REFLECTIONS ON THE MEDIATION AND NEGOTIATION PROCESS IN THE CASE OF FROZEN CONFLICTS IN EASTERN EUROPE

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Abstract

Reflections on the mediating process upon the frozen conflicts, in principle, has led to the idea regarding the confrontation with Russia which, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, felt largely excluded from European issues, although its role in Europe's political and economic life remains particularly important. Geopolitical clashes at the strategic level over the 20-21st centuries have created a situation of profound mistrust between Russia and the US, Russia and NATO, Russia and the EU and new lines of rift between the European integration areas. At the macro level, we can talk about some fundamental consequences for the issue of regional security. In fact, the mediating process can be rushed up by the governments of each state. The interests of each state to settle up the frozen conflict can start the mediating process.

Keywords: frozen, mediators, enclave, separatist, resolution.

In international relations, a frozen conflict is a situation where active armed conflict has been put to an end, but no peace Treaty or other political framework resolves the conflict to the satisfaction of the combatants. The conflict can therefore start legally again at any time, creating an environment of uncertainty and instability.

The term was also used for other geographical regions, but most importantly with reference to post-Soviet space. After the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, a number of conflicts have arisen in some of the post-Soviet States, usually if the new international borders do not match the ethnic affiliation of the local populations. This file links the post-Soviet frozen conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia and eastern Ukraine.

In general, a frozen conflict means that, as a result of a conflict that is not resolved, certain post-Soviet States are not in a position to exercise their sovereignty on part of their territory and that the part of their territory is controlled by rebels. Rec-

ognition of these rebel groups varies. In the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria and Eastern Ukraine, no UN Member State has granted them recognition. In the case of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, these territories of Georgia have been recognized by Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Naauru.

A frozen conflict means insecurity and instability and the possibility that the conflict can start again. That was precisely the case in Nagorno-Karabakh, where the low-intensity fight was customary and where a four-day war recently erupted between 2 and 5 April 2016. Some analysts say that Nagorno-Karabakh doesn't really fit the term "frozen conflict" because it is just a conflict, albeit with little intensity most of the time. Most of the countries in the frozen conflict zones – Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine – have expressed their desire to become EU and NATO members in the long term. Helping to engineer and perpetuate frozen conflict zones, Russia has slowed the rapprochement. Armenia and Azerbaijan, which are technically at war due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, are a special case. Energy-rich Azerbaijan prefers to keep an equal distance from the great powers, while poor Armenia put all its eggs in Russia's basket.

Mediation and conflict transformation share the overall objective of building lasting peace[1]. However, they differ in terms of means used, time limits, parties and third parties involved, as shown in the table below.

On the means side, mediation uses assisted negotiations as a way to help the parties reach an agreement that will put an end to violence and address the root causes of the conflict[2]. This could lead to a long-term transformation of relations and structures, but agreements can also arise without a fundamental transformation of relations for purely pragmatic reasons. The transformation of conflicts sees the transformation of relations between the

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[1] Moore Christopher, *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict*, Hoboken: Jossey-Bass; (2003), 9.

[2] *Ibidem*, 23.

Overall Objective: Building Long-Term Peace

	Mediation	**Conflict Transformation**
Means	Assisted negotiations	Transforming relationships and structures
Timeframe	Short-term	Long-term
Parties	Decision-making conflict parties	Society at large
Third parties	Mediators and mediation support actors	Mediators, peacebuilders, development workers, et

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parties to the conflict, but also the relationships and structures of society at large, as the most effective means of bringing peace[3].

As such, a change in "basic conditions that have led and can lead to violence again" is considered to be the most important means of bringing lasting peace[4].

This can happen through various mechanisms that go beyond the mediation process (e.g. confidence-building measures, peace-building and development programs, economic empowerment, constitutional reform, justice and reconciliation processes, responsibility for violent crimes).

On the post-Soviet conflicts along both lines, it leads to three general comments. Firstly, the local causes, conditions and course of each conflict are essential for its resolution, a factor which is not always recognized or understood by the nations and international bodies that have tried to act as mediators.

Secondly, although the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union have emerged from the same political and economic environment, their internal causes and internal dynamics have varied widely, the nature of East-West relations in the region since around 2004-2005 EP, in particular, after the 2008 war in Georgia, it has not always been the case and therefore cannot necessarily be the inevitable or natural state of things.

Thirdly, it seems that especially in more recent years, a focus on geopolitical competition between major regional and global powers – such as Russia,

the EU, and the USA – in these conflicts has distracted the attention of both analysts and practitioners from a real shift in the internal nature and dynamics of the disputes, which are crucial to their resolution. The overall experience of working with participants and mediators in all these cases suggests that resolving these conflicts depends at once upon several factors and requires simultaneous, sustained attention and engagement at several different levels.

These factors include:

(1) regional and great power differences and conflicts of interest;

(2) specific local conditions unique to each of the conflicts, in addition to broad similarities springing from their common Soviet heritage;

(3) the personalities of key figures involved in the conflicts and settlement processes[5].

The countries that emerged from the Soviet Union have faced two sets of problems, domestic and external ones. Domestically, most of these nations still struggle with the powerful vestiges of the authoritarian society and command economy that they inherited from the Soviet Union. These vestiges include: the control of the state and exploitation of public resources by a small elite; related corruption; the absence of independent institutions; non-transparent governance; elite-controlled media; and, in some countries, ethnic tensions.

Externally, these nations have faced a powerful neighbor, Russia, that under President Putin has not hidden its demand for a sphere of influence, which would circumscribe their security and even their foreign economic policies. Moscow has exploited all of these vestiges above to extend its influence in the "Near Abroad." In the countries where ethnic

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[3] See Frazer, Owen and Lakhdar Ghettas (2013), 9; Lederach, Jean-Paul (1995), *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures.* New York: Syracuse University Press, 18.

[4] Austin, Beatrix and Hans-Joachim Giessmann, et. Al. (2012), "*Berghof Glossary on Conflict Transformation: 20 Notions for Theory and Practice,*" Berlin: Berghof Foundation Operations GmbH, 22.

[5] Chaim Kaufmann, "*Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars*", International Security, vol. 20, no. 4 (Spring 1996), 138.

tensions loom, the Kremlin has developed the policy of "frozen conflicts." The Kremlin has chosen to champion the ethnic minorities in Nagorno-Karabakh, Ajaria, Abkhazia, Southern Ossetia and Transnistria as a means to apply pressure on the governments in Baku, Chisinau, and Tbilisi.

In years to come, most of these battles pitted newly independent governments against territorial separatists, but all sprang from a range of disparate causes: the collapse of federations, the end of authoritarianism, the reemergence of old quarrels, the meddling of outside powers, political demagoguery

The fact that people do feel strongly about their ethnicity, but very few convinced nationalists actually go so far as to exterminate their neighbors should be taken into consideration. In this situation we may talk about the maniacal leaders that clearly play an important role in civil wars, but simply saying so does not explain why some end up as powerful demagogues while others simply rant in obscurity. There are some other important factors affecting these zones such as economic grievances and security dilemmas that can also push groups toward violence, but such explanations predict far more conflicts than actually occurs in the world.

One of the Kaufman's solution to these frozen conflicts is to focus on what he calls the "symbolic politics" of conflicts that is, how existing beliefs about neighboring ethnic groups are used to justify violence, and how these beliefs then seem to be confirmed once the violence breaks out. The researcher is focusing on several wars that broke out during the collapse of communism: in the Dniester region of Moldova, in Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, in the Nagorno Karabakh enclave inside Azerbaijan, and in the former Yugoslavia. All of these conflicts raged from the early to mid-1990s and resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of displaced people. Kaufman argues that each of these wars displayed three conditions essential for communal violence. First, in each case politicians used a preexisting reservoir of myths about rival ethnic populations to mobilize the public along cultural lines. Second, in every instance particular ethnic groups feared being swamped economically, politically, and demographically by other groups. And third, in each of these wars the communities involved had plenty of time to mobilize and shore up their own security before their neighbors got the upper hand. Without any one of these ingredients,

Kaufman says[6], these post-communist conflicts would never have occurred.

What is important to point out about all these civil conflicts, they have a volatile mix at their core: myths that can be mustered into service, politicians willing to use those myths, and the state apparatus is too weak to ensure basic civil order. However, Kaufman's explanation raises the question of whether what is called "ethnic war" even exists. Of course, there are such things as ethnic groups, and they do occasionally come into conflict, although as Kaufman rightly points out, they do so far less often than we normally think. But it is worth asking whether talking about a distinct category of violence called "ethnic war" is as useful as Kaufman (and many others) think.

Indeed, on the scale of human suffering, post-communist wars are hardly noticeable: they killed relatively few people, they did not last long, and, most importantly, they attracted the attention of great powers, in particular the United States. The label "ethnic conflict" fits as a simple shorthand for wars in which belligerents define themselves in part along cultural lines.

Due to the all conclusions regarding these conflicts, there is a truth that the myths were manufactured in relatively short order, and usually after violence had already started. There was little in Georgian or Abkhaz national mythology to explain the depth of hatred that arose during the conflict there. And in Moldova, one would have had to be very creative to forge a coherent narrative of oppression on the either side.

Most civil wars, whether involving ethnic groups, ideological factions, or any other social category have a way of manufacturing their own inevitability.

The label "ethnic conflict" may lead analysts and would-be peacemakers to confuse two different issues: pathologies of individual beliefs and rational motives for group mobilization, or, in other words, to mistake causes of hatred for causes of violence. The former is about precisely the "symbolic politics" that Kaufman[7] identifies, the narratives of national suffering that can be useful in whipping up the masses. The latter is about getting armies into

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[6] Chaim Kaufmann, *"Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars"*, International Security, vol. 20, no. 4 (Spring 1996), 138.

[7] *Ibidem.*

the field, and for that no amount of symbol-manipulating will get anywhere without a leadership and a state bureaucracy intent on perpetrating violence.

Georgia, Moldova, and Azerbaijan remain issued in internal disputes just because of the myths, fears, and opportunities that originally started the wars. But in all of these cases, the issues that first brought the various parties to clashes are very different from the dynamics that perpetuated the conflicts. In each of these regions, a tense cease-fire has been in place since the mid-1990s, but no progress has been made toward a final peace accord. Today, much of these states' territories is controlled by unrecognized but fully functional quasi states: the so-called republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (in Georgia), the Dniester Moldovan Republic (in Moldova), and the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh (in Azerbaijan). None of these stateless has a seat in the United Nations. None is recognized by any sovereign country[8].

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the U.N. have spent the better part of a decade "mediating" these various disputes, and the organizations' main strategy has been to address precisely those beliefs and insecurities that Kaufman[9] identifies. That approach has led nowhere, however, and for one simple reason: ethnic myths and fears have become largely irrelevant to most of the actors in these dramas. In fact, under the current *status quo*, there has been no fighting or a final peace agreement. The separatists get a *de facto* country. Corrupt officials in the central governments get a transit route for illegal commerce. Foreign governments made some peace and therefore there was no need to intervene. International organizations get multiple rounds of "negotiations" and willing recipients for their good offices. In the long run, however, everyone ends up a loser. These unsettled conflicts have had cancerous effects on the regions where they occurred, feeding corruption, weakening governance, and blowing away what little democracy in Georgia, Moldova and Azerbaijan rests on. They have created havens for international criminals and conduits for the smuggling of drugs, weapons, and people into Europe

and beyond. None of that, incidentally, has much to do with ethnicity[10].

Analyzing the EU as a mediator in conflict resolution and peace building process, we have to focus on the EU Security Strategy of 2003 (EUSS), that notes that 'frozen conflicts, which also persist on our borders, threaten regional stability'[11]. This document states clearly that 'violent conflicts, weak states, where organized crime flourishes, dysfunctional societies or exploding population growth on its borders all pose problems for Europe'[12], and goes on to a very specific demand that the Union 'should now take a stronger and more active interest in the problems of the Southern Caucasus'[13].

The EU reacted to the crisis under the EU presidency of France. Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner flew to Tbilisi together with the OSCE chairman, Finland's Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, on 9 August. On the way, and the next morning, they prepared a tentative ceasefire proposal on three key issues: cessation of hostilities, recognition of Georgia's territorial integrity, and a speedy restoration of the previous *status quo*. They discussed the plan with the Foreign Minister Ekaterine Tkeshelashvili. Then they presented the proposal to President Mikhail Saakashvili who accepted it. After having visited the town of Gori on the request of the hosts, Kouchner and Stubb flew to Moscow in order to negotiate a ceasefire with the Russians[14].

While the dissolution of the USSR into its major constituent republics was achieved peacefully, the determination of ultimate political authority in a number of small areas on the periphery led to violence. Wars of various size and duration were fought over the Nagorno-Karabakh region in Azerbaijan, South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia, and Transnistria in Moldova. In fact, a full-scale civil war began between the factions in Tajikistan, and the national-national discontent on the Crimean Peninsula in Ukraine was eventually resolved without

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[8] Modern Hatreds: *The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*. by Stuart j. kaufman. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001, 288 pp.

[9] Chaim Kaufmann, "*Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars*", International Security, vol. 20, no. 4 (Spring 1996), 139.

[10] Charles King, *The Myth of Ethnic Warfare Understanding Conflict in the Post-Cold War World*, Source: Foreign Affairs, Vol. 80, No. 6 (Nov. – Dec., 2001), 165-170.

[11] Council of the European Union," *A secure Europe in a better world: European Security Strategy*" (Brussels, Dec 12. 2003), 5.

[12] *Ibidem*, 7.

[13] *Ibidem*, 8.

[14] Tuomas Forsberg "*The EU as a peace-maker in the Russo-Georgian war* " Paper Presented at the Fifth Pan-European Conference on EU Politics, 23-26 June, 2010.

violence. The specific historical evolution of each of these conflicts depended obviously on both the correlation of the interests of external powers at that particular moment in history and the dynamics of the individual internal political, economic, and social conditions in each country and/or region.

In fact, take Nagorno-Karabakh – this is the most pronounced ethno-national of all conflicts, and the only conflict in which there were hostilities between two recognized independent states[15]. More than any of the other conflicts, this one is going from the reason made by popular fears and hostilities. In addition, the war in Nagorno-Karabakh went on longer, the casualties on both sides were higher, and the numbers of displaced persons were larger than in other conflicts—all internal factors that exacerbated suspicion and bitterness, making reconciliation and resolution of the conflict extremely difficult. On the other hand, the Nagorno-Karabakh (and Armenia-Azerbaijan) conflict has escaped the external geopolitical rivalries and ambitions to a significant extent, which may complicate settlement of such conflict. From the beginning to the present day, this conflict has seen the best US-Russian cooperation.

Due to the conclusions about the resolution of this dispute the US, Russian, and European cooperation was quite positive. Certainly, there were disagreements, but the common attention was focused on preventing a wider war between Azerbaijan and Armenia and seeking a compromise solution (we failed in both, but not, in my view, because of competition between external powers). The Minsk Group still works fairly amicably (at least until very recently)—perhaps because US, Russia, and France collaborate at the working level as true equals in this format. In fact, the US and Russia in the early 1990s both believed it in their interest to avoid Iranian involvement in mediating in the Caucasus, and therefore agreed from the very start on the CSCE/OSCE as the forum for conflict resolution efforts between Armenia and Azerbaijan[16].

The struggle over Nagorno-Karabakh escalated after both Armenia and Azerbaijan attained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. In the post-Soviet power vacuum, military action be-

tween Azerbaijan and Armenia was deeply affected by the Russian military. Full-scale fighting started late in the winter of 1992. The Khojaly Massacre of 25-26 February 1992, when at least 161 ethnic Azeri from the town of Khojalj were killed by the Armenian, and partly by CIS forces, is considered to be the largest massacre in the course of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

By the end of 1993, the conflict had caused thousands of casualties and created hundreds of thousands of refugees on both sides. By the end of the war in 1994, the Armenians were in full control of most of the enclave and also held and currently control approximately 9% of Azerbaijan's territory outside the enclave. At that stage, for the first time during the conflict, the Azerbaijani government recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as a third party in the war, and started direct negotiations with the Karabakh authorities. As many as 230,000 Armenians from Azerbaijan and 800,000 Azeri from Armenia and Karabakh have been displaced as a result of the conflict. A cease-fire was reached on 12 May 1994 through Russian negotiation.

There are currently an estimated 600,000 to 700,000 refugees from the Karabakh region living in Azerbaijan and another 200,000 to 300,000 in Armenia and Karabakh. There have been reports, including by the OSCE, of Armenia moving population from the mainland to Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as directing several hundreds of Armenian Syrians fleeing the Syrian war, to Nagorno-Karabakh.

Negotiation and mediation efforts, primarily led by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, have failed to produce a permanent solution to the conflict. Russian-mediated peace talks have also not resulted in any concrete steps toward de-escalation.

Established in 1994, the Minsk Group continues to work for the creation of conditions in which such a conference can take place. The co-chairs of the Minsk Group are the ambassadors of the Russian Federation, of France and of the USA. The Minsk Group's permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland, and Turkey, as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan. On a rotating basis, the OSCE Troika is a permanent member.

Four UN Security Council Resolutions[17] have been passed during the Nagorno-Karabakh war. These resolutions have not invoked Chapter VII

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[15] Charles King, *The Myth of Ethnic Warfare Understanding Conflict in the Post-Cold War World*, Source: Foreign Affairs, Vol. 80, No. 6 (Nov. – Dec., 2001), 165-170.

[16] *Ibidem*, 165-170.

[17] https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/index.htm

of the <u>United Nations Charter</u>. Chapter VII of the <u>United Nations Charter</u> sets out the UN Security Council's powers to maintain peace. It allows the Council to "determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression" and to take military and nonmilitary action to "restore international peace and security"[18].

A four-day war was fought between 2 and 5 April leaving over two dozen soldiers killed on both sides. A ceasefire was agreed on 5 April at a behind-the-scenes meeting in Moscow between representatives of the warring sides. Analysts said it should be safely assumed that the events from the first days of April could be a precursor to much worse confrontation to come.

"Russia styled itself as the lead mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict,"[19] insisting that the aim was to create the impression that Moscow "calls the shots" in the South Caucasus.

Neil Melvin[20], Senior Researcher at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), said that Russia styled itself as the lead mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and that the absence of a significant US response left the field open for Russia to be the power broker.

British S&D MEP Richard Howitt (Labor) said the EU should associate formally with the Minsk group process, and that the Union should also engage more with Russia diplomatically. He complained that there were no mechanisms to find out what is actually happening on the ground.

Howitt also put Nagorno-Karabakh in the wider picture, stoking the risk of a wider Christian-Muslim confrontation, Azerbaijan being predominantly Muslim, and Armenia predominantly Christian[21].

Emboldened by Russian nationalists and those fearing annexation by Romania, the Moldavian SSR declared itself independent under the name of "Transniester Moldovan Republic", a move that led to a 4-month conflict between Moldovan forces and separatists backed by the Soviet 14th Army that claimed an estimated 1,000 lives.

The 1992 ceasefire agreement created the Joint Control Commission (JCC), under which 1,500 Russian, *de facto* Transnistrian, and Moldovan forces continue to serve ostensibly as peacekeepers in Transnistria in roughly equal proportion.

Russian Lt. Gen. Alexander Lebed, a profane and charismatic officer, had little use for either the Moldovans or the Transnistrians, who began to devote sectors of their economy to human trafficking, drug running and arms smuggling. But he successfully separated the two warring parties and they have stayed that way ever since.

The cease-fire led to the creation of a three-party Joint Control Commission, consisting of Russia, Moldova, and Transnistria, which supervises a demilitarized security zone on both sides of the Dniester River. Transnistria has been a "frozen conflict" ever since.

Since 1997, the OSCE has managed a conflict resolution process which now engages seven parties in the <u>"5+2" format</u>: Moldova and Transnistria, with Russia, Ukraine, and the OSCE as intermediaries, and the US and the EU as observers. The OSCE-brokered talks have helped to defuse occasional crises and to keep the sides in dialogue, but no framework agreement has yet been accepted by all sides.

The closest they came was in 2003, when the Russian-brokered <u>Kozak plan</u> for the reunification of Moldova and Transnistria was rejected at the last minute by Chisinau.

In September 2006, Transnistria's citizenry voted overwhelmingly to confirm their independence and the country has created its own constitution, flag, national anthem, and coat of arms, as well as a military, police, postal system, and currency. But Transnistria remains a *de facto* state, unrecognized by sovereign members of the international community – including even Russia itself.

Formally, Transnistria remains an electoral democracy. Moldova and Transnistria have held talks. Moldova announced that its parliament would consider removing travel restrictions on the Transnistrians with Russian and Ukrainian passports.

It is unlikely that the war will be renewed, because Russian President Vladimir Putin would actively support Transnistria, while the Moldovans could expect little military aid from the United States and NATO.

A so-called 5+2 settlement process, (OSCE, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, the Transnistrian region, plus the EU and US as observers) was established following the 1992 truce. However, the format has produced few results.

The OSCE established the <u>Mission to Moldova</u> in February 1993 with a mandate to help find a peaceful

[18] https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/index.htm
[19] *Ibidem.*
[20] *Ibidem.*
[21] https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/index.htm

solution to the conflict between the country's central government and the breakaway region of Transnistria. The Mission has its base in Chisinau[22] and maintains a branch office in Tiraspol, and an office in Bender. It has a total staff of 52, out of which 13 are international and 39 local personnel. A recurrent problem is that the local so-called "authorities" refuse to grant OSCE monitors unfettered access to do their work.

Therefore, we should focus on the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova. The National Security Strategy is a complex concept that defines the range of actions that need to be taken by the competent authorities of the Republic of Moldova in order to establish an environment where our citizens could live in security and prosperity.

Moldova has very limited experience and expertise in evaluating, planning and carrying out national security strategies. The intellectual potential, which in the Soviet Union deals with developing strategies in the field of security and those adjacent to it, has been inherited almost entirely by the Russian Federation. A new strategy needs to identify the key challenges to be overcome by the Republic of Moldova in order to ensure its security.

On March 2, 1992 in the eastern districts of the Republic of Moldova the war started on the Dniester – a military conflict which, despite all human sacrifices and political efforts since then, remained unresolved, becoming soon, a frozen conflict in which the Russian Federation exercises its influence and geopolitical pressure in the region.

30 years have passed since that day, but the Republic of Moldova has still failed to resolve the Transnistrian dispute. In recent years, this topic had almost disappeared from the government agendas, but events after 24 February 2022 in Ukraine have revived public attention to the Transnistrian conflict and, in particular, the risk of becoming part of the invasion equation of the Russian Federation.

The vision of the new national Security Strategy must be drawn up taking into account the lessons of the country's development path over the past two decades, previous national strategic planning processes and documents, and the need to ensure an objective assessment of the impact of policies.

In order to realize this vision, it is necessary to achieve tangible progress in improving people's quality of life, which can be verified both by ob-

jective statistical data and by people's perceptions and subjective experiences. It is undeniable that the Republic of Moldova must ensure accelerated economic and technological convergence with the countries of the region, and in this respect, it will inevitably compete with these countries in attracting investment, seizing export opportunities, attracting talented people, economic growth, etc. it is also clear, that modernizing the country – at all levels – is only possible by continuing and deepening the country's EU integration process. But the country's strategic imperative is to regain the trust of its own citizens.

Looking at the "Moldova 2030"[23] National Development Strategy, we find out that this legislation proposes the use of a concept of quality of life that includes 10 relevant dimensions. This concept is used by Eurostat by standard to measure the phenomenon of quality of life.

Here we see that security issues in 2020 (the year of release and approval of the Strategy) of the 10 main specific goals of the Strategy were placed in eighth place (i.e., almost at the end of the hierarchy of categories, which requires sustainable progress) will be achieved in the coming ten years).

At the same time, if we refer to the way in which the problems related to the Transnistrian conflict and the withdrawal of foreign troops, which were exposed in the 2011 national Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova, we can see that the solutions presented in this document involve strictly diplomatic processes, in accordance with the civilized requirements of contemporary international relations, such as: the solution to the Transnistrian problem must be achieved exclusively by peaceful means in the negotiation process in the format of "5+2"[24].

The solution to the conflict must be based on respect for the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders, respect for democratic norms, values and practices must be extended to the whole territory of the reunited country, by ensuring a functioning state based on the principles of the rule of law and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, assisted by a free and strengthened civil society.

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[22] https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/index.htm

[23] https://cancelaria.gov.md/en/content/national-development-strategy-moldova-2030-parliament

[24] https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/index.htm

In the context of the war actions on the territory of Ukraine, initiated and carried out by the Russian Federation with complete defiance of the general rules of international relations, we can predict that the rules laid down in the text of the national Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova[25] can also be easily violated by the authorities of the Russian Federation. This requires us to develop a new strategy that will lay out some scenarios that, by the beginning of 2022, seemed absolutely impossible. Especially in the current conditions, when our state remains subject to threats of political or other coercion generated from outside in order to influence its foreign and domestic political choice.

According to the same 2011 strategy[26], external coercion can be exercised in the form of measures of an economic or other nature, as well as through the special services of other States.

The current state of affairs points to the need for adequate information and communication capabilities. These capabilities shall include both the instrumentation for obtaining the quality of information and good management of things on the counter-intelligence line and the instrumentation used in appropriate communication within the national security sector and in analyzing the information used for political decision-making.

A reset of the information system in line with the standards and practices used in the EU will allow for a better orientation of the Republic of Moldova in the current security environment.

The vulnerabilities of strategic planning acts among the typical weaknesses of the strategic planning documents produced over the last 25 years, the following three are:

1. Excessive focus on growth. This approach led to the substitution of national development with economic growth, assuming that the effects of economic growth were to spread across society. In this context, man has been seen as a resource for accelerating economic growth and not as the main beneficiary of economic growth that is sustainable in the consumption of natural resources, socially and geographically inclusive and fair in its impact on future generations. Even in strategies where economic growth goals were complemented by poverty reduction goals, poverty reduction was achieved to a greater extent by purely monetary means.

2. Arbitrary establishment of development priorities. In many cases, the development priorities incorporated in development documents were a reflection of the balance of formal and informal powers, institutional influences or the need to align national policies with some current financial opportunities, rather than a result of conclusive analyzes and understanding of the theory of change. As a result, priorities were often formulated in a 'dehumanized' manner (such as the development of the business environment), with a strong focus on the development of technical systems and infrastructure (the development of the road and energy network) and without showing how, in practical terms, the most disadvantaged people in society would have benefited from this progress.

3. Limited quality of data and indicators. The data used in development planning did not always provide sufficient detail of the analyzed phenomena, also due to limited disaggregation. The monitoring indicators did not always have a direct link with the issue addressed and/or did not have a constant presence in public statistical work and sociological measurements. The targets were often set arbitrarily, without a clear link to the scale of the planned intervention and the resources available.

At the same time, the causes of the failures are of a different nature. To a much greater extent, the impact of strategic planning documents was constrained by the overall quality of the policy framework, institutional environment, administrative processes and bureaucratic routines in which strategic planning documents were integrated. In particular:

1. Development strategies have not been successfully integrated into the core of administrative processes. With often limited ownership of strategic planning documents, national policy planning and monitoring authorities perceived the reporting and monitoring of these documents as foreign

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[25] http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00002614/01/IPP_NATIO-NAL_SECURITY_Eng.pdf

[26] https://cancelaria.gov.md/en/content/national-development-strategy-moldova-2030-parliament

elements, which absorb their resources and time.

2. The uncertain role attributed to national development strategies in the overall policy framework. The hierarchical relationship of national strategic planning documents with those at the level of economic sector, public service, development region or district/city was not clearly defined and maintained. Crucially, the connection between national, regional and local policies has been very poor.

3. General deficit of financial resources. Adequate financial resources to finance development priorities have not always been secured, and the connections between strategic planning documents and national public budget components have been too weak. The transition to program-based budgetary planning is still far from complete. The problem of weak links between declared policies and the budget has been exacerbated by difficulties in allocating resources transparently to competing priorities.

4. General scarcity of human resources in the general government. Linked to a certain degree to the lack of financial resources, but also to the lack of motivating mechanisms for promoting and advancing careers, the lack of human resources has shunned the institutional memory vis-à-vis strategic planning documents, and the continuous flow of frames has led to the loss of links between institutions and planning documents.

5. General weakness of the monitoring and evaluation framework. Few strategic planning documents have benefited from constant monitoring and effective mid-term and final evaluations. One of the weakest elements in this chain was Parliament, the one which actually did not exercise its role of control and supervision over the executive.

6. Depreciation of the relevance of strategic planning. Planning documents targeting long horizons and covering several electoral cycles inevitably lose relevance as new development realities materialize and government changes. Reinvigorating them involves updating provisions / priorities and adjusting to new risks and opportunities.

The weakness of the framework for strategic monitoring and evaluation has made this impossible in the Republic of Moldova. The current issue is the war in Ukraine and threats to the security of the Republic of Moldova and the whole of Europe.

The humankind entered 2022 with a series of cascading crises. The pandemic continues with its strong economic and social impact, aggravated by the energy crisis with the explosive rise in public debt and the inflationary wave that only flourish. To all this, the beginning of the year has only inherited the escalation of conflicts in critical areas, such as Ukraine and Taiwan, to which Kazakhstan added at the beginning of the new year.

And if in Kazakhstan a sort of defuse of the internal crisis was achieved with the use of foreign military intervention, then the case of Ukraine has degenerated into a classic war to a full extent.

It is emphasized that Putin's current agenda is far from being limited to the Ukrainian issue alone. The real Kremlin stake is to put the Americans and the Europeans in the face of clear blackmail so that they can accept Pax Russia, at least for the post-Soviet space[27].

One of the worst scenarios for the Republic of Moldova, as a result of the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, would be the invasion of the territory to the right of the Dniester River. Once Russia has brutally violated international law and order, by the military attack on Ukraine, a little that would stop them from violating the same international law in the case of the Republic of Moldova.

There would be a great deal of pretexts, ranging from a military challenge in Transnistria to an urgent appeal of an invented committee of the Russian citizens, residing in the Republic of Moldova, to defend their rights violated by the so-called Romanian nationalists.

Another equally bad scenario would be the implementation of the Novorossiya project, in which separatist Transnistria would join the Ukrainian territory occupied by the Russian military forces. Under these circumstances, imposing a kind of Kozak's memorandum on Chisinau as a solution to the Transnistrian conflict, would only be a short-term problem and without the right of appeal. In the scenario of avoiding military conflict and resorting to the diplomatic solution, the Republic of Moldova risks becoming part of the bonus achieved by Russia

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following the compromise between the negotiating parties. Putin clearly outlined his priorities by demanding control over historical Russia[28]. Finland, Poland, the Baltic republics have also been embedded in the Tatars empire, but by promoting separate national identity policies, these countries have gained the right to separate themselves from historical Russia. In contrast, the Republic of Moldova, promoting at state policy level the Moldovan identity different from the Romanian one, inextricably linked to the imperial practices of alienating the Moldavians to the East of the Prut from the whole area of its national becoming, remains captive to the Russian world and to the Russian geopolitical area. Nor is the firm attachment to the idea of the European integration of the Republic of Moldova, in the absence of a clear prospect of EU accession, the guarantee of its separation from historical Russia and from Moscow's revisionist claims. Such a guarantee can only be the position of the Officials of the Republic of Moldova regarding their belonging to the Romanian historical, cultural and original space, by definition different from the Russian one. Only such an approach by the Chisinau government of the natural place of the Republic of Moldova within the European civilization concert would offer opportunities to resist the table of talks in the face of Moscow's geopolitical revisionism.

Conclusions

The events in Ukraine and the deep crisis that our Eastern neighbor has entered reflect the weak position or even the dissolution of the whole European Security System.

Broadly speaking, today's European security architecture is based on three pillars:

1. NATO, as a collective defense platform, which at the same time maintains the US role in Europe;
2. The European Union as a structure ensuring political and economic stability;
3. The Organization for Security and co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which must act as a political and security forum.

The crisis in the ideology of "common spaces" is taking place, which is leading to the blocking of the "Lisbon Great Europe" model at Vladivostok. Since the end of the cold War, the downside of relations between the major geopolitical players

has been the worst, leading to the disappearance of common discussion platforms (G8, NATO-Russia Council, etc.), and communication between the parties has turned into a "dialogue of two parties with the deaf". We are witnessing the collision of the two major integration projects in Europe – the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union – which has been stimulated by the improvisation of the ideology "either, or" to the detriment of the "and, and" ideology in the region.

Russia has given to understand that it is capable of taking strategic action to radically change the rules of play in the region. Russia is moving troops into the region called Novorossiya and is building up its military capabilities in other areas (for example, in Transnistria). At the same time, NATO is starting to patrol the airspace of the Baltic countries, introducing warships in the Black Sea, increasing the number of military applications, and US soldiers have returned to NATO borders. We are pursuing a gradual transition from the soft to hard approach to security.

In conclusion, we can point out that the future security strategy must aim at bringing the Republic of Moldova directly into the infrastructure of the European security system, which in turn is to be restructured in a complex way following events in Ukraine.

As an element of a new strategic orientation, the gradual activation of Chisinau can be used to obtain new international arrangements which would guarantee the country's neutrality or provide security guarantees, while maintaining the pro-European course of the country, diplomatic activity in the current numb formats such as 5+2, the OSCE, the UN, etc. strategies to maintain the status quo no longer work, just as the signing of association agreements with the EU represented by Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia has upset the fragile balance in the region. Even if, for the time being, an activation of existing formats seems impossible, in the near future, some windows of opportunity may appear, in view of the worsening regional situation, the economic crisis which will dramatically influence the economies of Russia, Ukraine and, as a result, the Republic of Moldova.

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[28] file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/812653.pdf