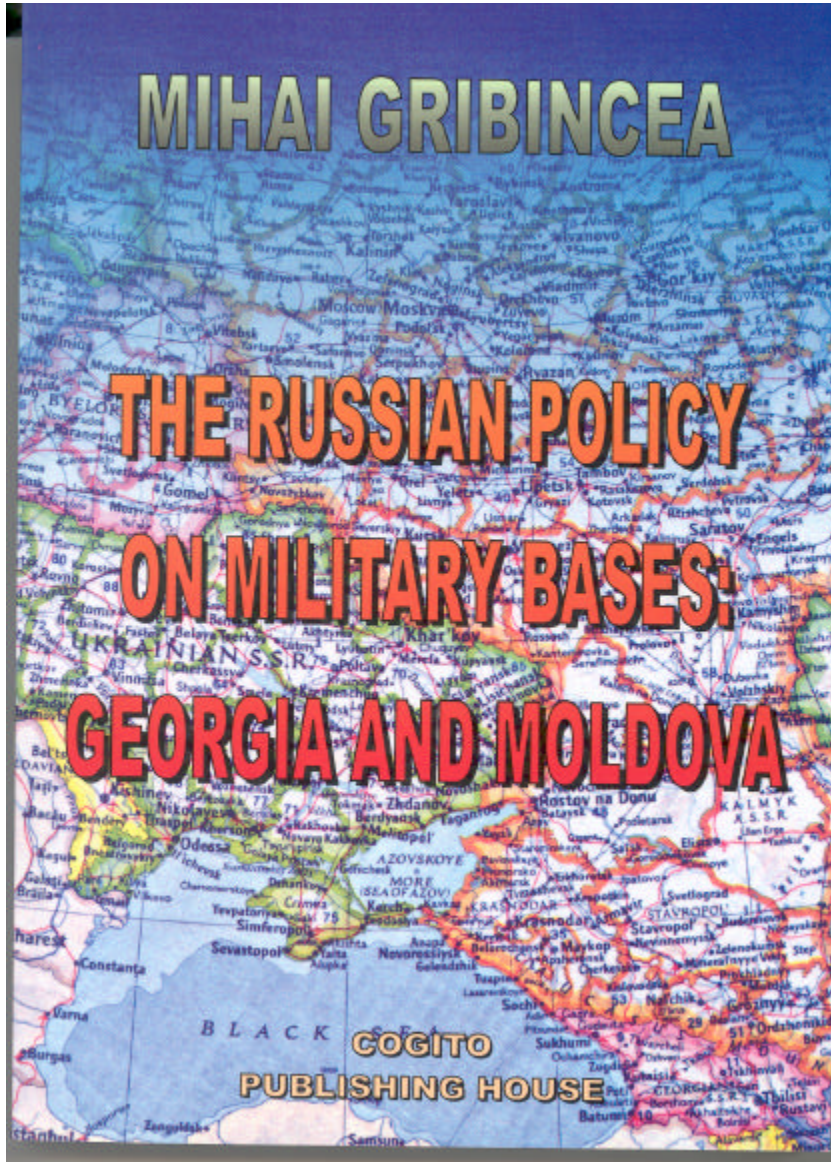


MIHAI GRIBINCEA

**THE RUSSIAN POLICY
ON MILITARY BASES:
GEORGIA AND MOLDOVA**

**COGITO
PUBLISHING HOUSE**



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INTRODUCTION

The disintegration of the USSR and the appearance on its territory of 15 new independent states has generated an absolutely new geopolitical and geo-strategic situation for Russia. In the opinion of some Russian researchers, after the USSR's collapse "Russia found itself geo-politically speaking in the situation it had been after the Brest Peace Treaty in 1918 and socially and economically in the situation of the year 1920, after the Civil War".¹ Other scientists consider that after August 1991 "the geopolitical configuration of Russia as a successor of the Russian Empire was similar to the one it had before Peter the Great".² Such statements are made on account of the fact that, as a consequence of the disappearance of the USSR, Russia has lost Crimea, most of the Black Sea and Baltic Sea coasts, the borders of Russia become further from the West by more than 1,000 kilometres etc.

It is difficult to say which of the analogies we have already quoted can more adequately reflect the geopolitical situation of Russia after August 1991. One thing, though, is certain: after the crash of the USSR this situation has suffered significant changes and, with the disappearance of the Soviet Empire, Moscow not only lost 24% of its territory and around 40% from the population of the former empire, but it also lost the main co-ordinates of its foreign policy. This fact has confronted the political and decisional factors in the Kremlin with the issue of finding a new identity for Russia within the international system. In some instances, this continues to be an actual problem for Russia even today.

By declaring the former Soviet space to be its own area of influence, Russia is actually trying to regain control over the Newly Independent States (NIS), and in order to accomplish this goal it is using a whole range of economical, political and military factors, such as: providing support for separatist regimes and pro-Russian forces in internal political combats, enforcing economic and political pressure upon the governments that try to keep their distance from Russia, imposing Russian military presence on the

¹ "Bezopasnosti", Informatzionnyi Sbornik Fonda Natzional'noy i Mezhdunarodnoy Bezopasnosti. No.5, May 1994, p. 90.

² *Ibid.*, p.89.

NIS territory against the will of the population and of the governments from the former Soviet republics etc.

From the whole range of means used by Russia in order to re-establish its control over the former Soviet territories, we shall only mention in the present work the efforts Russia is making to create military bases on NIS territories. After a general view of the Russian “doctrine” regarding military bases and of the role the Russian military has played in its creation, we shall elucidate the juridical status of the Russian military formations in Georgia, the negotiations between Russia and Georgia regarding the transformation of Russian troops into military bases, their movable and immovable property, the staff policy, the ensuring of lodging space, the population's attitude towards the troops. At the same time, we will try to enumerate the ways in which the Russian troops of the Transcaucasian Group of Russian Troops (TGRT) deployed in Georgia are used by Russia as a pressure factor over the authorities from Tbilisi in order to maintain Georgia within the area of Russian influence.

The present work will pay a special attention to the Russian troops stationed on the territory of Moldova, to the intentions Russia has of transforming the Operative Group of Russian Forces (OGRF) in Transnistria into a Russian military base, as well as to the reasons why this perspective of solving the issue of Russian troops on the territory of the Republic of Moldova is unacceptable to the Moldovan leadership. In our opinion, it is worthwhile for analysts to familiarise themselves with the case of Moldova, not only to understand better the Russian military policy in the so-called "Near Abroad", but also because this case seems to be an eloquent example of how Moscow, contrary to international practice which is based on mutual accord and interest of parties, is trying to establish military bases on the territory of the NIS without the countries' consent.

Since the summer of 1992, Moscow, according to its policy of re-establishing military control over the former Soviet territories, has been giving a particular attention to peacekeeping operations (PKO). At the beginning, by initiating the PKO Russia was following its goal of obtaining the status of “peacekeeping forces” for the Russian army units deployed in the conflict areas of the former USSR and also of avoiding the deployment of UN troops in former Soviet territories, which it still considers as its own sphere of

influence. Later, the PKO in general and especially the Russian "peacekeeping" forces began to be used by Moscow as elements of interference in the conflicts in order to serve Russian interests. The main goal was to force the NIS (which face problems caused by separatist movements) to accept the deployment of Russian military bases on their territory. Therefore, besides the problems connected to the OGRF in Transnistria, this work also clarifies the situation of the Russian "peacekeeping" operation in the area, in which OGRF troops are presently involved.

The "peacekeeping" operation in Transnistria also presents interest because it is taking place more than 1.000 kilometres away from the Russian borders and thus invalidates the main motivation of active involvement of Russia in the CIS - "the conflicts take place on the perimeter of Russian borders and have a destabilising influence over Russian border areas".

During the years 1992-1995, while trying to obtain financial resources as well as the mandate of the UN and OSCE for its "peacekeeping" operations, Moscow was presenting the Transnistrian case as its most successful operation, claiming it had been superior to UN procedures. The facts presented in this work belie these statements too, as we shall further see.

With the material, financial and political support of Russia, especially of the Russian troops of the 14th Army/OGRF, the separatist authorities have created quite a powerful army in the eastern districts of Moldova. Therefore, this work will also clear up the present state of Transnistrian military and paramilitary forces. We also have decided to deal with this issue because the Transnistrian army forces are essentially Russian troops; unofficially, they are a part of the Army Forces of the Russian Federation. They are regarded by Moscow as such and they are used as means of blackmail and pressure in the relationship with Kishinev (Chisinau).

We have chosen the Republic of Moldova and Georgia as examples, according to their peculiar place within the CIS.

The Republic of Moldova, due to its geographical location, is one of the former Soviet republics which has no common border with Russia, it is not part of the Treaty On CIS Collective Security (Tashkent, 15th of May 1992) and its constitution forbids the deployment of foreign troops on its territory. Finally, its neighbours (Romania and Ukraine) do not represent a threat and therefore its security doesn't need to be ensured by Russia.

As far as Georgia is concerned, it is an eloquent example of the way Russia, by enforcing political, military and economic pressure, has imposed its military presence on Georgian territory. This presence is perceived by the majority of the population as a threat to Georgia's national security. As a result, the status of the Russian troops on Georgian territory is very fragile. In certain circumstances the military bases have been in danger of facing attacks from the part of the population. The situation of the Russian troops from the Transcaucasian Group of Russian Troops also demonstrates that the Russian troops deployed outside the borders of the Russian Federation (and especially the ones in Georgia) face the peculiar problems of the entire Russian army and that their situation is by no means better than the one the troops in the "inside" districts are facing. Finally, it also proves that nowadays Russia has no adequate resources for its imperial pretensions and for the role it claims to play in the former Soviet territories, and that the "strategic partnership" relationships it enforces through pressure are very fragile.

We shall also refer to the Russian troops in other former Soviet republics, especially the ones in Armenia and Tajikistan, but, however, their legal status and present situation do not represent the subject of our study.

This work is mainly based on materials of Russian, Moldovan and Georgian mass media. Some aspects of the theme have for their source several unpublished documents from the author's archives.

The discussion we personally have had with superior officers of the OGRF and the TGRT, and also with the contributors of "Soldat Otechestva" (the OGRF newspaper) and "Zakavkazskye Voennye Vedomosti" (TGRT newspaper) have been particularly helpful. The author thanks them all for their contribution to this work. We also especially wish to thank the MacArthur foundation from the US which has offered the undersigned in 1995 a research stipend at the Russian Center of St. Anthony's College in Oxford, where he studied the "Russian military policy in the CIS", as well as the "Civitas" printing house for its support.

The opinions expressed in this work reflect the author's personal point of view.

August 1, 1999

Chapter 1

THE RUSSIAN “DOCTRINE” OF MILITARY BASES

General aspects

The Russian “doctrine” on the creation of military bases on the territory of other states was advanced by President Boris Yeltsin in November 1992 at a meeting of the Defence Ministry Collegium.¹ In June 1993 B. Yeltsin again expressed his support for the idea of creating military bases in the newly independent states. Speaking at a meeting of the Ministry of Defence, the Russian president declared that there were two ways to solve the question of Russian troops outside the borders of the Federation: a) to withdraw them completely from the territories of the newly independent states; b) to transform them into Russian military bases.² In the Russian Military Doctrine, a document adopted by the Security Council of the Russian Federation on the 2nd of November 1993, the “doctrine” regarding the establishment of military bases was promoted as state policy. The Russian Military Doctrine stipulates that “the security interests of the Russian Federation and of other CIS member-states may require the stationing of troops (forces) and equipment outside the borders of the Russian Federation.³ According to the Doctrine, Russian troops may be stationed outside the borders of Russia either in purely Russian formations or in mixed formations (together with troops belonging to other states).⁴

¹ ITAR – TASS, Moscow, in English, 15:01 GMT, 23 November 1992; Interfax, in English, 17:11 GMT, 23 November 1992.

² V Rossii nado sozdavat' mobil'nye vooruzhennye sily. – “Segodnya”, 11 June 1993; ITAR – TASS, in Russian, 09:48 GMT, 10 June 1993; ROMPRES, in English, 08:21 GMT, 17 June 1993.

³ Pavel Grachev, Voennaya Doctrina i bezopasnost' Rossii. – “Nezavisimaya gazeta”, 9 June 1994.

⁴ “Armeiskiy sbornik”, No. 1, January 1995; “Zakavkazskie Voennye Vedomosti” (we shall further mention it as “ZVV”), 11 February 1995.

On the 14th of September 1995, Boris Yeltsin approved the Russian Strategic Course regarding the member states of the CIS, by a decree. In chapter 3 of this document, entitled “National Security”, the competence structures in Russia were called upon “consistently acting with the view of regulating the mechanism of the fulfilment of agreements in the field of defence established within the CIS, and the keeping on basis of mutual agreement of devices belonging to military infrastructure. In case of mutual interest one should pass to the principle of deployment of the military bases, in this case precisely establishing the legal status of Russian military bases, as well as the status of the soldiers and members of their families presently located in these countries”.¹

In addition to Military Doctrine and the “Russian Strategic Course”..., Russian diplomats and the Russian military have a domestic legal foundation for their policy concerning the establishment of military bases: the Law of the Russian Federation "On Defence" (on 24 September 1992), which allows deployment of troops outside the borders of Russia, “on basis of international treaties of the Russian Federation”.²

As far as international rights are concerned, Russia considers that its policy of creating military bases in member states of the CIS is entirely within the limits of the Treaty On CIS Collective Security, agreed upon at Tashkent on the 15th of May 1992,³ as well as of the bilateral agreements between

¹ “Dipkur'er”, No. 16 (18), August 1995, p.79.

² “ZVV”, 11 June, 1996. According to article 17 of the Law of the Russian Federation “On Defence”, the deployment of Russian troops outside the borders of Russia could only be accepted “with the approval of the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation”. (“ZVV”, 21 October, 1992)

³ The Treaty on CIS Collective Security was initially signed by Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikstan and Uzbekistan. On the 24th of September Azerbaijan adhered to the treaty, on the 9th of December Georgia also adhered, followed by Belarus – on the 31st of December in the same year. On the 1st of November 1995 the Treaty has been registered at the UN Secretariat. The Treaty was to be valid until the 20th of April 1999. However, on the 2nd of April 1999, six states-Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Tajikstan- signed in Moscow a protocol regarding its extension. Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan have left the Treaty, under the pretext that it did not suit the new realities and that it had proved itself to be ineffective.

Russia and CIS states. The Russian diplomats also consider that the principle of mutual interest, which stands at the core of the policy concerning the establishment of military bases, does not contravene Article 51 of the UN Charter, which proclaims the right to collective self-defence.¹

Russian policy makers speak about different reasons for the establishment of military bases in the ex-Soviet republics. The necessity for military bases outside Russian borders, in the opinion of Pavel Grachev, former Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, is dictated first of all by the interest to maintain stability in various regions. “Concerning military installations, - Grachev continued in one article published in June 1994, - the need for them outside Russia's territory is determined by their purpose (for example, early-warning radar stations) and in other cases, by their technical uniqueness and by the impossibility of creating an equivalent replacement on Russian territory in the near future”.²

On 18 January 1994 at a meeting of Russian ambassadors accredited in the CIS member-states and in the Baltic states, Andrey Kozyrev, by then Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, speaking about military-technical co-operation among the ex-Soviet republics stressed the need to preserve the Russian military presence on the entire territory of the former USSR. The idea of leaving the CIS states altogether, mentioned minister Kozyrev, is “an extreme, if not an extremist idea, just like the idea of sending tanks to different regions of these republics”. Further on, it has been mentioned that military domination in the former Soviet territories is not the interest of Russia, but “at the same time the appearance of a security vacuum would be dangerous, as this vacuum could be filled by forces unfriendly and in many cases hostile to Russian interests”.³ Vyacheslav Elagin, Section Chief at the Press and Information Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

¹ Vyacheslav Elagin, Rossiyskoe voennoe prisustvie: Pravovoy status – “Segodnya”, 2 March 1994.

² Pavel Grachev, Voennaya Doctrina i Bezopasnost' Rosii. – “Nezavisimaya gazeta”, 9 June 1994.

³ Kozyrev – za voennoe prisustvie v sosednikh gosudarstvakh. – “Nezavisimaya gazeta”, 19 January 1994; Pavel Vasilei, Nash prioritet – interesy sootchestvennikov. – “Rossiyskie vesti”, 20 January 1994; Aleksei Pushkov, Kozyrev nacheal igru na chiuzhom pole. – “Moscovskie novosti”, 20-30 January 1994.

in an article published in the “Segodnya” newspaper in March 1994, alongside Grachev and Kozyrev's reasons mentioned the following arguments for the need to maintain the Russian military presence in the former Soviet republics: first - the need of protecting the Russian-speaking population in the republics; second - the need of defending the “insufficiently protected” borders of the former USSR; third - “Russian military presence in one area or another is necessary for the defence of Russia's economic interests”.

In the same article, he mentions that “during situations of conflict” the Russian troops deployed on the territory of the newly independent states “with mutual agreement of the parties involved” could be used as peacekeeping forces. In the Russian diplomat's opinion, it is easier for Russia to operate in this way than for other states. “Besides this, admitting the deployment of some military forces of third countries on the territory of the former USSR would not be in the interest of Russia”.¹

Some Russian newspapers also wrote that Russia's political and military leaders consider that the Russian army, besides other goals, should ensure Russia's military presence in some states of the "Near Abroad" and in other strategically important areas in order to show that the state is ready to fulfil its obligations towards its allies, to fortify regional stability, to ensure the training of the troops for defence, together with armed forces of friendly states”.²

The Russian policy of establishing military bases on the former Soviet territories is supported by strong propaganda. The Russian mass-media, acting on the entire area of the former Soviet Union, tries to present the establishment of military bases in the NIS as a solution for economic problems. The Russian mass-media states that military bases could partially solve the problem of unemployment. The money Russia pays for the rent of the territory would allow the economy to improve, by resetting in motion the plants of the military and industrial complex. Finally, it is asserted that Russian military bases would contribute to diminishing interethnic tensions, as the presence of Russian troops would discourage the “nationalist movements” from extreme actions. For example, in August 1994 the Russian

¹ Vyacheslav Elagin, Rossiyskoe voennoe prisutstvie: pravovoy status. – “Segodnya”, 2 March 1994.

² “ZVV”, 12 November 1998

newspaper "Literaturnaya gazeta", approaching the problem of Russian troops' future in Moldova, wrote that their transformation into military bases "would suit all the parties involved: Russia, Moldova and Transnistria. It is clear why this would suit Russia and Transnistria. As for Moldova, this country is indebted to Russia and, as the situation evolves, its debt towards Russia will continuously increase. The establishment of a Russian military base would help Kishinev by wiping out 200 million dollars of the debt. At least in this way, though finding itself in an unfavourable situation, Kishinev will still be able to gain some advantages.¹

After adopting the Military Doctrine, Russia has made considerable efforts in the view of realising its conception about the military bases. Besides the propaganda by which the public opinion is being prepared for the eventual deployment of Russian military bases in the former Soviet territories, Russia also applies different political, economic and military pressures in its relationships with the newly independent states. The method of pressure has proved itself quite efficient and some states have already accepted the creation of Russian military bases on their territory.

Speaking about the Russian "doctrine" of the military bases we must mention that, generally speaking, the decisional factors in Russia have modified their position towards the fate of Russian troops in the former Soviet republics, under military pressure. If during the "Atlantist"² period of Russian

¹ "Literaturnaya gazeta", 26 October 1994.

² Russian and Western researchers distinguish in Russian political thinking after August 1991 a number of "schools of thought"/"trends" with regard to Russian foreign and security policy. Thus Sergey Stankevich, in one article published in "Nezavisimaya gazeta" in March 1992, speaks about a debate between an "atlanticist" and "eurasian" trend ("Nezavisimaya gazeta", 28 March 1992). According to the opinion of V. P. Lukin, the present chairman of the Committee for International Relations of the State Duma, in Russia after the fall of the USSR were three "schools of thought": "liberal democratic internationalism", "crude national chauvinism" and an "enlightened understanding of Russia's national interest" (V. P. Lukin, Our Security Predicament, Foreign Policy, 88:57-75, Fall 1992). E. P. Bazhanov, Director of the Institute for contemporary international issues, marks out 4 "camps" in the controversy within Russian society regarding Moscow's foreign policy: 1) "Westernists" who continue to declare that there is but one way for Russia: to follow the establishment of market

foreign policy the political leadership of the Russian Federation had accepted the idea of withdrawing Russian troops from the former Soviet republics, then, since the end of the year 1993, Moscow's view regarding the status of Russian troops outside the borders has been radically modified. And this was due, first of all, to the pressure exercised by the military.

economy and democratic society, and that this can and must be done only by collaborating with the West"; 2) their "antipode", led by the communists, who think of the West as of an enemy; 3) the politicians who call their fellow countrymen to the closure of the frontiers and the establishment of a circular defence line", as they see enemies coming from all directions: besides NATO, others too are regarded as enemies of Russia: Turkey, "which dreams of the rebirth of the Ottoman Empire", Japan, "which encroaches upon the Kurile Islands", the Muslims, the Zionist Jews, the Chinese etc.; 4) the camp who considers that "Russia does not have any enemies, it can and must collaborate with the majority of the world's countries, especially with its neighbours, but Moscow should not incline towards one side or another. Due to its geographical situation, dimensions, power and history, Russia should have balanced relationships with the West, the East and the South, without seeking any alliance (with the possible exception of CIS states)". (Evgeni Bazhanov, *Pobeda umerennoy diplomatii stala faktom – "Nezavisimaya gazeta"*, 21 February 1998). There are researchers who distinguish five "schools of thought" in Russian Society after the putsch of August 1991 (Arbatov Aleksey, *Russia's Foreign Policy Alternatives – "International Security"*, XVIII, 2:5-43, Fall 1993) and this probably is not the last figure found in the literature. As far as we are concerned, we consider that the "basic division" in the years 1991 – 1994 was the one between the so-called "Atlantists" and "Eurasianists" (Galeotti Mark, *The Age of Anxiety. Security and Politics in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia*, London, New York, 1995, p.160). Within these two currents we can distinguish several different factions, according especially to the means they considered to be suited for the defence of Russia's vital interests and the realisation of its foreign policy.

The role of the military factor in the elaboration of the “doctrine”

During the years 1991-1993 the involvement of the military in academic and political debates regarding Russian foreign policy has been insignificant. The only official document elaborated in Russian military institutions during that period was the Military Doctrine. However, the key factor that determined the change of the “Atlantist” course of Russian foreign policy (especially towards CIS states) was the pressure that the military have exercised over the policy-makers.

Future research will probably make clear whether at the "Atlantist" stage it is possible to speak about two Russian foreign policies regarding the "Near Abroad" - a policy of "Atlantists" and another held by the military. However, now it is obvious that Moscow military elite in the first years after the disintegration of the USSR perceived Russia's vital interests and problems connected to its security in a different way from that of the “Atlantists”. While Kozyrev was offering Russia's integration in European security structures, and Boris Yeltsin was talking about an "all-European security system",¹ in the draft of the Russian Military Doctrine, elaborated within the Russian Ministry of Defence and published in May 1992 “there are strong suggestions that the NATO and the US pose the principal threat to Russia's security”.² Marshall Shaposhnikov, CIS Commander in Chief, Gen. Col. Igor Rodionov, head of the General Staff Academy, and other Russian generals several times came out against NATO enlargement. Marshal Shaposhnikov, pronouncing himself against NATO extension stressed that the discussions over this issue could contribute to the collapse of the CIS.³

The Russian military elite perceived Russian interests in the "Near Abroad" in an entirely different manner than the “Atlantists”. Speaking about the withdrawal of Russian troops from the ex-Soviet republics, General Lebed

¹ “Rossiyskaya gazeta”, 3 February 1992.

² John Lough, The place of the “Near Abroad” in Russian Foreign Policy. RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 2, No.11, 12 March, 1993, p.26.

³ Radio Rossiy, 11 December 1992, I. N. Rodionov, The Fundamentals of Russia's Military Doctrine. – “Voennaya Mysl”, Special edition, July 1992, p.6-14.

said that for him it is disgusting to speak on that issue and that “the vast majority of generals and officers feel as I do”.¹

In the summer of 1992, during the escalation of conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Transnistria, A. Kozyrev expressed his opinion on several occasions in favour of UN/OSCE involvement in settlement of the mentioned conflicts. But the military leadership of Russia considered the deployment of UN troops in ex-Soviet conflict regions as an unacceptable variant for Russia. In July 1992, asked if the UN could become involved in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova or Nagorno-Karabakh, Marshal Shaposhnikov said: "I am categorically opposed... to that kind of solution to this issue. I think the CIS is quite capable of dealing with all the issues that arise within the CIS, and that include these military conflicts so on... I am not, of course, against some commissions being set up with peacekeeping purpose, or the UN taking part in the work of those commissions; I say yes to this but no troops".²

In a number of cases the leadership of the Russian Ministry of Defence was acting independently in the relationships with the NIS, and the "Atlantists" could not do anything but accept the accomplished facts. For example, in 1992, the Agreement on Russian troop withdrawal from Lithuania had been negotiated by the Ministry of Defence of Russia without the participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to Former First Deputy Foreign Minister Feodor Shelov-Kovadyaev, the Russian Foreign Ministry received the agreement from the Ministry of Defence only two days before its signing and was unable to make any amendments.³

An eloquent example which proves that the Russian military were regarding Russian interests in the former Soviet territories in a wholly different manner than President Boris Yeltsin is the attitude of some Russian generals towards the issue of the withdrawal of the 14th Army from the Republic of Moldova. On the 27th of May 1992 Boris Yeltsin announced Russia's intention to withdraw the 14th Army from Moldova. But his declaration provoked several objections from top Russian military officers. First, the military would have to be relocated: “The withdrawal is unrealistic

¹ “Sovetskaya Rossiya”, 4 August 1992.

² Russian television, 11 July 1992.

³ Interfax, 29 October 1992; John Lough, p.24.

and impossible for the simple reason that there is no place for the Army to withdraw to today. There are 200.000 officers and warrant officers without apartments in Russia, and it is simply unwise to increase that number" (General Stolyarov, chairman of the committee for work with personnel of CIS Unified Armed Forces); Secondly, most of the 14th Army officers came from the Transnistria area: "I doubt that the withdrawal would be easy to accomplish [because] more than half of the unit's personnel consist of local inhabitants" (General Netkachev, until June 27, 1992 the 14th Army commander); Third, "legalistic" motivations prevented the move: "The withdrawal could only take place if a special accord among the two states is signed, and that could only be done after the conflict in that zone is settled" (General Pavel Grachev, Russian Defence Minister).¹

At the same time, the Russian military leadership has elaborated a plan for the annexation of Transnistria to Russia. In May 1992, such a plan was the subject of discussions between General Stolyarov and the leadership of the "Transnistrian Moldovan Republic" (known by its Russian initials, PMR) and with the leadership of the 14th Army. At the same meeting, General Stolyarov declared that the 14th Army would not be withdraw from Transnistria, because it protected Russian strategic interests in the region. Indirectly, Yeltsin has recognised his defeat in this "competition" with Russia's military leadership concerning Transnistrian matters, remarking that "for my part, I will do everything to ensure appropriate behaviour by the Russian Army there [in Transnistrian region]".²

In the "Atlantist" period of Russian foreign policy some Russian newspapers wrote about two policies: one of Yeltsin, and another of "generals". After General Lebed's declaration of 4 July 1992, in which he called the Moldovan Government "fascist" and asked Russian policy-makers not to go begging abroad "like goats after a carrot", the "Izvestia" newspaper wrote: "The statement by Maj. Gen. A. Lebed, Commander of the 14th Guards Army, raises in an unparalleled harsh form the question of whether the Russian Federation generals are going to obey the government or whether

¹ Sergiu Verone, Political – Economic Assessments: Moldova. – The Former Soviet Union in Transition, New York 1993, p. 998; RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 1, No. 24, 12 June, p. 57.

² "Komsomol'skaya pravda", 3 July 1992.

they are going to continue to conduct a policy of their own, which runs counter to the policy of the President of Russia”.¹

Even today, some Russian newspapers write about two distinct Russian foreign policies. According to “Moskovskye Novosti”, the march of general Zavarzin from Bosnia to Prishtina on the 12th of June 1999 proves that there are two Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Russia – a civilian and a military one. “The military one keeps quiet and acts, while the civilian one, blushing and stammering, tries to explain our wise foreign policy to the world”. In the opinion of the newspaper, such a policy forces Russia's neighbours and “eternal brothers” (the NIS) to join NATO.²

But the fact that during the “Atlantist” period Russian generals “were conducting their own policy” does not in any case mean that Russia's interference in the internal affairs of the NIS can be referred to the responsibility of the local commanders.³ Detailed analysis of cases of Russian troops involvement in the conflicts on the ex-URSS territories leads to a conclusion that “the commanders of local level” have been receiving precise instructions from Moscow, which confirms the opinion of researches, who considers that the Russian interference in the internal affairs of ex-Soviet republics is a policy co-ordinated from Moscow. On the 3rd of December 1991 General-Lieutenant Yakovlev, by then commander of the 14th Army, passed to the orders of the separatist leaders, in order to hasten the process of creating the so-called “Dniester Moldavian Socialist Soviet Republic” (“DMSSR”) Army.⁴ He had been ordered to do so by the Russian Ministry of Defence.

Moreover, a few time before the escalation of the armed conflict in Transnistria during the summer of 1992, Pavel Grachev gave general Netkachev (by then newly appointed commander of the Russian troops in Transnistria) the following order: “Considering the fact that Transnistria is in

¹ “Izvestia”, 7 July 1992

² “Moskovskie Novosti”, No. 22 (989), 15 – 21 June 1999; “Svobodnaya Gruzija”, 24 June 1999.

³ This idea was also adopted by some researchers. See: S. Neil MacFarlane, Russian Conceptions of Europe. “Post-Soviet Affairs”, 1994, 10, 3, p. 253.

⁴ “The Dniester Moldavian Socialist Soviet Republic”, we shall further mention it as “DMSSR”.

fact Russian land and that the situation there has been aggravating, we must protect it by all means. Therefore we demand you: 1) to complete from the mobilisation reserves all the military units of the 14th Army distributed on Transnistrian territory. 2) to have all military units fully prepared for combat; 3) to de-block all military units in order to allow the displacement of war technique”.¹ After this order, the leaders of the 14th Army began to transfer weapons to the Transnistrian separatists in large quantities.

The fact that the involvement of Russian troops in the conflicts in the former USSR is and always has been an activity co-ordinated by Moscow, and not the result of decisions from local commanders, is also proved by the skilful use by Russia of contradictions between the newly independent states, for its own interests. Russia's involvement in the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan for Nagorno-Karabakh is an illustrative example.

During Gorbachev's “perestroika”, Azerbaijan, together with the Baltic States, was one of the most irredentist republics within the USSR. On 19-20 of January, “in order to avoid the secession of Azerbaijan”² Soviet troops were brought to Baku. As a result of the clashes between the military and the population of the city 83 persons were killed (among them 14 soldiers).³ On the 30th of August 1991 Azerbaijan declares its independence and tries to keep its distance to Russia, and on the 7th of October 1992 Azer Parliament votes for leaving the CIS. Furthermore, the Azer leaders insist over the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of the republic and obtain Russia's consent during the CIS summit in Tashkent (15th of May 1992). The last Russian military units left Azer territory in May 1993.⁴

On the contrary, Armenia declared itself from the beginning in favour of a tighter integration within the CIS. On the 15th of May 1992 Armenia signed the treaty regarding collective defence of the CIS, and a few days later, on the 21st of May, it signed an agreement with Russia, allowing the Russian 7th Army to remain on Armenian territory.⁵

¹ “Sfatul Tarii”, 26 May 1992.

² Gorshkov M., Zhuravlev V., Dobrokhotov L., Nesokrushimaya i legendarnaya. V ogne politicheskikh batalii. 1985-1993. Moscow, 1994, p.147.

³ *Ibid.*, p.106.

⁴ “Vesti”, Russian Television, 26 May, 1993.

⁵ See: William E. Odom, Robert Dujarric, Commonwealth or Empire? Russia,

During the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Russia sided with Armenia, for the reasons mentioned above. As a result, Armenian forces supported by Russian troops, occupied around 20-25% of the Azer territory by the end of the year 1993.¹

Moscow repeatedly denied its involvement on the Armenian side in the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh, but there is irrefutable evidence in this respect. Names of Russian soldiers who participated in military actions, board number of Russian helicopters (of Yerevan squadron) which bombed Azer territory etc.² have been published in Russian newspapers. A large number of examples on the participation of Russian troops in military operations were also collected by the Helsinki Watch organisation.

There are also other facts confirming the opinion of researchers who consider that the “divide et impera” policy and the Russian interference in internal affairs of the former Soviet republics is a policy directly co-ordinated by Moscow.³ After the involvement of the 14th Army in the Transnistrian conflict and of the 7th Army in the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh (on the Armenian side), generals Lebed and Reut were called to Moscow and promoted in rank.⁴ Around 200 soldiers of the 14th Army who had taken part in the fighting in Transnistria were decorated by Boris Yeltsin, too.

It is obvious that the military leaders' desire that Russia keeps its military troops in the NIS cannot be explained only by their nostalgia for the old Soviet Empire.

The military were the first to become aware of the impact the disintegration of the USSR was to have over the combat potential of the Army Forces and over the Russian military and industrial complex. After the disintegration of the USSR, a large number of military installations of an exceptional strategic importance to Russia remained on the territory of the

Central Asia and the Transcaucasus, Hudson Institute, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1995, p.32.

¹ “Vladimir Emel'nenko, Rarii Fish, Naverno, s nim bol'she ne uvidyatsya. – “Moskovskie Novosti”, No.17, 24 April – 1 May, 1994.

² “Deni”, No. 32, 9-5 August 1992.

³ William E. Odom, Robert Dujarrie, p.116-117

⁴ Radio “Mayak”, in Russian, 1530 GMT, 18 September 1992; “Deni”, No. 32, 9-15 August 1992.

NIS. Without these, Russia would lose some elements of its status as a superpower. For example 5 out of 8 early-warning radar stations of the USSR anti-missile system have remained on the territory of former Soviet republics after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The majority of military establishments could be reproduced on the territory of Russia only in 10-15 years time.¹ In the opinion of the Russian military, keeping the Russian troops on NIS territory and, thus, the re-establishment of Russian military control over former Soviet territory will help Russia not only to regain its status as a superpower, but also to spare supplementary expenses for the reproduction of the military objectives from the “Near Abroad”.

The military elite has chosen the establishment of Russian military bases on NIS territory also because of the impact the disintegration of the USSR had upon the military industrial complex. Although Russia inherited 80% of the production capability of the military industrial complex, after August 1991 it was able to produce autonomously only 17% of the armament systems. The other 83% could only be produced in co-operation with the other ex-Soviet republics. In order to create its own production abilities, which would have replaced the ones on NIS territory, Russia would have needed 5-10 years and tens of trillions of roubles (at the prices of the year 1994).²

The country's military infrastructure also had to suffer as a result of the disintegration of the USSR. General Viktor Barynikin, Assistant Commander of the Headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, wrote the following in April 1995: “If we evaluate the present state of military infrastructure on the territory of Russia, we soon reach an upsetting conclusion. As a result of the disintegration of the USSR the integrity of the strategic nuclear forces' infrastructure, of the espionage system and of the missile attack prevention system has been damaged. The abilities of the radio-location field of the air defence troops' search and information system have been considerably reduced. The conditions of disposal, stability and operational leadership of the sea forces, as well as the conditions of navigation security on the Baltic, Caspian and Black Sea have changed. The

¹ See: Rossiya segodnya: Real'nyi shans. RAU Korporatzya. Moskva, p. 425-427, 432.

² *Ibid.*, p. 381.

majority of the military airports, due to technical conditions, cannot ensure anymore the displacement of modern aircraft.

The state of infrastructure of national importance is by no means better. For example, the length of the highways is 10-30 times inferior to the one in the developed countries. As a matter of fact, we just do not have modern highways, which could be used by the Air Forces for landing and taking-off. And this without mentioning the bridges of which 5% are damaged and 40% need to be re-built or thoroughly repaired.

The railways are in a similar situation. After the disintegration of the Union, we have 4 railway directions in the Western area, one in the middle area, and in the East – only the Transsiberian, as the BAM is practically out of function. Therefore, the analysis of the military infrastructure allows us to conclude that it does not represent a whole and does not fully ensure Russia's defence as a sovereign state”.¹

By declaring themselves in favour of keeping Russian troops in the former Soviet territories, the Russian military also invoked the need of protecting the Russian and Russian-speaking population outside the frontiers of the Russian Federation. The more so as within the 25 millions Russians and Russian-speaking people on NIS territory, there are large communities of retired military and veterans of WWII, especially in the Baltic States, Moldova, Ukraine. For example, in Latvia, at the middle of the year 1992 there were nearly 50,000 retired officers of the Soviet army and members of their families. In March 1994, the population of Estonia included 10,570 veterans of the Soviet Army, of the KGB and former Soviet militia, and around 35,000 members of their families.² At the end of June 1999 in the Transnistrian area of the Republic of Moldova there were more than 5,000 Russian retired officers and non-commissioned officers.³

When we speak about the peculiar attitude of the Russian military towards Russian military policy as a whole and especially towards the issue of military bases located beyond the frontiers of Russia, we must take into account the psychological factors, too. As a result of the disintegration of the USSR, the Russian military found themselves in a country with tens of

¹ “ZVV”, 20 April 1995

² Press Release of the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3 March 1994.

³ AP FLUX (Press Agency FLUX), 1 July 1999.

thousands of kilometres of “transparent border”; turned from “liberators” of the “sister republics” into “occupiers”. Finally, after the disintegration, the Russian military have lost a lot of their former privileges and prestige within society.

The official document, which marked the adoption by Russian politically decisional factors of the military's point of view towards the CIS states and the issue of Russian troops over the national borders, was the Russian Military Doctrine, adopted on the 2nd of November 1993. The Doctrine lists 10 external sources of external military danger, including 6, which give a large number of excuses for intervention in the “Near Abroad”:

- existing and potential areas of local wars... especially near Russia's frontiers;
- suppression of the rights, freedoms, and lawful interests of Russian citizens in foreign states;
- attacks on Russian facilities in foreign states;
- preparations of military groups to move into the territory of Russia or her allies;
- expansion of military blocks and alliances to the detriment of Russia;
- armed incursions and provocations over Russia's borders or those of her allies;¹

Once the Russian Military Doctrine had been adopted, the re-establishment of military control over ex-Soviet territories had legal support and was amplified considerably. The dissonance between political rhetoric and practical activity disappeared. If before the adoption of the Doctrine Moscow's attention had been focused on the states seemingly interested in Russian military presence on their territory (Tajikstan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Kazakhstan), since the autumn of 1993 the main efforts of Moscow have been oriented towards re-establishing military control over the states who “consider Russia more a danger source than a support one” (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Ukraine) and who declare themselves in favour of the complete withdrawal of Russian troops from their territory. In order to achieve its goal, Russia uses various political, economic and military pressures in its relations

¹ Trevor Taylor, *European Security and the Former Soviet Union. Dangers Opportunities and Gambles.* London, 1994, p.12.

with the CIS. And these pressures did bring significant results: in September 1993 Azerbaijan joined the CIS,¹ Georgia did too in December,² and Moldova in April 1994.³ Consequently, the CIS has considerably expanded to include all post-Soviet territories excepting the Baltic States. Azerbaijan and Georgia, upon entering the CIS also signed the Treaty on CIS Collective Security (Tashkent, 15 May 1992). In February 1994 Russia and Georgia signed a Protocol in keeping with which Moscow obtained the right to create in Georgia military bases. Later on, by supporting Crimean secessionism and by exercising economical pressure over the Kiev authorities, the Kremlin obtained Ukraine's consent for keeping its fleet in the town of Sevastopol.⁴

As a result of the policy of re-establishing military control over former Soviet territories, Russia managed to maintain the majority of the CIS states within the orbit of its geopolitical interests. At the beginning of 1997, there were three categories of states within the CIS: a) "states accepting a military alliance with Russia"; b) "undecided states which have not yet determined their priorities" and c) "states which want to keep some distance from Russia".⁵

In the opinion of Leonid Ivashov, by then chief of the Main Department of military collaboration of the Russian Ministry of Defence, the first category of states included Belarus, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan" and "one may say, Kazakhstan, too". The second category included the states with which Russia had "normal friendly relationships", but these relationships did not turn into alliances, "because of a whole range of reasons". "For example, Turkmenistan has declared itself neutral, and we cannot count on it as a military ally. Georgia, although a member of the Treaty regarding collective security of the CIS states, cannot afford a military alliance, for fear that the political struggle within the country should not be aggravated. Our relationships with Azerbaijan, too, are not entirely without complications, although the friendly relationships we have with this country do satisfy us".

¹ Aidyn Mekhtiev. Azerbaijan prisoedinit'sya k dogovoru ob SNG. – "Nezavisimaya gazeta", 22 September 1993.

² ITAR – TASS, Moscow, in Russian, 20:18 GMT, 9 December 1993.

³ "Moldova suverana", 20 April 1994.

⁴ "Pravda", 10 June 1995.

⁵ "ZVV", 7 January 1997.

The third category of states includes, first of all, Ukraine, which, according to the opinion of Russian military, “prefers” the development of its relations with NATO and the US, a fact that requires the vigilance of Russia.¹

Although the Republic of Moldova was not named by the representative of the Russian Ministry of Defence, Moscow surely includes Moldova within one of the first two groups of states. And this not only because there still are Russian troops in Transnistria, but also because Russia has managed to impose a military alliance upon Moldova.

On the 22nd of September 1990, the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation signed the Treaty regarding the principles of the relationship between the Moldovan SSR and the Russian Federation. The treaty was ratified by the Kishinev parliament a few days later. However, the Russian State Duma shows no signs of hurry in to do the same, not even today. In the opinion of observers, Russia does not hurry to ratify the treaty for at least 3 reasons: “firstly because the Treaty stipulates the respecting of territorial integrity and inviolability of the frontiers of the parties involved; secondly, Moscow still hopes of the revival of a new USSR-type empire and it does not think it should recognise our state by a treaty; thirdly, Russia uses the Treaty as a means of blackmail against Moldova, so that it would make compromises with the authorities from Tiraspol in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, as well as in accepting Russian military presence on its territory.”²

Until the parliamentary elections in 1994, when the Agrarian government led by Sangheli came to power, Russia declared on several occasions that it would not ratify the Treaty until Transnistria was not accorded a special juridical status. However, under the reason that the coming into effect of the Treaty would accelerate the solving of the Transnistrian conflict, on the 19th of February 1995 M. Snegur signed in Almaty an additional protocol which, in the opinion of some Moldovan politicians, “allows the Russian military forces to interfere in Moldova at any time”.³ According to article 3 of the Protocol, “in case of a situation which, in one of the parties' opinion, endangers peace or affects its interests of national

¹ “Respublika Armenia”, 7 February 1997.

² “Glasul natiunii”, No. 17 (289), May 1996.

³ “Flux” (Newspaper), 26 January 1996, p. 6.

security, of sovereignty and territorial integrity, the party mentioned above can propose the other party the immediate holding of consultations. The parties will exchange information and, in case of necessity, they will have co-ordinated actions with the purpose of overcoming the situation, including mutual assistance for rejecting any aggression against one or both parties”.¹

The stipulation regarding “mutual assistance in rejecting any aggression against one or both parties” from this article, gives a military nature to the Treaty.

If the two parties fulfil the internal procedures of the coming into effect of the Treaty and of the additional Protocol signed on the 10th of February 1995, Russia may easily find a pretext of defending the “interests of national security, sovereignty and territorial integrity” of the Republic of Moldova, especially as the Protocol does not specify either the state authority (the president, the government or the Parliament?) which has the right to initiate consultations and ask for assistance in situations of crisis, or the degree of gravity of the situation which would require the initiation of the consultations. And this means that there may be the case that some day, on the background of an internal crisis in Moldova, the Parliament, the Government or the President of Moldova would ask Russia to introduce its troops on the streets of Kishinev, in accordance to Article 3 of the Protocol. The events in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968) and Afghanistan (1979) suggest that Russia might interfere in Moldova's internal affairs, on the legal basis of the same additional Protocol, when requested by a phantom-government created, for example, by some Russian forces.

And there is one more aspect of the problem. The fact that Russia is part of the Treaty on CIS Collective Security, and that Moldova engages itself to undertake “co-ordinated actions” and to “give mutual assistance in rejecting any aggression against one or both parties” with a state member of this treaty indirectly includes the Republic of Moldova within the countries which are part of the Treaty on CIS Collective Security. This is a flagrant violation of the Constitution of Moldova, which declares this country a neutral state.

On the 23rd of January 1996 the press service of the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued an official statement in which it tried (in a

¹ *Ibid.*

highly unconvincing manner, in our opinion) to clear up “the misunderstandings of notions” from the Protocol signed on the 10th of February 1995. The statement claimed that “consultations represent an inherent instrument of international law and procedure, frequently used by the Republic of Moldova also in its relationships with other states, such as France, Bulgaria, Poland, etc., as well as within international organisations, like the OSCE and the Council of Europe”. Further on, the statement underlined that “taking a notion out of the context and interpreting it arbitrarily leads to a flagrant misrepresentation of the matter. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also points out that the correct interpretation of the notions used in the text of the Protocol can only be made according to the principles of international law and to the whole text of the Treaty”.¹

But the references, which the statement makes to Moldova's treaties with other countries, are irrelevant. The treaty between Moldova and France and the one between Moldova and Poland make provisions for consultations between the parties involved, but these consultations are of a wholly different nature than the ones stipulated in the Moldovan-Russian Treaty. For example, in the Treaty of agreement, friendship and collaboration between the Republic of Moldova and the French Republic (art.5:1) we can read: “In case of appearance in Europe of a situation that would lead to peace violation or endanger the security of one of the parties, the above mentioned party may demand the other one to proceed immediate consultations in order to elaborate a common vision over the means by which the situation could be overcome”.²

Though not favourable to Moldova, the Moldovan-Russian Treaty of 1990 has not been ratified by the Russian State Duma. The nationalist forces within the Duma, who militate in favour of the recognition of the so-called “Moldovan Dniester Republic”, declared themselves against the Treaty. The State Duma's point of view regarding the Treaty has been very clearly expressed by Anatoli Chehiov, assistant of the Chairman of the Duma Committee for CIS problems and relationships with fellow countrymen. In February 1998 he showed that the Treaty does not satisfy Russian deputies, as “it doesn't solve the issue of Transnistria. But until the problem of the status

¹ *Ibid.*

² “Flux”, 26 January 1996, p.6.

of Transnistria is not solved, until the rights of the Russian-speaking population, as well as the problems of their language and culture are not clearly determined, we could not possibly sign this treaty. We are warned about the Romanianization of Moldova, in case the Treaty is not ratified, but we consider that, by ratifying it we contribute to Moldova's Western orientation, and further on - to its possibly joining the NATO. Just by ratifying the Treaty we recognise the territorial integrity of Moldova, and this is very important for the West. Moreover, in case the treaty is ratified, the Transnistrian issue will become an internal problem of Moldova, and Russia will lose the possibility of influencing the final settlement of the issue, and of protecting the interests of the Russian-speaking population".¹

At the end of the year 1998 the Treaty between Moldova and Russia and the Agreement of the 21st of January 1994 regarding the withdrawal of Russian forces from Moldova were withdrawn from the State Duma.

Presently there is talk about the need of elaborating a new Treaty, in both Moscow and Kishinev. This issue was also approached during the meeting President Lucinschi had with former Russian deputy prime minister Vadim Gustov. According to a statement of the press service of the President of Moldova, Petru Lucinschi declared himself in favour of elaborating and signing the Treaty between the two states. This document would substantially contribute to the fluidity of bilateral export - import relations and to the conclusion of agreements regarding commercial exchanges".²

In our opinion, the elaboration of a new text of the treaty will be a long and difficult process, as Russia will insist that representatives of the separatist authorities in Tiraspol also should take part in the negotiations, and that the treaty should also refer to the special status of the Transnistrian area. However, we consider that, no matter how many efforts it would claim, the elaboration of a new Treaty between Moldova and Russia is a must, if Moldova wants to avoid discovering some day the Russian troops on the streets of Kishinev, after having crossed the Dniester "by mistake" (an action which would have the existing Treaty and additional protocol of the 10th of February 1995 as legal support).

¹ "Pridnestrovie", 20 February 1998.

² AP FLUX, 20 April 1999.

As far as keeping its troops outside its national borders is concerned, Russia has been remarkably successful.

At the beginning of 1998 Russia had around 20,000 soldiers in Ukraine (Crimea), more than 8,200 soldiers in Tajikstan (besides the border troops, counting a number of around 14,500 soldiers according to some data¹, 13,365 soldiers of the Russian Troops Group in Transcaucasia (Armenia, Georgia), over 2,800 soldiers in Moldova, over 1,700 of them in Abkhazia (Georgia) etc.

The first CIS state to sign a Treaty with Russia regarding the establishment of Russian military bases was Armenia. The negotiations between Moscow and Yerevan began after the visit of Pavel Grachev in Armenia (June 1994). During the visit the Russian Minister of Defence obtained the consent of the Levon Ter Petrosian, President of Armenia, for the creation of a Russian military base on Armenian territory with two branches, in Gyumri and Yerevan.²

The negotiations took place in a very short time and almost without any controversy. At the beginning of October 1994 Pavel Grachev and his Armenian counterpart Serzh Sarkisian had already signed the additional protocol to the Treaty regarding the creation of a military base in Armenia,³ and on the 16th of March 1995 presidents Boris Yeltsin and Levon Ter Petrosian signed “The Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia regarding the Russian military base on the territory of Armenia”.⁴ The Treaty is meant to last for 25 years, and if by the deadline

¹ “Curentul”, 23 April 1999. The Jamestown Foundation Monitor, Vol. V, No. 77, 21 April 1999.

² Pavel Felengauer. *Rossia ukrepleaet soiuz s Armeniei*. – “Segodnya”, 10 June 1994.

³ Yurii Golotok, *Rossia usilivaet svoe voennoe prisutstvie v Zakavkaz'e*. – “Segodnya”, 12 October 1994; Pavel Felengauer, *Rossiyskie voyska ostaiutsa v Zakavkaz'e*. – “Segodnya”, 21 October 1994.

⁴ Armen Khanbabenean, *Rossiyskaya voennaya baza v Armenii*. – “Nezavisimaya gazeta”, 18 March 1995; Aleksandr Pel'ts. Vitali Denisov, *Dogovorennosti s Armeniei i Gruziei otsenivaiutsya vysoko*. – “Krasnaya zvezda”, 24 March 1995.

there are no disagreements between the signing parties, it will automatically be extended for 5 more years.¹

During the negotiations, it seems there have not been any disagreements concerning the functioning terms of the Russian military base on the Armenian territory. Actually, Serzh Sarkisian, the Armenian minister of Defence, declared in June 1994 to the correspondent of the Russian newspaper “Segodnya” that he wished the Russian army to stay in Armenia forever.²

The haste in which negotiations between Russia and Armenia took place, and also Armenia's acceptance of the 25 years term for the stationing of the Russian troops on its territory can be explained firstly by the fact that Yerevan sees a Russian military presence on Armenian territory as a guarantee of its security. According to Armenian leaders, the country's security is threatened by its neighbours, including Turkey. In January 1997, Armen Sarkissian, prime-minister of Armenia, during a visit in the US declared that Russian troops in Armenia (7,000 soldiers) are border guard troops “stationed along the south border with Turkey... There are no troops in the North, along the border with Azerbaijan. Why? We have had a tough history with Turkey. Turkey has openly supported Azerbaijan during the war (for Nagorno-Karabakh)”. Sarkissian also mentioned that “there is a large Turkish army in the east of Turkey. In order to maintain balance and security of the borders, we have accepted the Russian presence there”.³ The Armenian leaders have also accepted the deployment of Russian military bases on Armenian territory because they hope that Russia will go on supporting Yerevan in the Armenian - Azeri conflict for Nagorno- Karabakh.

At the beginning of 1998, from the category of conventional weapons provided by the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty)⁴ the Russian troops in Armenia were possessing 80 Battle Tanks, 160

¹ ITAR – TASS, in English, 17.47 GMT, 16 March 1994; Armenian radio, Yerevan, in Armenian, 17.00 GMT, 17 March 1995.

² Pavel Felengauer, Rossiyskie voiska ostaiutsya v Zakavkaz'e. – “Segodnya”, 21 October 1994.

³ Sarkissian: Russian troops protect Armenia against Turkey. – “Turkish Daily News”, 14 January 1997.

⁴ The CFE Treaty was signed on the 19th of November 1990 at the high-level

Armored Combat Vehicles (ACVs) and 85 Artillery systems. Russia gained the right of maintaining this military equipment on Armenian territory, according to the same Treaty from the 16th of March 1995, which stipulates that “with the purpose of providing the base with, military technique and weapons”. Armenia handed over to Russia some of its own national quotas of conventional weapons, as stipulated in the CFE Treaty.¹

The Republic of Azerbaijan perceived the establishment of Russian military bases on Armenian territory and the modification of Armenian national quotas to the favour of Russia in an extremely negative manner. On the 26th of April 1995, the Azeri Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed a note to its Russian counterpart, in which, according to the “Agreement regarding the principles and modality of application of the CFE Treaty” of the 15th of May 1992 in Tashkent asked for a reunion “for consultations” of the states which had signed the Agreement – Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova. This reunion took place in July 1995 at Moscow. As a result of the consultations regarding the transfer of quotas from Armenia to Russia, all the states that had signed the agreement mentioned above (including Azerbaijan) have accepted the modification of the Armenian national quotas in favour of Russia.

The Treaty regarding the Russian military base on the territory of Armenia was ratified by the Russian State Duma on the 18th of April 1997. 370 deputies voted for the ratification of the treaty, 5 abstained and one voted against.² Boris Pastukhov, vice-minister of Russian Foreign Affairs, while

Reunion of the CSCE in Paris (19/21st of November 1990). It came into effect on the 9th of November 1992. The Treaty is valid for an unlimited period of time and it is the main document of the regime of control and checking of offensive armament levels possessed by the party states, in the area between the Atlantic Ocean and the Ural Mountains. (See: Adrian Nastase, “Fundamental documents of international law and international relationships, 16, Bucharest, 1997, pages 475-589).

¹ In April 1999, according to CFE Treaty, a team of inspectors from Turkey, Belgium and UK inspected the Russian military base in Gymri. After the inspection was over, the Turkish colonel Yavuz Akgun, head of the team, declared to the press that the conventional armament displayed at the base did not exceed the limits stipulated by the CFE Treaty – RFE/RL NEWSLINE, Vol. 3, No. 75, part 1, 19 April 1999.

² “Respublika Armeniya”, 19 April 1997

presenting the Treaty regarding the Russian military base on Armenian territory to the Duma, declared that “it was an adequate reply to NATO's extension eastward “and that it solved the problem of Russian military presence in the Caucasus for the next 25 years.¹ Calling the deputies to the ratification of the Treaty, Pastukhov underlined that “The Caucasus, Transcaucasia is an area of strategic interest for Russia”, “Armenia supports the Russian position opposing NATO's extension eastwards”, and it acts as an ally of Russia on the international arena. According to Pastukhov's declarations, the treaty is not aimed against other states, Russian and Armenian troops will defend the borders of the CIS without interfering in internal conflicts, especially in Nagorno-Karabakh.²

General Lev Rohlin, chairman of the Duma Committee for defence problems at that time, voted against the ratification of the Treaty by the Duma. He proposed that the ratification of the Treaty should be conditioned by the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In Rohlin's opinion, the ratification of the treaty without such a condition would lead to the involvement of Russia in the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia for Nagorno-Karabakh.³

The Armenian Parliament ratified the Treaty regarding the Russian military base on the territory of Armenia on the 29th of April 1997. 118 deputies voted for the ratification of the Treaty, 4 were against it and 7 abstained.⁴ The discussions on the ratification lasted for two days. Several deputies declared themselves to be definitely against the ratification, showing that the Treaty would turn Armenia into an enemy for its neighbours, that the

¹ “Respublika Armeniya”, 29 April 1997

² “Interfax”, Moscow, in Russian, 07:21 GMT, 29 April 1997; BBC Monitoring Service, Former USSR, 30 April 1997

³ Radio “Ekho Moskv”, in Russian, 12:00 GMT, 18 April 1997, Lev Rohlin, chairman of the State Duma commission for defence problems, starting with the second half of the year 1996 began to declare himself openly against Russian military presence in Transcaucasia. The members of the Commission led by him have even prepared the project of a decision of the State Duma “Regarding the military bases of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Georgia”, whose realisation would have led to the liquidation of the Russian military bases on the territory of the republics mentioned above.

⁴ “Respublika Armenia”, 30 April 1997

deputies had not been acquainted with the text of the Treaty and they had no idea of what it really represented, that the document had been presented to the Parliament by a person who did not suit the importance of the document (the vice-minister of Defence, Vagan Shirhanean). However, the Treaty was ratified, with the firm support of the majority of the Parliament of the republic.¹

In 1996 Russia accepted the Base 102 to be completed with Armenian military and Armenian civilian staff, and Armenia, on its turn, engaged itself to bear 25% of the expenses for the maintenance of the Base.²

The main provisions made in the Treaty regarding the Russian military base on Armenian territory are also fixed in the "Treaty of friendship, collaboration and mutual assistance between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia", signed on the 29th August 1997.³ According to the 2nd article of the Treaty "The High Contracting Parties shall closely collaborate in the issues of defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity and insuring the security of the Russian Federation and of the Republic of Armenia. The parties will hold emergency consultations with the purpose of insuring common defence and maintaining mutual peace and security, each time when the danger of armed aggression against one of the Parties should arise. During these consultations the degree of necessity, the manner and the extent of the assistance which one High Contracting Party will accord the other High Contracting Party in order to overcome the situation will be discussed". The 3rd Article stipulates that the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia "will commonly adopt any measures in their powers in order to eliminate anything endangering peace or in order to oppose any acts of aggression against them from the part of any country or group of countries and will accord mutual support (including military support), in the view of exercising the right to collective defence according to the 51st article of the UN Chart". The guard of the border between the Republic of Armenia and the states outside CIS "will be realised by the common efforts of the High

¹ Goar Sarkissian, Rossiiskaya baza v Armenii: nikto ne protiv, no voprosy vznikli – "Respublika Armeniya", 29 April 1997; Gamlet Matevosyan, Rossiiskaya voennaya baza v Armenii vse-taki budet – "Segodnya", 6 May 1997.

² "ZVV", 26 November 1998

³ "Novoe Vremya" (Armenia), 4 October 1997

Contracting Parties on the basis of the corresponding treaties between them, starting from the interests of their own security and of the collective security of the CIS". (article 5) "By solving independently the issues of ensuring national security and of military construction, the 4th article says "The High Contracting Parties will closely collaborate in these fields and will determine the forms of interaction on the basis of the present Treaty, of the bilateral Treaty regarding the Russian military base on the territory of the Republic of Armenia from the 16th of March 1995, as well as of other corresponding agreements. The High Contractual Parts will extend the collaboration between their national armed forces. In the case of danger against the security of one of the Parties or of armed attack against one of them, the Contractual Parties will start from the principle of commonly using military objectives and equipment, in the conditions provided for national armed forces, as well the common exploitation of the objects of defensive importance. The High Contracting Parties will collaborate in the realisation of technical and military politics, of co-operation in military production, taking into account the standardisation of the armament, including the financing of co-ordinated military programs. The High Contracting Parties will also collaborate in the realisation of politics in the area of export and import of military technology and armament, respecting the established international rules".¹

The last country with which Russia has signed a treaty concerning military bases is Tajikstan. The Treaty regarding the status and stationing conditions of the Russian military bases in Tajikstan was signed on the 16th of April 1999 in Kremlin by Marshal Igor Sergeev, Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation and Colonel General Serali Hairulloev, Tajik Minister of Defence. The treaty conferred the title of military base to the 201 "Peacekeeping Division", as well as to other Russian units deployed in Tajikstan, which will be stationed in Dushanbe, Kulab and Kurgan-tepa, after their acquiring the Status of military base. According to the Treaty, Russia will cover all expenses concerning the functioning of the bases and troops. The Treaty will be valid for a period of 25 years and could be prolonged by mutual agreement.² According to some sources, the Treaty also provides that

¹ *Ibid.*

² "ZVV", 17 April 1999; The Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 21 April 1991, Vol. 5, No. 77.

Russia should take part in the modernisation of the Tajik Army and to provide armoured cars, helicopters and artillery. In this respect, a team formed by a military counsellor and 20 Russian officers will function within the Ministry of Defence in Dushanbe. A large number of Tajik military will study within the military educational institutions in Russia.¹

Russia and Tajikistan agreed to confer the status of military bases to the Russian troops in Tajikistan during the visit of Marshal Sergeev in Dushanbe at the beginning of April 1999. During a meeting with the 201st Division staff, Marshall Sergeev enumerated 5 reasons for the need of perpetuating Russian military presence in Tajikistan: 1) the actions of the US and NATO in Yugoslavia and other areas prove their intention of “re-dividing the world” to the detriment of Russia; 2) the danger of the expansion of islamic fundamentalism from Taliban Afghanistan; 3) the need of striving against drug traffic from Afghanistan through Tajikistan towards the European states of the CIS; 4) the “complicated situation” between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan; 5) the need of stabilising the whole area of Central Asia in order to prevent any destabilising effects on Russian Muslim areas.²

The units of the 201st Division form the main forces of the Russian military bases in Tajikistan. On the 1st of January 1998 the 201st Division counted over 8,200 persons. It had 158 tanks, 313 ACVs, 206 artillery systems, 10 Combat Aircrafts, 8 Combat helicopters etc.³ Besides the troops of the division mentioned above, Russia also maintains in Tajikistan around 14,500 men within some border guard troops. The leaders of these troops are Russian, and 80% of the recruits are Tajik. According to the press service of the Russian Ministry of Defence, the Russian military base in Tajikistan will be operatively subordinated to the “Privolgie” Military District.⁴

The units of the 201st Division, until their acquiring the status of military bases, have activated within the Collective Peacekeeping Forces (Collective PKF) of the CIS, constituted by a decision of the leaders of CIS

¹ Presently there are around 560 Tajik military studying in Russian military schools.- “Curentul”, 23 April 1999

² Press Agency Dushanbe, 7 April 1999

³ Mihai Gribincea, Russian Troops in Moldova: Stability Factor or Source of Threat? [in Romanian], Chisinau, "Civitas", 1998, p. 67.

⁴ “ZVV”, 17 April 1999

member states from the 24th of September 1993. Then the decision regarding the establishment of the Collective PKF of the CIS was taken because of the aggravation of the internal situation in Tajikistan.¹

In the Agreement of the Council of the heads of the CIS member states regarding the CIS Collective PKF and the collective measures to be adopted in view of supplying them with technique and equipment, the peacekeeping forces were assigned the next tasks: contributing to the negotiation process between the parties in conflict and to the normalisation of the situation at the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan; ensuring the transportation, guard and distribution of humanitarian aids; creating the necessary security conditions for the refugees to return to their permanent residences; ensuring the guard of objectives of vital importance to the republic.²

The belligerent character of the activities displayed by the Collective PKF of the CIS has significantly distinguished the “peacekeeping” operation in Tajikistan from the international practice in this field. The activities displayed by the “peacekeepers” rather reminded the war in Afghanistan than a peacekeeping operation. For example, in May 1995, within the 201st Division there was a Detachment for psychological operations, whose activity “was only slightly different from the activity of this type of detachments during WW II”,³ according to the declaration of Captain Aleksandr Martynenko, commander of the detachment.

Russian officials do not hide the fact that the 201 Division firstly defends Russia's interests in the area, and puts the interests of the Tajik population on the second place. In May 1995, Colonel General Valery Patrikeev, commander of the Collective PKF of the CIS in Tajikistan, in an article published in “Zakavkazskie Voennye Vedomosti”, openly recognised the fact that Russia holds geopolitical interests in Tajikistan. “Presently the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan is in fact the southern border of Russia and of the entire CIS. If we leave here, we will have to arrange a new border somewhere on the Caspian. Sea - Altay line. This is unrealistic. The

¹ “Mirotvorcheskim silam v Tadjikistane – 4 goda”, “Nezavisimaya gazeta”, 15 October 1997

² “ZVV”, 15 February 1996

³ “ZVV”, 25 May 1995.

specialists have calculated: in order to arrange a kilometre of border to a satisfying level, we need 1 billion roubles. And how many kilometres do we have? Under the present circumstances, Russia just cannot afford this amount of expenses.¹

The belligerent actions of the Collective PKF of the CIS often turned the Tajik population hostile. As a consequence, the “peacekeepers” often became targets of the attacks from the part of the population. The officers of the 201 Division and Russian border guards used to leave their homes for work and return there by a service bus escorted by a armoured vehicle and by gunmen.² On the 20th of March 1994 the Russian “peacekeeping” forces in Tajikistan already counted the following casualties: 53 people killed and 77 of them wounded. During the year 1995 the Collective PKF lost more than 30 officers and soldiers as a result of “terrorist attacks”.³

The issue of financing was among the most difficult problems which the Russian “peacekeepers” in Tajikistan had to face. The states participating in the peacekeeping operation had agreed to divide between them the expenses for the maintenance of the Colective PKF United Command like this: Russia – 50%, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan – 15% each, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan – 10% each. However, according to Russian officials, the Agreement for financing the “peacekeepers” was only fully respected by Russia. The other states taking part in the peacekeeping operation did not even respect their engagements of placing the number of soldiers agreed upon at the disposal of the United Command of the Collective PKF. Initially it had been planned that the Collective PKF should be composed of a Russian division and of three more regiments: a Kazakh one, a Kyrgyz one and an Uzbek one. But in February 1996 Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan had only sent one battalion each to the orders of the Collective PKF United Command, and Kazakhstan – only 2 officers.⁴ Later, Kazakhstan also sent one peacekeeping battalion, but reduced it to only 300 persons in March 1999.⁵

¹ “ZVV”, 11 May 1995.

² Vladimir Mohov, “Voyevat' tak za ideyu” – “ZVV”, 15 November 1995.

³ “ZVV”, 15 February 1996.

⁴ “ZVV”, 15 February 1996

⁵ Interfax, 17 March 1999

During December 1998, the Uzbek battalion was withdrawn from Tajikistan; so was the Kyrgyz battalion, at the beginning of March 1999.¹ The decisions of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan of withdrawing their troops from Tajikistan were also among the reasons, which determined Kremlin to change the status of its troops in Tajikistan.

The treaty between Russia and Tajikistan regarding the establishment of military bases was received with anxiety in Central Asian capitals, and the Russian military base was seen as a destabilising factor in the area. The Uzbek president Islam Karimov even declared that the base in Tajikistan had a destabilising effect in the area, similar to the one that the Russian military base in Armenia had.²

* * *

In spite of the results mentioned above, Russian military policy towards the NIS in general and particularly the activity of establishing military bases on former Soviet territories are severely limited by the economic problems which Russia faces. In the opinion of some researchers, although Moscow has made serious progress in the view of re-establishing Russian military control over most of the CIS by the summer of 1994, its economic policy (especially its monetary and credit policy) has gone bankrupt.³

By accepting Russian military bases on their territory, the NIS leaders expect financial support from the part of Russia, while the population awaits for an improvement of the living conditions. However, due to its own economic problems, Russia is not able to satisfy their expectations. For example, in December 1994, a Tajik delegation in Moscow was declared to that Russia couldn't "pump in" Tajik economy with Russian money anymore, and that Tajikistan wouldn't go wrong if it decided to introduce its own currency.⁴ In December 1994 Russia and Kazakhstan signed an agreement

¹ The Jamestown Foundation Monitor, Vol.5, No. 42, 2 March 1999.

² Itar-Tass, 9 April 1999; The Jamestown Foundation Monitor, Vol.5, No. 66, 8 April 1999

³ William E.Odom,Robert Dujarric, p. 46

⁴ Umerserik Kasenov, Chego khochet Rossiya v Zakavkaz'e i v Tsentral'noy Azii.-"Nezavisimaya gazeta",24 January,1995.

regarding the rental of the “Baykonur” complex. According to the Treaty, Russia has to pay Kazakhstan a rent of 115 million dollars each year.¹ However, in spite of the importance, which Baykonur has for Russia, the latter cannot fulfil its financial obligations towards Kazakhstan, its debts towards this country amounting to several hundreds of millions of dollars.² Neither did the economic situation in Georgia improve after it had accepted Russian military bases on its territory. In Transnistria, the OGRF troops have debts of millions of Russian roubles for communal services towards the separatist authorities (see Table 1). But under such circumstances the question whether the pro-Russian governments in CIS states will be able to stay in power for a long time and whether Russian military presence on NIS territory is for a long period stays in suspension. As far as we are concerned, we consider that there is little probability that Russia should be capable of maintaining its troops in the NIS, while distancing from the economic problems of these states.

Besides Russia's economic weakness we can also list the following factors that compromise the Russian policy of establishing military bases: the extremely difficult material and financial situation of the troops in the Russian military bases deployed over the borders of the Federation, the supporting by Moscow of separatism in some CIS states, the lack of a co-ordinated policy of the power branches in Russia towards the CIS states, the decreasing of Russia's authority on the international arena etc. All these factors determine some states (which have already accepted Russian military bases on their territory) to review their policy towards these bases and towards military co-operation with Russia. There are eloquent examples of this kind: Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan have left the Treaty on CIS Collective Security, starting from the 20th of April this year, under the pretext that the Treaty does

¹The treaty was ratified by Kazakhstan in April 1995. The Baykonur Complex is rented for 20 years, with a 10 year extension if none of the parts should announce its intention of cancelling the action of the Treaty. The rent is 115 million dollars each year. On the territory of the complex Russian citizens are under Russian legislation.

² At the beginning of 1997 Russia owed Kazakhstan 345 millions of dollars for the rent of the “Baykonur” cosmodrome, 126 millions of dollars for the rent of the military polygons and 65 millions of dollars for the coal received from the mines of Ekibastuz. – “Nezavisimaya gazeta”, 16th of January 1997.

not correspond to the new reality and it lacks effectiveness,¹ and Turkmenistan has taken the decision of getting rid of the Russian border troops on its territory until the 20th of November 1999.² Recently Kyrgyzstan has announced its decision of giving up the services of the Russian border troops, too.³

Table 1

**The debts of the OGRF for communal services towards “DMR”
authorities on the 1st of August 1998
(thousands of Russian roubles)**

	Debts accumulated until the 1 st of October 1996	Debts accumulated between the 1 st of October 1996 and the 1 st of August 1998	Total
Electricity	5302,4	18394,4	23696,8
Water	2173,2	8267,7	10440,9
Gas	203,3		203,3
Heating	6355,0		6355,0
Total	14033,9	26662,1	40696,0

At the end of this chapter, the following conclusions are imposed:

a) the will of the Russian Federation of keeping its military presence on other states' territory is a reality and a distinct element of Russian military policy in CIS states;

¹ “Nezavisimaya Gazeta”, 26 May 1999

² The Russian border troops (around 300 officers who command Turkmen recruits) are deployed in Turkmenistan according to a Russian-Turkmen treaty from 1993, signed by presidents Boris Yeltsin and Saparmurat Niazov. The Treaty makes provision for the common defence of the borders Turkmenistan has with Afghanistan and Iran. The Treaty has no time limit, but it offers the parties the possibility of unilaterally suppressing its validity, by notifying the other part six months in advance. On the 20th of May Ashkhabad sent such a notice to Russia, asking it to withdraw its troops from Turkmenistan until the 20th of November 1999 (see: The Jamestown Foundation Monitor, Vol. 5, No. 102, 26 May 1999)

³ RFE/RL NEWSLINE, Vol. 3, No. 124, Part I, 23 June 1999.

b) during the next years Russian foreign policy in general, and especially the military one, will keep on being focused on the so-called "Near Abroad", having the re-establishment of military and political control over the NIS as its main purpose;

c) the military have played a significant role in the elaboration of the Russian "doctrine" of military bases and its putting into practice, and their influence in the political decision will be continuously growing during the following years, in connection with the extension of the NATO;

d) the activity of creating military bases and Russian military policy in general should be examined in tight connection with the social-political and economic processes in Russia; special attention should be paid to the role the military factor has in these processes.

Chapter II

THE RUSSIAN MILITARY BASES IN GEORGIA The Transcaucasian Group of Russian Troops (TGRT). Short History

The Transcaucasian Group of Russian Troops was established on the 1st of January 1993, on the basis of some units belonging to the Transcaucasian Military District (TMD) which had been established, at its turn, in June 1935 on the basis of troops belonging to the “Caucasian Army Bearer of the Red Flag”. However, the TGRT considers as birthdate of the TMD not the year 1935, but the day of the 22nd of May 1921, when the Caucasian Army had been created on the basis of military units of the 11th Army, by the order number 1119/200 of the Revolutionary Council of the Republic.¹ The units of the Caucasian Army were distributed on the territories the unional republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, as well as on the territories of the autonomous republics of Dagestan and Northern Ossetia. The TMD Headquarters was located in the town of Tbilisi. In 1940 the TMD was strengthened by 5 infantry divisions, 3 air divisions, a cavalry one and a tank one, as well as with other units. Some of these units were operatively subordinated to the Leningrad Military District and took part in some military actions during the war between the USSR and Finland.

After the Soviet-German war had started, the 45th and 46th Armies (for the defence of the Soviet-Turkish border) and the 44th and 47th Armies (for the defence of the Soviet-Iranian border) were set up within the TMD. On the 23rd of August 1941 the TMD was re-organised as the Transcaucasian Front, and from the 30th of December of the same year as The Caucasus Front. The Caucasus Front had the task of defending the Caucasian coast of the Black Sea and the borders with Turkey and Iran. The 44-47th and 41st Armies, as well as the Sevastopol Defence Area (from December 1941) joined the Front. The Black Sea Fleet and the Azov Military Flotilla were also subordinated to the Caucasus Front.

¹ “ZVV”, 22 May 1999

At the end of January 1942 the Caucasus Front was divided into the Transcaucasian Military District and the Crimean Front. The TMD, with two armies, ensured the guard of the Black Sea coast and commanded a division of gunmen and a cavalry corps deployed on the territory of Iran.

On the 15th of May 1942, the Transcaucasian Military District was again transformed into the Transcaucasia Front, being composed of the 45th and 46th Armies. Further on, the 4th, 9th, 12th, 18th, 24th, 37th, 44th, 47th, 56th and 58th Armies, as well as the 4th and 5th Air Armies joined the Transcaucasian Front for certain periods of time. The Black Sea Fleet and the Azov Military Flotilla were operatively subordinated to the Transcaucasian Front, too. Starting with the 1st of January 1943, the troops of the Transcaucasia Front began the offensive. As a result, the northern group of the Transcaucasia Front was transformed into the Northern Caucasus Front (24th of January 1943), and the other troops still within the Transcaucasia Front continued to ensure the guard of the Caucasian coast of the Black Sea and the USSR's borders with Iran and Turkey, as well as to lead the troops of the 45th Army on the territory of Iran. The Transcaucasia Front was dissolved on the 25th of August 1945.

After the end of the Soviet-German war, on the 25th of August 1945, the Tbilisi and Baku Military Districts were created on the basis of the Transcaucasian Military District. These two districts merged into the Transcaucasian Military District exactly a year later. Since 1946 the territories of Dagestan and Northern Ossetia have been included within the Northern Caucasus Military District.

By a decision of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium dated 17th of June 1967, the Transcaucasian Military District received the Red Flag of the Caucasian Army.¹ Thus the District began to be called “bearer of the Red Flag”. The District bore this denomination until the 1st of January 1993, when it was dissolved according to a decree of the Russian President, the Transcaucasian Group of Russian Troops being created on the basis of some of its units.²

The first commander of the Transcaucasian Military District was I. I. Smolin, who commanded the District until 1937. After I. Smolin, until 1938,

¹ The Caucasian Army was decorated with the Red Flag on the 22nd of September 1921 and on the 17th August 1923 – with the “Red Flag” Order.

² “ZVV”, 23 May 1995

the TMD was commanded by N. V. Kuybyshev (1937-1938) and A. I. Egorov (1938), heroes of the Civil War. After that, the following generals commanded the TMD:

Army General I. V. Tjulenev (TMD; 1938-1940)
Lieut. Gen. M. G. Efremov (TMD; 1940-1941)
Lieut. Gen. D. T. Kozlov (TMD/Transcaucasia Front; 1941)
Army General I. V. Tjulenev (Transcaucasia Front; 1942-1945)
Col. Gen. S. G. Trofimenko (Tbilisi MD; 1945-1946)
Army General I. I. Maslenikov (TMD; 1946)
Marshal of the Soviet Union F.I. Tolbukhin (TMD; 1947-1949)
Army General A. K. Antonov (TMD; 1950- 1954)
Army General I. I. Fed'uninskiy (TMD; 1954-1957)
Marshal of the Soviet Union K. K. Rokovskiyy (TMD; 1957)
Army General K. N. Galitzkiy (TMD; 1958-1961)
Army General A. T. Stuchenko (TMD; 1961-1968)
Col. Gen. S. K. Kurkotkin (TMD; 1968-1971)
Col. Gen. P. V. Melnikov (TMD; 1971-1977)
Col. Gen. O. F. Kulishev (TMD; 1978-1983)
Col. Gen. V. M. Arkhipov (TMD; 1983-1985)
Col. Gen. K. A. Kochetov (TMD; 1985-1988)
Col. Gen. I. N. Rodionov (TMD; 1988-1989)
Col. Gen. V. A. Patrikeev (TMD; 1989-1992)
Col. Gen. F. M. Reut (TMD/TGRT;1992-1997)
Col. Gen. V. V. Andreev (TGRT; 1997-present)

The present commander of the TGRT, Lieutenant General V. Andreev, was born on the 13th of December 1949. He graduated from the Military School in Vladikavkaz (1967), the “M. V. Frunze” Military Academy (1982) and the General Staff Academy (1993). He did 4 years of army service in Afghanistan; he is married and has 2 children.

The Russian military presence in Georgia. General Aspects

The troops belonging to the Russian military bases in Georgia are quartered in four garrisons:

- 1) The Batumi Garrison – Military Base Number 12;
- 2) The Akhalkalaki Garrison – Military Base number 62;
- 3) The Vaziani Garrison-Military Base number 137;
- 4) The Tbilisi Garrison - the Headquarters of the TGRT together with units of supply for the military bases.

Thus, the TGRT Headquarters is distributed in the town of Tbilisi. The units from the 12, 62 and 137 military bases distributed in Georgia, as well as the 102nd Base in Armenia, the tank repairing factory number 142 (Tbilisi), the car repairing factory number 13 (Tbilisi) the caterpillar tractor repairing base number 47 (Tbilisi), the 364th guard and service battalion, the independent 566th transmissions battalion, the engineer troops' depot number 430, as well as other 4 military depots located in Vaziani, Akhalkalaki, Gymri and Medjinstskari are all subordinated to this command.

The TGRT is subordinated to the High Command of the Ground Forces of the Russian Federation. At the beginning of the year 1997 the TGRT personnel was composed by more than 13,200 persons, supplied with more than 210 tanks, around 520 armoured combat vehicles, around 400 Armoured personnel carrier look-alikes and armoured infantry fighting vehicle look-alikes (APC & AIFV Look-alikes), around 210 artillery systems, 10 helicopters etc.

BASE 12 was created on the basis of the units belonging to the former 145th Division (set up in the year 1951),¹ deployed in Ajaria during the Soviet period. The commander of this base is Major General Vyacheslav Borisov, appointed by a decree of President Boris Yeltsin dated 12th of October 1998.²

¹ “ZVV”, 13 July 1994.

² Until the 12th of October 1998 the commander of Base 12 was Major General Viktor Sobolev; born on the 23rd of February 1950 in the village of Kalinino, Krasnodar region, of Russian nationality, he has a son born in the year 1972. Studies: he has graduated from a military school in Baku (1971) and from the “M. V. Frunze” Military Academy (1981); military service: 1971-1978 – MD “Prikarpatie” (Subcarpathian) – platoon commander, battalion commander; 1981-1986 – Far East MD – assistant commander of a regiment of motorised infantry, regiment Commander, assistant commander of a motorised infantry division, commander of motorised infantry division; in 1996 he was appointed commander of Base 12. He is decorated with 4 medals.

V. Borisov has graduated from the military school of paratroops in Ryazan (1976) as well as from the “M. V. Frunze” military academy (1990) and from the General Staff Academy (1998). Between 1985 and 1987 he served in Afghanistan, where he led at first a battalion of paratroops, and later was appointed commander of the Soviet garrison in Zaboli Province. After the service in Afghanistan he commanded an independent brigade of paratroops in the Transbaykal Military District (1991-1995) and the 2nd Motorised Infantry Division of Taman, within Moscow Military District.¹

Base 12 is composed of the 35th and the 90th motorised infantry regiments, deployed in Batumi and Helvachauri, the 1089th artillery regiment (Batumi), the 773rd independent reconnaissance battalion (Medjintskari), the 404th independent pontoons battalion (Medjintskari), the 122nd independent transmissions battalion (Medjintskari), the 175th repairing and reconditioning battalion (Batumi), the 1553rd independent supply battalion (Batumi), the 1053rd anti-aircraft missile regiment (Batumi), the 61st independent anti-tank artillery battalion (Batumi), the 627th independent chemical and biological protection battalion (Batumi). At the beginning of the year 1997 the staff of the Base was composed of around 2,900 persons. The Base's units and depots had around 40 tanks, over 40 armoured combat vehicles, more than 200 APC & AIFV Look-alikes, more than 70 artillery systems etc.

In the opinion of the TGRT leaders, Ajaria “is the only area where there is an attitude of respect towards the Russian military”.² And this because the Russian troops in Ajaria enjoy all the support of the Ajarian authorities and first of all the support of Aslan Abashidze, President of the Supreme Soviet of the Autonomous Republic of Ajaria, a former major general in the Soviet Army, a man of pro-Russian orientation and an ardent supporter of Russian military presence in Georgia. At his proposal, since 1991, the young people of Ajaria began to be recruited into the Russian border troops. During Pavel Grachev's visit to Georgia, in September 1995, A. Abashidze proposed that the young people of Ajaria should also be recruited for active military service within the Russian troops of Base 12. However, such a decision has not been taken then and today the inhabitants of Ajaria serve within the Russian Troops

¹ “ZVV”, 24 November 1998; 17 December 1998

² “ZVV”, 10 October 1995

by a contract.¹ During the same year 1995, the Supreme Council of Ajaria decided that the military of Base 12 should be given 200 apartments with all facilities included.²

Moscow is generously rewarding the support A. Abashidze gives to the Russian troops in Ajaria – By a decree issued by Boris Yeltsin on the 19th of October 1995, Aslan Abashidze was decorated with the “Friendship” order for “merits in developing the collaboration between nations and the consolidation of peace”. Fyodor Reut, by then Commander of the TGRT, handed the order to him.³ Aslan Abashidze is also the first person in Georgia to be decorated with the badge of merit of the Russian Border Troops “For service in the Caucasus”.

Since October 1996 the Headquarters of Base 12 is located in the building of the former Russian-teaching school number 5 in Batumi. The building of the school was placed at the Base's disposal by the local municipality. The headquarters of the base was transferred to the new location according to the city's reconstruction plan. According to Aslan Abashidze, the issue of transferring military objectives from the city had been on the agenda during the Soviet period, too, but its settlement had not been possible during that time. In 1996, Igor Rodionov, by then Russian minister of defence, accepted the long-awaited transfer, and the area freed by the Russian objectives was included in the City Park.⁴

Before being placed at the disposal of the Headquarters of Base 12, the building of the school had been restored. “When visiting the objectives of Base 12 of the TGRT, deployed in Batumi - the “ZVV” declares- one can convince himself that they are not quite different from the respectable offices of the “new Russians” or from the service residences on the Staraya Ploshchad'. Marble stairs, excellent furniture, floor covered with carpets, doors worth no less than three hundred dollars each... All these have been placed at the disposal of the Russian military by the local authorities (more exactly – by Aslan Abashidze, president of the Supreme Council of Ajaria). With the approval of the Russian Ministry of Defence, he didn't just “move” the TGRT facilities from the Primorsky boulevard (where they did not belong, of course), but he also made

¹ “ZVV”, 10 November 1995

² “ZVV”, 22 May 1996

³ “ZVV”, 27 October, 14 November 1995

⁴ Black Sea Press, Tbilisi, 15 October 1996.

everything he could in order to ensure that the officers and soldiers should be in a situation by no means worse, after the deployment”.¹

The 35th Guard Regiment “Gdynia”, created on the 30th of August 1935 and decorated with the “Red Flag” order, is one of the most well known units belonging to Base 12. In December 1941, this regiment was one of the first units of the Soviet Army to receive the “Guard” honorific title, and in March 1943 it was decorated with the “Red Flag” order, for having successfully fulfilled its combat missions. The regiment distinguished itself when the Polish town of Gdynia was liberated from the fascists, and after this event it began to bear the name of the city mentioned above.²

BASE 62. Another military base on the territory of Georgia is Base 62, also named “the garrison at the gates of heaven”, as it is situated 1,700 meters above the sea level.³ Due to its location in Samtskhe-Javakheti region, where more than 90% of the population is Armenian, it is also named “the Armenian division”.⁴ A significant part of the Base's personnel is composed by locals hired through a contract. Even as early as July 1994, there were 600 of such contractual employees within the units belonging to the division, according to the declarations of Major General I. F. Kovalenko, by then commander of the Base.⁵

Presently Base 62 is commanded by Major General Nikolai Zolotov. He was born on the 30th of November 1955 in the city of Beelitz (German Democratic Republic), he is of Russian nationality, married. He has graduated from a military school in Moscow (1977), as well as from the “M. V. Frunze” Military Academy (1985) and from the General Staff Academy (1996).

Between 1977 and 1982 he served within the Soviet troops Group in Germany, and during the years 1985-1991 he served within the Pribaltik Military District (Baltic Countries MD). Between 1991 and 1992 he served within a main Department of the Russian Ministry of Defence, and during 1992-1994 – in the Western Troops Group. He was appointed commander of Base 62 in 1996. He is decorated with 4 medals and with the “Badge of

¹ “ZVV”, 6 February 1997

² “ZVV”, 30 August, 19 September 1995

³ “ZVV”, 25 July 1995

⁴ “ZVV”, 5 July 1994

⁵ *Ibid.*

honour” for having successfully fulfilled the tasks regarding the transportation of the 1986 crops by his unit.

At the beginning of 1997 Base 62 was composed by two regiments of motorised infantry (409, 412), the 817th artillery regiment, the independent 774th reconnaissance battalion, the independent 889th pontoons battalion, the 899th independent transmissions battalion, the 176th repairing and reconditioning battalion, the 1554th independent supply battalion, the 628th independent chemical and biological protection battalion, the 1007th anti-aircraft missile regiment, the independent 65th anti-tank artillery battalion. 2,900 persons composed the staff of all these units. The base also had over 40 tanks, around 50 armoured combat vehicles, over 40 APC & AIFV Look-alikes, over 60 artillery systems etc. At the Akhalkalaki military depot there were about 80 more ACVs in preservation.

BASE 137 was established on the basis of the 405th motorised infantry regiment deployed in Vaziani. At its turn, the regiment was created on the 6th of October 1954. Besides the units of the regiment mentioned above, there is also an independent helicopter squadron, which is included in the Base.¹

Base 137 is commanded by Nikolay A. Shuldyakov, born on the 1st of April 1956 in the town of Gubakha in the Permi region, of Russian nationality; married, has two children. N. Shuldyakov has graduated from the military school for tank units in Cheleabinsk (1977) and from the Military Academy of armoured troops (1990). During the years 1977-1984 he served within the Northern Caucasus MD, and during 1984-1987 – in the Group of Soviet Troops in Germany. Since 1990 he has been serving in Transcaucasia (TMD/TGRT). He was appointed commander of Base 137 in November 1995.

As the Base is located near Tbilisi, its units often become the targets of attacks from the part of persons and movements who declare themselves against the stationing of Russian troops in Georgia. Since December 1992 until June 1995 the Base had been about 80 times attacked with firearms.²

Presently the main task of the Base is that of ensuring the good functioning of the Vaziani airport. It seems the Base is quite successful in fulfilling this obligation. In 1994 and 1995 the base gained the title of “best unit

¹ In August 1998 the “ZVV” reported that the 10 helicopters of the Base had not taken off for one year and that they were “in preservation” (“ZVV”, 11 August 1998).

² “ZVV”, 22 May 1996

of the TGRT". As a part of the TMD, the 405th regiment had also been worthy of this title in the years 1973, 1987, and 1993.¹

At the beginning of 1997 the regiment's staff was composed of more than 1380 persons. The regiment also possessed 33 tanks, over 40 armoured vehicles (BMP, BTR), 16 artillery pieces etc. The helicopter squadron had 10 MI-8 and MI-24 helicopters.

In Vaziani, besides the regiment mentioned above, there are also a military depot and the 566th independent transmissions battalion (also known as Brandenburg), directly subordinated to the TGRT Command. The battalion was established on the 1st of February 1943. It has been decorated with the "Red Flag of Combat" order, 2 "Aleksandr Nevsky" orders, the "Red Star" order. At the beginning of 1997 the battalion was commanded by Colonel Mikhail F. Kolesnikov, who was serving his 11th year in Transcaucasia.²

BASE 102. Besides the Russian military bases deployed on Georgian territory, the TGRT also includes Base 102, distributed on the territory of Armenia.³ It was established on the basis of the former 127th Division distributed in the town of Gymri. During the years of the Soviet rule the Division was defending 40 km of border.⁴ At present the main forces of the Base 102 are distributed in the Gymri area, and certain independent formations – in Yerevan and other districts of Armenia.⁵

Colonel Arkadiy Bakhin commands base 102. He was born on the 8th of May 1956 in the town of Kaunas, of Russian nationality, married, he has a son (born in 1981) and a daughter (born in 1993). He has graduated from a military school in Moscow (1977), from the "M. V. Frunze" Military Academy (1987) and from the General Staff Academy (1997). During 1977-1982 he served in the Southern Group of Troops, during 1991-1992 in Turkestan MD,

¹ *Ibid.*

² "ZVV", 1, 25 February 1997

³ In the opinion of Russian military the Russian military presence in Armenia started on the 1st of October 1827, when the tsarist troops occupied the fortress of Yerevan, "freeing the city from the Persian invaders" ("ZVV", 28 December 1996). In 1997 the Russian troops in Armenia celebrated the 170 years Jubilee of the Yerevan Garrison.

⁴ "ZVV", 13 May 1993

⁵ "ZVV", 24 March 1995

and during 1992-1995 in the Siberian MD. Between the 26th of December 1994 and the 10th of February 1995 he fought in Chechnya, where he was wounded; since 1997 he has been serving in the TGRT as commander of BASE 102. He was decorated with the “Za Muzhestvo” (“For Courage”) order, and with three medals.

The base is composed of 3 motorised infantry regiments, two of them (124 and 128) being deployed in Gyumri and one in Yerevan (123),¹ the 116 independent tanks regiment, the 992nd artillery regiment (Gyumri),² the 988th air defence missile regiment (Gyumri), the 772nd independent reconnaissance battalion (Gyumri), the 550th independent pontoons battalion (Gyumri), the 628th transmissions battalion (Gyumri), the 174th repairing and reconditioning battalion (Yerevan), the 1552nd independent supply battalion (Yerevan), the 626th independent chemical and biological protection battalion (Gyumri), the 66th

¹ One of the regiments mentioned above was created on the 29th of December 1941 in Sverdlovsk region. It participated for the first time in combat actions in June 1942 within the 164 Infantry Division. It took part in the liberation of Belarus and Lithuania. For the heroism displayed in battles, the regiment was decorated with the “Aleksandr Nevsky” order by a decree of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, on the 12th of August 1944. On the 1st of June 1946 it was transformed into the 179 independent battalion. Starting from the 15th of October 1949 it has been distributed in Vitebsk, within the Vitebsk 16th independent brigade. On the 1st of November 1953 it received the denomination of 229 motorised regiment, within the Vitebsk motorised division. On the 18th of January it changed its name to Military Unit number 30774. On the 26th of May this unit was transferred to Kanaker near Yerevan, where it began to be a part of the 7th Army of the Transcaucasian Military District. Along the years the regiment changed its name a few more times. Since the summer of 1993 the regiment is a part of Base 102 - “ZVV”, 28 December 1996

² The artillery regiment was created in the year 1946 in the town of Leninakan. Initially it was called the 906th artillery regiment and it was included in the 261st Infantry Division distributed in Leninakan, on the territory of the Great Fortress. In 1968 the regiment was dissolved and on its basis the 483rd independent artillery division was created. This was included within the motorised infantry division of the TMD 7th Army. On the 25th of December 1976 the independent artillery division 483 was transformed into an artillery regiment. The soldiers belonging to the regiment consider that the date of the 25th of December is the regiment’s “birthday”. In December 1996 Base 102 celebrated the regiment’s 20th anniversary. - (“ZVV”, 25 December 1996).

independent anti-tank artillery battalion. Towards the beginning of the year 1997 the personnel of the Base was composed of around 4,200 persons. At the same date, the Base also possessed over 70 tanks, over 50 ACVs, 130 APC & AIFV Look-alikes, around 85 artillery systems etc. A significant number of armoured vehicles (more than 100 units) were in the boxes of the Gymri military depot.

Since the end of the year 1998 the Military Base 102 has begun to be strengthened with MIG-29¹ Combat Aircraft, and later on with “S-300V” anti-missile systems (Gymri).² The first five MIG-29 Combat Aircraft arrived in Armenia in December 1998.³ The MIGs and Russian anti-missile systems, as well as some Armenian anti-air and radar systems presently form an unified Russian-Armenian anti-air defence system. The system mentioned has been officially inaugurated on the 15th of April 1999, in the presence of Anatoli Kornukov, commander of Russian Air Forces. On the 22nd of April 10 MIGs had already been deployed in Armenia, and eight more were to arrive during the month of May.⁴ On the 18th of June 1999, four Russian MIG-29 aircraft were placed in Armenia (Erebuni airport) violating Georgian air space for the fourth time during the year 1999.⁵

¹The Jamestown Foundation Monitor, Vol. 5, No. 36, 22 February 1999; “ZVV”, 15 March 1999; “ZVV” 20 April 1999

² “ZVV”, 19 January, 27 February 1999; AP FLUX, 23 February 1999; The Jamestown Foundation Monitor, Vol. 5, No. 74, 16 April 1999; ITAR-TASS, 22 April 1999; “ZVV”, 5 June 1999. While commenting of the fact that Base 102 was strengthened with “S-300V” anti-missile systems, Colonel General Kornikov declared that the action had been also dictated by the potential danger regarding air space (particularly in connection with the bombarding of Irak), when there was the possibility that some fighter planes could accidentally enter CIS airspace and unsanctioned to use their armament. However, A. Andreev, commander of the TGRT, declared that the fact that Base 102 was provided with “S-3000V” anti-missile systems is just part of the natural process of providing anti-aircraft defence units with more performing technique, as the old technique (the “KUB” systems), used since more than 25 years ago, is obsolete (“ZVV”, 27 February 1999).

³ “ZVV”, 25 February 1999

⁴ ITAR-TASS, 22 April 1999

⁵ “Svobodnaya Gruzziya”, 22 June 1999; The Jamestown Foundation Monitor, Vol. 5, No. 122, 24 June 1999

Here we have to mention that the strengthening of Base 102 with MIG-29 aircraft and with S-300 anti-missile systems has led to anxiety in Baku, the officials there having resumed their declarations against Moscow, accusing it of arming Armenia. Consequently, Azerbaijan proposed the US, Turkey and NATO the establishment of military bases on its territory,¹ and since April 1999 it withdrew from the Treaty On CIS Collective Security, together with Georgia and Uzbekistan.²

The Group of command of the Russian Federation troops stationed on Armenian territory is in Yerevan and it is organisationally a part of the TGRT³. During December 1996, Major General Aleksey S. Tretyakov, by then commander of the Group and of the Yerevan Garrison, mentioned that the Troops Command Group had the purpose of “ensuring functioning of Russian troops on Armenian territory, as well as the collaboration with local state and military bodies, with the supply services, with workers in the field of transport and telecommunications, with the Russian embassy in Armenia, in the issues concerning the defence of the rights of the military who are citizens of the Russian Federation. The troops' command group solves the military and juridical problems, quartering problems; it carries out the operational command of the troops”.⁴

Besides the troops included in the military bases, Russia has other troops distributed on the Georgian territory: the 345th airborne regiment (the Base 50, in the town of Gudauta, in Abkhazia), “peacekeeping” forces in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as border guard troops belonging to the “Georgia” group of border troops. The situation of the “peacekeeping” troops and of the border guard troops will be largely discussed at the end of this chapter. As far as the 345th airborne regiment is concerned, due to the fact that it belongs to the 7th Airborne Division, the information on it has been very difficult to collect. On the 1st of January 1996 the regiment counted 1645 persons, was supplied with 28 BTR, 95 BMP, 12 artillery systems of more than

¹ The Jamestown Foundation Monitor, Vol. 5, No. 57, 23 March 1999.

² ITAR-TASS, 5 February and 19 March 1999, AP FLUX, 25 February 1999, The Jamestown Foundation Monitor, Vol. 5, No. 50 and 79, 12 March and 23 April 1999; The Jamestown Foundation Prism, Vol. 5, No. 7, Part I, 9 April 1999.

³ “ZVV”, 29 March 1995.

⁴ “ZVV”, 28 December 1996

100 mm in calibre, other fire arms. At the beginning of June 1999, at the proposal of General G. Shpak, commander of airborne troops of the Russian Federation, “The Red Flag of Combat” of the 345th Regiment, which had till then been preserved in the Central Museum of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation was returned to the military unit, with the purpose of keeping the regiment's tradition alive and raising the spirits of the soldiers and officers.¹

The Russian-Georgian negotiations regarding the establishment of Russian military bases in Georgia

The negotiations between Russia and Georgia regarding the establishment of military bases on Georgian territory have been initiated at the beginning of the year 1994. In Tbilisi, Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze have signed the “Treaty of friendship, neighbourliness and collaboration between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia”,² as well as a Protocol of intentions regarding the establishment of a special working group which would study the issue of organising the Russian troops in Georgia as military bases.³ At that time Shevardnadze pointed out that the adoption of the new deployment principle not only suited well the interests of Russia and Georgia, but the interest of the whole of Transcaucasia as well.⁴ Moreover, in an interview granted to the Georgian radio on the 7th of February 1994, Shevardnadze pointed out that “the presence of foreign troops on the country's territory is not an occasion of joy for anyone, but under the present circumstances the presence of Russian troops on Georgian territory is dictated

¹ “ZVV”, 10 June 1999

² The Treaty was published in the “ZVV” newspaper on the 10th of February 1994

³ “ZVV”, 8 February 1994; Peter Zhuravlev, “Strategicheskoye interesy Rossii i Gruzii sovпали”, “Segodnya”, 4 February 1994; Tengiz Pachekoria, Rossiyskie voennye bazy - vopros reshennyi – “Nezavisimaya gazeta”, 5 February 1994

⁴ “ZVV”, 8 February 1994.

by necessity”.¹ At the moment when the Protocol was signed, Russia intended to have three military bases on the territory of Georgia - “Akhalkalaki, Batumi and Vaziani (Tbilisi)”. It is on these that Pavel Grachev, the Russian minister of defence was informing its subordinates. On the 2nd of February 1994, while, speaking in front of the soldiers of one of the TGRT regiments, Grachev pointed out that the “TGRT will initially consist of three special bases with a total number of 23,000 soldiers, although this number is just the minimum needed for ensuring the security of the border”.²

The negotiations over the text of the Treaty lasted for almost a year. The main issues discussed were: the stationing term of the military bases on Georgian territory and the bases' personnel number,³ the character of the bases, the rent, the issues regarding jurisdiction and mutual juridical assistance during the presence of Russian military on Georgian territory (finally this section was excluded from the basic Treaty, in order to be the subject of a separate additional agreement), the participation of Georgian citizens as technical staff serving the military bases. Although several rounds of negotiations had taken place, in the end the parties signed a Russian version of the “Treaty between the Russian Federation and Republic of Georgia regarding Russian military bases on the territory of the Republic of Georgia”. This is the version, which Pavel Grachev (by then minister of defence of the Russian Federation) had in his bag when he came to Tbilisi on the 22nd of March 1995.⁴

According to the reports of some Georgian diplomats, Eduard Shevardnadze signed the Russian draft of the Treaty without taking the opinions of Georgian experts into account. The “Grachev draft” contained

¹ “ZVV”, 9 February 1994.

² “ZVV”, 4 February 1994

³ During the negotiations the Georgian side insisted on a 5-year term of stationing of the Russian troops, while the Russian side insisted on a 25 years term. As far as the number of soldiers is concerned, Georgian experts insisted on a total of 10 thousands and Russian experts – on 14-16 thousands

⁴ The Treaty was signed by Pavel Grachev, Russian minister of defence, and Vardiko Nadibaidaze, Georgian minister of defence, on the 23rd of March 1995 – Liana Minasean, Nodar Broladze, Mirotvortzev obvineaiut v neloyal'nost'. Dogovor o voennykh bazakh Rossii v Gruzii podpisan – “Nezavisimaya gazeta”, 4 March 1995; Aleksandr Pel'ts, Vitali Denisov, Vazhnyi faktor bezopasnosti” – “Krasnaya zvezda”, 25 March 1995

significant modifications. For example, in the draft negotiated by experts the 2nd article stipulated the distribution of Russian military bases in Georgia “in the towns of Akhalkalaki, Batumi, Vaziani and Gudauta”; but in the “Grachev draft” the “and” was replaced by a comma, and “and others” was added after the word “Gudauta” (“in the towns of Akhalkalaki, Batumi, Vaziani, Gudauta and others”). Consequently Russia obtained the formal right of establishing an unlimited number of military bases on the territory of Georgia.

Neither did Eduard Shevardnadze take into account the “Special Opinion of the Georgian Side upon Initialing the Treaty between the Republic of Georgia and the Russian Federation on Russian Military Bases on the Territory of the Republic of Georgia”, a document signed by Vardiko Nadibaidze and annexed to the Treaty during its initialling. The “Particular opinion...” of the Georgian party points out that: “The Georgian side considers the signature by the heads of state and the ratification of the present Treaty to be possible after restoration of the jurisdiction of the Republic of Georgia on all of its territory (in view of the fact that the existence of conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia will hinder the carrying out of the provisions of the Treaty), and after determination of the commitments of the Russian Federation for building up the armed forces of the Republic of Georgia.

Proceeding from a mutual understanding in the course of the negotiations, the Georgian Side raises the question about the destruction of armaments and of military technical equipment not attributed to the armed forces of the Republic of Georgia or of the Russian Federation, but present on the territory of Georgia”.¹

The Treaty, only elaborated in Russian, was signed in Tbilisi on the 16th of September 1995 by Viktor Chernomyrdyn and Eduard Shevardnadze. It consists of 41 articles and is to come into effect on the day of exchange of ratification instruments (art. 39). After its ratification the Treaty will be valid for 25 years and it “will automatically be extended for successive 5 year periods if neither of the Sides informs the other Side in writing at least two years before the expiration of the regular period that it intends to terminate its operation” (art. 40).

¹ See the interview with Guram Nikolaeshvili, first deputy of the Georgian Minister of Defence.—“ZVV”, 12th of April 1995.

According to the Treaty, the military units of the Russian Federation deployed on the territory of the Republic of Georgia, from the day of the coming into effect of the Treaty, “organisationally shift to the system of Russian military bases, which will be located in the cities of Akhalkalaki, Batumi, Vaziani, Gudauta and etc. The command of the Russian military bases, along with the military units, subunits, and the institutions of supply and service directly subordinate to it, will be located in the city of Tbilisi” (art. 2). In concordance with article 1 of the Treaty the notion of “military base” includes: “an integrated system consisting of an area (areas) of territory allocated by the Republic of Georgia for use by the Russian Federation with precisely designated boundaries agreed on by the Sides, and with deployed military formations of the Russian Federation deployed on it (them).

The Russian bases’ tasks on Georgian territory are listed in the 3rd Article of the Treaty: "During the period in which they are present on the territory of the Republic of Georgia, the Russian military bases will, jointly with the armed forces of the Republic of Georgia, assure the defence of the sovereignty and security of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia.

The tasks being carried out by the Russian military bases will be determined by agreements between the Sides and by the Treaty of Collective Security of 15 May 1992. Tasks directly before the Russian military bases will be set by the President of the Russian Federation, by the Government of the Russian Federation, and by the Command of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

For the practical realisation of the tasks being carried out by the Russian military bases, the command of the Russian military bases will act in agreement with the top commander of the armed forces of the Republic of Georgia and in co-ordination with the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Georgia. The use of the military formations of the Russian Federation in any sort of military actions from the territory of the Republic of Georgia is permissible only on the basis of a joint decision of the top commander of the armed forces of the Russian Federation and the top commander of the armed forces of the Republic of Georgia, and in accord with the laws of each of the Sides”.

In conformity with the 6th article of the Treaty, the Republic of Georgia engaged itself in creating “all conditions for the normal functioning on its territory of the Russian military bases”. “With the aim of assuring the fulfilment of the tasks placed upon the Russian military bases” the Parties also agreed to modify the maximum levels of conventional armament, in accordance with art. 8 of the Treaty regarding Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The mechanism of modifying the maximum quantities is contained in “The Protocol Concerning Changes in the Maximum Levels for the Presence of Conventional Armaments and Military Equipment of the Russian Federation and of the Republic of Georgia, Limited by the Treaty On Conventional Armed Forces in Europe”. The Protocol is included in the Treaty regarding Russian military bases on Georgian territory and consists of 4 articles. According to this Protocol, the Russian Federation obtained the right of increasing the number of tanks by 115 items, of ACVs by 160 items and of artillery systems by 170 items. At its turn, Georgia has accepted that the quantity of conventional weapons it possesses should be reduced in correspondence with the units mentioned above.¹

Georgia was forced into accepting the creation of Russian military bases on its territory in exchange for the assurance Moscow has given that Russia will contribute to restoring Georgia’s national integrity. On the 23rd of March 1995, Eduard Shevardnadze, in an interview given to the Georgian radio declared:

“We have been forced into accepting this step because we are concerned about the future...The only force capable of helping us and of guaranteeing the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity is Russia. If Russia

¹ According to the declarations made by General Guram Nikolaeshvili, First deputy Defence Minister of Georgia, the giving up of the quota suits the Georgian party, as “the remaining limits are fully sufficient in the present stage of building up national armed forces. Besides that, the Treaty on military bases contained the following stipulation: in case the Georgian party acquires supplementary military technique, the Russian party automatically gives up this technique (i.e. it will be withdrawn) “Thus Georgia's strategic interests will be respected”. - “ZVV”, 26 October 1995.

decides that the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity is not in its interests, this thing will never happen".¹

We believe this declaration not only explains the reasons of Georgia's accepting Russian military bases on its territory, but it also indicates the place where the "producer" and the key to the solutions of the conflicts in former Soviet space can be found.

Although more than four years have passed since the Treaty regarding Russian military bases on Georgian territory was signed, the Georgian Parliament is in no hurry of ratifying it, and recently the parliamentarians and some Tbilisi officials have begun to speak about the need of closing the Russian military bases in Georgia and of the country's joining the NATO.² Thus, Revaz Adamia, chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for security and defence problems, declared on the 18th of March 1999 to the Reuters press agency that Georgian Parliament will look forward to forcing Eduard Shevardnadze into asking Russia to withdraw its troops from Georgia and to close down the bases.³

Later he declared to the journalists that Georgia would ask Russia to liquidate its bases in Gudauta and Vaziani until the 1st of October 1999.⁴ The base in Gudauta is located in a conflict area and the one in Vaziani is near Tbilisi. "For the moment there is no talk about the withdrawal of the bases from Batumi and Akhalkalaki, but this issue too is to be discussed in the near future". Irakli Menegarashvili, Georgian minister of Foreign Affairs, declared on the 23rd of May 1999 that it is unlikely that the treaty on Russian military bases in Georgia should ever be ratified by the Georgian parliament under its present form. He underlined that the Treaty allows Russia to maintain in Georgia a larger number of troops than the CFE Treaty makes provision for, adding that the Tbilisi authorities insist that the treaty mentioned above should be respected by all signer states.⁵

¹ Georgian radio, Tbilisi, in Georgian, 17:57 GMT, 23 March 1995.

² "Svobodnaya Gruzija", 1 July 1999; RFL/RL NEWSLINE, Vol. 3, No. 129, Part I, 2 July 1999

³ RFE/RL NEWSLINE, Vol. 3, No. 55, Part I, 19 March 1999.

⁴ RFE/RL NEWSLINE, Vol. 3, No. 100, Part I, 24 May 1999; "Svobodnaya Gruzija, 2 June 1999.

⁵ *Ibid.*; "ZVV", 8 June 1999

The withdrawal of Georgia from the Treaty On CIS Collective Security, a fact we have already mentioned, also speaks about the fact that the leaders of Tbilisi have decided to accomplish the liquidation of Russian bases on Georgian territory. In an interview given to the national radio, Eduard Shevardnadze motivated Georgia's withdrawal from the Treaty by the fact that the country's being part of the Treaty “has not brought any positive results in the settlement process of the Abkhazian conflict”.¹

The fact that the Treaty between Russia and Georgia on Russian military bases has not yet been ratified can be explained by many reasons. Firstly, the Georgian leaders condition Russian military presence on Georgian territory and the coming into effect of military agreements between Russia and Georgia with the degree of Moscow's involvement in the process of settling down of the conflicts in Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia.² Thus the Decision of the Georgian Parliament dated 2nd of October 1996 “Regarding the stage of the realisation of the Georgian Parliament's Decision of the 17th of April 1996 on the measures concerning the settlement of the Abkhazian conflict”, mentions that “The crisis created in the settlement process of the Abkhazian conflict is directly connected to the real situation and to the perspectives of relationships between Russia and Georgia. We are to properly consider the fact that until now there is no legal basis for the deployment of Russian military bases on Georgian territory. A similar situation has emerged in connection with the common defence of Georgia's state borders.

The military treaties signed previously can be examined within the Georgian Parliament after the jurisdiction of Georgia is “de facto” restored over its entire territory...”

The explanation for the connection between the Treaty's coming into effect and the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity can be found in an interview given by Eduard Shevardnadze to “Zakavkazskie Voennye Vedomosti: “The Treaty will only come into effect when Georgia's unity and territorial integrity are restored. It is not a political transaction, as some people prefer to regard it. There will be no real peace in Georgia as long as justice is not restored. Therefore, the military bases will lack the conditions for their

¹ AP FLUX, 5 April 1999.

² See: Nodar Broladze, Posledniy shans dlya Tbilisi – “Nezavisimaya gazeta” – 28 March 1995

normal functioning. One cannot just sit on a volcano with a gun in his hand and believe this gun will stop the eruption. This is why we expect a peaceful and constructive but at the same time urgent and consistent settlement of the Abkhazian issue”.¹

Presently Moscow denies the fact that there was a previous agreement between Russia and Georgia regarding the conditioning of the treaty's coming into effect by the settlement of the Abkhazian conflict”.² It seems, however, that such a transaction really existed.³ Moreover, the “ZVV” informed his readers in February 1993 that Boris Yeltsin himself was “conditioning” the signing of the “Treaty regarding the status of the TGRT” by the settlement of the Abkhazian conflict.⁴ Vladymir Golubi, military attaché of the Russian Federation in Georgia, saw (in 1995) the conditioning of the signing of the Treaty regarding the bases by the solving of the Abkhazian problem” as a “precise chess move” of Shevardnadze.⁵

Besides the conditioning mentioned above the deputies in the Georgian Parliament consider that the “Grachev draft” of the treaty should be improved because presently Russia pays no rent for its bases.

The issue of the rent aroused passionate discussions within the negotiations, but the Russian party did manage to avoid the inclusion of any such engagements in the Treaty. During the seventh round of negotiations the Russian party showed that the military bases would station on Georgian

¹ “ZVV”, 6 May 1995

² Lieutenant General A. Yu. Potapov, Commander in charge of the TGRT declared in an interview given to the “ZVV” in April 1997: “In local press, there are current references to a certain annex of this document (the Treaty on Russian bases on Georgian territory), an annex which conditions the stationing of our troops by Abkhazia's return under Georgian jurisdiction, as well as by a considerable military and technical assistance from the part of Russia. In fact, this special opinion, signed by the Georgian minister of defence, was annexed to the treaty during its signing on the 22nd of March 1995. However, half a year later, Eduard Shevardnadze, the President of Georgia, has signed the treaty, without taking into account the separate opinion of the minister of defence. Thus, the references to the special opinion of the Georgian minister of defence really have no solid basis”

³ “ZVV”, 7 April 1997

⁴ “ZVV”, 10 February 1993

⁵ “ZVV”, 20 September 1995

territory in the interest of both states, so Russia won't have to pay any rent. Although it exposed a diametrically opposed opinion, with reference to international experience (particularly to the American experience in Turkey and the Philippines), the Georgian delegation did not succeed in defending its positions¹.

After the inventory of the mobile property of TGRT troops distributed in Georgia (February 1997), the Georgian Ministry of State Property Administration (MSPA) calculated the value of 2,060 buildings and edifices in the account balance of the TGRT, establishing that their value was 374,092,980 \$US - considering the currency of the American dollar at the 1st of January 1992 (See Table 2). Starting from the fact that Georgian legislation stipulates 10% of the total value of the buildings as minimal rent, in the opinion of the Georgian MSPA, Russia should annually pay at least 37.409,298 US dollars as a rent. For the years 1991-1997 Moscow should pay 261.865.000 \$US (7 x 37,409,298). If we take the Russian data as a basis, then, in the opinion of the Ministry mentioned above, Russia has to pay each year 5,713,364 \$US and 39.993548 \$US (7 x 5,713,364) for the period between 1991 and 1997.²

An irritating aspect for Tbilisi is the fact that the soldiers belonging to the Russian bases are being paid in Russian roubles, not in lari - the Georgian national currency. The Georgian side insists that the Russian military should be paid in Georgian Lari for several reasons: a) according to Georgian Law, the only means of payment on the territory of Georgia are the laris; b) in some area of Georgia (Ahalkalaki, Kazbeghi, Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia) the Russian military pay for goods and services in Russian roubles, thus influencing Georgian economy; c) the taking out of circuit of the Russian roubles is a demand of the International Monetary Fund, which supports Georgian currency. In order to regulate these matters, the representatives of the Georgian National Bank have held some talks with representatives of the Russian Ministry of Defence on the 15th of October 1997. On this occasion they insisted over the conclusion of an agreement between Russia and Georgia regarding the status of the campaign offices of the Russian Federation Central Bank, which serve Russian military bases on Georgian

¹ "ZVV", 20 April, 27 May 1994

² Tamara Honelidze, Irakli Aladashvili, "The Russian military are indebted to Georgia" – "Kviris Palitra" (in Georgian), 13-19 October 1997

territory. The Georgian side expressed its will that these campaign offices should be registered and licensed by the Georgian National Bank.

Table 2

The value of immovable property of Russian military bases deployed in Georgia*

	Evaluations of immovable property of Russian military bases by Georgia		Evaluations of immovable property of Russian military bases by the Russian Federation	
	Number of buildings evaluated	Value in \$US according to exchange rate for 1 st of January-1992 (1\$=0,56 roubles)	Number of buildings evaluated	Value in US \$ according to exchange rate for 1 st of January 1997 (1\$=5079 roubles)
TGRT HQ and the logistic units (Tbilisi)	909	206.508320	907	29.593241
Base 112 Batumi	534	68.229768	533	5.781788
Base 137 Vaziani	285	47.776250	412	13.239752
Base 62 Akhalkalaki	332	51.449643	332	8.518862
TOTAL	2060	37.3963981**	2184	57.133643***

* The author drew up the table. Sources: The letter (number 08-137/6-7) of Z. Bakhtadze, deputy minister of the Georgian Ministry of State Property Administration, dated 24th of July 1997, and addressed to M. Ukleba, Georgian deputy minister of Foreign Affairs.

** The letters contains several miscalculations. Thus, in the letter the total value of the buildings and edifices as estimated by the Georgian side is 374.092980 \$US.

*** In the letter: 57.133.642

The representatives of the Russian Ministry of Defence have qualified the pretensions of the Georgian side as groundless. In the opinion of Russian experts, the currency which is used as payment is a matter of Russia's competence, the more so as "Russian roubles are not being used as a means of payment on the territory of Georgia, but they are exchanged for laris in the exchange offices; moreover, most of this money is spent on the territory of Russia by the soldiers' families". As for the "circulation of the Russian rouble on the territory of Georgia (Akhalkalaki, Kazbeghi, Abkhazia and Southern

Ossetia), this matter is of the competence of Georgia's government and it can be arranged through adequate measures against people breaking the law". The experts of the Russian Ministry of Defence also declared that both the HQ and the staff of the TGRT insist in being paid in Russian roubles, so they could be protected from inflation and have the guarantee of their families' maintenance in Russia.

Besides that, in the opinion of the TGRT financial experts, Russian soldiers would lose a minimum of 10 – 15% of their income, should they be paid in laris. The Russian side considers as acceptable the Russian experience in Armenia, where the government "has adopted a decision according to which Gyumri is a rouble zone, i.e. Russian rouble is there in circulation alongside with the drama".¹

During the second reunion of the Russian – Georgian Commission for economical co-operation (8-9 December 1997), the Parties have agreed upon the following: "with the purpose of establishing the financing and serving payment-discount order of the Russian military bases, of determining the status and functioning regime of military institutions of the Russian Federation Central Bank, of solving the matter concerning the form of payment towards the Russian military contingent on Georgian territory, the Parties have agreed upon preparing for signing the following agreements during the first trimester of the year 1998: The Agreement between the Government of Georgia and the one of the Russian Federation regarding financial insurance of the Russian military bases on Georgian territory; the Agreement between the National Bank of Georgia and the Russian Federation Central Bank regarding the activity of the military institution of the Russian Federation Central Bank, located on Georgian territory".² It seems that till now the mentioned agreements have not yet been elaborated and signed by the Parties. At the beginning of January 1999 David Tevzadze, Georgian minister of Defence, has declared to the journalists that the laris payment mechanism of the Russian military bases was still not elaborated.³ One month later, Nikolai Mikhailov, Russian first deputy minister of Defence, while

¹ "ZVV", 22 January 1997.

² Quotation from the Protocol of the 2nd meeting of the Russian – Georgian Commission for economical co-operation, of the 8 – 9th of December 1997.

³ "ZVV", 7 January 1999.

visiting Tbilisi, mentioned that the parties had agreed upon the payment of the TGRT soldiers (a part of the salary should be paid in laris, and another in Russian roubles), but the final decision is to be taken by the ministers of defence.¹

The majority of the political forces in Georgia consider that the assistance given by Moscow to Georgia in building up its own Army Forces (assistance promised by the Russian side during the negotiation process) is insignificant. Moreover, Georgia tries to revise the manner of dividing between Moscow and the former Soviet republics of the wealth formerly belonging to the USSR Army Forces, as it considers that Moscow has illegally withdrawn military technique and armament located on Georgian territory until 1992. In October 1997, in one interview given to the Georgian radio, E. Shevardnadze declared that for the Georgians “up to now it is not quite clear why... unlike in other states, 80% of the military technique has been withdrawn from the territory of Georgia. What happened here never happened anywhere else. I have in view the fact that not a single combat aircraft has remained, although we had had several divisions distributed here. Even the anti – aircraft defence system has been disassembled and carried away, not to speak of the missile systems we have had in Georgia. They carried away everything that they could carry”.² E. Shevardnadze used the same tone when exposing Georgia's pretensions concerning the manner in which Russia had expropriated the military goods belonging to the former Transcaucasian Military District at the CIS summit in Kishinev.³ According to Shevardnadze's declarations, Russia illegally evacuated from Georgia 7 – 8 billions \$US worth of military equipment.⁴ Avtandil Kvetenadze, former

¹ “ZVV”, 13 February 1999. During his press conference in Tbilisi, N. Manilov also enumerated as still unsolved issues the problem of the possibility of repairing TGRT armament and technique “over the borders of the residence state” and the problem of liquidating the customs barriers “emerged in front of the TGRT” at the transport of goods for the supplying of bases.

² “Svobodnaya Gruzija”, 14 October 1997.

³ “Svobodnaya Gruzija”, 28 October 1997.

⁴ Jamestown Foundation Monitor, Vol. 5, No. 34, 18 February 1999.

member of the Gamsakhurdia government, claims that 11 billions \$US worth of military equipment had been evacuated from Georgia in July 1992.¹

The amount of technique previously existing in the Transcaucasian Military District and the one transmitted to Georgia by Russia between 1992 – 1995, according to the data of the Georgian Ministry of Defence, is elucidated in Table 3.

Georgia also considers that Russia has ignored its interests when the Black Sea Fleet's property was divided. In April 1997, during one of his weekly interviews accorded to the Georgian radio, E. Shevardnadze mentioned: "...I have declared it myself countless times: Georgia has the right to its share of the Black Sea fleet. When chaos and anarchy were ruling the country, the Russian military took advantage of the situation and almost furtively took the military ships out of Poti, without a previous agreement with the country's leaders. Unfortunately, our requests and demands for our share of the fleet to be returned did not led to any results. The refuse of taking into account the interest of a country with whom they are bound through a strategic partnership, is not only impossible to understand, but also awakes feelings of protest. I often think that our legitimate demands are being neglected because we are considered as second-hand partners. We must still hope that the Russian leaders (my letter concerning this is in Mr. Yeltsin's hands and we have had discussions over this matter more than once) will re-examine its position and rectify the decision they have made. This suits our common interests. Besides this, I want to openly mention that Georgia is not asking for a large share (we would have difficulties in keeping it in repair), but Georgia has to receive at least a symbolical share".²

Georgia's pretensions over a share of the Black Sea Fleet have been concretised by Irakli Menengarashvili, Georgian minister of foreign affairs and Vakhtang Abashidze, press secretary of the Georgian president. During a briefing at the end of May 1997, they explained that the position of the Georgian side regarding the Black Sea Fleet consists in the fact that a share of the 40 ships which used to have Poti as their base should be returned to their registration harbour. Georgia did not put forward any pretensions at the proper time because it was not a member of the CIS. Besides this, in the

¹ "The Georgian Times", 22 June 1999.

² "Svobodnaya Gruzija", 30 April 1997

initial stage the stress was not laid upon the division of the fleet, but on the defining of the status which the town of Sevastopol was to have.¹

Table 3

List of military technique and other types of technique deployed on the territory of Georgia until 1992 and the share transmitted to Georgia between 1992 and 1995*

Type of military technique	Belonging to the Transcaucasian MD until 1992		Delivered to Georgia in the years 1992-1995	
	Number of items	Total value in millions of US \$	Number of items	Total value in millions of US \$
Air technique	318 aircraft and helicopters	4655,4	1 aircraft and 12 helicopters	68
Road technique	20600	885	3081	290,75
Telecommunication and radio-telecommunication equipment		47,3		0
Ground technique and anti-aircraft defence equipment	over 30 denominations	139,92	15 systems deteriorated from technical point of view	4,6
Navy technique of various types	133	269,5	0	0
Armament for infantry and close combat	152290	49	10265	2,85
Ground artillery systems and mine launchers	2950	198,04	485	4,51
Armoured tank technique	2620	2930	320	472,5
Ammunitions	4040 wagons	2650	230 wagons	146,32
TOTAL		11842,16		989,53

* The table was drawn up by experts of the Georgian Ministry of Defence.

The Russian side considers that the Georgian accusations claiming that Russia is not helping Georgia in building up its national army are groundless. According to Russian data, “when the arsenal of the former

¹ “ZVV”, 3 June 1997

Transcaucasian military district was divided, Georgia received 147 tanks, 169 BMPs, 32 BTRs, 40 BRDMs, 263 canons and mine launchers of various types and calibre, 26 “Grad” reactive systems, 40 anti-tank artillery devices and 210 anti-tank missile complexes, 436 anti-aircraft artillery pieces, over 4,5 thousand automobiles, over a thousand ammunition wagons and a lot of other goods”.¹ As far as the Georgian pretensions over the Black Sea Fleet are concerned, on the 30th of May 1997, at the meeting with the journalists, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, press secretary of the President of the Russian Federation, declared that “Georgia's pretensions of taking part in partition of the Black Sea Fleet have neither the support of the law nor of the common sense and Russia does not recognise them”. He explained that the issue of the Black Sea Fleet's partition had been settled through the CIS member states' Protocol on the 16th of January 1992. It was then decided that the fleet should be divided between Russia and Ukraine. However, Georgia joined the CIS only later. Besides this, in 1991 Georgia unilaterally nationalised the military sea base of Poti, thus disposing of a part of the Black Sea Fleet and of its infrastructure, which exceeded by far the price of all war ships that had Poti harbour for their base.² While commenting the same Georgian pretensions, Valery Nesterushkin, representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign affairs added: “In 1992, when receiving all the coastal constructions of the military navy base of Poti, Georgia did not raise issue of using them commonly with the CIS States in the interest of the Black Sea Fleet. In fact, this really meant the division of the Fleet in two by the principle that the coast infrastructures should belong to Georgia and the Black Sea Fleet ships to Russia. At the same time the value of the infrastructure was several times higher than the

¹ See: “GRVZ byla. Est'. Budet?” – “ZVV”, 17 April 1997; “GRVZ: kakovy perspektivy voennogo prisutstviya v Zakavkaz'e?” – “ZVV”, 26 June 1997. According to other sources, the Georgian side has received 120 tanks, 308 armoured combat vehicles, 76 artillery systems with more than 100 mm in calibre, 4 attack helicopters and 33 combat aircraft”. Besides that, Georgia also received 187 canons and mine launchers less than 100 mm in calibre, 40 anti-tank artillery devices, 210 anti-tank missile systems, 436 anti-air artillery units, over 4,5 thousands cars and over 1000 wagons of ammunition and much other goods” – “ZVV”, 16 April 1998; “Krasnaya Zvezda”, 22 April 1998; “ZVV”, 10 December 1998

² “ZVV”, 3 June 1997

price of the ships. The CIS states, and first of all Russia, had to accept this situation as an accomplished fact”.¹

During the negotiations between the delegation of the Georgian Ministry of Defence and the one of the Russian Ministry of Defence, held on 14-16 October 1997 in Tbilisi,² the Russian side declared that the issue of the division of the Black Sea Fleet “has been settled, as far as international law is concerned, by the Protocol of the of the Community's heads of state on the 16th of January 1992. This Protocol does not provide for three-sided negotiations (i.e. between Russia, Ukraine and Georgia) regarding the Black Sea Fleet. In the same time, the Russian side has confirmed its agreement to transmit the Georgian side, as part of their technical and military co-operation, 4 ships of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. In this respect, the groups of experts of the involved sides will come to an agreement upon the list of the transmissible wealth in October this year (1997-M.G.) in Novorosiysk.”³

It seems that Russia’s availability of transmitting 4 ships to Georgia does not satisfy the Georgian side, and that Georgia's pretensions over a share of the Black Sea Fleet are still holding on. During his interview on the 20th of October 1997 accorded to the Georgian radio, E. Shevardnadze has declared that the information on Russia's agreement of transmitting 4 ships to Georgia “does not indicate the settlement of the issue or a final coincidence of opinions”, the issue of the Black Sea Fleet's division is to be settled on a higher level, “both sides firstly, have to clear up the exact reasons for which Georgia became an exception when military property was divided”.⁴

¹ “Svobodnaya Gruzija”, 31 May 1997

² “Rossijsko – Gruzinskoe voennoe sotrudnichestvo: novyi etap”. – “ZVV”, 18 October 1997

³ ”Itogovyj Protokol peregovorov delegatsij Ministerstva oborony Gruzii i delegatsii Ministerstva oborony Rossijskoi Federatsij”. Unpublished document. Admiral Vladimir Kuroedev, chief of the Headquarters of the Military Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation announced Russia’s intention of giving Georgia “a few” military ships during a press conference in October 1997—“ZVV”, 28 October 1997; “Nezavisimaya gazeta”, 22 October 1997; “Svobodnaya Gruzija”, 17 October 1997.

⁴ “Svobodnaya Gruzija”, 21 October 1997

When ratifying the Treaty regarding Russian military bases on Georgian territory the Georgian Parliament will have to take into account the attitude of the Georgian population towards Russian military presence in the country. And since the end of the 80's this attitude has been nothing but hostile.

The Georgian population's hostility towards the Russian troops reached its climax especially during the years 1988-1993, when, according to the opinion of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the Georgian people had been waging a guerrilla war against Soviet troops.¹ By then the TMD units were often blocked, attacked, and the soldiers were aggressed, taken as hostages or even killed. According to some data, since December 1988 until the middle of January 1992 Soviet troops had 78 soldiers killed in the Transcaucasian republics and 710 more were wounded and traumatised.² Only during the year 1991, 127 attacks occurred against the soldiers of the CIS unified military Forces (Azerbaijan -68, Armenia-22, Georgia-37). Consequently, 18 soldiers were killed.³ During the first six months of the year 1992 the soldiers and military objectives of the TMD became the target of more than 200 attacks, as a result of which 31 soldiers were killed, 59 of them wounded, and 33,875 weapons and 2,821 technique units were seized.⁴

During those years many of the TMD soldiers were taken as hostages. According to the declarations of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, 45 soldiers have been taken as hostages in Transcaucasia between the years 1988 and 1993.⁵

A quite common practice used to be the seizure of automobiles belonging to the Russian troops deployed in Transcaucasia. In an interview given to the "ZVV", Colonel B. Shcherbaev, head of the auto section of the TGRT, pointed out that since 1990 up to the 12th of February 1993 "2,814 vehicles have been seized, including 845 cars, 1044 trucks, 925 special

¹ "ZVV", 21 January 1992

² "ZVV", 22 January 1992

³ "ZVV", 18 March 1992

⁴ "ZVV", 30 June 1992

⁵ "ZVV", 7 January 1992

vehicles. Only 176 of them have been recovered. We are still searching for the others”.¹

Between 1989 and 1993 the population of the Transcaucasian republics used to attack and maltreat Russian military without taking their age or military rank into account. On the 19th of June 1992, the automobile of Major General E. Arustamov was attacked in the centre of Tbilisi,² and on the 25th of September 1992 Major General A. Voronin, commander of the division deployed in Akhaltsikhe, was maltreated by 8 armed men in his apartment.³

The hostile attitude of the population in the Transcaucasian republics towards Russian military, the seizure of their property can be explained using the following reasons:

¹ “ZVV”, 19 February 1993

² “ZVV”, 23 June 1992

³ “ZVV”, 29 September 1992. We have to underline the fact that the data we have cited only reflect the situation in Transcaucasia with approximation and are not a picture of the actions taken by the population against the Russian troops in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. We remind that besides the TMD, Russia was having also border guard troops, anti-air defence forces, troops belonging to the 19th Air Army, to the Caspian Sea Fleet etc. in the Transcaucasian republics and that attacks and assaults have taken place against these troops as well. For example, in October 1992 the soldiers, in the border guard troops deployed in Georgia have faced 5 attacks, as a result of which an automatic gun, 5 automobiles and 63 tons of gasoline have been stolen (“ZVV”, 4 November 1992). It is highly unlikely that we should ever know the exact number of the victims of the population's actions against the TMD, because there never have been unitary statistics of the illegal actions headed against the TMD troops. In April 1992 the “ZVV” wrote that there was no common statistics of illegal actions headed against troops distributed on TMD territory. “The Anti-air defence troops, the Air Forces, the Navy Forces and the Border Guard troops only hold the evidence of their own incidents, often ignoring the situation of their neighbours. Besides that, the information is being kept so secret that it leads to the fact that the information service of the district, as a joint army body, in fact works for itself and only satisfies the curiosity of a small group of military commanders, either local or in Moscow. Nothing more” (“ZVV”, 11 April 1992). Probably the lack of common statistics also explains the fact that the data on illegal actions taken against Russian troops during that period are very contradictory.

a) the population wanted Russian troops to leave the territory of the newly independent states;

b) the population was reacting to the Russian troops' involvement in interethnic conflicts;

c) certain persons and military formations were trying to take hold of weapons and military technique from the Russian troops. In March 1994, B. Diukov, Commander in charge of the TGRT pointed out that during the years 1992 and 1993 the population used to rob Russian soldiers for two purposes: "Some of them were appealed to by the possibility of procuring weapons, others were simply against Russian presence on the territory of the republic".¹

The results of sociological polls also speak about the population's attitude towards the Russian troops in Georgia. One of them was carried out at the beginning of the year 1993 by the Georgian newspaper "Rezonansy" among the population of Tbilisi. The poll's purpose was studying the attitude of the population towards the Government's decision of accepting the presence of Russian troops on the territory of Georgia until the end of the year 1995. 35,3% of the persons questioned approved the decision, 40% declared themselves for the immediate withdrawal of the troops, 10% considered that the troops should remain in Georgia until the complete stabilisation of the situation, 2% said that the troops should be permanently distributed in Georgia, and 12,7% had not yet decided.²

A poll carried out by the USIA in Georgia at the beginning of the year 1999 proves that the population's discontent with the presence of Russian troops has increased even more. It was ascertained that an increasing number of Georgians perceive Russia as the main threat to their country's security and sovereignty. 50% of the persons interviewed declared that Russia represented the main danger to Georgia (only 30% were thinking that in 1996), and 64% declared that they were "categorically opposing" the Russian troops' stationing in Georgia (in 1996 it had been only 45%). 84% of the persons participating in the poll declared they didn't trust the Russian peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia (in 1996 only 76% of the people interviewed had declared that).³

¹ "ZVV", 25 March 1994.

² "ZVV", 19 February 1993.

³ RFE/RL CAUCASUS REPORT, Vol. 2, No. 2, 12 January 1999.

After the Treaty on Russian bases on Georgian territory was signed, the attacks against TGRT units and soldiers stopped the violent cases now being quite rare. Nowadays the Georgian population expresses its attitude towards the Russian troops deployed in Georgia through protest actions, collecting signatures for their evacuation, declarations of parties and political movements etc.¹ On the 16th of October 1996, for example, the political party union “Round Table – Free Georgia” organised a protest action against the presence of Russian troops on Georgian territory in front of the Russian Federation's Embassy in Tbilisi. The demonstrators were carrying slogans calling for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgia, as well as flags of the “independent republic of Ichkeria”. During the protest action, the police retained 25 demonstrators. Amongst the singular violent actions which took place after Georgian's decision of according Russian troops the status of military bases we may also mention the ones on the 9th of April 1995. Then an organisation known as “The wolves of Alegeti” (Alegeti is a river in Georgia), “in response to the deployment of Russian military bases on Georgian territory”, attacked the Headquarters of the TGRT. In the same day, six members of the same organisation attacked the residence of the Russian Ambassador in Georgia.

Taking into account the facts mentioned above, as well as the present composition of the Georgian Parliament, it is hard to believe that the Tbilisi Parliament will ever ratify the Treaty between Russia and Georgia regarding the establishment of military bases on Georgian territory. However, this fact does not mean that Russian troops will soon leave Georgia, and especially the separatist regions. Russia would rather resort to destabilising Georgia's internal situation than to withdrawing its troops. It is not impossible that Russia should withdraw its troops out of Georgia, in the same time leaving the armament of the military bases in the hands of the separatist regimes. We also have to underline the fact that Moscow considers the Treaty regarding the bases (although it has not yet been ratified), as well as the “Agreement

¹ Iprinda news agency, Tbilisi, in Russian, 1407 GMT, 23 March 1995; Revez Saevarishvili, U rossiysko-gruzinskogo dogovora mnogo protivnikov – “Segodnya”, 1 April 1995; Vitali Denisov, Obretet li zhizni dogovor o rossiyskikh bazakh v Gruzii? - “Krasnaya zvezda”, 7 April, 1995; “N.D.P. protiv ratifikatsii”. - “Svobodnaya Gruzija”, 13 June 1996.

between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia concerning the legal status of the military forces of the Russian Federation temporarily stationed on the territory of the Republic of Georgia”, signed by B. Yeltsin and E. Shevardnadze on the 9th of October 1993¹ to be a sufficient legal basis for Russia to keep its military presence in Georgia during the following years.

Arguments pro and against Russian military presence in Georgia

Presently the status and military potential of the Russian troops in Transcaucasia is entirely different from the one it had until the fall of the USSR. The attitude of the local authorities and the population towards the Russian troops has also changed, that's why the utility of the Russian troops' deployment in Transcaucasia has become an issue vividly discussed within Russian political and military circles and largely elucidated within Russian mass-media.

The analysis of press materials illustrate two diametrically opposed points of view over this matter: one in favour of the Russian troops' deployment in the area and one according to which their deployment there makes no point.

The following political, military and economical arguments are being brought in favour of keeping the Russian troops in the Transcaucasian NIS:

– “the Russian troops in Transcaucasia remind to “the three republics, and other states as well, that in spite of the fall of the USSR and the remoteness of Transcaucasia, Russia is still present in the area, and its position is still quite strong. By this anybody who would wish to spread its influence in the area is reminded that there already is a “ruler” here and that its interests are to be taken into account”;²

- “the presence of the Russian military contingents over the borders, inclusively in Transcaucasia, is a factor indicating the country's strength. It thus allows not NATO countries, especially Turkey, to spread their influence

¹ ”Megapolis-Express”, No. 6, 9 February 1995, p. 15.

² “ZVV”, 5 February 1993

over their newly independent neighbours, or to get nearer the new Southern borders of Russia”;¹

--“the troops” presence in Transcaucasia is necessary in order to create a first echelon of defence in case some countries should initiate any military actions against the Russian Federation. The main purpose of the TGRT is most likely the one of holding back the enemy offensive, thus allowing inner districts on the territory of Russia to display their main forces...”;²

--“due to the Russian troops' presence in Transcaucasia and especially in Georgia, “there is no longer the need of building an extremely expensive new border in the Northern Caucasus Military district... Georgia's joining the CIS security system equals with her finding its own place within the new Russian military doctrine, where Caucasus represents one of the essential points. Thus Georgia becomes again Russia's military outpost at the border between Asia and Southern Europe”;³

– the Russian troops are a force supporting the governments in the states which accept Russian military bases against the opposition: “For Armenia, Russian army is not only a guardian of its territory's inviolability (firstly in the context of its unstable historical relationships with Turkey and Azerbaijan), but also of stability within the republic: it is unlikely that some people of the opposition should make any movement towards Yerevan, knowing about the Russian troops' sympathy for the current regime”;⁴

– “The Transcaucasian Group of Russian Troops remains a buffer between the Christian and the Islamic world...”;⁵

– the Russian troops' presence in Transcaucasia contributes to maintaining peace and stability in Transcaucasian states, which is in the interest of Russia.

While speaking about the Russian troops in Transcaucasia, Russian journalists and military do not forget to mention the “advantages” which these troops bring to Transcaucasian states. In the opinion of a certain S.

¹ “ZVV”, 9 April 1994.

² ”ZVV”, 5 February 1993.

³ “Z.V.V.”, 9 February 1994.

⁴ “ZVV”, 29 March 1995.

⁵ “ZVV”, 14 March 1998.

Matveychuk, the Transcaucasian NIS, are the first ones interested in the Russian troops' presence in the area:

- 1) “for acquiring stability within the area”;
- 2) “for the alignment to a more or less exemplary order – the military units are now the only oasis inside an area of chaos and violence”;
- 3) “the presence of Russian troops in the area is convenient for the Transcaucasian republics from the economical point of view... . Russian officers, sub-lieutenants and soldiers are paid in roubles, ... which they spend in local markets, thus completing the republics' bank reserves with strong currency”;
- 4) “Russian units are additional workplaces for the specialists within local population, thus diminishing the unemployment rate in the republics”;
- 5) by their presence in Transcaucasia, Russian troops “can be helpful for building up the new national armies”.¹

In a recent edition of the “ZVV” one can read: “... Within Georgian parliament, only a few “hot heads” talk about the withdrawal of the peacekeeping troops [from Georgia—M. G.]. Anyway, we offer local population 8000 workplaces and a fair salary. And this without counting the locals engaged through a contract, who feed their families. In Armenia, 80% of the Base 102's staff are locals. So, speaking about the economic irrational character of the troops' presence in Transcaucasia is not a serious thing”.²

While speaking about the opportunity of the Russian troops' presence in Transcaucasia and especially in Georgia, the Russian authors make considerable efforts to reject the accusations which claim that Russia has “malevolent intentions” in deployment the military bases within the area. “They say one base is in Ajaria,³ and another one in Akhalkalaki, where Armenian population prevails. One doesn't have to be a great strategist in

¹ “ZVV”, 9 April 1994

² “ZVV”, 8 April 1997

³ The leaders of the Autonomous Republic of Ajaria manifest a separatist attitude towards Tbilisi. In the opinion of analysts the leadership in Batumi, especially Aslan Abashidze, the leader of the republic (although a member of the Georgian parliament, he has not taken part in any meeting of the parliament and has not visited Tbilisi during the last 7 years), can afford such an attitude towards the central government due to the support he has from the Russian troops distributed in Batumi

order to understand that they are guarding the same directions that Russian army has been protecting from invasions since as far as that last century, and from where calamity has stricken Georgian people more than once, during their history.

This, and not the local population's ethnic composition, explains the Russian bases' deployment here. These bases, together with the units in Armenia are capable of offering a strong protection of the Southern borders of two friendly Transcaucasian states, in the same time ensuring the security of Russia's borders".¹

Another opinion which is being rejected is that according to which the presence of Russian troops would lead to the "dramatisation" and further tensioning of the situation of the situation in Georgia. In the opinion of Irina Kopinashvili, correspondent of the "ZVV", this is not true, because the Russian soldiers "realise the fact that they are on the territory of a sovereign state and do not have any intention of involvement in its internal affairs". More than that, "it is their presence which contributes to stability and restrains separatist aspirations. That is because, in case the Russian troops should leave, the Georgian Ministry of Defence would have to sent Georgian units to Abkhazia, Ajaria and Akhalkalaki "and this would be exactly the kind of situation capable of stimulating separatist dispositions and dramatise or even make explode the situation in districts which are peaceful today".²

Starting from these arguments, Russian press often supports the idea that Transcaucasian republics should in fact pay Russia for keeping its troops on their territory.³

The Russian analysts declaring themselves against the Russian troops' distribution in Transcaucasian republics usually bring military arguments. At the beginning of the year 1997, these arguments have been "synthesised" within a decision project of the Russian State Duma "Regarding Russian military bases in the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Georgia", a project prepared by Lev Rokhlin, by then chairman of the State Duma Committee for Defence. The project noted that "the results of parliamentary audiences which have taken place on the occasion of the

¹ "ZVV", 24 April 1997.

² "ZVV", 24 April 1997.

³ "ZVV", 9 April 1994.

preparing for ratification of the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia, regarding the Russian military base on Armenian territory as well as of the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia concerning the status of the Russian military units temporarily distributed on the territory of Georgia, have shown that the presence of the Russian military bases on these republics' territories is not dictated by military and political needs, but is a fact leading to the waste of the Russian Federation's Army Forces powers and means.

By their fighting potential, combat training and distribution points near the external borders, Russian military bases in Georgia and Armenia do not ensure operational display of military formations, do not ensure a secure guard of weapons and military property existing there and are not capable of fulfilling tasks specific to advanced detachments, in case they should be involved in military actions within the area.

In the Republic of Georgia some political forces, representing the majority in the Parliament, declare themselves against the Russian military bases' stationing in the country and use this in order to amplify anti-Russian dispositions within the society.

The presence of the Russian military base in the Republic of Armenia turns Russia into a hostage in the conflict policy between Armenia and Azerbaijan concerning the status of Nagorno – Karabakh.

The fact that there are many local citizens within the bases' military and civilian staff does not exclude the bases' involvement in internal conflicts, or the illegal transmission of weapons and military property”.¹ Further on, the Russian president was recommended to examine the utility of the bases' stationing on the territory of Armenia and Georgia; that the issue of the bases' presence on Armenian territory should be conditioned by the political settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan concerning Nagorno – Karabakh; that measures should be taken in order to prevent local population from service within the bases; that the Russian government should negotiate with the governments of Armenia and Georgia “to the purpose of

¹ “Respublika Armeniya”, 28 January 1997; “Literaturnaya gazeta”, 12 February 1997

receiving necessary compensations for maintaining Russian military bases in the republics mentioned above” etc.¹

It seems that the draft of the decision presented by Lev Rokhlin is also based on a “report” regarding the opportunity of the Russian troops' presence in Transcaucasia, prepared by analysts belonging to the Russian Army Forces Headquarters, which puts forward almost the arguments. At the beginning of the year 1997, some newspapers in Russia and the Transcaucasian republics wrote about the fact “the Russian High Headquarters' analysts” have reached the “paradoxical” conclusion that the Russian military bases' presence in Transcaucasia is pointless. “The Russian bases in Armenia and Georgia have no military importance whatsoever... If during the Soviet period the divisions of the Transcaucasian Military District could be displayed in an hour and a half and they had determined defence lines, at the present time something like that doesn't exist. If by then the TMD troops were supposed to cover “the display of the second echelon”, now the second echelon simply doesn't exist. It is located in Russia beyond the Caucasus. As a consequence, the Russian units and depots are an easy pray for the hypothetical enemy (presumably the NATO), whose forces in the area (military personnel and armoured technique) are superior. In the same time, there still is the danger that the bases should be captured by the “outraged people”. In fact, this happened more than once in Georgia Armenia and Azerbaijan. It is not impossible that such things should happen again, the more so as most of the people serving in the Russian bases are local citizens. The fact that war has started again in Abkhazia and Nagorno – Karabakh makes the involvement of the Russian troops in these conflicts quite probable. Thus the Russian military bases cease to be a stabilising factor and automatically become living ballast that has to be saved.”²

As far as the military belonging to the bases are concerned, most of them consider that the Russian troops' presence in these republics is pointless. One may hear this opinion while talking with both officers and soldiers of the TGRT, as well as in the pages of the TGRT newspaper. On the 27th of January 1993, at a press conference, general Sufiyan Uzierovych Beppaev, by

¹ *Ibid.*

² ”Black Sea Press”(Tbilisi), in Russian, 15 January 1997; “ZVV”, 25 January 1997.

then assistant of the TMD's commander, declared: "Today, speaking about a strong group of troops in Transcaucasia is meaningless". He pointed out that at the date mentioned above the TGRT had less than 10% of the staff of the former Transcaucasian Military District and that "further presence of the Russian troops in Transcaucasia makes no sense. "He declared himself for "the ending of the tormenting process of the troops in Transcaucasia by withdrawing them from there".

According to the general's sayings the withdrawal of the troops could have been realised in less than a month's time..."¹ The soldiers of the TGRT used to think that their presence in Transcaucasia was pointless, this especially until the signing the respective treaties concerning Russian military bases on the territories of Georgia and Armenia. After the signing of the treaties mentioned above, the feelings of uselessness and depression decreased in intensity, but the fact that the Treaty between Russia and Georgia regarding Russian military bases has not yet been put into effect makes many of the Russian military serving in Georgia feel uncomfortable. The continuous discussions within Georgian parliament and mass media about the need of withdrawing Russian peacekeeping forces (and Russian forces in general) from Georgia also contribute to the soldiers' feeling of discomfort.

Many soldiers belonging to the TGRT consider that when there is talk about the opportunity of the Russian troops' presence in the Transcaucasian republics politicians should ask them too if they wish to serve in the new Transcaucasian states or not. At the beginning of the year 1993 the "ZVV" newspaper showed that many soldiers would give a negative answer to this question, "... and this not because they lack patriotic feelings and because they are indifferent to their country's fate. No. Brought by fate in Transcaucasia a few years ago, now, after the crash of the USSR, the soldiers simply found themselves in this area not only as hostages of politics and of their own destiny, but also found themselves accursed, forgotten and humiliated. The Russian soldiers used to think of themselves as being accursed, "because of the attitude created around Russian troops from the part of the local population, which viewed the TGRT as an occupation contingent.. Besides that, an undeclared guerrilla war is being waged against

¹ "ZVV", 29 January 1993.

Russian soldiers. And we're not talking about verbal attacks only; many times guns, too, are put into action." Not only the "unconscious part of the population" is in favour of the troops' withdrawal from Transcaucasia. This is proved by "the results of a meeting between the representatives of 25 political organisations at the residence of the Party of Georgian National Independence, where the immediate according the status of occupying troops to Russian units on the territory of the republic, as well as the demand for their unconditioned withdrawal were amongst the documents adopted as basic principles".

Russian soldiers used to think of themselves being "forgotten", judging by Moscow's attitude towards them, as they had been left "in a belligerent area", with the status of hostages. "And, unfortunately, this mistake has not yet been repaired. So, the ones to suffer the results of the politicians' mistakes are the soldiers who die, get crippled and wounded, never understanding why.

All these enhance their feeling of humiliation. This is because they have been forgotten and betrayed by the leadership who, by leaving its troops in a belligerent area, shows a lack of concern for the fate of its citizens..."¹

After the decision concerning the transformation of the TMD to TGRT was taken, the commander of the District carried out a poll amongst the soldiers in order to find out their opinion towards Moscow's decision of keeping its troops in Transcaucasia. Only 8% of the interviewed declared themselves in favour of this decision with the condition that proper agreements should be obligatorily signed with the new independent states, 92% of them being in favour of the troops' withdrawal from the area. In the same time, 48% declared themselves in favour of the immediate withdrawal of the troops.²

Presently the leaders of the TGRT, through the "ZVV" newspaper and the bases officers responsible for education within the units, try to inspire the soldiers the idea that the TGRT is to be in the area for a long period of time and that their presence in Transcaucasia suits the interests of Russia. In order to achieve this, they even resort to illegal actions. An eloquent example is the burning of 500 copies of the "ZVV" newspaper containing Oleg

¹ "ZVV", 5 February 1993.

² "ZVV", 9 June 1992.

Blotzky's article "The group of Russians forgotten by all", by the leadership of the 12th Base (Batumi). The leadership of Base 12 considered that the article of the Moscow correspondent offered a misrepresentation of the Russian troops' situation in Ajaria and that it was detrimental of the military's moral. However, in spite of their efforts, the TGRT leaders find it hard to persuade the soldiers of the necessity of the Russian troops' presence in Transcaucasia. The improperly dressed soldiers not receiving their salary for months find it hard to understand what interests a half-naked and half-starving army can defend.

Immovable property of the Russian military bases in Georgia

Between 5 and 18 February 1997 a joint commission composed by representatives of the Russian Ministry of Defence and of the Georgian Ministry of Defence have made an inventory of the property of the Russian military bases on Georgian territory. The inventory was carried out according to the Protocol of the work meeting of the delegations of the Russian Federation and of the Republic of Georgia from the 29th of November 1996. The Russian military also have carried out the inventory in order to fulfil the Directive 335/3/69 dated 30th of January 1997 of the chief of the Russian Federation Army Forces Headquarters. In its activity, the commission followed the 7th article of the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia regarding Russian military bases on the territory of the Republic of Georgia from the 15th of September 1995, which stipulates the following: Immobile property existing in the Russian military bases at the moment of the present Treaty's coming into effect is property of the Republic of Georgia. The objects within this property which are not used by the Russian military bases are to be transmitted to the Republic of Georgia in the state they have previously been, also taking natural wear into consideration".

During its activity, the commission, while visiting the distribution places of the Russian bases, specified the list of military

towns where Russian troops were distributed and inventoried the buildings, constructions and land possessed by each base and it checked the correspondence between these data and numerical and technical characteristics of the respective documentation of the TGRT.

As a result of the inventory it has been ascertained that on the date of February the 1st the TGRT troops on the territory of Georgia were being quartered in four garrisons (composed of 114 military towns situated in 19 Georgian localities):

- 1) the Vaziani garrison – military base . 137;
- 2) the Ahalkalaki garrison – military base . 62;
- 3) the Batumi garrison – military base 12;
- 4) the Tbilisi garrison – the command and logistic units of the

TGRT.

20.036 buildings composed the housing resources and barracks fund. The facilities were distributed among the bases as shown in table 4.

In the inventory act of the immovable property of the TGRT, the commission mentioned that “more than 70% of its housing resources needed thorough repairs. Many buildings are not being used because of technical conditions. Almost 90% of the whole number of military towns of the TGRT military bases are occupied by Georgian citizens”.

Taking notice of the state of things the commission considered it was “irrational to keep the military towns in the account balance of the TGRT, as the majority of their population are Georgian citizens”. The TGRT command was proposed to prepare a list of the military towns which are to be ceded to the Georgian Ministry of Defence. “When the military towns are transferred, the Inventory Act points out, the locative space occupied by persons within Russian military bases, inclusively the ones living in municipal town funds and Georgian localities (the former fund of 10%) should be distributed by the TGRT as service fund for the entire period that the Russian military bases will be present here, with the right of distribution and re-distribution”. To the purpose of keeping the locative space as patrimony of the TGRT, it was proposed that until the 1st of April 1997 all the locative space of persons within the TGRT should be inventoried, together with addresses

Table 4

The immovable property of Russian military bases on the territory of Georgia (1st of February 1997)

	TGRT HQ and logistic units (Tbilisi)	BASE 137 VAZIA NI	BASE 62 AKHAL KALAK I	BASE 112 BATU MI	TOTAL
-land (in ha)	1112, 05	9006,2	2117,49	423,93	12659,67
-barracks	11	9	10	18	48
-study blocks	-	3	1	5	9
-canteens	9	7	9	13	38
-headquarters	26	7	12	13	58
-clubs	7	4	4	7	22
-housing facilities	216	90	76	107	489
- dormitories	10	5	2	8	25
-hotels	-	-	-	58	58
- technical depots	87	77	36	57	257
-depots	177	12	47	92	328
-other buildings	355	74	134	226	789
Including:					
a) made of stone:					
-barracks	9	8	9	17	43
-study blocks	-	2	1	4	7
-canteens	9	7	9	13	38
-headquarters	20	5	9	13	47
-clubs	5	4	4	7	20
-housing facilities	156	61	51	95	363
- dormitories	-	4	2	8	14
-technical depots	61	71	34	35	201
-depots	177	11	45	83	316
-other buildings	318	70	124	214	726
b) made of wood:					
-barracks	2	1	1	1	5
-study blocks	-	1	-	1	2
-headquarters	4	2	3	-	9

-clubs	2	-	-	-	2
-housing facilities	59	29	25	12	125
-dormitories	1	1	-	-	2
-depots	4	1	2	1	8
-other buildings	46	4	10	3	63
c) made of metal:					
-technical depots	26	6	2	24	58

* The table was realised by the author on the basis of the data from the "Inventory act of immobile property belonging to the Transcaucasian Group of Russian Troops (February 1997)". As a result of the author's calculations there appeared certain divergences between the total figures from the Inventory act and the ones obtained by the author as a result of his totalling up the figures indicated by each base. In the Inventory Act the total area of the land is 12669,45 ha, the total number of barracks – 51, of headquarters – 55, of houses – 480, of dormitories – 25, of technical depots – 258, of depots – 342, of other buildings – 797.

and characteristics, and that the list should be approved by the Georgian Ministry of Defence. "In case of an individual decision of the TGRT command of according locative space on the territory of the Russian Federation to WW II veterans, former military, employees of the Army Forces, the apartments left by these persons are at the disposal of the TGRT locative organs as service funds with the right to re-distribution".

During the 90's a part of the terrain owed by the bases' military towns underwent changes, therefore the commission proposed to the Georgian Ministry of Defence to carry out the necessary geodetic works and determine the exact areas occupied by the Russian units. Later, on the basis of these data, the borders of the bases should be fixed on ground with landmarks, and the bases should be given documents regarding their right of using the land.

As Georgia does not control the territory of Abkhazia, the commission did not go to Gudauta in order to inventory the immovable property of the military base in Gudauta, a base which is not part of the TGRT and is directly subordinated to Moscow. However, at the insurances of the Georgian side, the commission proposed the Russian Ministry of Defence that "up to the 5th of March of the present year (i.e. 1997—M.G.) it should place at the disposal of the Georgian Ministry of Defence the list of all military towns of the Russian military base distributed in Gudauta and of all the units of the USSR Army Forces quartered on the territory of

Abkhazia". The commission also proposed the Russian Ministry of Defence to convey to the Georgian Ministry of Defence the list of all military towns and the inventory bills of the objects on Georgian territory which had formerly been in the account balance of the USSR Ministry of Defence.

During the inventory process, the representatives of the Georgian Ministry of Defence raised doubts about the legality of the TGRT transferring more than 20 military towns. As a result, the commission decided that legal organs of the Parties' Ministries of Defence should discuss the issue of transferring these military towns to the TGRT.

After the declaration of its independence, Georgia had been permanently asking Russia that the TGRT should cede the Georgian army a part of its objectives. However, Russia has been delaying this process and it continues to delay it, under different pretexts, this fact tensioning Russian-Georgian relationships even more. At the end of March 1998 Sergey Kirienko, by then prime minister of the Russian Federation, signed a decision regarding the transfer to Georgia of 10 TGRT military objectives, especially objectives that have not been used (kindergartens and repair shops for cars and armoured vehicles). Still, these objectives have not yet been ceded to the Georgian Army Forces. One of the reasons is the fact that the State Duma declared Kirienko's decision illegal (at the beginning of April 1998). Within the same decision, the Duma requested president Yeltsin to cancel the decision mentioned above.¹ The last negotiations between the parties regarding the transfer of the military objectives took place on the 18th of June 1999. These negotiations resulted in a failure, as the Russian delegation came to Tbilisi with another list of the TGRT military objectives due to be handed over to Georgia, but not with the one upon which the parties had previously agreed. Among others, the Alekseevka airport was not on the list. The Russian delegation "was forced to" return to Moscow "in order to settle the issue with the leaders of the Ministry of Defence". The date for the re-opening of the negotiations has not yet been announced. However, Moscow will probably have to speed up the transfer of at least some of the objectives to Georgia, because during the last negotiations the Georgian delegation handed over to the Russian one a

¹ "Krasnaya Zvezda", 15, 22 April 1998; RFE/RL CAUCASUS REPORT, Vol. 2, No. 25, 25 June 1999.

letter in which it requested the TGRT to cede another 44 military objectives to the Georgian Army Forces. The letter, among others, mentioned that the objectives are of vital importance to Georgia and that if the transfer process will be further delayed, the Georgian side will unilaterally occupy them.¹

The list of the 44 military objectives includes, amongst others, the building of the TGRT headquarters, and the tanks and automobiles repair plant in Tbilisi.

The completion of military bases with personnel

The completion of military bases with personnel takes place in two ways: as a result of recruitment for active military service in the Army Forces of the Russian Federation and as a result of hiring through contract.² The active service military in TGRT units are recruited mostly from Russian regions within the military districts of Moscow, Ural and Northern Caucasus. An insignificant number of soldiers are being recruited from among Russian citizens living on the territory of Armenia and Georgia.³

Right after the disintegration of the USSR, because of the unstable situation in the Transcaucasian republics, the number of Russian citizens willing to serve or work through a contract in Russian military units in Armenia and Georgia was insignificant. On the contrary, for the people living in the republics mentioned above, being hired through a contract to work in the future Russian bases was considered a prestigious achievement. Service within Russian troops allowed a good salary and access to free

¹ CAUCASUS-PRESS, 19 June 1999; "The Georgian Times", 21 June 1999.

² Russian Army Forces have adopted the contractual system of military service at the end of the year 1992, according to the decision of the Government of the Russian Federation from the 30th of November 1992, "Regarding measures for the gradual transition to the completion of the Russian Federation Army Forces with military on volunteering contract principles" ("Krasnaya zvezda" 3 December 1992)

³ "ZVV", 14 November 1998.

medical insurance, made Russian citizenship easier to acquire etc. As a result, during the years 1991-1994 most of the people “hired through contract” were young people. In some units the employees “hired through contract” were representing up to 99% of the staff.¹

After the military actions in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh had stopped, the number of Russian nationals willing to be hired through contract in the TGRT Russian troops increased, but it still a small figure even now. Besides this, the newly hired do not serve in the Army Forces because of their patriotic feelings, but because “they are forced by the conditions of life”, by the “lack of a workplace as civilians”.² This is why, at the beginning of the year 1997, one of the main problems of the TGRT military bases' Headquarters was persuading contract employees to extend their service term. Lieutenant General Yuriy Netkachev, assistant of the TGRT commander responsible for the troops' combat training, while inspecting the base 12 of Batumi February 1997, mentioned that task of convincing persons not willing to extend their contract to stay should be carried out individually, “in a reasonable and accessible manner”. The young people should be explained that outside the gates of the military unit not all the “volunteers belonging to the local population will have the possibility to gain more money than within Russian military formations”, that “the irregular financing of the troops won't last for ever”. Otherwise, if we should form officer patrols for the defence of the bases, which should do nothing but that. But in such a case we come to questioning ourselves about how rational it would be to keep the military base the way it is now. Thus arises the perspective of a gradual transformation of the military base into a base for keeping technique and armament, with the respective state and tasks...”³

After the financial crisis in Russia in August 1998, the number of persons willing to serve within military bases has decreased even more. In December 1998, V. Borisov, commander of Base 12, declared that there have appeared problems with the soldiers hired through contract “because serving for our Russian roubles has become deficient and as a consequence,

¹ “ZVV”, 19 February 1997.

² “ZVV”, 13 March 1997.

³ “ZVV”, 19 February 1997.

many employees have begun to quit military service”.¹ After the Russian rouble devaluated (a fact that led to the reduction 2 or 3 times of the TGRT soldiers' income,² many TGRT officers too have begun handing over applications for dismissal or for transfer to the military districts in Russia. During the period between the 1st of December 1997 and the 1st of April 1999, 471 persons were dismissed from the units of Base 12. “The notices taken down from the talks held with the dismissed indicate one single cause: the salary does not insure the minimum necessary for survival.”³ In October 1998 588 soldiers willing to be dismissed from the Army Forces or to be transferred to another workplace were registered at Base 102 in Armenia. Some persons on the list were waiting to receive their salary so they could get dismissed since as far as December 1997. And the situation was that “by paying all to the salary to a dismissed soldier the Group leaves 15-30 families without means of survival”.⁴ Some soldiers had to go to court in order to be able to be dismissed from the TGRT.⁵

As far as the mechanism of hiring through contract of the military base personnel is concerned, it suffers from some deficiencies. As the number of people willing to be hired through a contract is small, military commissariats have no possibility of selecting the volunteers on the basis of a contest, but they conclude contracts with all the candidates. However, before signing the contract these people do not possess necessary information on their future job, on living conditions, salary, leisure possibilities etc. because they find out about the recruitment from local newspapers or from the work market. And “in announcements published in local newspapers, what comes the first to the eye is the size of the promised

¹ “ZVV”, 17 December 1998.

² V. Korytov, assistant of the TGRT Commander responsible for financial issues of the Group, declared in December 1998 that after the Russian rouble had devaluated in August 1998, according to the calculations, a colonel serving in Transcaucasia could afford to buy with his salary only 54% of what a colonel holding the same position on the territory of Russia could buy (“ZVV”, 26 December 1998).

³ “ZVV”, 29 April 1999.

⁴ “ZVV”, 29 October 1998.

⁵ “ZVV”, 8 December 1998.

salary, allegedly more than two million roubles". "Often some military commissariats and officers from the bases sent to select the candidates turn a blind eye on the recruits' inadequate state of health. Thus, at the beginning of March 1997 a part of the recruits arrived at Base 137 of Vaziani were sent back to Russia, as "they were considered as unfit for military service" "as a result of a thorough medical control".¹

In order to fulfil the recruiting plans the difficulties involved by the new job also are passed over in silence. As a consequence, a whole series of persons find themselves among the employees and become disappointed of the choice made as soon as they cross the threshold of the military bases. Many of the employees, finding themselves in the military units and taking notice of the realities of military life, receiving their salary in delay, not having the possibility of bringing their families to their place of deployment try to prematurely cancel their contract.²

The deficiency of the recruiting mechanism also leads to the fact that a series of persons accidentally find themselves in the military bases and end up in creating extra problems for the units' commanders. At the beginning of the year 1997, Colonel Nikolay Shuldiakov, commander of military base 137 regretfully noticed (after a contingent of 60 persons hired through contract had come to the base, that the completion is new, but the problems are the same. Among the problems that he mentioned was also the "propensity that some people hired through contract have for the use of alcohol", a fact that forced the leadership of the base into limiting the access out of the military units not only of those who liked to drink, but also of the "ones completely sober". Later N. Shuldyakov mentioned that the TGRT units and sub-units are usually completed with persons who have taken part in the fighting in Chechnya and who "feel themselves one head above the soldiers from the active service". These people "become openly indignant when they are asked to make the cleaning or to dig trenches. They have to be explained from the very first day that all these are part of their obligations, that soldiers from active service alone cannot cope with the whole volume of work".³

¹ "ZVV", 13 March 1997.

² "ZVV", 12 December 1997.

³ "ZVV", 18 February 1997.

In order to liquidate the deficiencies of the contract hiring mechanism, N. Shuldyakov considered that the following have to be done: “Firstly, we should not send officers appointed by chance to the military commissariats of the inner districts (i.e. Russia), but people who know well the selecting methods, officers belonging to the Personnel units, led by the regiment's psychologist. Having two or three tests (at least for checking psychic balance) already in the commissariats, with the support of local physicians and psychologists, they should reject all the ones who don't cope with the basic requirements. Secondly, the candidates must be told the truth about the conditions and difficulties of the service in Transcaucasia. Showing them advertising films (objective ones, though) is a must...” Consequently N. Shuldiakov considered that the time had come for an area (district) of the Russian Federation to be fixed for each base “at the highest level” and that area “should provide contractual employees, help them in a practical manner, create better conditions of life and work for them and their families”.¹

The system of hiring soldiers through contract was hoped to put an end to "dedovshchina" relationships in the army. However, as related by military press, this did not happen. “Because, when coming to the army, men stricken by destiny they bring there together with the civilian clothes their bad habits, depressive states and inconstancy”. Because of the “dedovshchina” many soldiers end up in hospitals, with broken noses and jaws, with brain concussions, contusions and bruises...”.²

When the bases are completed with local staff the Russian ethnics are given priority. Firstly, because they can be trusted more than employees of another origin. Secondly “this is a way of expressing our concern towards the fellow Russians who found themselves in Tajikstan at destiny's will and are now left without a job, without any means of earning their living.

But these people are still Russians by their spirit and serving within the Russian division means not only material, but also spiritual support for them in this complicated life”.³

¹ *Ibid.*

² “ZVV”, 2 February 1995.

³ “ZVV”, 1 June 1995.

Non-Russian local employees are generally used for the completion of logistic services – “drivers, repair workers and other qualified specialists... It is obvious that these people, too, determine the Base's combat potential, but not in the tank, BMP or artillery installation”.

Many base commanders prefer to hire local employees through contract, because their attitude towards work is much more serious than that of the young people coming from Russia. “The fact that local employees live together with their families is no less important. These people know what they fight for, whom they protect. They have to whom to return from work in the evening and spend weekends with. They live a normal family life”. In other words many commanders “wouldn't change one local contractual employee for three employees coming from Russia”.¹

In the same time the commanders of the bases are against their completion with 100% local staff. Because it is not excluded that such a base should become a “nominal” one, as no one may know it in case of necessity, hired employees would be willing to fight in other direction than the “Southern direction”, for example in Chechnya”.²

The financing of the TGRT

Financially, the TGRT had been directly subordinated to the Russian Ministry of Defence until the 1st of March 1997. Since the date mentioned above, it has been subordinated to the Northern Caucasus Military District, receiving the money transferred by Moscow through Rostov.³

As it is the case with the entire Russian army, the money received by the TGRT do not satisfy its needs, even by far. Unfortunately the “ZVV” has not published any general data concerning the financing of the TGRT. However, we believe that the data found in the press on certain chapters of the Group's budget allow us to create a general image of the financing of Transcaucasian troops. For example, in 1995 the TGRT was allocated 4

¹ “ZVV”, 1 June 1995.

² “ZVV”, 13 July 1995.

³ “ZVV”, 8 April 1997.

billions roubles for the food of the personnel. The real need, though, was of more than 20 billion roubles. Towards the beginning of July the Group had already spent 5 billion roubles for the food of the troops. Around the same date the Group had “swallowed” the 2,3 billion roubles allocated for the payment of communal services, too. In connection with this situation, colonel Viktor Korytov, interim head of the Financial Service of the TGRT declared to the “ZVV” newspaper that “Russian barracks and military towns will run out of water and electricity”, should they not receive at least 4 billions roubles as soon as possible.¹

We also may judge the degree of financing the TGRT receives from the data regarding the debts of the Group towards certain institutions and economical agents. For example, in September 1996, the TGRT had the following debts: 25 billions roubles for not having paid the soldiers' allowances, 9 billions roubles for not having paid for communal services, 4,5 billions roubles of debts towards rest homes and sanatoriums, 1,6 billion roubles to the railways, 4,9 billion roubles to the tanks and cars repairing factories. At the date mentioned above, beside these sums the TGRT also had significant amounts of money to pay for the rental of locative space.² The total debts of the TGRT in January 1998 were 113 billion roubles, and over 100 billion denominalised roubles in November the same year.³ On the 26th of December 1998 the TGRT had debts of over 134 billions roubles towards the soldiers of the bases (unpaid soldiers). According to the data of the Financial Service of the TGRT, in 1998 the soldiers' wages have been paid as following: 84,4% in July, 3,5% in August and September, 61,9% in October, 85,2 in November.⁴ The state of the salary payments for civilian staff within the military bases was by no means better. In July 1998, one of the higher officers of the TGRT declared that the automobile repairing factory No. 13 of Tbilisi was fulfilling all the orders from the Group, but that the employees of the factory had not been paid since January, because

¹ “ZVV”, 14 July 1995.

² “ZVV”, 10 September 1996.

³ The denominalization of the Russian rouble took place on the 1st of January 1998. Until then 1 USD equaled 5960 Russian roubles, and after – only 5,96 roubles.

⁴ “ZVV”, 22, 26 December 1998.

of the debts the TGRT had not paid. On the 1st of July 1998 the TGRT had 956,2 thousands of roubles debts towards the factory. Out of this sum, 492,5 thousand roubles represented the debts for the year 1997.¹ In March 1999, the "ZVV" wrote that, since the TGRT had not paid its debts towards the "Akhalkalaki" agricultural farm (the main provider of food for the military bases), the machine operators there had not received their "modest salary" for more than one year.²

The delaying of the wages' payments makes most of the officers live on money they have borrowed. In June 1999, Vera Lezhava, instructor of Base 12 responsible for working with the soldiers' families, declared the "ZVV" correspondent that "in this paradise of mandarins" [Ajaria - author's note] sometimes one cannot even buy mandarins for his children. During the summer officers don't even want to go to the market. There are plenty of fruits there, but their pockets are empty. And who can think of buying fruit... when one has only enough money for bread and butter?..." After that, V. Lezhava underlined that the officers of the Base are forced to borrow food from pubs and small shops around the military units, by signing the so-called "credit books". "One can meet all the family names of the people here, from soldier to colonel, in these documents of our national shame". "It is not a rare case that officers' wives should sell their engagement rings, after having already given away their gold jewels for insignificant sums of money. There is plenty of such cases within the military unit". "After the financial crisis in August 1998 the military's debts towards the "creditors" from pubs and shops near the military units have increased 2,5-3 times, because if 100 Russian roubles equalled 20-21 lari before the crisis, after the rouble had devaluated, it only equalled 7- 8 lari. Following to the financial crisis in Russia, 50 officers handed in applications for their quitting the Army forces.³

In an article published in the "ZVV", while speaking of issues connected to the financing of the TGRT, the author remarked: "Taking all

¹ "ZVV", 23 July 1998. In November 1998, because of the debts it had, the factory (with a surface of 5,1 ha and around 120 employees) was disconnected for three months from the electricity supply network ("ZVV", 24 November 1998)

² "ZVV" 20 March 1999

³ "ZVV", 11 November 1998; 10 June 1999

the above into account, it is no wonder the Transcaucasians tend to make jokes on the account of the abbreviation "GRVZ" ["GTRT" - *the author*] - "Grazhdane Rossiy, Vas Zabyli!" ("Citizens of Russia, you've been forgotten!").¹ We are not amazed by the fact that jokes are made on the account of the "GRVZ" abbreviation. And if we think about the recent evolution of the relations between Russia and Georgia in the military field and of the difficult situation of the entire Russian army, we may unreservedly affirm that there is little chance that the TGRT bases' financial and material situation should change during the following years, the more so as Georgian authorities seem to be resolute in accelerating the Russian troops' withdrawal from Georgia, by resorting to the financial and economical levers at hand. Here are a few examples. On the 27th of August 1998, the Georgian Security Council reached a resolution which among others, requested the TGRT soldiers to respect Georgian customs legislation regarding crossing of the state border, inclusively payment of custom taxes.

The TGRT Command was notified of the Security Council's decision on the 27th of October 1998.² At first the Georgian custom officers asked the Russian military to pay 34,7% of the total value of the carriage, later they settled for 20%. Since the end of the year 1998, Georgian authorities have begun to collect a route tax (100 lari for each vehicle)³ from Russian military transport in transit through Georgia, and since April 1999 all TGRT transport units are requested to pay an ecological tax.⁴

Putting Georgian custom legislation into practice, Georgian custom officers detained a column of 20 cars carrying fuel at the Kazbeghi frontier point on the 23rd of August 1998, and at the end of September they detained a 30 cars column.⁵ During December 1998, the officers of the Georgian Custom Department have retained three cars transporting food for base 102 from crossing the border between Georgia and Armenia, because they could not pay the requested taxes,⁶ and at the end of March 1999 – they retained

¹ "ZVV", 14 July 1995.

² "ZVV", 3 December 1998.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ "ZVV", 6 April 1999.

⁵ "ZVV", 3 December 1998.

⁶ "ZVV", 19 December 1998.

30 vehicles carrying fuel in Misaktsiely, which led to the fact that some units of the Tbilisi and Vaziani garrisons ran out of fuel.¹ In April 1999 Georgian custom officers retained for 3-11 days 5 columns of automobiles transporting food and fuel.²

In the opinion of Russian military, the enforcement of the taxes mentioned above on Russian troops might lead to the crash of the TGRT. In December 1998 colonel V. Korytov, assistant of the TGRT commander responsible for financial issues, declared that, according to the calculations of the finance experts, the Group will spend 50% of its budget for the year 1999 in order to pay the custom taxes for the transport of vital necessities. "The amount of the rent of the buildings is astronomical - 160 million dollars a year (if we calculate 20 cents per square meter)" "The year 1999", Korytov added, "is the year when the contracts have to be signed by most of the soldiers, and if practical measures are not taken in due time, if we do not make ourselves heard in the higher echelons of power ...the Group may go bankrupt".³ Another superior officer in the TGRT command declared, during the same month: "In order to prepare all military bases for the winter, we have to bring 6,520 tons of food, fuel, coal and other goods from the territory of the Russian Federation, which means 1,185 car routes (400 of which in transit towards Armenia). Thus, we will need 40,000 lari or 470,000 roubles (according to the rate of exchange set by the Georgian National Bank) just in order to pay for the road taxes till the end of the year. Even more money will have to be spent... in order to pay custom taxes..."⁴

Moscow considers that custom taxes and other taxes set by Georgian authorities act contrary to all bilateral agreements regarding military bases on Georgian territory. However, the Georgian side claims the taxes to be legal and justified, as the Treaty regarding Russian military bases has not yet been ratified by Georgian Parliament.⁵

¹ "ZVV", 6 April 1999.

² "ZVV", 29 April 1999.

³ "ZVV", 26 December 1998.

⁴ "ZVV", 3 December 1998.

⁵ "ZVV", 3 December 1998.

The supply of lodging space

One of the toughest social problems within the Russian Army was and still is the problem of lodging. At the end of the year 1992 200,000 families "had no roof above their heads", 62,5 thousand families were crowded in dormitories and hotels, 114,8 thousand families in "service lodgings", 89,1 thousand families rented apartments.¹ At the middle of the year 1995 more than 125,000 families of officers were homeless, and 43,8 thousand families needed an improvement of their lodging conditions.² A year later, around 220,000 families of the officers and sub-lieutenants were facing the problem of having no place to live in. 151,9 thousand of these families were in a queue for receiving lodging space from the local organs of the state power.³ In spite of the reduction of the army forces, the situation was just as deplorable on the 1st of January 1998, when 149,796 families were in a queue waiting to receive lodging space.⁴

The issue of lodging space was and still is one of the most tormenting problems for the TGRT Russian troops, too. The Group inherited it from the Transcaucasian Military District. According to the "ZVV" newspaper, on the 1st of June 1991 within the TMD there were 4,702 families of officers and sub-lieutenants that had no lodging facilities; 1,031 of these families were within the Tbilisi garrison.⁵ Although after the break-up of the USSR the number of Russian troops in Transcaucasia was considerably reduced and almost 2,000 apartments were built for the troops, the problem of ensuring lodging space for TGRT soldiers is still an acute one. In August 1997 within the TGRT "710 persons had the right to dwelling place, in the same time 743 homeless soldiers needed lodging space within the units' distribution area. 352 of these were in Batumi and

¹ "ZVV", 2 December 1992.

² "ZVV", 11 July 1995.

³ "ZVV", 11 July 1996.

⁴ "ZVV", 24 March 1998.

⁵ "ZVV", 31 July 1996.

233 in GyMRI.¹ In February 1998, there were 707 homeless soldiers in the TGRT.²

In September 1996, around 400 families of officers and sub-lieutenants of Base 12 were in a queue for receiving apartments. "And this without taking into account the soldiers hired through contract, who have all the rights to be provided with lodging space".³ In April 1997, within the same base 380 officers had no apartments,⁴ and in June 1999 - "345 families of the officers and sub-lieutenants, as well as 69 single persons"⁵ were in the same situation. In the same time, the soldiers of Base 12 were much better provided with lodging space in comparison to their comrades in other garrisons. In Base 12 there were "5 dormitories situated inside the units' distribution places. For example, in Mahindjauri a rest house was transformed into a dormitory. It's obvious that the living conditions there are not very good, but the thing that counts is that officers and contractual employees, together with their families, can be quartered".⁶

¹ "ZVV", 9 August 1994. In December 1997 42% of the officers and 78% of the sub-lieutenants of Base 102 in GyMRI needed a dwelling place in Russia. At the same date 29% of the Base's officers lived in dormitories, and 7,5% in rented apartments. In April 1999 124 officers of the 123rd motorised infantry regiment belonging to the same base were homeless (120 of them had no dwelling place even in Russia) ("ZVV", 15 April 1999).

² "ZVV", 25 February 1998.

³ "ZVV", 5 September 1996.

⁴ "ZVV", 26 April 1997.

⁵ "ZVV", 10 June 1999. In June 1999, while speaking about the way in which the soldiers of Base 12 lived, Vera Lezhava, instructor of Base 12 responsible for relationships with the soldiers' families, declared that, as they are not capable of paying rent for lodging facilities in the town, the officers' families move to the dormitories and barracks inside the units. This had become a mass practice especially in the 1053rd anti-aircraft missile regiment (Batumi). In this unit "up to 80% of the officers and sub-lieutenants, inclusively the assistants of the regiment's commander, presently live with their families inside the area of the military unit; in barracks, in offices, in the club, in the gym, in other rooms fit up to this purpose".

⁶ "ZVV", 26 April 1997. Living in a dormitory is a practice common enough within Russian Army Forces in general, and particularly within the TGRT. In April 1999, for example, there were 3 dormitories for 395 persons inside the Tbilisi

A part of the TGRT officers rent apartments in the towns where the units are deployed. In Batumi, for example, the rent is 50-60 US-dollars. "Usually, this [apartment - M.G.] is a roof, the walls and a simple set of furniture (obviously the apartment is not provided with electricity and running water)". To rent an apartment with more facilities would cost the soldiers 4-5 times the above-mentioned price and they cannot afford this luxury.¹

According to the present legislation of the Russian Federation and on the basis of the TGRT commander's order No. 5, dated 11th of January 1996, "Regarding the order of providing dwelling space within the TGRT", in Russian military bases in Georgia and Armenia the soldiers who are to be put in reserve during the present year enjoy the right of receiving lodging space on the territory of Russia. After the rights of this category are satisfied, the garrisons' lodging committees examine and satisfy, "according to possibilities", requests made by soldiers with 20 years and more length of service (the ones who had taken part in combats in Afghanistan and Chechnya, and also the ones having participated in the liquidation of the effects of the Chernobyl accident do enjoy special privileges). As far as possible, some apartments can be given to reservists who give their dwelling space to the garrisons, in the areas where TGRT military units are distributed. According to articles 60-62 of the Housing Code of the Russian Federation and to point 35 of the TGRT Commander's order No. 5 from the 11th of January 1996, the soldier or civilian employee who has received the order allocating him lodging space must check in within 6 months' time. In case he doesn't check in and he doesn't have reasons for doing so, he loses the right to the respective lodging facilities, which are re-allocated.²

Until the middle of the year 1997 the works of house building for the TGRT were carried out by the TGRT Building Direction, which was transferred from Tbilisi to Stavropol during April 1992.

Towards the half of the year 1997 the Direction mentioned above was transformed into the Military Direction of Building No. 437 and was

garrison only - in Vaziani (for 100 persons), in military town No.1 (190) and on the territory of the TGRT HQ (105) - "ZVV", 13 April 1999.

¹ "ZVV", 26 April 1996.

² "ZVV", 20 August 1996.

directly subordinated to the Russian Ministry of Defence. In August 1997 the building works carried out for the benefit of the TGRT only constituted 19% of the total volume of works realised by Direction 437, the rest of the works carried out by the organisation were "to the purpose of fulfilling the tasks concerning troops quartering and building of apartments for the Northern Caucasus Military District - for the air forces, for the anti-aircraft defence troops, for the airborne troops and for the Caspian Sea Fleet".¹

The apartments for the TGRT soldiers are being built on the territory of Russia in three towns - Stavropol, Izobilnyi and Budionovsk. Since the year 1992 and up to March 1995 130 families of TGRT officers and sub-lieutenants had received apartments in Stavropol, "around 90 families" in the town of Izobilny and 20 in Budionovsk.² Since the TGRT Building Direction was transferred to Stavropol and until the 1st of January 1997, according to the accounts of Major General V.Tsay, assistant of the TGRT commander in charge with house building and troop quartering, the Direction has been building 50 dwelling houses (3,700 apartments with a total locative area of 227,000 square meters), including 25 houses for the TGRT (1,829 apartments with a total area of 137,000 square meters).³ In the year 1999 only one building with 108 apartments is to be provided for the soldiers of the TGRT in the town of Stavropol.⁴

Some officers of the TGRT and their families live in extremely bad conditions. An example are the stone barracks in the center of the fortress of Gymri, called by officers living there "gadyushnik" (filthy, disgusting place). When the barracks were built, they were provided neither with aqueduct, nor with sewerage system. All the facilities are in the courtyard and there are only two of them: a tap and closet... When climbing on the stairs of the two-storied barrack, one often gets into trouble with the faeces of the local fauna - cats and dogs, whose number has increased beyond any rational limits. During hot summer months a specific sharp odour, coming from the overloaded closet, fills all the district. Across the street there is... the garrison's kindergarten. That's where the soldiers' children play, sleep

¹ "ZVV", 9 August 1997.

² "ZVV", 23 March 1995.

³ "ZVV", 9 August 1997.

⁴ "ZVV", 13 April 1999.

and eat. From time to time, with cheerful shouts, they throw stones to the well-fed and lazy rats, wandering in large groups around the courtyard... In the morning, tenants hurrying to work stay in queue in front of the only tap. During the good days, water only runs in the morning, during bad days there is no water at all. Women standing in a queue manage to talk about all the news of the day and gossip about people who aren't there. Just like in a small hamlet, anyone's personal life may be viewed by everybody.¹

The situation described above is not unique in the military bases of the TGRT. At the middle of the year 1997 the correspondent of the "Sovershenno Sekretno" newspaper in Moscow, while visiting the dormitory of the artillery regiment of the Batumi base where officers' families live, wrote: "Neither summer nor beautiful weather could ease the sensation, felt when looking at the broken glass, at the shrivelled and humid walls. People have no electricity, gas or water, the latter being periodically delivered or carried from private sources. But many families live there together with their young children. I imagined how the dormitory should be like during the winter, imagined the coldness and humidity and grew sick. - How can you live in such conditions during winter? - I asked an officer who had fought in Afghanistan. - As you can see, I'm not dead yet, the man said with a sad smile. Although, if I am to be honest, picketing in Afghanistan was a whole lot easier".²

Some of the barracks, dormitories and houses of the TGRT soldiers are in this state because of the lack of material and financial means necessary for maintaining and repairing housing resources. The "ZVV" newspaper announced its readers in August 1996 that, although 7 months had passed since the beginning of the year, the TGRT still had not received any money for the repairing of housing resources within the Group's garrisons and for the works of repairs and prophylactics of the aqueduct and sewerage system. The works carried out in this field were realised on the account of money provided by other chapters of the budget. Thus, without receiving a single penny from the budget for repairs, on the 1st of August

¹ "ZVV", 11 December 1996.

² "ZVV", 1 July 1997. On the dwelling conditions in dormitories of military Bases 12 and 102, "where water and electricity are reasons for celebrations", see "ZVV", 24 December 1997; 13 January 1998.

1996 the TGRT had succeeded in repairing 62 barracks, 7 canteens, 6 clubs, 7 medical facilities, 25 living houses, 7 dormitories, 6 Diesel electrical stations etc. 7,5 km of thermal tracts, 6 km of electrical network, 3 km of the aqueduct and sewerage system, had been prophylacticed as well, the total cost of these works amounting to around 650 million roubles.¹

At the beginning of the year 1998, the TGRT owed 12 billion roubles to Georgian resort institutions for not having paid for communal services and 1,6 billion roubles to their Armenian counterparts. In the same time the TGRT urgently needed money for a thorough repair of the Group's hospital, the HQ's building, four houses in the Akhalkalaki garrison and an "almost crumbling" house in the Batumi garrison.² In November 1998 the debts the TGRT had towards the "Tbilvodokanal" and "Gruzenergo" (the electricity and water supply networks) amounted up to around 2 millions US\$.³

Food

Another problem which Russian military bases in Transcaucasia have to face, is the one of food supply. Until the 1st of January 1994 the TGRT had been provided with food in a centralised manner from the depots of the Russian Ministry of Defence. After this date, the Group has been receiving food from the depots of the Northern Caucasus Military District. Food is being brought mainly by road transport. For example, in the year 1993 6,424 tons of foods were brought from Russia for the TGRT. 3,100 tons were brought by tracks, 1,787 tons were brought by railway transport, 1,099 tons were brought by plane (51 flights) and 443 tons were brought by

¹ "ZVV", 13 August 1996

² "ZVV", 25 February 1998

³ "ZVV", 26 November 1998. During the second half of the year 1998, the TGRT's debts for communal services increased considerably because of the devaluation of the Russian rouble in August. According to the declarations of V. Korytov, assistant of the TGRT commander responsible for financial issues, as a result of the fall of the rouble, the Group's debts for communal service increased from 14 to 42 million roubles ("ZVV", 11 November 1998).

ship.¹ Especially the bases 62 and 102 are provided by road transport. There the trucks bring 95% of the total amount.²

As it is the case with other things too, the bases face enormous financial difficulties as far as food supply is concerned. For example, in 1995 the TGRT was allotted 4 billion roubles in order to buy food for the staff of the Group. However, the real needs of the Group amounted up to more than 20 billion roubles. Towards the beginning of July the Group had already spent 5 billion roubles for the food. Consequently "in the season of fruit and vegetables" the soldiers had to eat dried potatoes and many of them had forgotten "the taste of fish and fresh meat".³ For the year 1997 the TGRT command for "payment of the food and money compensations in exchange for rations" requested the Russian Ministry of Defence 64,8 billion roubles. However, during the first five months of the year the Group had only received 5,5 billion roubles out of the sum requested. In June 1997, V. Nikolishin, head of the Food Service of the TGRT, declared to the correspondent of the "ZVV" newspaper that the Group's debts as far as food was concerned amounted up to 104,5 billion roubles, "taking necessities into account".⁴ The situation did not improve during the year 1998. In January the Group's debts as far as food was concerned were of 45 billion roubles, and in November they had amounted to 67,6 billion roubles.⁵

The Northern Caucasus Military District (to whom the TGRT is subordinated) is in no better situation. For the year 1997 the District's Command had requested 900 billion roubles from Moscow "in order to finance food supply", but it was only given 525 billions (58%). During the first 8 months of the year 1997, the District had only received 171,5 billion roubles, i.e. 33% of the sum agreed upon. As far as food was concerned, the District was indebted with 85 billion roubles, including 13 billions for bread.⁶ During September 1998 one of the superior officers of the TGRT,

¹ "ZVV", 19 January 1994.

² "ZVV", 7 June 1997.

³ "ZVV", 14 July 1995.

⁴ "ZVV", 7 June 1997.

⁵ "ZVV", 24 January, 24 November 1998.

⁶ "ZVV", 25 September 1997.

responsible for the Group's supply, declared that if the soldiers belonging to the military base still could eat meat now and then, the ones in the Northern Caucasus Military District "have long forgotten the taste of it. There they just have to put up with tinned food".¹

Presently within the Russian Army Forces, the development of "auxiliary agricultural farms" near the units has become quite a common practice because this is a way of solving some of the food problems. During the year 1997, according to the accounts of General-Lieutenant V. Isakov, head of the logistic services of the Russian Army Forces, agricultural farms near the units provided the troops "with around 20% of their food products". At the half of the year 1997 these provided the Russian Army with 16% of the meat, 17% of the potatoes and vegetables, 37% of the eggs and 100% of the milk. "In the same time many garrisons and military units covered all their needs as far as these products were concerned with their own production (the Kola peninsula, Sachalin, Kamchatka, Tiksi and so on)".²

The TGRT troops also try to overcome the difficulties connected to the food supply by organising agricultural farms near the military units. If there were only 5 such farms within the TGRT at the beginning of the year 1994,³ during April 1997, there were 18 of them, the biggest part of them being located in military bases 62 and 102. "There they have their own vegetable garden, greenhouses, tens of heads of cattle. During the year 1996 they produced almost 20 tons of meat, significant quantities of potatoes and vegetables. The soldiers at the Kumisi fuel depot have even taken out fish breeding."⁴ During July 1998 the "ZVV" newspaper presented as a great realisation the fact that soldiers belonging to a unit of Base 137 had prepared for the winter 10 tons of hay for the "10 bulls recently bought. In the same unit the soldiers have preserved 200 jars of stewed fruit".⁵

The "life-buoy" of the TGRT is the "Akhalkalaki" military farm. During 1995 it possessed 350 ha of arable land, a meat processing unit and, a preserved meat section. On the date mentioned above, not only sausages,

¹ "ZVV", 22 September 1998.

² "ZVV", 1 October 1997.

³ "ZVV", 19 January 1994.

⁴ "ZVV", 18 April 1997.

⁵ "ZVV", 16 July 1998.

but also canned meat was produced in the farm, "no more and no less than 12,000 jars a day". In September 1995, the "ZVV" newspaper wrote that the "Akhalkalaki" sovkhos [state collective farm] produced 100 tons of meat each year (thus satisfying the TGRT's needs for four months) and 300-350 tons of potatoes (which satisfies the Group's needs for 4 months). The sovkhos could also provide the TGRT with enough flour for about three months. During 1998, besides the meat, potatoes and flour, the "Akhalkalaki" farm also provided the TGRT with 140 tons of stewed fruit and over 100 tons of jam and juices.¹

In the opinion of the TGRT leaders, the activity of the "Akhalkalaki" farm could be even more fruitful, should the Group be able of paying its debts towards the farm in due time. In June 1997 the group's debts towards the "Akhalkalaki" farm had amounted up to 6,9 billion roubles, on the 17th of August 1998 (in the day when the Russian rouble devaluated) 15,3 million roubles, 10 million roubles in September the same year.²

Starting from the importance of auxiliary agricultural farms as far as the troops' food supply is concerned, at the middle of the year 1997 V. Andreev, commander of the TGRT, issued an order by which he asked all units, without any exception, to establish their own auxiliary farms until December 1997.³ As any military order, this one too will be probably carried out. However, many military ask themselves is this is the right way of solving the problems connected to the TGRT's food supply, if soldiers working on the fields of the agricultural farms wouldn't be better learning the military arts than "the basics of agronomy and zootechny".⁴ We do agree with the "ZVV" that the soldiers' mission is learning military art, not zootechny and agronomy. However, we also think that they would be much more useful doing this in their own country, and not thousands kilometres away from home.

¹ "ZVV", 5 September 1995; 22 September 1998; 20 March 1999

² "ZVV", 7 June 1997

³ "ZVV", 9 October 1997

⁴ "ZVV", 18 April 1997

The TGRT troops psychical and moral state

In the paragraph concerning the negotiations between Russia and Georgia regarding the creation of Russian military bases in Georgia we have largely spoken about the negative attitude Georgian population has towards the Russian troops. Here we shall add that during the years 1988-1995, the population's hostile attitude, permanent attacks against Russian units and military deployed in Transcaucasia considerably affected the troops' moral and psychological state, by inoculating them a fear, which still holds on. During the years mentioned above, Russian soldiers were afraid of going out into the streets dressed in military uniform and they tried to send their families in Russia by all means. Although the troops had not yet received an evacuation order, a mass evacuation of the soldiers' families was taking place. To this purpose the TMD command placed some IL-76 planes to the troops' disposal, and operational evacuation groups were created within the units. In April 1992 around 30,000 families of Russian military were waiting to leave Transcaucasia.¹

The number of soldiers requesting to be put into reserve or transferred to the armies of the newly independent states' armies had suddenly increased. At the meeting of the TGRT Military Council of January 1993, among others, it was mentioned that in the year 1992 more than 3,000 TMD officers left in order to earn their living within the national armies of the NIS,² around 800 were fired, 67 deserted and 24 become accomplices to murder, five of them being judged by the military court.³

¹ "ZVV", 11 April 1992.

² Most of the officers and sub-lieutenants transferred from the TMD to the NIS armies were Ukrainians. A. I. Gusev, head of the Personnel Unit of the TGRT, mentioned, during an interview accorded to the "ZVV" newspaper in February 1993, that "3,500 Ukrainian and Caucasian officers have already left for their new workplace, after having received the invitations of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence ("ZVV", 17 February 1993). During the years 1992-1994 more than 43,700 officers left the CIS/Russian Federation Army Forces and transferred to the national armies of the NIS (28,500 in 1992, 13,500 in 1993, 1,700 in 1994). More than 60% of them were law rank officers ("ZVV", 16 December 1995).

³ "ZVV", 28 January 1993.

The problem of staff completion, too, was a quite challenging one. Most of the units were only completed up to 10-20% of the number stipulated by the organisational schemes. Because of the complicated situation in the area, many soldiers and officers refused to serve in Transcaucasia. In December 1992, A. Gerasimov, first assistant of the TMD Commander, declared that only several hundreds out of 8,500 soldiers expected to arrive in the district had come.¹ During the autumn of 1990, 16 graduates of the military schools rejected the service in the TMD which they had been proposed, and asked for workplaces in other districts.² In 1992 only 15% of the military school graduates expected to come had arrived.³

Military service in Transcaucasia has become even less attractive since the Congress of the People's Deputies of the Russian Federation adopted the decision "Regarding the Situation of the Army Forces and Military Policy of the Russian Federation", dated December the 7th 1992. In the decision, the president of the Russian Federation was recommended, amongst others, to reach agreements regarding the status of Russian troops in the NIS, as well as the order of withdrawal of the troops, as soon as possible. It requested that starting from the 1st of January 1993 the completion with active service soldiers of military formations located over the borders of Russia should be realised only on volunteering bases.⁴

According to the decision mentioned above, the soldiers only became to serve in Transcaucasia on volunteering principles. And it was not enough that the soldiers called to the army agreed for active service in Transcaucasia; the parents' agreement, too, was needed. If the soldier received the parents' agreement, he signed a contract according to which he was to receive 3,000 roubles per month and certain privileges.⁵

The privileges enjoyed by the soldiers in Transcaucasia were not appealing even for the officers or for the sub-lieutenants. In 1994, according

¹ "ZVV", 29 December 1992.

² "ZVV", 13 October 1992.

³ "ZVV", 17 February 1993.

⁴ "ZVV", 15 January 1993. See: the Decision of the Congress of the People's Deputies of the Russian Federation "regarding the situation within the Army Forces and military politics of the Russian Federation" from the 7th of December 1992.

⁵ "ZVV", 12 January 1993.

to the Personnel rotation plan, 500 officers and sub-lieutenants of the TGRT were to be replaced by officers and sub-lieutenants from Russia. However, only 100 persons were replaced: no people willing to serve in Transcaucasia were found in Russia. In the same time, some TGRT officers did not accepted the transfer, because in Russia they were proposed functions lower than the ones they had within the TGRT.¹

A real problem was that of desertion. In April 1992, 3,676 deserting soldiers were being pursuit in the TMD. Not only privates, but officers and sub-lieutenants, too, used to leave the military units. A. I. Gusev, head of the Personnel Unit of the TMD HQ, declared to the "ZVV" in April 1992 that 208 officers and 123 sub-lieutenants had left their units in the TMD.²

The low spirits of the troops led to increasing criminal activity within the units. 566 acts of offence were registered in the Transcaucasian military units in 1992. Out of these, 252 were common offences and 314 were military offences (evasion from military service, infringement of the rules of garrison and guard service, infringement of the rules of interior service etc). 18 of the total amount of the offences were premeditated murders, 114 - weapon stealing cases.

During the first half of the year 1993, 113 offences were committed within the TGRT, including 13 premeditated murders and 13 weapon stealing cases. In the first half of the year 1994 42 offences were registered.³ Drunken persons committed most of them.⁴ In January 1993, for example, in one of the Vaziani units, sergeant V. Kuznetzov, being drunken, killed

¹ "ZVV", 15 November 1994.

² "ZVV", 15 April 1992.

³ "ZVV", 12 August 1994.

⁴ Alcoholism is a problem for the entire Russian army. From the order of the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation No. 440, dated 30th of November 1997, "Regarding measures for preventing alcoholism among soldiers of the Russian Federation Army Forces" we find out that: "In the year 1997, the material damage brought by soldiers to the state as a result of actions connected to the use of alcoholic drinks amounted up to 7 billion roubles. 30% of the suicides, 60% of crimes against life, health or property of citizens belonging to the local population, over 30% of crimes connected to the infringement of the statute rules of relationships between soldiers, 25% of road accidents resulting in loss of human lives are made by drunken persons..." - "ZVV", 29 January 1998.

three of his comrades and two civilians, after having stolen a machine gun and an automatic pistol.¹ At a meeting of the TGRT Military Council of the year 1993, where the state of discipline within units was discussed, it was pointed out, amongst others, that: "alcoholism, social debauchery, hooliganism, as well as the number of the cases of desertion are increasing within the officers' environment. Many families break up, actually a part of the officers run away to their families who had already left for Russia. During the present year we have lost 5 officers due to social and familial disagreements, social debauchery, alcoholism and lack of control from the part of the leaders".²

"Unstatutory" relationships between the soldiers have also amplified. During 1993 5% of the soldiers requested treatment in medical institutions of the TGRT due to traumas 11% of the total of traumas were connected to "unstatutory relationships" between the soldiers. At the beginning of 1994, within the TGRT, "45 times more military were put into reserve as a result of traumatism than as a result of disease cases".³

Cases of theft and dilapidation within TGRT units were quite frequent. In 1992, the material losses the TGRT had suffered as a result of these offences amounted up to more than 20 million roubles (without taking into account the damage caused by fires and by the explosion of the Salogly ammunition depot, which led to damage worth a few hundred million roubles),⁴ and in 1993 - to 118 million roubles. As a result of financial controls, in 1993 and in the first half of 1994 around 12 persons were released from their functions, 180 of them were fined and 300 persons received reprimands, severe reprimands, warnings about their not suiting their function.⁵ In one of its issues, the "ZVV" newspaper wrote that "in the Russian army some officers are ready to sell everything if they are paid, and they call this business. The soldiers follow their example. In order to hide

¹ "ZVV", 16 June 1993.

² "ZVV", 24 June 1993.

³ "ZVV", 4 February 1994.

⁴ "ZVV", 29 June 1993.

⁵ "ZVV", 7 July 1994.

these things, unit commanders resort to mystification, to falsifying the evidences".¹

The crime situation within the TGRT did not improve much during the following years. In 1997 "material losses" within the TGRT constituted 770,700 roubles, in 1998 - 1500,5 thousand roubles, in the first 3 months of 1999 - 773,6 thousand roubles.² From the "ZVV" newspaper we find out that at the end of 1998 the most characteristic files of the TGRT were the ones connected to "unstatutory relationships, thefts, evasion from military service, illegal keeping and carrying of weapons". A case in a company where the commander and the accountant had illegally appropriated 100,000 roubles was given as example.³

After the Treaty on Russian military bases on Georgian territory was signed, the moral and psychological state of the TGRT soldiers improved, but it is still bad. Due to difficult social and living conditions, to insecurity as far as the future is concerned, many soldiers belonging to Russian military bases in Transcaucasia become depressed, they turn to alcohol, they resort to illegal actions, not compatible with the status of a man wearing the military uniform.

Nothing illustrates better the moral and psychological state of the TGRT soldiers than the increasing number of suicidal acts, a scourge confronting the whole of the Russian army. In 1996 within the Russian Army Forces, at work and elsewhere, 526 persons committed suicide, this being a fifth of the total of Russian human casualties in Chechnya (on the 30th of August 1996 these had amounted up to 2,837 soldiers).⁴ The cases of suicide have become quite a serious problem for the Russian army. In order to get over this problem, the leaders of the Ministry of Defence elaborated a program of complex measures. In 1998, through a directive of the Ministry of Defence, the program mentioned above was conveyed to all units.⁵

¹ "ZVV", 29 June 1993.

² "ZVV", 29 April 1999.

³ "ZVV", 8 December 1998.

⁴ "Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie", No. 21 (148), 14-20 June 1997. About the suicides in Russian army see also "Newsweek", 20 January, 1997, p.11.

⁵ "ZVV", 21 March 1997.

Although the material and financial state of TGRT troops is better than that of troops in "inner military districts", cases of suicide have been registered within soldiers belonging to Russian military bases in Armenia and Georgia, too. Between January and October 1996 4 suicidal cases happened within the TGRT.¹ While relating about the suicides of captain Aleksandr Fadeev and of soldier Rais Kutuzov of the Akhalkalaki garrison, the "ZVV" newspaper underlined that the first causes leading to suicides are "difficult material and financial situation, the feeling of isolation from society, difficult and ill-regulated life". In another issue, while informing the readers of the suicide of captain Sergey Panin, the newspaper underlined that "in this particular case one cannot help seeing something general, too, an alarming tendency, behind which a quite visible and typical phenomenon is hiding - a phenomenon which could be conventionally called social fatigue. To a great extent, the officers have stopped feeling themselves useful to the society, they no longer are the pillars of the state and of the Motherland, as the state only remembers of its guardians on days of professional holidays, of natural calamity and war. The decay of the military service's prestige is only the visible top of the iceberg. The soldiers' social vulnerability (when they don't receive their wages in due time they are not allowed to strike in order to defend their rights, nor have they the right to have additional income sources in order to feed their family), the unclear perspectives concerning the imminent military reforms, large scale re-organisations and dismissals, social difficulties, often humiliating for the status of an officer - all these do not contribute to the dignity of the man in uniform. By accumulating, social fatigue becomes moral fatigue and sooner or later it emotionally turns into all these troubles we've got -disintegration of the families, massive dismissals in the ranks of the lower officer corps, alcoholism and suicides".²

In order to improve the moral and psychological situation in the Russian army, the military psychologists have been introduced into the units. The psychologists not only have the mission of contributing to the improvement of moral and psychological climate within the units, but also of helping the commanders in their education of the soldiers. In October

¹ "ZVV", 12 November 1996.

² "ZVV", 21 March 1997.

1996 there were 12 psychologists active within the TGRT. At the date mentioned above, "according to the most modest calculations", there were more than 300 persons "weak in spirit" and "mental unstable" within the TGRT. These persons have been included in the "increased risk" category, with whom psychologists and TGRT commanders were to intensify education.¹

In order to somewhat reduce the military's frustrations linked to social and economical or family problems which they face, on the 5th of August 1994, secondary schools were opened in Russian military bases on the territory of Georgia and Armenia.²

On the 1st of September 1994 6 schools of this type begun to function within the TGRT—in Tbilisi, Vaziani, Akhalkalaki and Batumi (Georgia), Yerevan and Gymri (Armenia).³ The schools are intended for the children of the soldiers and civilian staff of the military bases. But the high level of education—clearly superior to Georgian and Armenian schools—make these schools appealing to citizens of the two states mentioned above, too. "From unofficial sources, some parents, occupying positions high enough within state structures in Georgia and Armenia, try, sometimes successfully, to have their children study in such schools, although everything here is taught in Russian. They say, amongst others, that the nephew of the President of the Armenian Science Academy studies in the Russian school of the military base in Gymri".⁴

Most of the TGRT schools' pedagogical staff is highly qualified. At the beginning of the year 1995, out of the total number of 194 teachers of the TGRT schools, 9 had "superior category" and 66 "the 1st category". Persons with scientific degrees also exist among the teachers.⁵ Such a level of qualification of the teaching staff was only achieved by a rigorous selection of the candidates, through contest. For example, the candidates to 22 teaching posts in the Gymri School were selected from 800 candidates.⁶

¹ "ZVV", 9 October 1996.

² "ZVV", 1, 3 September 1994; 5 January 1995.

³ "ZVV", 25 September 1996.

⁴ Kavkaz-Press, Tbilisi, in Russian, 5 June 1996.

⁵ "ZVV", 5 January 1995.

⁶ *Ibid.*

The large number of teachers willing to work in TGRT schools can be explained through the high salary offered by these schools, even higher than the corresponding salaries in educational institutions in Georgia and Armenia.

The military bases' schools enjoy the parents' sympathy not only because of the high level of education, but also because of the better conditions the children have for their study. While state schools in Georgia and Armenia often suspend their activity because of the lack of heating and electricity, the Russian military bases' schools are provided with autonomous sources of heating and electricity, and in some of them children are provided with food, too.¹ The schools are patronised by military units, which support them multilaterally. One of the exemplary schools of the TGRT is the school number 21 in Yerevan, where children are happy to learn, "not only because the school's direction has managed to arrange an uninterrupted educational process and to provide the school with heating and electricity. In the school, the educational process has been harmoniously combined with extra-curricular activities".² This school has begun its activity in August 1994 in one of the buildings of the former Russian regiment deployed in Kanakere. Russian military in the town and future teachers, lead by the school principal P. V. Soshnikov, have actively taken part in repairing the school's building. Within the school there are tailoring and cooking circles, a political discussion club, sport sections. "Students of senior classes even hold firing sessions on the Nubarashen shooting stand." The Russian regiment deployed in the town patronizes the school.

¹ *Ibid.*. It is obvious that, although the state of the TGRT schools is better than that of Georgian and Armenian ones, they too must face a whole range of problems. "The schools' buildings (with the exception of the one in Gymri), --we may read in the "Zakavkazskie Voennye Vedomosti",- are far from being ideal, as far as their sanitary and hygienically state is concerned. One can acutely feel the lack of classrooms and laboratories. In spite of titanic efforts made by the School Section [of the TGRT HQ -M.G.], in spite of considerable support from the Command, from Russian embassies in Georgia and Armenia, of the Ministry of Defence, the schools' technical and material basis is far from ideal (in fact, even far from satisfying minimal needs). The biggest problem is still the insufficiency of textbooks...of desks..."--"ZVV", 17 April 1996.

² "ZVV", 25 February 1997.

One of the regiment commander's assistants is chairman of the school's "parental committee", as a rule.

The establishment of TGRT schools has had the anticipated effect: it reduced the number of officers willing to leave Transcaucasia because their children had no place to study, provided workplaces for many wives of the soldiers, led to many families' returning to the garrisons. According to the data made public by the "ZVV" newspaper, since the schools' opening date and until the end of the year 1994 around 300 families had come back to the garrisons.¹ In the opinion of some people, many officers' families only held together because of the establishment of the schools.²

The persistency of social - economical and living problems, the aggravation of the military's material situation may lead to an explosion of discontent within the Russian Army. In July 1995, Colonel Viktor Korytov, provisional head of the TGRT Financial Service, while speaking about the military bases' lack of financing, mentioned that "some 'decisions' of the leaders might provoke an explosion of discontent within military circles".³ By the same time the "ZVV" newspaper informed its readers that "the wives of the officers belonging to the plane squadron commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Nikolai Fedosov, have threatened with blocking the airport's runway, should they not receive their salary at least for the month of June".⁴ During June 1998, 30 workers of a unit belonging to the 4th Air Army of the Northern Caucasus Military District, deployed on the Vaziani airport, have blocked themselves the airport's landing runway, in sign of protest for not having received their salaries.⁵

The situation of the TGRT troops described above, as well as the press accounts we have cited are significant from several points of view. Firstly, they prove wrong the intensely propagated theory according to which Russian troops represent a stability factor in the area. Since the

¹ "ZVV", 5 January 1995.

² "ZVV", 23 March 1995.

³ "ZVV", 14 July 1995.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ "Svobodnaya Gruzija", 12 June 1998.

soldiers themselves and the members of their families resort to blocking military objectives and reach to conflict with local population because they are not able of honoring their obligations, we believe that speaking about the Russian troops in Georgia as a stability factor would be at least an exaggeration. Secondly, the situation described above confirms the military uselessness of the Russian troops' presence in Georgia. Thus it is quite natural that military analysts should ask themselves if the Russian troops in Georgia, completed with a high percentage of locals, would be filling to fight, in case of need, in any other direction than the South, the more so as for many of them religious affiliation is more important than citizenship or military vows. Thirdly, the Russian troops' presence in Georgia is only justified by the fact that they serve Moscow as a pressure factor upon the leaders of Tbilisi, as a factor of encouraging separatism, of "administrating" conflicts, and thus of maintaining Georgia within the Russian sphere of influence. Lastly, the situation of the Russian troops in Georgia contradicts the opinions of those political leaders in the former Soviet republics (including Moldova), who see the acceptance of Russian military bases on their territory as a way of overcoming economical difficulties faced by the states they lead.

The Russian border troops in Georgia.

In Georgia, along with the troops included within Russian military bases, there are also an insignificant number of border troops of the "Gruziya" ("Georgia") Group, belonging to the Caucasus Special Border District.¹ If at the beginning of 1997 border troops within the

¹ The Caucasus special Border District was created by a decree issued by Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, dated 1st of March 1994. It was established on the basis of the Northern Caucasus Border District. The town of Stavropol was chosen as the deployment place for the Headquarters of the Caucasus Special Border District. The Headquarters was transferred from Tbilisi to Stavropol during the second half of March 1994. The specificity of the Caucasus Special Border District lies in the fact that its troops are distributed in two "echelons". The first echelon includes the troops of the "Georgia" and "Armenia" Groups, defending the frontiers these two states have with Turkey

"Georgia" Group counted around 8-10 thousand soldiers, presently, as a result of the withdrawal of the process started at the middle of the year 1998, their number is only of a few hundreds, distributed in Abkhazia and Ajaria. The process of withdrawing Russian border guards from Georgia is to end on the 1st of November 1999.

At the beginning of the year 1997 the "Georgia" Group was composed of four large border units and around other ten units, all together protecting especially the border between Georgia and Turkey. The sea border guard detachments in the harbors of Batumi, Poti and Sukhumi, as well as a brigade in Ochamchira, were also included in the "Georgia" Group.¹

The decision to maintain Russian border troops in Georgia for the defense of the Georgian-Turkish border was taken during the third round of the negotiations between the delegations of the governments of Georgia and Russia (February 1993). It was then decided that Russian border guards should stay in Georgia until the end of the year 1996.² The Georgian part motivated its attitude by the fact that "Georgia has no experience in border guarding, in building up its own border guard troops, it has no qualified staff for solving problems connected to the defense of its borders." By the same time the main department of Georgian border troops issued an address towards Russian border troops deployed in Georgia which mentioned, among others: "At the present time we have prepared the Agreement concerning the status and

and Iran. The second echelon consists of the troops distributed on the territory of Russia, which protect the Russian Federation's borders with Georgia ("ZVV", 24 March 1994). In June 1999 the "Armenia" Group was re-organized as the "Operational Group of Russian border troops in Armenia" and it was subordinated to the Russian Federal Border Service. The Operational Group is composed of four border guard detachments and an independent checkpoint on the "Zvartnotz" airport (YYerevan). The Group ensures the guard of Armenia's state border with Turkey (328 km) and Iran (46 km). Since the 1st of July 1999 the "Armenia" Border Group is commanded by Lieutenant General Mikhail Naimilo.- "ZVV", 1 June 1999; "RIA Novosti", 1 July 1999.

¹ "ZVV", 27 May 1995; "Novosti razvedki i kontrrazvedki", No. 14, 1996; "Nezavisimaya Gazeta", 6 March 1997.

² "ZVV", 6 February 1993.

functioning conditions of Russian Federation's border troops on the territory of Georgia. It will be soon signed and put into practice. You will be acknowledged of its text by all means. We request you, glorious border guards of the Russian Federation, to consider the border between Georgia and Turkey as your own border until the last day you are deployed here and to protect it with the same sense of responsibility as you have done till now. We request you to preserve movable and immovable military property as something of your own, as something Russian. At its turn, the Republic of Georgia guarantees you and the members of your families normal conditions of life, of service activity and combat, as well as the defense of all rights and liberties reflected in the Agreement".¹

Though the initial term provided for the Russian border troops' withdrawal from Georgia (the end of the year 1996) has already expired, Russian border guards are still present in this Transcaucasian country. According to some recent declarations of Valery Chekhidze, head of the State Department for the Defense of Georgia's State Border, the process of withdrawing Russian troops from Georgia is to end on the 1st of November 1999.²

Until not long ago, Georgian politicians used to explain the Russian border troops' presence in Georgia through economic reasons, as well as through the lack of border guard staff. The guard of a kilometer of border with Turkey costs 2 billion roubles, according to V. Chekhidze's declarations. "Today Georgia does not have this amount of money, taking into account the fact that the border with Turkey stretches over 2000 km. That's why the border is defended by Russian border guards".³

The "Georgia" Group of Russian border troops is active on the territory of Georgia according to the provisions made by the Agreement between Russia and Georgia regarding status and functioning conditions

¹ "ZVV", 10 February 1993.

² "Svobodnaya Gruziya", 8 June 1999. A little time before, V. Chekhidze had declared to the press that the process of withdrawing Russian border troops from Georgia was to end towards the 1st of September 1999. ("Svobodnaya Gruziya", 5 May 1999).

³ "Iprinda" information agency, Tbilisi, in Russian, 24 June 1996.

of the Russian border troops deployed on Georgian territory, of the 3rd of February 1994.¹ But this agreement, as well as the one regarding Russian military bases, has not yet been ratified by Georgian Parliament. Since the end of the year 1995, Georgian authorities have begun to declare themselves in favor of its modification, as "the situation has changed and Georgia is now able of defending its own borders". According to the declarations of Kaha Chitaea, president of the Committee for foreign relationships of the Georgian Parliament, "the agreement concluded in 1994 needs serious adjustments and has to be revised. We must specify the exact terms [of the Agreement's effect - M. G.], i.e. 3-5 years at the most. During this period the control of the border has to be gradually transferred to Georgian border guards".²

After the fall of the USSR, Russian border guard troops stayed in Georgia in order to defend especially the border between Georgia and Turkey, but during the conflict between Russia and Chechnya they also defended the border between Chechnya and Georgia. The guard of the border with Chechnya was realized according to the Russian-Georgian Protocol signed on the 11th of September 1995 "Regarding the enforcement of the safety of the border between Russia and Georgia".³ The declared task of Russian border guards of the border between Georgia and Chechnya was of providing practical assistance to Georgian border guards, of establishing pickets, "of improving the co-operation in case of a change of the situation", of training Georgian border guards.⁴ In

¹ "ZVV", 25 April 1996. At the beginning of the year 1998, Major General Mikhail Krylovsky, by then commander of the "Georgia" Group, declared that, in order to fulfil the provisions made by the Agreement of the 3rd of February 1994 regarding staff training, more than 10,000 recruits and around 300 officers and sub-lieutenants citizens of Georgia served in the Group ("ZVV", 10 February 1998). In February 1999, Colonel Viktor Seredkin, Commander of the "Gruziya" Group, declared that "during the last few years around 2 thousands Georgian citizens received training inside the Group. At the request of our Georgian colleagues, such a training of specialists will go on in the future too" ("ZVV", 18 February 1999).

² "Svobodnaya Gruziya", 17 August 1996.

³ "Nezavisimaya gazeta", 6 March 1997.

⁴ "Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie....", 26 September 1996.

reality, Russian border guard troops were introduced on this border section in order to prevent any armament deliveries towards Chechnya from the territory of Georgia. And "this co-operation between the two states in defending the border has undoubtedly played a positive part. No case of transfer of weapons and ammunition over the border, to the combat area, has ever been registered".¹

Other reasons for the presence of Russian border guards at the frontier between Georgia and Chechnya were also exposed. For example, this is the explanation of the phenomenon as provided by Major General V. Vozzhaev, former commander of the "Georgia" Group: "It is known that Chechnyan fighters, encircled in the mountains, may enter Georgia, obviously not to the purpose of relaxing in the Gudauri rest house and drinking Kakhetian wine. There are possibilities that tension points should be created. For example, it is not difficult to imagine what would happen if the terrorists should take over the Zhinvalsk power plant, where there is enough water to drown the entire town of Tbilisi with a population of one million and a half. Thus, a handful of people might dictate their own will to the whole of Georgia. The fact that Chechnyan fighters are not afraid of taking over such serious actions is proved by the cases of Budionovsk and Pervomaik. That's why Russian border guards should be ready to support their Georgian colleagues, of course with the government's agreement, the more so as aggression may come from Russian territory. A border guard picket was sent to Barisaho, at the frontier with Chechnya, in order to study the area, train the staff and carrying on exercises."²

Russian border troops have completely taken over the control of the border between Georgia and Chechnya in May 1995. At the end of May 1995, the "ZVV" newspaper declared that "several picket points guaranteeing the safety of the frontier have been established. A special military command, purposely created in the Caucasus Special Border District, deployed in Southern Chechnya, was called to co-ordinate picket actions".³

¹ "Nezavisimaya Gazeta", 6 March 1997.

² "ZVV", 25 April 1996.

³ "ZVV", 27 May 1995.

During the Soviet period, the defense system of the border between USSR and Turkey was considered to be almost perfect. However, when the empire broke-up, the system was seriously prejudiced. This is why one of the main tasks of the "Georgia" Group was the re-establishing of the former border guard system. In 1996, according to the declarations of General Vozzhaev, this task was assigned to the Group. In 1996 the Russian border guard troops were able "to re-establish old relationships with local population, which always gave us active support in defending the border and used to notify us about the appearance of strangers in the observation area... In some sectors, volunteer popular detachments and border guard co-operation teams are established, teams of "young friends of the border guards" reappeared in schools and other learning institutions".¹

Russian border troops on Georgian territory are being completed with personnel by recruiting young people for active military service within the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and by contractual hiring. In September 1996, the completion with officers and sub-lieutenants of the "Georgia" Group border guard pickets reached 95% of the number provided for by the statuses. Most of the people hired through contract were citizens of Georgia. For example, in November 1996, "over 40%"² of the soldiers belonging to the Group were citizens of Georgia, and four months earlier, according to the declarations of General V. Vozzhaev, by then commander of the "Georgia" Group, 80% of the Group's staff were "of Georgian origin".³

In spite of the "Georgian character" the "Georgia" Group had, the relationships between the Group's soldiers and the authorities of the hosting state are very complicated. The Russian border guards' actions are not coordinated with the state institutions in Georgia and thus they awaken some discontent from the part of Georgian authorities and public opinion. After the Ukrainian ship "Almaz" was retained on the 4th of December 1996 by Russian border guards in Georgian territorial waters, the Georgian President, Eduard Shevardnadze, qualified the Russian border guards' actions as an "act of piracy" and apologized to the Ukrainian state on behalf of the Georgian

¹ "ZVV", 28 May 1996.

² "Nezavisimaya Gazeta", 28 November 1996.

³ "ZVV", 28 May 1996.

Government, for the incident.¹ In connection to the same incident, the Georgian Ministry of Foreign affairs has addressed its Russian counterpart a note qualifying the actions of the Russian border guards as a "flagrant violation of international rules and of bilateral agreements between Georgia and Russia", and the Georgian Parliament's Committee for defense and security issues appreciated the act of retaining the Ukrainian ship as a "proof of Russia's ignoring the principle of Georgia's sovereignty".²

On the 12th of March 1997 a new incident took place in Georgian territorial waters. This time it was between the Russian border guard troops and a Turkish fishing ship, the accident resulting in a skirmish and the death of a Turkish sailor.³ After this incident Eduard Shevardnadze declared, in an interview given to the Georgian radio, that "if we judge by the character of their actions [of Russian border guards - M. G.], we reach to the conclusion that to them Georgia is a territory just like any other outlying region of Russia". "For example, - E. Shevardnadze underlined - during these days there was talk that the border with Chechnya is to be protected by Russian border guards. However, nobody found it necessary to discuss the matter with us, too, and nobody asked us anything about it". Further on, the Georgian President blamed the "Georgia" Group of regrouping troops (including navy troops) and of capturing other states' ships without notifying Georgian authorities. "These and other regrettable and arbitrary acts have become ordinary phenomena".⁴

Georgian authorities consider that Russian border troops, acting without taking into account Georgia's state interests, do not respect their obligations of ensuring the blockade of Abkhazia, according to the decisions adopted within the CIS.⁵ V. Chekhidze, head of the State department for the

¹ "Svobodnaya Gruzija", 17 December 1996.

² *Ibid.*

³ "Nezavisimaya Gazeta", 13 March 1997.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6 March 1997.

⁵ The border between Russia and "The Republic of Abkhazia" on the river Psou was closed during the second half of December 1994. The closing of the frontier took place under the pretext of preventing fighters to go from Abkhazia to Chechnya. Other versions regarding the reason why the frontier was closed have been brought forward, too: a) the decision was taken under the pressure of

Defense of Georgia's State Border declared that "It is known that since the 19th of January [1996 - M. G.] the heads of state of the CIS have adopted the decision that no representative of any state structure of the countries member of the Community should establish contacts with the leaders of Abkhazia without the agreement of the Georgian Government. It also was decided that no carriage should reach the territory of Abkhazia without coordination with our government. Besides this a decree was issued by the President of Georgia, regarding the closure of the Sukhumi sea port and the abolishment of its status of international harbor. The Georgian Ministry of foreign affairs has informed all the states possessing navigation companies of this fact. However, these decisions are often being ignored and even violated. And the proper measures for their enforcement are not always taken".¹

Russia obstinately rejects all the accusations brought to the "Georgia" Group, usually reminding the provisions made by the Agreement between Russia and Georgia regarding status and functioning conditions of the Russian Federation Border Troops deployed on the territory of Georgia, of the 3rd of February 1994. Thus, the accusations brought by President E. Shevardnadze to the "Georgia" Group of regrouping its troops without notifying the Georgian side, General Manilov, whom we have previously mentioned, cites the 24th article of the Agreement providing that "in the interest of the state border defense", the troops are to be "freely" regrouped. Obviously, A. Manilov does not mention the fact that the Agreement, not being ratified by Georgian Parliament, has not yet come into effect and thus has no legal value. In view of supporting its position, the Russian side also cites the Russian border guard troops' achievements during their activity: between the years 1995-1996 "border guards have retained 415 trespassers of the frontier, have authorized around 850,000 people and 215,000 means

some Russian entrepreneurs who import citric from Mediterranean countries and who are interested in liquidating Abkhazian concurrence; b) Moscow has decided to punish Ardzinba for his sympathy towards Chechnya; c) Russia prepares a Chechnya - style action against Abkhazia, in order to overthrow the government in Sukhumi by force and re-establish Abkhazia's unity with Georgia -See: "ZVV", 11 February 1995.

¹ "ZVV", 3 October 1996

of transportation to cross the border, have prevented 1,370 foreign citizens with false documents or suspected of illegal activity (including members of international organizations) from entering Georgia".¹ In 1996 in the sector controlled by the "Batumi" checkpoint over 200 persons who have attempted to violate Georgia's national border were retained. In 9 of these cases, smuggled goods in value of 400,000 US\$ were preventing from entering and leaving the country.² In 1997 border guards of the "Georgia" group retained over 171 trespassers, smuggled goods in the value of 183,5 million rouble, stopped 20 violations of the navigation regime. According to the same Russian data, Russian soldiers have allowed 530,000 persons and 145,000 means of transport to cross the border.³ In 1998 the "Georgia" Group of border guards retained 140 persons who had tried to violate the state border, 450 persons violating the border regulations, 1,300 persons possessing false or stolen identity documents, it also retained 2,200 ammunition items, 54 side arms, 8 fire arms; it authorized 171,201 means of transport and 59,836 persons to cross the border".⁴

Another problem tensioning the relationships between Georgian authorities and the "Georgia" Group is the one of how the Group should be financed by both sides. According to the agreement regarding conditions of the presence of Russian border troops on the territory of Georgia, 60% of the expenses for maintaining the troops should be supported by Russia and 40% by Georgia. However, if Russia has spent 140 billion roubles for the maintenance of the Group since 1995 and until 1998, in 1994 Georgia did not contribute with a single copeck to the budget of the "Gruziya" Group, and in 1995 it only contributed with 46% of the total amount provided by the expense plan.⁵ In 1995 the "Georgia" Group only received 11% of the Georgian quota.⁶ (Tbilisi did not deposit in the Group's budget 460,000

¹ "Nezavisimaya Gazeta", 13 March 1997.

² "ZVV", 24 December 1996.

³ "ZVV", 10 February 1998.

⁴ "ZVV", 18 February 1999.

⁵ "ZVV", 28 May 1996.

⁶ "ZVV", 25 April 1997. According to some other data published by the "ZVV", in 1996 the "Georgia" Group received only 1,5% of the total sum provided by the Group's expense budget.--"ZVV", 16 January 1997.

lari¹). In May 1997 Georgia's total debt towards the Group amounted up to 74 billion roubles,² a sum which had been accumulated during the last three years, and at the beginning of March 1998 it was 91 billion 998 million roubles.³ In December 1998 the "Zakavkazskie Voennye Vedomosti" newspaper accounted that financial matters between the two sides had been solved. Georgia's debts which had accumulated concerning the financing of the "Georgia" Group were cancelled.⁴

The chaotic financing of the Russian border troops from the part of both Georgia and Moscow, often brings the Group to situations of conflict with local authorities, as well as with the population. In May 1996 Major General V. Vozzhaev, by then commander of the "Georgia" Group, declared to the "ZVV" newspaper that the Group did not possess enough money for payments and that the phones had been cut off, that bread was no longer delivered, that the units were threatened with being cut off from the water and electricity supply networks.⁵ Around a year later, Vladimir Manych, chief of the Group's Headquarters, mentioned that, as the Georgian side was not paying its debts towards the Group, the latter cannot pay its debt of

¹ "ZVV", 18 September 1997.

² "ZVV", 28 May 1997.

³ "ZVV", 11 March 1998. We need to mention that Russian border guard troops on the territory of Armenia, too, are facing enormous financial difficulties. According to the provisions made by the agreement between the Russian Federation and the republic of Armenia regarding the status of Russian border guard troops on the territory of the Republic of Armenia and their functioning terms, from the 30th of September 1992, Russian border troops are equally financed by Russia and Armenia. However, as it is the case with Georgia, the Armenian side cannot fulfil its obligations of financing the troops due to financial difficulties. In 1994, Armenia had to allocate 816 million 455 thousand dramas for the maintenance of Russian border troops. However, it only gave the Group 185 million dramas (22,7%). In 1995 1 billion 412 million dramas were to be allocated, but the Group only received 949 million 300 thousand dramas from the Armenian side (67,2%). In 1996 the Armenian side only allocated 27,3% of the sum provided for by the budget of the "Armenia" Group ("ZVV", 3 October 1996, "Novosti razvedki i kontrrazvedki", No. 14, 1996).

⁴ "ZVV", 10 December 1998.

⁵ "ZVV", 28 May 1996.

700,000 lari towards the people of the Ahaltsikhe district and Ajaria for food products, a fact which leads to the people's "legitimate discontent". "In front of the units massive meetings take place, roads are being blocked, physical threatening are heard, the food providers deny us any supply..."¹ By the same time Vladimir Manych declared that "if the issue of food and fuel delivery will not be soon solved, then a cold and hungry winter awaits the three thousand Russian border guards defending the frontier between Georgia and Turkey, as well as their families".²

The analysis of the relationships between Russia and Georgia as far as the common border defense is concerned allows us to reach the conclusion that the financial situation of the "Georgia" Group will not change until the troops are not completely evacuated to Russian territory. Eduard Shevardnadze, President of Georgia, in November 1996, while commenting upon the results of the talks held with Andrey Nikolaev, by then head of the Federal Border Service of the Russian Federation, has declared that the Georgian side is dealing with the issue of financing Russian border troops "starting from its financial possibilities" and that "in the actual stage the Georgian quota within the total expenses will only be a symbolical one".³ The decision taken by the Georgian Parliament of excluding from the country's budget on 1997 the article stipulating the financing of the "Georgia" Group also speaks of the fact that Georgia has no intentions of spending money from the state budget for the maintenance of Russian border troops.⁴

Georgian authorities consider that Russia's discontent connected to the fact that Georgia does not finance Russian border guards is not well-founded. Niko Lekishvili, state minister of Georgia, declared in an interview given to the "Prime Press" Agency that Georgia may put forward its own pretensions, as well-Russian military do not pay taxes and rent for using the

¹ "ZVV", 18 September 1997.

² "ZVV", 18 September 1997.

³ "Svobodnaya Gruzija", 26 November 1996.

⁴ "ZVV", 25 April 1997. Georgian Parliament had decided to introduce a special article in the Georgian state budget concerning the financing of the "Georgia" Group in November 1996.- See: "Nezavisimaya Gazeta", 28 November 1996.

land and the buildings.¹ The Georgian side also conditions the financing of the Group by the state of objectives received from Russian border guards. Valery Chekhidze, commander of the Georgian border troops, expressed clearly enough the Georgian view over this matter: "When solving the problem of supporting the expenses of Russian border troops, assumed by Georgia according to the agreement regarding the common defense of borders, the Georgian side will take into account, by all means, the state of the objectives transmitted by the Russian colleagues, as well as the damage caused." The latter are quite significant, in the Georgian opinion. For example, damages "purposely" caused to the transmission base in Okrokana are evaluated to 1 million 270 thousand lari, while in the opinion of the Russian side, the whole objective is not worth this entire price.²

Since the end of 1997 the two sides have been taking significant efforts in order to solve border problems which had accumulated. An inter-government working group was created to this purpose and it held its first session on the 16th of January, in Moscow. The Russian side of the working Group was led by Boris Pastukhov, first deputy minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Georgian one by Mikhail Ukleba, first deputy of the Georgian minister of Foreign Affairs. "During the meeting the present state and the perspectives of co-operation between Russia and Georgia concerning the border guard issues were discussed. It was established that the co-operation relationships between the two countries now enter a new stage, connected to the fully Georgian defence of the border between Georgia and Turkey. The process of handing over the border defence tasks to the Georgian troops will end in 2000. The first stage of this process will be taking control of the sea equator, of the continental shelf and of the special economical area from Psou to Sarpi, including the coast of Abkhazia".

During the meeting in Moscow, the Georgian delegation proposed the Russian side the project of an Agreement regarding co-operation in border guard matters, and also requested the modification of the Agreement between Russia and Georgia from the 3rd of February 1994, a proposal accepted by the Russian delegation. Consequently it was decided that a mixed expert group

¹ "ZVV", 18 September 1997.

² "ZVV", 28 May 1997.

with the task of elaborating concrete proposals in this respect should be established until the 15th of February 1998.

On the 27th of June 1998 a second meeting of the Russian-Georgian group for border-related issues took place. During the session the two sides elaborated two projects of agreements between the governments of the two countries: a) an agreement regarding co-operation in border-related matters and b) an agreement concerning the gradual handing over to the Georgian troops of the control over Georgia's State Border. After the meeting had ended, Mikhail Ukleba, head of the Georgian government delegation, declared that the agreement had determined the procedure of Georgia's taking over the defence of its own state border, the handing over from Russian border guards to their Georgian counterparts of immovable property of border troops belonging to the "Georgia" Group, as well as the division of movable property. In the same time it was decided that the control over Georgian territorial waters should be realised by the state Department for the guard of Georgia's state border, starting from the 16th of July 1998.¹ The agreements were signed on the 3rd of November in Moscow.² The agreement regarding co-operation in border-related problems was signed by Aleksandr Andreev, first deputy minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and Malkhaz Kakabadze, the Georgian Ambassador to Russia, and the agreement regarding gradual transfer to the Georgian troops of the control over Georgia's state border-by Constantin Totsky, Director of the Federal Service for the Defence of the State border of the Russian Federation, and Valery Chekhidze, Head of the Department for the Defence of the State Border of Georgia. According to the agreement, the gradual transfer of border defence tasks to Georgian border guards was to end on the 1st of July 1999.³

Although relationships between Russia and Georgia have been quite tense during the last years, agreements between Russia and Georgia regarding the transfer of border defence tasks to Georgian border guards are being

¹ "Svobodnaya Gruzija", 1 July 1998.

² RFE/RL NEWSLINE, Vol. 2, No. 214, Part I, 5 November 1998.

³ "ZVV", 5 November 1998. At the beginning of December 1998, V. Chekhidze declared that the first stage of the Georgian troops' taking over control of the state border was to end on the 31st of December 1998, and the second stage-on the 10th of July 1999 ("ZVV", 3 December 1999).

successfully put into practice. On the 16th of July 1998, Georgian border troops begun to take over control of Georgian territorial waters, except for the Abkhazian sector (at the date mentioned they possessed one "Tarantul" guard ship, 7 "Grif" motorboats¹ and six armoured motorboats (5 "Aist" ones and an American one))² and from the 31st of August 1998 they have began the control of sea transport in the harbour of Poti.³

On the 14th of February 1999 the Department for the defence of the border state of Georgia has taken control of the land border with Turkey in Meskhetia, protected by the Akhaltsike Border Guard Detachment.⁴ During the

¹ Georgia obtained 3 out of the total number of its "Grif" motorboats from Ukraine. The crews have also followed a training course in Ukraine ("ZVV", 5 November 1998).

² "Svobodnaya Gruziya", 18 July 1998. The total length of the sea border protected by Georgian troops is of more than 270 km ("ZVV", 17 July 1998).

³ "Svobodnaya Gruziya", 2 September 1998; The first ship to undergo control from the side of Georgian border troops was the ship "Maria" under Maltese flag ("ZVV", 5 September 1998)

⁴ The Akhaltsike Border Guard Detachment was created on the 28th of May 1924. The detachment had been assigned the task of defending 141 km of the border. Russian border guards from the Akhaltsikhe Border Detachment have begun to hand over their pickets to Georgian border troops since the end of 1998. On the 30th of January 1999 the "ZVV" newspaper reported that a car column transporting 17 officers and sub-lieutenants as well as 28 members of their families had arrived at Nalichik from the Akhaltsike border detachment. The transfer process of the pickets and of the troops' property ended with a ceremony which took place on the 14th of February 1998. Colonel Viktor Serdnik, Commander of the "Georgia" Group, Avtandil Ikitishvily, chief of the Headquarters of the Department for the guard of Georgia's state border, as well as other officials took part in the ceremony. According to the accounts of colonel Viktor Sevedkin, since May 1924 and until the 14th of February 1999 the soldiers of the Akhalitsikhe detachment "have retained more than three thousand persons attempting to violate the frontier, 25 thousand violators of the frontier regime, stopped the transit of two thousand fire arms and of 100,000 ammunition items". After the pickets had been handed over to Georgian border guards, Russian soldiers of the Akhaltsikhe Detachment were transferred to some border guard units in Armenia and Adjaria. Russian border guards from the Batumi, Sukhumi and Hichauri frontier detachments also were to hand over their tasks to the Georgian Department for Defence of the State Border on the 14th of

second decade of May Russian troops of the Sukhumi border detachment left the "Ochamchira" picket distributed in Abkhazia, on the coast of the Black Sea.¹

In the process of taking control over own state border, Georgian authorities not only have to face resistance of Russian border troops to the process, but also the resistance of authorities of the Autonomous Republic of Ajaria and the separatist republic of Abkhazia.

Aslan Abashidze, the Ajarian leader, has many times declared that he viewed the Russian border troops' withdrawal from Georgia as premature, that Georgia didn't possess enough forces for the protection of its own borders. The real reason of Abashidze's declarations is his fear of allowing the troops of the Georgian Department for Defence of the State Border on the territory of the Autonomous republic of Ajaria, as he views these troops as a danger for the authoritarian regime he had instituted in Ajaria. Showing their flexibility, the Tbilisi leaders have accepted that Ajarian border units should be assigned the task of defending the border between Georgia and Turkey on the territory of Ajaria. In November 1998, Valery Chekhidze, head of the state Department for the Defence of the state Border, while speaking about the guard of the border on the Ajarian sector, declared that the Tbilisi authorities had agreed with the leaders of Ajaria that border guard should be realised by Ajarian authorities with their own forces, without any new units of the Department being introduced in Ajaria,² and in March 1999 he announced that the withdrawal of Russian border troops from Ajaria should start from May. "The preparations have begun, concrete steps are being realised to attract local population to the defence of the Ajarian sector of the State Border."³ In an interview of the 3rd of June 1999, V. Chekhidze added: "We have no divergences with Aslan Abashidze. We proposed him our conception regarding the defence of the border. A regional direction of the Georgian, Department for the Defence of the State Border is being created in Batumi. The head of the direction will be the

February 1999 ("ZVV", 18 February 1999).

¹ "ZVV", 15 May 1999.

² "Svobodnaya Gruzziya", 29 November 1998. In May 1999 V. Chekhidze declared that the number of border guard soldiers on the territory of Ajaria would not be more than 2 thousand ("ZVV", 15 May 1999).

³ "Svobodnaya Gruzziya", 31 March 1999.

Ajarian deputy minister of security, local population will be attracted to this service".¹

As far as Abkhazian authorities are concerned, they have many times declared themselves against the withdrawal of Russian border troops from Abkhazia. V. Ardzinba, the leader of the self-proclaimed republic of Abkhazia, proposed Moscow that an agreement between Russia and Abkhazia regarding the status of Russian border troops on the territory of Abkhazia should be signed; in the same time he expressed the separatist republic's availability of bearing a part of the troop maintenance expenses. However, Russia has declared that this problem should be settled with the authorities in Tbilisi. In the same time, Russia assured Abkhazian authorities that the withdrawal of Russian border troops would not affect security in the area, as Russian peacekeeping forces will still be present in Abkhazia.²

Willing to achieve the withdrawal of Russian border troops from the territory of Georgia at any cost, the Tbilisi authorities proposed the Abkhazian separatists the same solution central authorities had reached in their relationships with Ajaria. It was proposed that a regional border guard direction, subordinated to the Georgian Department for the Defence of the State Border, should be created in Sukhumi. This direction would have the mission of protecting Abkhazia's sea border with their own forces. The separatist authorities have accepted to assume the responsibility of independently defending the borders of the republic, but they asked the authorities in Tbilisi to sign a bilateral agreement in this respect. Obviously, the Abkhazian proposal was rejected, as the signing of such an agreement would of have meant the recognition by Georgia of the separatist republic of Abkhazia".³

Although the authorities of Tbilisi and Sukhumi have not yet reached an agreement on the issue of the manner in which the defence of the state border should be realised, the withdrawal of Russian troops from Abkhazia is taking place in conformity with the Agreement between Russia and Georgia from the 3rd of November 1998 and with the Protocol regarding handing and taking over of military objects, of movable and immovable property, signed on the 4th

¹ "ZVV", 3 June 1999.

² "ZVV", 22 December 1998; 20 April 1999.

³ "ZVV", 3 June 1999

of December 1998 in Tbilisi.¹ In March 1999 V. Chekhidze declared that "the withdrawal of Russian coast guard units from Abkhazia will take place starting from April. The control of this section of the border will be realised by the help of the radio interception system from the motorboats on the sea".² At the middle of May 1999 he announced the press that Russia has evacuated the 5th and 6th border guard pickets and the sea brigade of Ochamchira from the territory of Abkhazia. He also added that "the border guard detachment of Sukhumi, the Pitsunda and Gantiadsk border guard pickets a few other formations will be soon withdrawn from the territory of Abkhazia... The withdrawing process of the Russian troops from Abkhazia was planned to end at the end of May this year. However, at the request of the Russian military, the withdrawing process will end at the end at of June, so that 49 children of the soldiers should be able to finish their school year".³

While insisting on the Russian border troops' withdrawal from Georgia, the Tbilisi authorities try to find new sources and manners of defending the border between Georgia and Turkey. In November 1998 the Georgian border troops completed their naval potential with a German ship, and in December with a Turkish motorboat.⁴ In 1999 Georgian border troops are to receive financial support as well as other types of assistance in the total value of 12 million 378 thousand dollars from the US.⁵ During one of his interviews in August 1998, Valery Chekhidze declared that he was being assisted by an US counsellor,⁶ Georgia also receives material support from Ukraine, Greece,⁷ Germany etc, for strengthening up its border guard troops. In May 1999

¹ "ZVV", 24 December 1998

² "Svobodnaya Gruzziya", 31 March 1999

³ "ZVV", 20 May 1999

⁴ "Svobodnaya Gruzziya", 13, 18 November 1998; "ZVV", 3 December 1998.

⁵ "Svobodnaya Gruzziya", 31 March 1999; "ZVV", 20 April 1999. It seems that the Georgian Ministry of Defence, led by Vardiko Nadibaidze, elaborated the Programm concerning the US' financial assistance to Georgia. The "ZVV" newspaper informed its readers in April 1998 that during V. Nadibaidze's visit to the US a co-operation plan had been signed between the US Ministry of Defence and its Georgian counterpart, according to which Georgian Army Forces will receive two patrolling motorboats ("ZVV", 4 April 1998).

⁶ "Svobodnaya Gruzziya", 30 August 1998.

⁷ RFE/RL NEWSLINE, Vol. 3, No. 114, Part I, 11 June 1999.

Georgian border troops got from Ukraine a "MI-8 MTV" helicopter, considered to be one of the most advanced in the entire world. Its price is about 1 million USD. The helicopter was bought with the money given by the United States Government to Georgia for the development of its state border infrastructure. On the whole, Georgian border troops intend to buy 8 such helicopters.¹

Russian border troops perceive losing control over Georgia's state border in quite a sickly way, a fact that generated certain incidents in the process of handing over military functions and objectives. For example, one such incident took place in August 1998 when Georgian troops took control over the Poti border checkpoint. Russia then blamed Georgia of having established control over the checkpoint mentioned above without previously notifying the Russian side; at their turn, the Tbilisi authorities accused Moscow of not respecting the border troops' withdrawal schedule and of they artificially delaying this process.²

We conclude that the relations between Russian border troops deployed in Georgia and the Tbilisi authorities are as complicated as the ones the TGRT has with Georgian authorities. The leaders of Georgia regard Russian border troops as a necessary evil of which they try to get rid of while they create conditions for defending their borders by their own forces. As far as Russian border troops in Georgia are concerned, judging by their actions, they have not yet acknowledged the fact that they are on the territory of another state, a thing that should inspire them adequate behaviour. And this fact leads to a range of conflicts between them and Georgian authorities and to more complicated relationships between Russia and Georgia in general.

The Russian "peacekeeping" troops

Besides Russian troops of the military bases and the border troops, in Georgia there are also Russian "peacekeeping" forces - in Southern Ossetia and Abkhazia.

¹ "ZVV", 22 May 1999.

² "Svobodnaya Gruzija", 11 September 1998.

The "Peacekeeping forces" in Southern Ossetia were introduced to the conflict area between Georgia and Ossetia according to the 3rd article, 3rd paragraph of the agreement between Russia and Georgia "Regarding principles of settlement of the conflict between Georgia and Ossetia", concluded on the 24th of June in Sochi.¹ This article mentions that "In order to accomplish the indicated tasks,² besides the Control Commission,³ joint forces are created for establishing peace and maintaining legal order. Besides this commission, joint observer groups, too, will be established. These observers will be placed on the perimeter of the security area".

The decision to establish the PKF was adopted by the Joint Control Commission on the 4th of July 1992; it was decided that the Russian Federation, Georgia and Northern Ossetia (subject of Russian Federation) should each place 800 soldiers at the JCC's disposal, 300 of these acting as reserve troops.⁴

It was agreed upon that the review of the troops should take place until the 12th of July. By the same time it was decided that, in two days' time, the PKF Headquarters should be created, by determining its structure and

¹ "Rossiykaya gazeta", 26 June 1992.

² For example ensuring control of the cease-fire, the withdrawal of military formations, the dissolution of self - defence forces and the ensuring of a security regime in the conflict area.

³ The Joint Control Commission (JCC) was created on the 4th of July 1992 within the "meeting of the representatives of the parties for the realisation of the Agreement regarding the principles of settlement of the conflict between Georgia and Ossetia, holding its meetings in the town of Vladikavkaz (Northern Ossetia). The JCC was created in order to fulfil the 3rd article of the agreement mentioned above, stipulating the following:

"1) To the purpose of ensuring control of the cease-fire, withdrawal of military formations, dissolution of self - defence forces and ensuring a security regime in the indicated area, an Joint Control Commission, composed of the Parties involved in the conflict is established; this commission fulfils its missions by collaborating with the group of military observers, established in conformity with the Kazbegi agreement;

2) Each of the Parties taking part in the commission assigns its representatives within the commission. The control commission will have residence in the town of Tsinvali".

⁴ The Russian Federation engaged itself to put a Airborne regiment and 300 soldiers in reserve to the disposal of the JCC.

equipment, and that an observing group should be established, according to the Sochi Agreement.

The Russian "peacekeeping" battalion is completed with personnel from the Army Forces of the Russian Federation, called under arms as a result of recruitment. Before being sent to Southern Ossetia, soldiers attend special courses (lasting for a few weeks) in the Leningrad Military District, where they take knowledge of the peacekeeping activity and the tasks they are to fulfil. The "peacekeeping" battalions are in the conflict area for a period of 6 months. Officers serve 1-1,5 years in the area. Presently, Major General Evgeny Churayev commands Russian "peacekeeping" forces in Ossetia.¹

In December 1997 in the Security Zone (with a total area of 1,736 km²)² there were 15 pickets, 5 of whom were served by Russian soldiers. Russian soldiers also served in two checkpoints and had the task of maintaining order in the town of Tsinvali. The number of personnel, armament and equipment of the Russian "peacekeeping" forces in Southern Ossetia are illustrated in tables 5 and 6.

At the last meeting of the Unified Control Commission, of the 23rd of July 1999, it was decided that the number of pickets in the Security Zone should be reduced to 10 (4 Ossetian ones, 3 Georgian ones and 3 Russian ones). The Ossetian "peacekeeping" forces are to serve 4 other temporary checkpoints as well (until the 1st of December 1999).³

¹ "Black Sea Press", 15, 23 July 1999; "Svobodnaya Gruzija", 16 July 1999.

² "Yuzhnaya Ossetia", 23 August 1997.

³ "Black Sea Press", 24 July 1999.

Table 5
Number of military personnel in the Peacekeeping forces in Southern Ossetia
during January and June 1996

	According to scripts								in active service							
	Total		Officers		Sub-lieutenants		Sergeants and privates		Total		Officers		Sub-lieutenants		Sergeants and privates	
	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	Jan.	June
Joint Military Command	102	102	55	55	1	1	46	46	100	100	53	53	1	1	46	46
Russian PKF	589	586	44	41	20	20	525	525	520	513	44	41	18	18	458	454
Georgian PKF	564	674	67	44	30	19	467	611	534	438	21	16	30	19	473	403
Ossetian PKF	677	674	47	44	17	19	613	611	565	565	44	44	17	17	511	504
Commandant's office	16	16	13	13	-	-	3	3	16	16	13	13	-	-	3	3
TOTAL	1,948	2,052	226	197	68	59	1,654	1,796	1,735	1,632	175	167	66	55	1,491	1,410

* The table was drawn up by the author

Table 6
Armament possessed by the Joint Peacekeeping Forces in Southern Ossetia
during January and June 1996

	Armored infantry combat vehicles		Armored transporters		Kalashnikov automatic guns		Kalashnikov light machine-guns		Heavy machineguns		Antitank hand grenades		Degtyariov light machineguns		Trucks		Cars		
	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	Jan.	June	
Joint Military Command	-	-	-	-	45	45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
Russian PKF	-	-	38	38	296	479	20	24	8	9	22	32	23	27	30	30	2	2	
Georgian PKF	4	-	10	10	408	408	21	21	8	8	46	46	4	4	29	29	2	2	
Ossetian PKF	4	1	17	13	333	317	25	25	-	-	23	24	-	-	24	24	3	3	
Commandant's office	-	-	-	-	10	10	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
TOTAL	8	1	65	61	1093	1259	69	73	16	17	91	102	27	31	83	83	12	12	

* The table was drawn up by the author

The Ossetian "peacekeeping" battalion active in Southern Ossetia could be considered a Russian battalion. Legally, the Ossetian battalion should be completed and financially supported by the Ministry for Exceptional Situations (MES) of Northern Ossetia. In reality, it is completed with people of South Ossetia, many of whom have actively taken part in military actions during the year 1992. For example, in July 1996, out of the 565 soldiers of the battalion only 100 had a residence visa for Northern Ossetia. The other soldiers were from South Ossetia.

During the years 1992 and 1993 many young people of Northern Ossetia were willing to serve in the Ossetian battalion and even sacrifice their life for the Union of Southern and Northern Ossetia. However, presently such "patriots" almost don't exist anymore. This can be mostly explained by the fact that the material state of the Ossetian battalion is miserable: the soldiers lack clothes and food, they get a poor salary which they receive a few month in delay, they live in unheated houses and lack sanitary conditions, the discipline is at the lowest level. The Ossetian battalion reached this state because the MES of Northern Ossetia has stopped financing it, starting from the year 1994. For the MES, maintaining the Ossetian battalion is a burden beyond its financial possibilities. Between 1994 - 1996 the Ossetian battalion has not been financed by Russian Ministry of Defence either, because it was not in its financing and supply scripts. Taking this situation into account, the Joint Control Commission addressed the Government of the Russian Federation on the 6th of December and the 23rd of July 1996, asking it to "solve the problems connected with the regular financing" of the Ossetian battalion.¹

The Russian "peacekeeping" forces in Abkhazia were introduced to the conflict area in conformity with an Agreement between Georgia and Abkhazia regarding a cease-fire and a separation of forces, signed on the 14th of May 1994, in Moscow. According to the agreement, collective peacekeeping forces of the CIS states were to be introduced to the conflict area. However, as these states refused to send their soldiers to Abkhazia,

¹ See the decisions of the JCC of the 6th of December 1994 and of the 23rd of July 1996.

now there are only Russian troops in the conflict area. Initially, around 3,000 soldiers were sent here,¹ but their number reduced to around 1,800 soldiers. The Main Headquarters of the peacekeeping troops are distributed in Sukhumi. Another two regional headquarters are distributed in the towns of Gali and Zugdidi.

At the middle of the year 1997 a "peacekeeping" battalion of the 345 Airborne regiment in Gudauta, two motorised infantry battalions belonging to 12 and 102 Russian military bases (also called the "Ajarian" and "Armenian" battalions) and a motorised infantry of the 27th Division, Leningrad Military District (also called the "Totsk" battalion) were operating in the conflict area. Beside these four battalions, an engineer company and an artillery division also were active in the area. These troops served 33 checkpoints round the clock. They possessed light combat armament and over 130 armoured combat vehicles.

Since the beginning of the "peacekeeping" operation in Abkhazia and until the 23rd of June 1999, 19,202 Russian soldiers served in the conflict area. As a result of "terrorist" attacks against them, 68 persons died and 255 were wounded. Two of the soldiers were post mortem conferred the title of "Hero of Russia".²

As the Russian "peacekeeping" is not the object of our study, we shall not elucidate the status, mandate and problems connected to the presence of Russian "peacekeeping" troops in Georgia. We only shall mention that peacekeeping operations in Southern Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as the operation in the Transdnistrian area of the Republic of Moldova, an operation on which we will talk in the next chapter, are in essence border wars of Russia.³ Like Moldova, Georgia only accepted the Russian "peacekeeping" forces on its territory only after a few "tough" declarations from the part of Moscow. "The agreement regarding the settlement of the conflict between Georgia and Ossetia", from the 24th of June 1992, was signed by E. Shevardnadze only after the Declaration of the Government of the Russian Federation regarding the situation in Southern Ossetia, from the

¹ "ZVV", 25 June 1994.

² "RIA Novosti", 23 June 1999.

³ "The Independent", No. 1281, February 1994.

21st of June 1992, which underlined that if the two sides do not cease fire, if they do not withdraw their military formations and do not start negotiations, "The Russian Federation will take all necessary measures in order to protect human rights, the life and dignity of the population of the region, the re-establishment of peace and legality".¹

In the opinion of observers, in Georgia, like in Moldova, the Russian "peacekeeping" forces support separatist authorities in Tskhinvali, Sukhumi, and Batumi and engage in an activity which is damaging to Georgia's national interests, by establishing a defence shield for the separatists, behind which Ossetian and Abkhazian authorities consolidate their armed forces and state structures

¹ See: The final Report of the "International co-operation in peacekeeping" International Conference, Moscow, 20 – 24th of June 1994.

CHAPTER III

RUSSIAN TROOPS IN MOLDOVA *PERSPECTIVES OF RUSSIAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN MOLDOVA*

The Operational Group of Russian Forces in the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova. Short History

The Operational Group of Russian Forces (OGRF) deployed in the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova was established on the 1st of July 1995, as a result of the re-organisation of the 14th Guard Army. The Group was established in conformity with the directive of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation No. 314/2/0296¹ and is considered to be the successor of the 14th Army. The history of this Army began in the second half of November 1956. It was established on the basis of the 10th and 24th Army Corps' of the Odessa Military District, which had been dissolved by a directive of the Main Headquarters of the Ground Troops of the USSR, dated 15th of October 1956.²

The 10th Army Corps, called "Budapest", was created on the 18th of August 1942 near the town of Makhachkaly. During the Soviet - German war, the 10th Army Corps took part in the liberation of the Soviet cities of Melitopol, Borislav, Kherson, Nikolaev, Odessa, Kaluga, Tiraspol, as well as to the "liberation" of Yugoslavia and Hungary from the fascists, including the town of Budapest, whose name it began to bear. It ended its fighting in the town of Freistat in Austria. The 24th Army Corps was created on the 6th of April 1943. During the Soviet - German war, this army corps took part in the battle of Kursk,

¹ Operativnaya Gruppy Rossiyskikh Voisk v Pridnestrovskom Regione Respubliki Moldova (Istoriya, traditsiy, preemstvennost'), Tiraspol, 1996, p.1.

² "The History of the 14th Army". Unpublished document drawn up by the Command of the 14th Army.

in crossing over the Dniepr, in the Iasi - Kishinev operation, in the fights for the "liberation" of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, including the town of Prague.

In the year 1956, 4 divisions were made up into the 14th Army: three rifle divisions (the 86th division deployed in the town of Baltsi, the 59th division deployed in Tiraspol; the 14th division deployed in Belgorod - Dnestrovsk) and a motorised one (the 69th division deployed in the town of Bolgrad). The 14th Army Headquarters was in the town of Chisinau (Kishinev) until 1985, and since then up to now in the town of Tiraspol.¹ At the beginning of April 1995 the 14th Army Headquarters consisted of 177 military and 42 "workers and employees".

In 1956, Lieutenant General Ivan M. Afonin, Hero of the Soviet Union, was appointed commander of the 14th Army. He commanded the Army until the 25th of May 1960. After Ivan M. Afonin the following generals held this function:

- Lieut. Gen. Grigory Shcherbak (28.05.1960 - 28.05.1969)
- Lieut. Gen. Vladimir Meretskov (28.05.1969 - 30.11.1971)
- Lieut. Gen. Grigory Yashkin (30.11.1971 - 26.12.1975)
- Maj. Gen. Anatoliy Fomin (26.12.1975 - 27.12.1977)
- Maj. Gen. Vladimir Vostrov (27.12.1977 - 10.07.1980)
- Lieut. Gen. Viktor Ermakov (10.07.1980 - 07.05.1982)
- Lieut. Gen. Boris Tkach (07.05.1982 - 16.09.1984)
- Lieut. Gen. Ivan Fuzhenko (16.09.1984 - 17.02.1986)
- Lieut. Gen. Anatoly Sergeev (17.02.1986 - 26.05.1988)
- Lieut. Gen. Genadiy Yakovlev (26.05.1988 - 16.01.1992)
- Maj.Gen. Yury Netkachev (16.01.1992 - 01.07.1992)
- Lieut. Gen. Aleksandr Lebed (01.07.1992 - 31.05.1995)
- Lieut. Gen. Valery Evnevich (31.05.1995 - till present)

General Valery Evnevich, present commander of the OGRF in the Transdnestr Area of the Republic of Moldova, was born in the year 1951. He graduated from the Superior School of the Ryazan paratroopers' Superior School. He took part in the war in Afghanistan, where he Commanded the 66th airborne assault brigade in the town of Gordez. After the evacuation of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan, he served in the town of Yalatani, in Turkmenia. Later,

¹ *Ibid.*

he was appointed commander of the Taman' Paratroopers Division (Moscow Military District), a function which he held for around 4 years. Under the command of V. Evnevich, the Taman' Division took part in crushing the putsch in Moscow, in October 1993, a fact for which he was decorated with the order "Hero of the Russian Federation" and appointed deputy commander of the 1st Tank Army. On the 31st of May 1995, he was appointed commander of the OGRF by a decree of President Boris Yeltsin.

On the 30th of April 1975, by a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and by an order (number 00399) of the USSR Ministry of Defence, the 14th Army was decorated with the "Red Flag" order, "for special merits in the defence of the Socialist Motherland, for successes in political and combat training, as well as in connection with the 30 years' jubilee of the Victory of the Soviet People in the Great War for Defence of the Motherland of the years 1941 - 1945". By the same time, the Army was conferred the honorific "Guard" title. On the 1st of September 1993, out of the total amount of units, 9 were having the "guard" title, 7 of them had honorific names, 9 of them were decorated with orders such as Kutuzov, Suvorov and Bogdan Hmel'nitsky. Out of the 78 soldiers and officers of the 14th Army (including the 18th and 24th Army Corps', which had been the bases of the army) to have been distinguished with the title of "Hero of the Soviet Union" through the years, 7 were "for eternity" inscribed in the lists of the units where they had fulfilled their military service.

Towards August 1991, there were around 30,000 Soviet soldiers on the territory of the Republic of Moldova.¹ There were 36 military garrisons in Moldova, the biggest of them being the Kishinev and Tiraspol garrisons. Most of the units were included in the 14th Army. But, besides these, in Moldova there

¹ "Mezhdunarodnaya Bezopasnost' i razoruzhenie. Ezhegodnik SIPRI 1994 (sokrashchenyi perevod s angliyskogo), Moskva, Izdatel'stvo "Navka", 1994, p.5. According to other sources, 23,000 soldiers were deployed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova in August 1991 (Vladimir Socor, Russian Forces in Moldova. - RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 1, No. 34, 28 August 1992, p.38). According to the declarations of General Yuri Netkachev, former commander of the 14th Army, at the beginning of the 1992 the army led by him consisted of 28,000 persons, 6,000 of whom active on the territory of Transnistria. The Army's Headquarters counted around 240 persons. - Author's interview with Gen. Netkachev, Tbilisi, 28th of November 1997.

also were units belonging to the 5th Air Army, units directly subordinated to the Odessa Military District, as well as the infrastructure units of the Black Sea Fleet. For example, within the 5th Air Army on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, there were the 36th helicopter squadron and 5th reconnaissance plane squadron. The 86th Combat aircraft regiment, deployed in Marculesti, was included in the 119th infrastructure of the Black Sea Fleet, and the 300th paratroopers regiment in the centre of Kishinev of the 98th Airborne Division deployed in Bolgrad.

During the years of the "cold war", Soviet troops on the territory of the Moldavian SSR were included in the Odessa Military District. In case of conflict, troops belonging to the district had the mission of carrying out a strategic offensive against the Balkans on the South-western military operations scene, the Suez Channel and the Northern Coast of Africa being the second objective. In this context, Moldova and Soviet military forces on its territory had a global strategic significance.¹ After the disintegration of the USSR, Moldova lost this significance. However, Russia continues to view Moldova as a very important strategic point in the Southeast of Europe. General Lebed, former commander of the 14th Army, called Transnistria "the key to the Balkans", considering that Russia would lose this key and influence in the area by withdrawing its troops from Moldova.²

But it is obvious that Russian intentions of keeping military presence on the territory of Moldova are not only dictated by strategic military considerations. On the 17th of December 1993, in Moscow, within the seminary with the theme "Perspectives of the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict", organised by the Russian Association of International Relationships Theory and Modelling with a restricted character (only representatives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the State Duma, of the General Staff, of the Diplomatic Academy and of the Russian Science Academy, as well as N. Medvedev, by then Special Representative of the Russian Federation President for the settlement of the

¹ Instabilities in Post - Communist Europe. Moldova. Conflict Studies Research Centre. RMA Sandhurst Paper prepared by Dr. T. Waters (January 1995), p.14-15.

² See: Trevor Waters. Moldova: continuing recipe for instability - Jane's Intelligence Review, September 1996, p. 401.

Transnistrian conflict took part in it), it was ascertained that Russia's interests in Transnistria were determined by the need to:

- a) maintain Russia's strategic positions in the Southeast of Europe;
- b) protect the interests of Russian population in Moldova, as well as of other nationalities who view Russia as their historical motherland;
- c) maintain co-operative relationships with factories in Transnistria, as some of these are unique within the military and industrial complex* ;
- d) settle the conflict to the interest of internal stability and of Russia's consolidating the relationships with countries in the immediate neighbourhood where there is a Russian minority;
- e) establish more predictable and stable relationships with Romania and not admit the growth of its nationalist influence over Moldova.¹

Further on, we shall see that Russia has succeeded in reaching its goals, generally speaking.

As integration processes within the CIS amplify, Moldova's strategic importance increases, and if a military block should be built up in former Soviet space, in case Russia keeps its military presence in Transnistria, Moldova will regain the strategic significance it had during the "cold war" period. That's what explains Russia's insistence on maintaining its forces in Moldova and keeping the latter within the Russian sphere of influence. But this will be discussed later.

After the independence of the Republic of Moldova had been declared, on the 14th of November 1991, the patrimony of Soviet military formations on the territory of Moldova passed under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Moldova. Military technique, armament, buildings and other properties of military units

* On the territory of the so-called "DMR" there are factories of an exceptional importance to Russia, some of them being part of the military and industrial complex of the Russian Federation. Amongst these, we can mention the following: "Lyt mash" plant in Tiraspol, which used to supply almost the entire production of foundry machines in the country during the Soviet period, the refrigerators wagons and cable production plants in Bender, which used to produce 63% of refrigerators wagons and cables of the ex-U.R.S.S., the "Elektromash, "Elektroapparat" plants, and so on - See: "Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie", No. 5 (9), March 1996.

¹ "Bezopasnost'" Informatsyonny Sbornik Fonda Natsional'noy i Mezhdunarodnoy Bezopasnosti, No. 1-2 (January-February), 1994, pp. 52-54.

passed under the republic's jurisdiction were transmitted to the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova.

The decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova dated 18th of March 1992 "Regarding the transfer to the jurisdiction of the Republic of Moldova of military formations deployed on its territory" awakened a negative reaction from the part of Moscow. Consequently, on the 20th of March 1992 an agreement "Regarding conditions of reformation of the Army Forces of the former USSR, deployed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova and social protection of the military" was concluded between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Main Command of the CIS Army Forces. Through this agreement, former Soviet troops on the territory of Moldova divided into military forces of Moldova and troops under CIS command.

According to the Agreement mentioned above, around 150 "military units and formations" located on the territory of Moldova passed to the orders of the Moldovan Ministry of Defence. Other 50 military units and formations, considered as having a strategic importance, passed to the orders of the Supreme Command of the CIS Army Forces. CIS Units were to be withdrawn from the territory of the Republic of Moldova until the 1st of January 1993.

Strategic troops on the territory of Moldova which had not been included in the Moldovan Army only had the status of CIS troops for a few days. On the 1st of April 1992, Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, issued the decree "Regarding transfer to the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation of former USSR Army Forces military units temporarily deployed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova". According to this decree, CIS forces on the territory of Moldova passed under Russian jurisdiction. Thus, formally, the Russian Federation is military present on the territory of the Republic of Moldova since the 1st of April 1992. In reality, Russian troops have been present in Moldovan districts of the left side of the Dniestr since the end of the 18th century, and in districts on the right side of the Dniestr since the year 1812, the year when Basarabia was occupied by Russia. During 1918 - 1940 and 1941 - 1944, when Basarabia was a part of the Romanian State, there have been no Russian troops in the districts between the Prut and the Dniestr [Nistru]. Between 1941 there have been no Russian troops in Transnistria either, as this area was then under Romanian administration.

The Patrimony of TGRT/OGRF

Until the middle of the year 1994 the main forces of the 14th Army have been concentrated in the 59th Motorised Rifle Division, which included three motorised rifle regiments (176, 179 and 183), the 356th tank regiment, an artillery regiment, an air-defence missile regiment, an independent anti - tank artillery battalion, an engineer battalion and other units (see table 7).¹

After the liquidation of the 59th Motorised Rifle Division, the main formation within the OGRF is the 8th Independent Motorised Rifle Brigade. On the 1st of July 1999, it counted around 1570 person and possessed 113 battle tanks, 73 armoured combat vehicles (ACVs), 92 artillery system, 74 armoured personnel carrier look-alikes and armoured infantry fighting vehicle look-alikes (APC & AIFV Look-alikes).

On the 1st of July 1999 the patrimony of the 14th Army included 117 battle tanks (T-64), 133 ACVs (68 "BTK-70", 7 "BTK-60", 58 "BMP"), 120 artillery system, 7 combat support helicopters (5 "MI-8", 2 "MI-24K"), around 50,000 automatic guns etc.

In table 8 (pp. 152-153) we see that most of the armament limited by the FACE Treaty is concentrated within the 8th Independent Motorised Rifle Brigade. Another important quantity is being stored at military depot number 69 (4 tanks, 60 ACVs, 36 artillery systems, some of which fit for use of nuclear weapons). We also see from the table that since the 1st of January 1995 until the 1st of July 1999 the number of artillery systems was only reduced by one item, the one of battle tanks and combat support helicopters by 2 items each, of armoured combat vehicles by 33 units. This insignificant reduction of Russian military technique on the territory of Moldova, which took place after the signing of the Agreement between Moldova and Russia regarding the withdrawal of Russian military formations from the territory of Moldova, from the 21st of October 1994, is the result of Moscow's lack of will to evacuate its

¹ Gerald B. Solomon, "Le maintien de la paix en Transnistrie - un teste pour la CSCE. Assemble de l'Atlantique du Nord. Commission Politique". Rapports 1994, November 1994, p.5-6

troops from Transnistria, a region declared by Kremlin as "area of strategic interest to Russia".

Besides armament indicated in the table, at the half of the year 1997 the depots in Transnistria also had "35,600 soldier greatcoats, 77,600 complete sets of underwear, 51,000 lap caps, and even 31,000 pairs of kirza boots. Without taking into account 390 campaign kitchens, 7 bakeries and 3 army hospital sets with the whole range of medical instruments, as well as proper supplies and medicine".¹

Most of the ammunition of the 14th Army is kept near the village of Kolbasna (Rybnitsa district), in a depot with an area of 132 ha and a capacity of 2,700 wagons. At the beginning of the year 1990, 2,600 ammunition wagons (around 50,000 tons) and 96 wagons of missiles were kept in the depot.²

¹ "Kak tam, v Kramatorskoi?" - "ZVV", 3 September 1997.

² The data regarding the total amount of ammunition in the Kolbasna depot are very contradictory. According to an interview given by A. Lebed to a correspondent of the "Segodnya" newspaper, in May 1995 there were 2,600 wagons of armament and ammunition in the Kolbasna depots, these amounts exceeding 2 times the storing capacity of the depots. Out of the total quantity of ammunition, 1,200 wagons were kept outside on the ground, 657 tons of ammunition, most of them mines made in 1938, were non-transportable and were to be destroyed on the spot ("Segodnya", 17 May 1995).

Table 7

**Structure of 59th Motorised Rifle Division and the CFE Treaty Limited Equipment in its possession
(July 1992 - January 1997)**

Name of unit	Number of Personnel and CFE Treaty Limited Equipment	The 14 th Army				OGRF(starting with the 1 st of July 1995)			
		07/92	01/93	01/94	01/95	11/95	01/96	07/96	01/97
The 176 th Motorized Rifle Regiment	Number of Personnel	244	244	245	244	x	x		
	Battle Tanks	18	22	21	16				
	ACVs	26	23	22	13				
	APC & AIFV Look-alikes	16	7	6	5				
	Artillery	22	22	24	24				
	AVLBs	1	1	1	1				
The 179 th Motorized Rifle Regiment	Number of Personnel	244	244	245	244	244	244	244	173
	Battle Tanks	20	22	20	16				
	ACVs	32	30	30	17				
	APC & AIFV Look-alikes	25	11	11	10	7	9	9	9
	Artillery	31	27	25	25	12	12	12	12
	AVLBs	1	1	1	1				
The 183 rd Motorized Rifle Regiment	Number of Personnel	1517	1517	1524	1518	1518	1518	1518	1819
	Battle Tanks	6	12	12	22	31	31	31	31
	ACVs	95	85	82	94	53	50	50	50
	APC & AIFV Look-alikes	26	21	21	18	23	23	23	23
	Artillery	18	24	20	20	24	24	24	24
	AVLBs	1	1	1	1				
	Number of Personnel	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261

The 356 th Tank Regiment	Battle Tanks	82	68	68	66	85	85	85	84
	ACVs	17	17	17	17		3	3	3
	APC & AIFV Look-alikes	17	12	12	12	12	12	12	6
	Artillery	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
	AVLBs	2	2	2	2				
The 328 th SP Artillery Regiment	Number of Personnel	152	152	152	222	151	151	151	151
	ACVs	5	3	2	2				
	APC & AIFV Look-alikes	37	11	11	10	12	12	12	12
	Artillery	47	51	51	51	48	48	48	48
The 1162 nd Air Defense Missile Regiment	Number of Personnel	184	417	417	417	417	417	417	316
	APC & AIFV Look-alikes	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
The 1299 th Indep. Anti-tank Artillery Battalion	Number of Personnel	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
	APC & AIFV Look-alikes	18	16	15	16	16	16	16	16
The 102 nd Independent Reconnaissance Battalion	Number of Personnel	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	175
	ACVs	23	23	22	23				
	APC & AIFV Look-alikes	10	5	3	2	3	1	1	1
The 201 st Independent Signals Battalion	Number of Personnel	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	98
	APC & AIFV Look-alikes	11	10	8	8	8	8	8	8
The 66 th Independent Engineering Battalion	Number of Personnel	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	115
	APC & AIFV Look-alikes	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	AVLBs		1	1					
The 896 th Independent Material Supply Bat.		x	x	x	x	x			
The 275 th Independent Repairing and Reconditioning Battalion	Number of Personnel	x	x	x	x	x	61	61	x
	APC & AIFV Look-alikes						2	2	
	Number of Personnel	2784	3017	3026	3088	2773	2834	2834	3119
	Battle Tanks	126	124	121	120	116	116	116	115

TOTAL	ACVs	198	181	175	166	53	53	53	53
	APC & AIFV Look-alikes	175	107	101	95	95	97	97	89
	Artillery	127	133	129	129	93	93	93	93
	AVLBs	5	6	6	5	0			

*The table was realised by author. Based on CFE Information Exchange.

Explanations: x - Unit without CFE Treaty Limited Equipment.

ACVs - Armoured Combat Vehicles.

APC & AIFV Look-alikes - Armoured personnel carrier look-alikes and armoured infantry fighting vehicle look-alikes.

AVLBs - Armoured vehicle launched bridges.

Table 8

CFE Treaty Limited Equipment possessed by the 59th Motorised Rifle Division and the 8th Motorised Rifle Brigade

Date	Number of 14 th Army/OGRF Personnel	The 59 th Motorized Rifle					
		Battle Tanks		ACVs		Artillery	
		Total for the 14 th Army	The 59 th Mot. Rifle Division	Total for the 14 th Army	The 59 th Mot. Rifle Division	Total for the 14 th Army	The 59 th Mot. Rifle Division
07/92	9254	126	126	198	198	127	127
01/93	9225	124	124	181	181	133	133
01/94	7708	121	121	175	175	129	129
01/95	6356	120	120	166	166	129	129
01/96	6529	120	116	130	53	129	93
01/96	6285	120	116	130	53	129	93
01/97	4923	119	115	129	53	129	93
		The 8 th Independent Motorized Rifle Brigade					
		Battle Tanks		ACVs		Artillery	
		Total for the OGRF	The 8 th Indep. Motorized Rifle Brig.	Total for the OGRF	The 8 th Indep. Motorized Rifle Brig.	Total for the OGRF	The 8 th Indep. Motorized Rifle Brig.
07/97	3004	119	115	129	53	129	93
01/98	2824	119	115	129	53	129	93
07/99	2642	117	113	133	73	128	92

* The table was realised by author. Based on CFE Information Exchange. The table does not show the data regarding attack and combat support helicopters. Since 1992 and until 1999 the number of combat support helicopters was reduced from 9 to 7 items, and it seems that two assault helicopters were evacuated on the territory of Russia during the second half of the year 1997. Combat support and assault helicopters form an independent helicopter squadron.

According to same data, a large part of the ammunition was stored in Transnistria as a result of the Soviet troops' retreat from Hungary, Poland and the former GDR.¹

¹ On the eve of the 10th round of the negotiations between Moldova and Russia regarding the withdrawal of the 14th Army (August 1994) Moldavian and Russian experts

According to some information of the year 1994, 13,162 tons out of the total amount of ammunition in the Kolbasna depot could not be used by the formations of the 14th Army, because they did not possess the corresponding armament system, and 453 were non-transportable and were to be destroyed on the spot. According to the calculations made by specialists during the year 1994, a 7 months' period was needed for the liquidation of non-transportable ammunition. 154,311 artillery pieces were to have their detonator detached before transportation.

During the summer of 1995, after General Evnevich had come to the command of the 14th Army, a certain part of the non-transportable ammunition (around 10,000 mines, model 1938-1945, according to some data) were liquidated by detonation. However, the liquidation of all non-transportable ammunition was not possible then because of the destructive attitude of the Tiraspol authorities, which declared that explosions carried out in the deserted mines of the area represented an ecological threat. Later on, the separatist authorities declared themselves against the liquidation or evacuation of the ammunition, reasoning that "they could be useful" in case Moldova should declare war on Transnistria. In December 1995, General Evnevich declared that another 4,000 ammunition pieces were to be destroyed.¹ It is hard to know exactly the amount of non-transportable ammunition, which was liquidated in 1995, as the representatives of the Moldovan Ministry of Defence and of the OSCE Mission to Moldova were not allowed to observe the destruction process. By the same time press agencies disseminated information according to which a

have commonly established that the withdrawal of the 14th Army required 11,233 wagons, including 570 wagons for the transport of the troops; 4,215 wagons for the transport the military goods (1,485 wagons for armament only - 443,515 metric tons); 1,230 wagons for household goods (6,150 containers 5 tons each).regarding the withdrawal of the 14th Army (August 1994) Moldavian and Russian experts have commonly established that the withdrawal of the 14th Army required 11,233 wagons, including 570 wagons for the transport of the troops; 4,215 wagons for the transport the military goods (1,485 wagons for armament only - 443,515 metric tons); 1,230 wagons for household goods (6,150 containers 5 tons each).

¹ BASA - PRESS, 9, 15 December 1995; 12 August, 1 October, 6 November 1996.

part of the ammunition to be liquidated had been transmitted to Transnistrian authorities.

In July 1998, in Vienna, during the OSCE Reunion concerning military transparency in Moldova, Igor Morozov, representative of the President of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Moldova, promised that during the following two months Russia would start again the process of liquidation of the non-transportable ammunition and invited the representatives of the OSCE member states to observe the liquidation of the ammunition. However, I. Morozov (read Russia) has not yet honoured his promise up to now.

On the 10th of November 1994, the guard of the Kolbasna depot consisted of two companies of soldiers belonging to the 14th Army (around 70 persons). Moreover, on the territory of the depot a separatist sub-unit of 250 soldiers was placed. On the 3rd of February 1995, I. Smirnov issued a decree regarding some extra measures in the purpose of not allowing the 14th Army's technique, equipment and wealth to be evacuated from the territory of Transnistria. Consequently, during the first days of February 1995 the unconstitutional authorities in Tiraspol placed checkpoints (consisting of soldiers belonging to the "armed forces of the DMR") around the depot, too.

Another important depot of the OGRF is situated near Tiraspol, where, according to the declarations of General Evnevich, combat equipment sufficient for 17,000 soldiers is being stored.¹

In our opinion, neither Moldovan authorities, nor the Transnistrian ones do have any clear idea about the danger (ecological and of other nature) which the OGRF ammunition depots represent for the security of the region. It seems that nobody in Kishinev has yet calculated what would be the destructive range of an explosion of the OGRF depots. In order to make a clear idea of what could happen, should an explosion take place in the depots of Kolbasna or Tiraspol, we will only remind the evaluations made by a group of Russian experts regarding a weapon depot of more than 200,000 tons, stored in the south of Sakhalin island, whose "history" is very similar to the one of the depot in Kolbasna - the depot dates from the year 1943 and contains large amounts of non-transportable ammunition. According to the experts, the simultaneous explosion of the entire

¹ "Krasnaya zvezda", 19 May 1999.

ammunition stock would be equivalent with the consequences of a dozen atomic bombs of the same type as the one launched over Hiroshima in 1945.¹

While speaking about the OGRF ammunition depots, one must underline the fact that they are the main source providing weapons for the underworld of Moldova, Ukraine, Romania and Russia. Transnistrian "peacekeepers", too, take an active part in activities of illegal trade of weapons and ammunition of the OGRF. Here are a few examples. On the 12th of December 1997, the police of the Republic of Moldova arrested Lieutenant Colonel Vitaly Nemkov, head of the car service of the "peacekeeping forces" of the "DMR", accusing him of illegal keeping and trade of armament. On the 16th of September 1998, during the court session, he confessed that together with a group of other persons he had sold "Iglă" land to air class missile systems, around 10 kg of explosives and detonators. "According to the bill of indictment, the missiles had been sold to some persons... for 48,000 US\$ and the explosives and detonators were sold for different prices in the total sum of 1,250 US\$".²

During April 1998, as a result of the investigations of the police of Iasi, the Service of arms and ammunition managed to take hold of 34 fire arms, 846 items of ammunition, 108,7 kg explosives, 2373,4 kg of toxic substances. Dumitru Birliga, first deputy commander of the Iasi District Police Inspectorate, declared on the occasion of the capture that Transnistria was "one of the main weapon providers for the black market" in Romania.³ On the 25th of October 1996 the first terrorist bomb attack in Romania (motel "Kilometer 12" in Vesten, Sibiu district) took place. The bomb used by the terrorists had been procured in Transnistria for 600 US\$.⁴

Some representatives of the Kishinev government, too, have issued statements about the fact that Transnistria provides weapons to the underworld in Romania. Victor Catana, Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, in an interview given to the "Evenimentul zilei" newspaper of Bucharest, declared that "it was ascertained that the armament traffic from

¹ AP FLUX, 7 June 1999.

² BASA-PRESS, 16 September 1998.

³ "Evenimentul zilei", 13 April 1998.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6 July 1998.

Transnistria towards Romania not only consists of pistols and guns, but also of automatic weapons, plastic explosives and Stinger ground to air missiles.¹

In September 1998 the Russian Federal Security Service arrested in Moscow four persons from which it confiscated 16 kg of explosive used for hand-made bombs, 15 detonators and 14 remote control devices, a few pistols and transmission-reception devices. All these came from the depots of the OGRF deployed in Transnistria.²

The patrimony of the 14th Army (which is claimed by the separatist authorities in Tiraspol, and which Moscow tries to withdraw from the territory of Moldova) legally belongs to the Republic of Moldova. The following facts speak in favour of this statement.

By the decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova No. 234 dated 14th of November 1991,³ "the weapons, ammunition, means of transportation, military technique, military bases and any other property belonging to military units of the Soviet Army deployed on the territory of the republic" were declared property of the Republic of Moldova. Since the day it was issued and until present time, any state organ or leader of the former Soviet republics has not contested the decree mentioned above, as there is no legal ground for such a thing.

On the 18th of March 1992, M. Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova, issued the decree number 73, through which, "in order to create a basis for building up the "Army Forces of the Republic of Moldova", former Soviet military units deployed on the territory of Moldova were transferred to the jurisdiction of the Republic of Moldova and transmitted to the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova, "with all technique, armament, buildings and any other property in the account balance of the military units". (The number and distribution place of 104 military units were indicated in the annex. The list of military units also included units of the Kolbasna garrison, where most of the OGRF ammunition is being stored).

¹ *Ibid.*, 14 August 1998.

² *Ibid.*, 23 September 1998.

³ The decree is called "Regarding the declaration as property of the Republic of Moldova of armament, military technique and other military property belonging to military units of the Soviet Army deployed on the territory of the republic".

On the 1st of April 1992, ignoring the decree of President Snegur, Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation issued the decree No. 320 "Regarding the transfer to the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation of military units belonging to the former USSR Army Forces temporarily located on the territory of the Republic of Moldova". According to this decree, "the 14th Guard Army, formations, military units and institutions of the Armed Forces of the former USSR, located on the territory of the Republic of Moldova and not yet included within its army forces" passed under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and to the orders of the supreme commander of the CIS Unified Armed forces.¹ The troops' transfer to the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation can be explained by the following reasons: a) the need of maintaining a stable command and of insuring the functioning of the troops; b) the need to prevent troops from involving in inter-ethnic conflicts; c) the need of socially protecting the soldiers and the members of their families.²

Although the decree of the 1st of April 1992 had been an illegal and unfriendly act from the part of Russia, the leaders of Moldova did not contest it. This can be probably explained by the fact that the decree was issued in a period when relationships between Moldova and Russia were very tense, one of the purposes of its issuing being that of preventing troops from involving in a conflict. In spite of all these, there is a range of reasons for considering President Yeltsin's decree as illegal.

It is an unanimously accepted fact that on the territory of a state the internal laws of that state as well as international laws which the state has accepted by joining certain conventions and international treaties should be respected. However, in spite of all these unanimously accepted rules, President Yeltsin's decree extended over a territory which was not part of the Russian Federation, over persons not being citizens of the Russian Federation, over organisations and properties not belonging to Russia.

Thus, taking the above mentioned into account, President Yeltsin's decree of the 1st of April 1992 cannot be viewed as legal and all military technique, armament, ammunition and other property of former Soviet troops

¹ "Rossiyskaya gazeta", 3 April 1992

² *Ibid.*

deployed on the territory of Moldova when Yeltsin's decree was issued belonged to Moldova, and Russia appropriated a fortune which did not rightfully belong to it.

During the 7th round of the negotiations between Moldova and Russia regarding juridical status, manner and terms of withdrawal of Russian military formations temporarily deployed on the territory of Moldova, A. Tsaranu, head of the Moldovan delegation, drew the attention of the Russian delegation on the illegal character of the decree of the 1st of April 1992. The Russian side rejected the arguments of the Moldovan delegation, trying to interpret the term "jurisdiction" as "property". But these two notions are absolutely different and cannot be substituted.¹

Not only Russia, but also the self-proclaimed "DMR" covets for the military patrimony of the OGRF. At the beginning of February 1998, during a press conference, Viktor Siniov, deputy-leader of Transnistrian administration, declared that "according to a decision of the Supreme Soviet of Tiraspol, the military property of the Operational Group of Russian Forces deployed in the area had become "the property of the Transnistrian people". He also underlined that the OGRF's military patrimony should be divided in three categories: the one to remain in the possession of the OGRF, the part to be evacuated to Russia and the part to be commercialised, in agreement with Transnistria, on principles of equality. The income resulting from commercialising this part of the Russian patrimony will help Transnistria to partially pay its debts for the natural gas delivered by the Russian Federation. When the OGRF's patrimony is divided, he added, the interests of Kishinev will not be taken into account, as the Republic of Moldova "came off with all patrimony of Soviet military units distributed on its territory", after the fall of the Soviet Union. Viktor Siniov also added that, according to a protocol signed in Moscow on the 10th of November 1998, the OGRF would unconditionally transmit to the local authorities the immovable goods of the former 14th Army, as a recompense for its debts for communal services. On the 1st of January 1999, the OGRF's debts towards Tiraspol

¹ See: Yuridicheskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar'. Moscow, Sovetskaya entsiklopediya, 1987.

amounted to 7 million US\$ for communal services and of 16,2 billion US\$ for the buildings built for the 14th Army.¹

In another work,² we expressed the hope that during the following years there would be a political force that would ask Moscow the proper compensations for the patrimony Russia had illegitimately appropriated by President Yeltsin's decree from the 1st of April 1992 and at the same time we expected concrete steps in this direction when the Sturza government came to power in Moldova. But our hopes proved to be an illusion. Instead of asking Russian authorities to return the property stolen from Moldova on the 1st of April 1992, the Sturza government declared that it did not have any pretensions regarding income resulting from their commercialisation. After the meeting of the inter - government Moldovan - Russian committee for commercial and economic co-operation which took place in Kishinev during April 1999, Ion Sturza declared to the press that the Republic of Moldova did not "have any pretensions" to any part of the incomes resulting from the commercialisation of the 14th Army's military arsenal. It is true, however, that he specified that there was also a "confidential approach to this matter".³

In our opinion, the Republic of Moldova not only should claim its rights of property of the OGRF patrimony, but also to insist over the fact that it also should receive compensations for the damage provoked by the evacuation of armament to Russia between the 14th of November and the 1st of April 1992, i.e. the period between the issuing of President Snegur's decree regarding the declaration of the former Soviet troops' patrimony on the Republic of Moldova as property of Moldova and President Yeltsin's decree of the 1st of April 1992. From an interview of Ion Costas, former Minister of Defence of the Republic of Moldova, given in March 1992, we find out that during the period mentioned above "768 special automobiles and trucks, 43,000 fire arms, 38 million bullets,

¹ AP FLUX, 13 February 1999.

² M. Gribincea, *Trupele ruse in Republica Moldova: factor stabilizator ori sursa de pericol?* [Russian Troops in Moldova: Stability Factor or Source of Threat?], Chisinau, "Civitas", 1998, pp. 23-24.

³ AP FLUX, 21 April 1999

836 grenade launchers, 38 artillery pieces and so on were removed from Moldova to Russia".¹

The involvement of Russian troops in the Transnistrian conflict

The 14th Army became well known to international public opinion in connection with its soldiers' supporting separatist movements in Moldova and with its involvement in the Transnistrian conflict. In fact, the 14th Army was and still is the material, political and ideological support of separatism in the Republic of Moldova.

After the Republic of Moldova had declared its independence (on the 27th of August 1991) an intensive campaign was carried out in military units deployed in Moldova in order to indoctrinate military personnel in the spirit of Russian chauvinism, of Romaniaphobia and hatred towards the leadership of the Republic of Moldova. Between the 10th and 20th of September 1991, assemblies of the officers corps were organised in military units of the Tiraspol, Rybnitsa and Dubasari garrisons and adopted appeals towards the soldiers, as indicated by the leaders of the Odessa Military District and of the 14th Army. These appeals called the soldiers to boycott the decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova "Regarding withdrawal of military formations of the Soviet Army from the territory of the Republic of Moldova" (3rd of September 1991), raised doubts about the legitimacy of the eastern Moldovan districts' entering the Moldovan SSR in 1940 and put forward requests for the transferring of military units in Transnistria to the jurisdiction of the "DMR", as well as for defending the anti-constitutional authorities of Tiraspol from Moldova's "aggression".

¹ "Moldova suverana", 29 March 1992. In the same interview, Ion Costas declared that "starting with the 23rd of June 1990, when the sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova was proclaimed... 230 tanks, 245 ACVs, special cars, and so on have been withdrawn from our territory". In March 1992 the ex-Soviet troops on the territory of the Republic of Moldova possessed "buildings worth 11 billion roubles and armament or of worth of 4,8 billion US\$"

Thus, the resolution adopted by the officers of the Tiraspol garrison underlined that: "Military units of our garrison are deployed on the territory of the former Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which had been a part of Ukraine until the year 1940. Until 1917 this area was a part of the Russian State and had never been included in any other state before. We are in our home, on the lands of our ancestors, that's why the decisions of the people of Transnistria, whose manifested will has formed the DMSSR, are clear and familiar to us... We address the request of not admitting the withdrawal of the Soviet Army's units from the ancestral lands of our great Motherland".

At a similar meeting, held in military unit No. 34517 of Rybnitsa, the officers adopted a resolution which, among others, included the following requests: a) to adopt a decision concerning the transfer of units located in districts on the left bank of the Dniestr to the jurisdiction of the "DMSSR"; b) to express our firm decision of personally protecting the population of the "DMSSR" and its structures "from any military attacks".

Since September 1991, a range of military formations have been established and armed in the "DMSSR" (the "National Guard", the Workers' Detachments of co-operation with the Militia, the territorial salvation detachments), with the direct participation of military belonging to the 14th Army. Officers of the 14th Army were appointed to command posts of these formations. For example, there were around 200 officers and sub-lieutenants in the "Dniestr" detachment of the "National Guard" only. Centres of training for soldiers of the "National Guard" were created in Rybnitsa and Tiraspol. Training was realised by officers of the 14th Army and in reserve.

On the eve of the Transnistrian armed conflict, some military formations of the 14th Army were transferred to the "DMSSR"'s jurisdiction with all their personnel and equipment. An example is the 66th engineer battalion, deployed in the village of Parcani, which was excluded from the lists of the 14th Army by an order of the Russian Minister of Defence, after it had been transferred to the jurisdiction of the separatist authorities.¹ Once this battalion was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Tiraspol authorities, 1321 "Kalashnikov" automatic pistols and a million and a half bullets for them, 155

¹ "Izvestia", 21 July 1992.

"Makarov" and "TT" pistols, 1,300 "F-1" and "RGD-5" grenades, 15 "RPG-7" grenade launchers with complete combat equipment, 30 ground to air missile launchers and other equipment got to the hands of the separatists.¹

We can make a certain impression of the manner in which armament and military technique was transmitted to the separatists by the following account, quoted by representatives of the Helsinki Watch organisation. Sergey Zubkov, fighter of Bender, declared, while answering questions about who had ordered the armament transfer: "Here we don't do the things this way. We are not bureaucrats. The commander and the boys of the 59th Division know us and they gave us a new BTR [armoured combat vehicle]". Zubkov also added that once with the escalation of the armed conflict, relationships between local population and the 14th Army improved a lot. He said: "We had to ask for the technique before, but now they offer it to us themselves".²

When we speak of Russia's involvement in the Transnistrian conflict, we must not forget Russian Cossacks who fought for "Mother Russia" on the Dniestr, hundreds of kilometres away from the frontiers of Russia. Cossacks, as well as other separatist military and paramilitary formations, received armament and military technique from the depots of the 14th Army.

Russian newspapers many times recorded the Cossacks' participation to the fighting.³ Even in the opinion of Russian journalists the Cossacks' participation to the fights in Transnistria was an "armed aggression encouraged by the Russian government, since it did not manage to suppress it, or at least to officially accuse it. By doing neither of these two, Russian authorities not only proved their impotence, but also their fear of movements, especially from the part of the Cossacks. Is not this the same cause explaining the fact that Rutskoi openly protects national - patriots, as well as the fact that the President himself has not yet expressed his attitude towards this matter? Judging by the silent approval of all that is going on, one cannot exclude the fact that some persons

¹ "Moldova suverana", 17 March 1992.

² "See: "Helsinki Watch - Rossiyskim Vlasteam" - "Nezavisimaya gazeta", 9 November 1993.

³ See, for example, "Izvestia", 6, 11 March 1992.

in Russia are ready to mount on the Cossack horse and act under a national-patriotic flag, in case a critical moment for them should arise".¹

The Russian government obstinately denied the involvement of Russian troops deployed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova in the Transnistrian conflict. However, when analysing the speeches and declarations of Russian officials during the conflict, we find out that President Yeltsin himself has on different occasions recognised the Russian troops' involvement in the fighting on the Dniestr, as well as the fact that weapons had been delivered to the separatists. Thus, in an interview of the 27th of May 1992 Yeltsin declared: "Obviously, there are supporters of Transnistria among the officers of the 14th Army and these people begin to join the side of the people of Transnistria, sometimes together with their equipment. That's why Snegur, together with others, view this as direct intervention of Russia. However we're not talking about a Russian intervention, but of the protection given to people living there, on the personal initiative of officers living there. In my opinion, if the people of Transnistria want to live autonomously, it is their own business".² After the military operations had ceased, on the 8th of October 1992, Boris Yeltsin openly recognised Russian interference to the internal affairs of Moldova during an interview given to the Russian television:

"Now about *Pridnestrovie*[Transnistria]. We have achieved our goal after all. The situation is more or less peaceful now. We provide help to *Pridnestrovie* as much as we can. Bread, glass, many things in general. We are helping them directly. In addition, we insist that the President of Moldova advocate in the Parliament of Moldova granting of political status to *Pridnestrovie*, i.e., the status of a republic which will enjoy in the future the right to self-determination. At present we are involving international organizations in this issue so that they would also participate somehow in solving it. Meanwhile the Supreme Soviet is considering there three options, some sort of a self-governing county. This certainly cannot be sufficient to us in anyway".³

¹ "Izvestia", 11th of March, 1992.

² See B. Yeltsin's interview in "Komsomolskaya pravda", 27 May 1992.

³ "Moldova suverana", (digest in Russian language), 19 November 1993; CSCE Mission to Moldova, Documents. Volume 1 (April - October 1993), Annex 4, p. 8.

The Russian troops' involvement in the Transnistrian conflict on the side of the separatists was recognised not only by Yeltsin, but by some Russian state dignitaries as well. During talks held with representatives of the press, Colonel Nikolai Medvedev, spokesman of the Russian Ministry of Defence, admitted some units' involvement in the conflict, but he insisted on the fact that these units had acted on their own will.¹ On the 8th of July 1992, in the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Mikhail Kolesnikov, Deputy-Chief of the Russian Main Headquarters, "categorically disavowed the declarations on the 14th Army's being demoralised, having many casualties, not being fit for combat and being impossible to control. The army's personnel... fiercely holds on in this extremely complicated situation, it fulfils its duty, respecting armed neutrality. The army has not compromised itself through anything - nor through lack of courage, neither through reduction of the fighting spirit". As far as the rumours about its losses are concerned, these are very exaggerated, from what M. Kolesnikov said. The General offered the exact figures: "during the entire conflict period, in the 14th Army two people were killed, a man disappeared without a trace and a few of them got wounded".²

Sergey Stankevich, Adviser to President Yeltsin, recognised that the tanks of the 14th Army had taken part in driving Moldovan troops out of Bender, as well as in installing Transnistrian troops in the town. A Russian dignitary, who did not want his name to be divulged, declared that "the 14th Army received orders from the leaders in Moscow to involve into conflict, but that the purpose of this action was more a demonstration of force than the waging of war".³ General Lebed remembered the following: "... I was sent here, in Transnistria, when the war was in full swing. In this case I do not pretend to laurels. The one thing I have understood in Afganistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia is that in each similar situation immediate and drastic actions must be carried out, a fact that guarantees that blood will not be shed for a longer period of time. One can fight for two years, having 5-10 casualties daily. It seems like a small

¹ "The Independent", 24 June 1992; "Los Angeles Times", 24 June 1992; "Nezavisimaya gazeta", 1, 9 July 1992; RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 1, No. 36, 11 September 1992, p. 46.

² "Izvestia", 10 July 1992.

³ RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 1, No. 36, 11 September 1992, p. 46.

figure, but after one year it will increase to 3,650. Or one can solve the problem once and forever, with a strong strike and losing only 100 men. I am the supporter of such an approach, and here, in Transnistria, I managed to prove it right"¹. On another occasion, A. Lebed also declared: "I have recruited 12,000 soldiers and officers myself. I armed them with everything that they needed, then I declared all armament as lost and captured"². As far as the 14th Army's human and material losses during the war are concerned, in a letter from the 9th of September 1992 sent to Pavel Grachev, by that time Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, A. Lebed mentioned that human casualties had amounted to 7 dead and 48 wounded. The material damage suffered by the units of the 14th Army "as a result of artillery fire and diversions activities from the part of the Republic of Moldova" were evaluated to 65,8 million roubles.³

The involvement of the troops of the 14th Army in the Transnistrian conflict was also recognised by General Netkachev, Lebed's predecessor as commander of the 14th Army. During an interview published in the "Zakavkazskie Voennye Vedomosti" in June 1997 we can read: "In June [1992 - M. G.], during the final events in Bender, the danger of Transnistria being bombed appeared. After the first raid of Moldovan aviation I assumed responsibility and, although I had not received any kind of directions, I gave in written the order that fire should be opened by the anti-aircraft defence devices in case of a repeated raid. By the way, Colonel Dobryanskiy can confirm this. He was then commander of the Air defence of the Army, and today he is serving in the Northern Caucasus Military District. But, generally speaking, we were in quite a stupid situation. By taking out the means of Air defence, we were taking the risk to lose them - guardsmen could seize them. The Army was seemingly caught between two fires. However, we opened fire on air targets and brought down a few airplanes."⁴

After Moscow gave the order that "action should be taken", Yu. Netkachev allowed reserve soldiers to be recruited from among local

¹Aleksandr Lebed, Ocherednoy voiny Rossia ne perezhivet - "Argumenty i fakty", 3 June 1994.

²Pavel Creanga, Ya khochu rasskazat'... Kishinev, 1998, p. 127.

³Aleksandr Lebed, Za derzhavu obidno... Moscow, 1995, p. 460.

⁴"ZVV", 19 June 1997.

population, "completed the division according to its war scripts and displayed it", instructed the men, "taught them to fight and to lead" and decided that the division should start to fight the moment it would be ready for combat. "We take out the formations and tell both sides: "From this moment on any combat actions are suspended. One further step from any direction and we open fire". We had to stop both sides, otherwise the process would become impossible to control. And we did so. Our heavy artillery came into action, our war technique came out of the boxes and ... in a minute everything had calmed down".¹

The 14th Army's involvement in military actions on the side of the separatist formations was also confirmed by the separatist leaders. In a declaration given to the Tiraspol radio, Igor Smirnov, President of the so-called "DMR" stated that the military council of the 14th Army had warned Moldova that "if the Moldovan side does not put an end to its military actions until 6 p.m. on the 20th of July, the Army reserves itself the right to defend the Transnistrian people. This declaration has already begun to be put into practice... Moldovan troops are driven out of Bender".² On the 2nd of September 1992, in an address on the occasion of the second anniversary of the declaration of the self-proclaimed "DMR"'s independence, the same I. Smirnov declared that "the republic only managed to survive because of Russia and the 14th Army".³ A few days later, on the 16th of September 1992, during a press conference in Tiraspol, Grigore Maracuta, President of the Supreme Soviet of the self-proclaimed "DMR", declared that "Russia not only gives Transnistria moral and political support, but also material and military assistance".⁴ One

¹ *Ibid.*

² Radio Tiraspol, 21 June 1992, Radio Ukraine, 22 June 1992; RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 1, No. 36, 11 September 1992, p. 45.

³ RFE/RL Daily Report, 3 September 1992, p. 3. I. Smirnov recognised the 14th Army's involvement in the Transnistrian conflict on other occasions, too. For example, in an interview during the year 1992 he declared: "During the tragically events of Bender our volunteers fought there. They were only supported by a few officers who were fighting for us during night-time and carried out their service within the 14th Army during daytime. The things are like this and we cannot forget that after only two years" ("Rossiyskie vesti", 5 July 1994).

⁴ See: RFE/RL Daily Report, 21 September 1992, p. 3.

more proof of the participation of Russian citizens to the armed conflict on the Dniestr on the side of the separatist authorities is the fact that in July 1993, in the White Hall of the Moscow City Committee, Aleksandr Karaman, one of the leaders of the "DMR" handed over the "Defender of Transnistria" medal to several Russian citizens.¹

The participation of the 14th Army units in actions against Moldovan troops was also partially recorded by some Russian and foreign correspondents present in the area during military operations.² For example, Svetlana Gamova and Eduard Kondratov, correspondents of the "Izvestia" newspaper, which cannot under any circumstances be considered pro-Moldovan side, wrote the following concerning the events in Bender: "The 14th Army, coming out of the barracks, did not advance on combat positions, waiting for the further development of the events and for the commander's order. Its participation to the fighting for the town was limited to 3 tanks with crews consisting of volunteer officers, who live with their families in the city under siege".³

It is quite a complicated thing to exactly ascertain number of soldiers and military technique units of the 14th Army who took part in military actions against Moldova during the summer of 1992. However, an approximate evaluation of the degree of Russian troops' involvement to the conflict is possible. During a meeting at the beginning of July 1992, General M. Kolesnikov, assistant chief of the Russian Main Headquarters, declared that "according to his department's intelligence, around 15,000 persons are taking part in military actions in the conflict area on both sides. The two sides possess around 400 tanks and armoured combat vehicles, as well as 300 artillery pieces and mine launchers".⁴

If we take into account the fact that on the 7th of July 1992 (and nowadays, too) the National Army of the Republic of Moldova did not possess one single tank and that Moldova only disposed of 104 armoured combat vehicles and 108 artillery pieces, and the Tiraspol separatist authorities

¹ "Trudovoy Tiraspol", 14 -21 July 1993.

² Reuters, 21, 22 June 1992; Financial Times, 22, 24 June 1992.

"Washington Post", 23, 24 June 1992; The Guardian, 24 June 1992.

³ "Izvestia", 23 June 1992

⁴ "Izvestia", 9 July 1992

presently possess 18 tanks, 60 artillery pieces and 50 mine launchers, it becomes obvious to whom did the rest of the military technique mentioned by General M. Kolesnikov belong, and which was the extent of the Russian troops' involvement to the conflict in Moldova.

In order to justify the Russian troops' involvement in the Transnistrian conflict on the separatist side, some dignitaries belonging to the Russian leadership, the Russian mass-media as well as the ones in Tiraspol intensely propagated the idea according to which Romania was providing armament to the Kishinev authorities and Romanian citizens were fighting alongside with Moldovan police against the "people of Transnistria". Thus, on the 8th of March 1992, during the "Novosti" news program of the "Ostankino" company, it was reported that Romanian nationals were taking part in the conflict on the left side of the Dniestr, and that 28 coffins had been sent from the territory of the Republic of Moldova to Romania.¹ In an interview during the evening of the 30th of May 1992 on the CIS central television channel, Pavel Grachev, by then minister of defence of the Russian Federation, accused Romania of selling weapons to Moldova. He admitted, "on international scale, weapon trade is not forbidden", but "taking into account the present situation in Moldova, which is on the brink of civil war, I consider these weapon deliveries as incorrect and unjustified". Pavel Grachev also said that "according to our information, there are Romanian military counsellors on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, and Moldovan officers are on probation in Romania".² At the beginning of June 1992, during another interview, Pavel Grachev declared that: "according to our exact data, there already are 80 units of Romanian military technique (including M-30 mortars) on the territory of Moldova. Now they have brought pontoons, too, in order to build crossing points. We can suppose that an offensive is being prepared".³ On the 23rd of June 1992, the "Izvestia" newspaper announced its readers that "the Romanian Minister of Defence declared to the journalists that his country was not involved in the conflict taking place on the territory of its neighbouring state, but, at the request of the Moldovan leadership, it had sent there 64 observing officers, 20 armoured vehicles, 40 mine launchers of 82 mm

¹ "Moldova suverana", 10 March 1992

² "Moldova suverana", 3 June 1992

³ "Izvestia", 2 June 1992

in calibre and around 30 mine launchers of 120 mm in calibre". It was then underlined that "from competent sources, it is known that there are 120 Romanian military in Moldova, including diversion specialists".¹

The authorities in Kishinev, as well as the Romanian ones, did not make a secret out of the fact that Romania had delivered equipment and certain types of armament (especially armoured vehicles) to Moldova. And this would have been impossible, as Vladimir Socor underlined, since the frontier between Romania and the Republic of Moldova was being protected by Russian border troops at the time".²

M. Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova, and Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, have on several occasions recognised the fact that Romania had delivered armament to the Republic of Moldova³, and on the 10th of July 1992, the representative of the Romanian Ministry of Defence declared that 2,000 automatic weapons, a few armoured vehicles and artillery pieces had been delivered to Moldova.⁴ However, the involvement of Romanian nationals in military operations in the districts on the left side of the Dniestr was denied by both Moldova and Romania.⁵ Both sides considered the information Russia had diffused in this respect as being false and lacking any real basis, their sole purpose being the one of justifying the Russian troops' involvement in the conflict. On the 31st of May 1992, the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, specified (in reply to the statements made on the evening of the 30th of May by General Grachev, Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, according to which the Republic of Moldova had received tanks from Romania) that "from the information received from the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova, it results that the army of the Republic of Moldova does not presently possess tanks. Consequently, the statement regarding tank deliveries from Romania does not correspond to truth". Further on it was recognised that

¹ "Izvestia", 23 June 1992

² RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 1, No. 36, 11 September 1992, p. 44.

³ See: "Moldova suverana", 21 May 1992; "Izvestia", 11 June 1992

⁴ "Izvestia", 15 July 1992.

⁵ The involvement of Romanian nationals in the fighting is also denied in the book written by Pavel Creanga, former minister of defence of the Republic of Moldova. - Pavel Creanga, *Ya khochu rasskazat'...*, Kishinev, 1998, pp. 153-154

"during the last period of time" floating pontoons had been received from Romania, but these pontoons were to be used" in order to ensure the transportation of food and medicine for the population living in the villages on the left side of the Dniestr, in areas where bridges had been destroyed or damaged by the guard detachments, inclusively by using combat technique provided by the 14th Army". In the end, the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs underlined that "such statements, which obviously distort reality, are used in order to try to justify the 14th Army's involvement in the conflict. Moreover, such statements may be considered as an attempt of undermining the efforts presently taken in order to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the east of the Republic of Moldova, within political consultations between the Moldovan, Russian, Romanian and Ukrainian Ministers of Foreign Affairs".¹

Regarding the same statement issued by Pavel Grachev on the 30th of May, concerning alleged armament deliveries from Romania to the Republic of Moldova and the presence of Romanian military counsellors on the territory of Moldova, the spokesman of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared, among others, that Romania had delivered to Moldova "on commercial bases, some means of transportation and pontoon bridges, an action on which the Russian military attaché, too, had been informed. No other deliveries of armoured technique had been made nor is there any Romanian military counsellor on the territory of the Republic of Moldova; the only Romanian military in the Republic of Moldova are the 24 military observers of Tighina (Bender), sent there on the basis of the agreements of the ministers of defence of the four countries".²

In the "Trudovoy Tiraspol" newspaper's issue of the 10-17th of June 1992, an information appeared, according to which the arrival of a group of Romanian pilots for the Mig-29 fighter planes and the Mi-24 helicopters possessed by the Moldovan Army was prepared at the Marculesti airport in Moldova. It was stated that "it is not excluded that Romanian air forces should take part in military operation, during night-time and without any signs of

¹ "Moldova Suverana", 2 June 1992

² "Moldova Suverana", 3 June 1992.

recognition". The Press Bureau of the Romanian Army declared the following concerning this information: "The information put forward by the "Trudovoy Tiraspol" newspaper lacks any real basis. No Romanian pilot or Romanian soldier has been or is presently being involved in the conflict in the Republic of Moldova. As we have stated on countless occasions, Romania wants the problems in Transnistria to be solved politically, through negotiations, and not by use of weapons. Such false information is dangerous, provocative and are brought up in order to justify actions carried out by units of the 14th Army, under Russian jurisdiction, on the side at the separatist forces in Transnistria".¹

The analysis of the events which happened then leads to the conclusion that the propaganda displayed by Russia in order to present Romania on the international arena as a side taking part in the conflict on the Dniestr in 1992 was determined by Moscow's will to justify its transfer of armament towards the separatists and the Russian troops' involvement in the conflict on the side of the authorities from Tiraspol. At the same time, when speaking about the deliveries of armament from Romania to Moldova and about the ones from the Russian troops' depots towards the separatist authorities, the following considerations must be taken into account: a) weapons deliveries from Romania to the Republic of Moldova were by far inferior to the ones made to the "DMR" authorities from the Russian troops' depots; b) the transaction between Moldova and Romania was legal in character, it was a transaction between two sides who were subjects of international law, whereas the transfer of armament towards the separatist authorities was illegal and represented a flagrant violation of international law; c) the armament Romania delivered to Moldova was by far inferior in class to the one that the separatists received from the Russian troops (while the Transnistrians received tanks and "Alazani" and "Grad" artillery systems, the authorities in Kishinev were receiving from Romania automatic guns, ACVs old models, dating as far back as the 60's, and without spare parts, and anti-tank guns).²

¹ "Moldova Suverana", 24 June 1992.

² RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 1, No. 36, 11 September 1992, p. 44.

Negotiations between Moldova and Russia regarding the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova

The negotiations between Moldova and Russia regarding the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova started after the "Agreement Regarding the Principles of a Peaceful Solution to the Armed Conflict in the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova" from the 21st of July 1992 had been signed. Between August 1992 and May 1996 the government delegations of Russia and Moldova met during 11 rounds of negotiations, which, as a rule, were preceded by meetings of the experts. The rounds' frequency, the places and the names of the heads of the delegations are presented in table 9.

During the negotiations the main divergences between the two sides were concerning the terms of the Russian troops' withdrawal from Transnistria (article 2 of the Main Agreement, also named the Basic Agreement), the matter of Moldova's taking part in building housing resources on the territory of Russia for the units which were to be withdrawn from Moldova, the issue of the division of the 14th Army's property.

Table 9
Dates and places where the rounds of negotiations between Moldova and Russia regarding the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova took place

D a t e	Place**	Head of the State Delegation of the Republic of Moldova	Head of the military Delegation of the Republic of Moldova	Head of the State delegation of the Russian Federation	Head of the Russian military delegation
12-14.08.92	M.	P. Lucinschi	V. Toporivski	V. Plechko	B. Gromov
16-17.09.92	K.	P. Lucinschi	V. Toporivski	V. Plechko	Ed. Vorobiov
25-26.02.93	M.	I. Ciubuc	V. Toporivski	V. Plechko	Ed. Vorobiov
8-9.04.93	K.	I. Ciubuc	V. Toporivski	V. Plechko	Ed. Vorobiov
18-19.05.93	M.	A. Tsaranu	V. Toporivski	V. Plechko	Ed. Vorobiov
22-23.06.93	K.	A. Tsaranu	N. Turtureanu	V. Kitaev	Ed. Vorobiov
10-11.11.93	M.	A. Tsaranu	N. Turtureanu	V. Kitaev	Ed. Vorobiov

5-6.04.94	K.	A. Tsaranu	N. Turtureanu	V. Kitaev	Ed. Vorobiov
7-8.06.94	M.	N. Osmochescu	V. Grosu	V. Kitaev	Ed. Vorobiov
9-10.08.94	K.	N. Osmochescu	V. Grosu	V. Kitaev	A. Sokolov
6-7.05.96	K.	V. Sova	V. Grosu	V. Kitaev	A. Sokolov

*The table was drawn up by the author. Sources: "Russia" TV channel, Moscow, 19:00 local time, 23 June 1993; "Komsomol'skaya Pravda", 11 November 1993; "Dnestrovskaya Pravda", 4 December 1993; "Nezavisimaya Moldova", 7 April 1994, "Vek", 27 May 1994, "Segodnya", 9 June 1994, "Moskovskie Novosti", 9 June 1994, "Izvestia", 12 August 1994, "Rossiyskie Vesti", 11, 12 August 1994, "Nezavisimaya gazeta", 13 August 1994; Iulian Chifu, Razboi diplomatic in Basarabia, Bucuresti, 1997, pp. 21-23, 55-56.

** Abbreviations: M.=Moscow, K.=Kishinev.

During the first rounds of negotiations, the Moldovan delegation insisted that the complete withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova should be realised until the 1st of January 1994, without its being conditioned by other problems, then the 1st of July the same year was fixed as the final term.¹ Later, though, the Moldovan side made permanent concessions regarding the final term of the withdrawal, finally proposing the date of the 1st of January 1996 as final term.² At its turn, during the first rounds of negotiations, the Russian delegation used to reject the proposals made by the Moldovan delegation, considering them unrealistic because of the lack of conditions needed for the Russian troops' installation in the new places of deployment.³ Besides this, the Russian side insisted that the Basic agreement

¹ "Saptamana", 14 January 1994

² "Segodnya", 9 June 1994.

³ The Russian side considered that certain conditions had to be created in order to allow the withdrawal of the army. When he was asked when the 14th Army could be withdrawn from the territory of Moldova, A. Lebed declared that this would only be possible "when political and economic conditions are created in order to allow a necessary number of echelons to be sent here for the distribution of the troops, so that local women shouldn't come again and besiege our units, as they had done before... Presently we lack these conditions: the 18 months of peace have passed without any consequences, the negotiations between the two sides in conflict are not progressing and, unfortunately, we cannot speak about a political settlement. Which are the economical conditions, you will ask me? We have already withdrawn troops from Georgia and other republics and this made hundreds of thousands of officers and lieutenants to wander around between heaven and earth without a job, without

should specify the fact that the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova should be realised synchronically with the political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict and with the elaboration of a special status for the Transdnestrian area of the Republic of Moldova.¹

apartments and without perspectives. We shall not take this way again. There are also diplomatic problems. How would Ukraine react if we begin to carry armament and ammunition through its territory? Because its railways will be overloaded, and the wagons will be, euphemistically speaking, dangerous. There is also a technical aspect of the issue. Taking into account the capacity of the railway, the number of wagons needed and the volume of the armament, it will take two years for the distribution. And this if we take out our troops without any pause - day and night, summer and winter, without any holidays... Under these circumstances, can we further speak of the year 1994 as the year of the final withdrawal?" ("Transnistria may become a second Yugoslavia" - "Saptamana", 1 April 1994).

¹ The so-called principle of synchronisation was introduced into the process of negotiations between Moldova and Russia regarding the withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldova in the Common Statement of the 15th of May 1993, about the meeting between B. Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, and M. Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova. Among others, the statement mentioned that: "B. N. Yeltsin and M. I. Snegur have established that the negotiations regarding the preparation of the Agreement regarding status, order and withdrawal terms of military formations of the Russian Federation temporarily deployed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova are being carried out in a constructive spirit. The two presidents have confirmed the common position, which is shared by the Transnistrian leaders, that the Russian troops' withdrawal terms will be synchronised with the political settlement of the conflict and the elaboration of a special status for the Transdnestrian area of the Republic of Moldova". (ITAR-TASS, 15 May 1993, 12:07, Moscow time).

As Russia has already started to use the principle of synchronisation as a means of delaying the negotiation process regarding the withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldova, Kishinev insisted upon the synchronisation principle not being mentioned in the statement of the following meeting between Yeltsin and Snegur: (See: "Moldova suverana" (digest), No. 69 - 70, 3 September 1993). Moreover, as a result of considerable efforts, Moldovan diplomacy, supported by the international community, has managed to achieve the mutual non-conditioning of the process of the Russian troops' withdrawal from Moldova and the process of settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, in the decisions of the OSCE Summit in Budapest. The decisions mentioned

After the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova from February 1994, won by the Democrat Agrarian Moldovan Party (DAMP), a party of pro-Russian orientation, as well as after Anatol Tsaranu had resigned from the function of extraordinary and plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Russia and from its function as head of the Moldovan delegation at the negotiations with Russia concerning military problems, the Moldovan side accepted all Russian proposals made during the negotiations. Consequently, during the 10th round of negotiations of August 1994 "Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova, on the Legal Status, Procedures and Terms of Withdrawal of the Military Forces of the Russian Federation, Temporarily Stationed on the Territory of the Republic of Moldova" was initialled and on the 21st of October the same year it was signed. Prime Ministers V. Chernomyrdin and A. Sangheli signed the agreement in Moscow in the presence of presidents B. Yeltsin and M. Snegur.¹

According to the 2nd article of the Agreement, "The Russian side, taking into account technical possibilities and the amount of time needed for installing the troops in their new place of deployment, will carry out the evacuation of military formations mentioned above in a three years' period, starting from the day when the present Agreement will come into effect.

Practical actions in view of the evacuation of military formations of the Russian Federation from the territory of the Republic of Moldova within the limits of the fixed term will be synchronised with the political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict and determining of the special status of the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova....".² Article 23 stipulates that the

above show that: "The participating States welcomed the commitment by both parties to conduct the withdrawal of the Russian Fourteenth Army from the territory of Moldova and the search for a political settlement of the problems of the eastern part of Moldova (Trans- Dniester region) as two parallel processes which will not hamper each other". (See: Adrian Nastase, Fundamental documents of international law and international relationships, Bucharest, 1997, p.232)

¹ "Nezavisimaya Moldova ", 25 October 1994; The informative Bulletin of the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, No. 2, October 1994, p.5-6.

² "Diplomaticheskij vestnik", No. 21-22, November 1994, p.47-48.

Agreement will "come into effect on the date when the Parties finally notify the fulfilment of all internal procedures and will be valid until the complete withdrawal of the military formations of the Russian Federation from the territory of Republic of Moldova".¹

During the negotiations, vivid talks were held over article 17 of the Basic Agreement, concerning Moldova's participation in building on the territory of Russia social sphere facilities necessary for the putting in place of Russian military formations withdrawn from the territory of the Republic of Moldova.

While reminding Germany's taking part in installing Russian troops retired from the former GDR on the territory of Russia, as well as the financial difficulties Russia presently faces, the Russian delegation insisted during the negotiations with Moldova that the latter should take part in building on Russian territory housing facilities and social sphere objectives needed for installing the withdrawn troops on the territory of the Russian Federation. This issue was discussed during several rounds of negotiations, as the Moldovan side viewed the data offered by the Russian side concerning expenses for the withdrawn troops' arrangement on the territory of Russia as exaggerated. On the eve of the 4th round of negotiations (8th –9th of April 1993), the Russian side presented Moldovan experts the following data concerning financial means needed for carrying out the withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldova and their deployment on the territory of the Russian Federation: quartering of military staff - 255 billion 560 million roubles; building of parks for installing technique and armament - 19 billion 780 million roubles; installing reserves and material means - 84 billion 830 million roubles; building lodging facilities for officers and sub-lieutenants - 25 billion 500 million roubles. Totally - 181 billion 170 million roubles, according to prices of the 1st of April 1993. On the same date, according to information brought forward by Russian experts, housing facilities for 2,550 families (1,650 officers' families and 900 of the sub-lieutenants) were to be built on the territory of Russia for the withdrawal of

¹ *Ibid.*

officers and sub-lieutenants of Russian troops located in Moldova. The total area of housing space was of 127,500 square meters.

Moldovan experts have considered these data as exaggerated. They showed that the number of officers and sub-lieutenants for whom the Russian side had asked Moldova to build houses also included persons who did not own housing space on the territory of Moldova and for whom the Moldovan Government had no logical reason to build housing facilities, since these people were not to leave any apartments on the territory of the republic. Consequently, on the 29th of October 1993 the Russian side brought forward new data regarding housing space occupied by the officers and sub-lieutenants of the Russian troops deployed on the territory of Moldova: on the date mentioned above, 1,754 military possessed 87,345 square meters of housing space. Out of them, 1,340 lived in Tiraspol, 196 in Rybnitsa, 112 - in Dubasari.

During the 6th round of negotiations the two sides agreed upon the following: in order not to delay the definitization of the Basic Agreement, the issue of Moldova's taking part in building social objectives for the Russian troops withdrawn from its territory should be settled through a special agreement. Consequently the following article was introduced in the Basic Agreement: "To the purpose of ensuring withdrawal, in terms agreed upon, of the military formations of the Russian Federation from the territory of the Republic of Moldova and their new functioning in their new deployment places on the territory of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Moldova takes part through quotas in building on the territory of Russia social sphere objectives necessary for the installation of the withdrawn military formations. The volume of the means allocated, the list of buildings and the location of the construction are determined through a separate agreement".¹

Starting from the provisions made by the article we have quoted, during the negotiation rounds, while discussing the project of the supplementary agreement stipulated by article 17 of the Basic Agreement, V. Kitaev tried to have the Moldovan delegation specify the concrete amounts with which the Republic of Moldova was to take part in installing Russian troops in their new deployment spots. However, A. Tsaranu underlined that

¹ "Diplomaticheskij vestnik", No. 21-22, November 1994, p.50.

Moldova was ready to take part in installing the troops withdrawn on the territory of Russia, but only by the means accumulated as a result of selling the military property which is due to Moldova after the military patrimony of the 14th Army is divided. The fund intended for installing Russian military formations was also supposed to include the sums obtained from selling the apartments belonging to Russian officers who were to be evacuated from Moldova. After that, the head of the Moldovan delegation stated that Moldova would not allocate one single penny from its state budget for the buildings, as the difficult economic situation does not allow it. At the same time, in order to moderate the insistence of the Russian delegation, which requested that the Government of Moldova should allocate money from the state funds for building in Russia the social objectives for the troops to be withdrawn from Moldova, A. Tsaranu proposed that a new issue should be put in discussion during the negotiations, i.e. the one of the compensations Russia has to pay Moldova for the damage it had suffered as a result of the Russian troops' stationing on its territory.¹ The Moldovan delegation proposed that the following article should be included in the Basic Agreement: "Matters concerning the compensation of damage provoked to the Republic of Moldova as a result of the stationing on its territory of military formations belonging to the former USSR and to the Russian Federation will be settled through a supplementary agreement concluded between the Parties until the coming into effect/signing of the Agreement regarding juridical status, manner and terms of retreat of military formations of the Russian Federation temporarily deployed on the territory of Moldova".

The demand of the Moldovan delegation that Russia should pay compensations to Moldova had as legal support the decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova "Regarding the withdrawal of the Soviet Army Troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova", from the 3rd of September 1993. Point 3 of the decree stipulated that the Government of the Republic of Moldova should "initiate negotiations with the Government of the USSR, regarding manner and terms of withdrawal of Soviet troops, evaluation

¹ "Komsomol'skaya Pravda", 30 November 1993; "Dnestrovskaya Pravda", 4 December 1993.

of compensations for the use of land and buildings, and for the pollution of the environment..."

For the 8th round of negotiations, the Moldovan delegation prepared a project of "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of the Russian Federation regarding the settlement of issues concerning compensations for the damage brought to the Republic of Moldova as a result of stationing of military formations belonging to the former USSR and the Russian Federation on its territory", consisting of ten articles. It was also proposed that the damage should be evaluated by a joint Moldovan - Russian commission including experts of both sides, who would have followed the normative acts of the Republic of Moldova, of the former USSR and of international practice in this field.

Together with the preparation of the agreement project, the Moldovan Ministry of Defence, the Moldovan Ministry of Culture and Cults, as well as the Department for protection of environment and natural resources were requested for information regarding damages (ecological and of other types) which the Republic of Moldova had suffered between 1944 and 1992 as a result of the Soviet and Russian armies' stationing on its territory.

According to the calculations of the Department for protection of environment and natural resources, as a result of Soviet and Russian armies' stationing on its territory, the Republic of Moldova suffered material damage in value of 55,255,497,000 roubles, evaluated at the prices of the year 1990, or 99,416,151,000 US\$. Damage brought to monuments of art, architecture and archaeology and moral damage brought to the population were not included in this sum.

During the 8th round of negotiations, the Moldovan delegation proposed the Russian side its own project of agreement regarding the quota and conditions of Moldova's participation to building on the territory of Russia social sphere objectives needed for the installation of withdrawn Russian military formations. However, the two sides have not yet managed to overcome divergences between them. The negotiations also continued during the following rounds. The additional agreement regarding this matter was initialled during the 10th round. According to the agreement, Moldova will not allocate financial means from its state budget. The money obtained from the

commercialisation of the 14th Army's immovable property, as well as of the houses of the military who had owned locative space in Moldova and decided to move to Russia will be transferred to the fund created for building housing resources. This was a variant of compromise between the two sides. The Russian side accepted that Moldova should not contribute with financial means from its state budget to building housing resources for the Russian military, and the Moldovan delegation gave up its demand that Russia should pay Moldova compensations for damage brought by the stationing of Soviet and Russian troops between the years 1940 and 1992.

The draft of "Agreement between the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova regarding flight activity of the military air formations of the Russian Federation temporarily deployed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, as well as the use of the Tiraspol airport by transport aviation of the Russian Federation Armed Forces" awakened vivid discussions within the negotiations, especially during the 7-9 negotiation rounds. This agreement was initialled during the 10th round and signed by the two parties on the 21st of October 1994. The Agreement came into effect the day it was signed.

The Moldovan delegation opposed the immediate signing of the agreement mentioned above, as the Russian side had accepted some planes belonging to the Tiraspol authorities to be placed on the territory of the Tiraspol airport (590 ha), which was under the jurisdiction of Russian troops. However, during the 10th round, N. Osmochescu initialed the Agreement, although the "DMR" planes were still present on the Tiraspol airport. The planes of the separatist authorities still are on the territory of this airport, even today. During October 1999, along with the planes of the former 14th Army's troops, the following types of planes belonging to Transnistria were placed on the airport: MI-8 - 6 units (fighter planes), MI-2 - 2 units, an AN-76 plane and an AN-2. On the airport there is also a control centre belonging to the separatist authorities, which is located in the same building where the Command Centre of the aviation of the Operational Group of Russian Troops deployed in Transnistria is.

During the negotiations, the fact that a large part of the 14th Army's soldiers were natives of Transnistria was presented as a serious obstacle in the

way of the Russian troops' withdrawal from the territory of Moldova, as well as one of the reasons for which the Army had to stay in Moldova. This idea was and still is very strongly propagated within Russian mass-media. During February 1995, for example, Aleksandr Lebed, former commander of the 14th Army, declared to a correspondent of the "Krasnaya zvezda" newspaper that "the biggest part of the military in the 14th Army are natives of these places and they won't leave here". In his opinion, the situation was such that the only person who could leave the area was himself, taking the stamp and the flag with him, but leaving behind not an organised army, but "something armed and uncontrolled".¹ On other occasion, the same Lebed declared: "I put the flag in my suitcase and the stamp in my pocket and I leave for Moscow. Then the retreat could be considered as finished. All the other military of the 14th Army are either natives of the DMR or have grown roots here".²

However, when speaking about the soldiers of the 14th Army who were natives of Transnistria, Russian diplomats used to keep silent on the fact that almost all of them were Russian citizens and that the recruitment of young people from Transnistria in Russian military formations was an illegal act against which the leadership of the Republic of Moldova had repeatedly protested. For example, during the meeting of Russian and Moldovan military experts during November 1992, the Moldovan side had protested against the recruitment of young people from Transnistria in the 14th Army, considering this as a "camouflaged form of training lower military specialists for the future army forces of Tiraspol".³

During the years 1992-1994, together with negotiations held at the level of government delegations in view of the Russian troops' withdrawal from Moldova, negotiations were also held between the Ministries of Defence of Moldova and Russia, concerning the withdrawal of some Russian formations from the territory of Moldova, and especially from districts on the right side of the Dniestr.

¹ "Krasnaya zvezda", 23 February 1995.

² "Segodnya", 30 November 1994.

³ See: "The 14th Army cannot exist without the phantom-republic", interview given by the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Moldova, Pavel Creanga, to the "Moldova suverana" newspaper - "Moldova suverana", 3 December 1992.

On the 26th of August 1992, Pavel Creanga, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Moldova, and Pavel Grachev, Russian Minister of Defence, signed "The Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Moldova on the terms of withdrawal of the 300th airborne assault regiment of guard on the territory of the Russian Federation".¹ The agreement consists of 10 articles and 2 annexes, which are included in the Agreement as well. The agreement was signed in Moscow and came into effect the day it was signed.

According to the 1st article of the Agreement, Russia engaged itself to withdraw the 300th regiment of airborne troops from the territory of Moldova during the two months following the Agreement's coming into effect. At its turn, Moldova obliged itself to create the necessary conditions for the withdrawal of the regiment mentioned above, while respecting the juridical status of the military and of members of their families, abstaining from any actions that would complicate the regiment's activity and taking the proper measures in order to stop any illegal actions against the regiment. Until the complete withdrawal, the Moldovan side also engaged itself to provide the regiment with food, water, electricity, phone connection and other facilities, according to the order already established.

According to the Agreement, the Republic of Moldova was transmitted 79 ACVs (including 46 "BMD-1P", 9 "BMD-1PK", 11 "BTR-D"), 75 military tracks (including 38 "GAZ-66" tracks and 27 "Ural-4320" tracks), 1007 units of various artillery and missile armament, as well as other armament and technical and material equipment. The Russian Federation obtained the right of withdrawing 70 ACVs, 73 military tracks, and 1,021 units of artillery and missile armament, 125 parachute platforms and other military property to the territory of Russia. Military technique, wealth and material resources of the 300th regiment not included in the annexes of the Agreement were equally divided between the two sides. To the purpose of the realisation of the accord,

¹ OSCE Mission to Moldova. Documents, Vol. 1 (April - October 1993). See annex 4: "Final Report on the Conflict in the Left Bank Dniester Areas of the Republic of Moldova by the Personal Representative of the Chairman-In-Office of the CSCE Council Adam Daniel Rotfeld (Poland) Director of SIPRI, Prague, 31st of January 1993".

as well as of solving the litigious problems, a joint Moldovan - Russian commission consisting of 6 persons (3 persons from each side) was created.

According to the 8th article of the Agreement, armament, military technique, ammunition, wealth and technical and material means transmitted to the Republic of Moldova are to be used by the latter exclusively to the purpose of self-defence, defence of its national territory in response to external aggressions. The same article forbids the use of the armament, military technique and other property obtained by Moldova through the Agreement in internal conflicts.

The 300th regiment left Kishinev at the beginning of October 1992.¹ At the date of its withdrawal from Kishinev, the regiment counted around 400 persons. It was commanded by Aleksey Lebed, brother of General Aleksandr Lebed, by then commander of the 14th Army. After leaving Moldova, the regiment was to be distributed in the town of Abakan, in Siberia, its personnel were to be increased up to 2,400 persons, and it was to be provided with air forces of its own (8 AN-2 planes). Experimentally, the regiment was to have a new structure, allowing each battalion to act in a much more independent manner. The regiment also had to be endowed with more technical equipment than the one it had in Moldova.²

On the 21/29th of December 1993 Pavel Creanga and Pavel Grachev signed "The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of the Russian Federation regarding mutual handing over of the armament, military technique and military and technical property".³ According to the 1st article of this agreement, the Russian Federation was handed over the armament, military technique and documentation of the 189th brigade of tactical missiles stationed in Balti, possessing 18 9M79-I carrier missiles, 3 9M79-IP training missiles, 18 9P129-IM launching installations, 9T218-1M transport and loading devices etc. As for the Republic of Moldova, it received 84 "Ural" automobiles, 350 tyres, 50 compasses, 50 telemeters, 125 binoculars, motor bulk patrimony for GAZ-66 and "Zil-131" automobiles in

¹ "Moldova suverana", 7 October 1992.

² See: Carey Schofield. The Russian Elite. Inside Spetsnaz and the Airborne Forces, London, 1993, p. 241-251

³ "Mesagerul", 24 September 1994.

value of 2,5 million roubles (at the prices of the 1st of January 1993), as well as other trifles.

Although Pavel Creanga, former minister of defence of the Republic of Moldova, claims that the agreement was profitable for Moldova¹, even without a detailed analysis of the agreement one can clearly see that the "mutual handing over of armament and military technique" was realised to the detriment of the Republic of Moldova. The "Mesagerul" newspaper, which made the agreement public, appreciated it as a "transaction made on a moonless night", considering that "the transaction made by mister Pavel Creanga was exactly the same as the one described by Ion Creanga, the writer from Humulesti – an ox was exchanged for an egg", Moldova finally getting the egg.²

Another agreement damaging to the interests of Moldova, signed by the Moldovan side after the Agrarian Party had come to Power (1994), is the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the one of the Russian Federation regarding social guarantees and insurance of pensions for former military and members of their families.

The agreement stipulates the insurance of pensions for "officers, NCOs, midshipmen, re-engaged military, persons dismissed from the military service within the former USSR Armed Forces as well as of persons who had served in the Army as officers, NCOs, midshipmen and persons who had satisfied military service as privates, sailors, sergeants and warrant officers within the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova and of the Russian Federation, within the Unified Armed Forces of the CIS, in border guard troops, police and railways of the former USSR, of the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation, as well as of members of their families who had lost their financial supporter and live on the territory of the Republic of Moldova or of the Russian Federation". The agreement does not stipulate the condition that these persons should be present or former citizens of the Republic of Moldova. Moreover, the 6th article stipulates that the validity of the agreement is not conditioned by the former military and their families' possessing or not the citizenship of the state on whose territory they live. Thus,

¹ Pavel Creanga, p.166.

² "Mesagerul", 24 September 1994.

Moldova has willingly assumed the responsibility of paying pensions to all the former military enumerated in the quotation above from its own budget. (According to the 4th article of the Agreement, all expenses for ensuring of pensions will be supported by the state budget of the Republic of Moldova, without any discounts between the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation.¹ The Agreement is to be valid for 5 years, and its validity is automatically extended each five years, in case neither of the Parties should acknowledge the other Party in written, at least six months before the end of the year about its intention of denouncing it. The agreement is to come into effect on the date when both contractual parties notify their fulfilment of inter-state procedures needed for its coming into effect.

Of all the agreements between Moldova and Russia concerning the troops' withdrawal from the territory of Moldova, the Russian State Duma only ratified the agreement regarding social guarantees and ensuring of pensions, which we have mentioned above. Consequently, Moscow insists that the Agreement should be ratified by the Moldovan Parliament as well. However, Moldovan parliamentarians are in no hurry of ratifying the Agreement, and in 1999 they sent to the Government, for notification, a project of decision of the Parliament regarding the ratification of the agreement. The Government of the Republic of Moldova examined the project of decision in June. In the reference handed to the Parliament, the Government recognised that the signing of the agreement had been "a concession" of the Moldovan delegation at the negotiations, and the fact that "the agreement does not stipulate that the former military and members of their families must have the citizenship of the country of whose territory they live" comes in conflict with the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova with current legislation, as well as with international practice. The ratification of the Agreement "may create the precedent of a state's citizens enjoying all rights and facilities, given by another state, the citizens of which they are not".

In conclusion the Government showed that the Agreement might be ratified only with the condition that it is completed with the amendment that it

¹ The Government has a strange way of protecting the interests of the Republic of Moldova, "Mesagerul", No. 17 (103), 12 April 1996.

only applies to former military permanently living on the territory of the Republic of Moldova and having adopted its citizenship.¹

The authorities in Kishinev presented the signing of the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994 as a success of Moldovan diplomacy. However, in the opinion of several local and foreign observers, the signing of the agreement between Moldova and Russia of the 21st of October was a victory of Russian diplomacy, Moldova only obtaining "the victory of shame".² Immediately after the Basic Agreement and of other additional agreements had been initialled on the 10th of August 1994, the Associated Press agency underlined the fact that they represented a victory for Russia, an example of Moscow's skill of using armed force for diplomatic gains. "By maintaining its forces in the area after the crash of the USSR and later strengthening them with peacekeeping units, Russia succeeded in forcing Moldova to join the CIS and underlining Moscow's decision of defending its interests. In the future Russia will have a lasting influence over Moldova, as well as over Transnistria".³

In the opinion of Anatol Tsaranu, former head of the Government Delegation for military problems, the Agreement was "an error of Moldovan diplomats", the three-year term for the troops' withdrawal being "unjustifiably long".⁴ We fully agree with the appreciation A. Tsaranu has given to the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994. The concessions made by the Moldovan side during the last two rounds of negotiations were unjustified and placed a question mark on the realisation of the Agreement without affecting the national interests of the Republic of Moldova. The principle of synchronisation contained in the agreement, as well as the fact that the Agreement did not come into effect the day it was signed, as it was initially stipulated, but it will only come into effect" when both contractual Parties finally notify their fulfilment of inter-state procedures needed for its coming into effect" offers Russia the possibility of maintaining its forces in Moldova for many years to come. Firstly, the leadership of the so-called "DMR", in

¹ Interlic Press Agency, 25 June 1999.

² Iulian Chifu, p.55.

³ Quoted from "Glasul Natiunii", No. 33 (204), August 1994.

⁴ Information bulletin of the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n. 1 (5), January 1995, p. 30.

order to have the Russian army stay in the area, may reject (as it actually has done until now) any project of a special status of Transnistria within Moldova. Secondly, although almost four years have passed since it was signed, the Agreement is not put into effect by Russia, and the decisions of the Russian Duma regarding the 14th Army's withdrawal from Transnistria being unacceptable convince us of the fact that there is little chance this treaty should be ratified by Russian Parliament in the near future. The treaty between Moldova and Russia of the year 1990, which was ratified by the Moldovan Parliament immediately after it had been signed, has not been ratified yet by Russian Parliament because it stipulates the principle of the Parties' territorial integrity (even if it does it in a confuse manner). It seems like the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994 regarding the withdrawal of Russian military formations from the territory of Moldova will have even a sadder fate.

A. Tsaranu, head of the Moldovan delegation during 4 of the 11 rounds of negotiations with Russia, as well as Moldovan experts assisting him were conscious of the danger of the principle of "synchronisation" being included in the Agreement regarding the troops' withdrawal, as well as of the Agreement's not specifying any exact date regarding the end of the withdrawal process. Unfortunately, the "Agrarian", leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Minister Mihai Popov) and Nicolae Osmochescu, head of the Moldovan delegation at the negotiations, did not take into account the delegation's position and previous activity.

Ambassador Tsaranu considered the principle of "synchronisation" as an "extremely serious mistake of Moldovan diplomacy. During four rounds of negotiations, in spite of Russian pressures, he refused to recognise the principle of synchronisation as element of the mechanism of the army's withdrawal, inferring that, if this should happen, the army would not be withdrawn, and neither would the Transnistrian conflict be settled without damaging the territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. By the same time, bringing forward the reasons for which the Moldovan delegation insisted on the fact that the withdrawal should take place until January 1996, the former ambassador showed that in 1,5 years time about 105,000 Soviet citizens, 25,900 units of military technique (including 673 tanks, 10,028 armoured vehicles, 23,132 automobiles) as well as 440,000 tons of ammunition had been withdrawn from

Poland, and 100,000 soldiers, 25,000 units of military technique and around 300,000 tons of ammunition had been withdrawn from Hungary in only 13 months, whereas from Moldova only 7,500 soldiers and around 300,000 tons of ammunition were to be withdrawn".¹

The "DMR" leaders reacted in a negative manner to the initialling and the signing of the Agreement between Moldova and Russia of the 21st of October 1994. During the first day of the 10th round of negotiations between Moldova and Russia, Stephan Kitsak, head of the delegation of the Tiraspol authorities at the negotiations issued a declaration, then left the negotiations. Among others, in his declaration he accused the two parties of not having taken into account the opinion of the representatives of the "DMR" or only having taken their opinion into account when it suited them, during the entire period of two years in which the negotiations had taken place. Further on, it underlined that "the Transnistrian delegation viewed as unacceptable the taking of a decision regarding the withdrawal of troops and armament of the Russian Federation from the area before the political settlement of the issue regarding the status of Transnistria, as such a decision, together with the present cutting down of the peacekeeping forces, will inevitably lead to a lack of poise of forces in the area and to a new confrontation race. The declaration further mentioned that "the Transnistrian people will not allow the realisation of any kind of agreements and decisions regarding the Russian troops' withdrawal or elimination which are adopted without taking into account the situation and vital interests of the people of Transnistria and of the soldiers belonging to the Russian troops." In the end, it proposed that the negotiations should be started again and that the Transnistrian side should take part in them as a party with equal rights.² In an interview given to the BASA-PRESS agency, the same Stephan Kitsak, while speaking about the effects of the Russian troops' withdrawal, declared that the withdrawal will infringe the principle of military equality to the advantage of Moldova, "a fact that will tension the situation until

¹ I. Constantin, Cind va pleca Armata a 14-a? ["When will the 14th Army leave?"] - "Glasul Natiunii" No. 33 (204), August 1994.

² Iulian Chifu, p. 55 - 56; Rapport No. 16/94 of the OSCE Mission in Moldova, Annex n. 1

an unpredictable dramatic character".¹ During February 1995 I. Smirnov issued a decree through which he forbade physical and juridical persons in the districts of the "DMR" "to withdraw the property of the Russian Army from the area" as the Agreement between Moldova and Russia of the 21st of October 1994 "does not take the interests of Transnistria into account".²

As a reply to the signing of the Agreement of the 21st of November 1994, the Tiraspol authorities organised in Transnistria a referendum regarding the 14th Army's stationing in the area, on the 26th of March 1995. The question was put this way: "do you support the presence of the 14th Army of the Russian Federation in the Dniester Moldavian Republic as a guardian of peace and security?" 93,3% of the people voting answered the question in an affirmative way. The presence of some Russian deputies at the referendum, and especially the resolution of the Russian State Duma "Regarding the situation of the 14th Army", adopted on the 26th of April, suggest that the referendum was inspired by Moscow.³

Its purpose was to find a justification for the Russian troops' stationing in Moldova, using "public opinion".

After the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994 had been signed, Moldova and Russia signed a few additional agreements stipulated in the basic agreement.⁴ However, as the delegations of Moldova and Russia only met at

¹ Molodezhi Moldovy", 1 November 1994.

² Sergey Kneaz'kov, Soglashenie podpisano, no sovershenno ne yasno, smozhet li 14-a armiya pokinut' Pridnestrov'e. - "Krasnaya zvezda" 23 February 1995.

³ Sergey Kneaz'kov, Itogi referendumu byli predskazuemy - "Krasnaya zvezda", 28 March 1995, Mihai Gribincea, Doctrina Rusa asupra bazelor militare si Moldova, - "Cele trei Crisuri", Serie Noua, Anul 6, No. 9-10 (66-67), Septembrie-Octombrie 1995. On the reaction of the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Parliament, as well as of some international organisations to the referendum in Transnistria regarding the stationing of Russian troops in the area see: Information bulletin of the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [in Romanian] No. 3-4 (7-8), March-April 1995, p. 34-39

⁴ During February 1995 Moldova and Russia signed the following additional agreements to the Basic Agreement:

1) The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of the Russian Federation regarding the organisation of inter-action during the inspection of the military formations of the Russian Federation temporarily

the table of negotiations once (in May 1996) since October 1994, the Parties have not yet elaborated or signed all additional agreements stipulated in the basic agreement. Neither was the Moldovan-Russian commission stipulated in article 21 of the Basic agreement (a Commission with the goal of observing the realisation of the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994) established.

If Moscow's lack of interest for the continuation of negotiations in view of finishing agreements and their signing can be explained, the Kishinev authorities' lack of interest is strange. The fact that Kishinev authorities have not appointed a head of the government delegation of the Republic of Moldova at the negotiations with the Russian Federation regarding military problems is also strange. The lack of consequence and firmness of the Kishinev leadership in the problem of the Russian troops' withdrawal determine some Western analysts to doubt the sincerity of Kishinev's will of getting out of the Russian influence sphere and of getting rid of the occupying troops. Thus, political analysts of "The Jamestown Foundation Monitor", regarding the visit to the USA of Dumitru Diacov, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, in June 1999, conclude that "recent signals in Kishinev suggest us

deployed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, concerning the CFE Treaty and the Vienna document of 1992 regarding measures of consolidation of trust and security; 2) The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of the Russian Federation regarding social guarantees and insurance of pensions for the former military and members of their families; 3) The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of the Russian Federation regarding transportation of troops and military loads belonging to military formations of the Russian Federation temporarily deployed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova and the manner of mutual discounts .in the given matter; 4) The agreement between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova and the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation regarding conditions of the withdrawal of the 240th pontoons regiment (with the exception of one battalion), of the 237th pioneer regiment (with the exception of one battalion), of the 1833rd engineer depot (with the exception of two sections) on the territory of the Russian Federation - "The Information Bulletin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova", [in Romanian] No.6, February 1995, p. 22, Press-release of the Permanent Delegation of the Russian Federation to OSCE, 9 November 1995.

though that the decision of the Moldovan authorities of staying outside Russian influence and follow the proposed objective of "integration in Europe" could be questioned. According to the analysts of "Monitorul", the President of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova brought an "ambiguous message" to the US, tried to "spare" Russia, "used the Russian Duma as scapegoat for the conflict in Transnistria" and for the delaying of the withdrawal process of Russian troops from Moldova. "Moldovan officials", we read in the Monitor, - "find that it is simpler to blame the Duma for its incapacity of settling the Transnistrian conflict or "certain anonymous forces" in Russia than to recognise the role of the Russian government and of the Kremlin. The Russian government finds it suitable to hide itself behind the Duma, in order to avoid responsibility in front of international legislation for some of its actions. Thus, the Kremlin still claims that the bilateral agreement of 1994, which stipulated that Russian troops should leave Moldova during the following three years, cannot be put into practice, as it has not been ratified yet by the Duma. However, the Russian side, including President Yeltsin, was the one to insist over the introduction within the agreement of a ratification demand "through internal state procedures", then interpreting the formula above as a ratification from the part of the Duma. On the other side, it is Russia's executive power that supports Transnistrian economy through "subventions", not the Duma. The President of Moldovan Parliament "neglected pointing out the fact that the Duma really has no power in elaborating external politics, that its resolutions are only rhetorical exercises and that Transnistria's real problem does not concern the State Duma, but the executive branch of the government and of the Russian Army".¹

In our opinion, the appreciation given by analysts of the Monitor to D. Diacov's visit to the USA should have the Kishinev authorities worry and ask themselves questions about Moldova's external image. The appreciation above also prove that the elaboration of a state conception regarding the issues of the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict and of the Russian troops' withdrawal from Moldova, as well as an urgent revision of our state's foreign policy, that would eliminate its incoherence and duplicity is an urgent need.

¹ "FLUX", No. 25 (207), 18 June 1999.

The close observation of the implementation of the Moldovan-Russian Agreement of the 21st of October 1994

On the eve of the signing of the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994, as well as after its signing, several officials of the Republic of Moldova declared themselves in favour of the establishment of an international control over the Russian military formations' withdrawal from Moldova. For example, Mircea Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova, approached this matter during a meetings with a delegation of the Council of Europe, which visited Moldova during October 1994, during his meetings with Boutros Boutros-Ghali, General Secretary of the United Nations (4th of November 1994), with Bill Clinton, President of the USA (30th of January 1995), with Ambassador Istvan Gyarmati, personal representative of the Chairman in Office of the OSCE etc.¹ The idea of monitoring the implementation of the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994 was also exposed in some speeches at OSCE Summits. Thus, in his speech at the Budapest's OSCE Summit (5th - 6th of December 1994), he showed that: "On the 21st of October this year the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation signed the Agreement regarding the withdrawal of Russian military formations in a period of three years. It is a common success of the two states, which in the same time suits the engagements made within the OSCE. The immediate coming into effect and effective realisation of the provisions made by agreement are to strengthen the trust and good relationships between the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation. Thus, I consider that monitoring the 14th Army's withdrawal process, especially the withdrawal of the huge stocks of armament stored in the conflict area, would not only be in the interest of Moldova and Russia, but also in the interest of all those who plead for the consolidation of security and

¹ "Information Bulletin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova" [in Romanian] No. 2, 1994, p.9; No. 3, 1994, p.3; No. 1 (5), 1995, p.10; No. 5-8 (9-12), 1995, p.3.

stability in this vulnerable area of the European continent. In our opinion, such a mandate could only be assigned to the long-term Mission of the OSCE in the Republic of Moldova.¹

Kishinev's will that the withdrawal process should be monitored by the OSCE can be explained by the fear that a part of the Russian troops' armament should not come to the hands of the separatist authorities in Tiraspol. However, Russia has rejected and it still vehemently rejects the idea of monitoring. On the 8th of December 1994, the representative of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs made a declaration showing that the matter of the Russian troops' withdrawal from Moldova "concerns exclusively the two sovereign states of Russia and Moldova. The issue of international control over the process was not raised or discussed during any of the rounds of negotiations between Russia and Moldova regarding the withdrawal of the 14th Army". It was also underlined that the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994 "as well as other documents, do not contain any provisions for the participation of foreign observers controlling the Russian troops' withdrawal. The OSCE Mission in Moldova was never assigned the task of controlling the withdrawal of the Russian troops. There is no provision made for the participation of the mission and other foreign observers in this process, the more so as the practical steps of the troops' withdrawal will be transparent, thus making the process easy to be bilaterally controlled in accordance with the agreements which have been signed".²

In spite of Russia's reaction to the idea of monitoring, the Republic of Moldova insisted many times during the years 1994 - 1996 that this matter should be approached within the Permanent Council (PC) of the OSCE in Vienna. Moreover, on the 28th of September 1995 it proposed to the PC a project of a document entitled "Considerations on closely following of the implementation of the "Agreement between the Russian Federation and the

¹ Information Bulletin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova [in Romanian], No. 4, December 1994, p. 7.

² "Moldova suverana", 13 December, 1994; "Information Bulletin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova" [in Romanian] No. 4, 1994, p.19. The reactions of some politicians in Kishinev to the mentioned declaration of the representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, too, are to be seen there.

Republic of Moldova regarding the legal status, the modalities and the time-table of withdrawal of Russian armed forces temporarily deployed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova".¹ Ion Capatana, by then deputy minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Moldova, while presenting the "Considerations..." to the PC, mentioned that in the case of Moldova the need of ensuring the observation of the implementation process of the Agreement from the 21st of October 1994 is not a proof of the lack of trust towards the signing parties' decision of honestly fulfilling the engagements assumed through the Agreement, but is dictated by the following considerations: a) the Russian troops' withdrawal will be carried out on a territory which is not controlled by legal authorities; b) there is an illegal army in the area, as well as paramilitary formations possessing modern armament; c) huge amounts of ammunition are stored in the area from where troops are to be withdrawn.² These ammunition stocks "in cases of crisis, may become a target of some terrorist attacks with consequences which may endanger regional peace and security". The close monitoring of the Agreement's implementation will increase the feeling of safety of the signing parties and all OSCE states that the armament and ammunition deployed in the eastern districts of Moldova would not come to the hands of separatist authorities or of terrorist groups, and would avoid the transfer of armament from Transnistrian area to other conflict areas.³

According to the "Considerations...", the structure assigned with the task of close monitoring had to be the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova, to whom the OSCE had offered its services for close monitoring

¹ OSCE Mission to Moldova. Documents. Volume 5 (July - December 1, 1995), p.73.

² *Ibid.*, p.73.

³ See: "Considerations on closely following of the implementation of the "Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova regarding the legal status, the modalities and the time-table of withdrawal of Russian armed forces temporarily deployed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova". When elaborating the "Considerations..." , the MFA of the Republic of Moldova took into account suggestions of several state members of the OSCE, especially France, as well as the ones of the OSCE Mission in Moldova.

through the decision of the Budapest Summit.¹ In order for the OSCE Mission to carry out its monitoring activity under fine conditions, it was proposed that the OSCE should extend its mandate and activity term, and increase its staff. The process of close monitoring of the Russian troops' withdrawal from the territory of Moldova was to end once the validity term of the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994 had expired, i.e. "until the complete withdrawal of military formations of the Russian Federation from the territory of the Republic of Moldova".²

The "Considerations..." proposed that the close monitoring regime should be composed of two parts: the information regime and the inspection one. According to the information regime Russia was to give the OSCE Mission detailed and complete information on the Russian military formations' deployment place, on their movable and immovable property, information on persons of the military formations' personnel and on their family members, as well as the date and manner of transportation of the loads, the route of the means of transport from the starting point and until the border of the Russian Federation. At its turn, the OSCE Mission in Moldova, in accordance with the inspection regime, was to verify the information through a sounding method. The inspections were to be routine ones (meaning planned) and unexpected. The inspections were to take place at the "place of deployment" and at the stations on the way to Russia.

The participation of Ukraine (whose territory the military loads were to cross on their way to Russia) to the process of monitoring of the Agreement's implementation was declared as indispensable.

On the 28th of September 1995, deputy minister I. Capatana proposed, during his speech, that an ad-hoc working group, consisting of the representatives of several states, should be established within the Permanent Council of the OSCE. This group would have the task of perfecting the Moldovan "Considerations" on closely following of the implementation of the Agreement from the 21st of October 1994.³

¹ Adrian Nastase, *Documente fundamentale ale dreptului international si relatiilor internationale*, Bucharest, 1997, Vol.1 a, p. 232.

² "Diplomaticheskii vestnik", 1994, p.51.

³ OSCE Mission to Moldova, *Documents*, volume 5 (July 1 - December 1995), p.

The Russian position regarding the Moldovan proposal on the close monitoring of the implementation of the Agreement of 21st of October 1994, was expressed, besides the declaration of December 1994 mentioned above, in a speech made by the Russian delegation to the Permanent Council of the OSCE, in November 1995. It can be summarised to the following elements:

a) in order to closely observe the implementation of the Agreement the latter has to come into effect, namely to be ratified by the State Duma. Moreover, "at its turn, the Moldovan side, although it had approved the basic agreement through a government decision, has not yet ratified the additional agreement regarding jurisdiction and mutual juridical assistance in this matter, without which the basic agreements are not operational...";

b) the monitoring of the Agreement's implementation cannot take place, because during the negotiations the Moldovan side did not raise the issue of establishing international control over the implementation of the Agreement. Besides that, the Agreement does not stipulate anything in this respect;

c) the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova cannot be the structure suited to monitor the Agreement's implementation., as it has no such mandate. The monitoring of the Agreement's implementation is a matter of the competence of the signing states;

d) in order to implement the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994 the necessary political premises must be created (the political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict should be achieved). "Until then we cannot speak about details of the withdrawal schedule";

e) the troops' withdrawal must take place in accordance with article 2 of the Agreement from the 21st of October 1994, "which openly states that the practical actions in view of the withdrawal of Russian troops will be synchronised with the political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict and the defining of the special status of the Transnistrian area of the Republic of Moldova (but not the other around, the way it is often presented in a distorted manner)".¹

73.

¹ See: "Moldova suverana", 15 December 1994; "The Information Bulletin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova" [in Romanian] No. 4, 1994, p.19.

As the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994 has not come into effect yet, and the process of withdrawal of the troops is suspended, presently the matter of the close monitoring of the Agreement's implementation is not on the agenda of Moldovan diplomacy. However, we believe that as soon as signs come from Moscow announcing the actual start of the troops' withdrawal, the issue of the "close monitoring of the implementation of the Agreement from the 21st of October 1994 will be again approached by Moldovan diplomacy, the more so as Russia is more and more tempted to negotiate the matter of the Russian troops' withdrawal from Transnistria with the authorities of Tiraspol, but not with the ones from Kishinev.

The Russian "peacekeeping" forces in the Republic of Moldova

Even since 1992, while trying to obtain a UN/OSCE mandate for the Russian "peacekeeping" forces on former Soviet territories, Moscow has been presenting the case of Moldova as its most successful operation. Sometimes the "peacekeeping" operation in Transnistria was and still is presented as being superior to UN practice. For example, Andrey Kozyrev, former Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, in an article published in the "Nezavisimaya gazeta" in November 1993, wrote that: "Today the "classical criteria by which the UN used to approach peacekeeping operations decades ago are no longer valid. New questions arise, such as: would it be better should the peacekeeping contingents be established by the parties involved in the conflict and the "neighbouring country"? They state that this does not suit UN practice. However, we should not take our stand on schemes, but on real life, the more so as the new approaches have already proved their efficiency, for example in Transnistria and South Ossetia"¹. The operation in Transnistria was also presented as a success of

¹ Andrei Kozyrev, Rossiya fakticheski v odinokku neset bremya real'nogo mirotvorchestva po peremetru svoikh granits. - "Nezavisimaya gazeta", 22 October 1993.

Russian "peacekeeping" during the speech held by Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, during the 49th Session of the UN General Assembly.

But in spite of Russian rhetoric, the Transnistrian case is the most eloquent example of the way Moscow uses Russian "peacekeeping" forces in order to maintain military presence on former Soviet territories.

However, before elucidating the Russian "peacekeeping" operation in Transnistria, we have to underline the fact that the leaders of Moldova only accepted the introduction of some Russian "peacekeeping" forces to the conflict area because they had been forced by the circumstances to do so. Initially, the Kishinev Government and Parliament had declared themselves for the introduction of multinational peacekeeping forces in the eastern districts of Moldova. Unfortunately, the neighboring states, from which Moldova had requested the peacekeeping forces, did not respond to Kishinev's appeals. On the 7th of July 1992, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, "in connection with the aggravation of the conflict in the eastern districts of the Republic of Moldova and with the purpose of perpetuating the cease-fire and disengaging the sides involved in the conflict", addressed parliaments and heads of state of the Republic of Belarus, Bulgaria, the Russian Federation, Romania and Ukraine proposing them to "agree upon forming a united force of disengagement of the parties involved in the conflict, together with the Republic of Moldova".¹ Only Romania gave a positive answer to the request of the Moldovan Parliament. On the 8th of July 1992 Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, while arriving at Helsinki, where he was to take part in the OSCE Summit of the 9-10th of July, declared that "Romania is ready to send peacekeeping troops to Moldova, with the condition that the parties involved should agree to this".² Bulgaria, although it had showed many times its concern for the fate of the Moldovan Bulgarians, in relation with the escalation of the conflict³ hesitated to send peacekeeping forces to Moldova,

¹ "Moldova suverana", 9 July 1992.

² "Moldova suverana", 11 July 1992

³ During the Helsinki Conference (March 1992), N. Tiu, Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Stoyan Ganev, Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs had a meeting, during which Stoyan Ganev expressed his concern regarding a possible escalation of tensions in Moldova, "a fact that would endanger the tens of thousands

refusing to get involved in the settlement of the conflict.¹ The Republic of Belarus, which had expressed its will to act as a mediator in the settlement of conflicts in former Soviet space since June 1992, gave a negative answer to Moldova's request of sending disengagement troops to Transnistria. During the meeting which took place on the 3rd of July 1992 between A. Mosanu, President of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, and S. Shushkevich, President of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Belarus, the latter declared that the Republic of Belarus could not send peacekeeping forces to Moldova "as the national army is not formed yet and its soldiers have not yet taken their vows to the republic". At the same time, the president of the Belarussian parliament added that his country intended to raise the issue of sending to Moldova some military formations of countries member of the OSCE as "blue helmets".²

The "peacekeeping" forces presently active on the territory of the Republic of Moldova were established on the 27th of July 1992 in accordance with the "Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation on the principles of peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova" (signed in Moscow on 21 July 1992) through a decision of the Joint Control Commission (JCC), which had been created in order to ensure the agreement's practical realization.

The "peacekeeping" forces were placed on the terrain between the 31st of July and the 4th of August 1992. Until then the JCC had established the limits of the Security Zone between the sides involved in the conflict. The length of the Security Zone is 225 km, and its width is 12 to 20 km. The Security Zone is divided in three sectors: Northern Sector (Rybnitsa), Central Sector (Dubasari) and Southern Sector (Bender).³ Bilateral posts using soldiers of the Russian Federation and the "DMR" on the left bank of the Dniestr and soldiers belonging to Russian troops and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova on the right bank (15 posts were placed on the left bank

of Bulgarians living in Moldova"("Moldova suverana", 31 October 1992).

¹ "Moldova suverana", 11 July 1992.

² "Moldova suverana", 7 July 1992

³ Sbornik Dokumentov Ob'edinennoy Kontrol'noy Kommissiy, No.1, Bendery, 1992, pp. 19-23.

of the Dniestr¹ and 17 of them on the right bank)² were placed along the Security Zone with the exception of the Northern Sector. Mobile posts were established inside the security zone and trilateral checkpoints on the bridges. The situation on the terrain at the date when the Agreement of the 21st of July had been signed was taken into account at the deployment of the "peacekeeping" forces.

As far as the personnel of the "peacekeeping" forces are concerned, the JCC decided on the 30th of July 1992 that they should be composed of 4,300 persons and 800 reserve persons. Six battalions, one of which in reserve (2,400 members on the whole) were to be introduced to the Security Zone from the part of the Russian Federation, 3 battalions (1,200 soldiers) were to be introduced from the part of the constitutional authorities of the Republic of Moldova, and three battalions, of which one in reserve (1,200 soldiers on the whole) were to be introduced from the part of the separatist authorities in Tiraspol. The "peacekeeping" battalions were distributed like this: the Russian ones - one battalion in Rybnitsa, one in Dubasari, one in Dorotskaia-Pyryta and three of them in Tighina; the Kishinev authorities' battalions - at Malovata-Noua-Cocieri, Cosnita-Vadul-lui-Voda and Varnita; the battalions of the self-proclaimed "DMR" in Dubasari, Dorotskaia and Parcani.³ It was also decided that the "peacekeeping" forces should be established on volunteering bases, using soldiers and citizens aged 20 to 50 which had not taken part in military actions during the armed conflict of the summer of 1992.

On 30 July 1992, the JCC created a Unified Military Commandment to ensure direct control over the "PKF", and on 31 July a General Staff. Also on 31 July a Group for rapid action was formed, that would deal with the

¹ The Russian "peacekeeping" forces arrived in Moldova from Pskov, Ryazan and Kostroma transported by 58 military transport airplanes.

² In July 1995 19 checkpoints were placed in the Security Area (5 trilateral ones, 5 bilateral ones and 9 unilateral ones), served round the clock by 132 soldiers armed with fire arms and means of communication. -"Mirotvorets"(Edition of the Unified Control Commission and of the Unified Military Command of the PKF of the Transnistrian area of the Republic of Moldova) [in Russian] No. 3, July 1995.

³ Sbornik Dokumentov Ob'edinennoy Kontrol'noy Kommissiy, No. 1, Bendery, 1992, pp. 12-16

problems arising from possible violations of the cease-fire.¹ On 3 August, in order to ensure the monitoring and control of the security zone, a group of military observers was formed, consisting of 30 people (10 from each of the parties in conflict).²

In order to achieve an objective elucidation of the situation in the area of the armed conflict and to inform public opinion on the activity of the JCC, a JCC Press Center was created on the 31st of July 1992. Military commands were created in the towns of Tighina (Bender) and Dubasari, as well as in the village of Varnitsa, these being considered localities with complicated situation. In accordance with the Agreement of the 21st of July 1992, the town of Tighina was declared an increased security regime area.

Under numerical aspect the personnel of the "peacekeeping" forces of the three parties and technique which they possess are shown in table 10. From the same table, we can see that Russian "peacekeeping" forces had been cut down since 1992 up to 1999 from 2,400 to 469 soldiers, whereas the forces of the Republic of Moldova and of the separatist authorities were cut down to 493 and 452 soldiers each.

After the introduction of the "peacekeeping" forces to the Security Zone, the sides in conflict have began the withdrawal of military personnel and technique from their positions, they moved on to de-blocking the roads and de-mining the territory, a part of the refugees begun to return to their homes. Until the 21st of July 1993 the engineer units from the "peacekeeping" units de-mined most of the mined objectives and fields (over 11,000 mines and explosive objects were destroyed), over 600 illegally kept weapons were confiscated from the population, together with over 1,000 grenades and more than 100,000 cartridge.³

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-46, 50-52

² *Ibid.*, pp. 12-16, 53-54

³ Zayavleniye Ob'edinennoy Kontrol'noy Kommissiy, "Nezavisimaya Moldova", 24 July 1993. Between August 1992 and July 1999 the "peacekeeping" forces from the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova" retained 25,840 persons having committed several infringements of legal order in the Security Zone, seized 134 firearms, 360 combat grenades, 97,650 war cartridge and deprimed 11,370 explosive devices" ("Moldpres", No. 8962, 30 July 1999). Between August 1992 and the 27th of

These results, as well as actions carried out by the JCC, initially created the impression that the acceptance by Moldovan leaders of Russian "peacekeeping" forces in Transnistria had been a good step on the path of the solving of the Transnistrian conflict and a quick settlement was hoped for. However, Kishinev's hopes proved to be an illusion. After the Russian "peacekeeping" forces had been introduced, the Tiraspol authorities began to use the Security Zone as well as the Russian "peacekeeping" forces as a shield for consolidating already existing anti-constitutional structures and the creation of new ones.¹ Thus, in accordance with the decree issued by Igor Smirnov, leader of the self-proclaimed "DMR", "Regarding organizational measures concerning the guard of the DMR State frontier" border guard units were introduced to the Security Zone, in places controlled by Russian "peacekeeping" forces. In the fortress of Tighina [Bender], the 2nd rifle brigade of the "DMR" replaced the 173rd missile brigade of the 14th Army, which had been evacuated on the territory of Russia. On the whole, since the Russian "peacekeeping" forces had been introduced to the conflict area and until the 1st of December 1994, the separatist authorities in Tiraspol introduced 3 motorized rifle brigades, one border guard detachment, several Cossack detachments, totally more than 3,500 men to the Security Zone, with the acceptance of Russian "peacekeeping" forces.² As a result of these actions, the Dniestr River became the frontier between the sides involved in

April 1998 human losses of the disengagement forces amounted up to 41 dead (27 persons belonging to Russian troops, 9 belonging to Transnistrian "peacekeeping forces" and 5 belonging to Moldovan forces) and 81 wounded (46 soldiers belonging to Russian Federation troops, 24 belonging to the Moldovan ones and 11 belonging to the separatist authorities' troops).

¹ In his statement delivered on 1 October 1992 at the 47th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, N. Tâu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, declared that one of the main sources of tension in Moldova was the presence of the 14th Army which he called "the occupying army"(See: The 14th Army, a permanent source of tension. Speech of N. Tâu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, during the 47th Session of the UN General Assembly ("Moldova suverana", 10 October 1992).

² See: Mihai Gribincea, Rejecting a New Role for the former Russian 14th Army. - "Transition", Vol. 2, No. 6, 22 March 1996, p.38-40

the conflict. Thus, what the separatists during the armed conflict had not realized in the summer of 1992 was realized peacefully after the Russian "peacekeeping" forces had been introduced to the conflict area.

Table 10
Personnel and technical units possessed by "peacekeeping" forces in the Transdnestrian Region of the Republic of Moldova (August 1992, November 1995, March 1998, May 1998)

Year and month	The Russian Federation				The Republic of Moldova				Separatist authorities ("DMR")			
	08. 1992	11. 1995	03. 1998	05. 1999	08. 1992	11. 1995	03. 1998	05. 1999	08. 1992	11. 1995	03. 1998	05. 1999
Personnel	2400	586	404	469	1200	1200	738	493	1200	1032	865	452**
Battalions: -active	5	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2
- in reserve:	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1
Total :	6	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Armored combat vehicles (BTR):	63	58	38	16	18	18	19	17	5	5	2	20
Armored vehicles for paratroops (BMD):	78	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
APC & AIFV Look-alikes***	-	-	-	-	54	54	54	48	14	14	-	1
Light and special vehicles and trucks:	75	72	75	54	43	43	36	33	67	67	67	66

* The table was drawn up by the author.

**Besides personnel and technique indicated in the table the separatist authorities possess one "peacekeeping" unit outside Security Zone (in the village of Vladimirovka). On 17 of May 1999, 291 persons served in this unit. They were armed with 3 armored combat vehicles (BTR), 26 light and special vehicles and trucks (3 light, 7 special and 16 tracks), and 358 firearms.

*** Armoured personnel carrier look-alikes and armoured infantry fighting vehicle look-alikes.

The fact that separatist authorities in Tiraspol use Russian "peacekeeping" forces as a shield behind which they arm themselves and consolidate their state structures was recorded by many foreign observers and by the representatives of several international organizations which visited Moldova. For example, during the 40th Session of the NATO Assembly (Washington, November 1994), Gerald Solomon (USA) mentioned the following in his report "The peacekeeping operation in the Transnistrian area: a case of testing for the OSCE": "Transnistrian forces have taken advantage of military facilities given by the 14th Army in the Security Zone in order to illegally recruit soldiers, strengthen up fortifications and build new ones; consequently the area which was supposed to be de-militarized become a military fortress under a dubious authority".¹

Point 2 of the Agreement of the 21st of July 1992 stipulates that effectives, manner of introduction and withdrawal from the conflict area of peacekeeping forces is to be determined by an additional protocol concluded between the sides. However, during the year 1993 and the first half of the year 1994 Moscow unilaterally cut the effectives of its peacekeeping forces down to 1,200 persons out of 2,400. Then, in September 1994, the Russian Ministry of Defense officially put forward the proposal that Russian "peacekeeping" forces should be cut down to 500 persons. As a result of several protests from the part of Moldova against the manner in which the Russian "peacekeeping" forces had been cut down and against the fact that the part of the Security Zone under Russian control had been transferred under control of Transnistrian authorities, Russia cut down its "peacekeeping" forces to 630 persons (November 1994).²

Col. Gen. Kondratiev, Russian Deputy Minister of Defense, while present in Tiraspol at the end of November 1994, motivated Moscow's decision of cutting down Russian "peacekeeping" forces in the area through the financial difficulties the Russian Army is presently facing and through a

¹ Gerald B. Solomon, Peacekeeping in the Transdniester Region: A Test Case for the CSCE. North Atlantic Assembly, November 1994.

² Yuriy Selivanov, Rossiyskie mirotvortsy pokidayut Moldaviyu,-"Segodnya", 1 December 1994.

relative stabilization of the situation in Transnistria.¹ In reality, the case of Moldova proves the fact that the so-called Russian peacekeeping forces are being introduced in conflict areas of the former Soviet territories and held there until situations favourable to Moscow are created. The Russian "peacekeeping" forces in Transnistria were cut down because they had already achieved the goal with which they had been created. For more than two years they have been a defence shield for the authorities in Tiraspol. During this period of time the separatist authorities consolidated their state structures, created their own army, as well as border guard units, and took over most of the security area controlled by Russian peacekeeping forces. After all these, even if it happens that Russian troops should withdraw from the territory of Moldova, under the influence of certain factors, there will remain a regular army and pro-Russian paramilitary forces in Transnistria, which will act as an element of permanent pressure over the Kishinev Government, a "fifth column" of Moscow in the area, which will try to keep Moldova within the Russian sphere of influence.²

The "peacekeeping" operation in Transnistria also elucidates Russia's view on international control from the part of international organisations over the Russian "peacekeeping" operations.

Under the insistence of the Republic of Moldova and under pressure from the part of the West, Russia accepted that an OSCE Mission should be sent to Moldova at the beginning of the year 1993. The mission has a mandate to contribute to the restoration of peace, to the consolidation of the Republic of Moldova's independence and sovereignty, as well as the protection of Moldova's national minorities. However, due to Russia's attitude towards the Mission, the latter's role in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict stays insignificant. Moscow opposed to the OSCE Mission's taking part in the negotiations regarding the withdrawal of the 14th Army from the territory of Moldova,³ the members of the Mission have restrictions regarding their free

¹ Arkadiy Pasechnik. Lebedya prosyat ostat'sya na Dnestre. - "Pravda", 30 November 1994.

² See: M. Gribincea, "Doctrina" rusa a "pacificarii" in Republica Moldova. - "Mesagerul", No. 1-3 (87-89), 5, 12, 19 January 1996

³ CSCE Mission to Moldova, Documents, Vol. 1 (April-October 1999) Report No.

access to the Security Zone, they only take part in the JCC meetings with the status of observers and may express their opinions only if there is a consensus of the JCC parties in this respect etc. Jonathan Eyal, director of studies at the Royal Institute for Defence Studies in London, writes about the "helpless CSCE mission" to Moldova: "As the example of Moldova shows, the Russian pretend to carry out peacekeeping missions, while the West pretends to be monitoring them. It's a convenient arrangement, which, in the terms so much cherished by diplomats, keeps everybody "involved" in the "process".¹

An eloquent example of the part which the OSCE Mission to Moldova plays in the process of settlement of the Transnistrian conflict and its possibilities of carrying out its mandate is the case of the abusive retaining by Transnistrian border guards of Donald Johnson, head of the Mission. At the beginning of November 1996, the OSCE Mission in Moldova publicised a press-release pointing out, amongst others, that a few days before the car in which Donald Johnson, the head of the OSCE Mission, was, had been retained by a Transnistrian border guard picket in Dubasari, that the head of the Mission had been asked to declare the purpose of his journey and to show the vehicle's papers, that the head of the border guard picket had ordered the car to go back to Kishinev, etc. After all these, it was not even possible that the incident should be debated within the Unified Control Commission, responsible for the situation in the Security Zone.²

A part of the fault for the insignificant role the Mission plays in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict and the negative attitude towards it is born by the leadership of the OSCE, which often appoints as heads of the Mission diplomats who do not know the situation in the area and the country where they come, they have no idea of the origins of the conflict, or have a visible pro-Russian attitude, which is even worse. Some of the latter, after attending the weddings and baptisms of separatist leaders and expressing their availability of working under the same roof with the Russian embassy in

7, 29 July 1993, p. 49.

¹ Jonathan Eyal, Un razboi de frontiera pus la dosar, "Observatorul" (Kishinev), 10 March 1994.

² BASA-PRESS, 5 November 1996.

Kishinev, try to convince the public opinion in Moldova of the fact that "the members of the Mission are not Russian spies".

Since the year 1995, in order to maintain its military presence in Moldova (as this country opposes the Russian troops' transformation into a military base), Russia has chosen to transform the small contingent of Russian troops in Transnistria into peacekeeping forces. The "Jamestown Foundation" newspaper's issue of the 13th of November 1995 informed its readers of the fact that the Russian president Boris Yeltsin, among other subjects discussed during his meeting of the 10th of November with Pavel Grachev, minister of defence of the Russian Federation, in a hospital, approached the issue of the future the Russian troops deployed in Moldova have. According to the Presidential Press Service, Yeltsin approved the proposals put forward by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the Ministry of Defence of holding consultations with Moldova in view of transferring functions from the Russian peacekeeping contingent to the Operational Group of Forces deployed in Moldova (the former 14th Army).¹

The Russian Federation's intentions of transforming the 14th Army into a peacekeeping force is not a new one. Russia also made proposals in this respect to Moldova even during the armed conflict during the summer of 1992. On that date, as well as today, the leaders of the Republic of Moldova categorically rejected the proposal mentioned above. This matter was also approached during the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, Romania, Russia and Ukraine on the 17th of April 1992 in Kishinev. It was then that N. Tiu, the Moldovan minister of Foreign Affairs, supported by Adrian Nastase, its Romanian counterpart, declared himself categorically against the transformation of Russian troops into peacekeeping forces, insisting on their immediate withdrawal of the area. This position was also put forward by President Snegur during his meeting with the 4 ministers of foreign affairs, specifying that "the 14th Army cannot play the role of interfering force between the parties in conflict, for several considerations".² During the meeting of the 11th of July 1992, when the situation regarding the disengagement of the forces

¹ "The Jamestown Foundation Monitor", 13 November 1995.

² "Sfatul Tarii", 21 April 1992.

involved in the conflict was examined, the Security Council of Moldova, "as a rule accepting the variant of the representative of the president of the Russian Federation which supposes the disarmament of illegal formations the town of Bender with the help of neutral military forces... declared itself categorically against the using in this respect of the airborne troops regiment deployed in Kishinev or of 14th Army units".¹ On the 8th of July 1992, the Russian State Duma also adopted a Declaration approving the use of the 14th Army in Transnistria as a peacekeeping force, "until CIS inter-state peacekeeping forces will be created and introduced in the conflict area, according to the agreement between the presidents of Moldova, Ukraine and Russia".² In the opinion of General M. Kolesnikov, former assistant chief of the Russian High Headquarters, uttered during the discussions in the State Duma, the 14th Army could be used as a peacekeeping force until the "unified CIS forces" distribution in the area, but it would of been proper that it should have been strengthened with two airborne troop regiments from Belarus and Ukraine.³

On the 22nd of November 1995, the issue of the transformation of the contingent of Russian troops in Transnistria into a peacekeeping force was discussed within the Joint Control Commission. The meeting was also attended by Lieutenant General Aleksandr Sokolov, assistant commander of the ground forces of the Russian Federation.⁴ General Victor Catana, co-chairman of the JCC from the part of the Republic of Moldova, rejected the Russian proposal, attracting General Sokolov's attention to the 4th point of the Agreement of the 21st of July 1992, stipulating that the 14th Army would respect neutrality in the Transnistrian conflict. V. Catana pointed out that the reduced contingent of Russian troops deployed in Transnistria could not be engaged in peacekeeping operations. This could only be possible as a result of a new convention being signed between the President of Moldova and the Russian one.⁵

¹ "Moldova suverana", 14 July 1992

² "Izvestia", 10 July 1992

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Generalul Victor Catana respinge pretentiile militarilor rusi. - "Flux", 24 November 1995; Natalya Prikhodyko, 14-ya armia stanet mirotvorcheskoy. - "Nezavisimaya gazeta", 12 December 1995

⁵ "Flux", 24 November 1995, p. 13; Nataliya Prikhodyko, 14-ya armiya stanet

Russia tried to motivate its proposal of giving the former 14th Army troops peacekeeping functions through the financial difficulties it faces in ensuring the means for the "peacekeeping" forces. Vladimir Ustinov, co-chairman of the JCC from the part of the Russian Federation, declared to the correspondent of the "Nezavisimaya gazeta" newspaper of Moscow that the Russian proposal started from economical considerations and from the will to "reduce the burden of large expenses, which Russia bears as it carries out its peacekeeping mission in the area".¹ According to Russian declarations, a "rotation" (i.e. a shift of the peacekeeping battalions in Transnistria with others brought from Russia) of the "peacekeeping" forces in the eastern districts of Moldova causes Russia the loss of 6 billion Russian roubles.² In reality, the Russian proposal was "one more proof of the fact that Moscow has no intention of respecting the Agreement for the withdrawal of the Russian troops, signed with Moldova in October 1994", and "the transfer of the peacekeeping functions towards the 14th Army will perpetuate its presence in Moldova".³

In the opinion of some observers, the Russian proposal also had another purpose: According to the provisions made by the CFE Treaty, the Russian Federation has the obligation of destroying or withdrawing from the territory of the Republic of Moldova 5 types of conventional armament (battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, artillery systems, attack helicopters and combat aircrafts). However, if Moldova should accept the Russian proposal, all the armament or a part of it would go to the Russian "peacekeeping forces", a fact that would mean its taking out from under the incidence of the CFE Treaty⁴, and consequently it would not be possible to accuse Russia of not respecting the Treaty mentioned above.

mirotvorcheskoy - "Nezavisimaya gazeta", 12 December 1995; Information bulletin of the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs [in Romanian], No. 4, December 1994, p. 18; Documenty Obyedenennoy Kontrol' noy Komissiy, Bendery, Sbornik 8, 1995, pp. 38, 39.

¹ "Nezavisimaya gazeta", 1 December 1995.

² See: OSCE Mission to Moldova, Spot Report No. 14/96: Rotation of Russian Federation's Peacekeeping Contingent.

³ The Jamestown Foundation, 13 November 1995.

⁴ Ilie Lupan, Moscova e pe punctul de a-si permanentiza stationarea Armatei a 14-

As the Russian proposal regarding the assignment of peacekeeping functions to the former 14th Army had also been put forward by the Russian side on the 14th of February 1996, the permanent Delegation of the Republic of Moldova to the OSCE made a Declaration within the permanent Council on the 29th of February the same year, in which it definitely rejected the Russian proposal. The declaration underlined the fact that the transfer of functions from the Russian peacekeeping forces to the Operational Group of Russian Troops comes in contradiction with the 4th Article of the Moldovan-Russian Agreement from July 1992, as well as the Moldovan-Russian Agreement from the 21st of October 1994, which stipulates the complete withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Moldova. At the request of the Moldovan representative to the permanent Council, the declaration was annexed to the meeting's journal.¹

However, in spite of all negative declarations of Moldovan officials to the Russian proposal,² Moscow introduced 2 incomplete battalions of the OGRF (391 persons with individual armament, 26 ACVs, 16 trucks etc) to the Security Zone, during the 27th and 30th of May 1996, without informing the Joint Control Commission or obtaining its acceptance. Thus Russia unilaterally substituted the Russian "peacekeeping" forces which used to arrive in the area from the 27th Motorised Infantry Division of the Volga Military District with formations of the OGRF. Its main argument was that the Agreement of the 21st

a in Transnistria? [Is Moscow on the point of perpetuating the 14th Army's stationing in Transnistria ?] - "Mesagerul", 8 December 1995.

¹ The declaration of the Moldovan Delegation at the Permanent Council of the OSCE of the 29th of February 1996. - REF. PC/167/96, 29 February 1996.

² During January 1996 M. Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova, had a meeting with Yuri Karlov, representative of the President of the Russian Federation at the negotiations for the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. During the meeting, M. Snegur showed that "the opinions regarding the transformation of the operational group of Military forces of the Russian Federation temporally stationed in the eastern districts into peacekeeping forces are not in the position of re-establishing the situation and they have to be struggled against" (See: "Moldova literara" supplement of the "Moldova Suverana" newspaper, 17 January 1996).

of July 1992, according to which the "peacekeeping" forces had been built up, had not made any provisions forbidding the use of troops belonging to the former 14th Army in the peacekeeping operation.

As a result of several discussions within the JCC, when facing an accomplished fact, the Moldovan side was forced to accept the transfer of "peacekeeping" functions from the Russian "PKF" to the OGRF troops, under two main conditions: the "peacekeeping" units should not be operationally subordinated to the OGRF command, the "peacekeeping" soldiers should have visa of residence in Russia.¹

The way in which Russia acted when transferring "peacekeeping" functions to the OGRF units is an eloquent proof of its ignoring the interests and positions of the CIS states in general, and particularly of Moldova, as well as proof of the fact that the "master" of the situation in former soviet territories is still Russia.

Presently the Russian "peacekeeping" forces consist of a command (33 persons), a communication center (61 persons), a helicopter squad (12 soldiers, 2 MI-8 helicopters and 2 MI-24 helicopters) and 2 incomplete motorised infantry battalions (around 360 soldiers), which also possess 16 BTR and 54 vehicles besides their individual armament.

On the 20th of March a meeting took place in Odessa. P. Lucinschi and L. Kuchma, presidents of Moldova and Ukraine, V. Chernomyrdin, by then Russian Prime Minister, J. Evans, the head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova at the time, as well as I. Smirnov, president of the self-proclaimed "DMR" took part in it. During the meeting, the "Agreement" regarding trust measures and development of contacts between the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria" was signed, along with other documents. Among others, the sides signing the Agreement agreed upon the following:

"1. To cut down within two months' time the effectives of the peacekeeping forces of the Republic of Moldova and of the Transnistrian Region in the Security Zone down to 500 soldiers from each side, with technique and armament according to the scripts.

¹ See: OSCE Mission to Moldova, Spot Report No. 14/96; Rotation of Russian Federation's Peacekeeping Contingent.

2. To cut down, as a result of co-ordination with the Joint Military Command, the number of checkpoints and of the posts belonging to the joint peacekeeping forces, by replacing them with mobile patrols.”

At the same time, starting from the perspective of the demilitarisation of the Security Area, "the sides supported the proposal regarding the matter of Ukrainian peacekeepers' being sent to the security zone (Ukrainian observers in the present stage)".¹

After the reunion in Odessa, Kishinev and Tiraspol took several measures in order to realise the provisions made by the agreement mentioned above: at the end of June 1998 "the sides" agreed upon withdrawing Transnistrian and Moldovan military formations from the villages of Copanca and Cremenciug, where they had been deployed without the agreement of the JCC, as well as upon reducing the Southern Sector of the Security Area;² during September 1998 Transnistrian authorities withdrew the post of a paramilitary formation deployed ("for guarding the crops") in Rascaietsti;³ on the 12th of October 1998 the Kishinev authorities unilaterally withdrew a peacekeeping sub-unit from the security zone,⁴ and at the middle of April 1999

¹ "Pridnestrovie", 24 March 1998.

² In the Southern area only the observers of the Joint Military Command and the peacekeeping forces were given the right to activate. By the same time it was decided that in a week's time the Joint Control Command should bring forward "the organisational structure of the headquarters of the peacekeeping forces in the security area", the calendar of the effectives' cutting down to 500 soldiers, and of the evacuation of armoured technique from the area (AP FLUX and BASA-PRESS, 1 July 1998).

³ BASA-PRESS, 15 September 1998.

⁴ "Moldavskie Vedomosti", 10 October 1998; BASA-PRESS, 13 October 1998; "Moldova suverana", 31 October 1998. By unilaterally withdrawing the unit mentioned above, Kishinev hoped that Tiraspol would take a similar step. On the contrary, Transnistrian authorities condemned the action taken by the central authorities, declaring that such steps should not be taken unilaterally. The representatives of the presidents of Russia and Ukraine at the negotiations regarding the Transnistrian area, as well as the head of the OSCE mission in the Republic of Moldova supported Kishinev's action. A common declaration made during November 1998 mentioned, among others, that "the withdrawal from the security zone of a part of the Moldovan contingent of

they evacuated a training center for car drivers subordinated to the Moldovan Ministry of Defence from Rezina (as a result the central authorities in Kishinev withdrew all military units from the Security Zone, except the peacekeeping ones); on the 25th of August 1998 the "sides" agreed upon the fact that 10 Ukrainian observers should be introduced to the security zone, one of them being assigned the function of high military observer and representative of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in the area¹ etc. Consequently the main provisions made by the Odessa agreement regarding "peacekeeping" forces in the Transnistrian area were fulfilled (see table 11). However, the actions mentioned above did not lead to the settlement of the main problem - the demilitarisation of the security zone. In April 1999 Gheorghe Roman, head of the Moldovan delegation to the JCC, declared the press that the central authorities in Kishinev had withdrawn all military units from the security zone (except the peacekeeping ones), whereas "the Transnistrian side has military units distributed in the areas of Rybnitsa, Dubasari and Bender (Tighina) in

peacekeeping forces together with their military technique and armament proves Kishinev's attachment towards the engagements it had assumed. This contributes to the development of the process regarding a final and just settlement of the Transnistrian issue". The mediators also expressed in this declaration their hope that the leaders of the Transnistrian Region should take similar steps. In order to put into practice the decisions taken on the 20th of March in Odessa regarding the reduction of the PKF down to 500 persons, Kishinev unilaterally withdrew about 150 soldiers from the security zone during October and November 1998 (BASA-PRESS, 21 November 1998). Between 1997 and 1999 Kishinev cut down and withdrew PKF sub-units counting 398 soldiers together with their armament and technique from the security zone, "in order to create favourable conditions for the peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict" (Moldpres, No. 8962, 30 July 1999)

¹ AP FLUX, 27 May 1998. The decision to introduce Ukrainian observers to the security zone was only adopted in August because for a long time the "sides" included in the JCC had not been able to reach a common point of view concerning the area of action of Ukrainian observers. The Moldovan side and the Russian one considered that observers were to be active all along the security area, whereas the representatives of the separatist authorities insisted on the fact that they should only be active in the central section. In the end it was decided that Ukrainian observers should be active in the entire security zone.

contradiction with the Agreement signed in Moscow in 1992". Afterwards Gheorghe Roman pointed out that Kishinev insisted on the withdrawal of Transnistrian units from the security zone as they "represent the danger of destabilising the situation in the area and block the process of a final settlement of the Transnistrian conflict".¹ According to some data obtained from the Moldovan Ministry of Defence, during July 1999 there still were Transnistrian military and paramilitary Units counting more than 2,500 men in the security area. The separatist authorities also go on producing armament in the security zone.

The evacuation of Transnistrian military and paramilitary units from the security zone is still the main task of the JCC. However the representatives of separatist authorities refuse to approach the issue of the evacuation of military and paramilitary formations illegally deployed in the security area, considering it as a political matter which they are not empowered to discuss.² As military observers do not control the military and paramilitary units, as well as plants producing weapons, Kishinev also insists on the need to establish a mechanism for control and transparency in the security zone.³ However, this proposal too is vehemently rejected by Transnistrian authorities. The latter insist that the Moldovan side should unilaterally cut down the number of armoured vehicles to 20 items, a level that would correspond to the quantity of armoured vehicles presently possessed by the Transnistrian peacekeeping units. The representatives of Kishinev consider that the Transnistrian proposal can only be accepted if the separatist authorities would evacuate the armoured vehicles that they had illegally introduced in the security area.⁴

We are sure that the problems mentioned above will be finally overcome, the more so as Russia has already achieved its goals in the area. With the support of its "peacekeeping forces", a separatist regime has consolidated in the eastern area of Moldova and this regime can be used by Moscow as a factor of pressure over Kishinev, a lever useful to maintain Moldova within the Russian sphere of influence.

¹ AP FLUX, 21 April 1999

² AP FLUX, 10 February 1999

³ AP FLUX, 30 July 1999

⁴ AP FLUX, 10 February 1999

The analysis of Russian "peacekeeping" operations in general and especially the operation in Transnistria leads us to three main conclusions: a) in spite of Russian propaganda, which denies any neo-imperialist pretensions from the part of Russia, Russian "peacekeeping" forces are used as a tool of involvement to conflicts in former Soviet territories to the purpose of realising Russia's interests in states facing separatism, especially in order to force those states to accept Russian military bases on their territory; b) Russian "peacekeeping" operations cannot substitute UN/ OSCE operations. Russian operations are characterised by politicisation of the staff and use of force, by the lack of interest in a political settlement of conflicts etc.; c) a more active involvement of the UN/ OSCE in the settlement of conflicts in former Soviet territories is needed as it would not only lead to a quicker settlement, but would also increase the prestige of international organisations.

Table 11
Structure of the staff of the "peacekeeping" forces in the Transnistrian area of the
Republic of Moldova (June 1998, July 1999) *

	June 1998					June 1999				
	Unit	Personnel				Unit	Personnel			
		Off.	Subl	Ser. & Prv.	Total		Off.	Subl	Ser. & Prv.	Total
FR	Headquarters	28	2	7	37	Headquarters	28	3	2	33
	Comm. center	16	32	21	69	Communic. center	8	18	35	61
	Helicopter unit	3			3	Helicopter unit	12			12
	1 Btl Bender	34	21	272	327	1 Btl Bender	24	20	174	218
	2 Btl Dubasari	10	10	52	72	1 Coy / 1 Btl Dubasari	5	5	66	76
						2 Btl Dubasari	8	10	51	69
	Total RF	91	65	352	508	Total RF	85	56	328	469
RM	Headquarters	24	3	23	50	Headquarters	19	2	13	34
	1Btl Cocieri	19	4	202	225	1Btl. Cocieri	13	4	119	136
	2 Btl Varnita	28	17	247	292	2Btl. Varnita	22	15	148	185
	3 Btl Cosnita	27	18	214	259	3 Btl Cosnita	17	10	111	138
		Total RM	98	42	686	826	Total RM	71	31	391
RT	Headquarters	27	2	17	46	Headquarters	25	3	13	41
	1 Btl Vladimirovka	25	10	280	315	1 Pl./1Btl Cremenciug		2	11	13
	2 Btl Dubasari	17	12	201	230	2 Btl Dubasari	16	11	181	208
	3 Btl Krasnaya-Gorka	12	6	142	160	3 Btl Krasnaya-Gorka	18	6	166	190
		Total RT	81	30	640	751	Total RT**	59	22	371
T O T A L	270	137	1678	2085	Total	215	109	1090	1414	
Ukrainian Observers						10			10	

* The author drew up the table. Source: The Unified Command of the PKF. RF = Russian Federation; RM = Republic of Moldova; TA = Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova; Off.= officers; Subl = sub-lieutenants; Ser. & Prv. = sergeants and privates; 1 Btl. = Battalion 1; 1 Coy = Company 1; Pl. 1 = Platoon 1.

** Without the "peacekeeping battalion" distributed in Vladimirovka (23 officers, 11 sub-lieutenants, 257 sergeants and privates).

Armed forces of the so-called "Dniester Moldavian Republic"

The first military formations of the "DMR" began to be created during the second half of the year 1989. However, separatist authorities intensified their activity in view of establishing military paramilitary formations of the "DMR" after the Kishinev Parliament had adopted the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Moldova and President M. Snegur had issued the decree "Regarding the withdrawal of troops belonging to the Soviet Army from the territory of the Republic of Moldova", shortly after that, on the 3rd of September 1991. In reply to this decree, the Supreme Soviet of the self-proclaimed "Dniester Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic" ("DMSSR") adopted a range of decisions: "Regarding military commissariats of the USSR Ministry of Defence distributed on the territory of the "DMSSR" (6th of September 1991), "Regarding the implementation of the Law concerning Republican Guard of the DMSSR" (10th of September 1991), "Regarding the jurisdiction of the USSR Army Forces distributed on the territory of the DMSSR" (18th of September 1991) and others. By the decision of the 6th of September military commissariats of the USSR Ministry of Defence "with all their property and equipment.... including the communication and technical means" were subordinated to the "DMSSR Government". The "Republican military commissariat of the DMSSR" was created on the basis of the Tiraspol City military commissariat.¹ By the decision of the 18th of September, all Soviet military formations of the districts on the left bank of the Dniester went under the jurisdiction of the "DMSSR". The decision underlined that the subordination of the military units distributed on Transnistrian territory to Tiraspol was being carried out in accordance with the constitution and declaration of independence of the so-called "Dniester republic" and taking into account the "numerous appeals of the units and formations of the USSR Armed Forces distributed on the territory of the DMSSR regarding their transfer to the jurisdiction of the DMSSR"². According to article 2 of the decision, the

¹ Decision No. 62, from September 6, 1991, of the "Supreme Soviet of the Dniester Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic" (we shall further mention it as the "SS" of the "DMSSR").

² Decision No. 66 of the 18th of September 1991, of the "DMSSR" Supreme Soviet.

distribution of military units and formations present on the territory of the unconstitutional republic, as well as the withdrawal of military technique, of military armament and equipment was to be carried out by the USSR Ministry of Defence only as a result of co-ordination with the Supreme Soviet in Tiraspol.

The "Law regarding the DMSSR Republican Guard" mentions that the guard was established "to the purpose of protecting the republic's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, as well as of the rights and liberties of its citizens". It is subordinated to the Supreme Soviet and to the "DMSSR" President. However, in case of the need of defending the USSR "The Transnistrian Guard as result of decision of the Supreme Soviet", will be subordinated to the Supreme Command of the USSR Armed Forces" (art. 1).

Between September 1991 and December 1992 the "DMSSR" Supreme Soviet and Government, as well as I. Smirnov adopted or issued about 40 decisions, laws and decrees on military issues, which had as purpose the establishment and consolidation of the "DMSSR" Army Forces, as well as the cancelling of decrees and decisions concerning military matters issued and adopted by the legal authorities in Kishinev.¹ Thus, by the decision of the 18th of

¹ *September 24, 1991* - decision of the "DMSSR" Supreme Soviet No. 72 "Regarding insurance of pensions of the military belonging to the DMSSR Republican Guard"; decision No. 73 of the "SS" "Regarding the rights of the Chairman of the Committee for defence problems of the DMSSR"; decision No. 75 of the "SS" "Regarding the confirmation of the regulations concerning military service of privates and sergeants in the DMSSR Republican Guard"; *October 18, 1991* - decision No. 97 of the "SS" "Regarding military service carried out by the citizens of the DMSSR within the Armed Forces and the Navy"; *November 21, 1991* - decree No. 94 of the "DMSSR" President "Regarding the fulfilling of military service on the territory of the Dniester Moldavian Republic"; *November 27, 1991* - decision No. 116 "Regarding the transfer of military units to DMR jurisdiction"; *December 3, 1991* - decision No. 117 "Regarding the establishment of the Direction for the defence and security of the DMR"; *December 20, 1991* - the decision of the DMR Government "Regarding military vows to the DMR"; *January 8, 1992* - "The Law of the DMR regarding armed forces", "The Law of the DMR regarding defence", "The Law of the DMR regarding compulsory military service and military service", decision No. 133 "Regarding the practical application of the Law of the DMR "Concerning the status of the military"; *January 15, 1992* - decree No. 13 "Regarding the organisation of large units of the DMR Armed Forces"; *February 15,*

October 1991" Regarding the fulfilling of military service by citizens of the DMSSR within the Armed Forces and the Navy" the Supreme Soviet in Tiraspol considered the decision of the Supreme Security Council of the Republic of Moldova "regarding the establishment of the National Army and the recall of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova from the Army Forces and the Navy" as null and void from the juridical point of view on the territory of the "DMSSR" and decided that the citizens of the self-proclaimed republic should continue their military service within military units on the territory of the former USSR. In order to attract soldiers of the former Soviet troops distributed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova to the armed forces of the "DMR" a whole range of decisions and decrees were issued in order to ensure social protection of soldiers in active service and in reserve.¹

We have already mentioned that moral, political and material support of the separatist armed forces is ensured by Russian troops deployed in the area, at whose initiative they had in fact been established. During September 1998 Colonel G. Borisenko, assistant commander of the 1st Motorised Brigade of the Transnistrian army, remembered, while speaking about the establishment of the "DMR" army: "Once with the creation of our republic, the problem of ensuring its defence naturally appeared. The Supreme Soviet assigned this honourable task to the Republican Guard. It is however true that until this colonel A. I. Kurchin, deputy of the City Council of Tiraspol and member of the military council of the 14th Army, gathered some of us who were planning to go in reserve, inquired about our plans and asked us how we could concretely help the Republic as far as its defence was concerned". After the meeting with Kurchin, S. Borisenko, still in

1992 - decision No. 151 "Regarding the introduction of some amendments to the Law of the DMR "Regarding Armed Forces"; *March 13, 1992* - decree No. 60 "Regarding the establishment of the State Commission for social protection of the military, beside the President of the DMR"; *March 17, 1992* - the decree "Regarding practical application of the Provisory Statutes of popular militia" etc.

¹ See, for example, the decision of the "Supreme Soviet", No. 121 from the 3rd of December 1992 "Regarding measures concerning protection of rights and liberties of the military belonging to units which have passed under DMR jurisdiction" and the government decision No. 32 from the 2nd of April 1992 "Regarding building housing resources and social-cultural objectives for the 14th Army between 1992 and 1995".

the service of the 14th Army, together with V. M. Ryliyakov, elaborated the structure of the Republican Guard (4 battalions) and the units' distribution place. While active in the function of provisory commander of the guard, starting from the 27th of September 1991, it began to appoint certain officers to their functions. Initially the guard's command had been in the "Kirovets" House of Culture and since the middle of October 1991 it was transferred to the sport school of 25th of October Street".¹

Military and paramilitary formations of the "DMR" include units and formations which are part of the "DMR" Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of National Security, as well as the popular militia and Cossack army (see table 12). Presently the formations and units have reduced effectives, but in case the situation should destabilise they extend up to peace scripts; in case of military danger they extend up to war scripts. In case the formations and units should be completed up to war scripts, the total number of persons called under arms grows to 15,000.

Table 12

Structure and distribution places of the "DMR" military and paramilitary units (October 1998)*

Ministry of Defence	Distribution place
Central apparatus and Headquarters	Tiraspol
1 motorised infantry brigade	Tiraspol
2 MIB	Bender
3 MIB	Ribnita
4 MIB	Dubasari
Independent tank battalion	Hlinoiaia
1 independent artillery regiment	Tiraspol
1 anti-aircraft artillery regiment	Tiraspol
1 independent transmissions regiment	Tiraspol
Battalion with special destination	Tiraspol
Independent air detachment	Tiraspol
1 independent engineer battalion	Parcani

¹ "Za Pridnestrov'e", No. 18(156), September 1998

Technical air base	Tiraspol
Repairing and reconditioning base	Tiraspol
Independent repairing and reconditioning battalion	Tiraspol
Training center of the “DMR” “Ministry of Defence”	Bender
Training center of the MIB 3	Kolbasna
Training center of the MIB 4	Afnasievka
Ministry of Internal Affairs	
Central apparatus of the Ministry of Internal Affairs	Tiraspol
“Dniestr” battalion	Tiraspol
Sections of militia, patrolling and car inspection	Tiraspol
Sections of militia, patrolling and car inspection	Camenca
Sections of militia, patrolling and car inspection	Ribnita
Sections of militia, patrolling and car inspection	Dubasari
Sections of militia, patrolling and car inspection	Grigoropol
Sections of militia, patrolling and car inspection	Bender
Sections of militia, patrolling and car inspection	Slobozia
Patrolling detachment	Pervomaisk
Patrolling detachment	Parcani
Ministry of state security	
Central apparatus of the MSS	Tiraspol
“Delta” battalion	Tiraspol
Cossack border troops regiment	Tiraspol
Border guard detachment	Tiraspol
Border guard commandant’s office 1	Camenca
Border guard commandant’s office 2	Ribnita
Border guard commandant’s office 3	Dubasari
Border guard commandant’s office 4	Grigoropol
Border guard commandant’s office 5	Bender
Border guard commandant’s office 6	Tiraspol
Border guard commandant’s office 7	Slobozia
People's Militia	
Popular Militia Headquarters	Tiraspol
Popular militia battalion	Ribnita
Popular militia battalion	Grigoropol
Popular militia battalion	Dubasari
Popular militia battalion	Kitkani
Popular militia battalion	Tiraspol
Popular militia battalion	Bender

Popular militia battalion	Parcani
Cossacks Army	
Headquarters of the 10 th regiment of the Don Army	Dubasari
Cossack district	Tiraspol
Cossack district	Camenca
Cossack district	Ribnita
Cossack district	Dubasari
Cossack district	Grigoropol
Cossack district	Bender
Cossack district	Slobozia

* The table was drawn up by author, on the basis of sources from inside the OGRT Command.

In case of military danger Cossacks formations and formations included in the Ministry of National Security are subordinated to the Ministry of Defence. The completion of the respective formations is realised on the account of local mobilisation reserves, as well on the account of "DMR citizens" on the territory of the Russian Federation.

During October 1998 military and paramilitary formations of the "DMR" (subordinated to the ministries of "Defense" and "National Security", as well as to the "Popular Militia") consisted of about 7,500 persons¹ of which around 3,000 were in the Security Area. They possessed the following armament: 18 T-64 tanks, 49 ACVs (40 "BTR" armored transporters, 6 multi-purpose track vehicles (MTLB) and 3 "BMP" infantry combat vehicles), 18 mortars 122 mm in calibre, 12 cannons 85 mm in calibre, 3 "Alazani" installations, 24 "ZU23-2" systems, 16 "MT-12" anti-tank machineguns 100 mm in calibre, 30 mine launchers 82 mm in calibre, 30 "FAGOT" anti-tank guided missiles, over 15,000 fire arms etc.

The "DMR air forces included: 8 helicopters (6 "MI-8T" and 2 "MI-2") and 5 airplanes (one "AN-26", two "AN-2" and two "IaK-18"). 25 motor

¹ Data regarding the total effectives of Transnistrian armed forces are contradictory. According to some data, towards September 1998 the Transnistrian army counted around 10,000 soldiers, 20% of them being soldiers of the Russian Army in reserve, 10% being recruits, whereas the rest were satisfying their military service through contract. - "AP FLUX", 8 September 1998.

deltaplanes are to be used in case of need.¹ According to the "Za Prednestrovie" newspaper, the press organ of Transnistrian armed forces, military air force of the "DMR" was established on the basis of the 24th Russian independent airports-engineer battalion, which had been deployed in Tiraspol at the beginning of the '50s. In January 1993 the battalion went under the jurisdiction of the "DMR" as result of a decision taken by the general assembly of the battalion's military. In January 1998, Colonel V. Ametov commanded the air detachment of the "DMR".²

The basis of Transnistrian armed forces consists of 4 motorised rifle brigades (MRB), one independent tank battalion and two special battalions: "Delta" and "Dniestr". The main armament possessed by the brigades and their distribution place at the end of October 1998 are presented in table 13. In this table we can see the distribution places and armament possessed by the other units subordinated to the Ministry of Defence of the so-called "DMR". For example, the independent tank battalion was distributed in Hlinoiaia village, its staff consisted of around 120 persons and it was armed with 16 T-64B combat tanks "acquired" on the 19th and 20th of May 1992 from the 59th division of the Russian Federation and which had not been returned to the 14th Army after the end of the conflict.

Speaking of the "acquired" tanks... According to the statements of General A. Lebed, former commander of the 14th Army, during the conflict "on the whole 19 tanks were captured, 3 of them were burnt during the fights in Bender on the 19th and 20th of July (1992), and the other 16 remained". After the end of the conflict, on the 10th of September 1992, Russia signed a "common document concerning captured weapons" with Igor Smirnov, the leader of the separatists in Tiraspol. "On the basis of this document, made up after all captured technique and armament had been inventoried", Lebed continues, "we took this

¹ Data regarding the "DMR" armed forces' armament are contradictory, too. The English researcher Trevor Waters quotes the following figures: "around 20 T-64 tanks (taken from the Russian 14th Army during May 1992), 50 ACVs, 18 cannons (122 mm), 16 anti-tank cannons, 50 mortars (120 mm) ..." - see: Trevor Waters, Moldova: Continuing Recipe for Instability - "Jane's Intelligence Review, September 1996, p. 399.

² "Za Pridnestrov'e", January 1998

technique and armament out of the 14th Army's inventory. In the same time, we are responsible for its possible use afterwards by the Transnistrian side".¹

Table 13
Main units subordinated to the Ministry of Defence of the so-called "DMR", together with their distribution points, personnel, armament and technique (July 1998)*

Unit	Distribution place	Number of personnel	Armament and technique possessed
1 Motorized Rifle Brigade	Tiraspol	Around 400	- more than 1,000 Kalashnikov assault rifles - 16 "RPG" anti-tank grenade launchers - 30 special cars and vehicles
2 Motorized Rifle Brigade	Bender	Around 600	- around 1,000 Kalashnikov assault rifles - 1 "BMP" armored combat vehicle - 16 "RPG" portable rocket launchers - more than 40 vehicles
3 Motorized Rifle Brigade	Rybnitsa	Around 420	- 8 « BTR » armored combat vehicles - 2 « BMP » armored combat vehicles - 3 "BRDM2" reconnaissance vehicles - 3 "Alazani" systems - 10 anti-aircraft missile launchers - around 450 Kalashnikov assault rifles - 2 "Osa" systems - mortars 82 mm in calibre - cars and special vehicles etc.
4 Motorized Rifle Brigade	Dubasari	Around 450	- 5 "BTR-70" armored combat vehicles - 4 "BTR- 60PB" armored combat vehicles - 1 "MTLB" multi-purpose track vehicle - 27 "RPG" portable rocket launchers - 9 "SPG" anti-tank guns - around 500 Kalashnikov assault rifles - 10 bridge launchers and special vehicles - 13 vehicles, etc.
Independent Tank Battalion	Hlinoaia	Around 120	- 18 "T-64B" tanks - around 150 Kalashnikov assault rifles etc.
1 st Independent Artillery Regiment	Parcani	around 300	- 20 "Grad" missile launchers - 18 artillery systems 122 mm in calibre - around 400 Kalashnikov assault rifles - 10 vehicles etc.
1 st Independent anti-aircraft	Tiraspol	around 200	- 12 "S60" anti-aircraft artillery devices - 24 "ZU23-2" anti-aircraft defense devices

¹ "Flux", 7 December 1998.

artillery regiment			- around 200 Kalashnikov assault rifles - 10 special vehicles and cars
1 st Independent Engineering Battalion	Parcani	around 150	- around 150 Kalashnikov assault rifles - 20 bridge launchers and special equipment - around 10 vehicles
Special destination battalion	Tiraspol	around 100	-1 "BTR-60PB" armored combat vehicle -around 200 Kalashnikov assault rifles - around 10 vehicles
Independent Air Detachment	Tiraspol	?	-6 "MI-8T" helicopters -2 "MI-2" helicopters -2 "AN-2" airplanes -2 "IaK-18" airplanes -1 "AN-26" airplane

*The author, on the basis of sources from within the OGRF Command drew up the table.

In our opinion, the "common document concerning captured weapons" signed by Russia and Smirnov, is not only a proof of the fact that Russia provides weapons for the separatist regime in Tiraspol, but also an evidence of Moscow's responsibility for the armament now in the hands of the so-called "DMR". Thus, the claim made by the Kishinev authorities that armament transmitted to separatist authorities should be withdrawn together with the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Moldova is fully justified. According to assessments made by the separatist leaders, the armed forces of the so-called "DMR" possess a suitable level of armament and equipment and they continuously perfect their military skills. "The army's basic objective is the defence of the state and of its citizens' legal interests, a task which Transnistrian military are capable of fulfilling".

The Cossacks Army of the "DMR" was established on the 15th of February 1992 by decision No. 153 of the "DMR" Supreme Soviet, which approved the regulations "Regarding military formations of the Cossacks Army from the Black Sea Coast." This regulation was valid until the 9th of March 1993, when it was replaced by another one through decision No. 137 of the "DMR" Supreme Soviet.¹ The 1992 regulations showed that the activity of the Cossacks army was ruled by the legislation of the DMR and by the Status

¹ Sbornik dokumentov, prinyatykh na 7-8 zasedaniakh sessiy i prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta Pridnestrovskoy Moldavskoy Respubliki v yanvare-marte 1999 goda. Tiraspol, 1993, p. 91.

of the Cossacks Army from the Black Sea Coast, taking into account the customs and historical traditions of the Cossacks". The Cossacks Army was to obey the president of the "DMR", and its "structure and status" is to be determined by the leadership of the Cossacks army from the Black Sea Coast and to be approved by the DMR Government, starting from the minimum sufficient for ensuring the guard of the "DMR" borders" (art. 1). Service within the Army was to be on contractual bases. The ones who could sign contracts with the separatist authorities were "citizens of the DMR" with status of Cossacks aged from 21 to 55, but also "citizens of other states and republics" as well, "in cases of need"(art. 3). After signing the contracts the Cossacks have to take their military oath (art. 6) and enjoy the right of wearing traditional Cossack uniform with distinctive signs. The Army is divided into "the military body, the lower rank effectives and the officer body" (art. 7). According to article 24 of the 1992 regulations, "Cossacks have the right of keeping, wearing and using traditional armament while on duty and not only".

The "Regulations regarding the Cossacks army of the DMR" adopted on the 9th of March 1993 is essentially different from the one adopted during the previous year. Besides containing much more ideology, it also contains a range of new elements. Article 4 stipulates that the Cossacks army is to be formed on territorial principles, "taking into account the Cossacks' "location and living place". The lowest organizational link of the Cossacks is the "kureni"(camp),¹ which reunites Cossacks living in a village, and in a town-Cossacks from one or two streets. "A few camps are united in stanitsas, which, at their turn, unite in districts, usually the size of the territory of a territorial-administrative district(a town)".²

The Cossacks Army has its own manner of administration. The Cossacks in a camp are lead by an ataman, chosen by the Cossacks from among them. The "stanitsas" and districts are lead by elected leaderships, and

¹ It seems that this unit is borrowed from the Zaporozhje Cossacks. It also existed within the troops of the Ukrainian central Rada.

² Sbornik dokumentov prinyatykh na 7-8 zasedaniakh sessiy i prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta Pridnestrovskoy Moldavskoy Respubliki v yanvare-marte 1993 goda. Tiraspol, 1993, page 93.

the Cossacks army by an Ataman council, led by an ataman, which is assigned to his function by the president of the republic, whom it obeys (article 15). The Council's working organ is the "Steering Committee of the Army" financed from the budget of the "DMR"(article 18). The "Steering Committee of the Army" has its residence in the town of Tiraspol.

Article 11 of the regulation of the 9th of May 1993 established 16 Cossack military ranks, the lowest being the Cossack and the highest the Major General.

According to the 1993 regulation, Cossacks may be called under arms not only to fight within the Cossacks army, but also within all types of "DMR" troops. However, the "priority form of the cossacks' state service is service within border guard formations of the DMR". The Cossacks have the right of wearing traditional Cossack uniform, and also side weapons: sword and dagger- by the permission of the ministry of internal affairs of the self-proclaimed "DMR"(article 12).¹

At the beginning of the year 1995, in the Security Zone there were Cossacks formations in Dubasari² (about 1,400 persons), Grigoriopol (about 100 persons, possessing armored vehicles and infantry armament), Bender,³ Bychok (about 250 persons), and Krasnoe (on the territory of the student camp).

The Cossacks formations, like the other military and paramilitary formations of the "DMR" enjoyed and continue to enjoy all the support of Russian troops deployed in Transnistria. In April 1994, for example, General A. Lebed, by then commander of the 14th Army, had a meeting with a part of the Atamans' Council of the Cossacks Army. During the meeting he promised the Cossacks support and gave them an auto-crane for one of the Cossack co-operatives, as well as some fire arms and military equipment.

¹ *Ibid.*, page 95.

² The Dubasari Cossack District was established in 1991. Its first ataman was Panteley Sazonov, fallen on the battlefield in 1992 during the fighting near the Dubasari power plant. One of the streets of Dubasari now bears his name. - "Adevarul nistrean", 3 March 1998.

³ The headquarters of a Cossack detachment is located in the "Yunost" House of Culture

At the beginning of the year 1998, the ataman of the "Cossacks troops on the Black Sea Coast of the DMR" was Vladimir Ryabinsky, and the Cossacks Army of the "DMR" was a structural unit of the Cossacks Union of Russia.¹

"The People's militia". According to the reports of the "Za Pridnestrovie" newspaper, the first units of the People's militia began to be formed during August 1989, and their "legalization" took place by Smirnov's decree No. 67 of the 17th of March 1992 "Regarding the establishment of People's militia formations".² The decree presents the establishment of the People's militia as an act of response to the aggressive actions of the Kishinev authorities. "As a result of aggressive military actions from the part of the Republic of Moldova registered during the last few days, as well as of its ultimatum regarding the disarmament of the Dniester Moldavian Republic Guards within 48 hours," the decree states, "People's militia has begun to form all over the territory of the DMR in order to protect the republic's sovereignty and integrity. To the purpose of establishing People's militia and the possibility of leading its formations, I decree:

1. That the application of the "Provisory regulations regarding People's militia" should start with the 17th of March 1992.

2. That the town (district) executive committees should take out measures in order to immediately fulfill the provisory regulations regarding People's militia".³

The regulation quoted above mentioned that the People's militia was to be established from the citizens' initiative at the recommendation of the government or of the president of the "DMR" to the purpose of defending the republic's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity as well as the citizens' rights and liberties"(art 1). The forming of the militia and the presence in its ranks "are realized on volunteering bases"(art. 2). Any citizens of the "DMR" above 18 years, no matter the sex, social status, nationality, language, studies, religion or profession, may enter the militia. Persons who

¹ "Adevarul nistrean", 3 March, 1998.

² "Za Pridnestrov'e", n. 6(144), March 1998.

³ "Za Pridnestrov'e", 17th of March 1998.

are to be recruited in the Transnistrian army or are already part of military and paramilitary formations cannot join the militia (art. 3-4).¹

The Headquarters of the Militia is located in Tiraspol, and the self-defense workers' detachments (SWD) distributed in Rybnitsa, Dubasari, Grigoriopol, Bender and Tiraspol, as well as the one in the village of Parcani, are subordinated to it. At the beginning of the year 1995 the Rybnitsa SWD consisted of 25 persons (in case of need this number could increase up to 300 persons) and it possessed three cannons 122 mm in calibre, one armored vehicle and 40 automatic weapons. The "Krasnyi vinogradari" militarized formation in Dubasari, consisting of members of the "People's militia", counted around 300 persons at the same date. They possessed infantry armament.

The members of People's militia systematically take part in courses, applications and cantonments. For example, on the 21st of June 1995, the gathering of members of People's militia of Feropontievka and Valea Verde villages, Slobozia district, took place, around 300 persons participating. Within the gathering matters regarding the protection of the villages mentioned above in case the situation in the area should destabilize were discussed. During the meeting threatenings at the address of Moldovan police in the villages of Copanka and Cremenciug were heard. At the beginning of 1998 G. Egorov, "assistant of the chief of the People's militia headquarters", said that "commanders of battalions, companies and platoons take lessons systematically, every one of them knows his duty and the distribution place of the formation assigned to him. Moreover, 70% of the staff of the People's militia has combat experience".²

Speaking of combat experience... According to some data from mass media, during the 1992 conflict 16 battalions of the People's militia took part in the fighting, and 232 militia men "never came back from the trenches", while 211 of them were seriously wounded.³ According to the data published by the "Dnestrovskaya pravda", the leadership of the self-proclaimed "DMR" had a high appreciation of the activity displayed by People's militia during the

¹ *Ibid.*

² "Novoe Vremya" ("Benderskaya gorodskaya gazeta"), 17 March 1998.

³ "Za Pridnestrov'e", No. 6(144), March 1998.

armed conflict: "more than 10,000 militiamen were decorated with the "Defender of Transnistria" medal and the "For Defense of Transnistria" badge, 45 persons with the "For Bravery" order (11 of them posthumously). Moreover, by a decree of the "president", the People's militia was decorated with the order of the republic in order to celebrate 5 years from the creation of the "DMR".¹

Speaking about the combat experience of Transnistrian armed forces, we have to mention the fact that some of its military have not only accumulated combat experience during the Dniester conflict, but also in other "hot spots" of the former USSR. The participation of some Transnistrians to the bloody events in Abkhazia is an example in this respect. From a letter dated the 10th of August 1993, signed by S. A. Sosnaliev, minister of defense of the "Republic of Abkhazia", addressed to General N. S. Matveev, deputy minister of internal affairs of the "DMR", we quote: "since the 11th of May until the 10th of August 1993 the "Delfin" special group of the "Dniestr" special militia battalion, consisting of the following persons: Major A. V. Terentiev, Captain I. F. Danilin, Major Yu. N. Pimenev, Major A. N. Butiko, lieutenants E. N. Ryzhkov and Yu. N. Kulakov acted successfully on the territory of the Eastern Front of the Republic of Abkhazia. The Group carried out diversions behind the front of the Georgian-Fascist troops, conducted successful reconnaissance and combat actions, organized the arrest and detained recidivists on the territory of the garrison of the town of Tkvarcheli, which was under siege. With high professionalism, the group organized the meeting between the collaborators of the Russian State Committee for Exceptional Situations and accompanied the withdrawing refugee column from the blockaded town, without suffering any losses.

The "Delfin" group, delegated from the Dniester Moldavian Republic to Abkhazia, carried out 12 combat actions behind the enemy lines during military actions, resulting in damaging one airplane, blowing up one radio relay station, seizing one technical combat unit, destroying 34 enemy personnel units..." From another letter, of the 9th of July 1993, of Colonel M. V. Kishmaria, Commander of the Abkhazian Eastern Front, addressed to the

¹ "Dnestrovskaya Pravda", 16 March 1999

same N. S. Matveev, requesting the promotion of the members of the "Delfin" Group, we find out the names of other two military which had fought for the "freedom and independence of the Republic of Abkhazia" A. Z. Tsurkan and N. N. Calugarean.

The People's militia receives material and technical assistance from the president, government, state administration and from "a range of leaders of enterprises" in the "DMR". At the beginning of 1998 "President I. Smirnov, for example, allocated 2 billions 213 million roubles [Transnistrian roubles - author's note] as material help to members of the killed militiamen's families, as well as to disabled militiamen in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd degree..."¹

At the end of March 1999 the Transnistrian People's militia was commanded by Colonel Mikhail Ovcharov,² who "had occupied functions of command in the Soviet Army for 30 years", and during the military actions of the year 1992 "led several formations on the Dubasari and Bender directions".³

The border guard troops are subordinated to the ministry of national security of the self-proclaimed "DMR". During July 1998 the border guard troops formed a border detachment (having its headquarters in Tiraspol) divided in 7 border commander's offices, 14 border guard pickets and 30 customs and border guard posts. The border commander's offices were/are located in the towns of Kamenka, Rybnitsa (around 130 persons),⁴ Dubasari (around 80 persons, former Cossacks),⁵ Grigoriopol, Bender (around 170 persons),⁶ Tiraspol and Slobozia.

At the beginning of February 1995 there were pickets in the Security Zone in the villages of Tsybuleuka, Dzerzhinskoe, Krasnogorka (in Dubasari district), Teia, Tokmazeya and Bychok (in Grigoryopol district), Parcani

¹ *Ibid.*

² "Za Pridnestrov'e", 25 March 1999

³ *Ibid.*, 17 March 1999

⁴ The command center of the commandant's office is situated on Kirov street 108.

⁵ The command center of the commandant's office is located on Shevchenko street. The pickets are located in Dzerzhinsk, Tsybuleuka, Krasnogorka, as well as in the "Marina Roshcha" field camp and the "Dubki" pioneer camp.

⁶ The command center is situated on Kommunisticheskaya Street 69.

village near Bender, the Krasnoe village (Slobozia district), as well as in the town of Slobozia. At the same date, there were customs and border guard posts on the Kamenka -Sanatauca and Rybnitsa-Rezina bridges, at the ferry crossing point between the villages of Vertiuzheni and Krasnyi Oktyabri as well as in the little town of Dnestrovsk.

At the beginning of June 1999 a representative of the "DMR" border troops declared that "the Transnistrian border guard pickets in the Security Area..." mainly consist of Cossacks which have taken part in the 1992 armed conflict", thus having combat experience. According to the same sources, "the Cossacks' mission is the one of ensuring the guard of Transnistria's borders and of fighting against the weapons and drugs traffic, sometimes they also checking the citizens' papers and means of transportations".¹

Being aware of the importance the military factor has in order to consolidate the "DMR" and to obtain as many concessions as possible from Kishinev, the separatist leaders give a special attention to increasing the military potential of the armed forces and paramilitary units in the phantom-republic. They are educated in a hostile spirit towards the Republic of Moldova and frequently display military applications "against the Romanian-Moldovan aggression". These applications are often carried out on the military shooting grounds of the OGRF. Thus, between the 5th and the 8th of April tactical applications with combat shootings were carried out near Varancau village, with the participation of the 3rd and 4th brigades of the "DMR", during which they made firings from mine launchers... Transnistrian units used 10 out of the 16 "PTURS" anti-tank missiles received from the Russian troops. In order to carry out the application, the "DMR" formations received mines for the mine launchers and 40 tons of fuel from the Russian troops. During the first decade of May 1994, exercises of driving ACVs for the soldiers in the 4th brigade of the DMR" were organized near Belochi. During the exercises, Transnistrian soldiers used a part of the technique belonging to the 240th pontoon brigade of the Russian Federation. Some applications are even carried out in the Security Zone, which is under the control of the "peacekeeping forces". On the 17th of August 1993, some military observers registered the

¹ AP FLUX, 3 June 1999

presence of two companies of the Transnistrian army on the territory of the Russian missile brigade distributed in Bender fortress. According to declarations made by high officers of the brigade, they were carrying out training at the indication of the president of the "DMR".

A part of the lodging and barrack funds of the Russian troops is also placed at the disposal of the separatists. Thus, at the end of 1993, 39 out of 73 items belonging to the Tiraspol airport, which was under the jurisdiction of the 14th Army, had been transmitted to various structures of the "DMR". Transnistrian air forces, too, were distributed on the airport. The examples may continue.

The separatist authorities complete the military patrimony of the Transnistrian army with armament and technique from the depots of Russian troops distributed in the area. For example, in accordance with a decision of the Russian Federation Government (No. 1341, of the 2nd of December 1994), the "DMR" army was transmitted 39 technical units and 160 tons of material goods. Until April 1998, Russian troops stationed in Transnistria transmitted the separatist authorities 150 technical units and 3,000 tons of material goods. This transfer was approved by the Russian government on the 17th of July 1996.¹

Presently the separatist authorities are trying to obtain a part of the OGRF patrimony by "legal" means, according to the Chernomyrdin-Smirnov protocol signed in Odessa on the 20th of March, of which we will speak later.

The "DMR" Army also completes its military patrimony by producing some types of armament in local factories. Thus, the Rybnitsa metallurgical plant produces mine launchers 120 mm in calibre, and the "Pribor" factory and the mechanical factory in Bender ("BMZ") - produce "RPG-7" portable rocket launchers and automatic pistols 9 mm in calibre. Since 1955, the mechanical factory in Bender also has been producing "SPG-9" anti-tank guns and "Makarov" damper pistols 5,45 mm in calibre, which are very popular with the underworld. In 1995 the factory mentioned above produced around 1,500

¹"Informatia", No.I-590 of the 30th of August 1996 "Regarding the liquidation of illegalities in the Operational Group of Russian Troops in the Transnistrian area of the Republic of Moldova" addressed by General Lieutenant of Justice G. N. Nosov to I. Radyonov, Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation.

such pistols. The separatist authorities in Tiraspol sold 7 "Grad" artillery systems to the Abkhazian ones in 1995.

The leaders in Tiraspol do not make a secret out of the fact that armament is being illegally produced in Transnistria. During a meeting with a delegation of the European Council, Aleksandr Caraman, vice president of the "DMR", declared that the production of armament in Transnistria had started "even from the time of the armed conflict".¹ During April this year, the "Dnestrovskaya Pravda" newspaper wrote that even 10 armored cars had been produced in Transnistrian factories during the armed conflict".²

The "DMR" military and paramilitary forces were created, equipped and trained with the full support of Russian troops deployed in the area. In Moscow's view, they should form the military support of the affirmation of the "DMR"'s stability and Russia's support in the area, alongside the OGRF troops. In case the Russian troops should withdraw from the territory of Moldova, the "DMR" forces should stay as an element of pressure over the Kishinev government, in order to stop an eventual union of Moldova and Romania and in order to maintain Moldova within the Russian sphere of influence.

The perspective of the Russian troops' presence in the eastern districts of Moldova

Once with the rise of the "moderated" trend of Russian foreign policy, Moscow's actions oriented towards keeping Russian troops in CIS states were considerably amplified. Already on the 6th of April 1994 Russia had expressed its will of establishing military bases on the territory of some newly independent states. The ITAR-TASS agency published a statement claiming that: "President Boris Yeltsin agreed to the proposals of the ministry of Defence, co-ordinated with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the establishment of Russian military bases on the territory of CIS states and Latvia in order to ensure the security of the

¹ "Moldova suverana", 19 January 1995

² "Dnestrovskaya Pravda", 15 April 1999

Russian Federation and the states mentioned above as well as in order to experiment armaments and combat technique".¹ By the same time, Mikhail Kolesnikov, the head of the Russian Army High Headquarters, declared the ITAR-TASS correspondent that Russia was planning to have about 30 military bases on the territory of the CIS states and Latvia. In some states, M. Kolesnikov stated, the divisions presently distributed there will become military bases, as for example the 201st division in Tajikstan or the 127th division in Armenia. "It is fully possible", the head of the Russian High Headquarters continued, "that one of the bases should be created in Transnistria on the basis of the 14th Army, but the issue regarding the withdrawal of this guard unit from the area may be settled as well."²

According to Kolesnikov's declaration, on the 21st of October 1994 Russia and Moldova signed the "Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova, regarding the legal status, manner and terms of the withdrawal of the military forces of the Russian Federation, temporarily deployed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova", by which Moscow engaged itself to withdraw its troops from Moldova within three years. But not even a few months had passed and Moscow's point of view regarding the fate of Russian troops in Transnistria radically changed, its main objective now being to transform the troops into a Russian military base. Some military in the leadership of the Russian Ministry of Defense have already begun to speak openly about this. Thus, at the end of November 1994 General Eduard Vorobiov, head of the Russian military delegation to the negotiations with Moldova in view of withdrawing the 14th army from Transnistria, declared to the correspondent of the "Kommersant-DAILY" newspaper that "Moscow has consciously taken course towards keeping its military presence in Moldova".³ A little later, Vladimir Semyonov, commander of Russian ground forces, declared to the ITAR-TASS correspondent that he had

¹ "Rossiyskie vesti", 7 April 1994: Vladimir Abarinov, Rasporyazheniye Yeltsina o voennykh bazakh v Latvii ne sushchestvuet.- "Segodnya", 8 April 1994.

² ITAR-TASS, Moscow, in Russian, 12:12 GMT, 6 April 1994.

³ Yulia Bulavinov, V "planovuyu boevuyu podgotovku", vyvod armii ne vkhodit. - "Kommersant-DAILY", 30 November 1994.

declared himself against the withdrawal of the 14th Army and that he pleaded for the creation of a military base in Transnistria.¹ On the 27th of June 1995 Pavel Grachev declared during a press conference taking place in Kishinev that the possibility of establishing a Russian military base in Transnistria was not excluded. However, in his opinion, this was not a matter of the present, but of the future.² The issue of transforming the troops in Transnistria into a military base was also approached during the meeting Mircea Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova, had with Boris Yeltsin, President of Russia, on the 28th of June 1995.³ However, the Russian proposal was rejected, with reference to provisions made by the constitution of the Republic of Moldova, which stipulates that "The Republic of Moldova does not admit the stationing of military troops belonging to other states on its territory".⁴

In spite of several informal declarations (as the one M. Kolesnikov made), Russia did not put forward to Moldova an official proposal regarding the transformation of the 14th Army into a Russian military base before Pavel Grachev's official visit to Moldova (June 1995).⁵ This fact can

¹ ITAR-TASS (World Service), Moscow, in English, 17:31 GMT, 5 April 1995; Vasile Gribincea, In obiectiv: Armata a 14-a, "Oastea Moldovei", 13-20 April 1995

² Interfax, Moscow, in English, 10:50 GMT, 27 June 1995.

³ ITAR-TASS, Moscow, in English, 10:50 GMT, 28 June 1995; Interfax news agency, Moscow, in English, 13:50 GMT, 28 June 1995; RIA news agency, Moscow, in English, 13:52 GMT, 28 June 1995.

⁴ The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, Kishinev, 1994, page 6.

⁵ In December 1994 Valerian Viktorov, vice-president of the Federation Council, visited the Republic of Moldova. During his visit, Viktorov declared that "we need to initiate negotiations regarding the establishment of a military base on Moldovan territory". However, this declaration was not an official proposal from the part of the Russian Federation regarding the transformation of the 14th Army into a military base. A few days later, Dumitru Diacov, by then head of the Commission for external Relationships of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, described the declaration quoted above as "a personal initiative of Mr. Viktorov" (BASA-PRESS, in English, 21:30 GMT, 5 January 1995; Dmitri Zhdanikov, Parlamentarii SNG posetili Moldaviyu i Pridnestrov'e, -"Segodnya",

be explained through the firm position the leadership of the Republic of Moldova had against this idea. Even since the Russian "doctrine" of military bases had been launched, Kishinev had declared itself against the presence of Russian military bases on the territory of Moldova. In June 1993, taking notice of the speech held by The Russian President Boris Yeltsin at the council at the Russian Ministry of Defense on the 10th of June 1993, during which the Russian president had declared himself in favor of the establishment of military bases on the territory of some former Soviet republics, the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a statement in which it "put forward again the position of principle of the Republic of Moldova, repeatedly exposed regarding immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova..." and showed that the idea of military bases "is not acceptable for the Republic of Moldova under any form".¹

During February 1994, with reference to the "Libertatea" radio, several newspapers from the Republic of Moldova brought forward the information according to which the position of the leadership of the Republic of Moldova towards the 14th Army had changed and the Russian troops were to be transformed into a military base. In connection with this, the head of the Press service of the Government of the Republic of Moldova issued a statement on the 3rd of March 1994, underlining that "Kishinev's position is univocal - there will be no military bases on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, either on the left bank of the Dniester or on the right one".²

As the leadership of the Republic of Moldova had rejected the Russian proposal regarding the transformation of Russian troops deployed in Transnistria into a military base during the year 1995, Moscow tried to

30 December 1994).

¹ "Moldova suverana", 17 June 1993; ROMPRES, in English, 08:21 GMT, 17 June 1993; "Nezavisimaya gazeta", 26 June 1993, p. 3

² Mihai Valcu, Lebedi nu va fi sef de baza [Lebed will not lead a base]. - "Observatorul" (Kishinev), 10 March 1994; K voprosu o voennykh bazakh, "Moldova suverana"(digest), 4 March 1994.

make its military presence in Moldova a permanent one by resorting to provisions made by the CFE Treaty.¹

The Republic of Moldova became a part of this treaty on the 15th of May 1992, in Tashkent, when together with other 7 CIS member states (Armenia, Azerbaidjan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine), it signed the Agreement regarding principles and procedures of realization of the CFE Treaty”.² The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova ratified this agreement on the 6th of July 1992.³

In accordance with the CFE Treaty, the Republic of Moldova has the right of possessing the following conventional armament: 210 battle tanks, 210 ACVs, 250 artillery pieces more than 120 mm in calibre, 50 assault helicopters and 50 combat aircrafts.⁴ Around the date the Tashkent Agreement was signed, the National Army of the Republic of Moldova possessed much less armament than the amounts stipulated by the CAFE Treaty. The situation was the same in 1995. At the middle of November 1995 the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova possessed 209 ACVs, 155 artillery pieces, 27 MIG-29 aircrafts and zero tanks.⁵

¹ The CFE Treaty is the fundamental document of the regime of control and checking of the levels of conventional offensive armaments possessed by the CFE Treaty member-states in the area between the Atlantic Ocean and the Ural Mountains. It was signed on the 19th of November 1990 at the High Level OSCE Reunion in Paris (19-21 November 1990) and it came into effect on the 9th of November 1992. The Kingdom of the Netherlands acts as depositary of the treaty. Initially the Treaty had been signed by states inside the NATO and the Warsaw Treaty; later, however, some independent states appeared as a result of the disintegration of the USSR also joined the Treaty. Presently the Treaty includes 30 states. See: Adrian Nastase, *Documente fundamentale ale dreptului international si ale relatiilor internationale* [Fundamental documents of international right and international relationships], 1b, Bucharest, 1997, pp. 475-502.

² *Mezhdunarodnaya Bezopasnost' i Razoruzhenie. Ezhegodnik SIPRI 1993* (sokrashchenyi perevod s angliyskogo), Moscow, “Nauka”, 1993, p. 222.

³ *Ibid.*, page 309.

⁴ *Ibid.*, page 312.

⁵ See: Trevor Waters, *Moldova: continuing recipe for instability*. - *Jane's Intelligence Review*, September 1996, pp. 398-401.

At the beginning of 1995, when seeing that the leadership of the Republic of Moldova opposed the transformation of the Russian troops in Transnistria into a military base, Moscow requested the Kishinev authorities a part of the unused national quotas of Moldova provided by the CAFE Treaty.

Understanding that giving up the Moldovan quotas of conventional armament to Russia only means the acceptance of Russian military bases on its territory, the leadership of the Republic of Moldova rejected the Russian proposal. As a result, during the second half of October 1995 Moscow made a new attempt of using the flexibility of the CFE Treaty to the purpose of maintaining Russian troops in Transnistria - it resorted to the so-called principle of "temporary deployment". In accordance with article 5, paragraph 1 of the CFE Treaty,¹ Russia asked the leadership of the Republic of Moldova to accept the "temporary deployment" on Moldovan territory of 116 tanks, 53 ACVs and 93 Artillery. This Russian proposal was also rejected by the Republic of Moldova., and on the 14th of November 1995 the "official position of the Republic of Moldova towards the CFE Treaty was brought to the knowledge of the states which had signed the Treaty mentioned above, within the Joint Consultative Group in Vienna by Oleg Ungureanu, by then head of the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Moldova to OSCE.

Between the 15th and the 31st of March the first Conference of Evaluation of the application of the CFE Treaty and the Final Act regarding military effectives in Europe took place in Vienna. The works of the Conference were finalized through the elaboration of a Final Document of the first conference of evaluation of the Treaty and the act regarding military effectives in Europe. The final document evaluates the results and the activity carried out by the party states in view of the Treaty's application between 1990 and 1995, establishes practical measures for the maintaining of the Treaty's integrity and viability and expresses the will of the party states of starting a process of modernization and revision of the

¹ See: Adrian Nastase, Documente fundamentale ale dreptului international si ale relatiilor internationale, 1 b, Bucharest, 1977, pp. 475-502.

treaty to the new political and military conditions in the application area. The Republic of Moldova ratified the final document on the 15th of May 1997, issuing the following statement: “The ratification by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova of the Document agreed upon between the party states regarding the CFE Treaty, of the 19th of November 1990, does not mean an acceptance from the part of the Republic of Moldova of temporary presence and placement of conventional armed forces belonging to other states on its territory”.¹

The negative attitude of Moldova’s leaders towards Russian military presence on Moldovan territory can be explained by the fact that Moldova views Russia more as a threat towards its security than a support source.²

If some former Soviet republics view Russian troops as a warrant of their national security, Russian troops in the eastern districts of the Republic of Moldova make the Republic’s future unpredictable through their excessive politicization, through their tendency of involving in internal political processes of Moldova.³ Moldova is not interested in the

¹See: The Decision of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova No.1186-XIII, of the 15th of May 1997, “Regarding the ratification of the Document agreed upon between the party states concerning the CFE Treaty of the 19th November 1990”. During the summer of 1996, in Vienna, the member-states also negotiated and elaborated “The document agreed upon between the party states concerning the CFE Treaty, of the 19th of December 1990”, also called the “Document regarding the flank”, which was included in the A Annex of the final document

² Roy Allison, “Military Forces in the Soviet Successor States, Adelphi Paper 280, London, 1993, p.63.

³ Russian diplomats often declare that Russian troops in the area are a factor of stability and contribute to the settlement of the conflict. Facts indicate the opposite. For example, in February 1993 a project of agreement “Regarding basic principles concerning the settlement of the social and political conflict in the Transnistrian area” was prepared for signing. The agreement was initialed by the heads of the working groups (A. Tsaranu from the part of the Republic of Moldova and A. Karaman from the part of Transnistria). The document was to be signed on the 22nd of February 1993. However, the “Soldat Otechestva” (“SO”) newspaper, the press organ of the 14th Army, published a material (“Na pochetykh uslovyakh”) in which it showed the “faults” of the document the sides had agreed

bases' stationing on its territory; it would only lose by accepting the bases' distribution in Transnistria. The military bases would automatically place Moldova within the Russian sphere of influence, which would determine a radical change in the attitude of the West towards Moldova. Besides, staying in the Russian sphere of influence while democracy is still so fragile in Russia means letting Moldova face potential danger from the part of Moscow. The argument could be put forward in the following way: as long as the Russian president is capable of firing cannons against its own parliament, as long as Moscow can fight its own republics and erase some of its own towns to the ground, there is no guarantee that Russian troops should not act the same way with other capitals within the Russian sphere of influence during the future.

The Russian military doctrine tries to establish certain rules regarding the participation of Russian armies to events in former Soviet space. They say that Russian armies can only act with the agreement of the government in cause. However, knowing the case of Hungary (1956), the "government in cause" formula must be concretized. Another question also arises: will Moscow be able of controlling the future heads of the military bases?

Due to its geopolitical situation, Moldova occupies a special place within the CIS, and its relationships with Russia have a specific character. Moldova is one of the former Soviet republics, which has no common borders with Russia and is located around 1,000 kilometers away from its borders. The Republic of Moldova is neither a part of the Treaty on CIS collective security (Tashkent, 15th of May 1992), nor a part of the CIS military structures. Besides that, Moldova's neighbors (Ukraine and Romania) do not represent any danger for Moldova's national security, so that it does not need a Russian military umbrella. Although several political forces in Romania and Moldova are in favor of a union between these two

upon and requested the Transnistrian leaders not to sign the agreement. And this is what happened. Besides this, the "SO" also offered newspaper space to one of the leaders of the Moldovan "Interfront" (professor V. Yakovlev) who had been requesting the leaders of the "DMR" not to sign that document ("Soldat Otechestva", 12 March 1993).

Romanian states,¹ any action of force in this respect from the part of Romania is excluded. The politicians in Kishinev and Bucharest are conscious of the fact that a forced union would be impossible and it would only bring prejudices to the idea of union. Bucharest is also conscious of the fact that whereas Russia had accredited its right of intervention in areas inhabited by Russian-speaking population, a union between the Republic of Moldova (where over 560,000 Russians and more than 700.000 "Russian-speaking persons" live) and Romania would automatically include the latter within the Russian sphere of influence. And this fact is unacceptable for Bucharest, which is carrying on considerable efforts in order to join the NATO.

Moldova's union with Romania will become even less probable when the districts on the left bank of the Dniester, as the ones inhabited by Gagauz, will obtain a special status within Moldova. In case Moldova should unite with Romania, Gagauzia and the districts on the left side of the Dniester will gain their right to self-determination. In this context we have to underline the fact that the insistence manifested by Russia in order to have the principle of synchronization between the process of withdrawal of Russian military formations from the territory of Moldova and the giving of a special status to Transnistria included in the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994 followed exactly this goal - which it reached, in fact.

As far as Ukraine is concerned, during the Soviet years, as a result of Soviet expansionist policy and "gifts" received from Moscow (for example Crimea, during the year 1954), it acquired around 152,000 square kilometers of land and presently has potential territorial problems with most of its neighbors.² That's why after the disintegration of the USSR and

¹ In Moldova the most important party in favor of the union between the Republic of Moldova and Romania is the People's Christian Democrat Front. In Romania there are several parties and organizations supporting Moldova's union with Romania-"the Greater Romania Party", the Bucharest-Kishinev Cultural society, the Pro-Bessarabia and Bukowina Association etc.

² According to the population census of the year 1926, Ukraine possessed a territory of 451,7 thousand square kilometers, and presently it has 603,7 thousand square kilometers (See: "Vsesoyuznaya perepis' naseleniya 17 dekabrya 1926

the appearance on its territory of 15 newly independent states the main objective of Ukrainian external policy has become the legalization of the administrative borders of the former Ukrainian SSR as national borders of Ukraine.¹ While supporting the principle of inviolability of borders, Kiev rejects any attempt of modification of its present borders, even in its favor.

It is true that there are political forces in Ukraine which bring forward territorial pretensions to Moldova,² but, taking into account the

goda". *Kratkie svodki*, Vypusk 3, Moskva, 1927, p.4).

¹ On the 12th of September 1991 the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet adopted the Law "Regarding Ukraine's right of succession" ("O pravopremstve Ukrainy"). The 5th article of this law stipulates that "The USSR State border which separates Ukraine from other states, as well as the border between the Ukrainian SSR and the Belarus SSR, the RFSSR and the Republic of Moldova on the 16th of July 1990 is declared State Border of Ukraine". On the 4th of November 1991 the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet adopted the Law regarding the State Border of Ukraine.

Taking considerable efforts, Ukraine obtained important results in view of the legalization of its borders. Up to now, Ukraine has clearly defined its frontiers with 3 of the neighboring states: Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. Kiev signed the following treaties and agreements with these states: with Hungary - the Treaty on the Foundations of Good-Neighborliness and Co-operation between the Republic of Hungary and Ukraine (06.12.1991), the Agreement regarding points for crossing the border between neighboring states (26.02.1993); with Poland - the Treaty between the republic of Poland and Ukraine on Good-Neighborliness, Friendly Relations and Co-operation (18.05.1992), the Treaty on juridical relationships concerning the Polish-Ukrainian state border, co-operation and mutual assistance in border guard problems (12.01.1993); with Slovakia - the Treaty of neighborliness, friendship and collaboration relationships (26.06.1993), the Treaty regarding juridical relationships concerning the common border, co-operation and mutual assistance in border guard problems; the Treaty regarding the Common State Border (14.10.1993).

² On the 21st of February 1995, during a press conference in Kiev, Dmitri Korchinsky, vice-president of the Ukrainian nationalist organization "Ukrainian National Defense Assembly", declared himself in favor of Transnistria's integration in Ukraine, underlining that this fact would lead to the Dniester's becoming Ukraine's natural border. After this, Korchinsky added, "it is time we played the Transdnestrian card" (Interfax, Moscow, in English, 18:11 GMT, 21

consequences that the bringing forward of such pretensions on an official level would have on Ukraine, they cannot be viewed as a danger for the national security of the Republic of Moldova.

In the case of Moldova, the argument of the need of maintaining Russian troops in the newly independent states in view of defending the rights of the Russian-speaking population cannot be taken into account either. The conflict between Kishinev and Tiraspol is political, not ethnical in character, and if we can speak about ethnic discrimination, the ones discriminated in Transnistria are the Romanians/Moldavians, not the Russian. These facts have been observed by representatives of several organizations who have visited Moldova.¹ As far as the OGRF is concerned, it represents a destabilizing element in the area, and not an element contributing to the harmonization of inter-ethnic relationships, as the Russian side claims. Furthermore, the following question appears: why the “Russian-speaking population” in Moldova (which not only includes Russians, but also 600,000 Ukrainians, over 153,000 Gagauz, more than 88,000 Bulgarians, over 65,000 Jews etc.) should be protected by Russia and not by their kin states. Following the logic of Russian diplomacy, there should be military bases belonging to at least 5 states (Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Turkey and Israel) in Moldova.

An argument more recently used by the separatist authorities in Tiraspol and by some political forces in Russia in order to bolster up the idea that the Russian troops should stay in Transnistria is the process of NATO’s extension eastwards. On the 9th of December 1997 parliamentary audiences regarding the ratification of the treaty of friendship and collaboration between Moldova and Russia signed in 1990 took place within the Russian State Duma. During the discussions the Russian deputies declared themselves against the ratification of the Treaty, in favor of recognizing the “DMR” and keeping Russian troops in Moldova, showing that this was necessary as an action of response to NATO’s extension. Moreover, they needed a federalized Republic of Moldova,

February 1995).

¹ See, for example, Helsinki Watch Report “Human Rights in Moldova. The Turbulent Dniester”, March 1993.

including the “DMR” (on confederate bases), because this “would keep Moldova within the CIS and not allow it to go to Romania or the NATO countries”.⁵⁹⁰

The process of NATO’s extension eastwards is also used by some pro-Russian forces in Kishinev as an argument for keeping the Russian troops in Moldova and the latter’s joining the CIS military structures. On the 25th of December 1997, 22 deputies from the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova brought forward a project of decision of the Parliament regarding the ratification of articles 11-15 from the CIS status (the CIS military dimension). The explaining note to the project brought the following reason for the need of joining the CIS’ military dimension: “The fact that the Republic of Moldova has joined the Partnership for Peace brought about a process of military and strategic approaching to the countries within the NATO Block. Thus, for the first time in its multi-secular history, the Moldovan nation might get involved in a military alliance headed against Russia. History teaches us that none of Russia’s enemies has ever defeated it...”

Since May 1996 and until now the government delegations of Moldova and Russia have not met in order to discuss the Russian troops’ withdrawal from Moldova (presently negotiations are being carried out at the level of the delegations of the Ministries of Defense). However, in spite of this fact, Russia tries to persuade international public opinion that considerable progress has been made in the negotiation process. Some decision factors in Kishinev often express themselves in this respect, too. The argument they usually bring is the cutting down of the OGRF staff, illustrated in table 14.

Table 14. The cutting down of the 14th Army/OGRF staff between 1994 and 1997

	Total between the years 1994 and 1997	years			
		1994	1995	1996	1997
Officers	962	207	178	89	488
Sub-lieutenants	570	88	204	58	220
Sergeants and privates	3126	713	810	206	1397
Total cut off:	4658	1008	1192	353	2105

From the table one may clearly see that the personnel of the OGRF were cut down with 4,658 persons between 1994 and 1997. However, in our opinion, speaking about considerable progress in the troops' withdrawal process only on the basis of data in table 14 would be a superficial approach to the problem and would have as purpose the misleading of public opinion. We have to put the cutting down of personnel in relation with data in table 8 (pp.152-153) regarding Russian conventional army forces deployed on the territory of Moldova. From table 8 we understand that between 1994 and 1997 the number of tanks was only reduced with 2 units, the one of armored vehicles with 42 units, and the number of artillery pieces and combat support helicopters stayed unchanged. As far as the cutting down of OGRF staff, as illustrated in table 14, is concerned, it took place as a result of the 14th Army's transforming into the OGRF, but not according to a troops' withdrawal plan. It is highly unlikely that the process of cutting down the number of personnel should continue during the following years.

When we speak about cutting down OGRF staff, we have to take into account the fact that, in about the same period of time, Russia supported the establishment of military and paramilitary formations in Transnistria (about 7,500 persons), who might easily replace the reduced staff of the OGRF in case of need. And the soldiers of the Transnistrian army are as prepared for combat as OGRF soldiers, thanks to applications carried out in common with Russian units in the area.

In our opinion, presently there is no political will in Russia for the Russian troops' withdrawal from Moldova and thus for honoring the obligations assumed by Russia through the Moldovan-Russian Agreement of the 21st of October 1994 and within international institutions. The Russian side invokes the reason that the withdrawal cannot begin yet, as the State Duma has not yet ratified the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994.¹ However, we believe that this "legal vacuum" could be overcome,

¹ Russian authorities not only do not ratify the Agreement of the 21st of October 1994, but they also frequently violate it, a fact leading to the tensioning of the situation in the area. Article 6 of the agreement mentioned above stipulates that

should there be any political will. For example, conventional weapons could be withdrawn from Moldova according to the CFE Treaty, of which we have spoken before, and which was ratified by the State Duma. The withdrawal may also be realized within the general process of cutting down Russian armed forces or through a decision of the Russian Government. Kishinev exposed these opinions in a declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued on the occasion of the 4th anniversary of the signing of the Russian-Moldovan Treaty regarding the legal status, manner and terms of the withdrawal of the military forces of the Russian Federation, temporarily deployed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova", of the 21st of October 1994. Amongst others, the declaration mentioned above underlines that the "withdrawal process could have started not only on the basis of provisions made by the Agreement signed on the 21st of October 1994, but also in accordance with the decisions of the Budapest Summit (1994) and Lisbon Summit(1996) which form a sufficient juridical frame for the troops' evacuation, as they had been adopted by a consensus, inclusively by the Russian side".¹

The recent attempts of negotiating the fate of the troops in the area with Tiraspol instead of Kishinev also represent a proof of Moscow's lack of will of withdrawing its troops from Moldova. According to the

"the displacement, training and applications of military formations belonging to the Russian Federation outside their distribution places will be carried out on the territory of the Republic of Moldova in accordance with plans co-ordinated together with competent organs of the Republic of Moldova." In spite of provisions made by this article and a notice of the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the 3rd of September 1995 the Command of Russian troops distributed in the Transnistrian area of the Republic of Moldova organized a singing contest and a military parade in the square in the center of Tiraspol. Because of the inadequate choosing of the day in which the mentioned contest took place and because separatist leaders took part in the manifestations, ordinary population perceived the manifestations mentioned above as a continuation of separatist ceremonies organized on the 2nd of September on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the self-proclaimed "DMR", as well as a proof of the Russian troops' support towards separatist authorities.

¹ BASA-PRESS, 22 October 1998

declarations of V. Litskay, state secretary of the self-proclaimed “DMR”, the negotiations between Russia and Transnistria concerning the OGRF are carried out at the level of “state commissions”.¹ At the end of April 1999, the state commission of the Russian Federation was led by deputy prime minister Serov, the one of the “DMR” by the assistant of the president of the “government” - A. Blashku. The commissions had a few meetings, some of them being very fruitful, according to Litskay’s declarations. Among these we can mention the one in Odessa on the 20th of March 1998 within the meeting between Mr. P. Lucinski, President of the Republic of Moldova, L. Kuchma, President of Ukraine, V. Chernomyrdin, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, I. Smirnov, leader of the “DMR”, J. Evans, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova.² Then, besides the Odessa Agreement,³ V. Chernomyrdin and I. Smirnov signed a Protocol regarding the military patrimony of the OGRF. The Protocol, signed without the participation of the representatives of Kishinev authorities and the OSCE Mission in the Republic of Moldova, was qualified by Russian diplomacy as “a great step forward”. According to the declarations of Anatoly Adamishin, minister of the Russian Federation for matters of co-operation with CIS states, “all armament possessed by the group of Russian troops distributed in Transnistria is to be divided in three parts: intangible goods, ammunition and armament belonging to Russian troops: equipment which is to be unconditionally sent to the territory of the Russian Federation: the third part includes the exceeding amounts of armament which will have to be either destroyed on the spot or sold”.⁴

Speaking about the Russian-Transnistrian protocol signed in Odessa, we have to mention the fact that it has no legal value, not only because it was signed between Russia and a self-proclaimed republic, unrecognized internationally, but also because of the fact that Chernomyrdin’s and

¹ “Za Pridnestrovie”, 29 April 1999

² “Pridnestrov’e”, 24 March 1998

³ According to paragraph 6th of the Odessa Agreement, “The Parties will actively contribute to the evacuation of Russian military patrimony from Transnistria as fast as possible...”

⁴ “Moldova suverana”, 26 March 1998.

Smirnov's functions were not indicated on the protocol. In other words, it is just a document signed between two citizens of the Russian Federation, and thus it's not to be taken too seriously.

In order to mislead public opinion in Moldova and abroad regarding the role of the OGRF in the area and the Russian troops' withdrawal process, Russian diplomacy has been lately trying to artificially separate the process of evacuation of the ammunition distributed in Transnistria and the one of the complete withdrawal of military staff, of armament and military technique, as well as to present the OGRF's presence in Transnistria as necessary for the guard of the armament stocks. Thus, on the 17th of March 1999 the Russian Federation's embassy in Kishinev issued a declaration of a representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the adoption by the Duma in Moscow on the 19th of February of a decision "Concerning the Transnistrian issue", which says, among others: "As far as the Operational Group of Russian Troops stationed in Moldova is concerned, the leaders from Kishinev and the ones from Moscow have a clear understanding of the fact that it presently only carries out tasks of maintaining peace and ensuring the guard of the large quantity of ammunition and military technique belonging to the former 14th Army stored in Transnistria. In this respect, we are not presently talking about the withdrawal of the Russian troops, but of the withdrawal of exceeding amounts of armament ammunition. The conclusion, as fast as possible, of the Protocol between Russia and Moldova regarding military patrimony issues, which would create the juridical basis for the evacuation, liquidation and commercialization of the armament and ammunition could contribute to accelerating this process".¹

Another proof of Russia's lack of will of withdrawing its troops from Moldova is the schedule of the Russian troops' evacuation from Moldova presented on the 3rd of June 1999 to the OSCE Permanent Council, according to the decision of the OSCE Minister Reunion in Oslo (3rd of December 1998). "The schedule of the gradual withdrawal of the armament's use and re-use, military technique, ammunition and other

¹ BASA-PRESS, 17 March 1999.

material goods of the Operational Group of Russian troops from the Transnistrian area of the Republic of Moldova" stipulates the Russian troops' withdrawal from Moldova, with the exception of the "peacekeeping" ones, in four stages, the last one being to end "until the 31st of December 2005"- thus in a period of time two times longer than the three years' time stipulated by the Russian-Moldovan agreement of the 21st of October 1994.

The schedule also stipulates that the evacuation should not start with the withdrawal of the tanks, artillery pieces, ACVs and other combat armament, but with material goods of logistic, non-combatant services (topographical maps, telephone cable, transmissions technique etc.). The "peacekeeping troops" being excluded from the withdrawal schedule suggests that Russia will continue to insist on according the OGRF the status of peacekeeping forces in order to maintain its troops on the territory of Moldova for an unlimited period of time. The same exclusion of the "peacekeeping troops" from the withdrawal schedule also speaks of Moscow's vision on the way and terms in which it intends to settle the Transnistrian conflict. Moscow indirectly suggests that until the 31st of December 2005 it will continue to back up separatism in the Republic of Moldova, and that the Transnistrian conflict is unlikely to be settled down.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Moldova to OSCE in Vienna qualified the schedule presented by Russia as being just the project of a document, the two sides being to carry out supplementary negotiations in this respect.¹ At the beginning of June Ion Sturza, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, who had just come back from Minsk, from the reunion of the heads of government of the CIS countries, during a press conference qualified the same schedule as being a formal one as well as an "unacceptable one" for the Republic of Moldova, adding that he had agreed together with Sergey Stepashin, by then Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, that the two sides should initiate the elaboration of a new evacuation schedule.²

¹ AP FLUX, 8 June 1999.

² AP FLUX, 7 June 1999

The events until now suggest that the negotiations regarding the elaboration of the schedule will be difficult and will last for long time, their delaying only suiting the interests of Russia.

During April 1999 Moldova and Russia carried on negotiations regarding military patrimony and on timetable of the Russian troops' withdrawal from Moldova, which ended without any success. The delegation of the Republic of Moldova was led by General I. Coropceanu, Head of the High Headquarters and first-deputy minister of defense, and the Russian one by I. Morozov, representative of the Russian Federation President to the negotiations regarding the Transnistrian issue, assisted by General V. Evnevich, commander of the OGRF, representatives of the "Rossvooruzhenye", the Russian ministers of defense and of foreign affairs. Discussions on the Protocol between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Moldova regarding military patrimony issues not only pointed out the big divergences between the two sides' positions, but also Russia's true intentions: the Russian side proposed that the basis of the negotiations should not be the Moldovan-Russian Agreement of the 21st of October 1994 concerning the Russian troops' withdrawal from Moldova, but the Chernomyrdin-Smirnov Protocol of the 20th of March in Odessa, of which we have already spoken. (We remind that, in accordance to the Chernomyrdin-Smirnov Protocol, all armament possessed by the OGRF is divided in three parts: a) "intangible goods, armament and ammunition of Russian troops; b) "equipment which is to be unconditionally sent on the territory of the Russian Federation; c) "exceeding amounts of armament , which are to be either immediately destroyed or sold"¹). Russian diplomats also insisted that the negotiations should not have in view the manner and withdrawal terms of the whole amount of armament of the OGRF, but only "equipment which is to be unconditionally sent to the territory of the Russian Federation". In other words, the Russian delegation proposed that the negotiations should have in view old, non-used armament of the OGRF, but not combat armament, including conventional one.

¹ "Moldova Suverana", 26 March 1998.

As Russia's intentions of withdrawing its troops from Moldova remain simple declarations, we consider that Kishinev should again take into account the idea of promoting an UN resolution regarding the Russian troops' withdrawal from the Republic of Moldova. Moldova tried to promote such a resolution in 1993, but this idea was abandoned as a result of Russian pressures.

In 1993 Moldova made public its will of obtaining an UN resolution concerning the Russian troops' withdrawal at the 47th Session of the UN General Assembly. While speaking during the Session, Nicolae Tău, Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs, showed that "one of the factors which have contributed and still contribute to destabilizing the situation" in Moldova "is the presence of foreign military forces on its territory", that "Moldovan-Russian negotiations regarding the schedule of the 14th Army's withdrawal from Moldova develop with difficulty. The representatives of the Russian Federation delay the negotiations and thus delay the beginning of this army's withdrawal." Afterwards he saluted the fact that the amendment presented by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania regarding the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Baltic states had been included on the daily schedule of the General Assembly's session and expressed his hope that "this problem, whose settlement ...has a special significance for my state, too, will be approached in a larger context in order to include also the withdrawal of foreign armed forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova".¹

Russia's reaction to Mr. Tău's proposal was very sickly. On the 15th of October 1993, the spokesman of the Russian ministry of foreign affairs made a declaration mentioning that Mr. Tău's speech contained "evaluations on the Russian-Moldovan negotiations regarding military aspects which differ from the ones made by the supreme leadership of Moldova. Unfortunately, the way in which Russia's approach to the political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict is presented is entirely

¹ "Armata a 14-a, o sursa permanenta de tensiune" [The Russian 14th Army - a permanent source of tension], Speech held by Mr. N. Tău, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, during the 47th session of the UN General Assembly. - "Moldova suverana", 8 October 1993.

distorted. In fact Russia strictly follows provisions made by the agreement regarding principles of peaceful settlement of the 21st of July 1992". Referring the Snegur-Yeltsin meetings of the 15th of May and 1st of September 1993, during which the "principle of synchronization" had been agreed upon, he underlined that "the presidents established that the negotiations on military problems were constructive, contradicting the minister's declaration regarding the lack of any progress. Some Russian military units have already been withdrawn from Moldova. As a result of six rounds of negotiations, a project of agreement regarding the status, procedure and withdrawal terms of the 14th army was agreed upon. The following round of negotiations on military problems will soon take place. All these deny Mr. Tâu's declaration concerning Russia's "pro-imperial policy" which allegedly obstructs the negotiations, while not manifesting its will of withdrawing its military forces temporarily deployed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. As far as the matter of the OSCE Mission representatives' taking part in Moldovan bilateral negotiations regarding military matters is concerned, the negotiations are a matter of our two states' competence. At the same time, the Russian side has offered detailed information on the way in which the negotiations are being carried on to the representatives of the OSCE Mission in the Republic of Moldova and has the intention of continuing this practice. Taking all the above into account, we consider that Mr. N. Tâu's request regarding the inclusion of a supplementary point in the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly concerning the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of Moldova is not justified."

Besides the declaration of the spokesman of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the 17th of November 1993 Anatol Tsaranu, by then ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to the Russian Federation, was invited to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Moldovan ambassador was declared that Russia had a negative attitude towards Moldova's intention of promoting an UN resolution concerning the Russian troops' withdrawal from the territory of Moldova and that Moscow would try to act against the actions of Moldovan diplomacy to mobilize international institutions in view of organizing pressures over Russia in

order to determine the latter to withdraw its troops from Moldova. The representatives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also warned the Moldovan diplomat on Russia's intention of taking out economic sanctions against Moldova if the latter should not abandon the idea of promoting the UN resolution.

The withdrawal of armament and military technique possessed by the separatist authorities in Tiraspol should be a part of the OGRF withdrawal process. Armament and military technique illegally possessed by the separatists should be withdrawn on the territory of Russia because it comes from the depots of Russian military formations. However, they should be firstly inspected, an action that should take place in accordance with provisions made by the CFE Treaty.

In order to fulfill all these objectives a more active involvement of the international community in the process of withdrawal of the Russian troops from Moldova and destruction of armament stored in Transnistria is required. Thus, the US' and other states' intention of giving the Republic of Moldova financial support for the withdrawal of Russian troops from the districts on the left side of the Dniester is welcomed. We remind that during the visit made by President Petru Lucinski in Washington, on the occasion of the NATO Summit in April 1999, the USA decided to give around 30 million dollars for the Russian troops' evacuation from the territory of the Republic of Moldova,¹ and Helle Deign, chairman of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, during the visit she had made in Kishinev at the end of February 1999, declared that Canada, France, Denmark and Norway had also announced their availability of taking part in financing the Russian troops' withdrawal from Moldova.² However, we are convinced that the number of states willing to take part in financing the process of withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Moldova would considerably increase as soon as Russia should show its availability

¹ AP FLUX, 30th of April 1999. The Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced for the first time the US' availability of allocating 30 million dollars for the Russian troops' withdrawal from Transnistria during a briefing at the beginning of March 1999. - "Infotag", 9th of March 1999

² BASA-PRESS, 26 February 1999

of taking out concrete steps in view of withdrawing its arsenals from Moldova. A proof in this respect is the meeting of the group of experts from the countries interested in transporting and using the armament and ammunition distributed in the Transnistrian area of the Republic of Moldova, which was held in Moscow on the 22nd of July 1999. The group's meetings were attended by experts from the US, Germany, Great Britain, France, Holland, Switzerland, Finland, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Denmark as well as the head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova.¹ Now the only thing needed is that this money should be used according to their destination.²

¹ "INTERLIC", 28 July 1999. According to the "INTERLIC" Agency, which referred to the press service of the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during the meeting the representatives of Russia had put forward data on the number, storing conditions and transport possibilities of armament, ammunition, military technique and other property located in the Transnistrian area. It was also decided then that a group of international experts should visit the eastern districts of Moldova during August and September 1999 "in order to become familiar with the state of things on the field".

²While commenting the US' decision of giving the Republic of Moldova financial support for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Transnistria, V. Atamanyuk, one of the Tiraspol officials, declared that the decision mentioned above should not worry the "DMR": the millions of dollars will be "absorbed", will get stolen on their way and will not reach their destination, as it has happened before", - "Profsoyuznye vesti", No. 17 (363), May 1999

Conclusions

Russian policy of establishing military bases on the territories of CIS states is included in the range of political, economic and military levers used by Moscow in order to re-establish its political and military control over former Soviet territories. The facts quoted in this work illustrated the truth that the policy of establishing military bases comes into flagrant contradiction with international practice in this field. While the latter is based on the sides' mutual agreement and interest, Moscow tries to create military bases on the CIS territory by using various economical, political and even military pressures. The case of Moldova is an eloquent example in this respect. Although the Kishinev government officials have repeatedly expressed themselves against the Russian troops' stationing on the territory of Moldova, although the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova forbids distribution of foreign troops on the country's territory, Russia tries, by political and economical pressures, to obtain Kishinev's agreement in order to create at least one military base in the eastern districts of Moldova. More than this, Moscow negotiates this issue directly with the separatist authorities in Tiraspol. The protocol signed on the 20th of March 1998 in Odessa between V. Chernomyrdin, President of the Government of the Russian Federation, and I. Smirnov, the leader of the self-proclaimed "DMR" is a proof in this respect. The protocol was signed without the participation of Kishinev's representatives and it has been up to now inaccessible to Moldovan authorities.

At the same time with the efforts taken in view of maintaining Russian military presence in CIS states, Moscow gives separatist regimes financial and military support, so that the latter could create strong armies. For example, until April 1996 Russian troops distributed in the eastern districts of Moldova transmitted to the separatist authorities of the "DMR" 150 units of technique and about 3,000 tons of military goods. This

patrimony transfer was approved by the government of the Russian Federation by a decision dated 17th of July 1996.

Russia's efforts of consolidating separatist regimes in CIS space and their armed forces are explainable. For example, should Russian troops leave Moldova in the end, there still will be a pro-Russian army or "militia" in Transnistria, which will act as an element of continuous pressure, a "fifth column" of Moscow in the area, which will try to keep Moldova within the Russian sphere of influence.

The Russian policy of establishing military bases also proves the fact that some CIS states perceive Russian troops on their territory as a destabilizing element and a source of threat towards their security. And this because of the Russian troops' active involvement in internal affairs of the states on the territories of which they are quartered. Russian units distributed in conflict areas (Abkhazia, Southern Ossetia, Transnistria) offer moral, political and military support to separatist regimes; in the areas where ethnic minorities (Akhalkalaki) and confessional ones (Ajaria) prevail, Russian troops are a source nourishing irredentist sentiments.

It is also difficult to speak about the "stabilizing role of Russian troops stationed in former Soviet republics" (as Russian mass-media tries to present the situation) because of their financial situation and their spirits. Although being thousands of kilometers far from Russia, the TGRT and OGRF troops face the problems specific to the entire Russian army. In order to survive, Russian military bases in Armenia and Georgia, for example, have cut down their expenses for combat training to a minimum level, and the soldiers have taken out cattle raising, agriculture and even fish breeding. There are cases when the military and members of their families resort to blocking military objectives because they receive their salaries a few months later, come into conflict with local authorities and population because they cannot return money which they had borrowed etc. This state of things proves the fact that Russian military policy towards CIS states in general and especially the activity of creating military bases on former Soviet territories, are being seriously limited by the economical problems which Russia now faces and belies another "theory" propagated by Russian mass-media, according to which the establishment of military

bases in the CIS may be a solution for economical and social problems faced by the former Soviet republics.

The data we have exposed in this work also illustrate the fact that the Russian troops on NIS territory, whether they are in Georgia or in Moldova, have not yet become conscious of the fact that they are on the territory of independent states, a status which should make them have a behavior that would suit their situation. And this state of things often leads to tensions between Russian troops and authorities in the countries on the territory of which they are deployed.

The Russian policy of creating military bases also suggests that the West should more actively support the efforts of the CIS states of getting out from under the Russian military umbrella. The support given by Russia to separatist regimes does not lead to the settlement of crisis in former Soviet space, but to “freezing the conflicts”, and the terrorist attack against the Headquarters of the TGRT “in reply to the establishment of Russian military bases on Georgian territory”, as well as the Chechnyan attack against peaceful population in Budyonovsk prove that the policy of establishing military bases through pressure may generate conflicts threatening the security of entire areas.

The Georgian experience also proves the fact that one may reach its objectives in relationships with Russia only by promoting a consistent and severe policy. It seemed that Georgia’s withdrawal from the Treaty on CIS Collective Security (April 1999) and Georgia’s expressing its will of integration within the NATO would severely deteriorate Russian-Georgian relationships and would freeze any discussions concerning the Russian troops’ withdrawal from Georgia. But the things went just the other way around. The consistent position of Tbilisi authorities awoke the respect of Moscow, which continued to withdraw its border troops from Georgian territory according to previous agreements and began to examine its relationships with Georgia much more seriously.

We believe that Kishinev authorities, too, should (at last) understand that Russia’s involvement to Moldova’s internal affairs and the support it gives to Transnistrian separatism is not just a policy carried out by “some reactionary circles” in Moscow, but one controlled from the

Kremlin, which has as purpose to maintain Moldova within the Russian sphere of influence. It is time they acknowledge the fact that whatever should be the colour of political forces in Moscow and the composition of the State Duma, Russia's policy towards its former colonies and especially towards Moldova will stay unchanged, that the only chance Moldova has of escaping from the unbearable guardianship of Russia is to abandon the CIS and to give up its status of (illusory) neutrality, as well as to transmit the West a clear message regarding Moldova's will of integration within the Euro-Atlantic political and military structures.

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Postscriptum

The relations between Russia and the Newly Independent States (NIS) have known a significant evolution since the publication of the Romanian variant of the book “*Russian Policy on the Military Bases: Georgia and Moldova*” (the end of 1999), Moscow succeeding in increasing its political and military control over the former Soviet republics, inclusively over Moldova and Georgia. This is due to a lot of factors and changes that happened both on the international arena and in Russia and the ex-Soviet republics.

It can be said that only in this new political and military context, most of the problems I have dealt with, as well as most of the information presented in my book from 1999 get a new statute – that of significant elements for the later evolution. In other words, apparently paradoxical, the object of the book is revealed today more topical than two years ago. Hence the necessity of the present English edition, certainly “brought up-to-date” with the help of this postscriptum.

Russia’s control on NIS has increased especially after President Vladimir Putin’s coming at Kremlin, the president who wishes to be second Peter the Great of Russia. Unlike Eltsin, who used to watch some events from NIS indifferently, Putin has insisted that the former Soviet republics are a part belonging to the “Russian sphere of influence” and he is making considerable efforts to subordinate them to Moscow. On 10 January 2000, Vladimir Putin signed a decree by which he certified for Russian Federation a New Security Concept¹, and on 21 April the same year – a new Military Doctrine, which like that from 1993 granted Russia a long series of excuses for interventions in the “Near Abroad”.²

¹The texts may be found at the official site of Russian’s Security Council - www.scrf.gov.ru. See also Nicolai Socov, Russia’s New Concept of National Security - “East European Constitutional Review”, Winter/ Spring 2000, pp. 83-87.

² Among the “dangers” which give free hand to Russia to interfere into the

The decision of the member states to the Treaty On CIS Collective Security¹ to create until 1 August 2001 Collective Forces of Rapid Reaction in Central Asia (CFRR) is an example of Russia's success in reestablishing its military control on NIS. The above - mentioned decision was taken during the Yerevan Reunion of the member states countries of the Treaty On CIS Collective Security on 25 May this year. Taking advantage of the unstable situation from Central Asia, particularly of the threatening security in the region from Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU),² Russia persuaded the states belonging to the Treaty to create until 1 August 2001 Collective Forces of Rapid

internal affairs of NIS can be mentioned the next: "the discrimination, the suppression of the rights, liberties and legal interests of the Russian Federation's citizens in the foreign states", "the extension of the military blocks and alliances to Russian Federation's detriment", "the attack (military provocation) of the military objectives of Russian Federation, dislocated on other states' territory as well as the objectives and installations from the state border of Russian Federation, from its allies' borders and in their sea waters", "the creation, equipping and involving on the territory of other states of the military formations and groups with the purpose of their infiltration for actions on the Russian Federation's territory and its allies", etc. (See: "Zkavkazskie Voennye Vedomosti", 16-23 May, 2000)

¹ At present, six states are part to the Treaty On CIS Collective Security: They are: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.

²The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) is led by Juma Namangani (whose legal name is Jumabai Khojiev and who is the military leader) and Takhir Yuldash (the political leader). (See Mikhail Fal'kov, "Rukovoditeli IDU", *Nezavisimaya gazeta* (Internet version), 24 August 2000). According to Russian military agencies, the IMU has about 5,000 men under arms, of which several thousand are based in Afghanistan (Interfax, 25 August 2000, citing Russia's Defence minister). The movement is radical and fundamentalist, it opposes the neo-communist governments of Central Asia, in particular the Uzbekistan one, believes that Sharia law should be the organizing disciplinary principal of society, and "receives assistance from the Taliban and other groups based in Afghanistan". US Government considers the IMU a "terrorist organization". (Statement by Richard Boucher, the US State Department spokesman, 15 September 2000).

Reaction in Central Asia composed of Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Tajik battalions.¹ During the Reunion there was appointed the chief of General Headquarters of CFRR and it was decided that the General Headquarters of CFRR (made up of 8 persons²) should be at Bishkek. The troops who will join CFRR will be supported by the states under whose flag they will act, Russia will participate in the field of CFRR with troops from 201 Division, dislocated in Tajikstan³.

The creation of CFRR is seen by Russia as a first step towards “filling with content” the Treaty On CIS Collective Security. “A second move is the creation of a unified group”.⁴ In accordance with Russian media, such “schemes” of creating some united groups are also expected for West (Belarus) and Caucasus (Armenian) directions.⁵

To make attractive the Treaty On CIS Collective Security for other states, in the frame of the Reunion from Yerevan, President Vladimir Putin said that he would promote a differentiated policy of cooperation in the technical – military field with the states of the Treaty, these ones having big facilities. According to Putin the Russian “military – technical cooperation with the Treaty countries will differ from cooperation in this area with other states of the world. But first of all, of course, this will concern the manpower and resources which are joint”.⁶

¹ The initiative of creation some rapid reaction forces in Central Asia appeared in November 1999 during the reunion of security councils’ secretaries of the countries belonging to the Treaty On CIS Collective Security, that took place at Bishkek. That time was examined the problem of creation some Antiterrorist Common Forces of Rapid Reaction – “ZVV”, 13 November 1999.

² “Komsomolskaya Pravda”, 26 May, 2001; “ZVV”, 30 May 2001

³ “Moldpress”, No. 5986, 25 May, 2001; “Trud”, 25 May, 2001; “Izvestia”, 26 May, 2001.

⁴ See the official site of Russia’s MFA - <http://www.mid.ru>. Russian President Vladimir Putin News Conference on Outcome of CIS Collective Security Council Meeting Yerevan, May 25, 2001.

⁵ “Trud”, 25 May, 2001.

⁶ Russian President Vladimir Putin News Conference on Outcome of CIS Collective Security Council Meeting, Yerevan, May 25, 2001. See also “Express K” (Kazakhstan), 26 May, 2001, “ZVV”, 30 May 2001. The differentiated

In order to re-establish its control towards CIS, like in the last decade, Russia uses both economic factors and political ones (ceasing the electricity and gas delivery, supporting the pro-Russian forces in elections, the maintaining of separatism etc.), which, from day to day, was more and more diversified. The one-sided change, in December 2000, made by Moscow regarding visa regime between Russia and Georgia is an eloquent example in this respect.

Beginning with 5 December 2000 Russia introduced a new visa regime for Georgia, which stipulates the obligatory character of visas for Georgian citizens who travel to Russia. But the new rules were not extended on the citizens from the separatist regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia, these ones keeping the right of passing the Russian frontier without visa.

On 7 December 2000, MEA of Georgia issued a declaration protesting against the special privileges given to the citizens of Abkhazia and South Osetia in the field of new visa regime. "Georgia, was emphasized in the declaration, considers that such a decision represents a prejudice to its territorial integrity and interference into its internal affairs", "a gesture of political pressure". Edward Shevardnadze, Georgia's President, appreciated the visa regime imposed by Russian Federation to Georgia's citizens as "a measure of reprisals from Moscow, which reproaches to the authorities from Tbilisi that they haven't cooperated with Russia concerning the military operations from separatist Chechen republic, not allowing the conveying in transit of the Georgian territory by the Russian troops".¹ In spite of the authorities' protests from Tbilisi the decision regarding the new visa regime remained in force.

On 25 November 2000, Georgian Foreign Minister Irakli Menegharishvili told the Georgian Parliament that during his talks in Moscow the Russian officials had spelled out several conditions under

character of Russian cooperation policy in the military field with member states of the Treaty On CIS Collective Security is also stipulated in the Russian military Doctrine (Chapter III, paragraph 8).

¹ AP Flux, No.5292, 8 December 2000, AP Flux, No. 5360, 11 December 2000, Moldpress, No. 13108, 10 December 2000.

which Moscow was ready to drop its insistence on a visa regime for travel between two countries. The Russian demands were “that Georgia adopt a “neutral” position in the Chechen conflict, accede to the Eurasian Economic Community created last month on the basis of the CIS Customs Union, moderate its negotiating position on the closure of the Russian military bases in Georgia, and take into consideration Russia’s interests in the export of Caspian oil and gas”.¹

Besides the purpose of forcing Georgia to give up the matters enumerated above, in the opinion of some independent observers the Russian action has other purposes, too. One of them would be the acceleration of the integration process of the separatist republics in the frame of Russian Federation – many citizens of Abkhazia and South Ossetia have Russian passports, and the differentiated visa regime encourages the other part of the population to get them, too. The new visa rules are also a big blow to Georgia’s battered economy: around 500,000 Georgians, a tenth of the population, work in Russia. They send home a lot of money: \$1,5 billion, say the Russians; \$600m-700m, according to the Georgians”.² This sum is equal to twice the country’s annual budget. “The loss of those monies, in the opinion of some observers, will aggravate social hardship in Georgia (some 52 percent of Georgians live under the poverty level), and, if the Georgians who return from Russia fail to find employment at home, unemployment will rise considerably. Both those developments would inevitably exacerbate social tensions in Georgia”.³

Subdued to Moscow ‘s pressures Georgia gave way to a series of concessions in its relations with Russia, mainly in the field of negotiations concerning the withdrawal of Russian military bases from Vaziani and Gudauta,⁴ and it considerably changed the priorities of its

¹ RFE/RL, News Line, 27 November 2000.

² The Economist, 9 December 2000, p. 47

³ RFE/RL Caucasus report, 30 November 2000, Vol. 3, No 46.

⁴ For example, Georgia accepted that after the withdrawal of 137 Base to attend yearly 48 transport planes of Russian aircraft on Vaziani airport – “ZVV”, 25 April 2001.

foreign policy. If, until Putin's coming to Kremlin, the Georgian officials were speaking openly about a possible adherence to NATO in 2005,¹ then, since February this year, the Georgian officials have been speaking about Georgia's aspirations to become a neutral, and wants to convince Russia that after the withdrawal of the Russian military bases, the country won't host NATO bases.² The changing of priorities of Georgian foreign policy is so obvious that some Russian observers speak about the strategic partnership between Georgia and USA like a "strategic partnership of yesterday".³

The support given by Moscow to the communists from Moldova in order to win the parliamentary elections from February 2001⁴ is not

¹ See: "Partnerov na pereprave ne meneaiut", "ZVV", 15 July, 1999; "K 2005 godu Gruyia nadeetsya vstupiti v NATO", "ZVV", 18 November 1999.

² On 18 December 2000, commenting upon the activity of the conference "Security and defence in the South Caucasus", Edward Shevardnadze said that Georgia's adherence to NATO "is not a problem of the next 3-4 years". He added that "there are certain parameters and exigencies for the country that wishes to adhere to NATO", but Georgia, "is, for the moment, far from these standards". (Moldpress, No 13495, 18 December, 2000). Later, in February, this year, E Shevardnadze said that Georgia might make its choice in favor of neutrality status. "It is too early to speak of Georgia's possible accession to NATO. The people will decide. It is possible Georgia will become a neutral country", Shevardnadze told a news conference in Tbilisi. He added, that "Between now and 2005, there could be many changes on the world's political scene. ... We cannot know for sure that Georgia will be accepted as a member of the Alliance" (France Presse Agency, 6 February 2001). On 21 June, 2001, Edward Shevardnadze with the occasion of hosting on Georgia's territory the military exercises "Cooperative Partners – 2001" in frame of program Partnership for Peace, said that Georgia is rather closer to NATO adherence than to the adoption of neuter country status (Moldpress, No. 7108, 22 June, 2001). But we believe that this declaration must not be considered like a change of Georgia's political way. It was rather a protocol one.

³ Alexandr Svetlov, "Strategicheskoe partnerstvo vcherashnego dnea", – "ZVV", 2 August 2000.

⁴ The support of pro-Russian forces in the election campaign from Moldova from February 2001 was so obvious and transparent, that some foreign observers

only another example of the devices used by Moscow in the re-establishing policy of its political and military control on NIS, but it also suggests that one of Kremlin's strategies towards NIS is also bringing in top of the former Soviet republics of some pro-Russian leaders and of some marionette governments to promote the policies which Moscow wishes. In the opinion of some observers, the scandal which Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchima faced, being accused that he would have commanded the death of journalist Gheorgii Gongadze had not only the purpose to create a political crisis in his country but also to bring ahead the state a president closer to the interests of Russian capital in Ukraine.¹ It seems that Moscow would like to see other political person just ahead the Republic of Belarus. On 14 March 2001, the Belarus President Alexandr Lukashenko in a TV broadcast accused Russia and West of subversive activities against his country. "The Russian and West Intelligence services which function on our territory are planing wide-spreading actions against the country", said A. Lukashenko. He added: "It will be difficult for us to face them, but this is our task and nobody has the right to avoid them".²

The CIS states are watching with anxiety the increasing of Russian control on the former Soviet territory and even being in difficult situations, they are trying to get rid of Moscow's "support". An eloquent example in this respect can be Uzbekistan, which in the summer of the last year being confronted with problems in the fight against the militants of the Islamic Movement from Uzbekistan (IMU), refused Russia's military support. On 11 August 2000 the Russian General Headquarters said that they were ready to give military support to Uzbekistan, if it

appreciated the results of parliamentary elections as a victory of Moscow – "Russia Vence Eleiçoes Moldavas", "Mundo", 4 April, 2001.

¹ On 14 March 2001, the Chief of Ukrainean Intelligence Service, Vladimir Radcenko, said that the protests against president Leonid Kuchima could be supported by "external forces" and that "sooner or later, the external involving in the events from Ukraine, mainly in the financial one, will be revealed" (Moldpress, No 2888, 15 March, 2001).

² Moldpress, No. 2889, 15 March 2001.

requests this,¹ and on 29 August, General-Colonel Leonid Ivasov told the journalists that Uzbekistan's government asked military assistance against IMU detachments. But President Karimov denied all news from media concerning the requests of Russian help, and, in a speech in front of his country's Parliament on 30 August said that Uzbekistan didn't need Moscow's help²... President Karimov didn't let himself be convinced to ask help to Russia either at the urge of President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, who proposed to Uzbekistan and Kirghizstan to request military help against IMU in accordance with the Treaty On CIS Collective Security.³ More than this, on 10 October Karimov criticized the Russian exaggerations about the peril of Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia,⁴ and the next day he refused to participate at Biskek as observer in the Reunion of member states of the Treaty On CIS Collective Security.

The Russian-Georgian relationships after August 1999 (the date of publication of the Romanian edition of this book) have known a continuous tension; the sides accused themselves of unfriendly actions, interference in the internal affairs, the supporting of separatism, etc. The tensioned character of the relations has become obvious especially since October 1999 once with the intervention of Russian forces in Chechnya. Tbilisi refusing to put the Georgian territory at the disposal of the Russian troops in order to interfere in the separatist republic, began to be accused by Moscow that it permitted the transit of the Georgian territory by Chechen combatants and of the armament destined to them, that it hosted on its territory the Chechen separatists when these ones were harassed by Russian troops, etc. In spite of all these, taking profit of the negotiations regarding the revised CFE Treaty, Georgia succeeded in convincing Russia that on 17 November 1999, in the eve of Summit from Istanbul, to sign a Joint Declaration, by which Moscow had engaged itself that till 31

¹ Interfax, 10 August 2000.

² ITAR-TASS, 30 August 2000.

³ ITAR-TASS, 25 August 2000.

⁴ *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 10 October 2000

December 2000 to bring the number of military equipment from Georgia in accordance with the provisions of revised CFE Treaty (153 battle tanks, 241 ACVs, 140 Artillery systems), till 31 July 2001 to withdraw from Georgian territory the military bases from Vaziani and Gudauta, and that until the end of 2001 to determine the statute of its military bases from Batumi and Akhalkalaki.¹

Since November 1999 up to now the parts have met in order to talk about the implementation of the Joint Declaration from Istanbul during 7 negotiation rounds. Though the negotiations were often tensioned, the process of withdrawal of the military technique and of other equipment from the Group of Russian Troops from Transcaucasia² knew a continuous evolution. The withdrawal process can be divided into 3 periods. In the first stage (19 November 1999- 31 December 2000) Russia brought its military equipments from Georgia's territory in accordance with the provisions of revised CFE Treaty. In the second stage (1 January-30 June 2001) Moscow liquidated its military bases from Vaziani and Gudauta.³ In the course of the 3rd period, which began on 1 July this year and for the moment it's hard to say when it will be ended, they are to liquidate and withdraw from Georgia's territory the military bases from Batumi and Akhalkalaki.

The withdrawal from Georgia's territory of the Russian military technique and equipment, which exceeded the figures stipulated by the revised CFE Treaty, began after the 3rd round of Russian-Georgian

¹ RFE/RL Caucasus Report, "Vol. 2, No. 47, 25 November. In mass media the number of technique units which were to be removed from Georgia into Russia is different. The same thing can be said about the number of technique units that were to be liquidated on Georgia's territory. In accordance with "ZVV" newspaper, Russia was to withdraw from Georgia 244 technique units and 103 to be liquidated – "ZVV", 2 August, 2000.

² Since 8 August 2000, commander of GTRT is Maj.General Nicolay Evgenevich Zolotov ("ZVV", 12 August 2000; See the Decree of Vladimir Putin, President of Russian Federation, No. 1460 from 8 August 2000).

³ In accordance with a press statement of MEA of Russia, Gudauta Base was liquidated as a unit of the Armed Forces of Russian Federation on 7 June 2001.

negotiations that took place on 29-30 July in Moscow.¹ During the round the sides agreed to the schedule of military technique withdrawal coming to the agreement that on 1 January 2001 Russia should have on Georgia's territory no more than 153 tanks, 241 armored combat vehicles and 140 artillery pieces.²

The first echelon with military technique left 137 Base from Vaziani on 5 August 2000, the second on 5 September, and the third on 20 September of the same year. With the first echelon were withdrawn from Georgia 49 technique units (inclusively 10 tanks and 15 ACVs³), with the second – 61 (inclusively 10 tanks T-72 and 19 ACVs⁴) and with the third – 42 (inclusively 11 tanks and 15 ACVs⁵). The withdrawn military technique was carried by train until Batumi, and from there to Russia by 3 ships of the (military) navy from the Black Sea. The last echelon with material goods left Vaziani Base on 24 April 2001.⁶ Parts

¹ The first Russian-Georgian round of negotiations concerning the Russian troops' withdrawal from Georgia after the Summit in Istanbul took place on 20-21 April 2000 at Moscow. During the negotiations, the Russian side reiterated its availability that in the period August-31 December 2000 to reduce its number of conventional armament dislocated on Georgia's territory in accordance with the revised CEF Treaty, until 1 July 2001 to withdraw from Georgia's territory the Vaziani and Gudauta bases, to begin the elaboration of a treaty concerning the Russian-Georgian military cooperation etc. ("ZVV", 6 May, 2000; JCG. DEL / 12/00 9 May 2000). The second round of negotiations took place on 25 June in Tbilisi. During it the parts exchanged projects of the Agreement concerning the conditions and terms of functioning of the Russian military bases on Georgia's territory and they signed a protocol regarding the withdrawal and destruction of non-transportable munitions from the engineer troops depot in Sagaredjo. The Russian side engaged itself that until 3 July to present to Georgian side the list of all Russian military objectives from Georgia's territory – "ZVV", 29 July 2000.

² "ZVV", 2 August 2000.

³ "ZVV", 16 August 2000.

⁴ "ZVV", 19 August, 9 September 2000.

⁵ AP Flux, No. 2598, 20 September 2000.

⁶ "ZVV", 25 April 2001.

from the base goods were transferred to Akhalkalaki Base¹. The ceremony of signing the handing paper of Vaziani Base by Moscow to the Georgian Ministry of Defense took place on 29 June 2001². 11 Brigade of Georgia's Armed Forces occupied the Base barracks.³

TLE (Treaty Limited Equipment) withdrawal from Akhalkalaki⁴ took place in October – November 2000. The technique and military equipment were re-dislocated on 102 military Base⁵ from Armenia, and not removed on Russia's territory. In accordance with some data, from Georgia and Armenia were re-dislocated 76 ACVs.⁶ In a declaration from 4 November 2000, MEA of Russia showed that “some forces are trying to present the removing of Russian equipment as a violation of CFE Treaty” but this was done in accordance with the revised CFE Treaty and with the agreement of Armenian government.⁷

The first train with Russian TLE left Gudauta, Abkhazia, on 11 December 2000. On the whole, in accordance with media reports, till 29 December the same year, from Gudauta Base were withdrawn 89 ACVs and artillery installations.⁸

¹ “Imuschchestvo Vazianskoi bazy peredislotsiruetsya v Akhalkalaki”, “Svobodnaya Gruzia, 12 April 2001”.

² Moldpress, No. 7381, 29 June 2001. The last commander of 137 Base was Serghei Borisovich Fioletov, graduate from “M. V. Frunze” Academy. Until the appointment as a commander of 137 Base, he served in 62 Base from Akhalkalaki – “ZVV” 26 July 2000.

³ “Izvestia”, 30 June 2001.

⁴ Since November 1999 Serghei Pogodin is commander of 62 Base. At his appointment in this function he was Colonel. S. Pogodin was born on 22 March 1956 in Khabarovsk town, married, he has a son. He is a graduate from military school in Kiev and from the Military Academy of the General Staff (1999) – “ZVV”, 13 November 1999.

⁵ Since 7 August 2000, Alexandr Viktorovich Titov is commander of 102 Base (“ZVV”, 12 August 2000).

⁶ RFE/RL NewsLine, 19 October 2000.

⁷ Caucasus Press, 4 November 2000.

⁸ Moldpress, No. 13158, 11 December 2000, Ap Flux, No. 5431, 12 December 2000.

At the same time with TLE withdrawal from the Russian military bases, at 142 factory for repairing tanks from Tbilisi took place the destruction of military technique with expired time of using. The liquidation of the technique took place in two stages. In the course of the first stage (5 September-25 October) 6 tanks and 45 armored vehicles were destroyed¹, during the second stage – “24 tanks, 90 armored troops-carriers and 2 missile systems”.²

By the above listed actions, Russia demonstrated that, when it wants to respect its engagements taken at the international level, it is able to do it with success. Moscow published its achievements on 29 December 2000. The Official representative of the MFA of the Russian Federation made a statement indicating that “The Russian Federation, pursuant to arrangements laid down in the Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and Georgia (Istanbul, November, 17, 1999) and commitments under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, has completed according to agreed terms – no later than 31 December 2000 – the reduction of Russian conventional armaments and military equipment located on the territory of Georgia. As a result of these measures, the quantity of Russian TLE in Georgia does not exceed the ceilings for a basic temporary deployment under the adapted CFE Treaty. The process of reduction of armaments has been conducted in accordance with the timelines agreed with the Georgian side”.³

If Russia got accustomed to the idea of withdrawing its troops from Vaziani and Gudauta, then in what its bases from Akhalkalaki and Batumi are concerned, it seems that it is trying to delay their retreat as much as possible.

During the first rounds of negotiations Russia demanded that its troops from Akhalkalaki and Batumi should be withdrawn during 25 years,⁴ but later (VI-VII rounds of negotiations from 24 March and 22

¹ “ZVV”, 6 September, 2000.

² Caucasus Press, 28 October 2000.

³ SEC.DEL / 357 / 00, 29 December 2000, Moldpress, No. 13906, 29 December 2001.

⁴ “ZVV”, 23 February 2001.

June 2001) it insisted that the mentioned bases should be withdrawn during 14-15 years. Tbilisi tried to convince the Russian delegation that for withdrawing the mentioned bases it is enough a period of 3 years.¹ The same way as in the case of negotiations with Moldova from 1992-1994, in order to keep its troops as much as possible on Georgia's territory, Moscow invoked the financial difficulties related to the quartering again of the troops. In accordance with the Russian estimations, the complete withdrawal of the Russian troops from Georgia will cost Russia 4,3 billion rubles (140 million USA dollars).² On 15 May 2001, being at Tbilisi for discussing the military cooperation between Russia and Georgia, the Russian vice prime-minister Ilia Klebanov said that "taking into account the possibilities of Russian Federation's budget" for the withdrawal of Batumi and Ahalkalaki Russian military bases from Georgia it will be necessary 14 years.³ In case the external sources for financing the withdrawing process are found, added Klebanov, the time of retreat can be reduced. "There are only financial and technical problems, the Russian official explained.⁴ On 28 of May 2001 Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Igor Ivanov granted an interview to Russian Media on Russian-Georgian Relations. Being asked about the stage of the Russian-Georgian talks on military issues Ivanov explained: "At the first stage Russia within a specified time – by December 31, 2000 – completed the reduction of excess weapons and military equipment stationed in Georgia, as required by the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CEF Treaty). The reduction process was transparent, in accordance with the schedules agreed upon with the Georgian side. At present the amount of weaponry does not

¹ RFE/RL NewsLine, Transcaucasia & Central Asia, 26 March 2001; "Kviris palitra" of 2-8 and 9-15 April 2001..

² "ZVV", 19 May 2002; RFE/RL NewsLine, Transcaucasia & Central Asia, 16 May 2001.

³ "The mysterious document of Russia", "Alia", 17-18 May, 2001, "Moldpress", No. 5445, 15 May 2001.

⁴ "Alia", 18-20 May 2001.

exceed the levels set by the adapted CEF Treaty. The work done got a positive assessment in Moscow, Tbilisi and the OSCE.

The second stage of negotiations envisages dismantling and withdrawal from Georgian territory of the Russian military bases at Vaziani and Gudauta by July 1, 2001, and the fixing of the dates for withdrawal of the two other bases – in Akhalkalaki and Batumi. No serious difficulties with the withdrawal of the Vaziani base are visible. Matters are more complex with the dismantling of Gudauta, which is located in Abkhazia, Georgia.¹ However we hope that by joint efforts with the Georgian partners we will manage to carry out the withdrawal of this base as well. Regarding the dates for dismantling of the Russian military bases in Batumi and Akhalkalaki we continue to search with the Georgian side for mutually acceptable solutions. I want to stress that taking into account the stand of the current Georgian leadership, our bases will not, of course, remain in Georgia. But the Russian side requires the time to accommodate the military in new places. Military cantonments, residential buildings for officers and their families, schools, hospitals, children's establishments will have to be built. Necessary funds will be set into the federal budget year after year for these purposes. These questions cannot be solved at one go, but the Russian side does not intend to drag out this process.²

¹ In accordance with many press agencies, the withdrawal of the Russian troops from 50 Base (Gudauta) was difficult because of the resistance put up by the separatist authorities and population from Abkhazia. Gheorghii Shpak, the commander of Russian Federation's paratroopers, in June this year, with the occasion of the 7th round of Russian-Georgian negotiations concerning the withdrawal of the Russian military bases from Georgia's territory, said to "Ria Novosti" Russian agency, that the base from Gudauta will not be able to be withdrawn towards 1 July, even if this thing is stipulated by the agreement from Istanbul. He added that "it happened against Russia's will". The Abkhazian side is opposing to the withdrawal, because they are afraid that after Russian base's withdrawal from Gudauta, the Georgian Armed Forces will begin new actions against Abkhazia – <http://www.smi.ru/2001/06/23/>.

² Interview granted by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Igor Ivanov to Russian Media on Russian-Georgian Relations, May 28, 2001 –

During the 7th round of negotiations Russia insisted to get guarantees that after the removing of its bases from Georgia, the left barracks, shooting grounds and airports not to be used by third countries.¹ “There were reasons for such a worry, was emphasizing the “Trud” newspaper the second day after negotiations”. Turkey has already assigned important sums for the re-equipment of some air bases sent to Tbilisi recently.² And NATO tactical exercises “Co-operative partner – 2001”, which ended the other days in the Black Sea, in spite of their political – pacifying camouflage, are in fact, in Russian military’s opinion, another stage of acquiring by NATO of a new scene of military actions”.³

Although I. Ivanov has declared that Russia doesn’t have the intention to delay the withdrawing process of the bases from Akhalkalaki and Batumi, a series of its actions have just this purpose. And in order to impose its position we think that like in the case of its troops’ withdrawal from the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, it will take profit of the assistance which the Russian troops have in the removing places from the local population’s side.

We have already mentioned that the military base from Akhalkalaki is seen by the Armenian population from Samtske – Javakheti as a security factor against the “danger” from Turkey / NATO; that about half of the military personnel of the Base⁴ are Armenians from Akhalkalaki who have got the Russian citizenship; at last that the base assures with jobs some thousands of inhabitants from the region. These

“ZVV”, 2 June, 2001.

¹ CAUCASUS PRESS, 23 June 2001.

² It is about Marneuli airport which in the following years is expected to become the main military airport of Georgia. See: “Akhali Epoka”, 30 March-30 April 2001, “Delis gazeti”, 6 April, 2001, “Akhali Epoka”, 30 March-2 April 2001.

³ “Trud”, No. 113, 23 June, 2001.

⁴ In the mass media the number of Armenians from Akhalkalaki employed at 62 Base varies between 926 and 1700 persons – “Kavkazskii aktsent”, 16-31 May 2001; “Svobodnaya Gruzia”, 24 May 2001.

factors make that the population from Akhalkalaki have a different attitude towards the Russian troops' withdrawal from Georgia than the leaders from Tbilisi. This attitude was visible on June 14, 2001, when "a column of 10 lorries loaded with equipment, special devices and explosive matters was to leave the Akhalkalaki base, but around 300 residents of Akhalkalaki blocked the road and declared that they would not let the withdrawal of Russian troops from the region".¹

It's hard to say whether the blocking action of the road by population was inspired by the leadership of the Base from Akhalkalaki or not. But it is for sure that the "resistance" of the population opposed to the withdrawing process will be speculated at the most by Russia. An example in this respect can be Transnistria again, because Russia, under the pretext that population is not opposing to the withdrawal, hasn't been withdrawing the troops for several years, as well as the situation created around Gudauta Base, for the moment "liquidated" by Moscow formally.

Gudauta Base, although being dissolved as military unit of the Russian Army, is functioning freely now. Under the pretext that the Abkhazian population is blocking the Base's withdrawal, its soldiers haven't been removed to Russia. Moscow uses a plea the fact that Tbilisi doesn't create the security conditions necessary for the Base's retreat. In a press communicate from 10 July 2001, MEA of Russia hoped that "the Georgian side not in words, but in practice will fulfill its obligation arising from the Istanbul Statement "to ease the creation of necessary conditions for the reduction and withdrawal of Russian forces".²

But the real reason for not removing the base is Georgia's refusal to give Russia the right that after the Base's removing its substructure to be used by the Russian "peacekeeping" troops from Abkhazia as Center of Rehabilitation. Moscow demanding to Georgia the right of using the substructure of the Base as Center of Rehabilitation was saying: "It has to be admitted that the requirement for such a Center is long overdue.

¹ BLACK SEA PRESS, June 15, 2001.

² Press release of the MFA of Russian Federation Concerning the Situation with Withdrawal of the Russian Military Base Stationed in Gudauta, July 10, 2001.

Performing service in not easy conditions, constantly subjected to armed attacks by “guerrillas” and simply bandits (since 1994 seventy-six Russian peacekeepers have been killed and scores wounded in Abkhazia), personnel of the peacekeeping contingent still has no recreation and retraining center of its own. It was born in mind that their medical and psychological rehabilitation could be performed at the Center”. During the seventh round of Russian-Georgian talks on military issues, on June 22, 2001, the Russian side proposed also to keep on the territory of the base “a protection unit of the Russian army to ensure the preservation of its infrastructure”.¹

It is expected that the relations between the sides to know tensions also in the process of transmitting the barracks and other facilities of the removed bases from the Russian side to the Georgian one. Gela Bezhuashvili, Georgia’s vice minister of defense, while in Moscow was taking place the 7th round of negotiations, declared to the Interfax Russian agency that the Russian military “during the last days” were plundering cruelly the immobile property of Vaziani base. He showed his regret that the representatives of ministry of defense couldn’t get into the base’s territory to see what was happening. In accordance with some reports, was stating the vice minister, the Russian military took out the doors, windows and the wooden floor of the buildings, they filled the sewerage basins with concrete, they “destroy and carry everything no matter what small value it has”.²

The Moldavian diplomacy, like the Georgian one, during 1999, took profit of the negotiations concerning the adaptation of CEF Treaty, obtaining that in the text of Summit Declaration from Istanbul should be introduced a special paragraph regarding the withdrawal of the Russian troops from Moldova’s territory, by which Russia engaged itself to withdrawal its troops from the Transnistrian region of the Republic of

¹ Press release of the MFA of Russian Federation Concerning the Situation with Withdrawal of the Russian Military Base Gudauta, July 03, 2001.

² In accordance with the Russian press, on the contrary, the Russian military clear up the territory and “repair” the Bases’ buildings before they are handed to Georgia’s Ministry of Defence. – “ZVV”, 30 May 2001.

Moldova till the end of 2002. The importance of this paragraph for Moldova's independence is so big that it is worth being all quoted:

“19. Recalling the decisions of the Budapest and Lisbon Summits and Oslo Ministerial Meeting, we reiterate our expectation of an early, orderly and complete withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldova. In this context, we welcome the recent progress achieved in the removal and destruction of the Russian military equipment stockpiled in the Trans-Dniestrian region of Moldova and the completion of the destruction of non-transportable ammunition.

We welcome the commitment by the Russian Federation to complete withdrawal of the Russian forces from the territory of Moldova by the end of 2002. We also welcome the willingness of the Republic of Moldova and of the OSCE to facilitate this process, within their respective abilities, by the agreed deadline.

We recall that an international assessment mission is ready to be dispatched without delay to explore removal and destruction of Russian ammunition and armaments. With the purpose of securing the process of withdrawal and destruction, we will instruct the Permanent Council to consider the expansion of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Moldova in terms of ensuring transparency of this process and coordination of financial and technical assistance offered to facilitate withdrawal and destruction¹. Furthermore, we agree to consider the establishment of a

¹ The mandate of the OSCE Mission to Moldova in order to accomplish the Istanbul Summit Declaration was expanded by OSCE Permanent Council decision No. 329 on 9th of December 1999. The PC decided to “expand the scope of the present mandate, in accordance with paragraph 19 of the Istanbul Summit Declaration, in terms of ensuring transparency of the removal and destruction of Russian ammunition and armaments and coordination of financial and technical assistance offered to facilitate withdrawal and destruction. In this context, the Permanent Council welcomes the establishment in the OSCE Secretariat of a fund for voluntary assistance as mentioned in paragraph 19 of the Summit Declaration. The Secretary General was tasked "to present an outline with regard to any possible administrative implications from the implementation of this mandate expansion" - OSCE Decisions 1999, Reference Manual, Prague, 2000,

fund for voluntary international financial assistance to be administrated by the OSCE”.¹

It is important to emphasize that the Moldavian diplomacy succeeded in including this paragraph in OSCE Summit Declaration as a result of a long and intense persuasion activity of the west offices that the adapted CFE Treaty could remain non-ratified by the Parliament of Moldova if it doesn't take into account the national interests of the Republic of Moldova. Beginning with 21 October 1998, with the occasion of 4 years from signing the Moldo-Russian Agreement from 21 October 1994 concerning the withdrawal of the Russian troops from Moldova's territory, MEA of the Republic of Moldova broadcast a declaration in which it stated “the delay of the withdrawal can lead to serious complications in the process of ratifying the adapted CEF Treaty. The ratification of the Treaty by the Republic of Moldova's Parliament without solving the problem of withdrawing the conventional armament from Moldova's territory would be a flagrant violation of the Republic of Moldova's constitution which forbids the distribution of foreign troops on the country's territory”.²

The success obtained by Moldova at Istanbul was due not only to a favorable international situation, but also to the fact that the Moldovan diplomats (maybe for the first time) were allowed to do their duty without being subdued to the pressures from some state structures of Moldova, particularly from Moldova's President Office.

After the Istanbul Summit, where the Russian Federation assumed its engagement to withdraw its troops from Moldova till the end of 2002, from Transnistria only a train with “dual-use military equipment” (“manly assorted medium and heavy trucks, trailers, and transport equipment”) was removed. This happened on 28 November 2000,³ namely after more than a year, after other 3 trains had left Moldova in November 1999, just during the Summit from Istanbul. The

p. 152.

¹ OSCE Decisions 1999, Reference Manual, Prague, 2000, p. 21.

² BASA-PRESS, 22 October, 1998.

³ Moldpress, No. 12509, 28 November 2000.

train which left Moldova on 28 November 2000 reached Moscow's region on 4 December. It was subdued to a control from OSCE observers at the departure and destination points.

Besides that train with military equipment, withdrawn from Moldova on 28 November, Russia destroyed 10 tanks (T-64) and 10 armored vehicles in Transnistria. The destruction operations of the equipment took place on 2 and 11 July this year and they were going on in the presence on many journalists and members of OSCE Mission from Moldova.¹

In accordance with the official declarations of Moscow, Russia is ready to withdraw its troops from Transnistria but it is prevented from acting in this respect by the separatist authorities from Tiraspol. But Moscow, in accordance with the Ambassador of Russia at Kishinev, "won't use its force in order to remove its armament, because this thing could bring about actions of protest from Transnistria's population, instigated by the local administration".²

Between the official declarations of Moscow and the real steps with the view of withdrawing the Russian troops from Moldova there was a very big discrepancy. A lot of facts say that, in spite of the Russian declarations at OSCE and other international instances, Russia will not respect the engagement taken at Istanbul and that it already began to prepare the public opinion in this respect. In the last half year the number of declarations according to which the schedules of withdrawal stipulated by the Summit from Istanbul are considered unrealistic, has increased, and some Russian officials say that the Summit decision from Istanbul is not compulsory for Russia.³ On 4 June 2001, for instance, in a visit at Kishinev, Pavel Burdukov, the vice president of the State Duma

¹ Moldpress, No. 7636, 5 July, No. 7894, 11 July 2001.

² Moldpress, No 4612, 26 April 2001.

³ On 11 December 2000, at Tiraspol during a press conference, Gheorghii Tihonov, a representative of the State Duma of Russian Federation, appreciated the Summit Decision from Istanbul, regarding the withdrawal of the Russian troops from Transnistria, as a document "without juridical power" – INFOPRESS, No. 1697, 12 December 2000.

Commission for the resolution of the political and economic situation from Transnistria, declared to the press that “The Russian Federation won’t be able to respect the dates stipulated in the OSCE Summit Decision from Istanbul concerning the removing of the armament and the Russian military technique, from the Transnistrean region”. He also said that the first problem concerning Transnistria, which must be solved by the Russian Federation, is the removing of the munitions and armament from this region and not the withdrawal of the armed forces.¹

Russia is encouraged to act with the view of revising the decisions from Istanbul regarding the withdrawal of its troops from Moldova by the policy of the President and communist government from Kishinev. President Veronin’s policy and that of his government towards Russia in general and towards the Russian military presence in Moldova in particular, confirmed the fact that “in CIS space the notion of communist has a completely different meaning than the classic one. In CIS opinion, communist means the protector of the Russian imperial interests”.²

After the communists’ ascent to the power in Moldova, the message of Kishinev concerning the Russian troops from Moldova became very confused. President Voronin makes declarations concerning this subject in function of the place where he is and of the audience who listen to him. During his first visit abroad as president of the Republic of Moldova, at Moscow, he said that “the Russian military are a factor of

¹ AP FLUX, No. 0578, 4 June 2001.

² Flux / Friday Edition, 1 September 2000. “The Moldovan communists, we can read further on in Flux, don’t have too many in common with the left. Most of them are prosperous businessmen who transact the communist ideology on the election market. It wouldn’t be a tragedy if we had 40% from the parliamentarians as communists but to be patriots of this country. The most vivid discussions, in such a situation, would be brought about by the social policy of the government. But, in our country, the communists are completely concerned about other problems: the privatization of some enterprises, «the process of people’s Romanization» etc.

stability” in Transnistria, their presence in the region being necessary,¹ while being in Bucharest he said that Kishinev is “in favour of implementing the engagements assumed by the Russian Federation at the OSCE Summit from Istanbul.”² On 27 April 2001, in an interview granted to the radio *Romania Actualitat* (Romania’s News) V. Voronin made a declaration completely “shocking”: “The problem of withdrawing the Russian troops from the Transnistrian region can be solved only by Transnistria and the Russian Federation, without the implication of the Republic of Moldova, because Kishinev doesn’t control the territory from the left of the Dniester”.

In order to emphasize his pro-Russian orientation, the communist parliament from Kishinev on 20 April 2001 ratified the Inter-governmental Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation concerning the military cooperation, signed on 28 July 1997 at Moscow.³ The Agreement was referring to the exploitation of the armament and military technique of the National Army of the Republic of Moldova and of the Russian Armed Forces, to the cooperation in the field of information, to the organization of military transports; it assures the reciprocal delivery of armament, of military technique, of spare parts and of other military patrimony etc.⁴ According to the declarations of one of the MPs who voted against the ratification of Agreement, the 7 article of the agreement has also a clause, which obliged Republic Moldova not to deliver to a third side the information about its military relations with Russia, even if this information would refer to actions and plans that can put in danger the stability and peace in Europe and in the whole world.”⁵

¹ AP FLUX No. 9294, 18 April 2001.

² AP FLUX, No. 3382, 2 May 2001.

³ The Agreement was signed from The Republic of Moldova’s side by the ex-minister of Defence, Valeriu Pasat. At present, he is the chief of Intelligence Service of RM.

⁴ AP FLUX, No. 9374, 20 April 2001; MOLDPRESS, No. 4433, 20 April 2001.

⁵ AP FLUX, No 9374, 20 April 2001.

After the communists' coming to Moldova's helm, the intentions of Moscow regarding the perpetuation of Russian troops' presence in Transnistria have a chance of success more than ever.

In a letter from 13 July 2000 (? 2430? ?-? 4) addressed to D. Braghish, by then prime-minister of the Republic of Moldova, M. Kasianov, the President of Russian Federation's Government, was writing, besides other things: "Taking into consideration the fact that the Russian Federation has assumed the obligation of the guarantor-state of the Transnistrian reglementation, in accordance with the Memorandum concerning the normalization principles of the relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria from 8 May 1997, we consider that the presence in the region of the Russian peacekeeping contingent is necessary till the definite reglementation of the conflict.

In this context we hope to a rapid confirmation of the agreements recorded during the recent visit of Russian Federation's President in the Republic of Moldova, by signing the adequate agreements.

The changing of GOTR into forces for assuring the stability, in our opinion, could serve as a guarantee of carrying on the pacifying operation as well as it would assure the monitoring, withdrawal and utilization of armament, military technique and munitions.

More than this, it could permit taking again the withdrawing process of military patrimony, at present stopped by the leadership of Transnistrian region, who insists on receiving some new written guarantees concerning the carrying on of the peacekeeping operation, achieved in accordance with the Agreement concerning the principles of peaceful reglementation of the armed conflict from the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova, from 21 July 1992".

The Russian position regarding the change of GOTR from Transnistria into "forces for assuring the stability" was brought to international community's knowledge by Evghenii Primakov, during a meeting of OSCE Permanent Council from the autumn of the last year. In the opinion of some observers, "the Russians are looking for some kind of OSCE blessing for a continued presence in the region, for which they are willing to accept a certain internationalization of the Russian military

presence. They want to maintain a dominant Russian position, but would also welcome a number of unarmed OSCE observers”.¹

This was what Russia wanted till the communists’ victory in the parliamentary elections in Moldova from the spring of this year. But now, having at the helm of the country a parliament and a pro-Russian government, it’s hard to believe that Moscow will be pleased only with it. We believe that Russia, which began to affirm again that the Russian troops from Transnistria “are the Western defense line of Russia”,² will take out of the drawers the projects of older agreements, inclusively the one concerning the creation of military bases on Moldova’s territory.

In what the separatist leadership from Tiraspol is concerned, this is going on to pretend that the Russian armament from Transnistria is a property of “RMN” and demands as a reward for the armament and munitions which are to be withdrawn or destroyed 5-8 billion USA dollars.³

Taking a profit of the communists’ ascension to the helm of Moldova, the Transnistrian leaders are still insisting that Moldova’s leadership should adopt a unilateral decision about not removing the Russian troops from Transnistria until finishing off the legal statute of the region. I. Smirnov, the leader of the so-called “RMN”, has made such a proposal to the communist president Vladimir Voronin during their meeting from 16 May this year.⁴ After their next meeting that took place

¹ Helsinki Monitor, Volume 11, 2000, No. 4, pp. 81-82.

² Gheorghii Tihonov is Head of the commission of Russian Federation’s State Duma for the reglementation conflict from Transnistria.

³ OSCE Mission to Moldova Report No. 7/2000, 29 June-28 July 2000 (SEC. FR / 431/00, 8 August 2000). In December 2000, during a meeting with the members of MEA delegation of Great Britain being in Transnistria for a documentary visit, the president of the Supreme Soviet from Tiraspol, Grigori Maracutsa, said that the military patrimony from Transnistria costs 3 billion USD dollars and if the Government of Great Britain, wishes to pay the above-mentioned amount, then they can remove the armament and the military patrimony from the region (AP Flux, No. 5499, 14 December 2000)

⁴ AP FLUX, No. 0082, 18 May, Infotag, 17 May 2001

a month later the President of RM, V. Voronin, qualified the request of Tiraspol that Moldova should stop the decision of the Summit from Istanbul, concerning the GOTR withdrawal from Moldova as unfounded. He said that “the Declaration from Istanbul was signed by the presidents of 54 states, members of OSCE and such a proposal can not be discussed at all”.¹

As we have mentioned above, now the attitude of the political leadership from Kishinev towards the matter of Russian troops’ withdrawal from Moldova is confused. That’s why it is difficult to say if Voronin’s declaration, quoted above speaks about a final position of the communists from Kishinev towards the Russian military presence in the region, or was it just a mere reaction to the failure of negotiations with the separatist leaders. Whichever the reasons may have been, we think that it is a good signal which on the one hand should increase the political support given to Kishinev by the west states, and on the other hand to increase the pressures on Russia so that it may respect the engagements taken at Istanbul.

During the last months, the USA’s and OSCE’s position towards the matter of Russian troops’ withdrawal from Transnistria became obviously more trenchant and coherent.² We hope that to this has contributed not only the coming to the White House of Bush

¹ Moldpress, No 7034, 20 June 2001.

² On 25 of January 2001 the OSCE Permanent Council appointed Ambassador William Hill, the Head of Mission to Moldova to be responsible for the use of the OSCE voluntary fund to facilitate the withdrawal and or destruction of Russian Federation arms and equipment from Transnistria. On May 24 in Moscow the Head of OSCE Mission to Moldova and Russian Deputy minister of defense Isakov signed and exchanged letters on agreed procedures for use of the OSCE Voluntary Fund in support of the withdrawal of Russian troops, arms, ammunition, and military equipment from the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova. The exchange of letters “formalized agreement on the necessary institutional arrangements for employment of the Voluntary Fund as a key means of supporting and facilitating implementation of OSCE decisions on Moldova”.

administration and owing OSCE Presidentship by Romania this year, but at last, the west countries have realized the fact that the Russian munitions and armament from Transnistria, as well as the separatist regime from Tiraspol represent perils not only to the address of Republic Moldova's security, but also to the whole region. It's regrettable that the West has woken up from its insensibility just now when at Kishinev, at the helm of the country there is a President, a parliament and a pro-Russian government, and at Kremlin a president for whom the re-establishing of the military and political control on NIS is one of his external policy priorities.

Mihai Gribincea

July 15, 2001

Also by Mihai Gribincea:

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