex interplay among language, religion, and nationality. Moldovans living on both banks of the Dniester River deserve a chance to put these values into practice in a reunited society and state which

will open new opportunities, end painful separation, and deliver far greater prosperity for the region as a whole.

Thus, the vice-director of the Russia and Eurasia Program of the Carnegie Fund, Matthew Rojansky, considers that Russia holds a monopoly in solving the conflicts.

It is impossible to disagree with opinion of Spanish author Miguel Beltran de Felipe who in article of *Prospects of Catalan separatism: Politics and Law*. Whether states the law can resolve the law crisis and emphasizes, that the problem "secession" has not so much legal or constitutional how is political nature²⁶.

2014 up to the conflict in East areas of Ukraine 5 ways/ versions of resolving of this question were possible at least these variants:

1. Addition Transdnistria to Ukraine.
2. Addition Transdnistria to Russia.
3. Reunification of state. (The Republic of Moldova)
4. Independent state- Transdnistria.
5. Conservation nowadays status-quo.

Nowadays it is our opinion that the status-quo will be kept given the long-term conflict up until and while the Republic of Moldova by means of external partners will become attractive to the Transdnistrian population. then the basic actors will make mutually advantageous decisions in view of their geopolitic and national interests in the case of a mental shift of the Transdnistrian population.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- ✓ *Anatol Țăranu: Prognozes o schimbare de retorică la Chișinău în privința reglementării transnistrene, dar fără consecințe reale* <<http://www.europalibera.org/a/28170058.html>> (30.05.2018)
- ✓ Borgen C., *Thawing a Frozen Conflict: Legal Aspects of the Separatist Crisis in Moldova: A Report from the Association of the Bar of the City of New York*, "Record of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York", Vol. 61, 2006
- ✓ *Džeffri Giedmin: Rossija umiejzet eksportirovat' zamorožennyje konflikty*, <<http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/gedemin-on-russia/3380735.html>> (30.05.2018)

²⁶ M. B. de Felipe, *Prospects of Catalan separatism*, "Politics and Law", No. 109 (5/2016).

- ✓ de Felipe M. B., *Prospects of Catalan separatism*, "Politics and Law", No. 109 (5/2016)
- ✓ *Gazeta.ru*, <<https://www.gazeta.ru/column/lukyanov/4100585.shtml>> (30.05.2018)
- ✓ *Giermanija oczelowiecziwajet pridniestrowskij konflikt*, <<https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3048660>> (30.05.2018)
- ✓ *Grigoriy Tarasenko: Discussions in Transnistria about joining Russia. Pre-election PR*, <<http://super-nep.ru/blog/43878174353/razgovory-v-vpridnestrovie-o-prisoedinenii-k-rossii>> (30.05.2018)
- ✓ Lynch D., *Crisis in Moldova*, "ISS-EU Newsletter" No. 2, May 2002
- ✓ Lynch D., *Engaging Eurasia's Separatist States: Unresolved Conflicts and de Facto States'*, Washington 2004
- ✓ *Report No. 13 by the CSCE Mission to Moldova*, 13 November 1993, <<https://www.osce.org/moldova/42307>> (30.05.2018)
- ✓ *Moldova's Balancing Act between Russia and Europe*, Euronews, December 14, 2007, <<http://www.euronews.net/index.php?page=interview&article=459585>> (30.05.2018)
- ✓ Morar F., *Transnistria: Black whole? The EU is trying to melt the "frozen conflict". Myth about "frozen conflicts". Beyond the illusionary dilemmas*, <<https://news.prgid.com/archive/79-news/news-md/4596-gimpu-v-osnove-pridnestrovskogo-konflikta-lezat-interesi-Rosii>> (30.05.2018)
- ✓ Neukirch C., *Russia and the OSCE: The Influence of Interested Third and Disinterested Fourth Parties on the conflicts in Estonia and Moldova*, [in:] *National integration and Violent Conflict on Post-Soviet Societies*, ed. P. Kolsto, Lanham 2002
- ✓ *Pnp.ru*, <<http://www.pnp.ru/interview/2016/06128/vadim-krasnoselskiy-nacionalnaya-ideya-pridnestrovya-byt-vmeste-s-rossiei>> (30.05.2018)
- ✓ Roper S. D., *Regionalism in Moldova - The Case of Transnistria and Gagauzia*, [in:] *Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: Regions in Conflict*, ed. J. Hughes and G. Sasse, London 2002
- ✓ Salaru A., *Ukraine ready to offer "green corridor" for the evacuation of Russian troops*, <https://deschide.md/ru/russian_news/politic_ru/2821/> (30.05.2018)
- ✓ Socor V., *The Foreign Conflicts: a challenge to Euro-Atlantic interests. Report prepared by the Marshall Fund in Germany on the occasion of the NATO Summit from 2004 for "A new Euro Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea region"* p. 2

- <http://www.marshallcenter.org/mcpublicweb/MCDocs/files/college/F_Publications/perConcordiam/PC_V1N2_ru.pdf> (30.05.2018)
- ✓ *UN adopts resolution on withdrawal of Russian troops from Transnistria*, <<https://112.international/ukraine-top-news/un-adopts-resolution-on-withdrawal-of-russian-troops-from-transnistria-29635.html>> (30.05.2018)
 - ✓ Vaux T., Barrett J., *Conflicting Interests – Moldova and the Impact of Transdnistria*, London 2003
 - ✓ Waters T., *Security Concerns in Post-Soviet Moldova*, “Conflict Studies Research Centre”, April 2001
 - ✓ Waters T., *The ‘Moldovan Syndrome’ and the Re-Russification of Moldova Forward into the Past!*, “Conflict Studies Research Centre”, February 2002
 - ✓ Weber M., *Politics as a Vocation*, [in:] *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*, ed. P. O’Neil and R. Rogowski, New York-London 2004
 - ✓ *Zamorozhenye konflikty*, <http://gazeta.zn.ua/international/zamorozhenye-konflikty-igry-s-nulevoy-summoy_.html> (30.05.2018)