

ETHNIC MOBILIZATION AND REACTIVE NATIONALISM: THE CASE OF MOLDOVA

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1. Introduction

Until the October 1991 Soviet coup, Moldova,¹ previously known as Bessarabia and the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, had known independence only briefly,² having been part of the Russian Empire, Romania, or the Soviet Union for almost its entire history. As a result of shifting foreign influences and borders, Moldova, like most modern political entities, has a multi-ethnic population. The conflicting perspectives and demands of Moldova's different ethnic groups underlie many of today's controversies.

Moldova's post-Soviet development merits analysis for several reasons: (1) the process of national mobilization by the majority Romanian-speaking population aimed at creating an independent political entity on a territory that had almost never been self-governing, (2) the reactive nationalism of the minority populations resulting from the titular group's growing assertiveness, (3) the perceptions of external actors, each concerned with its ethnic diaspora in the new political and social order, and (4) the varying strategies being used to manage the resulting ethnic conflict.

This analysis will address the perspectives of the different actors in contemporary Moldova in the context of this territory's attempt to build an independent state and manage inherent conflicts within a developing political process. It focuses specifically on the interaction of the majority Romanian-speaking³ population and the minority Russian population in Moldova. The Russian minority warrants study not only for its own sake, but also because it resembles Russian minorities in many of the other former Soviet republics. With twenty-five million ethnic Russians living outside the borders of the Russian Federation, the successor states' indigenous leaderships must find means to deal with the Russian minorities in the new political entities that they are trying to create. To do otherwise risks internal conflict among the ethnic groups or external conflict with Moscow. The accommodative approach toward the Russians and other minorities being taken by the leadership of Moldova has enjoyed a modicum of success. Many of the right-bank minorities are joining the process of creating a new state; Transdnistrian Russians, however, continue to pursue territorial independence.

Moldova provides a case study of a political leadership's seeking a positive

balance between the demands of the majority, titular population and the rights of significant minority groups. At first, the national mobilization of the Romanian-speaking population led to a reaction on the part of the minorities that threatened not only the development of democratic institutions but also the existence of the new state. The Moldovan political leaders then moderated their positions and made efforts to accommodate the minorities—Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauz and others—living in the new republic. Their success in incorporating minorities on the right bank into a multi-ethnic government provides some support for the contention that accommodative rather than exclusionary policies contribute to building democratic political structures.

Democratic state-building can only progress in an environment in which differing ethnic points-of-view can be contained within legitimate political processes. Approaches to contain the ethnic conflict—cultural autonomy, territorial autonomy, and outside intervention—illustrate some of the available tools to manage ethnic differences not only in Moldova but also in the other successor states.

Moldova: Neither a Nation nor a State

Today's independent post-Soviet successor state neither restores a previously autonomous state (like the Baltics) nor satisfies a long-suppressed nationalist aspiration (like Ukraine). One position, represented by the Popular Front and other pro-unification forces and articulated by many western scholars, contends that:

The Moldavians ... can only be considered Romanians; they share exactly the same language, practise the same faith and have the same history. At every conceivable opportunity (in the 1870s, in 1918 and in 1941) the inhabitants of Soviet Moldavia freely opted for union with Romania and considered themselves Romanian. Furthermore—and despite persistent Russian or Soviet attempts to prove the contrary—Moldavians never sought nor achieved an independent existence as a state.... (Moldavia) is a territory without its own, separate nation, a political notion rather than an ethnic reality.⁴

The other position considers the situation to be more complex and suggests that Romanian-speaking Moldovans may see themselves as being different from Romanians. The March 1994 referendum, in which the population overwhelmingly rejected political ties with Romania, would lend credibility to the perception of difference:

Scholars in Romania and the West have dismissed the notion of Moldovan ethnicity as a paper-thin creation of Soviet propaganda; once someone dared to say the emperor had no clothes, the fiction of a separate Moldovan ethnicity would simply disappear. But it is clear that, for a time, the notion of Moldovan ethnicity served as an important rallying-point for the Moldovan *informals* [opposition to the Soviet-controlled leadership]. This message was not the resurrection of Romanian ethnicity, but an uncertain and inconsistent call to reappropriate an ethnic identity which, though related to the west-Prut Romanians, was still somehow distinctly Moldovan.⁵

Historically, Moldova, the territory between the Prut and Dniester rivers known as

Bessarabia, was caught between the Russian and Ottoman Empires.⁶ As a result of Russian success in the war with Turkey, this area was ruled by Russian tsars from 1812 until 1917. When the Russian Empire fell, Bessarabia was incorporated into the Romanian state that emerged after the First World War. It came under Soviet influence as the result of Molotov–Ribbentrop pact in 1939. Following the Nazi invasion in 1941, Moldova was re-incorporated into Romania. Only after 1944 did Moldova begin functioning as a Soviet Socialist Republic. The strip of land now known as Transdnistria on the eastern bank of the Dniester was reassigned from Ukraine to Moldova in 1940 and incorporated into the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. Unlike the remainder of today's Moldova, Transdnistria had never been under Romanian rule.

As a result of this history, Moldova never developed independent state structures. Only since the collapse of the Soviet Union has Moldova begun the process of state-building. Moldova thus is not a nation-state in the modern usage of the term.⁷ Lee Dutter argues that a nation-state has three features: (1) a bounded geographic area, (2) a centralized and institutionalized governmental structure engaged in social, economic and military policies, and (3) an ethnically and culturally homogeneous population.⁸ Using this standard, Moldova can be said to have only the first of these characteristics; but even this feature is being challenged. Moldova could, therefore, be considered a territorial state which is bounded geographically but does not have a centralized governmental structure nor an ethnically or culturally homogeneous population. Dutter described the territorial state as one in which “the *physical* boundary of the regime's authority exceeds the psychological boundary of its legitimacy.”⁹

An important characteristic of the nation-state is sovereignty over its territory. John Herz contends that applying force to rule one's own territory does not constitute sovereignty.¹⁰ The Chisinau government does not possess territorial sovereignty because it does not control the administrative or the military structures in Transdnistria and has only limited control of Gagauzia. The question confronting the Chisinau government is how can it extend its sovereignty—and establish its legitimacy—throughout its geographic boundaries.

Multi-Ethnicity: The Seeds of Conflict

The policy of the Soviet government toward the population of Moldova paralleled that followed by the tsars. To differentiate Bessarabia from the developing Romanian state to its west, the tsarist government encouraged non-Romanian ethnic groups to settle in the territory. Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, Jews, Bulgarians and Gagauz migrated to Bessarabia with grants of land and exclusions from the discriminatory legislation that they faced elsewhere in the Russian empire. These nineteenth-century policies diluted the Romanian population in Bessarabia: Romanians could be found mostly in the rural areas, and non-Romanians in the cities. The Romanians, who

constituted 86% of the population of Bessarabia in 1817, were reduced to only 48% of the population in 1897 and constituted 56% of the population in 1930.¹¹ The Soviets pursued ethno-demographic economic policies after the Second World War that led to the migration of thousands of Russians and Ukrainians to Moldova, resulting in further dilution of the indigenous population and the development of large Russian-speaking enclaves in Moldovan urban areas. Yet Moscow's policies toward Moldova were contradictory: on the one hand, Moscow encouraged "Moldovan" nationalism in order to sever linguistic and cultural ties with Romania; on the other hand, Moscow attempted to limit the development of a national consciousness that might be turned against the Soviet center.¹²

Today's Republic of Moldova has a population of 4,359,100 people [1 January 1992],¹³ with 2.8 million Romanians making up the largest population group (64.5%). Ukrainians are the largest minority, numbering 600,000 (13.8%).¹⁴ Moldova is the only Soviet successor state in which the Ukrainian minority outnumbers the Russian minority (13.0%). Sixty-seven per cent of the Ukrainians were born in Moldova, and 29% were born in Ukraine.¹⁵ The majority of the urban Ukrainians moved to Moldova after the Second World War to work in newly developing industrial enterprises; many rural Ukrainians live in villages where their ancestors have lived for centuries.

The 562,000 Russians constitute the third largest population group. About 52% of the Russians were born in Moldova, and 36% were born in Russia.¹⁶ Transdnistria, where today's conflict is centered, is home to 153,400 Russians [note that only 27% of Moldova's Russians live on the left bank], most of whom are post-war migrants. As Irina Livezeanu points out, many Romanians view the minorities as an extension of Soviet—specifically, Stalinist—policies.¹⁷

As in the Baltic States, Sovietization in Moldova was accompanied by mass deportations and a major influx mainly of Russians but of other Slavs as well. The Russian population of the republic grew from 6% of the total in 1940 to 10.2% in 1959 ... and in 1989 stood at 13%. According to the 1989 census, 48% of the Russians living in Moldova and 33% of the Ukrainians were born outside the borders of the republic. The Russians, the majority of whom settled in the urban centers, became a colonial élite in Moldova ... with Russified Ukrainians assuming the role of their junior partners.¹⁸

Not only did the Russian migration after the Second World War change the population statistics, it also affected both the occupational and educational balance among the ethnic groups. Russians and Russian-speakers moved to the cities, took the more technical jobs and filled many of the places in educational institutions. A large number of such opportunities existed for the Russians because many intellectuals moved from Bessarabia to Romania at the end of the Second World War or were removed from the territory during the Stalinist purges of 1940–1941 and the immediate post-war period. As a result, Russian culture dominated urban, technical and educational life.¹⁹

After years of substantial migration resulting from the development of heavy

industry during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, Moldova, like other successor states, is currently experiencing a reverse migration resulting in a re-indigenization of the population. In spite of the leadership's efforts to champion a multi-ethnic society in which the cultural traditions of all of the peoples are fostered and respected, emigration data for 1991 show an outflow of 64,000 people from the republic. Of this number, 18,000 were Jews, 15,000 were Russians, 11,000 were Ukrainians, and 14,000 were Romanians; many went to Israel, Western Europe and the United States.²⁰ Most Russians, however, perceive that inter-ethnic relations are rather good in Moldova and living conditions are better than in Russia; thus, no large scale Russian emigration is expected.²¹

A portion of this emigration was the result of the conflict in Transdniestria. Many refugees from Moldova fled to the Odessa region, just two hours east by train from Tiraspol. Ukraine has tried to reduce both arms shipments and refugee flows across its border. Ukraine has been particularly concerned about Russian intervention in Transdniestria and the movement of Russian Cossacks to fight for the Transdniestrian Russians against Chisinau. With the cease-fire and the introduction of peace-keeping forces in 1992, many of the refugees have now returned to their former homes. The involvement of some of the fighters from Transdniestria in the conflict between Russian President Yeltsin and the parliament in October 1994 illustrates that the border is closed to neither soldiers nor arms.

Another population group, the Gagauz, has inhabited the southern part of Moldova since the early part of the nineteenth century when it received gifts of land from the tsars. Gagauz are Turkic-speaking Orthodox Christians who migrated to the southern part of Bessarabia from Bulgaria to escape Turkish rule during the Russian-Ottoman war of 1806-1812. The Gagauz speak a dialect of Ottoman Turkish. Historians are divided on whether the Gagauz are descendants of Bulgarians whose language was Turkified, or Turkic tribes who were Christianized.²²

The 1989 Soviet census reports that 153,300 of the USSR's 197,000 Gagauz live in Moldova. An additional 27,000 Gagauz live in the neighboring Odessa Oblast of Ukraine. Almost all of Moldova's Gagauz live in five southern regions. Gagauz constitute 64% of the population of Comrat and Ceadir-Lunga, 37% of Vulcanesti, 30% of Basarabasca, and 27% of Taraclia. These five regions make up the territory of the "Gagauz republic" that is seeking autonomy. These regions comprise 10% of Moldova's territory, with a population of approximately 300,000. However, even in the area in which they are concentrated, the Gagauz are a minority.

The town of Comrat (population 30,000) is the administrative center of the Gagauz region. The Gagauz are largely agricultural, working the fertile lands that their ancestors received from the tsars, now mostly collective farms. Moldovan villages in the Gagauz region have poorer land, and the Moldovans living in these regions are typically laborers on state farms.²³

2. National Mobilization: Toward Independence

*Language*²⁴

Five years after the passage of legislation making Romanian the state language of Moldova, language remains one of the most difficult issues between the Russians and Romanian-speakers in Moldova. This situation is hardly surprising because language is one of the objective attributes of ethnicity. Language provides a "cultural mark" which serves to create internal cohesion among people and differentiate one group from another.²⁵ Most Russians thus far have made little effort to acquire even a rudimentary knowledge of the state language. This situation continues to frustrate the Romanian majority, especially those political leaders who from the beginning of the independence movement advocated the inclusion of the Russians and other minorities in the political, social and economic fabric of the new state.

Moldova followed the Baltics and Tajikistan in passing a law making the language of the indigenous population the state language. The August 1989 law required those working in public services and education and those holding leadership positions in enterprises to acquire facility in both Russian and Romanian by 1994. Few initially took the law seriously; 1994 was far off. With the arrival of the deadline, many Russians continue to make excuses (inadequate books, teachers, not enough time); the Romanian-speaking population, itself almost entirely bilingual, has become increasingly frustrated with its inability to use its own language for everyday activities. Russian school-age children are making the shift, but most of their parents have been slow to adjust to the new situation.

Russians typically interact with other Russians or expect Romanians to communicate with them in Russian. Some Romanians-speakers find this expectation troubling. As one Romanian educator reported: "In the 1940s when the Soviet Union annexed Moldova, the Russians just pointed a gun at our heads and said to learn Russian. We did. Now, even after four years, the Russians say they can't learn Romanian. What's wrong with them?"²⁶

Moldovans, led by the Popular Front, first formed groups in support of restructuring and seized the opportunity provided by *perestroika* and *glasnost* to create a nationalist movement. One of the first distinctly nationalist controversies erupted over the 1989 Supreme Soviet debate on making Romanian the state language. Gorbachev himself lobbied for maintaining Russian as the state language; Mircea Snegur, then Chairman of the Moldovan Supreme Soviet and currently President, came into the limelight for publicly opposing Gorbachev's position.

When the Soviet Union annexed Moldova from Romania in 1940 as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and the Second World War, the Latin alphabet, used to write the Romanian language, was replaced by the Cyrillic in Soviet-controlled Moldova. Soviet control also meant that Russian increasingly became the language of public life. With the passing of the 1989 language law, Romanian became the state language; Latin letters replaced Cyrillic for transcription of Romanian,

and russified names were returned to their previous designations. This process proceeded rapidly and relatively smoothly on the right bank of the Dniester River. However, "romanianization" became the primary point of controversy in the area controlled by the Russian minority on the left bank (Transdnistria) and in the Gagauz region to the south.

Language became the first and most important point of contention when political control loosened under Gorbachev, mobilizing the Romanian-speakers and making them more cohesive. At the same time, the re-discovery of Moldova's Romanian heritage triggered a Russian backlash. Language initially provided a vehicle for national expression that was less threatening to the center than an outright move for political independence would have been. Russians, however, feared that giving Romanian the status of the state language was just the first step toward eventual union with Romania. This fear was not unfounded; one of the initial priorities of the Popular Front and its leadership was reunification.

The question of Latin or Cyrillic was especially symbolic. The Soviet imposition of Cyrillic was seen as cultural imperialism. Symbolism and history, however, are not always congruent, as nationalists often reconstruct the past to serve their present political needs:

It is hard for Moldavian nationalists then and now to remember that the Cyrillic alphabet was not initially imposed on Romanians by an alien imperialist government. The Cyrillic script was used in Romanian until the middle of the nineteenth century. While linguistically it might make more sense to write Romanian with Latin letters, the logic of Latinity did not make itself felt until the 1840s. The first language of the Orthodox church, the princely courts, and high culture in the two principalities had been Old Church Slavonic since the tenth century.²⁷

Nonetheless, nationalists insisted that (1) "Moldovan" become the state language, (2) that the Latin alphabet be adopted, and (3) that the identity of Moldovan and Romanian be acknowledged. This third point is particularly important: during Soviet times, affirming that "Moldovan" was a different language from "Romanian" and best understood by using the Cyrillic script was "a litmus test of one's acceptance of the legitimacy of Soviet rule."²⁸

As momentum gathered to change from Russian to Moldovan/Romanian, so did the fear on the part of the Russian-speaking population. The Popular Front organized rallies and collected over a million signatures in support of the language legislation. Not only the Russians felt threatened by the Romanian movement. Gagauzi, Ukrainians and other ethnic groups living in Moldova feared that they would have to learn two languages—Russian and Romanian—in addition to their native language.²⁹ Even on the right bank, in spite of the statements by political leaders to the contrary, a strong anti-Russian sentiment was evident in the language debate from the early days of Moldova's move toward independence.³⁰

The Popular Front indeed was pro-Romanian (including support for unification) and anti-Russian. The anti-Russian rhetoric soon moderated and the unification

movement lost support; both the government and the parliament supported legislation to accommodate the linguistic and cultural interests of all the minorities. However, the damage done by the initial nationalist rhetoric could not be undone. The 1989 language law—though ultimately containing a compromise making “Moldovan” the state language and “the languages of the populations of other nationalities ... the languages of communication among the nations of the Soviet Union—provided the catalyst for the independence movements on the left bank and the Gagauz territory in the south. Crowther appropriately labels these independence movements “reactive nationalism.”

Threatened by efforts of the majority ethnic group to destabilize the *status quo* in its own favor, members of the other minorities themselves entered into an independent political movement in order to increase the cost to the state of concessions to the Moldavians [Romanian-speakers]. The minorities also appealed to the national-level political leaders [Moscow] either (1) to defend the *status quo*, (2) to guarantee that any concessions to the Moldavian majority do not damage the position of minorities in the republic, or (3), if all else fails, to permit the other minorities to detach themselves from the present political unit and form a political entity of their own, one that would be directly responsible to the national-level government.³¹

While the passage of five years has not resulted in the majority of Russians learning or even attempting to learn Romanian, it has brought a significant change of attitude. Even the Director of the Russian Cultural Center in Chisinau, Alexander Belopotapov, now refers to Romanian as the “state” language. In a recent interview he accepted the need for Russians to learn Romanian and talked more of the inadequate resources available to learn the language (meaning classes, books, and teachers) and the short time allowed by the law than about any fundamental opposition to becoming bilingual.³² On the right bank, many Russians, Romanians and Gagauz now refer to the “Romanian” rather than the “Moldovan” language, conceding their identity; in fact, people of all three nationalities corrected the author’s references to the “Moldovan language” or the “Moldovan people,” suggesting “Romanian” instead. In the heat of the February 1994 parliamentary campaign, President Snegur himself spoke of the common language but different peoples in Romania and Moldova. He “rejected the Romanian view that Romanians and Moldovans are one people and should therefore form one state. While related to Romanians and speaking a common language, Moldovans are a distinct people entitled to having an independent state....”³³ Only in Transdnistria do people consistently contend that Moldovan is a different language from Romanian; schools in Transdnistria teach almost entirely in Russian and the Romanian language is written exclusively in the Cyrillic alphabet. No Romanian schools exist in Tiraspol for a Romanian population of 25,000.

The russification of the educational system was at the root of the status distinction between the languages during Soviet times. Much of the education in Moldova was conducted in Russian, including practically all beyond the primary level in the urban

areas. Country-wide in 1989, 40.9% of students studied in Russian, and 59.1% studied in the titular language.³⁴ Just under half of the population of Chisinau was Romanian in 1989. Of this group, 12% claimed Russian as their native language, and 75% claimed to speak Russian. In contrast, only 11% of the Russians in the capital claimed competence in Romanian.³⁵ Only about 10% of the Chisinau kindergartens used Romanian as the primary language. In the Chisinau polytechnic university, Romanian was treated as a "foreign" language like French and English.³⁶ Because instruction in specialized and higher education was conducted primarily in Russian, fluency in Russian was required for skilled and administrative jobs.

The language law and independence have changed this situation. By the 1992-3 academic year, 71% of secondary school students in Moldova were taught primarily in Romanian.³⁷ Both Romanian as well as many mixed families (one-fifth of all marriages are mixed in Moldova) now send their children to Romanian-language schools. Because of the large shift, the Romanian schools are often overcrowded and instructional personnel are often in short supply. Russian families continue to send their children to Russian schools (though there are now exceptions), but the quality of the Romanian language instruction in these schools and student seriousness about the need to learn Romanian have reportedly increased.

Russians complain about the closing of many Russian schools and the shortage of Romanian language teachers and materials. The most serious complaints involve specialized secondary and higher education, where Moldovan governmental policies have had the greatest negative impact on the Russians. Specialized technical education provided in Russian has been severely reduced. Thus, many young people not pursuing higher education and wishing to develop a skill must study in Romanian or pursue their training out of the republic. Likewise, those who wish to pursue higher education in the Russian language have limited options within Moldova, and thus face increased competition for the available slots. Increasing numbers of Russian young people are reportedly seeking further education in Russia, with the Russian Cultural Center in Chisinau playing an active role in evaluating students' records and assisting them with placement in Russian universities.³⁸

Some educational personnel have lost their jobs as the subjects that they once taught in Russian have been shifted to Romanian. Several university teachers from Chisinau have moved to Transdnistria to continue their work.³⁹ Yet many Russian educators and other professionals willing to learn Romanian face a troubling problem: in spite of their having acquired the ability to communicate, they are having trouble gaining sufficient sophistication in Romanian to work in their area of expertise.⁴⁰

The language law, requiring that heads of institutions and people employed in public services speak both Romanian and Russian, took effect on 1 January 1994. Many Russians in such positions are unable to meet the requirements. The State Department of Languages, created in 1992, is charged with the law's implementation, and regularly carries out spot checks to determine compliance of govern-

mental official and agencies. This agency operates somewhat independently of the government and represents a Romanian nationalist and pro-unification position that is consistent with that of the Popular Front. According to its Director General, Ion Ciocanu, "the Russian-speaking masses have not yet developed a desire to master the language of the sovereign Moldovan state in which they live." He further reports that the number of Russians taking Romanian language courses has been declining.⁴¹ Despite the publicity generated by the spot checks carried out by the department, few expect the language law to be harshly enforced. Indeed, in February 1993 Prime Minister Sangheli directed that government work continue to be carried out in both Russian and Romanian because so few Russians were fluent in Romanian.⁴² While moving toward the more widespread use of the state language, the government is still trying to undo the polarization brought about by the initial nationalist stance of the Popular Front in the late 1980s.

While generally accommodative toward the mono-lingual Russian minority, some Romanians seem to be losing their patience on the language issue. As Presidential Counsellor Viktor Grebenshchikov (himself a Russian) stated:

Romanians are very tolerant. But as long as Russians in Moldova will not learn Romanian, there will continue to be tension. More and more Romanians are coming to wonder about having to use a foreign language in their own country. Speaking the language of the state of which you are a member is in no way discrimination.... Russians here must face the fact that the Republic of Moldova is no longer the Russian *gubernia* of Bessarabia, or the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic, but the independent Republic of Moldova.⁴³

Until 1989, Russians felt very comfortable in Moldova. They had their own schools and cultural institutions and expected non-Russians to speak to them in Russian. Even with the declaration of independence, the Moldovan political leaders took rather moderate positions *vis-à-vis* Russians and other minorities. The parliament adopted an accommodative position on citizenship (the zero-option approach, where all people currently resident in Moldova could become citizens if they wished) and imposed the language requirement only on those in leadership positions or in regular contact with the public. But, according to Valeriu Matei, Member of Parliament and vice chairman of the Congress of Intellectuals (which favors eventual reunification with Romania), the accommodative approach thus far has failed:

When I think that between 1989 and 1993 people didn't learn ten words of Romanian—how to say "hello," "good evening," "how are you"—I can only react with sadness and disappointment. If people want to live here, they should at least make an effort to learn the language.⁴⁴

Matei, however, remains an optimist, citing what he called a "new mentality" gaining ground among the young Russians and Ukrainians growing up under independence. He also pointed to the recent creation of the Russian Cultural Center by Chisinau's Russian intellectuals as evidence of progress. This group will bring "intelligence and reason" to the issues, rather than force.

The Break with Moscow

What began as a protest in 1989 over the new language law developed into a revolt in 1990 and into a mature break-away movement in 1991. Russian and Ukrainian workers went on strike after the passage of the language law, crippling many of the large industrial enterprises. The *Edinstvo* organization on the right bank and the Union of Work Collectives on the left bank were primary organizers of the strikes. Even before the 1991 coup, the Chisinau government had lost control of the left bank. The "Gagauz SSR" proclaimed its independence on 19 August 1991, and Transnistria followed on 2 September 1991. Conflict commenced from that point, with both break-away territories forming military units.

Both sides stressed ideological rather than ethnic aspects of the conflict in 1989 and 1990. The left bank leaders, taking an "internationalist" position to counter the Popular Front's Romanian nationalism, criticized the Moldovan steps to destroy both socialism and the union. Chisinau attacked left-bank leaders for their opposition to Gorbachev's reforms and their wanting to maintain the Soviet political and economic systems. The Chisinau leadership maintained this position for a long time, arguing that the dispute was over issues other than ethnicity. In so doing, it took pains to adopt policies to support minority rights and ethnic harmony. Thus, a distinction must be maintained between the more radical Popular Front leadership advocating unification with Romania and others committed to autonomy of a multi-ethnic Moldovan state.

Moscow at first ignored the events in Moldova, then sided with the break-away territories. Gorbachev himself became involved in attempts at negotiation, proposing three-party discussions involving the left-bank Russians, the Gagauz and Chisinau. Because this structure provided *de facto* recognition of the independence of the left-bank territory, Chisinau declined to participate.

Power shifted as a result of parliamentary elections in spring 1990 from the Communists to the Popular Front, a largely Romanian-dominated coalition. Mircea Snegur, one of the Popular Front's key governmental supporters, was first elected Chairman of the Moldovan Supreme Soviet, then president after the Supreme Soviet created the post. The government was replaced with Popular Front supporters in May 1990 with the selection of Mircea Druc as prime minister. By summer 1990, the Romanian-speaking reformers were firmly in control of the republican governing structures, and the Russians, with Ukrainian and Gagauz support, found themselves in opposition.

On 23 June 1990, the Moldovan Supreme Soviet adopted a declaration of sovereignty as far-reaching as any adopted to that point by the former union republics that decreed that Moldovan law superseded Soviet law. In negotiations over a new union treaty, Moldovan leaders took the position that any association should be among fifteen equal and sovereign republics without a center. At the same time, Moldova suspended the Soviet military draft on its territory. By this time,

Moldovan leaders cared little about Moscow's potential reaction. By siding with the Transdnistrians, Moscow and Gorbachev had lost their remaining influence. Rather than having taken a stand for the inviability of borders and the territorial integrity of the republic, Gorbachev had tilted toward the breakaway forces. Moldovan support for a new union treaty dissipated, and the Popular Front, with its pro-Romanian and anti-Russian outlook, became the leading political force. For the first time, complete independence from the Soviet Union appeared on the political agenda.

In December 1990 the leadership called a Grand National Assembly (consistent with both Moldovan and Romanian tradition) in Chisinau and 800,000 supporters took to the streets. This action was in response to Moscow's pressure and was used by Chisinau both to develop and to communicate popular sentiment. Between this December rally and the upcoming vote in March 1991 on the new union treaty, the Moldovan Supreme Council met to decide its position on the all-union referendum and its terms for further association with the center. The February 1991 Supreme Soviet session resulted in a series of votes rejecting the holding of the all-union referendum on Moldovan territory and endorsing an association of sovereign states with no central power—sometimes labeled the “fifteen plus zero” confederation. Russian deputies from the left bank boycotted the Supreme Soviet session, weakening the parliamentary faction that supported continuation of the union. Some of the Gagauz deputies ended their boycott to vote in favor of holding the referendum. Right-bank Russians, some ethnic Ukrainian and Bulgarian Communist deputies, and a small number of Romanian Communists supported the new union treaty. Ethnic and ideological cleavages were becoming more closely aligned.

The boycott against the referendum on union was successful, with few Romanian-speakers participating. In general, non-Romanians living on the right bank also boycotted the referendum. The military actions in the Baltic had shocked even the local Russian inhabitants, and many were beginning to lean toward Chisinau rather than Moscow. According to a series of opinion polls, the Russian population on the right bank was divided (like in the Baltic): some Russians were beginning to see the advantage of casting their lot with the Romanian-speaking majority in opposing Moscow and seeking independence. And finally, the Popular Front had moderated its initial positions and had taken a more accommodative position on both language and citizenship toward the non-Romanian groups.⁴⁵ In contrast, left-bank and Gagauz voting in the referendum and support for union were very high.

Determining the extent to which the non-Romanians on both sides of the Dniester favored the break with Moscow is difficult. Opinion polling in Moldova is a recent phenomenon, so one cannot trace shifting favorable/unfavorable ratings of political parties or positions over time. The Moldovan National Institute of Sociology conducted a series of polls from June 1991 to February 1992 that give some insight

into public opinion during this particularly critical period. When asked about political parties, the respondents indicated that support was quite splintered, with only the Popular Front getting the support of over 15%, and even that support declined to 12% in the late 1991 and early 1992 polls. The Communist Party had 3–8% support in 1991 prior to the failed August coup (before the Party was suspended), and Intermovement's *Edinstvo* support varied around 5%. As Vladimir Socor argues, these figures do "not adequately reflect the real extent of support for communist organizations among Moldova's non-native population, since the surveys did not include the Joint Council of Work Collectives [OSTK], the dominant political force in the Dniester region's Russified cities." The surveys also asked "To which country should Moldova draw closest?" Only 21% of the respondents named the USSR, while 62% selected various western countries, with the largest number naming Italy (15%). In June 1991, "58% of the respondents wanted Moldova to become independent from the Soviet Union." This number climbed to 79% by the time of the attempted coup. According to the Institute of Sociology, which conducted the polls, "the evidence that support for independence extended beyond the 65% share of ethnic Moldovans in the republic's population [was] instrumental in precipitating the decision of the republican leadership to proclaim Moldova's independence from the USSR on 27 August 1991."⁴⁶

As the Popular Front was taking the leadership role in the Moldovan Supreme Soviet, the Communist Party was becoming isolated because of its inability to adapt to the changing popular mood. The pro-Gorbachev and reformist wing of the Party supported the indigenous people's demands for recognition and limited autonomy; by taking this position, this wing acted against the interests of the Russian minority, which made up a disproportionate share of Party membership. Not surprisingly, the Party supported Gorbachev in the call for a new union treaty, in effect taking the same position as *Edinstvo* and the hard-line conservatives. This position put the Party out of step with the developing sentiment of the indigenous people. Even the Party's more liberal wing, in spite of being radically reformist when compared to previous eras, was left behind as the majority adopted a pro-independence, anti-center and anti-communist perspective. The Communist Party maintained solid support only in Transdnistrian and Gagauz areas.

The traditional communists found the reforms to be too threatening and wanted to maintain connections to the conservative political and military leaders critical of Gorbachev. The conservative wing of the Party, with its followers in the all-union industries and russified cities, could not support the positions taken by the reformist leadership of the Party in Chisinau. Gorbachev and his reforms were as threatening to the conservative Transdnistrian leaders as the ethnic revival taking place on the right bank. Transdnistria, perhaps to a degree greater than any area in the former Soviet Union, was interested in maintaining the traditional communist structures characteristic of former administrations. The Party's con-

servative Russians accused the reformers of "dismantling the Socialist system in the republic, 'Romanianizing' Moldavia, systematically violating the human and national rights of non-Moldavians, and undermining the state interests of the USSR."⁴⁷

The 1991 Coup

The aborted coup of August 1991 cemented the divisions between the right- and left-bank forces. Early on the first day of the coup, Moldovan leaders came out publicly against the usurpation of power by the Emergency Committee and the military. Not only did President Snegur and other leaders state that the Emergency Committee's decrees had no validity on Moldovan territory, but they also called upon the population to take to the streets to protect public buildings and communication facilities. Recalling the spring events in the Baltic, the leadership mobilized popular support to block troops that might try to take control of the city. People from throughout the republic barricaded entrances to Chisinau. Blocked by human walls on the nights of 19 and 20 August, Soviet troops never used force to push past the unarmed civilians. With the collapse of the coup, the troops returned to their bases.

Russians on the right bank avoided the confrontation and waited to see what would happen; left-bank Russians and Gagauzi sided with the coup leaders. In the self-proclaimed Transdnistrian Republic, city and enterprise leaders cabled their support of obedience to the Emergency Committee. The Transdnistrian Supreme Soviet

... saluted "the reintroduction of proper order and discipline in all areas of political and social life" and urged the USSR Supreme Soviet to "endorse the emergency measures" of the Emergency Committee. The Joint Council of Work Collectives cabled the Emergency Committee and Gennadii Yanaev its "full and all-around support," declaring itself "ready to carry out any tasks" in connection with the state of emergency.⁴⁸

Unlike the Baltic situation, where the collapse of the coup provided the opportunity for the pro-independence and anti-communist political leaders to remove Moscow's supporters from both enterprise and political leadership, the coup emphasized the extent to which Chisinau had already lost control of Transdnistria. The left-bank Party organization kept control of its property, financial assets and media. Moldovan leaders at first arrested some left-bank officials, but this step polarized the situation further. Strikes and blockades forced the Chisinau authorities to release them.

Immediately after the botched coup, Moldova declared its independence from the Soviet Union. Fifty-two of the 130 non-Romanian deputies voted in favor of independence. Six of the twelve Gagauz deputies were in favor. The declaration acknowledged Moldova's adherence to the documents of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) "guaranteeing the exercise of social and cultural rights and political freedoms ... including those of national, ethnic, linguistic, and religious communities."⁴⁹

After independence, Party and left-bank leaders continued to contend that Chisinau was pro-Romanian and opposed to the interests of the non-Romanian-speaking population (Russian, Ukrainian and Gagauz). While the dispute could also be interpreted as ideological—with right-bank reformers' being opposed by left-bank hard-liners—it was characterized as ethnic by the Transdnistrians and Gagauzi in spite of the Moldovan leaders' efforts to respect the cultural autonomy of the Russian-speaking population. As hostilities intensified throughout Spring 1992, President Snegur down-played the ethnic nature of the conflict, arguing on March 5 that both the Transdnistrian leaders and Moscow "are deliberately portraying the conflict as interethnic ... in an attempt to disguise the military- communist nature of the phantom 'Dniester republic' and to win support from the national-patriotic forces of Russia."⁵⁰ Immediately before and after independence, Snegur's characterization of a regime accommodative to minorities was essentially accurate; unfortunately, the legacy of the early days of the Popular Front with its pro-Romanian, anti-Russian rhetoric was the image that many of the non-Romanians retained.

Snegur attempted to convince the non-Romanians that the new regime would reverse the Soviet policy of cultural dominance with which all the non-Russian republics had become familiar by "giving urgent priority to resolving ethnic grievances, establishing a system of guarantees for the observance of human rights, and developing the facilities for the cultural and linguistic expression of the ethnic communities."⁵¹ Rather than replacing russification with romanianization, Chisinau promised that local languages and customs would be respected and that schools would respect the non-Romanians' desire for education in their own language. This approach was attractive to the Bulgarians and the Ukrainians, who, like the Romanians, were offended by the previous era of russification. Chisinau city authorities announced that they would open five Ukrainian-language kindergartens for the 1992–1993 school year, as well as a Ukrainian–Russian high school. These would be the first Ukrainian schools in Moldova since the 1960s when russification was in high gear.

In a move to show his commitment to a multi-ethnic rather than a mono-ethnic Romanian state, Snegur announced on 24 February 1992, that all residents of Moldova would be offered citizenship. Residents in Moldova would have until 4 June to accept or reject the offer. This inclusive approach to citizenship was in sharp contrast to the debates taking place in Latvia and Estonia. The Moldovan decree on citizenship made no mention of exceptions for military personnel, Party and Komsomol officials, or recent migrants, provisions typical of laws in other successor states. Consultations about approaches to citizenship had taken place between the Moldovan and the Baltic parliaments prior to Moldova's adopting this inclusive approach. While Moldovan parliamentarians had misgivings about granting citizenship to all residents (especially military retirees), they decided upon this approach to gain support for Moldovan independence from the Western Europeans and the Americans.⁵²

3. Reactive Nationalism: The Push for Autonomy

The left-bank separatists at first maintained that the only solution for the current problem in Moldova was independence for Transdnistria; this position has evolved over the last several years into a demand for a federal structure including Transdnistria, the Gagauz region and rump Moldova. The Moldovan government argued that calls for either autonomy or federation were groundless.

The issue of secession requires some clarification and helps focus some of the questions that must be asked about both the Transdnistrian and Gagauz situations. Birch states that secession is justifiable when (1) the region was included in the state by the use of force, (2) the government has failed to protect the basic rights and security of the citizens of the region, (3) the government has failed to safeguard the legitimate political and economic interests of the region, and (4) the government rejects or ignores an implicit or explicit bargain between regions "that was entered into as a way of pressing the essential interests of a region that might find itself outvoted by a national majority."⁵³ Buchanan argues that secession may have legitimacy if the people are indigenous, have no other ethnic homeland, or were incorporated involuntarily.⁵⁴ Interestingly, many of arguments made by Moldova in justifying its separation from the Soviet Union have been made by the Transdnistri-ans and Gagauz in arguing for their own autonomy.

Transdnistria

The left bank of the Dniester River (the eastern bank, designated "left" in relation to the flow of the Dniester river, which empties into the Black Sea to the south-east) has been the most troublesome area for Chisinau. The left bank was Ukrainian territory prior to 1940, and both Romanians and Ukrainians outnumber Russians in this area even today. The 1989 census showed the Transdnistrian population of 546,400 to be 39.9% Romanian, 28.3% Ukrainian and 25.4% Russian. The rural areas of the left bank remain predominantly Romanian, though a number of Ukrainian and several Bulgarian villages exist in this region. Tiraspol is the administrative center of the five administrative regions making up Transdnistria. Tiraspol has the appearance of a provincial Russian city and its population of 195,500 is 41% Russian, 32% Ukrainian, and 18% Romanian. Local leaders are quick to combine the Russians and Ukrainians and claim that three-fourths of the population is "Russian-speaking."

In Transdnistria as well as on the right bank, the term "Russian-speaking" is used to refer to the Russians and the Ukrainians together and, to some extent, the Gagauz and the Bulgarians. Few schools or cultural facilities were available to the minorities that used their own language as the means of instruction, resulting in the minority populations' becoming almost totally russified. Many Romanian-speakers complain about the designation "Russian-speaking" because, as they correctly point out,

almost all Romanians are themselves "Russian-speaking." The problem, in their view, is that the Russians are not "Romanian-speaking."

The Russian population in Transdnistria is made up mostly of migrants from the industrialization of the 1960s and 1970s. All-union military enterprises and large Red Army bases drew migrants to the towns and cities of the left bank. The Transdnistrian leader, Igor Smirnov, claims that 30% of Moldovan industry and 98.5% of energy production is on the left bank of the Dniester.⁵⁵ Until the last two decades, Romanians constituted the absolute majority on the left bank in spite of the area's never having been part of Romania.

In the first half of 1992, Transdnistrian military personnel and communist leaders expanded their control of the Moldovan villages on the left bank and increasingly made inroads to the Russian cities on the right bank. Romanians described the phenomenon as a "creeping putsch" which became more violent and bloody as time progressed. The Transdnistrian loyalists, organized into paramilitary units by the army and supported by the enterprises, took over administrative buildings and police stations in the rural areas and replaced the indigenous Romanians with Russians. The local officials and police at first offered almost no resistance on the orders of the Chisinau government to avoid confrontation and bloodshed. Finally, after months of incidents on the left bank and various forays across the Dniester to the right bank, the Moldovan leadership concluded that its appeasement had not been successful. President Snegur declared a state of emergency on 29 March 1992, and called on separatists in Transdnistria "to surrender their arms and acknowledge the authority of the Moldovan government."⁵⁶

The failure of the previous year's coup and the imprisonment of its leaders did not result in moderation of the position taken by left-bank Russians. Unlike the situation in the Baltics where the titular leaders were able either to neutralize or remove many pro-Moscow Russian leaders in the days following the coup, the Transdnistrian leadership stayed in place and even strengthened its extremist position. In fact, several deputies from the Russian Federation remarked that "[the Dniester leaders'] political views and slogans in general were even more right-wing than those of the State Committee for the State of Emergency."⁵⁷

Russia's Fourteenth Army

A source of continuing tension between Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and the CIS involves the status of the Fourteenth Army headquartered in Tiraspol. From the beginning of the Transdnistrian independence movement, these forces, the largest former Red Army unit in Moldova, have provided at least tacit support to the separatists. During the end of 1991 and the first part of 1992, this support became overt as the Fourteenth Army supplied equipment and personnel in support of the so-called "creeping putsch." The position of the Fourteenth Army underscores the Russian Republic's and the CIS military's interests in a separatist Transdnistria:

The transfer of jurisdiction over the Fourteenth Army meets manifold convergent interests: that of the "Dniester republic" in acquiring an army of its own; that of local military personnel in securing continued employment and residence there; and that of at least some circles in both Moscow and the military theater and district commands in maintaining a troop presence on the Dniester.⁵⁸

Boris Yeltsin placed the Fourteenth Army under Russian control on 1 April 1992. Removing the army from CIS command and placing it directly under the control of the Russian Republic increased fears that Moscow might intervene directly in the escalating conflict. At the same time, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev warned that Russia would act to protect the rights of ethnic Russians wherever they lived. In Chisinau, Kozyrev suggested a four-power (Moldovan, Ukrainian, Romanian and Russian) guarantee for the territorial integrity of Moldova with the suggestion that Transdnistria be granted the right of self-determination should the status of Moldova change, meaning its possible future unification with Romania. The other parties to the talks expressed little interest.

On 8 April, the Russian Congress of People's Deputies discussed using volunteers from the Fourteenth Army to keep the sides separated. Needless to say, neither the Moldovan nor Ukrainian leadership viewed the Fourteenth Army as a neutral force. Snegur criticized the Russian Parliament's suggestions as "intrusion in the domestic affairs of sovereign states" that "fans anti-Russian sentiment, setting other peoples, including the Moldovan people, against the Russian empire."⁵⁹

The dispute continued to intensify, threatening to expand to a Moldovan-Russian Republic controversy with the possibility of Romanian involvement. Moldova claimed that the Fourteenth Army, under direct Russian control, openly aided the Transdnistrian separatists. Snegur hinted that the Romanian army might become involved should the conflict continue. On 25 May, President Snegur declared that the "Moldovan parliament has to choose between two decisions—either stop military activities in the Dniester region ... or declare a state of war on Russia."⁶⁰

In late June 1992, elements of the Fourteenth Army, reportedly numbering 5000, crossed to the right bank of the Dniester and became involved in fighting around Bender, forcing the Moldovan troops from the city. Whether the order to participate came from Moscow or the local commander was initially unclear, but subsequent reports suggest that orders came from Moscow. At the same time, the Russian central command appointed Major General Aleksandr Lebed, a supporter of Yeltsin during the coup, as the new head of the Fourteenth Army. Lebed repeatedly referred to Transdnistria as a part of Russia and the right-bank city of Bender as "an inalienable part of the Dniester republic."⁶¹ Lebed's argument raised emotions, but failed to address the most important reason for the Russian Republic's interest in Transdnistria: with an army on the Dniester, Russia could maintain an important strategic position *vis-à-vis* Ukraine and the Balkans. During subsequent negotiations between Russia and Moldova, permanent basing of Russian troops in Transdnistria has remained a Russian objective.

In early July, Snegur and Yeltsin met to try to reach some agreement on the conflict which had killed 425 people between March and June. The two leaders agreed to a cease-fire and the need to divide the combatants. Several attempts to involve a multi-national peace-keeping force including Romanian, Ukrainian and Bulgarian troops, in addition to Russian and Moldovan forces, failed. On 21 July 1992, Snegur and Yeltsin signed the bilateral agreement to end the fighting in Transdnistria with the use of Russian, Moldovan and Transdnistrian troops as peace-keepers. Transdnistria received the right to decide its own fate if Moldova were to combine with Romania at some future time, an option that had been offered to the Transdnistrian leaders by Chisinau as early as January 1991. Moldovan officials had also offered the Transdnistrians positions in a coalition government in exchange for settling the dispute. The Transdnistrians rejected Chisinau's initiatives. Transdnistrian president Smirnov was present at the conclusion of the agreement, but did not sign with Yeltsin or Snegur. Whether he opposed the cease-fire or whether Snegur refused to allow him to be recognized as an equal participant remains unclear.⁶²

In fall of 1992 the military conflict de-escalated as a result of the agreement. About two thousand troops separated the parties. The situation has been stable since that time, with only occasional incidents. The peace-keepers have instituted checkpoints on all bridges, but trade between left and right banks continues and people are free to travel back and forth. Numerous daily trains run from Chisinau to Bender to Tiraspol and back without interruption or military interference. In early 1994, however, Transdnistrian president Smirnov announced that customs controls would be instituted on the "state" border for citizens of other countries, including Moldova.⁶³ Should this decree be carried out, the relative calm of the last two years is in jeopardy.

Bender (known in Romanian as Tighina), a city on the right bank just ten miles from Tiraspol, remains under Transdnistrian control as a result of the 1992 conflict. It is about two-thirds the size of Tiraspol, with a population of 138,000 [30% Romanian, 18% Ukrainian, and 42% Russian]. Unlike the rest of the territory under Transdnistrian control, Bender was part of Romania prior to 1940. Moldovan police and administrative officials were forced out of the city when it was taken over by the Fourteenth Army and the Transdnistrian guard during the early summer of 1992. Now peace-keeping battalions are controlling the city and refugees who left at the time of the fighting have mostly returned. The civilian administration remains closely aligned with the Transdnistrian authorities in Tiraspol. According to one official in Tiraspol, a referendum held in 1990 in Bender resulted in over 90% of the population's choosing to align itself with the breakaway republic, thus providing the justification for the military activity across the Dniester.⁶⁴ From the perspective of the left bank:

... Bendery must only be a part of the Dniester region. Proceeding from this orientation,

the city soviet recently rejected Moldovan assistance in the restoration of the ravaged economy. The city authorities justify their emphatic approach by the position of the inhabitants expressed at a referendum. Citing the wishes of the populace, Tiraspol considers Bendery its administrative-territorial unit. The mere mention of this in Chisinau evokes a strongly worded response.⁶⁵

As the Moldovan government has continued to voice concern about Russia's supporting the break-away movement, Transdniestrian political authorities have continued to establish state structures throughout the left bank and in Bender under the protection of the peace-keeping forces. A joint commission supervising the cease-fire, made up of Russians and Moldovans, has provided a venue for the Moldovans to criticize the lack of even-handedness by the peacekeepers; yet the Moldovans hardly exercise equal authority with the Russians in any "joint" activity. For this reason, the Moldovans have asked repeatedly for United Nations' or other neutral involvement in monitoring the cease-fire to balance the unequal Moldovan-Russian relationship.

The presence of the Fourteenth Army remains a problem. While its strength has dropped from 14,000 at the beginning of 1992 to perhaps half that number today, the Fourteenth Army is still the most formidable force in the region. In addition, the military has been taking steps to blur the lines between the *Russian* Fourteenth Army and the *Transdniestrian* guard by transferring soldiers back and forth, moving demobilized soldiers directly from the army to the guard, and drafting local Russian youths into the army. The Transdniestrians thus make the claim that the Russian forces are local rather than foreign.

Russian-Moldovan talks on the withdrawal of the Fourteenth Army were initiated in fall 1992 as a result of the cease-fire agreement. The fact that the parties sat down at a table to discuss the issue was an implicit acknowledgement that the Russians had troops stationed in foreign territory. However, as the Russian policy on the so-called "near abroad" has become more rigid, Russia has demanded bases for the Fourteenth Army in Transnistria, and raised the possibility of leasing bases on the right bank as well. These talks remain deadlocked. On the surface, as in the Baltics, the Russians argue that they want to assure the human rights and security of the Russian population in Moldova rather than to gain territorial concessions for the Transdniestrian authorities in exchange for troop withdrawals. Beneath the surface, the situation is more ominous. As President Snegur's Counsellor for National Security, Nicolae S. Chirtoaca argues:

Russia is using the Fourteenth Army to control some of the former territory of the Soviet Union. Moldova's fate is to play the role of Russia's security zone. Russia would like to have friendly countries around it. Russia is using the old Soviet means to assure that it has friendly neighbors. Transnistria is an experiment to see if the old means will work to continue Russia's military presence and to keep the Transdniestrian leaders in power.⁶⁶

Gagauz Autonomy

Because the Gagauz were russified as a result of Soviet cultural policy, they often side with the Russian-speakers (and typically are considered to be part of that category) in the conflict with Chisinau. Under Soviet rule, the Gagauz had few formal opportunities to study their own language and few of their own cultural opportunities. The Gagauz typically went to Russian schools; only a small number are proficient in Romanian. In fact, before independence from the Soviet Union, the Gagauz language itself was considered to be endangered.⁶⁷

The Gagauz were outspoken in their opposition to making Romanian the state language during the 1989 debate, contending that this step would discriminate against the various minority groups in Moldova who have already learned Russian as a second language. For this reason, both the Gagauz and those seeking to establish an independent Transdnistria have proposed using Russian as the official language of the break-away territories. As on the left bank, Russian is the language of communication among different nationalities in the Gagauz area.

The Gagauz leadership, including president Stepan Topal, is highly russified. Most of the leaders were members of the Communist Party hierarchy and supported the continuation of Soviet rule. In the March 1991 vote on the Union, the Gagauz voted almost unanimously to stay in the USSR; the Romanian-speakers living in the Gagauz area boycotted the election. Gagauz leaders then supported the August coup, making subsequent *rapprochement* with Chisinau more difficult. Currently, the Gagauz leadership favors a federal approach, with semi-independent Gagauz, Transdnistrian and Romanian territories constituting a Moldovan state. The Gagauz, like the left-bank Russians, especially fear the unification of Moldova with Romania, believing that such a step would deny the minorities their identity.

From the beginning the Moldovan government supported the granting of Gagauz cultural autonomy. In fact, the position taken by the Moldovan leadership toward both the Gagauz and the Russian minorities is as supportive of cultural autonomy as that found anywhere in the former Soviet Union. Even the Popular Front from its earliest days promoted Gagauz national development. With the demise of the Popular Front, the Chisinau government continued a supportive stance, acknowledging that all the smaller ethnic groups in Moldova, such as the Gagauz and the Bulgarians, were russified to a greater extent than the Romanian-speakers themselves. Chisinau, however, distinguishes between cultural and territorial autonomy, with the latter seen as a threat to the national aspirations of the Romanian-speaking people. The Gagauz, unlike the left-bank Russians, might be satisfied with cultural autonomy, though the developing sense of Gagauz identity has made the achievement of an accommodation with Chisinau more difficult.

Chisinau's strategy of cultural autonomy, though seemingly genuine and relatively successful with right-bank Russians and Ukrainians, has thus far failed to provide the necessary framework for either Transdnistrian or Gagauz incorporation into a

Moldovan state. Rejai and Enloe contend that neither a minority-oriented language nor religious policy can serve as the "integrative cement" of a society. They argue that the most effective integrative policies are political and economic rather than cultural.⁶⁸ To be successful, states must manipulate political and economic elements, though such strategies are more difficult than cultural ones. Chisinau's attempt to build a multi-ethnic coalition, offering political positions to both the Transdnistrians and the Gagauz, is a step in developing such a political framework.

4. External Perspectives

Moldovan-Romanian Relations

Moldova is the only successor state in which the indigenous population can identify with a nation outside the former Soviet Union. For this reason, the relationship between Moldova and Romania is a complex one that is viewed quite differently on the two sides of the Prut. Romanians generally assume that Moldova will eventually reunite with Romania. Most political forces list reunification as part of their platforms. The status of Moldova, however, is not a burning issue; most Romanians, preoccupied with their domestic economic and political problems, appear to be indifferent.

Moldovans, after their initial rediscovery of their Romanian heritage, have repeatedly made clear their disinterest in union with Romania. The Popular Front's loss of influence both in the parliament and in polls gave one indication. The 6 March 1994, "popular consultation" provided the most dramatic evidence. When asked, "Are you in favor of the development of Moldova as an independent state, whole and indivisible, within the borders valid on the date of the proclamation of sovereignty and recognized by the UN, pursuing neutrality, cooperating for mutual advantage with all countries of the world, and guaranteeing the rights of all its citizens in accordance with international norms?" an overwhelming 95% of those participating voted "yes." Over 75% of eligible voters participated, a very high rate considering that Transdnistria, with 18% of Moldova's population, boycotted the election.⁶⁹

For fifty years the Soviets tried to persuade "Moldovans" and Romanians that they were different peoples in spite of the similarities of their cultures, languages, and history. The Popular Front and the Congress of Intellectuals now takes the opposite approach, arguing that Moldovans are Romanians and that the "Moldovan nation" is just a creation of the misguided Soviet effort to divide Romanians from each other. At the present time, this question is best left open: Romanians and Moldovans speak essentially the same language and have very similar cultures; yet there is the sense in Moldova that Moldovan and Romanian history and destiny can be differentiated. Analysts should not be too quick to close this question; one cannot be sure whether circumstances will encourage the inhabitants of the two sides of the Prut to focus on their similarities or on their differences.

Even before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Moldova had attained enough autonomy to allow it to begin latinizing the Romanian language and emphasizing its cultural unity with Romania. While this linkage is important in its own right, it colors the situation in which the Russian minority in Moldova finds itself. A union between Moldova and Romania would reduce the status of the minority Russians and Gagauz not only numerically but also politically and culturally. For this reason, talk of reunification in either Bucharest or in Chisinau makes the separatists more adamant. By continuing to emphasize "two Romanian states," President Snegur, the government and the parliamentary leadership have tried to reduce the potency of this issue.

As the left-bank situation escalated, Romania played an increasing role as both a military and diplomatic supporter of Chisinau. This role was particularly unsettling to the Russian population, since it feared that the "two-state" rhetoric of President Snegur would be only temporary. While the Romanian leadership articulated the same "two-state" position, the opposition forces in Romania advocated reunification; the Romanian public, however, seemed to have little interest in the subject. President Iliescu acknowledged that "pro-unification propaganda in Romania has backfired in Moldova, and not just among the Russian-speakers but among the Romanian Moldovans themselves. During the past two years one has witnessed there a movement away from unification.... The people's reservations on the issue of unification have grown."⁷⁰ A joint decree was issued by the Romanian and Moldovan Parliaments in 1992, signed by former Romanian Foreign Minister Adrian Nastase and former Moldovan Parliamentary Speaker Alexandru Mosanu. While the decree recognized the important historical relationship between the two countries, it also affirmed the separate status of Romania and Moldova.⁷¹ Romanian parties continue to assume that the separate status of Moldova is temporary and are willing to contemplate a division of any reunited state at the Dniester, sacrificing the left bank for the sake of unification. Transdnistria, having never been part of Romania, holds little interest for those in Bucharest.

With the victory of the Agrarian Party in the 1994 elections and the clear mandate for independence in the referendum, further discussions of political ties with Romania are likely to be put on hold for the foreseeable future. The Popular Front, previously a major player in Moldovan politics and now virtually powerless, has severely undercut its political position by advocating reunification with Romania. The other pro-Romanian party, the Congress of Intellectuals, has bowed to the popular mood and now talks more of cultural rather than political connections to Romania. In addition, the out-going parliament put an important legal step in the way of unification with Romania: a nation-wide referendum would be required before any move to join or leave a state. The Snegur government placed yet another hurdle in the way of such a move, promising Transdnistria the opportunity to go its own way if Moldova chooses to join another state.

Russias Domestic and Foreign Policies Intertwined

For two centuries, Russians travelled to the fringes of the Russian and Soviet empires to settle new lands and work in the developing industrial infrastructure. The migrants did not perceive themselves to be going abroad or living in another country: they viewed their country to be bigger than the lands of Russia proper. The dissolution of the Soviet Union has changed neither these Russians' psychological connections to the center, nor the center's perception that its responsibilities go beyond the Russian Federation and include the welfare of the Russians living in the successor states. Russians in the so-called "near abroad" remain both a domestic and a foreign-policy issue in Moscow. This position is illustrated in an article in *Rossiiskaya gazeta* (23 June 1992) in which Yeltsin's Presidential Counsellor, Sergei Stankevich

criticized Russian foreign policy for its failure to stand up for the rights of the Russian population in other CIS states. He also accused [Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia] of oppressing their Russian minorities, and threatened the use of force to protect "a thousand-year history [and] legitimate interests" in those former republics. Stankevich called upon the 14th Army stationed in Moldova to defend the Slavic minorities, and he noted that Russia would soon reemerge as a power capable of protecting its people.⁷²

Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet's Committee on International Affairs Ambartsumov similarly argued that Russia had a responsibility to the Russian population beyond the Russian Federation. As he stated, "the Dniester area was never part of Moldova ... if any national-territorial community wants to become part of the Russian Federation, it should not be denied that right."⁷³

Former Russian Vice President Rutskoi and some members of the Russian Parliament took a more radical position in support of the Russian minorities beyond the Russian Federation. Rutskoi at Yeltsin's request visited Transdniestria on 5 April 1992, and voiced his support for the separatists (after making similar comments in the Crimea). Rutskoi's comments that "until Russia guarantees the protection of its citizens wherever they live ... there will be conflicts on the former territory of the Soviet Union, [and] there will be thousands of refugees"⁷⁴ raised the level of anxiety about Russian intentions in both Moldova and Ukraine and illustrated the tenuous balance of power that then existed between the Russian conservatives and moderates. The conservative challenge to Yeltsin both before and after the 1993 parliamentary election underlines this internal Russian conflict that has resulted in a more interventionist foreign policy from both Yeltsin and the Russian government.

Moldova provides a particularly sensitive, but hardly unique, example of the interplay of domestic and foreign policies. Other regions—Crimea, Latvia and Kazakhstan—similarly illustrate the attempt to balance domestic and foreign policies. Conservative Russian nationalists continue to place events in the context of the former Soviet Union or even the Russian Empire. With the strong conservative showing in the 1993 elections, even moderates have modified their positions to avoid alienating this powerful bloc. Russians were dominant throughout the territory under

the tsars and under the Soviets. That they no longer play this role in the successor states has not been accepted in the conservatives' world view. Intervention in Moldova or in similar situations provides the opportunity for the conservatives to display the power and control that existed in the past and that they wish to project into the future.

The moderate forces no longer think that Russia can impose its will on the former territories and are looking for less intrusive ways to protect the interests of the Russian minorities. While expressing concern for the plight of their fellow Russians, they have little confidence in their ability to manage events in the successor states, especially by force, as was possible under the old regime. Nonetheless, because of the demonstrated conservative strength, the moderates themselves have taken a harder line. Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev at first took this relatively moderate position. He realized the implications of the way in which the conservatives, still longing for the empire, were using the issue of the Russian minorities as part of a larger political struggle. In addressing the Congress of People's Deputies, Kozyrev dealt specifically with the Moldovan situation. Of course, his arguments did not convince the conservatives, who wanted Russia to play a more intrusive role:

Megaphone diplomacy and heroic poses, by me or by anyone else, lead nowhere, absolutely nowhere. We cannot send a military helicopter for every Russian-speaking boy or girl in a school in Moldova.... We have to consider the whole balance of interests. We must not provoke Russophobic feelings in Moldova, because 75% of all the Russians and Russian speakers living in Moldova are beyond the Dniester, on the right bank of the Dniester.⁷⁵

Moscow's rhetoric intensified during spring and summer 1992, reflecting both the outbreak of fighting in Transdnistria and the conservative challenge to Yeltsin taking place in Moscow that was being closely followed both in Moldova and in Romania.⁷⁶ Following the failure of the various attempts to resolve the conflict, the Russian leadership became even more concerned about the treatment of Russian minorities in Moldova. Rutskoi articulated the new Russian policy toward Moldova when he announced that "everyone must keep in mind that Russia will not tolerate such treatment of Russian-speaking people any longer."⁷⁷

The conservative successes in the 1993 Russian elections and the lack of Western reaction to Moscow's statements on the "near abroad" have encouraged Russia to take a more unyielding position on Moldova and other former Soviet territories. The Russian position shows the important connection between the domestic political situation and foreign policy: the opponents of Yeltsin's domestic reforms look longingly at the old empire and want to continue to exercise influence in the former Soviet space. The Russians in the successor states provide the justification for their position. Yeltsin and his advisors have tried to undercut the political threat of these opponents by adopting important aspects of their political agendas.

At the same time, the policy of the West contributes to Russian

interventionism in the "near abroad." Russia has made clear its wish for "special authority" to deal with conflict in former Soviet territory. Fearing that strong objection would play into the hands of conservatives such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the West has remained silent. A more interventionist Russian foreign policy has thus emerged, with leaders in Moldova, as in Ukraine and the Baltic, expressing fears that the European Community and the United States have consigned them to a Russian sphere of influence.

5. Approaches to Conflict Management

During the period before Gorbachev, intrinsic and systemic factors prevented the emergence of ethno-nationalism. Gail Lapidus cites cross-cutting identities and roles, lack of homogeneity within the ethnic groups, and coercion by Moscow as factors mitigating the rise of ethno-nationalism in the Soviet Union.⁷⁸ Paul Goble argues that this policy of coercion and republic dependency provided Moscow with an effective mechanism for conflict resolution.⁷⁹ In the absence of central control and coercion, ethno-nationalism has emerged as a destabilizing force in many areas of the former Soviet Union, with the articulation of national feelings and the display of national symbols by the indigenous population often triggering a Russian reaction. In the Moldovan case, several approaches have been designed to contain the resulting ethnic conflict. This section examines three of the conflict-management strategies that have been proposed: (1) cultural autonomy, (2) territorial autonomy and (3) outside guarantors.

Cultural autonomy was the strategy that the Moldovan Popular Front advocated even before the collapse of the Soviet Union. This strategy accepted and validated many of the claims of the minority populations. By supporting demands for linguistic, religious, and educational self-determination, cultural autonomy was intended to placate the minority groups and eliminate the reason for ethnic violence. By granting cultural autonomy, the Chisinau government hoped that the diverse populations would support the creation of a multi-ethnic state that acknowledged their cultural claims.

The concentration of Russians and Ukrainians in Transdnistria (and in the capital city of Chisinau itself) and of Gagauz in the south makes the minority demands important for the government to address, even though these groups do not constitute a majority in any of the areas in question. At the same time this concentration makes satisfying cultural demands feasible because the critical mass is present for establishing schools and other cultural facilities. As Lee Dutter argues, "if group members are concentrated, then some of the disadvantages of small numbers are attenuated."⁸⁰

After independence Chisinau immediately took steps to meet the cultural needs of the minorities, always emphasizing that the rebirth of Moldova's Romanian heritage need not threaten Russians, Gagauz, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Jews or other groups. Schools, media, and cultural facilities, financed by the Chisinau

government, were developed for the non-Romanian-speaking groups. Nonetheless, the Transdnistrian Russians and the Gagauz (who themselves are minorities in the areas in which their populations are most concentrated) were not satisfied with "mere" cultural autonomy and were unwilling to accommodate the other ethnic groups who also inhabit the geographic regions that the minorities claim. The Russian-dominated authorities in Transdnistria jammed Romanian radio broadcasts, refused to allow the teaching of Romanian history, and banned the use of the Latin alphabet in the schools. Thus, the 40% Romanian-speaking population of Transdnistria, which constituted the largest single ethnic group in that area, had no cultural autonomy.

One is hard-pressed to find a better example in the former Soviet Union of a new government, dominated by the titular nationality, that was more accommodative to minorities in general, and to the Russian minority in particular, than the government that took power in Moldova in 1991. Citizenship was immediately granted to all; the language policy was both moderate and patient; education was supported in a variety of languages; and political representation was available to all groups.

An evaluation of the success or failure of this approach to cultural autonomy depends upon how one characterizes Transdnistria. If the break-away movement is interpreted primarily as a last-ditch attempt by communists to hold power or as an attempt by Moscow to maintain a military outpost, then the ethnic issues become more of an excuse and justification for the insurgency than a cause. From this perspective, the generally positive relationships between the different nationalities on the right bank might be seen as a constructive outcome of cultural autonomy. The failure of the right-bank Russians to support the Transdnistrians provides further evidence for this interpretation. On the other hand, the Popular Front's initial rhetoric was indeed anti-Russian. While an accommodative policy toward non-Romanians quickly developed and became policy, it could not undo the fear of romanianization on the part of the Russians in Transdnistria that, combined with their nostalgia for the Soviet system, led to the separatist movement.

A second strategy for conflict containment involves the notion of territorial autonomy. Such an approach grants the population concentrated in a particular geographic area control over certain governmental functions, such as education, media, local administration and police. Various federal arrangements around the world provide examples of this approach, including the relationship of the union republics to the center in the former Soviet Union. This concept is attractive to minority peoples—concentrated in defined areas—who live in larger states. While enjoying the benefits of the larger political entity, they have greater influence over the day-to-day application of administrative policy that most directly affects their group.

Like all strategies, this one also has its negative implications. First, as the former Soviet situation illustrates, reinforcing ethnic content with territorial identification can foster the desire for total autonomy and independence. Education, culture,

language and media—the factors with the greatest influence on day-to-day existence—emphasize the part rather than the whole and ethnic differences rather than the political or economic similarities. This approach, while attractive because it decentralizes control over many day-to-day functions and services, makes any central attempt at state-building more difficult.

The Moldovan situation illustrates another problem with this approach. Both the break-away Russians and the break-away Gagauz are themselves minorities in the territory that they claim. What becomes of the rights the other minority populations that reside within these territories? While the Russians in Transdniestria are resisting learning the Romanian language, they seem to have little problem demanding that the Romanian-speakers communicate in Russian and use the Cyrillic alphabet for the transcription of Romanian.

As the stalemate in Transdniestria continues into 1994, some variation of a federative approach, in spite of its negative aspects, seems to be emerging. Chisinau wants control of all the territory that once was the Moldovan SSR; not only is it interested in preserving its prior borders, but it needs the economic resources located in Transdniestria. The Transdnistrians talk of independence, but seem most interested in preserving their Russian way of life. Both the Transdnister and the Gagauz Supreme Soviets now advocate a federation of three equal republics—Moldovan, Transdnistriean, and Gagauz. Chisinau has thus far rejected all talk of federation, but concedes that it is willing to grant “special status” to Transdnistriana and “regional autonomy” to the Gagauz. Presidential advisor Nicolae Chirtoaca, one of the negotiators for Chisinau, noted that Transdnistriana has “distinctive features that must be recognized in any agreement.”⁸¹ Of course, many steps exist between the recognition of distinctive features and special status and the adoption of a federation. Nonetheless, Chisinau seems to be closer to acknowledging that Transdnistriana will exercise a significant degree of local control, and Tiraspol seems more willing to concede that it can accommodate itself to its location within Moldova.

These negotiations are taking place in the context of a CSCE proposal to settle the disputes. Moldova has agreed to the CSCE formulation in which both Transdnistriana and the Gagauz areas would be granted considerable autonomy within a Moldovan state. Under this plan the left bank would have administrative autonomy, including its own legislature and the ability to use Transdnistriean “symbols” along with those of Moldova. Transdnistriana would be included in the Moldovan constitution, financial system, and military and security services. An important point for Chisinau, and perhaps the most difficult point for the Transdnistrians, is the acknowledgement of a single Moldovan army. In contrast, Russia has been supporting maximum Transdnistriean autonomy—including self-defense.⁸²

The third strategy might be better labeled conflict containment rather than conflict resolution. This model uses third parties, either international organizations or third-party military forces, to separate the combatants. A number of variations of this model have been proposed for Moldova.

In early 1992, the left-bank separatists themselves appealed for United Nations' help, arguing that their rights were compromised by the "romanianizing" policies of Chisinau. Ultimately, this appeal proved to be unsuccessful. The UN has resisted attempts to involve it directly in disputes in former Soviet space. Furthermore, in Moldova the issues are blurred by the conflicting rights of the parties; Transdnistria's Russians appeal for help to prevent romanianization, and Transdnistria's Romanian-speakers want assistance to prevent russification.

In April 1992, Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev advanced a second variation of this approach. He suggested a four-power (Moldova, Ukraine, Romania and Russia) guarantee for the territorial integrity of Moldova with the suggestion that Transdnistria be granted the right of self-determination should the status of Moldova change, meaning the possible future unification of Moldova with Romania. This proposal drew little interest from the other parties involved.

A similar version was proposed by Presidents Yeltsin and Snegur. These two leaders agreed to a cease-fire and the need to divide the opposing forces. The CIS Summit on 6 July 1992, agreed to send a joint force of Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Romanian and Bulgarian troops to monitor the cease-fire, provided that Moldova would make a formal request and pay for the troops. Because of the increasing violence, the Moldovan parliament agreed to the CIS plan. But Belarus, Romania and Bulgaria declined to participate, and Moldova withdrew its request for peace-keepers, calling instead on the CSCE.

Finally, Snegur and Yeltsin reached an agreement on peace-keepers that has been in place since late summer 1992, and has been successful in separating the two sides. Rather than an international or neutral force, the ten-battalion peace-keeping force is made up of the combatants themselves. As Neil Lamont notes, "In reality, the force was five Russian, three Moldovan and two Dniester battalions, in other words, ten battalions of troops from those involved in the fighting—of which eight were from the Russian side."⁸³ In spite of their lack of neutrality, shown by their support of the state-building efforts of the Transdnistrian side, the peace-keepers have ended the hostilities that erupted early in 1992 and have given political leaders the opportunity to look for common ground.

Containing the military conflict is one thing, but finding common ground for a political solution is another. Each of these strategies discussed is problematic because of the nature of the underlying process that tries to link the aspirations of different groups to a single political or economic agenda:

There is a subtle irony.... The manipulable, culturally detachable links are the products of modernization. Modernization depends on mobilization of all available resources. Mobilization ... has frequently depended on the existence of nationalism. In other words, the very instrumental linkages on which the authorities of the new states are wont to rely are those which require nationalism for their production.⁸⁴

6. Conclusion

The Transdnistrian Russians and other minorities have legitimate fears of romanization and their place in the new political order. Although always a minority, the Russians had the privileges of empire; their culture and way-of-life set the standard to which others tried to conform. The independence of Moldova threatens this situation both perceptually and actually. The Chisinau government's adopting a policy of cultural autonomy cannot reduce the enormity of the change that the Russians are experiencing. Dismissing the Transdnistrian leadership as hard-line communists or conservatives who want to restore the Soviet Union (both of which are true) fails to recognize the reality for the Russians and the other russified minorities.

A negative reaction to the statements of the Transdnistrian leadership and the activities of their military forces thus misses the point. Sympathies almost inevitably side with the Moldovans' [of Romanian and other nationalities] trying to establish an independent and democratic regime, as with the Latvians' and other titular groups' trying to throw off the imperial legacy of the Soviets; yet the issues to which the minority Russians react are genuine, and successful political approaches to allay minority fears are hard to find either on the territory of what was the Soviet Union or in other parts of the world.

Chisinau's problems with the break-away Transdnistrian and Gagauz areas have captured most of the attention in the sphere of ethnic relations. However, the accommodative policies of the Chisinau government have met some success and favorable reception with the ethnic communities on the right bank. Three-quarters of the Russian population in Moldova lives in the cities and towns on the right bank; likewise, a similar proportion of the Ukrainian population in Moldova inhabits right-bank villages. Focusing on the left bank controversy obscures an important part of the inter-ethnic picture.

The Chisinau government has repeatedly taken steps to assure the minorities making up some 35% of Moldova's population that cultural autonomy is the centerpiece of the republic's ethnic policy. This stand, together with its position that reunification with Romania is not a policy goal, led many of the Russians, Ukrainians and Bulgarians on the right bank to support Moldovan independence in 1991. The 52 of 130 non-Moldovan deputies who voted for independence and the 81% of the registered voters who voted for Snegur for president (ethnic Romanians make up only 65% of the population) provided evidence that a major portion of the non-indigenous population was willing to support the new state.⁸⁵ The same accommodative policy might be credited with bringing right-bank Russians and Romanians together in a multi-ethnic government in Chisinau that stood for independence from both Moscow and Bucharest. The victory of the Agrarian Democratic Party in February, 1994, with its "Moldovan" rather than Romanian agenda and willingness to include minority ethnic representatives and their agendas provides further evi-

dence that the different ethnic communities can cooperate. The margin in the vote for independence from both Romania and Russia in the March 1994 plebiscite also required substantial minority support. On the right bank, people of various ethnic groups seem to accept the leadership's often stated declaration that "Moldova should be neither a Russian *gubernia* nor a Romanian province."

As the Rector of the Moldovan Academy of Music and former Deputy Minister of Culture Constantin Rusnac reported, "Relations with Russians are better in Moldova than in other places. Moldovans are not as nationalistic as the Balts or the Georgians. Bessarabia has a long tradition of multi-ethnicity."⁸⁶ Because interpersonal relations are good on the right bank and economic conditions are perceived to be better than in Russia, few Russians are emigrating.⁸⁷ This positive nature of inter-ethnic relations on Moldova's right bank provides the best prediction for the immediate future. No inter-ethnic clashes have occurred; even during the 1992 military conflict in Transdnistria, Russians on the right bank did not give overt support to the breakaway Transdnistriians. One of the main aims of the Moldovan government has been to bring the Romanians and the Russians closer—to create the conditions so that the Russians and the other minorities do not feel compelled to leave.⁸⁸ To this end, each ethnic group has its own state-supported educational and cultural institutions. Romanian-speakers, while frustrated at the necessity of having to use Russian, have not forced the language issue, preferring instead to let the younger generations come to terms with the reality of Moldovan independence and assuming that time is on the side of the new state.

In the short term, the process of state-building in Moldova will be compromised by these ethnic relationships. Policy-makers' options are limited: mobilizing the indigenous population creates its own reactive nationalism among the Russians and other minority groups. It also tempts outside involvement from Moscow, both because the welfare of the Russian diaspora is an issue in the domestic policy dispute between Russian moderates and conservatives, and because it invites the military, no longer under strong civilian control, to involve itself in the local controversy. In spite of its accommodative ethnic policy, the ultimate irony is that the more the Moldovan leadership attempts to institutionalize its own state structures, the greater the potential for its actions to be perceived as "romanianization" and lead to opposition.

(March 1994)

NOTES

1. On 23 May 1991, the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic renamed itself the Republic of Moldova, removing the "Social Socialist" designation of the alphabet, most western sources began using the Romanian forms Moldova and Chisinau (the capital), rather than Moldavia and Kishinev, which result from the translation into English from the Russian or Cyrillic. This shift seems more significant in appearance than it is in fact; Romanian speakers have always used Moldova and Chisinau, the Russian speakers continue to use the russified forms

- Moldavia and Kishinev. This article will use Moldova and Chisinau except when the other forms are found in direct quotations.
2. Bessarabia declared itself an autonomous republic on 2 December 1917. The Bessarabian State Council then voted to reunite with Romania on 27 March 1918, ending four months of independence. See Nicolas Dima, *Bessarabia and Bukovina: The Soviet-Romanian Territorial Dispute* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).
 3. The question of a "Moldovan" people or nation will be discussed below. Few now argue that language on the two sides of the Prut differs beyond accent and some regional terminology and idioms. The existence of one or two Romanian-speaking nations has become a political rather than an analytical question; whether the Romanian-speaking people east of the Prut identify strongly enough with their territory and developing institutions to be differentiated from their relatives to the west remains an open question. The authors wish to thank Charles King, New College, Oxford, for his insight on this matter.
 4. Jonathan Eyal, "Moldavians," *The Nationalities Question in the Soviet Union* Graham Smith, ed. (London, Longman, 1990), pp. 123–124.
 5. Charles King, "Soviet Policy in the Annexed East European Borderlands: Language, Politics and Ethnicity in Moldova," *The Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989*, Odd Arne Westad, Sven Holtsmark and Iver B. Neumann, eds (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p. 87.
 6. Note that the eastern province of Romania (but west of the Prut) is also known as Moldova.
 7. Mostafa Rejai and Cynthia H. Enloe, "Nation-States and State-Nations," *International Studies Quarterly*, 13, pp. 140–158 (1969); Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Its Alternatives* (New York, Knopf, 1969); Cornelia Navari, "The Origins of the Nation-State," in *The Nation-State: The Formation of Modern Politics*, Leonard Tivey, ed. (New York, St. Martin's, 1981).
 8. Lee Dutter, "Theoretical Perspectives on Ethnic Political Behavior in the Soviet Union," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, June, p. 314 (1990).
 9. *Ibid.*
 10. John Herz, *The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics* (New York, McKay, 1976).
 11. *The Republic of Moldova*, (Chisinau: Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, 1992), p. 16.
 12. Eyal, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
 13. *The Republic of Moldova*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
 14. Population data, unless otherwise noted, are from the 1989 census.
 15. *The Republic of Moldova*, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
 16. *Ibid.*
 17. Irina Livezeanu, "The Internationalization of Ethnic Politics in ex-Soviet Moldavia," paper presented to the American Association of Slavic Studies Conference, Miami, November 1991, p. 9.
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
 19. William Crowther, "The Politics of Ethno-National Mobilization: Nationalism and Reform in Soviet Moldavia," *The Russian Review*, April, pp. 185–186 (1991).
 20. *RFE/RL Research Report*, 13 March, p. 75 (1992).
 21. Nicolae Tiu, current Moldovan Ambassador to the United States and former Foreign Minister (1990–1993), Personal Interview, January 1994.
 22. Vladimir Socor, "Gagauz in Moldova Demand Separate Republic," *Radio Liberty Report on the USSR*, p. 8 (7 September 1990).
 23. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
 24. An earlier version of this section was published as "The Politics of Language in Moldova," *Demokratizatsiya* (1994).

25. Paul Brass, "Ethnic Groups and Nationalities," *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe*, Peter F. Sugar, ed. (Santa Barbara, ABC-Clio, 1980), pp. 45-50.
26. Constantin Rusnac, Rector of the Academy of Music and former Deputy Minister of Culture, Personal Interview, January 1994.
27. Irina Livezeanu, "Moldavia, 1917-1990: Nationalism and Internationalism Then and Now," *Armenian Review*, 43(2-3/170-171), p. 157 (Summer/Autumn 1990).
28. Crowther, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
29. Livezeanu, "Moldavia, 1917-1990," *op. cit.*, p. 179.
30. "The Bessarabians," *The Economist*, p. 49 (6 April 1991).
31. Crowther, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
32. Alexander Belopotapov, Director General of the Russian Cultural Center, Personal Interview, Chisinau, September 1993.
33. *RFE/RL Daily Report*, No. 26, (8 February 1994).
34. Algis Prazauskas, "The Influence of Ethnicity of the Foreign Policies of the Western Littoral States," unpublished paper, p. 38 (14 June 1993).
35. Mikhail Guboglo, "Demography and Language in the Capitals of the Union Republics," *Journal of Soviet Nationalities*, 1(4), pp. 20, 40 (1990-1991).
36. Dan Ionescu, "Soviet Moldavia: The State Language Issue," *Radio Liberty Report on the USSR*, p. 20 (2 June 1989).
37. Charles King, "The New Bessarabian Question: Politics, Ethnicity and the Two Romanian States," Paper delivered at the 1993 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, 2-5 September 1993, p. 16.
38. Alexander Belopotapov, Personal Interview, Chisinau, September 1993.
39. Galina V. Galagan, Director of the Cultural Department of the Tiraspol Executive Committee, Personal Interview, Tiraspol, September 1993.
40. Konstantin Fedorovich Popovich, Director, Institute for the Study of National Minorities of the Moldovan Academy of Sciences, Personal Interview, Chisinau, September, 1993.
41. Natalya Prikhodko, "Russians Aren't Eager to Study the State Language," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, p. 3, (15 July 1993), cited in *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, XLV(28), pp. 26-27 (1993).
42. Charles King, "The New Bessarabian Question," *op. cit.*, p. 16.
43. Viktor Grebenshchikov, Counsellor to President, Personal Interview, Chisinau, September 1993.
44. Valeriu Matei, Member of Parliament, Personal Interview, Chisinau, September 1993.
45. Vladimir Socor, "Moldavia Resists Pressure and Boycotts Union Referendum," *RFE/RL Report on the USSR*, p. 11 (29 March 1991).
46. Vladimir Socor, "Opinion Polling in Moldova," *RFE/RL Research Report*, pp. 60-61, (22 March 1992).
47. Vladimir Socor, "The Moldavian Communists: From Ruling to Opposition Party," *RFE/RL Report on the USSR*, p. 17 (5 April 1991).
48. Vladimir Socor, "Moldavia Defies Soviet Coup, Removes Vestiges of Communism," *RFE/RL Report on the USSR*, p. 21 (20 September 1991).
49. Vladimir Socor, "Moldavia Proclaims Independence, Commences Secession from USSR," *RFE/RL Report on the USSR*, pp. 19-20 (18 October 1991).
50. *RFE/RL Research Report*, p. 69 (20 March 1992).
51. Socor, "Moldova Proclaims Independence" *op. cit.*, p. 16, citing *Moldova Surverana* (11 September 1991).
52. Valeriu Matei, Personal Interview, Chisinau, September 1993.

53. Anthony Birch, *Nationalism and National Integration* (London, Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 66.
54. See Allen Buchanan, *Secession*, (Boulder, Westview, 1991).
55. *The Economist*, *op. cit.*, p. 50 (6 April 1991).
56. *RFE/RL Research Report*, p. 63 (10 April 1992).
57. Vladimir Socor, "Creeping Putsch in Eastern Moldova," *RFE/RL Research Report*, p. 9 (17 January 1992).
58. *Ibid.*
59. *RFE/RL Research Report*, p. 67 (17 April 1992).
60. Justin Burke, "Moldova Calls on Russia to End Aid to Separatists," *The Christian Science Monitor*, p. 3 (27 May 1992).
61. *RFE/RL Research Report*, p. 73 (17 July 1992).
62. Neil V. Lamont, "Peacemaking or Warfighting? Ethnic Conflict in the Transdnierster," Foreign Military Studies Office, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, unpublished paper, p. 15 (November 1993).
63. *RFE/RL Daily Report*, No. 32 (16 February 1994).
64. Valentin Ivanovich Yegoshin, Cultural Department of the Tiraspol City Political Committee, Personal Interview, September 1993.
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66. Nicolae S. Chirtoaca, Personal Interview, Chisinau, September 1993.
67. Stefan Bozbei, Personal Interview, Chisinau, September 1993.
68. Rejai and Enloe, *op. cit.*, p. 153.
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72. *Post-Soviet/East European Report*, p. 4 (1 July 1992).
73. *Ibid.*
74. Bohdan Nahaylo, "Moldovan Conflict Creates New Dilemmas for Ukraine," *RFE/RL Research Report*, p. 6 (15 May 1992).
75. *Ibid.*, citing Radio Rossia (18 April 1992).
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80. Dutter, *op. cit.*, p. 317.
81. Nicolas Chirtoaca, Personal Interview, Chisinau, October 1993.
82. *RFE/RL Daily Reports*, No. 42 (2 March 1994); No. 43 (3 March 1994); No. 55 (21 March 1994).
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84. Rejai and Enloe, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
85. Vladimir Socor, "Why Moldova Does Not Seek Reunification with Romania," *RFE/RL Research Report*, p. 31 (31 January 1992).
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87. Nicolas Tau, Personal Interview, January 1994.

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88. Stefan Bozbei, Director General of the Moldovan State Department for National Relations, Personal Interview, September 1993.

