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The US and the Transnistria War of 1992:
A Case Study of US Policy Toward Russia

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Abstract

L'approccio dell'amministrazione di George H.W. Bush al crollo dell'URSS e alla successiva nascita di quindici repubbliche indipendenti è generalmente considerato improntato alla cautela e alla moderazione nel bilanciamento dei poteri. Mentre l'Amministrazione Bush ha agito in modo deciso e proattivo dopo l'invasione irachena del Kuwait, la sua posizione nei confronti della neonata Federazione Russa si è basata sul calcolo dei costi e dei benefici senza mettere in pericolo una serie di accordi politici e di sicurezza esistenti. Dopo aver esaminato l'ideologia generale e le azioni dell'amministrazione Bush e gli eventi che si sono verificati in Transnistria, questa tesi analizza le azioni del governo degli Stati Uniti riguardo al sostegno dei separatisti locali da parte dell'esercito russo nella guerra di Transnistria del 1992. In linea con i risultati degli studiosi su altri aspetti della politica estera degli Stati Uniti sotto l'amministrazione Bush, la tesi rileva che l'amministrazione si è astenuta dal perseguire una posizione di principio incentrata sui valori di democrazia e libertà nei confronti del Cremlino, nonostante la presenza di truppe russe in Transnistria costituisca una potenziale minaccia alla stabilità a lungo termine dell'Europa orientale. Questo porta con sé lezioni importanti per la rilevanza storica e la politica estera contemporanea degli Stati Uniti verso la Russia; mentre gli Stati Uniti hanno goduto di un periodo di debolezza politica russa, l'approccio di moderazione nei confronti delle azioni russe contro la Moldavia non è riuscito a costruire la pace attraverso la leadership americana nel senso dell'ordine internazionale libero e cooperativo basato sulle regole.

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Figure 1. Map of Moldova and Transnistria.¹

¹ *BBC News*, “Transnistria profile”, May 22, 2023. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-18284837>

Introduction

The breakdown of the Warsaw Pact and the USSR in 1991 marked a drastic shift in the history of international relations. Among its recognized consequences, was that the entire foreign policy and security calculus of the West had to adapt to the accommodation of states that abandoned communism and began to conduct their affairs free from Moscow's influence. The collapse of the USSR piled on top of the existing international challenges such as the Gulf War or the beginning of the Yugoslav Wars thereby putting additional strain on the capacity of the US to adequately react to multiple events quickly.² During the State of the Union Address in 1992, George H.W. Bush hailed the end of the Cold War as an American victory and stipulated “prudent use of power” that was to be used in a “fair and restrained way.”³ The academic consensus was that that was exactly how the Bush Administration approached handling the collapse of the USSR: through restraint and careful balance of power.

Several regional developments have reignited scholarly interest in the study of and solutions for the proper course of US-Russia bilateral relations. The short war between Russia and Georgia in 2008 was justified by then-Russian President Dimitri Medvedev as “humanitarian protection through force” and Russia's seizing of Crimea in 2014 and Russia's interference in successive events in Ukraine, up to the 2022 full-scale invasions, have been justified by Russia's President Vladimir Putin as “protection of Russian speakers”, and by invoking the need to ensure the stability of Russian borders from “NATO expansion”.⁴ Such declarations by Russian officials attempted to justify Russian use of force. The Transnistria War of 1992 in Moldova was one of the first cases of the Russian military engaging in direct combat against another state. This

² As highlighted in N. Belitser, “The Transnistrian conflict”, in A. Bebler, *“Frozen conflicts” in Europe*, Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2015, p.46.

³ See G. Bush, *A Europe Whole and Free. Remarks to the Citizens in Mainz*, Rheingoldhalle. Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany, May 31, 1989; Miller Center. *State of the Union Address*. [Video]. (1992, January 28). Miller Center.

⁴ For more details about Medvedev's invasion of Georgia, see *Vedomosti*, “Медведев о вторжении в Грузию: Это было мое решение [Medvedev about invasion of Georgia: It was my decision]”, August 4, 2013; *BBC News Russia*, “Путин: Крым Присоединили, Чтобы Не Бросать Националистам [Crimea Was Annexed to Save It From Nationalists]”, March 9, 2015. Putin's original justification for the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 harkens back directly to the collapse of the USSR and the “guarantees” of NATO's non-expansion. See The Kremlin, “The Address of the President of the Russian Federation”, February 24, 2022. Retrieved from: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843/videos>. The theme of NATO was recurring in Putin's speeches but already in May of 2022, Putin declared Finnish accession to NATO would not create dangers for Russia. See *RIA Novosti*, “У России нет проблем с Финляндией и Швецией, заявил Путин [Russia does not have problems with Finland and Sweden, said Putin]”, May 16, 2022. The topic of NATO expansion will be reviewed in Chapter 2 of this thesis through the work of the academia.

armed conflict involved Russian speakers and Moldovans, with the Russian 14th Army actively participating against Moldovan troops in the *de jure* Moldovan territory of Transnistria recognized by the UN and Russia itself. There is a significant academic record dealing with the causes of the war, its aftermath, and legal, social, and economic consequences, along with an analysis of US policy toward the Newly Independent States and Russia in particular. However, there is an insufficient body of research reviewing US foreign policy on Russia through the lens of the War in Transnistria, particularly considering that Russian involvement in Transnistria was one of the first of its kind throughout modern post-Cold War history. To enhance the understanding of modern-day developments between Russia and the West that directly affect the stability and security of Europe, this in-depth study provides a historical perspective of US policy on Russia through the Transnistria War.

Methodology: Counterfactual Analysis

An inquiry into how US officials acted on the resolution of the conflict between the Moldovan government and the Transnistrian separatists and their Kremlin backers allows not only an important contribution to the modern-day historiography of the region and US foreign policy, but also provides some lessons for contemporary decision-makers. This thesis makes use of counterfactual tools to analyze the actions of US officials in Congress and the Bush Administration, as well as motivation and comparison with other important international events to establish the factor of consistency. The counterfactual analysis provides a realistic alternative assessment of events based on a historically informed study that considers attitudes, logic, and present challenges.⁵ This thesis makes use of archival documents issued by the US Congress and the Bush Administration, as well as relevant photo and video files to capture precise statements and expressions of US policy toward Russia through the lens of the Transnistria War.

This study focuses on several major questions. One factual question will be explored in detail in Chapter 3: What course of action did the US pursue in Moldova against the backdrop of what it did in other European and international areas of tension? Two counterfactual questions

⁵ See P. Tetlock, A. Belkin, *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996; J. Black, *What If?: Counterfactualism and the Problem of History*, London: Social Affairs Unit, 2008; R. Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit: Counterfactuals and International Relations*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010; F. Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War: Counterfactual Theory, Logic and Evidence*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

will be discussed in the Counterfactual section of the Conclusion: Was Russian troop withdrawal from Transnistria feasible? Would the situation in Moldova become more peaceful, had Russian troops successfully withdrawn?

In answering these questions, the methodological background of counterfactual analysis rests on the logic of necessary conditions, which inevitably contain counterfactual assessments, provided there is little manipulation of the selected era of history.⁶ The best examples of studies in this field are those that are based on a valid comparison of “multiple realistic decisions available to powerful policymakers at the time that they made their decisions.”⁷

The analysis of such potential decisions, contingent upon deep structural processes, allows for better insight into the alternative courses of events where decision-makers do not unrealistically fully stray away from their general framework of policy considerations.⁸ Grand hypothetical structural and cultural changes take significant time to occur and are unlikely to yield a satisfactory realistic counterfactual scenario. It is thus imperative to structure a counterfactual scenario by finding a tipping point – “a well-defined event that caused history to move overwhelmingly in a particular direction, and where significant movement away probabilities capable of changing from that historical momentum became unlikely.”⁹ Before such an event occurs, there are possible counterfactual policy pathways that must be analyzed. To enhance the efficiency of a counterfactual scenario, it is important to not introduce too many counterfactual items, which in turn dilutes the pool of most plausible outcomes as there is more random variation.¹⁰ Such a tipping point in the Transnistria War is its nominal end, the July 21 ceasefire agreement between Moldova and Russia. This is the moment that practically puts an end to changes in US policy, with other bilateral policy items taking precedence.

This thesis on US policy on Russia in the Transnistria War allows historians and scholars of International Relations to compare existing academic records and evaluations of the Bush Administration, improve the understanding of the interaction between the Administration and

⁶ K. Marten, “Reconsidering NATO Expansion: A Counterfactual Analysis of Russia and the West in the 1990s”, *European Journal of International Security*, 3, no. 2, 2017, p.138

⁷ K. Marten, “Reconsidering NATO Expansion”, p.138.

⁸ J. Levy, “Counterfactuals, Causal Inference, and Historical Analysis.” *Security Studies* 24, no. 3, 2015, 392–393.

⁹ K. Marten, “Reconsidering NATO Expansion”, p.139.

¹⁰ J. Levy, “Counterfactuals and Case Studies.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, edited by J. M. Box-Steffensmeier, H. Brady, and D. Collier, 1st ed., 627–44. Oxford University Press, 2009, p.634.

Congress, and see what implicit lessons Russian officials learned from interacting with the US Government.

Chapter 1. The Armed Conflict in Transnistria

1. Transnistrian Separatism and Moldovan Statehood: From Late 18th Century Until the end of the First World War.

Transnistrian separatism remains an unsolved problem in the Republic of Moldova. Transnistria is often referred to as a “frozen zone” in the Eastern European region. The issue of separatism is deeply rooted in the historical discourse of the region, particularly in the interaction between predecessors of the modern Republic of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine, and the Russian Federation. In recounting the history of the region, most scholars emphasize the importance of the Russian Empire’s military advances and the subsequent incorporation of historical Moldavia.¹¹ Transnistrian separatists have attempted to receive a plethora of possible solutions from the Republic of Moldova, including wide autonomy, full separation, and possible unification with the Russian Federation. Understanding the roots of this discourse requires tracing the historical developments and changes that have connected Transnistria and the rest of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders.

After the Peace of Iasi in 1791, the Dniester River, which is now largely known as Transnistria, became the new border of the Russian Empire.¹² Following the Russo-Turkish War of 1806-1812, the Russian Empire expanded further southwest, acquiring parts of the territory between the Prut and Dniester rivers in the Bucharest peace treaty signed with the Ottoman Empire.¹³ This newly acquired territory, known as Bessarabia (modern-day Ukraine and Moldova), received a certain degree of autonomy. Many scholars mention the importance of the

¹¹ In search of reasons of Transnistrian separatism within the modern Moldovan state, some scholars elect to turn Moldovan history dating back to the 14th century or earlier, see for example P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict: between irredentism and separatism”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 45, no. 6, 1993, pp. 973-1000; R. Colbey. *The status and recognition of post-1992 Transnistria: An investigation of the case for de jure independence*. The University of Buckingham Press, 2022; P. Hare, M. Ishaq, J. Batt, “The political economy of state-building in Moldova” in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.). Routledge, 1999, pp. 348-376. For the purpose of this study, the treaty of Iasi allows for a more immediate connection to the roots of the modern-day conflict. In the words of Kolstø et al., this moment meant that Transnistria became subject to the jurisdiction of the Russian Empire.

¹² This treaty stands to establish a sort of historic countdown, a historic connection between modern-day Russia and Moldova as Russia began to directly border and influence many of the territories that are now considered the Republic of Moldova. P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.977.

¹³ According to the treaty, the Ottoman Empire ceded Budjak and Bessarabia of the Principality of Moldavia, its vassal. See *Polnoie Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*, ser. 1, vol. 32, 316-322 in V. Taki, “1812 and the Emergence of the Bessarabian Region: Province-Building under Russian Imperial Rule” in D. Dumitru, P. Negură (eds.), “Moldova: A borderland’s fluid history”, *Online Journal of the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe*, 2014, p.9.

russification policy pursued by the Russian Empire as having a distinct impact on the various political, sociological, and general cultural relationships that can be seen in modern-day politics.¹⁴ After Bessarabia had its autonomy revoked in 1829, Russian replaced the local languages in the public sphere.¹⁵

The Crimean War of 1853-1856 weakened the Russian Empire, forcing it to relinquish its claims to Moldavia. The European protectorate replaced the Russian protectorate. Moldavia, together with Wallachia (modern-day part of Romania), were free to conduct their sovereign policies. In January 1862, the two Principalities united and established the central government in Bucharest, the capital of modern Romania. The unique possibility of conducting common policies around similar languages and cultures was also important in terms of geopolitics, as the Russian Empire did not abandon its ambitions to retake Moldavia.¹⁶ After the Russian-launched offensive against the Ottoman Empire in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, the Romanian parliament voted to proclaim its full sovereignty and became a kingdom in 1881, thereby uniting Moldavia and Wallachia.¹⁷ The Treaty of San Stefano of 1878 stipulated that the United Kingdom of Romania had to return Southern Bessarabia (part of contemporary Moldova and Ukraine) to Russia in exchange for other lands.¹⁸ The *russification* policy continued.¹⁹ Many Russians were incentivized to settle on the left bank of the Dniester River to work in the growing industrial sector, reducing the number of local Moldovans in the total population.²⁰

¹⁴ This policy was commonplace throughout the Russian Empire in places where the Russian language was not natively spoken. For the varieties and tools of russification in the Russian Empire, particularly after 1861, see T. Weeks, "Russification: Word and Practice 1863–1914", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 148, n. 4, 2004, 471–489; S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova: the case of Transnistria and Gagauzia", *Regional & Federal Studies*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2001, p. 102.

¹⁵ Many scholars of Moldova stress the importance of this policy with the rise of the USSR because of the more immediate connection to Transnistrian separatism in particular. See V. Tkach, "Moldova and Transdnistria: Painful past, deadlocked present, uncertain future". *European Security*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1999, p.136; P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.977; P. Hare et al. "The political economy", in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 353; S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova", p.102.

¹⁶ See P. Hare et al., "The political economy", in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 351. A. Cușco, "1878, Before and After: Romanian Nation-Building, Russian Imperial Policies, and Visions of Otherness in Southern Bessarabia" in D. Dumitru, P. Negură (eds.), "Moldova: A borderland's fluid history", p.20.

¹⁷ The importance of unity of Moldova and Romania throughout this historic period is not just semantic; this milestone in the development of the Romanian-speaking territories allowed for a stronger bond between the people oftentimes separated by borders that were drawn based on military victories and subsequent treaties.

¹⁸ The loss of Southern Bessarabia in particular through the San Stefano treaty left many in Romania dissatisfied. These grievances would materialize later, during the Greco-Turkish War for example K. Hitchins, *Rumania, 1866-1947*. Clarendon Press, 1994, pp.48-54.

¹⁹ V. Tkach, "Moldova and Transdnistria", p.138. T. Weeks, "Russification", pp. 471-489.

²⁰ S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova", p.102.

2. The Great War and the Interwar Period, 1914-1939.

The advent of the First World War changed the territorial makeup and the power balance in the Eastern European region.²¹ The Kingdom of Romania gained the territory of Southern Bessarabia in April 1918, following its declaration of independence, as the Russian Empire was unstable amid the Bolshevik revolution.²² The Bolsheviks, who came to power in Russia and formed the Soviet Union, never recognized the legitimacy of Romania by incorporating Southern Bessarabia.²³ The USSR incorporated left-bank Dniestria into the newly formed Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (SSR) in 1922.²⁴ According to some researchers, the Soviet Union devised a Moldavian Autonomous SSR (MASSR) within Ukraine in 1924, only after a failed Soviet-backed Tatarbunary uprising against Romanian authorities during the same year.²⁵ Later in the year at the Vienna Conference, Romania and the USSR failed to reach any agreement on the matter.²⁶ Some scholars, such as Paul Kolstø and colleagues and Paul Hare and colleagues, contend that having a separate Moldavian subject within the USSR was meant not only to recognize the rights of ethnic Moldovans but to serve as a contesting claim for a future recapture of Southern Bessarabia from Romania.²⁷

²¹ The events of the First World War are not deeply emphasized by most scholars. The Great War is usually referred to in line with the results of its treaties, especially the geopolitical dynamic. In the case of Moldova, scholars emphasize the unity of Bessarabia with Romania and Transnistria's stay with the newly formed USSR following its intense fighting against the Ukrainian People's Republic. See A. Sanchez, "The "frozen" Southeast", p.155; P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.978

²² Many scholars highlight this event in their studies. According to S. Roper, Bessarabian national assembly was formed following numerous public meetings of largely pan-Romanianists, who desired unity with the Kingdom of Romania. In March of 1918, this assembly voted to unite with Romania. Together with some other territories previously held by Hungary and the Russian Empire, Bessarabia became part of the "Greater Romania". See S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova", p.102. P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.978; For more details of the process of voting and the Russian opposition see S. Suveică, "Between the Empire and the Nation-State: Metamorphoses of the Bessarabian Elite", in D. Dumitru, P. Negură (eds.), "Moldova: A borderland's fluid history", p.36.

²³ The theme of legitimacy of holding a territory was important in Romanian and Soviet discourses. See for example A. Roșca, "Moldova in U.S. foreign policy: Geopolitical and strategic aspects". *Revista de Filosofie, Sociologie și Științe Politice*, no. 2(162), 2013, p.138.

²⁴ P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.978

²⁵ See I. Casu. Political Repressions in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic after 1956: Towards a Typology Based on KGB files. *Dystopia. Journal of Totalitarian Ideologies and Regimes*, p. 3, 2012; V. Frunză, *Istoria stalinismului în România*. București: Humanitas, 1990, pp. 69-70.

²⁶ *The NY Times*, "Conferees Stay in Vienna: Russians and Rumanians Issue Propaganda on Bessarabia. Apr. 8, 1924.

²⁷ This assertion combines the refusal of the USSR to recognize Southern Bessarabia as Romanian, attempts in Tatarbunary uprising, failed negotiations at Vienna conference, and the inclusion of the region in the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact within the USSR. See for example P. Kolstø. *Russians in the former Soviet*

Stalin and the Communist Party thought it essential to separate the occupied lands from Romania more than just through borders. Some scholars emphasize that the USSR had the goal of molding a separate Moldovan nation and identity through history and culture, creating and emphasizing differences from Romania to reaffirm the Soviet claim to Bessarabia.²⁸ In this view, the process of *russification* from the times of the Russian Empire was also a way to bring Moldovans and their Moldovan dialect of Romanian closer to the Russian language, which was the lingua franca of the Kremlin. The reasons for effectively forging a new identity in the newly formed Moldavian SSR were manifold: division along ethnic lines and complicating any possible return to Romania.²⁹

After 1924, these lands also experienced Stalinist purges and *dekulakization*, the process of liquidation of *kulaks* as enemies of the state.³⁰ The intellectuals – writers, scientists, and students—had to adopt a "socialist way" of life and prove loyalty.³¹ Many fled; the USSR's special services and police usually killed the rest in Stalinist purges.³² Following a short period of the Soviet *korenizatsiya* (indigenization) meant to invigorate local cultures and engage locals in decision-making, *russification* returned to the non-Russian Soviet republics.³³ With the localized policy of "moldovanization," the Soviet authorities initially worked toward enhancing the differences between Romanian and Moldovan. In 1932, the Latin alphabet was returned. Per

republics, London: Hurst, 1995, pp. 141-142; M.L. Schrad. "Rag doll nations and the politics of differentiation on arbitrary borders: Karelia and Moldova", *Nationalities Papers*, 32(2), p. 471, 2004.

²⁸ See for example, P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.979; M.L. Schrad. "Rag doll nations", p. 471.

²⁹ S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova", p.102; P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict" p.979.

³⁰ W. Crowther, "Ethnic Politics and the Post-Communist Transition in Moldova", *Nationalities Papers* v. 26, no. 1, 1998, pp. 147. The process of *dekulakization* was particularly important in agricultural territories, which Transnistria was also a part of. See L. Viola, "The Campaign to Eliminate the Kulak as a Class, Winter 1929-1930: A Reevaluation of the Legislation," *Slavic Review*, 45(3),1986, pp. 503–524. R. Davies, *The Socialist Offensive. The Collectivization of Soviet Agriculture, 1929-1930*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.

³¹ P. Negură, "From a 'Liberation' to Another. The Bessarabian Writers During the First Year of Soviet Power (1940-1941): Integration Strategies and Forms of Exclusion" in D. Dumitru, P. Negură (eds.), "Moldova: A borderland's fluid history", p.47.

³² V. Tkach, "Moldova and Transdnistria", p.138. *Dekulakization* and Stalinist purges accelerated the decline of the Moldovan population in the MASSR, which had to be replaced with workers from other parts of the USSR. See W. Crowther, "Ethnic Politics", p.148.

³³ M.L. Schrad. "Rag doll nations", p. 471. Scholars like Schrad, Nicolaïdis Kalypso and colleagues, and Slezkine stress the attempts by the Soviet authorities to "indigenize" local proletariats and to reinforce the "Soviet project". With the end of the relatively liberal New Economic Policy (NEP), the process of *korenizatsiya* died with it. Over time, collectivization was to "speed up the study of Marxism-Leninism and "master technology" while encouraging the use of Russian. See for example A. Morrison, "The Russian Empire and the Soviet Union: Too Soon to Talk of Echoes?", p. 160, in K. Nicolaïdis, B. Sèbe, M. Gabrielle, *Echoes of Empire: Memory, Identity and Colonial Legacies*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2015; Y. Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2, 1994, 414–52.

Charles King, the new decree meant to reverse the intensification of differences to instead lay claim to the belonging of Moldovans and Romanians together.³⁴ In 1938, after peak “moldovanization”, the MASSR reintroduced the Cyrillic script claiming Latin “polluted... the “pure” Moldovan with Romanian words” in line with bringing different republics up to the same standards and goals.³⁵

3. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Second World War, 1939-1945.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and secret protocol between the USSR and Nazi Germany were important historical milestones for Moldova and Transnistria. In the protocol, Molotov and Ribbentrop divided the European continent into the ‘spheres of influence’. The Soviet Union denoted Southern Bessarabia and demanded that the Kingdom of Romania cede to Northern Bukovina and Southern Bessarabia in 1940. Romanian authorities complied with the demands after the fall of its allies in Poland and France. Stalin and the Communist Party of the USSR had the borders completely redrawn by assigning parts of Bessarabia to the Ukrainian SSR and the new, completely separate from the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, Moldavian SSR.³⁶ Transnistria, where Moldovans comprised 30,1 percent of the population, together with Ukrainians and Russians, according to the 1926 Soviet Census, was included within the Moldavian SSR.³⁷ The political identity of this choice and the legality thereof were questioned during the 1990s.

On the other hand, as the Kingdom of Romania negotiated the ceding of Northern Bukovina and Southern Bessarabia to the USSR, Transylvania to Hungary, and Dobruja to Bulgaria, the legitimacy of King Carol the Second was called into question. Revolutionaries of the Iron Guard, a Romanian fascist movement and party that forced King Carol II’s abdication in

³⁴ C. King, *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press - Stanford University, 2000, p. 80-82.

³⁵ See M.L. Schrad. “Rag doll nations”, p. 472; C. King, *The Moldovans*, p.85.

³⁶ P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict” p.978. The USSR’s short period of control over Northern Bukovina and Southern Bessarabia marked the implementation of Sovietization and concomitant readiness to apply force to enforce Soviet laws. Most scholars of the region do not focus on the Fântâna Albă Massacre, which occurred after the Kingdom of Romania gave up the two regions. On April 1, 1941, some 3,000 ethnic Romanians, who tried to forcefully cross the border to leave for Romania, were murdered by the Soviet border guards. *RFI România*, “75 Years of Fântâna Albă Massacre”, Apr.6, 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.rfi.ro/social-86059-expozitie-cutremuratoare-la-bruxelles-75-de-ani-de-la-masacrul-de-la-fantana-alba>. Additionally, on the night of 12 to 13 June 1941, ten days before Nazi Germany invaded the USSR, the Soviet authorities deported the first wave of local residents from Northern Bucovina and Bessarabia citing “anti-Soviet elements” as justification. See *Moldpres*. “Exhibition dedicated to first wave of Stalinist deportations inaugurated at Moldovan parliament's headquarters”, Jun.12, 2023. Retrieved from: <https://www.moldpres.md/en/news/2023/06/12/23004704>

³⁷ P. Hare et al. “The political economy”, in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 351.

favor of his son Michael, became *de facto* in charge and chose to bandwagon with Nazi Germany.³⁸

Soon thereafter, the Second World War ensued as Romania joined Nazi Germany. The Iron Guard Romanian government was keen to return the land to the USSR in 1940.³⁹ The Axis invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. Romania regained the lands, dubbing them the ‘Transnistrian governorate’ for the first time. However, the administrative division of the new subject extended far beyond the right and left banks of the Dniester or any historical Romanian lands into the Ukrainian SSR proper.⁴⁰

After initial territorial victories in the Belarusian and Ukrainian SSRs, the Axis powers lost their major offensives at Moscow, Kursk, and Stalingrad.⁴¹ The Red Army of the USSR took the initiative and started pushing back in the summer of 1943. Ukraine and Moldavia were mostly under Soviet control in 1944.⁴² The Second World War intensified ethnic divisions already palpable in the country, which were artificially split along the Dniester River. Stalin returned the 1940 administrative division thus restoring the Moldavian SSR as a separate republic.⁴³ After 1944, the Moldavian SSR gradually started to receive a significant number of Russian speakers, particularly on the left bank, with the name ‘Transnistria’ becoming official in Soviet discourse as well.⁴⁴

4. The Post-War Soviet Era until Gorbachev, 1945 – 1985.

Sovietization in the previous two decades continued in the Moldavian SSR.⁴⁵ Despite trying to create a separate Moldovan identity, the Communist Party of the USSR did not

³⁸ I. Țiu, “The legionary movement after Corneliu Codreanu: From the dictatorship of King Carol II to the communist regime (February 1938 – August 1944)”. *East European Monographs*, pp. ix, 2010.

³⁹ P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.979.

⁴⁰ P. Hare et al. “The political economy”, in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 351.

⁴¹ For more detailed accounts of the successful defensive and offensive operations of the Red Army, see C. Bellamy, *Absolute War: Soviet Russia in the Second World War*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007, p. 595.

⁴² A. Chubarov, *Russia's Bitter Path to Modernity*, A History of the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras, 2001, p.122.

⁴³ A. Sanchez, “The “frozen” Southeast: how the Moldova-Transnistria question has become a European geo-security issue”, vol. 22, no. 2, 2009, p. 155.

⁴⁴ The theme of resettlement of Russians in Moldova from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic particularly in Transnistria is highlighted by most scholars. See for example S. Roper, “Regionalism in Moldova”, p.103; W. Crowther, “Ethnic Politics”, p.148.

⁴⁵ In 1940 and immediately after the end of the Second World War, Southern Bessarabia and Bukovina underwent USSR’s collectivization policies. In 1946-47, grain requisitioning in the Moldavian SSR caused thousands of deaths of the local population amid a drought. Most scholars, who studied the Soviet rule in the Moldavian SSR conclude that the local Soviet authorities could have prevented the famine. See A. Tikhov, “Collectivization: Against White Spaces”, *Moldova Socialista*, 1989, p. 3; W. Crowther, “The Politics of Ethno-National Mobilization: Nationalism

particularly trust the local elites.⁴⁶ Russification was followed by purges conducted by Soviet police forces.⁴⁷ The CIA report on Lithuania asserted that Russification was the “concealed goal of Sovietization.”⁴⁸ While Sovietization/Russification continued, the Moldavian entity was gradually incorporated into the industrial economy, and more workers and experts came from within the Russian Federative SSR or Ukrainian SSR throughout the 20th century to work in industrial facilities primarily built in Transnistria.⁴⁹ Because the Moldavian SSR was poorer and less prone to secede due to several legal criteria, hardline Ukrainian and Russian communists were transferred to handle the region's administration.⁵⁰ In particular, the traditionally mixed Moldovan and Ukrainian demographics of Transnistria, specifically in urban and administrative centers, witnessed increased immigration of ethnic Russians.⁵¹ In 1970, Moldovans comprised 35% of the population, with non-Moldovans holding 54% of jobs in the industrial sector.⁵² Moldova consistently remained poor despite more investments from other Soviet subjects and increasing production. It remained largely agricultural, with most industrial potential developed on the left bank of Dniester.⁵³ It depended on different state subjects for production links (in particular, food processing plants), as local potential was not autarkic (self-sufficient). Moscow

and Reform in Soviet Moldavia”, *The Russian Review* 50, no. 2, 1991, p. 186; I. Casu, “Stalinist terror in Soviet Moldavia, 1940–1953”, in M. Stibbe, K. McDermott (eds.), *Stalinist terror in Eastern Europe: Elite Purges and Mass Repression*. Manchester University Press, 2010, pp. 44-46; Per some documented reports, many, who survived the famine, were forcibly deported or executed. See for reference M.L. Schrad. “Rag doll nations”, p. 472.

⁴⁶ P. Negură, “From a ‘Liberation’ to Another” in D. Dumitru, P. Negură (eds.), “Moldova: A borderland’s fluid history”, p.50.

⁴⁷ Policy of Russification in the USSR was presented in internal information reports by the CIA. Among the ways to conduct said purges were military discipline established at ‘kolkhozes’, Soviet-style communal farms. See CIA. *Anti-Nationalist Measures in Kazakhstan – Political, Economic, Cultural*. RDP80-00926A005600020014-5. Confidential. 1952, p.1.

⁴⁸ CIA. *State of Mind of the Lithuanian Population/Russification of the Country*. RDP80-00809A000500530182-9.1954, p.3. The report on Kazakhstan asserted that suppression of national feelings was underway as Kazakhstan’s national characteristics were removed from art and educational exhibitions and replaced with those stressing the links to Russia. See CIA. *Anti-Nationalist Measures in Kazakhstan – Political, Economic, Cultural*. RDP80-00926A005600020014-5. Confidential. 1952, pp.2-3.

⁴⁹ Many scholars in the field stress the importance of the Soviet authorities facilitating the relocation of many Ukrainian and Russian workers into Transnistria, thereby further lowering the share of local Moldovans and entrenching the industrial-rural divide that had started to form since before the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact’s secret protocol. See R. Colbey. *The status and recognition of post-1992 Transnistria*, p.91; P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.979; M.L. Schrad. “Rag doll nations”, p. 473; A. Sanchez, “The “frozen” Southeast”, p.155.

⁵⁰ V. Tkach, “Moldova and Transdnistria”, p.132.

⁵¹ R. Colbey. *The status and recognition of post-1992 Transnistria*, p.77. By 1959, Moldovans comprised 65,4% of the total population within the MSSR, with Russians taking 10,2%. See R. Lewis, “The Mixing of Russians and Soviet Nationalities and Its Demographic Impact,” in E. Allworth, (ed), *Soviet Nationality Problems*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1971, p. 146.

⁵² W. Crowther. “The Politics of Ethno-National Mobilization”, p.187.

⁵³ See J. Rudolph, *Hot Spot: North America and Europe*. Greenwood Press, Westport Connecticut, 2008, p. 165.

controlled approximately 95% of all enterprises in Moldova in 1990.⁵⁴ A similar situation was observed for the social ladder. Titular Moldovans, on average, had fewer opportunities to obtain higher education and were predominantly involved in agricultural production, whereas Russian speakers worked higher-paid industrial jobs.⁵⁵

After the end of World War II, the USSR cracked down on dissent against the Communist Party.⁵⁶ Until 1953, before Stalin's death, the police and secret services would send the "perpetrators" to penal colonies or GULAGs (officially closed in January 1960) to work in extreme conditions where they would damage their health, and few would return.⁵⁷ With the advent of Khrushchev's "Thaw," characterized by his motions of de-Stalinization, the process of making the USSR a somewhat more humane place to live began. This did not mean that intelligentsia or simple folks could have voiced their disagreement with the party line. Those Moldavians who violated Soviet law would find that the overall state of the penal system improved most of Khrushchev's tenure; scholars who studied the punitive system of the USSR highlighted backlash against lenient penal facilities, particularly since the 1961 statute of "the new order."⁵⁸ Correctionalism saw a return, albeit now with special cultural and educational programs.⁵⁹

In 1959, the remainder of Moldovan intelligentsia, which was not purged, obtained an opportunity to revive the Romanian literary classics of the 19th century through de-Stalinization.⁶⁰ According to Igor Casu, "The Moldavian elite felt it could push for their

⁵⁴ P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.980.

⁵⁵ V. Tkach, "Moldova and Transdnistria", p.139.

⁵⁶ Thousands of people were also deported to Siberia and Central Asia. Scholars recount that many Moldavians were "plucked out" of their homes and dumped into the Gulag and the exile villages". See A. Applebaum, *Gulag: A history of the Soviet camps*, Penguin, 2012, p. 495; T. Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. Basic Books, 2010.

⁵⁷ See for details I. Casu, "Political Repressions in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic after 1956", pp. 89-127. The CIA reported that multiple "non-Russian intellectuals" around the USSR were charged with "bourgeois nationalism" and "ideological deviations". See CIA. *Report Purges in Caucasus, Central Asia; Russification Campaign Under Way*. RDP80-00809A000700030467-9. Cairo: Daily newspaper, 1951.

⁵⁸ In fact, the penal system improved so much that it became common to refer to Khrushchev's prisons as 'resorts'. This entailed backlash as the perception of punishment turned to "excessive privileges". See J. Hardy, *The Gulag after Stalin. redefining punishment in Khrushchev's Soviet Union, 1953-1964*. Cornell University Press, 2017, p.132-140; A. Applebaum, *Gulag: A history of the Soviet camps*. p. 495.

⁵⁹ J. Hardy, *The Gulag after Stalin. redefining punishment in Khrushchev's Soviet Union*, p. 166. Even though the penal system improved overall, some scholars, like Igor Casu, contend that Soviet authorities did not hesitate to persecute dissidents and dissenters in the Moldavian SSR. Some people, like Alexei Sevastianov, were put in psychiatric hospitals at the Costiujeni-based hospital near Chişinău. See I. Casu, "Political Repressions in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic after 1956", pp. 95-98.

⁶⁰ I. Casu, "The Quiet Revolution": Revisiting the National Identity Issue in Soviet

language to be employed by high party and state officials or at least to ask for equal representation in the party and state apparatus according to the official stipulation that Moldavians are the titular nationality in the MSSR.”⁶¹ In particular, on numerous occasions, Moldovan students and intelligentsia opposed the Communist Party of Soviet Moldavia while praising the Romanian bourgeois, especially during the 1956 Hungarian uprising and the 1968 ‘Prague Spring.’⁶² Most scholars agree that any new opposition attempts were unsuccessful until the arrival of *the perestroika*.⁶³

5. Gorbachev: *Perestroika* and *glasnost* and the beginning of Moldovan national revival, 1985-1989.

Perestroika and *glasnost* were the reforms introduced by the Secretary General of the Communist Party, Mikhail Gorbachev. The "rebuilding" and "openness" were ways the head of the USSR envisioned to get the state out of stagnation caused in part due to the USSR's military involvement in Afghanistan, enormous military expenses to balance the West, and a slow-growing economy.⁶⁴ *Glasnost* permitted people to speak freely about discontent.⁶⁵ Foreign officials from the US and other states were allowed to conduct interviews with Soviet press outlets.⁶⁶ Ordinary people did not need to hide anymore to conduct "informal" group meetings to

Moldavia at the height of Khrushchev’s Thaw” in D. Dumitru, P. Negură (eds.), “Moldova: A borderland’s fluid history”, p.87

⁶¹ This linguistic push allowed local politicians to thus challenge years of *russification* and individual Russian-speaking officials administrating Moldavian SSR and to demand respect. See I. Casu, “The Quiet Revolution” in D. Dumitru, P. Negură (eds.), “Moldova: A borderland’s fluid history”, p.87.

⁶² See for instance, I. Casu, “The Quiet Revolution” in D. Dumitru, P. Negură (eds.), “Moldova: A borderland’s fluid history”, p.88; R. Colbey. *The status and recognition of post-1992 Transnistria*, p.77.

⁶³ See for instance P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.980; P. Hare et al., “The political economy”, in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 352; W. Crowther, “Ethnic Politics”, p. 152.

⁶⁴ D. Simes, “Russia Reborn”, *Foreign Policy*, no. 85, 1991, p.43.

Gorbachev’s economic policies were revolutionary for the USSR. In particular, the attempts to combine socialism with a state-regulated market and delegating ownership of means of production to worker collectives challenged previous Soviet practice. Such a vision was implemented in the Law on State Enterprises instituted in January 1988. For the effects of such reforms see P. Boettke, *Why Perestroika Failed: The Politics and Economics of Socialist Transformation*. London: Routledge, 1993; S. Kotkin. *Armageddon averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*. Oxford University Press, 2008, pp.49-54; V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*. Yale University, 2021, pp. 38-47.

⁶⁵ For the effects of *glasnost* in the sphere of media and signs of “ideological self-destruction”, see S. Kotkin. *Armageddon averted: The Soviet Collapse*, pp. 54-59.

⁶⁶ J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador’s account of the collapse of the Soviet Union*, Random House, 1995, p. 13.

discuss important topics. Similarly, pro-democratic movements began to form.⁶⁷ In Moldova, the Democratic Movement in Support of Restructuring advocated the removal of discriminatory practices against non-Russian people and a wider primarily reform-based democratic platform.⁶⁸

The national revival grew more robust as more people began discussing how the state of affairs could improve within the USSR.⁶⁹ In the MSSR, the death of Pavel Botsu, head of the Moldavian Writers' Union, led to members' successful push for a change in the leadership collective against the Central Committee of the Moldavian Communist Party.⁷⁰ The Democratic Movement in Moldova pressed for Romanian to become an official state language and for the fair treatment of multiple regionally spoken languages, not just Russian.⁷¹ Various movements and organizations banded together to form the Popular Front, which soon became the main opposition force.⁷² By 1989, the nationalist opposition won the linguistic debate. The Scientific Council of the Moldovan Academy of Sciences passed a recommendation to make Romanian the official language. In August 1989, the Moldovan Republic Supreme Council passed relevant measures.⁷³ The language issue rallied significant Moldovan demonstrations between 1988 and

⁶⁷ The goal of *demokratizatsiya* (democratization) was to make a change in the patterns of decision-making, in a way similar to the era of *korenizatsiya*. The ultimate goal was to reduce the centralized power of the Party, while also reinvigorating the participation of the populations in reforming the Soviet project, in Gorbachev's words: "a peaceful, smooth transition, from one political system to another". A. Brown. *Seven Years That Changed the World: Perestroika in Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 199-206. Also see for example, D. S. Lane, *Soviet Society under Perestroika*. London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 57-107.

⁶⁸ The platform did not initially include efforts to improve democracy practices and other reforms. The Communist party of the MSSR reacted negatively to the platform and attempted to undermine it, in part through by limiting access to media. Scholars argue that the inclusion of language concerns might be one of the reasons for the platform to gain momentum and public support. See S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova", p.104; W. Crowther, "The Politics of Ethno-National Mobilization", pp. 188-189.

⁶⁹ With the USSR implementing *glasnost* identity, language, culture, and history started becoming politicized and used by interest groups to further own agendas. See for example M.L. Schrad, "Rag doll nations", p. 474; Some scholars argue that repression of ethnic and national identity prior to Gorbachev's reforms might be one of the reasons for a strong national revival. See A. Williams, "Conflict Resolution after the Cold War: The Case of Moldova", *Review of International Studies*, vol. 25, no. 1, 1999, pp. 71-86. Hare et al. contend that the desire to rediscover historic repression of Moldovan compatriots, particularly of the Stalin era, was more important than perceived linguistic inferiority versus the Russian language. See P. Hare et al., "The political economy", in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), pp. 352-354.

⁷⁰ This event is one example of the open defiance of the dominant Communist narrative and the gradual mobilization of Moldavian non-Party forces. See W. Crowther, "The Politics of Ethno-National Mobilization", p.188.

⁷¹ Despite the MSSR not having an official language, Russian was the *de facto* lingua franca as a result of *russification* policies. Some scholars contend that while the linguistic question was important in the public life, the main point of contestation was between political elites and counter-elites. See S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova", p.104; P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.975.

⁷² W. Crowther. "Ethnic Politics", p.148.

⁷³ The law stipulated that Moldovan language be the state language and included a transition period of five years for non-native speakers to gain proficiency. See for instance S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova", p.104; W. Crowther.

1989 and was in line with the declared goals of democratization postulated by the Communist Party.⁷⁴ Ultimately, Hare and colleagues emphasized that *perestroika* in Moldova allowed for a political change within the Moldovan Communist Party itself, as positions held by Russian conservative Brezhnevites were replaced by ethnic Moldovan communists.⁷⁵

6. The Popular Front of Moldova: Challenging the Status Quo in the MSSR?

In the now more liberalized political sphere of life in Moldova, two key ideas gained traction on the left bank of the Dniester: proclaiming independence and unification with Romania.⁷⁶ The debate also rose to prominence due to the declaration by the newly democratically elected Second Soviet Congress of People's Deputies in Moscow that deemed the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact illegal and thus void.⁷⁷ The Moldovan struggle went hand-in-hand with similar pro-democratic and independence movements in the Baltics and Ukrainian SSR. Ethnic Moldovans, much like other titular groups in their respective republics, started demanding more rights and national sovereignty, thus contributing to the USSR's deeper political crisis.⁷⁸ In the Moldavian SSR, the increasingly nationalist Moldovan agenda of the Popular Front generated a broad pushback from the Russian-speaking community, particularly in Transnistria. The latter felt threatened to be excluded from the discourse, despite the Moldovan government's recognition of Russian as a sort of *lingua franca* within the Moldavian SRR and its vast privileges to Russian speakers.⁷⁹ Also, the new authorities changed the name to "Moldova" to align even closer with Romania, which had a district with the exact spelling and pronunciation. In 1989, Moldovan mass demonstrations protested against the active Soviet occupation of Bessarabia.⁸⁰

Most scholars contend that the Moldovan sovereignty/independence movement had many reasons for challenging the USSR's legitimacy. Some of these include historical vindication

"Ethnic Politics and the Post-Communist Transition in Moldova, p.148; P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.981

⁷⁴ P. Hare et al., "The political economy", in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 351.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 355.

⁷⁶ P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict" p.979; S. Musteată, "1991: A Chronology of Moldova's Independence" in D. Diana, P. Negură (eds.), "Moldova: A borderland's fluid history", p.92.

⁷⁷ P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.979.

⁷⁸ S. Musteată, "1991: A Chronology of Moldova's Independence" in D. Diana, P. Negură (eds.), "Moldova: A borderland's fluid history", p.92

⁷⁹ S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova", p.105; W. Crowther. "Ethnic Politics", p.148.

⁸⁰ I. Casu, "The Quiet Revolution" in D. Dumitru, P. Negură (eds.), "Moldova: A borderland's fluid history", p.87

based on the illegality of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and mustering a response to decades of *russification*, which challenged the identity of non-Russian citizens of the MSSR. Another important factor was the desire to break economic ties.⁸¹ Even before the collapse of the USSR, the Moldavian economy was heavily controlled by Moscow; the nomenklatura tried to save links with their bosses to save their positions.⁸² Alternatively, the central planning system was riddled with corruption and increased immigration levels from other parts of the USSR, which disadvantaged locals in housing lines.⁸³

Perestroika's introduction of partially competitive elections marked an important chapter in the development of the Moldovan public sphere.⁸⁴ Gorbachev presented a plan at the Nineteenth Party Conference in 1988.⁸⁵ Such partially competitive elections would only come a few years after, 1989-90. Gorbachev also realized that the destruction of the Communist Party would be dangerous for the system and hoped to ensure that new institutions would only gradually become more powerful.⁸⁶ According to Jack Matlock, the American Ambassador to the USSR from 1987 to August 1991, Gorbachev believed that the entire Union would benefit from democratization as the Party became stronger. Matlock further cites Gorbachev's words from June 1987: "We shall not succeed with the tasks of perestroika if we do not firmly and consistently pursue democratization."⁸⁷ While Communists managed to get the most seats in eight republics in the Union, the Communist Party failed in Moldova. The Popular Front and

⁸¹ See C. King, "Moldovan Identity and the Politics of Pan-Romanianism", *Slavic Review*, 53, no. 2, 1994, pp. 350-351; P. Hare et al., The political economy of state-building in Moldova, in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 354.

⁸² P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.980.

⁸³ Soviet corruption, much like the historical and linguistic issues could be seen part of a larger power struggle. As the USSR charted its course to decentralize some of the power to the local subjects, the local movements pushed to fill the growing power vacuum, where possible. Soviet corruption was also seen within the Front as a more general sign of the USSR's inefficiency. It was especially important for intellectuals to emphasize russification and oppression of the Romanian/Moldovan language. See P. Hare et al., "The political economy", in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 354; C. King, "Moldovan Identity and the Politics of Pan-Romanianism", p. 352. Additionally, a part of the Front was intent on uniting with Romania, an idea that contributed to the radicalization of the political sphere and which alienated a part of the Front's members. See S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova", p.106.

⁸⁴ J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p.17

⁸⁵ J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose: US Policy toward Russia after the Cold War*. Washington: Brookings Institution, 2003, p.19

⁸⁶ While Gorbachev may have believed his reforms were going to save the USSR, Jack Matlock, the US Ambassador in the USSR, "had no doubt that the Communist Party monopoly on political power would soon end". J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p.122. See also J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.19.

⁸⁷ Critically, per Matlock, Gorbachev did not see contention between the stated goal of democratization and maintaining let alone strengthening Party control. See J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p.66.

some former communists banded together to compete in elections.⁸⁸ The Front formed a coalition with other parties and secured 66% of seats. Following the declaration of the illegality of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact by the Second Soviet Congress of People's Deputies in Moscow, the Moldovan elites contemplated the possibility of legally seeking independence and reunification with Romania.⁸⁹ New authorities adopted new state symbols and formed a commission charged with drafting a constitution.⁹⁰

For Gorbachev, the draft law to install the election of presidents through a majority vote in most republics was intended to ensure that the system would maintain its strength. However, given the seven states in the USSR that elected non-communist candidates to the local Soviets, the eventual decision moved on to allow Yeltsin's election through the Congress of People's Deputies.⁹¹ The system continued to change fundamentally as newly elected officials challenged Soviet institutions in "a war of laws" in demanding the delegation of more sovereignty.⁹² Iurie Rosca, head of the Front's parliamentary group, emphasized that Moldova needed Russia to lose power to complete the long-awaited inevitable – unification with Romania.⁹³ Scholars have debated the extent of pro-Romanian sentiment. Some, like Kolstø and colleagues, Schrad, King, and Crowther, assert that throughout 1989 and 1990 the unification theme was ubiquitous both in the Front and the public, while others, like Hare and colleagues, stressed that calls for unification with Romania were limited.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova: the case of Transnistria and Gagauzia", p.105

⁸⁹ P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.982.

⁹⁰ S. Musteată, "1991: A Chronology of Moldova's Independence" in D. Diana, P. Negură (eds.), "Moldova: A borderland's fluid history", p.92.

⁹¹ J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p.336.

⁹² Most scholars note that the elections, particularly the election of Yeltsin in Soviet Russia, allowed for the balance of power to be changed from below. See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul. *Power and Purpose*, p.19; A. Brown. *Seven Years That Changed the World*, p.23. For the detailed process of the new election process see D. S. Lane, *Soviet Society under Perestroika*, pp.64-77; A. Brown. *Seven Years That Changed the World*, pp. 115-119.

⁹³ S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova: the case of Transnistria and Gagauzia", p.106

⁹⁴ The following scholars also underscore the problematic nature of the pro-Romanian sentiment which would start culminating from the end of 1990 and through the break-up of the USSR. W. Crowther, "Ethnic Politics", p.149; P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.981; M.L. Schrad. "Rag doll nations", p. 474; E. Berg, W. van Meurs, "Borders and orders in Europe: limits of nation- and state-building in Estonia, Macedonia and Moldova", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol. 18, no. 4, 2002, pp. 64; King highlights the position of Prime Minister Mircea Druc in 1989 and 1990, who used his position to appeal to Moldovans to "take up arms" to defend Moldovan borders and alarmed Transnistrians. See C. King, "Moldovan Identity and the Politics of Pan-Romanianism", p. 358. For a dissenting opinion on the popularity of Romanian unification see P. Hare et al., "The political economy", in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 354.

7. Perestroika: The View from Transnistria.

Not all Moldova experienced the same pro-national, pro-Moldovan feeling. In local elections in Transnistria in 1990, the regional conservative wing won. The new authorities on the left bank of the Dniester never endorsed Moldovan pro-independence calls, much less unification with Romanian proposals.⁹⁵ They moved to organize several referenda throughout the region, at which, according to the authorities, most people voted for autonomy from Chişinău, Moldova's capital.⁹⁶

Transnistria, which is supported by the Russian Federation, is a *de facto* state.⁹⁷ Comprising eight percent of the total landmass of Moldova, Transnistria was also used to produce 40% of Moldova's industrial goods.⁹⁸ Many Russian speakers and local elites were dissatisfied with the pro-Romanian nationalist revival and political change.⁹⁹ For instance, as many as 80,000 Russian-speaking workers in Transnistria went on a month-long strike protesting the language law at over 150 factories, shutting down the rail system.¹⁰⁰ The elections in Moldova mirrored demographic makeup. However, this did not translate equally into the republic's executive roster, where ethnic Moldovans included very few minority representatives.¹⁰¹ Scholars contend that the feeling of change is an important factor in the political stance of Transnistrian representatives.

8. The Start of Confrontation and the Collapse of the USSR, 1990 – December 1991.

On June 23, 1990, Moldovan legislators declared MSSR to be a sovereign entity and denounced the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. In response to that, in September 1990, Transnistrian elites repudiated the pro-Romanian and pro-nationalist reforms in Chişinău and continued to

⁹⁵ P. Kolstø. *Russians in the former Soviet republics*, p. 129.

⁹⁶ P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.982.

⁹⁷ Legal research describes the status of the current Transnistrian region through the doctrine of a *de facto* regime because separatists hold power away from official Moldova. See C. Borgen, "Thawing a Frozen Conflict: Legal Aspects of the Separatist Crisis in Moldova", *St. John's Legal Studies*, Record of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Vol. 61, 2006, p.61.

⁹⁸ V. Tkach, "Moldova and Transdnestria", P.143

⁹⁹ Most scholars agree that the pro-Moldovan and anti-Soviet rhetoric coupled with legal action (language law, rejection of a renewed USSR proposal from Gorbachev in 1990) and some radical calls to unite with Romania generally alienated ethnic Russians and Ukrainians in Transnistria. See V. Tkach, "Moldova and Transdnestria", p.141; R. Colbey. *The status and recognition of post-1992 Transnistria*, p.79; P. Kolstø. *Russians in the former Soviet republics*, p. 129.

¹⁰⁰ W. Crowther, "The Politics of Ethno-National Mobilization", p.196.

¹⁰¹ V. Tkach, "Moldova and Transdnestria", p.141.

abide by Soviet laws and fly the MSSR flag.¹⁰² Tiraspol, the nominal capital of Transnistria, stopped taking orders from Chişinău and defined that Moldovan officials by declaring the act 1924 act of MASSR creation now lacked jurisdiction over the current MSSR.¹⁰³ On September 2, the local elites declared Transnistria a separate republic (*Pridnestrovskaya Moldavskaya Respublika*, ‘PMR’) from the Moldavian SSR. They held elections in the new Transnistrian parliament, where Slavic applicants won 43 out of 60 seats.¹⁰⁴ The ethnic makeup of the Transnistrian population comprised 39% Moldovans, 28% Ukrainians, 24% Russians, and 9% other nationalities.¹⁰⁵ While ethnic makeup looks quite diverse, many citizens of the local population of all backgrounds were interested in having a separate economic zone.¹⁰⁶ The Soviet Interior Ministry troops supervised the act of declaration of the ‘PMR’; Moldovan authorities were told to stand down and sign the new Union of Soviet Republics treaty, which Chişinău officials refused.¹⁰⁷ After negotiations and a lack of understanding between Moscow communists and Chişinău, Moldovan elites chose to pursue independence.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Tiraspol and Moscow Democrats were unable to establish trust.¹⁰⁹ Some scholars, such as Sanchez and

¹⁰² Transnistrian elites associated with the Soviet rule and economic, ethnic, and party connections to other subjects, particularly apparatchiks in Moscow. A.Voronovichi, “Justifying Separatism: The Year 1924, the Establishment of the Moldovan ASSR and History Politics in the Transnistrian Moldovan Republic” in D. Dumitru, P. Negură (eds.) “Moldova: A borderland’s fluid history”, p.110.

¹⁰³ Transnistrian elites considered the Moldovan decision to choose sovereignty as a move that practically annulled its own legality and as such ceased to have any jurisdiction in the original MASSR, which Transnistria comprised in 1924. Per Voronovichi, PMR would openly legally declare that the denouncement of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and subsequent proclamation of Moldovan independence reinstated MASSR within its 1924 borders only in 2005. See A.Voronovichi, “Justifying Separatism” in D. Dumitru, P. Negură (eds.) “Moldova: A borderland’s fluid history”, p.110; P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict” p.982.

¹⁰⁴ V. Tkach, “Moldova and Transdnistria”, p.141.

¹⁰⁵ Memorial Human rights center. *Large-scale and gross violations of human rights and the situation in the zone of armed conflict in and around the city of Bender in June-July 1992*, 1992, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ Some scholars highlight the importance of recognizing the role of ethnic myths in the formation of Moldovan and Russian foreign policy. Because Moldovan legal action and rhetoric in the social and linguistic spheres in particular favored largely ethnic Moldovans and alienated Russians and Ukrainians, deeper multilateral political involvement took place over time to regulate the process of protecting human rights within the Moldovan SSR. See S. Kaufman, S. Bowers. “Transnational Dimensions of the Transnistrian Conflict”, *Nationalities Papers*, 26, no. 1, 1998, p. 129; S. Roper, “Regionalism in Moldova”, p.119; P. Kolstø. *Russians in the former Soviet republics*, p.142.

¹⁰⁷ S. Kaufman, S. Bowers, “Transnational Dimensions”, p.130.

¹⁰⁸ Both Gorbachev and Yeltsin attempted to be on good terms with Moldovan politicians. Gorbachev disliked the leader of Moldovan Communist Party, Grossu, who did not implement *perestroika* reforms and realized that Moldovan nationalists were going to disrupt the new USSR treaty so he turned to Transnistrian separatists. See C. Borgen, “Thawing a Frozen Conflict: Legal Aspects of the Separatist Crisis in Moldova”, *St. John's Legal Studies*, Record of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Vol. 61, 2006, p.15; S.Kaufman, S. Bowers. “Transnational Dimensions of the Transnistrian Conflict.”, pp.130-131.

¹⁰⁹ Up until the collapse of the USSR, Yeltsin and Moldovan elites were on relatively good terms: mutual recognition of state sovereignty was exchanged, and Soviet officials and media portrayed Transnistria as a region

Colbey, have highlighted the importance of individual leadership in the separatism of Transnistria.¹¹⁰ Igor Smirnov, a former metalworker from Kamchatka in the Russian Far East, moved to Tiraspol in 1987 to be a factory manager.¹¹¹ He then became the head of the United Council of Workers' Collectives (OSTK) and was voted into Tiraspol City Soviet in 1990.¹¹² He expressed concerns regarding the rights of non-Moldovans in determining the political path of Transnistria, which prompted him to seek political leadership and later join efforts with other pro-separatism entities.¹¹³

Smirnov and other Transnistrian elites expressed their dissatisfaction with policies in Chişinău by ignoring the authority of the Popular Front officials and issuing orders to assume control over the monopoly on force by taking over police stations and government buildings from September 2, 1990.¹¹⁴ In response, Moldova declared that the locals' secession attempts violated both the USSR and Moldovan constitutions. Additionally, the Moldovan parliament voted to disband councils on the right bank of the Dniester. The tensions began to materialize in the same month of November 1990 in Dubossary (modern-day 'PMR') when Moldovan police were dispatched to remove protesters, who captured local administrative buildings and, upon facing resistance, shot dead three of them – the first casualties of the war.¹¹⁵ Academia generally agrees that the ethnic component fueled the violence between the two sides. However, some scholars argue that violence was alleviated in part because the Front elites hesitated to resort to military means despite the continuous hidden buildup of the military in Transnistria.¹¹⁶

that hindered democratic transformations. For more details see P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict" p.984; S. Kaufman, S. Bowers, "Transnational Dimensions", p.131.

¹¹⁰ While most of the academia mentions Smirnov as a political leader of Transnistrian separatism in 1990-92 and on, few attempt to describe his background, personal motivations, and the importance of his rhetoric. See A. Sanchez, "The "frozen" Southeast", pp. 158-161; R. Colbey, *The status and recognition of post-1992 Transnistria*, pp.83-86.

¹¹¹ A. Sanchez, "The "frozen" Southeast", p.158.

¹¹² Mentioned in R. Colbey, *The status and recognition of post-1992 Transnistria*, p.83.

¹¹³ As recounted in C. Borgen, "Thawing a Frozen Conflict", p. 15.

¹¹⁴ Assuming control over public administration outlets and monopoly on force was a direct challenge to Moldovan capacity to enforce legitimacy and have a claim to Transnistria as part of the same Moldovan Soviet Republic. This and consequent attempts to solidify Transnistrian disagreement with Moldova marked the *de facto* independence status "PMR" has until today. See P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict" p.984; C. Borgen, "Thawing a Frozen Conflict", p. 15.

¹¹⁵ As reported by a human rights observer team. See Memorial Human rights center, *Large-scale and gross violations of human rights and the situation in the zone of armed conflict in and around the city of Bendery in June-July 1992*, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ Amid the sporadic grassroots formation of paramilitary groups as a response to sparks of violence, the political elites of Moldova decided to prioritize non-violent conflict resolution. This point is highlighted by V. Tkach,

Moldovan and Moscow democrats recognized each other and continued to cooperate to promote democratization. The distrust between Moscow Communists and the Popular Front in Moldova soon resulted in the latter's boycott of the all-Union referendum to preserve the USSR in March 1991.¹¹⁷ Transnistrian elites embraced the polls and reportedly 93% voted in favor of preserving the USSR.¹¹⁸ Moldovan secret agents managed to detain Smirnov and the 'PMR' defense minister Iakovlev in the Ukrainian SSR, which invited OSTK's blockade of the railways and threats to cut off energy supplies, thereby choking the Moldovan economy.¹¹⁹ Soon after, both were released.

In August 1991, the Soviet *coup d' état* in Moscow demonstrated a rift in support connections, as the Moldovan elites rebuked the communist coup, while the Transnistrian ones supported it.¹²⁰

On September 27, the Moldovan parliament adopted its Declaration of Independence under international law, and Transnistrian leaders declared independence on September 2.¹²¹ In December 1991, the signing of the Belavezha Accords and the Alma-Ata Protocols effectively dissolved the USSR and created the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), a regional intergovernmental organization meant to facilitate cooperation for the ex-subjects of the just-dissolved Union.¹²²

"Moldova and Transdnistria", p.142. R. Colbey emphasizes the "low-key militarization" endeavors within Transnistria. See R. Colbey, *The status and recognition of post-1992 Transnistria*, p.77.

¹¹⁷ See P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict" p.984. Scholars like Archie Brown also stress that for Russian people preserving the Union was preferable both before and after the USSR collapsed. See A. Brown. *Seven Years That Changed the World*, p. 210.

¹¹⁸ As mentioned in C. Borgen, "Thawing a Frozen Conflict", p. 15.

¹¹⁹ S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova: the case of Transnistria and Gagauzia", p.107.

¹²⁰ The 1991 August coup conducted by Communist hardliners in the State Emergency Committee is well documented in Chapter 11 of V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, pp. 425-474; "Beer Hall Putsch" and "Counter-putsch" in S. Kotkin, *Armageddon averted*, pp. 79-91; J. Engel, *When the world seemed new: George H.W. Bush and the end of the Cold War*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017, pp. 380-396. D. S. Lane, *Soviet Society under Perestroika*, pp.51-55. Transnistrian communists intended to maintain the status quo and hold the USSR together. See V. Tkach, "Moldova and Transdnistria", p.142; S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova: the case of Transnistria and Gagauzia", p.107; S. Kaufman, S. Bowers, "Transnational Dimensions of the Transnistrian Conflict.", p.131.

¹²¹ To give more validity to their declaration of independence the Transnistrian elites organized an area-wide referendum in December 1991. That same month, Smirnov was elected President of the "PMR". The referendum, much like the declaration, was not recognized by any new sovereign state emerging from the USSR, let alone the international community. The referendum was said to have compromised the anonymity of voters. For more context see P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.985, S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova: the case of Transnistria and Gagauzia", p.107.

¹²² The complete collapse of the USSR is documented through primary and secondary accounts in the following works: J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 630-647; Chapter 15 in V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, pp. 634-681; Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs provides a first-hand account of the process of the USSR

The internal sovereign decisions of states mirrored international developments. Moldova and the ‘PMR’ claimed the post-Soviet facilities, except military units, to come under local jurisdiction.¹²³ In November, two months after a similar move by the ‘PMR,’ Moldovan elites appropriated all Soviet military units on the right bank with Decree #234. The Moldovan elections in December 1991 displayed a further rift between the unionist faction, which desired to join Moldova and Romania in a single state, and the pro-independence side. Mircea Snegur ran unopposed and became president.¹²⁴ Many scholars believe that the victory of a moderate, like Snegur, made state-level discussions of Romanian unification and discrimination against the Russian minority in citizenship and language issues less radical.¹²⁵ State visits to Romania helped eliminate the desire to promote unification, primarily due to but not limited to Romania’s similar level of economic development and the lack of immediate willingness to establish a unified state.¹²⁶ Similarly, elections were held on the left bank of Dniester. In December 1991,

collapse as well as negotiating and signing the Belavezha accords, A. Kozyrev, M. McFaul, *The Firebird: The Elusive Fate of Russian Democracy: A Memoir*, Russian and East European Studies, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019, pp. 17-68; Secretary of State Baker shares the primary account of the US perspective entering the dissolution of the USSR, see J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, New York: G.P. Putnam, 1995, pp. 558-587. The Moldovan parliament signed but held off ratifying the Alma-Ata Protocol until 1994 amid the internal split on being with the “East” or “West”. For more context see C. King, “Moldovan Identity and the Politics of Pan-Romanianism”, p.353.

¹²³ As the USSR’s political system was closer to unraveling, events in Moldova started to get ever faster resolutions. A race of decrees per many scholars’ analyses was intended to solidify legitimacy and raise the stakes to have proper recognition of own interests. In the case of Moldova, interests were about preserving territorial integrity of the MSSR as a single unit; for Transnistrian elite, it was about staking the claim of recognition of its own subjectivity and concerns about stability. See S. Roper, “Regionalism in Moldova”, p.107; C. Borgen, “Thawing a Frozen Conflict”, p. 15.

¹²⁴ The Front’s pro-Union former Prime Minister Druc had not been allowed to run due to legal complications. As mentioned in V. Tkach, “Moldova and Transdnistria”, p.143; W. Crowther. “Ethnic Politics and the Post-Communist Transition in Moldova, p.150

¹²⁵ See K. Litvak, “The role of political competition and bargaining in Russian foreign policy: the case of Russian policy toward Moldova”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1996, p. 223; P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict” p.986. Additionally, some scholars highlight the specific attempts Snegur and his supporters attempted to accommodate minorities. A multi-cultural plan with linguistic and even political rights was on the table by the end of 1991. See P. Hare et al., “The political economy”, in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 360. C. King provides an account of a stronger support of independence among a few political factions, particularly the newly formed (November 1991) Agrarian Democratic Party. See for instance, C. King, “Moldovan Identity and the Politics of Pan-Romanianism”, pp. 352-353.

¹²⁶ In Kozyrev’s opinion, the main reason for Moldova’s stunted attempts to revive the discussion of unification was Romania’s level of development compared to other Western countries. See A. Kozyrev, M. McFaul, *The Firebird*, p. 106. However, some scholars provide a more nuanced explanation of why both Romania and Moldova did not unify. Most of Moldovan population did not believe unification would bring benefits that some unionist politicians were manifesting. Fears that Romania would not care about Moldova, would make Moldovans “second-class citizens”, would distribute resources unequally, and would not allow Moldova to have an autonomous voice, were all additional factors in the unwillingness to call for unification. See for instance, P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.986-990; K. Litvak, “The role of political competition and bargaining in Russian foreign policy”, pp. 218-219.

Transnistrian elites arranged a referendum with overwhelming positive support for Transnistrian independence and joining the CIS. Many scholars contend that the main mobilizing myth for Russian speakers in Transnistria was a sense of belonging to Soviet culture.¹²⁷ Because Moldova was actively dismantling the remnants of the Soviet Union and advancing some pro-Romanian ideas within its sovereign borders, the Slavic minority in Transnistria felt threatened.¹²⁸ The liberal citizenship law, adopted in June 1991, stipulated that all residents were to obtain Moldovan citizenship but did not alleviate concern for the rights of minorities.¹²⁹ Transnistrian elites used Soviet myth and unity around the Russian language as the *lingua franca* to reinforce the claim to remain in the USSR.¹³⁰

9. The Beginning of the Transnistrian Armed Conflict: Moldova Declares State of Emergency. February 1992 – May 1992.

The Moldovan government asserted the territorial integrity of the new state and denounced the activities of paramilitary formations on the left bank in a resolution on February 3, 1992. It was primarily a response to Transnistrian elites' seizures at police stations and the cessation of the following orders from the Moldovan capital.¹³¹ Some scholars argue that while the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic reasons were explicit, the Transnistrian political aspirations to be apart from Moldova and together with the Russian Federation were in part driven by the presence of the Soviet/Russian 14th Army and the links to Russia.¹³² The 14th Army of the Odesa

¹²⁷ A compelling account of Transnistrian affinity with preserving the USSR or at least the Soviet symbols and legal system can be traced since the first attempts at separatism until nowadays. For instance, the separatist entity still retains most of the old Soviet laws and symbols. See V. Tkach, "Moldova and Transdnistria", p.143-145; P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict" p.985; C. King, "Moldovan Identity and the Politics of Pan-Romanianism", p.360.

¹²⁸ This topic is covered in the section "Left bank vs. right bank" in P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict" pp.979-988; P. Hare et al., "The political economy", in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 359 among others.

¹²⁹ As quoted in V. Tkach, "Moldova and Transdnistria", p.145; P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.987.

¹³⁰ Scholars underscore the distinction between how the Russian-speaking population of Moldova and Transnistria in particular reacted to language laws and other changes. The status of Russian was to be the 'language of interethnic communication', just as other minority languages were "guaranteed" use within Moldova. For more context see P. Kolstø, *Russians in the former Soviet republics*, p. 129. Based on the report by the US Department of State on the situation with human rights in Moldova in 1992, the status of Russian was not systematically diminished, although individual cases of ethnic dismissal from jobs were present. The report found that Russian remained the language most widely spoken in many parts of Moldova and that the "PMR" "capitalized on fears to gain support from the majority Russophone population of the region." See Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1993, pp. 847-855.

¹³¹ As discussed in V. Tkach, "Moldova and Transdnistria", p.146; P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.986.

¹³² See for context A. Sanchez, "The "frozen" Southeast", p. 163. Additionally, Russia's foreign minister, upon his personal encounter with Igor Smirnov, recounted that his impression of the latter was that there was no definitive

Military District (Ukraine), headquartered in Chişinău, remained in Moldova after the latter's Declaration of Independence.¹³³ In 1990, equipment began to be withdrawn from Moldova to the Russian Soviet Republic. In September 1991, Transnistrian elites officially formed their military formations based on the previously created worker paramilitary groups.¹³⁴ On September 18, 1991, two months before Moldovan decree #234, President Smirnov of the 'PMR' declared jurisdiction over Soviet military units. In December 1991, the 14th Army commander Gennady Iakovlev accepted the post of defense chief of the 'PMR' while also commanding the ex-Soviet 14th Army, managed since December 1991 by the joint CIS command.¹³⁵ On December 5, 1991, Smirnov issued a decree to place military units located on the right bank of Dniester under the command of local elites.¹³⁶

In 1991 and 1992, the Transnistrian paramilitary force was continuously strengthened with weapons, particularly from a sizeable ammo depot in the town of Kolbasnaia on the right bank and personnel from the 14th Army.¹³⁷ The academia contends that the 14th Army and its personnel were partial to the "self-defense" of Transnistria mainly due to most of its personnel, apart from top officers, being local conscripts despite receiving orders from Moscow.¹³⁸ Moldovan authorities accused the 14th Army of deliberately distributing relevant equipment and supplies and helping organize separatist 'military detachments.'¹³⁹

Local clashes preceded the active phase of the armed conflict that involved regular full-scale armed units on both sides. In December 1991, Snegur warned of an impending civil war in which separatism and ethnonationalism were going to be amplified.¹⁴⁰ As some limited clashes

path but the one based on Russian support of the war effort against Moldova. See A. Kozyrev, M. McFaul, *The Firebird*, pp. 113-115.

¹³³ An excellent summary of events is presented in the *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, which was based on an application by four Moldovan nationals and their conviction by the Transnistrian court system, backed by the Russian Federation, against the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation. See *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, 8 July 2004, p. 9.

¹³⁴ As documented in *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 11.

¹³⁵ As quoted in S. Kaufman, S. Bowers, "Transnational Dimensions of the Transnistrian Conflict", p.130; S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova", p.102.

¹³⁶ *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 12.

¹³⁷ As established throughout the Case of *Ilascu*, the instances of military improvements of the Transnistrian armed formations were frequent and continued throughout the active phase of the conflict in 1992.

¹³⁸ This is considered by many scholars in the field as one of the most important factors in the involvement of the 14th Army. See W. Crowther. "Ethnic Politics", p.149; P. Kolstø et al., "The Dniester conflict", p.988. Per Kozyrev, Russia's foreign minister, the collapse of the USSR affected extraterritorial location of troops. "Broken chain of command", "lack of guidance from Moscow" meant decision-making was partly delegated to mid-ranking officers. See A. Kozyrev, M. McFaul, *The Firebird*, p. 111.

¹³⁹ *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 12.

¹⁴⁰ *The NY Times*, "Soviet disarray: Moldavian President warns of a civil war", Dec.15, 1991.

occurred at the end of 1991, a certain amount of military equipment fell into the hands of separatists from the stocks of the 14th Army, who offered no resistance or simply opened supplies to the ‘PMR’ armed units.¹⁴¹ Additionally, throughout the armed conflict, the Russian government corroborated some units of the 14th Army that had joined the Transnistrian self-proclaimed military forces, such as the Parcani sapper battalion. The arrival of paramilitary ideological volunteers named Don Cossacks from parts of the former USSR, who were on the state payroll and wanted to rebuild the Russian tsarist empire, bolstered the ‘PMR’ forces.¹⁴² Cossacks also tried to lobby the Russian government. Martinov, the leader of the Cossack Union, telegrammed Yeltsin, rebuked the Russian government's policy, and declared unwavering support to the Russian people in Transnistria, whose dignity was to be protected by Cossacks.¹⁴³

The tensions and apparent defiance of Moldovan authorities disrupted territorial integrity. On March 23, 1992, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Romania, and Moldova issued the Helsinki Declaration with steps toward a peaceful settlement.¹⁴⁴ At CIS, work was underway to prepare a peacekeeping doctrine that would set the stage for conflict resolution among the new states.¹⁴⁵ In signing the Kyiv Statement of the CIS about the situation in Transnistria, the Russian government upheld the need to protect the inviolability of Moldovan borders.¹⁴⁶ Tensions did not cease, and, on March 28, 2022, Mircea Snegur issued an ultimatum to the ‘PMR’ leaders to stop separatism and comply with Moldovan laws.¹⁴⁷ ‘PMR’ leaders refused to back down, which resulted in the Moldovan state’s declaration of a state of emergency. President Snegur justified it by asserting separatism and treason with “outside help” and “the most up-to-date equipment of the Soviet army” were tools to destabilize

¹⁴¹ While the total extent of stock deliveries to the Transnistrian armed formations is not the matter of most non-military studies, some reports estimate 24 tanks, 12 combat helicopters, 37,000 machine and submachine guns, as well as 120 cannons. As quoted in A. Sanchez, “The “frozen” Southeast” p.163; S. Roper, “Regionalism in Moldova”, p.104.

¹⁴² As quoted in *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 15; S. Roper, “Regionalism in Moldova”, p.107; P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.987.

¹⁴³ Leader of the Cossack Union Martinov, “Телеграмма о необходимости защиты всех мирных граждан Приднестровья (копия) [A telegram to Boris Yeltsin from Martinov, the Leader of the Union of Cossacks, about the need to defend all peaceful citizens of Transnistria (copy)]”, Ф. 6. Оп. 1. Д. 181. Л. 26, p.26.

¹⁴⁴ See for more details *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 17; CSCE. The Transnistrian Conflict in Moldova: Origins and Main Issues, CSCE Conflict Prevention Centre; United Nations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Delegations - Moldova, S-1086-0096-06-00002, p.145.

¹⁴⁵ As explained in D. McIntosh, “Russian Intervention and the Commonwealth of Independent States”, *Journal of Political Science*: 22 (1), 1994, p. 116.

¹⁴⁶ This statement highlighted Moldova’s sovereignty as “most important factor of stability in the Commonwealth and the region.” See K. Litvak, “The role of political competition” p.224.

¹⁴⁷ See P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.987; V. Tkach, “Moldova and Transdnistria”, p.138.

Moldova.¹⁴⁸ Moldovan police units and armed forces received an order to disarm illegal armed formations on the left bank of Dniester. The ‘PMR’ paramilitary forces and Russian Cossacks engaged in coordinated battles against the freshly formed and under-equipped Moldovan armed forces and police units.

While the Russian government denied involvement in the conflict, there were indications of support for Transnistrian separatism. Applicants in the case of *Ilascu and others v. Moldova and Russia* claimed that the Transdniestrian Bank started receiving aid from the Bank of Russia on March 12, 1992.¹⁴⁹ The Bank of Russia officially provided financial aid to the ‘PMR’ to stay afloat and continue its efforts starting in July 1992.¹⁵⁰ Additionally, on April 1, 1992, by Decree #320, President Yeltsin established command of the 14th Army after ten people were killed in skirmishes between Moldova and Transnistria.¹⁵¹ Iurii Netkachev replaced Iakovlev as the Commander of the 14th Army on April 2, 1992.¹⁵² Netkachev issued an order to Moldovans, who encircled the town of Bender, to withdraw, and officers of the 14th Army stationed in Bendery stated that the 14th Army had the duty to become the peacekeeping force.¹⁵³ Two days after Netkachev’s demand, President Snegur sent a telegram to CIS leaders, indicating the Russian army’s failure to remain neutral.¹⁵⁴

The Moldovan authorities also appealed to the international community, particularly to the UN, into which it had been accepted on March 2, 1992.¹⁵⁵ Both Smirnov and Snegur wrote to

¹⁴⁸ M. Snegur asserted that the “Pseudo-state” called “PMR” could not succeed without “outside help”. See *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 18

¹⁴⁹ While the applicants in the *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia* asserted that Russia funneled money toward the Transnistrian cause, the Russian side did not confirm whether such actions took place in March of 1992. See *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 34; The possibility of early Russian help is also referenced in one other scholarly work. For reference see S. Kaufman, S. Bowers, “Transnational Dimensions”, p.132.

¹⁵⁰ V. Emelyanenko, “Россия Между Двумя Берегами Молдовы” [Russia Between Two Banks of Moldova]. *Moscow News* #27 (622). July 5, 1992. Available at: <https://yeltsin.ru/archive/periodic/53442/>

¹⁵¹ See *The NY Times*, “Russia Takes Over Command of Army in Moldova”. April 2, 1992.

One reason, apart from establishing legal ties and assuming jurisdiction, to establish command was to make sure the 14th Army would not participate in the hostilities should they have resumed as per Susanne Crow from Radio Liberty cited in P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.993.

¹⁵² *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 13

¹⁵³ Memorial Human rights center. *Large-scale and gross violations of human rights and the situation in the zone of armed conflict in and around the city of Bendery in June-July 1992*, p. 4.

¹⁵⁴ *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia* (*Ilascu v. Moldova*) 48787/99, Council of Europe: European Court of Human Rights, p. 18.

¹⁵⁵ United Nations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Delegations - Moldova, S-1086-0096-06-00002, (9 December 1992), available from <https://search.archives.un.org/delegations-moldova-19>, p.158.

the UN.¹⁵⁶ Moldova and the ‘PMR’ asked for support to secure territorial integrity.¹⁵⁷ Moldova’s neighbors, Romania, Hungary, and Ukraine, condemned the militarization conducted by the ‘PMR’ and called for a peaceful resolution.¹⁵⁸ Snegur also asserted that some Russian elites had been intent on restoring a “totalitarian empire” and asked leaders of states of the CIS, OSCE, and UNSC to help withdraw the 14th Army.¹⁵⁹ On April 5, 1992, Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskoi visited Tiraspol and emphasized the importance of self-determination and the sure future of the ‘PMR’ to the five thousand people present.¹⁶⁰ Valeriu Muravski, Moldova’s Foreign Minister, called the visit “a rude interference”.

Andrei Kozyrev, Russian Federation’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, headed to Moldova and Transnistria the day after to do “firefighting”. He wanted to ensure that the rights of Russians and Moldovan integrity were protected, along with the 14th Army, not taking up arms against Moldovan armed forces.¹⁶¹ Kozyrev insisted autonomy be granted to the PMR, albeit through non-violent means, contrary to Rutskoi. Moldovan officials agreed with the proposal, albeit in ambiguous terms.¹⁶² The Minister also stated to the local rally, the officers of the Russian Armed Forces stationed in Transnistria, and Smirnov that the 14th Army would act only as a peacekeeping force, and that violence was not the way. Kozyrev recounts that the local separatists in Transnistria and the 14th Army representatives were much less enthusiastic about a new democratic Russian Foreign Minister coming to coach the locals on how to conduct their affairs.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁶ Smirnov’s letter is included in the UN binder of documents on Moldova. See United Nations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Delegations - Moldova*, S-1086-0096-06-00002.

¹⁵⁷ See United Nations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Delegations - Moldova*, S-1086-0096-06-00002, p.137.

¹⁵⁸ See for context United Nations, General Assembly, *Letter dated 21 April 1992 from the Permanent Representatives of Hungary and Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, A/47/172; United Nations, General Assembly, Security Council, *Letter dated 26 March 1992 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Romania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, A/47/136, S/23758.

¹⁵⁹ As quoted in United Nations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Delegations - Moldova*, S-1086-0096-06-00002, p.138; *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 19.

¹⁶⁰ See for reference, *UPI*, “Russian Leaders Wade into Moldovan Conflict”, Apr.5, 1992. R. Colbey. *The status and recognition of post-1992 Transnistria*, p.80; S. Kaufman, S. Bowers, “Transnational Dimensions of the Transnistrian Conflict”, p.130.

¹⁶¹ A. Kozyrev, M. McFaul, *The Firebird*, p. 106.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 106. Kozyrev’s first-hand knowledge and handling of the situation is unique to the book as he provides more details on how he was able to use a “fire extinguisher” as it was referenced in P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.993.

¹⁶³ Kozyrev’s mission, per his story, was problematic because the locals did not readily believe the Foreign Minister would actually come and listen, much less help fix the tensions. A. Kozyrev, M. McFaul, *The Firebird*, pp. 110-115.

On April 11, 1992, Snegur accused the 14th Army and the Russian Government of arming separatists, not preventing the arrival of Cossack “mercenaries,” and allowing for human rights violations and armed mutiny.¹⁶⁴ Negotiators from Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, and Romania attempted to settle the conflict and agreed to a ceasefire on April 7.¹⁶⁵ Per the provisions, Moldovan forces withdrew from the town of Bendery. However, the ‘PMR’ units in the city did not disarm. Skirmishes continued with mutual accusations. The partiality and interest in the armed conflict on the part of militarist and nationalist factions, which started to gain the upper hand in the political currents of Russian politics, weakened the pro-Western stance of Yeltsin and increased the need for consensus.¹⁶⁶ Combined with radical calls for independence from the emboldened Transnistrian elites and the Moldovan opposition to destroy its territorial integrity under pressure, the armed conflict became protracted and exponentially involved top Russian officials, who now had to weigh in on the question of the rights of Russians living in Moldova. On April 8, 1992, the VI Congress of People’s Deputies of the Russian Federation declared the need to maintain the presence of the 14th Army in Moldova as “pacification forces”.¹⁶⁷ The reports by the Russian “Kommersant,” Itar-Tass, and the Memorial Human Rights Center claimed that Moldovan forces fired at Russian positions, and the Russian command threatened to respond.¹⁶⁸ In particular, Kommersant, one of the leading Russian newspapers, reported that local women consistently pressured the 14th Army personnel to help the ‘PMR.’¹⁶⁹ On the eve of May 20, the newspaper also reported that an additional ten battle tanks and ten infantry fighting

¹⁶⁴ United Nations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Delegations - Moldova, S-1086-0096-06-00002, p.138.

¹⁶⁵ S. Roper, “Regionalism in Moldova”, p.108. Per Roper, the Russian delegation wanted the “PMR” to be party to the negotiations, while the 14th Army would keep peace.

¹⁶⁶ The topic of political in-fighting in the Kremlin and its effects on the Transnistrian conflict is not widely studied in the academia. For an insight of the political ideology of the then government and the decision to support “PMR” see K. Litvak, “The role of political competition”, p.225.

¹⁶⁷ *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 19; United Nations, Security Council, *Letter dated 28 May 1992 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova addressed to the Secretary-General*, S/24041, p.5

¹⁶⁸ The findings of the Memorial Center and Russian reports of Moldovan hostilities against them are not mentioned in other academic studies. Per Memorial, both sides accused each other of violating the ceasefire. See Memorial Human rights center, *Large-scale and gross violations of human rights and the situation in the zone of armed conflict in and around the city of Bendery in June-July 1992*, p.4. *Kommersant*, “Молдова — России: Отдай Ружье, Иди Домой [Moldova to Russia: Give Up Arms, Go Home]”, Apr.27,1992. Retrieved from: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4436>

¹⁶⁹ *Kommersant*, “Молдова — России: Отдай Ружье, Иди Домой [Moldova to Russia: Give Up Arms, Go Home]”, Apr.27,1992. Retrieved from: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4436>

vehicles of the 14th Army somehow fell into the hands of the Transnistrian armed formations.¹⁷⁰ Following these events, the Moldovan Parliament and President on May 20 voiced public protest against the Russian Armed Forces' "overt interference in the internal affairs of Moldova" and called on the UN and Russia to help withdraw the 14th Army following acts of "explicit arming of separatists and attacking Moldovan units."¹⁷¹ The Russian government promptly denied any such involvement and stated that any equipment lost was seized by Transnistria separatist military forces.¹⁷² In September 1992, CIS Defense Minister Shaposhnikov said that he did not rule out that combat hardware had been seized (by the guardsmen) with the complicity of some officers.¹⁷³

These events prompted member states of the CIS to attempt to establish a joint CIS army command to solve conflicts. Still, the organization failed to materialize, thus rendering the institution ineffective in part due to the Russian practice of bypassing the doctrines of the CIS.

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10. Direct Russian Involvement in the Conflict and the Signing of the Peace Treaty. June – July 1992.

June and July saw the most intense battles, as Moldovan forces attempted to reclaim control over the few accessible villages and towns on the left and right banks of Dniester. In Russia, local reforms and cooperation with the West proved to be slow-bearing, as stagnating economic conditions and political issues undermined Yeltsin's political platform.¹⁷⁵ Hardline nationalists in opposition to Yeltsin could not draw support through attractive financial slogans.¹⁷⁶ However, they were able to garner public support around Russian prestige and

¹⁷⁰ *Kommersant*, "Российские Танки Защилили Дубоссары [Russian Tanks Defended Dubossary]", May 25, 1992. Retrieved from: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4884>

¹⁷¹ United Nations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Delegations - Moldova*, S-1086-0096-06-00002, pp.120-131.

¹⁷² *The NY Times*, "Ethnic Battles Flaring in Former Soviet Fringe", May 24, 1992. Russian officials also denied any such involvement in the court case of Ilascu. See *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 16.

¹⁷³ V. Socor, "Russia's Fourteenth Army and the Insurgency in Eastern Moldova", *International Relations*, p. 41 as cited in G. Wilbur, "The chivalrous republic: intrarepublic conflict and the case study of Moldova", *Strategic Studies Institute*, U.S. Army War College, 1993, p.16.

¹⁷⁴ The relationship between Russia and the CIS is studied in D. McIntosh, "Russian Intervention and the Commonwealth of Independent States," pp.120-121.

¹⁷⁵ The complicated interaction between pressing financial issues, Yeltsin's reform-based agenda, and political competition is discussed in Chapter 4 of J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*.

¹⁷⁶ Initially, Yeltsin's attempts to implement radical capitalist economic changes was seen by some Russian and international scholars as a courageous and formidable move which still required a lot of work. See D. Simes, "Russia Reborn", p.50. His program was challenged by Rutskoi amid other conservatives as "another experiment on the Russian people". The changes, according to Russian liberals, resembled nothing in common with free-market

foreign policy, particularly concerning the “near abroad,” thus undermining the pro-Western government of Yeltsin.¹⁷⁷ The idea of Russian involvement in the nascent democracies was not new; in 1991, as declarations of independence were pronounced, Yeltsin spokesman Voshchanov warned all new republics but the Baltics that failure to enter into union with the Russian Federation may prompt Russian authorities to “take care of the population that lives there” as “these lands were settled by Russians.”¹⁷⁸ In light of the worsening economic situation, the waning political support of Yeltsin led to the reshuffling of ministerial seats and the need to balance state foreign policy. As a result, the official Russian policy toward Moldova adopted a moderation of policy options to balance the “Atlanticist” and conservative interests.¹⁷⁹ Consequently, the Russian state became more reliant on consensus as three conservatives (outside of Yeltsin’s party) became deputy prime ministers.¹⁸⁰

practices. See, for example, P. Boettke, *Why Perestroika Failed: The Politics and Economics of Socialist Transformation*, pp.138-144.

¹⁷⁷ Many conservative officials and military commanders used the term “near abroad” to indicate Russian interests in the post-Soviet republics. The theorization of the “near abroad” stemmed from the attempts of the Russian officials to chart a new foreign policy concept toward the new states which had recently been a part of the same state with Russia. The need to reestablish economic, political, and other ties with the former Soviet territories amid an uncertain transition and lack of economic stability made hawkish officials look for political victories in maintaining Russian prestige through its army. Scholars like Shashenkov and Russell highlight the attempts of the Russian Government to uphold security and establish its status as a regional peacekeeper. See M. Shashenkov, “Russian peacekeeping in the ‘near abroad’”, *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 36(3), 1994, p.49; Russell argues that at the time “near abroad” initiatives could have been promoted for absolutely different reasons. For Kozyrev, the goal was to keep Russia in line with the international legal system, a pattern Russell calls the continuation of “Gorbachev’s ‘free thinking’” See W. Russell, “Russian Policy towards the ‘Near Abroad’”, *The Discourse of Hierarchy* 1995, p. 25; W. Russell, “Russian relations with the “Near Abroad””, in P. Shearman, *Russian Foreign Policy Since 1990* (1st ed.), Routledge, 1995.

¹⁷⁸ Per Ukrainian historian Serhii Plokhy, Voshchanov initially extended the warning to every Soviet republic willing to declare independence from the USSR. After a clarifying question from a journalist, Voshchanov specified Ukraine and Kazakhstan only. As cited in S. Plokhy, *The Russo-Ukrainian War: The Return of History*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc, 2023, p.65; *The NY Times*, “Soviet Turmoil; Yeltsin Warns Seceding Republics About Ethnic Russian Minorities”, Aug. 27, 1991;

¹⁷⁹ The power struggle between the conservative and the “Atlanticist” politicians was that of finding a balance in defining Russian immediate national interests and maintaining a favorable path of integration with Western partners. The “Atlanticist” politicians such as Yeltsin and Kozyrev focused on cooperating with the West instead of focusing on the Russian role in ‘fixing’ conflicts in the Newly Independent States. See K. Litvak, “The role of political competition and bargaining in Russian foreign policy”, pp.220-227. Russell draws a line between the moderate “Atlanticist” faction and a conservative one including Rutskoi and Zhirinovskiy. See W. Russell, “Russian Policy towards the ‘near Abroad’”, p.13. One example of Kozyrev’s moderate thinking can be seen through his UN speech to the General Assembly on September 29, 1992 where he maintained that Russia supported working with the international community and that “Democratic Russia categorically rejects any form of chauvinism, be it Russophobia or anti-Semitism” in its relations with other states. See U.N. GAOR, 47th Sess., 6th plen. mtg., U.N. Doc A/47/PV.6. (22 September 1992), pp.59-62. See also *UPI*, “Russian Foreign Minister lashes out at Russian hawks”, June 30, 1992.

¹⁸⁰ The political infighting eventually led to serious political instability as Russian authorities asked the UN to provide Russia with a unique peacekeeping mandate for the ‘near abroad’. This instability spurred fear in the US government as it resulted in a full-blown constitutional crisis after Bush left office. See K. Marten, “Reconsidering

At the beginning of June, the Russian newspaper *Kommersant* reported that a Russian military unit entered the battle and helped ‘PMR’ retake a village on the left bank of the Dniester.¹⁸¹ The same report indicates Yeltsin’s willingness to withdraw Russian troops from Moldova shortly.¹⁸² Soon after, Moldovan armed units resumed their focus on retaking the only ‘PMR’-controlled town left on the right bank, Bender. The battle for this strategic town, which occurred on June 19, 1992, was the most intense.¹⁸³ Approximately 500 soldiers and civilians died from shooting and shelling. Moldovan forces held control of the town for a brief part of the day.¹⁸⁴ The next day, on June 20, the 14th Army intervened with tanks and artillery to help Transnistrian separatists and pushed Moldovan armed units out of the city.¹⁸⁵ On this day, Ruskoi stated that Russian military action was needed to stop the fighting.¹⁸⁶ Yeltsin said the Russian Federation would use strength to protect Russians abroad, a signal of an official change of stance.¹⁸⁷

On June 21, 1992, Moldovan statement to the Peoples, Parliaments, and Governments of the World claimed that the 14th Army “under the pretext of the defense of the rights of Russian

NATO Expansion”, p.148. Additionally, the ‘near abroad’ policy became crystallized in the Russian military doctrine of 1993. See B. Parrott, *State Building and Military Power in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, The International Politics of Eurasia, Armonk, N.Y: M.E. Sharpe, 1995, p.125.

¹⁸¹ *Kommersant*, “Перестрелка Перешла В Перепалку [A Shootout Turned into a Skirmish]”, Jun. 1, 1992. Retrieved from: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4950>

¹⁸² The report indicated that the soldiers of the 14th Army were not in a hurry to prepare the withdrawal with some of them turning to the ‘PMR’ paramilitary formation. *Kommersant*, “Перестрелка Перешла В Перепалку [A Shootout Turned into a Skirmish]”, Jun. 1, 1992. Retrieved from: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4950>

¹⁸³ The academia does not go in depth of the reasons why Moldovan armed forces were ordered to resume full-scale military action. Some authors argue that Moldovan officials wanted to control all settlements on the right-bank of the Dniester, as Bender and surrounding villages were not within the MASSR. See V. Tkach, “Moldova and Transdnistria”, p. 146. However, the loss of territorial integrity, occasional skirmishes, and the industrial importance of Transnistria could explain some of the reasoning behind the action of the government in Chişinău to move against “PMR’s” separatism. The quickly improving military predisposition of the “PMR” forces due to the 14th Army weapon stocks certainly played a part in the urgency aspect.

¹⁸⁴ P. Hare et al., “The political economy”, in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 361.

¹⁸⁵ As documented in United Nations, Security Council, *Letter dated 24 June 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Moldova to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, S/24185; P. Hare et al., “The political economy”, in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 361; *Kommersant*, “Война в Приднестровье: Руцкой Отразил Наступление [War in Transnistria: Ruskoi Repelled the Offensive]”, Jun. 22, 1992. Retrieved from: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5431>

¹⁸⁶ A. Sanchez, “The “frozen” Southeast: how the Moldova-Transnistria question has become a European geo-security issue” p.155; United Nations, Security Council, *Letter dated 24 June 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Moldova to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, S/24185, p.2.

¹⁸⁷ As referenced in *The LA Times*, “Russia Threatens Use of Military in Ethnic Conflicts”, June 22, 1992; *The NY Time*, “Yeltsin Voices Russia's Anger at Ethnic Wars Roiling the Old Soviet Empire”, June 22, 1992; Litvak Kate, “The role of political competition and bargaining in Russian foreign policy: the case of Russian policy toward Moldova” p.227; P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.994

population... are committing mass genocide against the local population.”¹⁸⁸ In its report, the Russian-based Memorial Human Rights Center documented that human rights violations, particularly against prisoners of war, were committed frequently by Transnistrian forces.¹⁸⁹ Moldovan armed formations and police forces also engaged in sporadic human rights violations and had trouble suppressing criminal activity.¹⁹⁰

The Russian central government had issues with definitive military and political control over the 14th Army’s commanding officers. General Lebed, who became Commander at the end of June 1992, used his authority and reputation to solidify a more militant position of the Transnistrian separatists as he denounced Moldovan authorities.¹⁹¹ The General Staff and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation distanced themselves from the “PMR’s” aggressive stance.¹⁹² Still, hardline officials like Ruskoi and Defense Minister Grachev reiterated the need to protect Russian speakers in other republics, thus raising stakes for the Moldovan authorities.¹⁹³ This fighting elicited condemnations from the UN Secretary-General and the wider international community.¹⁹⁴ The Battle of Bender was the turning point in the war, which demonstrated to the Moldovan officials that the direct involvement of the Russian Armed Forces nullified any hopes of a military solution. Soon after that, President Snegur sought negotiations with the Russian side to form a settlement of the conflict, which Moldova could not endure for long without a proper military up against a much better-equipped and equally motivated 14th Army.

The war was quite unpopular in the ‘PMR’ and the rest of Moldova, and pressure was mounted on the Moldovan government to find solutions that would not require the conflict to be

¹⁸⁸ United Nations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Delegations - Moldova, S-1086-0096-06-00002, p. 82; Moldovan Permanent Representative at the UN stated that the 14th Army intervention threatened to “blockade the implementation of agreements... and endanger peace and stability.” See United Nations, Security Council, *Letter dated 22 June 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Moldova to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary General*, S/24138, (22 June 1992), p.3.

¹⁸⁹ Memorial Human rights center. *Large-scale and gross violations of human rights and the situation in the zone of armed conflict in and around the city of Bendery in June-July 1992*. P. 12

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 14

¹⁹¹ P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.994; General Lebed in his press conference appeared quite resolute. He called the Moldovan government a “clique of fascists” and accused it of murdering innocent predominantly Moldovan civilians in Transnistria worse than Nazi Germany’s “SS” units. See *Press Conference of Alexander Lebed*. [Video], (1992, July 4). For more background on General Lebed see A. Cohen, “General Alexander Lebed: Russia’s Rising Political”, *The Heritage Foundation*, 1995. J. Azrael, E. Payin (eds), “U.S. and Russian policymaking with respect to the use of force”, Santa Monica, CA: *RAND Corporation*, 1996, pp.66-67.

¹⁹² P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.994.

¹⁹³ *The NY Times*, “Russia’s Post-Commonwealth Army Packs a Political Punch”, Aug 6., 1992.

¹⁹⁴ United Nations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Delegations - Moldova, S-1086-0096-06-00002, p.94.

prolonged.¹⁹⁵ In July, the new Moldovan government of Andrei Sangheli saw many ministers resign, as it became more accommodating to the equality of Russian speakers and Moldovans.¹⁹⁶ Many members of the Russian Parliament and the head of the Russian Presidential Administration sent an official letter request to Yeltsin to command the 14th Army to stay away from conflict resolution so Russia “does not become a scarecrow.”¹⁹⁷

In the court case of *Ilascu*, President Snegur testified that while President Yeltsin did not give direct orders, it was doubtless that the 14th Army had provided significant support to and equipped the ‘PMR’ well.¹⁹⁸ The Moldovan authorities were afraid the Russian Army would further encroach on the Moldovan sovereignty and sought negotiations starting from June 25, 1992, mainly through the CIS, to disengage, secure “neutrality of the 14th Army” as well as the “status..., time, and procedure for its withdrawal”.¹⁹⁹ Per René la Pedraja, the 14th Army, under the command of General Lebed, fired massive barrages of artillery at the Moldovan troops on July 3.²⁰⁰ On July 4, Lebed called the Moldovan government “fascist.”²⁰¹ Several members of the Russian Parliament called on Yeltsin to advocate for Moldova’s exclusion from the CSCE.²⁰² Chişinău feared that the more realism-based and nationalist feeling in Moscow would prevail.²⁰³

¹⁹⁵ See P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.994. V. Tkach, “Moldova and Transdnistria”, P. 146.

¹⁹⁶ The new government built on the more multicultural agenda of Snegur through adhering to principles of territorial integrity and willingness to negotiate cultural and administrative autonomy. See P. Hare et al., “The political economy”, in J. Batt, P. Hare (eds.), *Reconstituting the Market* (1st ed.), p. 362; P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.995.

¹⁹⁷ National Members of the Russian Parliament, “Обращение народных депутатов РФ к Президенту РФ по поводу ситуации в Молдавии [An appeal of members of Parliament of the Russian Federation to the President of the Russian Federation regarding the situation in Moldova]”, Ф. 6. Оп. 1. Д. 176. Л. 117-119, pp.117-119; Starovoitova, an Adviser to President Yeltsin, stressed that the 14th Army was no longer considered neutral after obvious interventions and a political settlement was desirable because it would prevent separatist movements within Russia from ever taking place. Starovoitova called on Yeltsin to involve international observers and mediators from the Helsinki foundation for human rights. See G. Starovoitova, Presidential Administration of the Russian Federation, “Записка с информацией о ситуации в Приднестровье и возможных последствиях эскалации конфликта между Молдовой и ПМР [A note with information on the situation in Transnistria and possible consequences of escalation of conflict between Moldova and ‘PMR’]”, Ф. 6. Оп. 1. Д. 135. Л. 65-67, pp.65-67. Retrieved from: <https://yeltsin.ru/archive/paperwork/12609>

¹⁹⁸ *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 42 (Annex).

¹⁹⁹ See United Nations, Security Council, *Letter dated 1 July 1992 from the Representatives of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, and Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary General*, S/24230 (2 July 1992); *The LA Times*. Russia and Ukraine Hail Friendship: Commonwealth; *The NY Times*, “Balkans in Unity with Ex-Soviets”, Jun.26, 1992.

²⁰⁰ See R. De La Pedraja, *The Russian Military Resurgence: Post-Soviet Decline and Rebuilding, 1992–2018*, McFarland, 2018, pp. 93–94.

²⁰¹ *Press Conference of Alexander Lebed*. [Video], (1992, July 4).

²⁰² *Kommersant*, “14-й Армии Повелели Стать Миротворческой [The 14th Army Was Told to Become Peacemaking]”, July 13, 1992. Retrieved from: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5673>

²⁰³ *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia* (*Ilascu v. Moldova*) 48787/99, p. 42 (Annex). The issue of presence of the foreign 14th Army was an important factor in Moldova’s policy choices and provided own military inferiority

While Moscow was still heavily counting on Western aid, further escalation could not have been ruled out, considering the poor state of Moldovan armed formations. There have also been attempts to broker a regional peacekeeping mission through the CIS on July 6 through Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine that Moldova had requested. The deal broke off after the Moldovan authorities sent a request the following day because some states withdrew their consent.²⁰⁴

On July 8, a ceasefire was announced in Transnistria, and the withdrawal of military equipment began following talks on July 3.²⁰⁵ Yeltsin stated that Moldova must be indivisible and that the ‘PMR’ have its special status within Moldova. The Moldovan authorities also sought international assistance. On July 10, 1992, President Snegur of Helsinki asked to apply the CSCE (modern-day OSCE) peacekeeping mechanism to the Transnistrian conflict. However, this mechanism could not be readily implemented because no lasting ceasefire was successfully broken.²⁰⁶ Ultimately, negotiations between Russia and Moldova came to fruition on July 21, and the two sides signed an agreement without the ‘PMR’ as a signatory. The economic and political details were to be discussed later. An immediate ceasefire and a demilitarized security zone overseen by peacekeepers were established.²⁰⁷ On July 29, a trilateral peacekeeping force composed of Russian, Moldovan, and ‘PMR’ soldiers took hold of the contact line.²⁰⁸

11. The Aftermath of the Conflict: August 1992 and On.

Russian support for Transnistrian elites continued. More Russian officials, like Deputy Speaker of the Duma, Guennadi Seleznev, supported Transnistrian “independence” while Russia continued to subsidize local industries, providing financial help and free gas and electricity.²⁰⁹ At the end of July, President Snegur, in another letter to the UN Secretary-General, asked the UN to

and the defeat in Bender, Moldovan officials could on the goodwill and practicality of Russian negotiators. K. Litvak, “The role of political competition and bargaining”, p.226.

²⁰⁴ OSCE. *The Transnistrian Conflict in Moldova: Origins and Main Issues*, CSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, p.2

²⁰⁵ *Kommersant*, “14-й Армии Повелели Стать Миротворческой [The 14th Army Was Told to Become Peacemaking]”, July 13, 1992. Retrieved from: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5673>

²⁰⁶ See CSCE: Helsinki Summit, 1992. *OSCE*.

²⁰⁷ OSCE. *The Transnistrian Conflict in Moldova: Origins and Main Issues*, CSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, p. 2; Security Council, *Agreement on the Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Dniester Region of the Republic of Moldova*, S/24369.

²⁰⁸ *Kommersant*, “Перемирие в Молдове: Вот Солдаты Идут [Ceasefire in Moldova: Here Come the Soldiers]”, Aug. 3, 1992. Retrieved from <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6029>

²⁰⁹ *Ilaşcu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, Council of Europe: European Court of Human Rights, p. 43 (Annex).

send an observer mission to ensure a peaceful ceasefire.²¹⁰ Tudor Pantiru, Moldovan Permanent Representative to the UN, in a letter dated October 20, 1992 date expressed concern at Yeltsin's remarks of Russian "goal achievement," "direct help" to Transnistria, and the floating of statehood ideas for the 'PMR'.²¹¹ The Presidium of the Parliament of Moldova condemned "the policy of secession, force, and diktat by the leaders from Tiraspol" that impeded dialogue and prevented the July 21 agreement as well as the Russian Federation's "gross and flagrant violation of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states."²¹² Pantiru also demanded that Russian troops withdraw from Transnistria and stressed the need to begin negotiations immediately.²¹³ Nicolae Țiu, Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs, also asserted that the Transnistrian elites and their backers treated the partition as a *fait accompli*.²¹⁴ During his speech at the UN General Assembly's 47th session in September, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Kozyrev asserted Russia's national interests would only be rooted in "an open society and a policy of openness" that would not manifest into "an aggressive great Power."²¹⁵ He also rejected "imperialistic ambitions, diktat, and violence both in the area of the USSR and in other parts of the world."²¹⁶ Kozyrev praised Russian participation in peacekeeping in the Dniester region of Moldova.

The details of the status of the 'PMR' between 1992 and early 1993 were not decided. On November 25, Permanent Representative Pantiru, in the context of the presence of Russian troops in the Baltic States, repeated the concerns related to the similar Russian government's unwillingness to withdraw the 14th Army, which "is an army of occupation and a permanent source of tension and conflict."²¹⁷ He also stressed the importance of following the UN Handbook on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes and the UN Secretary-General's role in mediating negotiations.²¹⁸ While the July 21 agreement contained a clause granting Transnistria special status and self-determination in case Moldova was to unite with Romania, the talks

²¹⁰ United Nations, Security Council, *Note verbale dated 31 July 1992 from the Permanent Mission of Moldova to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, S/24369*, (6 August 1992).

²¹¹ United Nations, General Assembly, *Letter dated 20 October 1992 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, A/47/561, S/24690 p. 2

²¹² *Ibid.*, 4.

²¹³ United Nations, General Assembly, *Summary record of the 17th meeting*, A/C.6/47/SR.17, p. 14.

²¹⁴ U.N. GAOR, 47th Sess., 21st plen. mtg., U.N. Doc. A/47/PV.21, p.23.

²¹⁵ U.N. GAOR, 47th Sess., 6th plen. mtg., U.N. Doc. A/47/PV.6, p.58.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

²¹⁷ U.N. GAOR, 47th Sess., 72nd plen. mtg., U.N. Doc. A/47/PV.72, p.31.

²¹⁸ U.N. GAOR 6th Committee, 47th Sess., 35th mtg., U.N. Doc. A/47/PV.35, p.14

stalled and did not gain traction and only started at the beginning of 1993.²¹⁹ The “PMR’s” “Supreme Soviet” proposed a draft treaty to practically establish an independent Transnistria in response to the special status proposal from the Moldovan authorities.²²⁰

To this day, negotiations have not advanced significantly. The region remains a gray area or a ‘frozen conflict zone.’ While on paper, the region conducts its own political and economic affairs, it remains dependent on Moscow and is unrecognized by the international community.²²¹

²¹⁹ S. Roper, “Regionalism in Moldova”, p.109

²²⁰ OSCE. The Transdnistriian Conflict in Moldova: Origins and Main Issues, CSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, p.5.

²²¹ Transnistria, despite trading more with the European Union single market through Moldova, remains subsidized, in particular its pension system and law enforcement. Researchers at the Centre for Eastern Studies estimate that until the end of 2012, Russia offered around US\$110 million to the government in Tiraspol. See K.Caľus, “An aided economy: The characteristics of the Transnistrian economic model”, *Centre for Eastern Studies*, 2013, p. 5.

Chapter 2. The Framework of the US Foreign Policy Toward the USSR and the Russian Federation

The focus of this chapter is predominantly on the ideology and foreign policy aspects of George Herbert Walker Bush's Administration along with the relevant legislative work of other US state institutions contributing to US foreign policy. In particular, this chapter aims to glean from academic sources the stance of the US government on working with the late USSR and early Russian Federation regarding predominantly security and multilateral cooperation.

1. Managing Security in the Bipolar World: on the Brink of the USSR's Collapse

There are two main schools of thought regarding the foreign policy of the Bush Administration. Per Goldgeier and McFaul, "the balance of power in the international system does not by itself determine the foreign policy of states."²²² In this context, these scholars contend that the power-balancing nature of the Bush Administration, rooted mostly in the realist school of international relations, defined the logic of working with Soviet counterparts. The transition of the Soviet Union into a new world order was a fundamental challenge.²²³ As James Baker, Secretary of State of the Bush Administration, writes in his book on US Foreign Policy during Bush's tenure, "We were reaping the success of the Reagan Doctrine, which called for the

²²² For George HW Bush, maintaining the traditional parity with the USSR was a way to preserve the balance of power and not let anything go awry. J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.8. Scholars like Stephen Walt hold that the capability to define a course of foreign policy for a state rests on multiple factors such as geographic proximity, threat presence, offensive power, aggregate power, and aggressive intentions. Per Walt, powerful states prefer balancing (allying to prevent a threat) to bandwagoning (aligning with the source of danger). Being one of the most powerful states, the US' aggregate power and the perceived threat of communism were conducive to Western European states joining the 'balancing' to counteract the USSR and Communist China. See for more details S. Walt, *The origins of alliances*. Cornell University Press, 2007, pp. 1-48. The degree to which the US would handle balancing differed throughout the 20th century. The Reagan Doctrine and Reagan are usually a direct source of comparison to Bush Sr. as Reagan is praised by some as providing little to no room for weakness regarding the USSR. As cited in Schweizer Peter, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's secret strategy that hastened the collapse of the Soviet Union*. Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994; J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, New York: G.P. Putnam, 1995, p.46; J. Engel, "A Better World... but Don't Get Carried Away: The Foreign Policy of George H. W. Bush Twenty Years On", *Diplomatic History*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2010, pp. 26-27. J. Mann, *The rebellion of Ronald Reagan: A history of the end of the Cold War*. Penguin, 2011. Scholars like Powaski challenge some of Reagan's foreign policy objectives. "At a summit with Gorbachev at Reykjavik, Iceland, in October 1986, Reagan had offered to eliminate all nuclear weapons—without consulting America's NATO allies in advance." See R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy from George H.W. Bush to Donald Trump*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, p.18; T. Naftali, *George H.W. Bush*, New York: Times Books, 2007, p.54.

²²³ Goldgeier and McFaul contend that while for more hawkish US officials like Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, the utter collapse was more preferable, George HW Bush and his Administration did not want to invest into such an endeavor. For the Administration cementing American hegemony did not warrant economic, political, or military aggression. Out of the two camps of "Regime transformers" and "power balancers" these scholars contend Bush belonged to the latter. See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, pp.9-10.

rollback of Communist regimes in the Third World-by force, if necessary. With most of these regimes already under siege, we were now able to turn to elections as the mechanism for making a peaceful transition to democracy.”²²⁴ Baker describes the management of the USSR as part of a carefully designed proactive plan, whereby the US intended to slowly but surely “demilitarize Soviet foreign policy and push Gorbachev on political reform.”²²⁵

Many scholars do not hold the same ‘proactive’ evaluation of US foreign policy toward the late USSR.²²⁶ The trend of activity versus passivity will also be explored in later parts of this chapter after the USSR collapsed. Some scholars and former officials contended that while Bush Sr. and his team were more on the sidelines when it came to encouraging democratic reforms in Eastern Europe and the subsequent fall of communism, the US did not waver when Iraq invaded Kuwait.²²⁷ According to Tudor Onea, George H.W. Bush’s Administration relied on “primacy” and restraint wherever possible, which did not translate into a coherent grand strategy.²²⁸ In particular, Onea argues that George H.W. Bush’s Administration attempted to experiment with

²²⁴ James Baker asserts that the US walked a fine line in handling the more liberalizing USSR and would stand its ground in demanding actual reforms and not giving away free bank cheques to Gorbachev. J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p.46.

²²⁵ Ibid., p.46. Scholar Mary Sarotte warns to read officials’ memoirs with a grain of salt. She highlights that Baker in his memoirs “glorified his own successes, avoided any hint of failure and skirted the truth” citing Andrew Carpendale, one of the writers on Baker’s team. See M. Sarotte, *Not one inch: America, Russia, and the making of post-Cold War Stalemate*. Yale University Press, 2022, pp.17-18.

²²⁶ Some scholars argue that Bush Administration did almost nothing to assist the USSR or Eastern European states of the Warsaw Pact. So much so that while protests were actively happening in Eastern European countries, “the White House offered no soaring rhetoric, no grand gestures, no bold new programs.” See M. Mandelbaum, “The Bush Foreign Policy”, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 70, no. 1, 1990, pp. 5-6. Internal affairs were exactly that, a matter of care for the Soviet nomenklatura. J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.10.

²²⁷ Former US Ambassador to NATO Ivo Daalder and ‘Mac’ Destler argue that the team-oriented cabinet-level and interagency foreign-policy making framework Bush and Scowcroft set up was the model to follow for the following administrations. Having a strong secretary of state and a strong national security adviser with the President still having full control was one of the main cornerstones of behind-the-scenes work. The two scholars state that US’ active handling of the process of Germany’s reintegration into one state was done in a way that Gorbachev “obtained the least bad option available.” See I. Daalder, I. Destler, “The Foreign Policy Genius of George H. W. Bush”, *Foreign Affairs*, 2018.

²²⁸ Along a symbolic spectrum of US grand strategy options, “primacy is the most assertive strategy as it recommends that the United States preserves its dominance in perpetuity, by further increasing its military capabilities, by containing would-be rivals, and by disciplining misbehaviors all over the world without relying on outside approval or support.” However, Onea cautions that the exact conduct of affairs may remain different in scale and commitment as we shall see with the Bush Administration. See T. Onea, *US foreign policy in the Post-Cold War era: Restraint versus assertiveness from George HW Bush to Barack Obama*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp.7-8.

restraint, which in itself “was the product of three illusions...: order, cooperation, and peace.”²²⁹ The application of the Bush Administration’s visions and the realist, a power-balancing approach, will be explored in subsequent paragraphs.

2. NATO “Non-Expansion Pledge” and the Disintegration of the Warsaw Pact

In outlining the specific tenets of George H.W. Bush’s and his Administration’s foreign policy, especially toward the Soviet Union, most scholars focus on the aspect of security in Europe. Before the collapse of the USSR, the US acted considering the bipolar nature of the world balance of power. Even though the USSR was undergoing radical pro-democratic changes thanks to Gorbachev’s reforms, the US and Soviet Union were still rivals and conducted their foreign affairs accordingly. Scholars such as Sarotte, Shiffrinson, Kramer, and Spohr have focused extensively on the security aspect of US-USSR (later Russian Federation) relations, specifically the role of NATO toward the disintegrating Warsaw Pact. The growing security vacuum arising out of the internal political and economic changes in the states of the Warsaw Pact would alter the European security architecture and be equally relevant at the beginning of the 1990s and the 21st century. As Michael Mandelbaum notes, “In 1989, the greatest geopolitical windfall in the history of American foreign policy fell into George Bush’s lap. Between July and December of 1989 Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania ousted communist leaders.”²³⁰ Among the reasons for the Communist downfall in Central Europe scholars such as Fergusson, Maier, Manela, and Sargent list the so-called “kiss of debt” as the Warsaw Pact members became ever more dependent on Western finance amid the oil shocks and soaring fuel costs.²³¹

²²⁹ Ibid., p.40. In fact, as Onega highlights, some in the West, like Fukuyama, believed the world was finally shaping up to move in the only right direction, that of liberal democracy. See for more details F. Fukuyama, *The end of history and the last man*. Free Press, 2006.

²³⁰ M. Mandelbaum, “The Bush Foreign Policy”, pp. 5-22. This rather dramatic potential shift in the balance of power alerted both the US and the USSR. Per Vladislav Zubok, as the USSR was bungling the reforms, the Warsaw Pact members realized the “keys to their future were no longer in Moscow but instead in Western capitals and banks.” V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, p.134. Gorbachev was surprised by the pro-democratic spur of Polish worker strikes and election victory of the opposition, the Hungarian decision to remove border installations with Austria etc. See for more details Chapter 3 of Part 1 of V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*.

²³¹ This dependence, per the authors, created an economic rift. Western capital allowed for economic indicators to grow. Such a dependence also meant that any human rights violations would most likely trigger Western firms to withhold finance so desperately needed in countries like Poland. Vladislav Zubok lists the repeal of the use of force and Gorbachev’s response to East Germany “everyone answers for himself.” to further near the end of Soviet involvement See S. Kotkin, “The kiss of debt”, in N. Ferguson, C. Maier, E. Manela, D. Sargent (eds.), *The shock of*

The modern scholarly debate on whether the US made an assurance to the USSR to not expand and guarantee respect for Soviet red lines is multi-faceted. Most scholars link the fall of the Berlin Wall with the subsequent disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the new pro-Western leanings of Central and Eastern Europe.²³² In 1989, after a wave of protests swept through the Warsaw Pact shaking the communist governments, West Germany's Chancellor Kohl and Hungary's Prime Minister Németh sensed that Washington was being too careful as Bush's "highest priority was to avoid "hasty developments," not to support revolutionary change."²³³ Gorbachev had hoped that free elections would boost the legitimacy of the communist governments. According to most scholars, such a judgment on Gorbachev's part was inconsiderate of the "moral bankruptcy of communism" which "destroyed any possibility of its legitimization in Eastern Europe."²³⁴ For Steven Kotkin, repealing the Brezhnev doctrine of intervention in socialist states to preserve communism compounded the velocity of the Warsaw Pact dissolution.²³⁵ As the communist governments of Central and Eastern Europe fell, the Bush Administration offered cooperation to the USSR as "Bush told Gorbachev that he no longer considered the Soviet Union an enemy."²³⁶

Shiffrinson contends that the Bush Administration attempted to reassure the Soviet Union through a series of interactions and speeches.²³⁷ For example, declassified transcripts of meetings of Gorbachev, Kohl, and Baker in Moscow on February 7-9 of 1990 indicate that "Baker

the global: The 1970s in perspective, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011, pp.80-93; V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, pp.103-146.

²³² See for details M. Sarotte, *Not one inch*, pp.17-18. M. Kramer, "The myth of a no-NATO-enlargement pledge to Russia", pp. 39-61.

²³³ Hungarian officials were ready to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact if NATO or select countries were willing to extend their, as Sarotte notes, 'financial' hand to Hungary. Disenchanted with communism, new governments sought a more flexible approach to cooperation with both the USSR and the West. See M. Sarotte, *Not one inch*, pp.41-43. Having sufficient guarantees and realizing that the USSR was "preoccupied with internal affairs, especially deteriorating economic conditions and the rising rebelliousness of the non-Russians." See M. Mandelbaum, "The Bush Foreign Policy", p.7.

²³⁴ R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.20. See for more details on Gorbachev's miscalculations in S. Kotkin. *Armageddon averted: The Soviet Collapse*, p. 71. V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, p.144.

²³⁵ For more details see S. Kotkin. *Armageddon averted: The Soviet Collapse*, pp. 71-73. V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, pp.144-145.

²³⁶ R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.21. same as above

²³⁷ Per Shiffrinson, there are two camps of scholars on German reunification negotiations and subsequent NATO enlargement toward the East. One of them focuses on the lack of any NATO-related promises by the US to the USSR. See M. Kramer, "The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 2009, p. 41; The other contends that NATO expansion would not cross into Eastern Europe. See J. Shiffrinson, "Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion". *International Security*, 40 (4), 2016, pp.23-24.

acknowledged “the need for assurances to countries in the East” and pledged that “there would be no extension of NATO’s jurisdiction for forces of NATO one inch to the east” if Germany reunited within NATO.²³⁸ However, soon thereafter in March 1990, Central European governments of Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia verbally attacked Moscow to oppose NATO expansion.²³⁹ The US and West Germany on February 24-25 agreed on new terms to incorporate East Germany and proposed it to the USSR. In the agreement, NATO would have jurisdiction over East Germany even without NATO troops stationed there, which, many scholars argue, marked a dramatic shift in US policy.²⁴⁰ Contrary to Sarotte, Shiffrinson argues that the US started working on expanding its presence at the turn of 1989-1990, not in 1990.²⁴¹

Bush Sr. in his speech in Stillwater, Oklahoma on May 4, 1990, emphasized the importance of a more cooperative Europe.²⁴² Subsequent months-long interactions with Soviet officials saw a continuation of promises tied to the creation of new institutions, like the CSCE (modern-day OSCE). The Bush Administration did not impose democratic values in the newly democratic Central and Eastern Europe but only encouraged their promotion.²⁴³ Shiffrinson argues that the Soviets believed NATO expansion was unlikely amid new security proposals, while the US insisted Europe would be more cooperative without promising NATO’s disappearance.²⁴⁴

²³⁸ J. Shiffrinson, “Deal or No Deal?”, p.23.

²³⁹ One other less regarded aspect of the NATO enlargement promises debate is the agency of ex-Warsaw Pact members. Mary Sarotte highlights the states’ desire to make connections with NATO. Especially given the arising security vacuum, it was important for the states to take a stance of siding with one of the sides or electing to be neutral. People like Lech Wałęsa in Poland protested and challenged the communist establishment and Viktor Orbán in Hungary called “for the Soviets to remove their still-present forces entirely.” Per Sarotte, “Gorbachev was indeed complaining about his Warsaw Pact allies wanting to join NATO, including in a meeting with Baker on May 18, 1990. The secretary of state, as he told Bush, found the Soviet leader upset by “indications that we are seeking to wean the East Europeans away.” Gorbachev had added, “if they want to move away on their own, okay.” See M. Sarotte, *Not one inch*, pp.38-39, p. 124. Kramer argues that NATO expansion in 1990 was not yet on the table as Warsaw Pact members wishes to rely on a reformed Pact and the Conference on Security and Cooperation (CSCE) in Europe. Per Kramer, first ideas started floating after 20 February 1990 after Gorbachev-Baker and Gorbachev-Kohl talks. See M. Kramer, “The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia,” p. 42.

²⁴⁰ The US was effectively barring any leeway for the Soviets to codify the NATO non-expansion assurances. Scholars such as Kramer, Spohr, and Sarotte consider this an important development in the US-USSR relations. See J. Shiffrinson, “Deal or No Deal?”, p.26.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁴² G. Bush, “Remarks at the Oklahoma State University Commencement Ceremony in Stillwater”, The American Presidency Project, May 4, 1990.

²⁴³ R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.17.

²⁴⁴ J. Shiffrinson, “Deal or No Deal?”, p.32.

No longer communist states, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and others negotiated the complete withdrawal of Soviet forces from their respective territories. West Germany additionally offered \$8 billion in loans to the USSR on top of verbal promises from the US that NATO would not be placed in East Germany.²⁴⁵ Gorbachev finally accepted German reunification and a ‘special military status’ of East Germany in July 1990 and on October 3, 1990, Germany was officially reunified following World War II victors relinquishing their powers over Germany and its capital Berlin.²⁴⁶ Kramer and Sarotte agree that Soviet officials simply “did not even contemplate seeking a provision that would bar any other Warsaw Pact countries from eventually pursuing membership in NATO. The issue of NATO enlargement had never been raised during the negotiations on German reunification.”²⁴⁷ Marten highlights the mixed response of USSR officials to the call of a Polish general for NATO to provide security. In November 1990, Gorbachev signed the Charter of Paris, which envisioned the full recognition of national sovereignty and security.²⁴⁸ Essentially, while verbal assurances of NATO non-expansion were made throughout the negotiations, no codification of such promises occurred. The signing of the Charter of Paris and adherence to the Helsinki principle by the CSCE members from Eastern and Western Europe effectively ended the Cold War in Europe.²⁴⁹ On July 1, 1991, the Warsaw Pact ceased to exist.

3. Balancing Security and Democratic Changes in the Disintegration of the USSR

The USSR itself was undergoing dramatic pro-democratic reforms, as covered in Chapter 1. An increasing number of nations in the Soviet Union were able to conduct local elections. For example, in Baltics, as in Moldova, local communists suffered electoral defeat. The quest for independence in the Baltics was in part fueled by the distrust of Gorbachev and the subsequent

²⁴⁵ M. Kramer, “The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia,” p. 41

²⁴⁶ Powaski Regarding the Germany proposal, Kramer notes that Gorbachev did not budge for four months until the situation in Eastern Europe became even more dire. The financial stimulus from West Germany was an important incentive on top of the more precarious waning stance of the USSR.

²⁴⁷ M. Kramer, “The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia,” p. 53. M. Sarotte, “A Broken Promise? What the West Really Told Moscow About NATO Expansion.” *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5, 2014, 90–97. Soviet officials, especially Gorbachev, as Sarotte highlights, were largely improvising particularly at the Washington summit because there was no single line of rhetoric as to what should have been the official Soviet policy on German reunification and NATO expansion into East Germany. M. Sarotte, *Not one inch*, pp.129-139.

²⁴⁸ Marten also underscores the attempts of the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister to pressure Warsaw Pact countries to sign “individual bilateral treaties” to not join other alliances. See for more details K. Marten, “Reconsidering NATO Expansion, p.140; CSCE: Charter of Paris for a New Europe, 1990. *OSCE*.

²⁴⁹ R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.29.

tensions surrounding political confrontation between Lithuanian independence activists and pro-Moscow leaders.²⁵⁰ Throughout 1990, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia moved to declare ‘transitional periods’ toward independence.²⁵¹ In January 1991, the Soviet Special Forces and military moved to take control of the TV tower “to prevent the broadcasting of any news harmful to the USSR” and killed fourteen Lithuanians in a skirmish.²⁵² Bush condemned the Soviet military actions with a letter to Gorbachev.²⁵³

Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia, which had been recognized as occupied by the US since their two occupations by the Soviets in 1940 and 1944, prepared to proclaim independence, which raised tensions with Gorbachev and the Party.²⁵⁴ In March of 1991, Matlock described that for Bush Administration any more potential outbreak of “serious violence in Lithuania would stop the general improvement of U.S.-Soviet relations, upset our arms reduction negotiations, and complicate solving the remaining issues in Eastern and Central Europe.”²⁵⁵ In the meantime, Yeltsin got along with his Baltic counterparts as they issued a joint appeal to the United Nations “and other international organizations” to denounce “acts of armed violence against sovereign states.”²⁵⁶ The Bush Administration preferred to maintain the status quo and not go ‘overboard by recognizing, let alone actively supporting, the independence of nations within the USSR.’²⁵⁷

²⁵⁰ Matlock recounts that Vytautas Landsbergis, the Lithuanian pro-independence leader, was reliant on US recognition and concomitant help, which the Bush Administration could not eagerly offer unless Lithuania was in effective control of its territory. Admittedly, the US government did not intend to raise tensions with Gorbachev, who was the first leader of the USSR eager to cooperate on a range of intergovernmental issues. See J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 320-329. Zubok states that Bush and Gorbachev kept close communication and Gorbachev promised to resolve tensions. Gorbachev said to Bush on January 11, “I will do all I can . . . to reach a political solution.” See for more details V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, p.276.

²⁵¹ See S. Kotkin. *Armageddon averted: The Soviet Collapse*, p. 72.

²⁵² The international community held the USSR authorities responsible. Gorbachev effectively broke his own promise to Bush to settle things in a peaceful manner. Similar clashes happened in Latvia just a week later with five Latvian civilians dead. Per Zubok, Gorbachev abstained from taking responsibility and accused Latvian militia and local leaders of insurrectionism. See V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, p.277.

²⁵³ J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.27.

²⁵⁴ The proclamation of independence in the Baltics did not sit well with the USSR authorities. Per Matlock, “The Soviet military forces in Lithuania began to flex their muscles by increasing the number of their flights and ground exercises.” which J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 337-339.

²⁵⁵ J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 340.

²⁵⁶ V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, p.278.

²⁵⁷ As Goldgeier and McFaul contend, Bush Sr. was careful not to alienate Gorbachev who still was the most important person in the USSR despite meeting in person with Yeltsin in July 1991. See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.26.

The summer of 1991 put significant pressure on the Bush Administration to adopt a more proactive rather than reactive policy. Bush traveled to the Ukrainian SSR's capital Kyiv to convince Ukrainians to not give in to suicidal nationalism based upon ethnic hatred" and "to forge a new social compact, you have the obligation to restore power to citizens demoralized by decades of totalitarian rule."²⁵⁸ The speech displayed Bush's "lack of support" and cautiousness regarding the issue of the self-determination of the collapsing Soviet Union.²⁵⁹

In August, Moscow witnessed a failed coup with Gorbachev. Powaski argues that Yeltsin-led resistance with thousands of locals allowed restoring Gorbachev's standing against a more formidable stance of Yeltsin. Powaski writes, "Bush clearly preferred to deal with Gorbachev rather than risk the uncertainties of his demise."²⁶⁰ This argument by Powaski is supported by other scholars like Goldgeier and McFaul, and Kotkin among others.²⁶¹

The course of action of the Bush Administration toward the USSR and the Russian Federation is a topic of discussion among scholars. Thomas McCormick argues that while George HW Bush called for "a new world order", American defense spending contracted only ten percent over five years and the US resorted to military efforts where it deemed necessary.²⁶² Most other scholars acknowledge the cautiousness with which the Bush Administration approached the unraveling of the USSR, particularly the oscillation between accepting Yeltsin and upholding contact with Gorbachev.²⁶³ Scowcroft stated on May 31, 1991, "Our goal is to

²⁵⁸ G. Bush, 1991, "Chicken Kyiv speech", Wikisource, the free online library, 1991. Available at: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Chicken_Kiev_speech "Bush still sought to influence regime change in the USSR by working with the center, and not the republics or the democratic movements in the Soviet Union." J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.29.

²⁵⁹ The author highlights the idea that Bush did not believe self-determination alone would spur growth of democratic statecraft. See for more details T. Naftali, *George H.W. Bush*, p.115.

²⁶⁰ R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.41.

²⁶¹ See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.26; S. Kotkin. *Armageddon averted: The Soviet Collapse*, p. 89.

²⁶² As stated in Bush's speech in *The Washington Post*, "Bush 'out of these troubled times . . . A new world order'", Sep. 12, 1990. McCormick argues that Bush Administration "committed to free enterprise at home and free trade abroad, it continued to see America's future wholly in terms of a global multilateralism that would be promoted and protected by American military might. For all of the Presidents calls for a "new world order, it was the perpetuation of the old order of Pax Americana that remained his purpose." See T. McCormick, *America's half-century: United States foreign policy in the Cold War and after*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, pp. 246-252.

²⁶³ See J. Rosati, S. Twing, "The Presidency and U.S. Foreign Policy after the Cold War" in J. Scott, *After the End: Making U.S. Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War*, Duke Univ. Press, 2000, p. 36; Goldgeier and McFaul, Onea indicate the apparent split in terms of appropriate policy choices within the Administration itself. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Ambassador Matlock believed a more proactive stance toward the changes was necessary. James Baker thought it important to not let the USSR collapse into multiple nuclear factions fighting each other. See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, pp.23-26; T. Onea, *US foreign policy in the Post-Cold War era*, p.48.

keep Gorbachev in power for as long as possible, while doing what we can to help head them in the right direction—and doing what is best for us in foreign policy.”²⁶⁴ Goldgeier and McFaul argue that because of the power-balancing nature of the Bush Administration, the type of domestic regime in the USSR republics was not a matter of concern, and the balance of power was.²⁶⁵ The concept of self-determination has diverse applications. The National Security Council decided to prioritize a set of five principles enshrined in the CSCE legal framework in dealing with newly emerging democracies, specifically those emerging out of the USSR.²⁶⁶ James Baker in the press briefing on September 4, 1991, insisted that five principles were pivotal to a harmonious transition citing the chaos erupting in Yugoslavia that did not follow the CSCE standards.²⁶⁷ In practice, however, applying the goals of respect for democracy, rule of law, and existing borders among others was quite particularly difficult in the case of Yugoslavia.

As the year 1991 ended, the Ukrainian referendum on independence on December 1 and the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the dissolution of the USSR, was a done deal. The Bush Administration preferred to wait out the reactions from within the USSR, namely from Yeltsin and Gorbachev, to make a policy move.²⁶⁸ James Baker visited Moscow on December 15, 1991, and was told by Andrei Kozyrev that the US must do more to help the formerly colonized countries institutionalize democratic processes beginning with granting them recognition. Considering the rather complicated issues of the Union’s dissolution, jurisdiction, and military command, Baker cabled Bush, “If the Russians want us to help them, they’re going to have to make it possible for us to do so.”²⁶⁹

As the Soviet Union collapsed, economic upheaval was an urgent concern for Yeltsin and many other leaders of the respective republics. Some scholars argue that the US government failed to provide relevant economic aid and did not actively participate in helping institutionalize

²⁶⁴ As cited in J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.25.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 30-35. This view is shared by Onea. See T. Onea, *US foreign policy in the Post-Cold War era*, p.41.

²⁶⁶ The five principles included “peaceful self-determination consistent with democratic values and principles, in the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act; respect for existing borders, both internal and external, when any changes occurred peacefully and consensually; respect for democracy and the rule of law, especially elections; human rights, particularly equal treatment of minorities; and respect for international law and obligations.” See V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, pp. 550-553. See also J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.46.

²⁶⁷ As cited in V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, p.551.

²⁶⁸ J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.35.

²⁶⁹ J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 567.

democracy.²⁷⁰ As Baker states in his book, 'Our policy included a heavy dose of political realism as a hedge against any reversals in reform. So while we worked with democrats in Russia, Ukraine, and the other independent states bolster democracy to and institutionalize free markets, I also spent much of that spring managing issues of realpolitik (...) The Bush Administration did not preclude non-governmental institutions from assisting the newly formed republics with improving democratic practices.'²⁷¹

Regarding the question of NATO in light of the USSR's collapse, Shiffrinson argues that by mid-1992, the US National Security Council led the issue of NATO enlargement and concluded that accepting more members would allow Eastern Europe to fill the security vacuum left by the disintegration of the USSR and Warsaw Pact.²⁷² Per Baker's account, at the end of 1991, Yeltsin told him he had wanted Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus to be admitted to the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, a NATO initiative, to improve cooperation and stability in the region and in the future to merge the military part of the CIS with NATO.²⁷³ Powaski emphasized that no immediate or planned expansion of NATO was planned by the Bush Administration or Congress, let alone contemplating an invitation to Russia to become a state

²⁷⁰ For Goldgeier and McFaul prioritizing arms control and maintaining stability while paying lip service to democratic reforms within Russia or other post-Soviet republics is a basic tenet of US foreign policy in Eastern Europe. See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.40. Onea recounts that US officials of the Bush Administration regarded the task to reform the Russian state and improve its welfare as "the greatest challenge of our time" See T. Onea, *US foreign policy in the Post-Cold War era*, p.51. Officials of the Bush Administration emphasized the US action. Matlock argues that Western policy "combined strength and firmness" which allowed the US to pursue a gradual improvement of stability in the region and facilitate the cooperation with the Soviet Union, which all ultimately ended the Cold War. See J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 669-670. Baker recounts that Bush Administration was in fact focused on democratic changes in Eastern Europe. However, Baker emphasizes that the US did not intend to get involved in Russian internal affairs. At the same time, Baker states that he repeated US readiness to support democratic reforms, often without specifying how that support would translate into practice. See J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p.570.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 654. Additionally, as Goldgeier and McFaul indicate, Michael McFaul participated in National Democratic Institute's (NDI) endeavors to help draft the Russian electoral law. Across the board many American NGOs worked with Russia, Ukraine, and other republics to improve democratic practices. See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, pp.36-39.

²⁷² The extent to which the US government was going to involve Eastern Europe in enlargement had not yet been determined. As mentioned in J. Shiffrinson, "NATO enlargement and US foreign policy: the origins, durability, and impact of an idea". *International Politics*, 57, 342-370, 2020.

²⁷³ J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 571. The Soviet ambassador participated in the inaugural meeting of the NACC on December 20, 1991 and announced the collapse of the USSR and that he was now representing the Russian Federation. For more details visit *NATO*. North Atlantic Cooperation Council (1991-1997). https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_69344.htm One important point raised by M. Kimberly is that of Gorbachev and Yeltsin not seeing NATO as a problem and a security concern. Moscow officials were not threatened and accepted that the unraveled Warsaw Pact countries were out of their sphere of influence. See K. Marten, "Reconsidering NATO Expansion", p.141.

member.²⁷⁴ As Sarotte writes, Baker responded to Yeltsin that NATO and the CIS may work on a certain level.²⁷⁵

A separate mention should be reserved for the official US Security Strategy reports viewing the USSR in the fast-paced and changing nature of the Soviet state structure. In 1990, the Bush Administration set out to “seek the integration of the Soviet Union into the international system as a constructive partner.”²⁷⁶ In 1991, the updated report sought to emphasize the lessened probability of clashes with the USSR, albeit dependent on its “external behavior.”²⁷⁷ The last Report of the Bush Administration issued in January 1993 focuses on the alleviation of the communist threat and the need to foster “open and democratic political systems” worldwide, a statement and action that the Bush Administration did not engage in directly as many in academia would emphasize.²⁷⁸

4. Arms Control: Conventional and Nuclear Weapons.

Weapons of mass destruction were another important aspect of security for the Bush Administration. After the collapse of communist governments in Central and Eastern Europe, the Cold War, in view of many scholars, was virtually over.²⁷⁹ While the USSR was still intact, envisioning an updated world order after Gorbachev took a course on inching closer to the West, preoccupied quite a few scholars.²⁸⁰ Nuclear warheads proved to be a challenging issue moving

²⁷⁴ R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy from George H.W. Bush to Donald Trump*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, p.42.

²⁷⁵ As cited in M. Sarotte, *Not one inch*, p.192.

²⁷⁶ The projection was rather cautious in 1990 but already quite optimistic regarding future prospects of conflict with the USSR. Additionally, “Even if the US-Soviet relationship remains competitive, it can be made less militarized and far safer.” The document further states, “The continued strength of the Alliance and our leadership within it remain essential to peace.” See for more details The White House. *National Security Strategy of the United States*. 1990, Bush Presidential Records, p.10.

²⁷⁷ The White House. *National Security Strategy of the United States*, 1991, Bush Presidential Records, p.6.

²⁷⁸ The White House. *National Security Strategy of the United States*, 1993, Bush Presidential Records, p.3.

²⁷⁹ As cited in J. Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War”, *International Security*, 15(1), 1990, p. 6.

²⁸⁰ For a thorough discussion of a potential security situation in Europe after the collapse of the communist governments of the Warsaw Pact, see J. Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future”, pp.5-56; Many scholars ventured to discuss the role of NATO, the German reunification issue, and the role of CSCE. See R. Pfaltzgraff et al., “The Atlantic Alliance and European Security in the 1990’s”, *Cornell International Law Journal*: Vol. 23 (3), Article 3, 1990; W. Laqueur, L. Sloss, *European security in the 1990s: Deterrence and defense after the Inf Treaty*, Springer US, 1990. Holly Wyatt-Walter in particular discussed the role of the European Community in stepping up to be a regional guarantor of security and how the post-Cold War period tested such ambitions. See H. Wyatt-Walter, *The European community and the security dilemma, 1979–92*, London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1997. J. Hulsman, *A paradigm for the New World Order*, MacMillan Press, 1997.

forward. John Mearsheimer discussed the realist approach to the post-Cold War era in which a bipolar order is supposed to be more stable as “the number of conflict dyads is fewer, leaving fewer possibilities for war... deterrence is easier, because imbalances of power are fewer and more easily averted.”²⁸¹ Scholars such as Robert Pfaltzgraff and colleagues argued in 1990 that negotiations on Conventional Forces in Europe and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces would allow for better arms control, particularly regarding long-range nuclear missiles, and reduce tension.²⁸²

George HW Bush delivered a statement on the New Arms Plan in Brussels in May 1989 proposed exactly that: significant cuts to personnel and armored capabilities.²⁸³ The National Security Directive 23 dated September 22, 1989, was meant to limit “the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missile proliferation and to “lead an interagency effort... to develop a detailed plan for non-proliferation cooperation with the Soviet Union.”²⁸⁴

In the different theoretical scenarios of a post-Cold War order, Mearsheimer attempted to analyze the potential risks of proliferation and balance. His predictions, similar to the analysis of most scholars studying nuclear deterrence, were backed by the concept of the ‘security dilemma’ and the anarchic nature of world order.²⁸⁵ The danger of uncontrolled nuclear proliferation as

²⁸¹ J. Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future”, p.14. The realist school of political science and international relations focuses on the interaction between states, the insecurity of states being the main problem. “States must provide security for themselves because no other agency or actor can be counted on to do so.” S. Walt, “Realism and security”. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, 2017, p.1; For more details on realism and security see S. Walt, *The origins of alliances*. Cornell University Press, 2007, pp. 1-48. A. Wendt, “Anarchy is what states make of it: The social construction of power politics”, *International Organization* 46, no. 2, 1992, pp. 391–425. R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, pp.15-18; K. Waltz, *Theory of international politics*, Waveland Press, 2010. For more details on nuclear deterrence see D. Schwartz, “NATO’s Nuclear Dilemmas”, *American Political Science Review*, 79(2), 1985.

²⁸² Per these scholars Gorbachev’s willingness to reduce its force structure in Eastern Europe allowed for a possibility of arms reduction. The Bush Administration attempted to “break any perceived link between the Soviet force presence in Europe and the number of United States personnel stationed in Europe.” However, as the communist governments fell, the newly elected leaders demanded that the USSR withdraw their forces completely thus rendering the CFE talks more complicated and ‘superfluous’. See R. Pfaltzgraff et al., “The Atlantic Alliance and European Security in the 1990’s”, pp. 505-508.

²⁸³ For instance, Bush proposed that “Each side would reduce to 15 percent below current NATO levels in two additional categories: Attack and assault, or transport, helicopters; and all land-based combat aircraft.” President George Bush’s statement on the new arms plan, Brussels, May 29, 1989 as cited in W. Laqueur, L. Sloss, *European security in the 1990s*, pp. 205-206.

²⁸⁴ National Security Directive 23, ‘United States Relations with the Soviet Union’ September 22, 1989, Secret, Textual Archives at the George Bush Presidential Library, Declassified Per E.O. 12958, Bush Presidential Records, p.4. Originally accessed at: <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/nsd/nsd23.pdf>

²⁸⁵ Mearsheimer is convinced nuclear deterrence is the “best hope for avoiding war in post-Cold War Europe”. J. Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future”, p.54. On the other hand, Sagan and Waltz contend that nuclear proliferation would not lower the degree of competition. S. Sagan, K. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1995. Per Walt, nuclear weapons also ushered in a stream of thought in which nuclear weapons

well as a potentially nuclear-free Europe would have been the worst possible outcome.²⁸⁶ This thinking was prevalent at the Bush Administration, particularly with the Secretary of State James Baker and the United States National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft.²⁸⁷ Powaski writes: “Scowcroft viewed perestroika “not as leading toward democracy but as a way to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Soviet Union”.²⁸⁸ Securing a safe nuclear balance was one of the primary goals of the Bush Administration throughout its tenure through the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the USSR.²⁸⁹

National Security Directive 40 dated May 14, 1990, stipulated Bush’s desire to “reach substantive agreement on (...) major START issues on a basis that will advance U.S. national security interests and promote international stability.”²⁹⁰ The same policy direction was amplified in NSD 50 on October 12, 1990.²⁹¹ The Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe was signed in Paris in November 1990.²⁹² Beyond the desire to lower expenses and improve security by cutting down on the arms race, the ideological background to working with the USSR and Russian Federation consists of several pillars. The first concerns the nuclear balance in Europe. Mearsheimer debated the potential of having a countervailing nuclear stockpile held by

were meant to be an exception to security dilemma. With the new logic, nuclear warheads would allow one to defend oneself without necessarily amassing bigger armies to conquer someone because of the promise of mutually assured destruction. See for more details S. Walt, “Realism and security”, p.13.

²⁸⁶ Mearsheimer predicted the best security scenario would still leave a bipolar division of the world whereby the US and the USSR could keep each other in check. Mearsheimer contends that big nuclear states can “extend security guarantees” or encourage a limited and carefully managed proliferation to financially capable states like Germany which would play the role of the US in balancing the USSR. See J. Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future”, p.54.

²⁸⁷ Per Powaski, judging by appointments in the Administration and subsequent analysis of actions, Bush Sr. was heavily reliant on his staff and national security advisors. For instance, appointing General Colin Powell, famous for the Powell Doctrine “designed as an antidote to the Vietnam syndrome” to prevent any future deadlocks, sunk cost fallacies, and have a coherent plan for engagement and exit. Additionally, Brent Scowcroft, named an embodiment of the principles of traditional realism by Powaski, was made Bush’s assistant for national security affairs. See R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.3; J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.42.

²⁸⁸ R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.18.

²⁸⁹ This is largely the consensus among policymakers such as Bush, Matlock, and Baker and scholars who study the foreign policy of the Bush Administration. See V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, pp.389-393; J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.8; R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, pp. 41-42; J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p.575; J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, pp. 668-670.

²⁹⁰ National Security Directive 40, ‘Decisions on START Issues’, May 14, 1990, Secret, Textual Archives at the George Bush Presidential Library, Declassified Per E.O. 12958, Bush Presidential Records, p.1. Originally accessed at: <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/nsd/nsd40.pdf>

²⁹¹ National Security Directive 50, ‘Decisions on START and CFE Issues’, October 12, 1990, Secret, Textual Archives at the George Bush Presidential Library, Declassified Per E.O. 12958, Bush Presidential Records. Originally accessed at: <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/nsd/nsd50.pdf>

²⁹² Per Jack Matlock, this treaty “was one of the events that formalized the end of the cold war.” See J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 524. Matlock also stated that “the Soviet high command was attempting to violate some of the provisions.”, p.525.

economically and politically capable states, such as the newly unified Germany, to obtain US nukes.²⁹³

The question of security became ever more acute with the declarations of independence by the Soviet republics throughout 1991. In July 1991 the US and the USSR signed the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (START I) to limit the number of strategic nuclear warheads to the ceiling of 6000.²⁹⁴ During the talks, the US was particularly interested in the following four objectives: 1) accountability on storage, and command and control of nuclear warheads, 2) safe disabling of nukes, 3) cooperation in the reduction of nuclear proliferation, and 4) fast ratification of CFE and START treaties.²⁹⁵ This allowed for a future gradual cut in the ceilings in the subsequent START II agreement negotiated in early 1993 before Bush left office between the US and the new Russian Federation. Bush also proposed to eliminate all tactical nuclear weapons on September 27, 1991.²⁹⁶ Gorbachev reciprocated by agreeing to begin dismantling tactical nuclear warheads. In November 1991, the US Congress passed the relevant Nunn-Lugar bill, which earmarked \$400 million in 1992 to assist the USSR and its successors in cutting down on weapons arsenals.²⁹⁷ With these actions, the Bush Administration attempted to prevent the dilution of the pool of states with nuclear weapons.²⁹⁸

²⁹³ J. Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future”, p.38. The nuclear capabilities of states in Europe had been a topic of concern for a multitude of scholars because of the implications for regional security. Mearsheimer in his later article on nuclear warheads in newly free post-Soviet states such as Ukraine argued for a more nuanced and balanced US foreign policy that would envision having a nuclear Ukraine as opposed to dismantling nukes remaining in Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan or delivering them to Russia. See J. Mearsheimer, “The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent”, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3, 1993, p. 53.

²⁹⁴ This would represent an almost double reduction in the number of strategic warheads for both states. See R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, pp. 41-42; Zubok outlines that the US delegation in Novo-Ogaryovo had sought to “sign the strategic arms control treaty” and “had continued to squeeze as much American advantage as possible from the embattled Gorbachev and his crisis-ridden military.” V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, pp.389-392.

²⁹⁵ As described by Baker. See for details J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p.571.

²⁹⁶ Per Baker, the US delegation approached Yeltsin and Shaposhnikov, USSR’s defense minister, to reach an understanding regarding of withdrawing all tactical nukes to Russia from other Soviet republics. Shaposhnikov assured Baker that the process of withdrawal was to be done by early 1992. As Baker explains, this prevent nuclear warheads from getting into the hands of militant groups outside of accountable government reach. See Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, pp.570-575; R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.42

²⁹⁷ As mentioned in R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.42.

²⁹⁸ Warnings against spreading or even letting existing owners of nuclear warheads after the collapse of the USSR stemmed out of the belief that it was most importantly safer to have only select countries be in charge of wielding the weapons of mass destruction. A. Arbatov, “Security issues in Soviet successor states”, p.2 in P. Brukoff et al., “Russia and Her Neighbors: Symposium Report”, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1992. It, however, must be said that within Bush Administration several officials like Scowcroft were eager to encourage the dilution of nuclear forces. Baker was instead worried about command and control over the nukes, which he did not want to become “loose”. See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, pp.42-43. As Onega stresses, having “the most accommodating Soviet leadership ever” certainly affected policy calculation within the Bush Administration. See T.

The second pillar of the approach to arms treaties was general security in democratic Central and Eastern Europe. Apart from the NATO non-expansion pledge, the topics of cooperation and the possible integration of all newly formed democratic states came to prominence. The US, coupled with its Western European allies, held significant power over policymaking in Eastern Europe. As established in the previous section, the US did not intend to change its internal political makeup. However, managing new states' foreign policies and relations is of acute importance. This was significant in light of scholars such as Mearsheimer warning against hypernationalism rising to power in newly formed democratic states.²⁹⁹ The disintegration of the Warsaw Pact, Yugoslavia, and, ultimately, the USSR challenged the structural underpinnings of the existing order and called for new measures. As Daniel Hamilton and Kristina Spohr highlight, the new states' need for security was met only halfway by the West.³⁰⁰ The carnage in former Yugoslavia exposed the apparent lack of effective response mechanisms to manage conflicts at the heart of Europe. James Baker famously said "We ain't got no dog in that fight" regarding the potential US involvement in the Balkans.³⁰¹ The US approach to working with new actors following the Warsaw Pact and the USSR's downfall is explored in the following section.

5. "Collective Engagement" or "Paralytic Passivity"?

In September 1991, Brent Scowcroft prepared a memorandum for President Bush regarding the developments in the USSR, in which he accentuated that the center was no longer the source of all power and that individual republics were gaining more relevance.³⁰² As the

Onea, *US foreign policy in the Post-Cold War era*, p.48. Per Sarotte, Baker envisioned only Russia to come out of the USSR with nuclear warheads. See M. Sarotte, *Not one inch*, p.190.

²⁹⁹ On hypernationalism see J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future", p.21.

³⁰⁰ Developing organizations like CSCE (OSCE) was ambitious, it still "lacked the mechanisms and institutional capabilities to prevent, suppress or mediate the conflicts arising in this broad area. NATO alone had the structures and forces for engage in such tasks, but many of its members did not have the will do to so." See D. Hamilton, K. Spohr, *Open door*, p.9.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁰² Scowcroft expressed the sentiment that while the new republics were now important in the creation of US foreign policy, he still held on to the idea that the USSR had a chance to survive the August Coup and the declarations of sovereignty and independence of individual Soviet republics. In this light, the National Security Advisor highlighted that "The fluidity of the situation, and the search for a model, gives us now more influence than we have ever had in the Soviet Union. The issue for us is if, and how, we choose to use that influence." B. Scowcroft, "Developments in the USSR", September 5, 1991, Secret, Textual Archives at the George Bush Presidential Library, Declassified Per E.O. 13526, Bush Presidential Records, p.4. Originally accessed at: <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/27265-document-2-memorandum-scowcroft-president-developments-ussr-september-5-1991>

USSR was inching closer to its eventual demise solidified through the Belavezha Accords in December 1991, the West needed to prepare a mode of conduct to collaborate with fifteen new actors in addition to the previously disintegrated Warsaw Pact states. The approach the Bush Administration chose to interact with in the new world order was dubbed by James Baker as “collective engagement” at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 5, 1992, along with other occasions.³⁰³ For Baker and Scowcroft, collective engagement was a way for the US to engage its allies and partners on topics of international importance while taking the lead.³⁰⁴ Bush Sr. in his campaign speech on February 19, 1992, stated that the world was at a pivot point as Communism faced a certain defeat and the US had the chance to lead the world to the new “limitless possibilities.”³⁰⁵ In that same committee hearing, Baker laid out key policy objectives which were to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, help abate regional conflicts through a collective effort of the European Community, G7, and NATO among others.³⁰⁶ In another one of his speeches, Baker goes into detail about the policy of “collective engagement” of the Bush Administration, which was to enlarge democratic communities and work with allies and international organizations to “win peace for the whole world” through American leadership.³⁰⁷ Baker asserted that “the policy of “collective engagement” avoids the dangerous extremes of fallacious omnipotence or misplaced multilateralism. The US is not the world’s policeman, yet we are not, either, bystanders.”³⁰⁸

³⁰³ C-SPAN. *U.S. Foreign Policy Overview*. [Video]. (1992, February 5). C-SPAN. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?24219-1/us-foreign-policy-overview>. It must be noted that scholars in the field do not prioritize Baker’s phrasing to label this US foreign policy approach to cooperating with its western partners on the topic of the ex-communist states.

³⁰⁴ See R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.17.

³⁰⁵ See C-SPAN. *Bush Campaign Speech*. [Video]. (1992, February 19). C-SPAN. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?24530-1/bush-campaign-speech>. Engel states that Bush’s confidence in his Administration’s approach was heavily rooted in “American-led international resolve and American-led leadership of an international coalition of democracies that had secured the great victories of Bush’s own youth and that had set the stage for the free world’s triumph over communism.” See for details J. Engel, “A Better World”, p.35.

³⁰⁶ As stated in C-SPAN. *U.S. Foreign Policy Overview*. [Video]. (1992, February 5). C-SPAN. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?24219-1/us-foreign-policy-overview>. It must be noted that scholars in the field do not prioritize Baker’s phrasing to label the US foreign policy approach to cooperating with its western partners on the topic of the ex-communist states.

³⁰⁷ Baker elaborates that this approach is a more potent alternative to isolationism because “real democracies don’t go to war with each other.” C-SPAN. *U.S.-Former Soviet Union Relations*. [Video]. (1992, April 21). C-SPAN. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?25708-1/us-soviet-union-relations>

³⁰⁸ Despite the multilateral, “collective” approach, Baker also stated that “the US reserves the right to act alone, which at times may be the only way to truly lead, to truly serve our national interest.” However, cooperation with the post-Soviet Union would revolve around cooperation. See C-SPAN. *U.S.-Former Soviet Union Relations*. [Video]. (1992, April 21). C-SPAN. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?25708-1/us-soviet-union-relations>. According to Powaski, Scowcroft considered the US to be exceptional, the only ones who can be the guiding light who need to

As was established in earlier sections of the chapter, some scholars see the Bush Administration as one exercising restraint but moving steadily forward, but other scholars and observers have been skeptical about the efficiency and steadfastness of such an approach. For instance, scholars describe the Bush administration with a few exceptions as “usually quite tentative and cautious, allowing others to take the foreign policy initiative.”³⁰⁹ Walter Mead in his column for the New York Times criticized George HW Bush, “no President since Harry Truman has had the foreign policy opportunities handed to George Bush; no President since Woodrow Wilson has made so little of them.”³¹⁰ Mead dubbed the Bush Administration’s approach as “paralytic passivity”, a countervailing name to “collective engagement”.³¹¹

6. The Bush Administration’s National Interests

The foreign policy of the Bush Administration was not always consistent depending on the region and the actors involved. While most scholars agree that the US foreign policy under Bush was that of restraint and power balancing, the response was different in dealing with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the Tiananmen massacre by the Chinese Communist Party. Fundamentally, some scholars attribute such policy calculations and responses to the wider area of “national interests”.³¹² Scholars generally agree that the Bush Administration did not

protect democracy and human rights, but the US “should not right all wrongs”. This statement is somewhat consistent with that of Baker’s on the topic of Yugoslavia but not on the Gulf War. See R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.17.

³⁰⁹ Among the exceptions is the US proactive position in the Gulf War. See J. Rosati, S. Twing, “The Presidency and U.S. Foreign Policy” in J. Scott, *After the End*, p. 36.

³¹⁰ The academic criticizes the Bush Administration’s bold statements of success in foreign policy as those lacking substance given the weakness of international organizations and the US itself in putting out the fire in the Balkans as well as weak attempts at integration of Russia and other ex-Soviet republics. “Presented with opportunity and responsibility on this scale, George Bush has nothing to offer.” See *The NY Times*, “Forget the World? Consider the Consequences”, Aug. 2, 1992.

³¹¹ This assessment is shared by some other scholars who underscore the confused and passive approach to dealing with the unraveling of the Warsaw Pact and the USSR. See M. Mandelbaum, “The Bush Foreign Policy”, p.5.

³¹² There is no commonly accepted definition of the term “national interest” among the scholars chiefly due to the term’s opaqueness and everyday use to justify complex and multilayered actions with a form of reasoning that varies depending on political needs. Some scholars define it as “*the perceived needs and desires of one sovereign state in relation to other sovereign states comprising the external environment.*” Donald Nuechterlein further suggests the division of the supposed “national interest” pool into four categories to identify the specific tenets of foreign policy, which would include: defense, economy, world order, and ideology. See D. Nuechterlein, “National interests and foreign policy: A conceptual framework for analysis and decision-making”, *British Journal of International Studies*, 2(03), 246, 1976, pp.247-248. Arnold Wolfers states that national interest under the pretense of finding the best solution comes “with an attractive and possibly deceptive name”. See A. Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962, p. 147. Scholars like Miroslav Nincic among others highlight the role of political ideologies such as realism and liberalism in explaining the national interest and foreign policy calculations. See M. Nincic, “The National Interest and its Interpretation”. *The Review of Politics*, 61(01), 29, 1999.

particularly resort to promoting values traditionally attributed to the core of the American identity, such as freedom and democracy.³¹³

The restrained power balancing approach towards the USSR and then the Russian Federation should be analyzed side by side with the US responses to two milestone events in world history: the Tiananmen Square massacre and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, which eventually turned into the Gulf War. The Sino-American relationship was similar in many ways to that between the USSR and then Russia with the US, in particular in the area of security and nuclear arms proliferation.³¹⁴ In the Tiananmen massacre of 1989, the Communist Party of China issued orders to the Chinese soldiers to crush the student demonstration that was asking for a Soviet-style *perestroika* in China with arms thereby murdering hundreds of protestors.³¹⁵ This tragedy elicited indignation and hostility toward China in the US but the links were not suspended. Baker stated that US strategic national interests were too important to shut China out considering the bigger security concerns and possible alienation of the Chinese government.³¹⁶ Some sanctions were applied, however, the cooperation was much less visible to the public eye although the Bush Administration tried to break through to the Chinese officials and get the latter to improve human rights practices.³¹⁷ Baker believed that "overriding strategic interests of the United States

³¹³ Some scholars are predominantly focused on the power balancing analysis of the Bush Administration. See R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.3; J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.10.

³¹⁴ China, the USSR, and the US were all working together on a range of important security and economic agreements. China's non-veto in the UN Security Council for the initiation of the Gulf War and willingness to suspend a part of the arms proliferation were all to critical for the US national interests per James Baker. See J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, pp.588-590. Scott notes that the primary goal of Sino-American cooperation was to counter the Soviets. As the USSR was collapsing, the Tiananmen tragedy was equivalent to a cold shower for many in the US. Human rights violations, authoritarianism, piracy on American properties, and other concerns were all significant impediments to Sino-American cooperation on the US side prior to the Clinton Administration taking charge. For more details see J. Rourke, R. Clark, "Making U.S. Foreign Policy toward China in the Clinton Administration" in J. Scott, *After the End*, pp. 202-203.

³¹⁵ As noted in R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.21; J. Rourke, R. Clark, "Making U.S. Foreign Policy toward China in the Clinton Administration" in J. Scott, *After the End*, pp. 202-203.

³¹⁶ J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, pp.588-590. Placing an embargo on trade relations with China after years of progress countering the USSR and improving cooperation would effectively pauses and damage any future talks. Powaski cites Scowcroft who said that the US "had too much invested in the China situation to throw it away in one stroke." See R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.22.

³¹⁷ As Powaski later argues, because sanctions were not meant to be crushing, the full-fledged relations between China and the US were resumed after Bush left office. See R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, pp.50-51.

require engagement, not isolation.”³¹⁸ Scholars generally agree that the US used an approach of restraint toward China in a similar way as toward the USSR and Russia.³¹⁹

A countervailing example of the Bush Administration's foreign policy was the response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Having intelligence that Iraq was getting into a belligerent posture, the US mulled whether to hold joint exercises with the UAE to deter Iraq a mere week before the day of the invasion.³²⁰ On August 1, 1990, Saddam Hussein ordered his soldiers to seize Kuwait, an oil-rich neighbor that held access to the seaports east of Iraq. The invasion was in breach of the world order and sent Bush and his advisors looking for appropriate measures. The initial response was a trade embargo and asset freeze of both Iraqi and Kuwaiti governments and a quick agreement with Saudi Arabia to dispatch troops for the latter's protection.³²¹ The Soviet Union was on board with voting in favor of UNSC resolutions “implementing a UN embargo on arms shipments to Iraq” and “authorizing the use of military force, if necessary, to enforce the embargo.”³²² Realizing that sanctions would not work, Baker recounted that complicated preparations were to establish a powerful force to make Hussein leave Kuwait.³²³ An augmentation of force was suggested initially to motivate Iraqi soldiers out of Kuwait. Seeing as sanctions and threats did not work, the Bush Administration focused on preparing a relevant military action, one that would be conducted with allies in a policy named “assertive multilateralism” by Madeleine Albright, the US representative at the UN.³²⁴ Following countless extensive negotiations in November and with China and the USSR not opposing the UNSC Resolution 678 to use “all necessary means” to make Iraq leave Kuwait, the Bush Administration arranged a coalition of two dozen states ready to supply their soldiers to defeat the Iraqi military

³¹⁸ J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p.594.

³¹⁹ See for instance T. Onea, *US foreign policy in the Post-Cold War era*, pp.50-52. F. Cameron, *US foreign policy after the Cold War: Global Hegemon or reluctant sheriff?*, London: Routledge, 2005, p.38; J. Rourke, R. Clark, “Making U.S. Foreign Policy toward China in the Clinton Administration” in J. Scott, *After the End*, pp. 201-203.

³²⁰ Initially, the idea to hold such exercises was almost opposed. See J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p.271.

³²¹ R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.32.

³²² The Soviet support was not inclusive of sending their own military as part of an international coalition to help deal with the Iraqi military. R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.32.

³²³ The prior war between Iraq and Iran made sanctions have a smaller impact as the Iraqis knew how it was when the state of affairs of poor, so at the White House a more powerful course of actions was being hatched. See J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, pp.301-304.

³²⁴ J. Sterling-Folker, “Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Assertive Multilateralism and Post-Cold War U.S. Foreign Policy Making” in J. Scott, *After the End*, pp. 277-278.

and force them to leave Kuwait.³²⁵ The coalition moved against Hussein and Iraqi soldiers already in January, after planning since October, and by the end of February a ceasefire was announced as the Iraqi military suffered a crushing defeat and retreated from Kuwait.³²⁶

The framing of the US national interest in the decision to go to war with Iraq is a rather special case in George H.W. Bush's foreign policy. Defining the US national interest and preparing to fight Hussein and the Iraqi military in Kuwait required coherent framing and justification. Joseph Nye in his article for *The Atlantic* argued that in a world of "rising interdependence" Americans "have a national interest in reducing disorder beyond our borders."³²⁷ The scholar stated that events that happen outside of the US borders are capable of affecting the US, particularly when it comes to oil prices and weapons proliferation and, given America's role, the US president needed to take on the responsibility to lead.³²⁸ Bush maintained the need to uphold respect for sovereignty and recognized borders if the rules-based world order were to function.³²⁹ Many scholars highlight the willingness of the US to use internal consensus in Congress and international institutions and connections with partners as opposed to promoting change unilaterally.³³⁰ At the same time, Gorbachev hoped till the very end that the US would not resort to a military operation as the Soviet delegate attempted to talk Hussein's forces out of

³²⁵ James Baker listed numerous negotiations that were held with partners and rivals alike to facilitate a military solution to the Iraqi invasion. Baker maintained that Bush was reluctant to use force but ready. See J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, pp.308-328. The coalition involved some 700,000 troops, with 500,000 being US soldiers. Over fifty nations provided relevant financial coverage nearing some fifty billion dollars. See R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.33.

³²⁶ See for more details F. Cameron, *US foreign policy after the Cold War*, p.15; R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, pp.35-36.

³²⁷ Nye said that the US national interest is simply "a set of interests that are widely shared by Americans in their relations with the rest of the world." Framing the interest need not only be viewed from the realist doctrine because democratic values and international rules are just as important as simple ideas of security, power, and economic wealth. See for more details J. Nye, "Why the Gulf War served the national interest?", *The Atlantic*, 1991.

³²⁸ Nye argued that because the world is so interconnected that as one of the largest players, the US had a vested interest in promoting peace in the Middle East as Hussein may have set his sights on Saudi Arabia and Israel, key US partners in the region and more. See J. Nye, "Why the Gulf War served the national interest?" Bush saw the US as the last remaining powerhouse with the means and the responsibility and opportunity to uphold "the new world order". See for details F. Cameron, *US foreign policy after the Cold War*, p.16; M. Mandelbaum, "The Bush Foreign Policy", p.11. "Bush believed it was a president's job to shepherd this new world through its period of change, to contain the violence and instability he could not control, and to impose structure and order whenever possible." Per Jeffrey Engel, Bush said that appeasement would not work on Hussein and that democracies need enforcement. Bush called the responsibility to act "the burden of leadership" and that American purpose is driven by principle." See George H. W. Bush, "Address to the Nation Announcing the Deployment of United States Armed Forces to Saudi Arabia", The American Presidency Project, August 8, 1990; J. Engel, "A Better World...", pp.34-37.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

³³⁰ While the consensus in the Congress was hard to get, the possibility to have legislative approval was important as it demonstrated the US president did not act without support within the branches of power. See J. Rosati, S. Twing, "The Presidency and U.S. Foreign Policy" in J. Scott, *After the End*, p. 36.

Kuwait.³³¹ The Bush Administration decided to proceed with the operation despite potentially humiliating the Soviets believing that appeasement would not work and a resolute action was the best course. The discourse on “national interest” may help scholars to assess the dynamics of a state’s foreign policy as prioritization of objectives versus actions taken to accomplish such could be compared.

7. The Role of Congress in US Policy

Representing the legislative branch of power, Congress serves as a vital check and balance on the Presidential Administration's power in international affairs. Through legislative initiatives, power of oversight, and budget disbursement, the legislature can affect the direction, priorities, and outcomes of US foreign policy. Congress can declare war, regulate commerce with foreign nations, and approve treaties.³³² While Congress has an extraordinary capacity to guide foreign policy, the actual historical practice differs from theory. A study by Lindsay and Ripley classified three important types of policy: crisis, strategic, and structural.³³³ Among the historical examples of successful Congressional action that directly shaped US policy were the Boland Amendments in the 1980s which limited the ability of the Reagan administration to support the Contras, a group of anti-Sandinista rebels in Nicaragua.³³⁴ Congress wields the power of anticipated reactions, procedural legislation, and framing opinion.³³⁵ These means

³³¹ Zubok states that Gorbachev wanted to avoid violence because of the previous agreements with the US on a new approach to dealing with crises and because Iraq was an economic partner of the USSR. Ultimately, the Soviets wanted to avoid See V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, pp.295-297.

³³² The White House, “The Legislative Branch”. Retrieved from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/our-government/the-legislative-branch/>

³³³ Crisis policy refers to the recognition of an imminent danger to the United States' national interests. Strategic policy outlines objectives and methods for defense and foreign policy and represents the most common beliefs of what foreign policy is. Structural policy pertains to resource allocation and resembles decision-making on domestic, distributive policies. See J. Lindsay, R. Ripley, “How Congress Influences Foreign and Defense Policy”, *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 47, no. 6, 1994, pp.10-12.

³³⁴ Zoellick lists many quarrels between Congress and incumbent Administrations over time where Congress members challenged US foreign policy decisions. R. Zoellick, “Congress and the Making of US Foreign Policy”, *Survival*, 41, no. 4, 1999, p.21; The track record shows that Congress has seldom overruled the president on foreign policy in the past. It usually ratifies the president's proposals, especially on decisions to use force. In many cases it is easier to find support for a given policy track, than advancing a substantive policy change. As seen in J. Lindsay, “Congress and Foreign Policy: Why the Hill Matters.” *Political Science Quarterly* 107, no. 4, 1992, pp.611-617; J. Lindsay, R. Ripley, “Foreign and Defense Policy in Congress: A Research Agenda for the 1990s.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (1992): 417–49.

³³⁵ For the Executive it is important to balance against possible Congressional opposition and to ensure that the opposition does not outweigh support. Awareness of existing opposition or support shapes decision-making and helps both Congress and White House to navigate potential challenges or conflicts. See J. Lindsay, R. Ripley. “How Congress Influences Foreign and Defense Policy.”, pp.18-21. The Congressional capacity to affect foreign policy

allow the legislature to increase the number of legal checks and safeguards for the policy initiatives which eventually must take into consideration the weight of Congressional opinion.³³⁶ Congress can also frame the public discourse in a most favorable way to sway public opinion concerning polarizing policy initiatives. For this study, the role of Congress shall be inferred from the scholarly contribution to the historical example of the Gulf War mentioned in the previous section.

Congress became closely involved in foreign policy after the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal through the War Powers Act of 1973.³³⁷ President Bush on numerous occasions appealed to Congress to seek approval for foreign policy decisions related to the Gulf War. Donald Westerfield argued that before the Desert Shield and Desert Storm operations of the Gulf War Congress predominantly let the US President “take initiative” in military initiatives per their role of Commander-in-Chief.³³⁸ With the Iraqi invasion at the start of August 1990, Bush conducted consultations with Congress regarding developments on the ground in Kuwait.³³⁹ On September 11, 1990, Bush made a speech in front of the joint session of Congress which is seen by many scholars as one where Bush stressed the simultaneous unwillingness and need to use force to push Iraqi soldiers out of Kuwait.³⁴⁰ According to scholars, Bush claimed he did not

can also be seen through public addresses, mail, and legislative action with a lot of the interaction happening outside of the formal channels. See B. Rottinghaus, D. Bergan. “New Data and New Directions in Interbranch Lobbying: Congressional Mail Summaries of the George H.W. Bush White House.” *Congress & the Presidency* 33, no. 1, 2006, pp. 75–94. For more information on the informal interaction between Congress and Administration see R. Hersman, *Friends and Foes*. Brookings Institution Press, 2000.

³³⁶ Legal checks and safeguards fall under the tools of ‘procedural legislation’ whereby Congress has legislative capacity to ensure foreign policy is not overextended in its execution through instruments like veto, use of institutions inside the executive, legal conditions for executive policy conduct, and accountable reporting of the actions on the part of the White House. See J. Lindsay, R. Ripley, “How Congress Influences Foreign and Defense Policy”, pp.22-27.

³³⁷ The War Powers Act was an attempt by Congress to have more leverage over foreign policy in terms of crisis situations. See J. Lindsay, R. Ripley, “How Congress Influences Foreign and Defense Policy”, pp.10-11; J. Rosati and S. Twing, “The Presidency and U.S. Foreign Policy after the Cold War” in J. Scott, *After the End*, p.39. The Act restricted Presidential authorities in deploying US army units abroad without Congressional approval. See for details J. Dumbrell, *American Foreign Policy: Carter to Clinton*, London: Macmillan Education UK, 1997, p.6.

³³⁸ The scholar insisted that progressively humanitarian assistance is likely to progress to combat assistance and defensive as well as offensive operations given the situation on the ground. See D. Westerfield, *War Powers: The President, The Congress, And The Question Of War*, Praeger, 1996, pp.119-121.

³³⁹ Westerfield emphasizes that while consultations were important and did take place ahead of actions, sometimes the events happened with the speed rivaling the capacity for consensus between branches of the US government. One of such early examples was the shots fired by US ships in the direction of Iraqi tankers trying to break US-imposed blockade effected on August 12-13. See D. Westerfield, *War Powers*, p.130.

³⁴⁰ D. Westerfield, *War Powers*, p.133; R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.33.

need Congressional support, yet he still requested the support of the US legislature.³⁴¹ Within Bush Administration there were two opposing opinions on legislative interference with Secretary of Defense Cheney arguing for a bypass and Powell, Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stating the need to secure legislative support.³⁴² In January 1991 Bush sent a letter to the Congressional leaders asking for support for the “use of all necessary means” to achieve the objectives of the UNSC Resolution 678.³⁴³ Congress passed authorization, however, the voting result came close.³⁴⁴ According to Westerfield, Bush believed he did not *per se* need to ask for Congressional approval of the use of force against Iraqi forces in Kuwait because he already had the power of the UNSC resolution behind him and the authority under the US Constitution.³⁴⁵ The debate in Congress preceding the eventual authorization is demonstrative of the power of the legislature to reflect the “unity of purpose on the part of the people of the United States.”³⁴⁶ Ultimately the slow pace of Congressional consensus and the much faster development of events in the Gulf demonstrated that Bush could not readily interact with Congress on pressing military questions.³⁴⁷

Throughout Bush’s tenure, the President received hundreds of letters from senators and representatives of the House, many of them on the topic of foreign policy and the Gulf War.³⁴⁸

³⁴¹ It is noted by Rosati and Twing that Bush enjoyed only marginal support on the military action, which was largely based on partisan division. Republicans voted in favor, while most Democrats opposed the move. See J. Rosati and S. Twing, “The Presidency and U.S. Foreign Policy after the Cold War” in J. Scott, *After the End*, p. 39. Dumbrell highlights the unsuccessful attempts of some Democrats to oppose the military decision with a lawsuit based on the War Powers Act. See J. Dumbrell, *American Foreign Policy*, p.158.

³⁴² J. Dumbrell, *American Foreign Policy*, p.158.

³⁴³ D. Westerfield, *War Powers*, p.153.

³⁴⁴ 52 to 47 in favor in the Senate, 250 to 183 in favor in the House of Representatives. See J. Rosati and S. Twing, “The Presidency and U.S. Foreign Policy after the Cold War” in J. Scott, *After the End*, p. 39. During the debate some senators and representatives attempted to impose checks in a form of restrictions on Bush Administration’s mandate. See S. Burns. “Legalizing a Political Fight: Congressional Abdication of War Powers in the Bush and Obama Administrations.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 3, 2021, p.12.

³⁴⁵ The eventual decision to obtain Congressional support may have proved more important than only have the UNSC resolution. See D. Westerfield, *War Powers*, p.154. Some authors like Sarah Burns highlight that the initial deployment of 100,000 troops to the Middle East prior to requesting Congressional approval was not exactly the ideal blueprint to greenlight military action. The author argues Bush could have always relied on the Commander-in-Chief duties and UNSC authorization for action. See S. Burns. “Legalizing a Political Fight”, p. 11.

³⁴⁶ D. Westerfield, *War Powers*, pp.154-156.

³⁴⁷ This is underpinned by Bush’s statement during the signing of the resolution authorizing military action against the Iraqi army. Bush asserted that Congressional support for use of US Army abroad was not in fact necessary “to use the Armed Forces to defend vital US interests or the constitutional authority of the War Powers Resolution.” See D. Westerfield, *War Powers*, p.172.

³⁴⁸ The study indicates that the majority of the letters were sent by the members of the Republican party, which President Bush was also a representative of. According to the study, this is an indicator of the ‘co-partisan’ attempts to better lobby a member of their own party. See B. Rottinghaus, D. Bergan. “New Data and New Directions in Interbranch Lobbying”, p.86.

This part of the interaction between Congress and the Administration could indicate an important role in informal aspects of setting foreign policy.³⁴⁹ The literature on the exact impact Congress may have had on the actions of George Herbert Walker Bush Administration in other areas is quite scarce and requires more attention.³⁵⁰

8. US Economic Stimulus

One of the tools to advance policy objectives and “national interests” the Bush Administration had at its disposal was the use of financial leverage. Many scholars such as Sarotte, Goldgeier and McFaul, and Kotkin covered the importance of economics and wealth amid the collapse of the USSR. As Kotkin states, “Most ordinary people had anticipated the onset of American-style affluence, combined with European-style social welfare.”³⁵¹ The collapsing economy of the USSR needed help. In the spring and summer of 1991, Gorbachev solicited help from the G7 and other international partners to help revive the USSR’s economy to no avail.³⁵² In December 1991, Baker called for an international coalition to support the “disoriented” people of the USSR with money and food.³⁵³ At the end of 1991 and the start of 1992, the Department of State planned a corresponding airlift plan called “Operation Provide Hope” to deliver food and medicine to emerging states.³⁵⁴

Goldgeier and McFaul stress that Soviet and then Russian authorities were eager to allow Western experts to help transform the political and economic situation of the USSR and then Russia.³⁵⁵ Due to the power-balancing nature of the Bush Administration, the initial concern was

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 89; Also see R. Hersman, *Friends and Foes*.

³⁵⁰ The link of causality and effect has not been studied in tremendous detail especially considering the classification of presented by Lindsay and Ripley. Note: the classification of anticipated reactions, procedural legislation, and framing opinion. As quoted in J. Lindsay, R. Ripley, “How Congress Influences Foreign and Defense Policy”, pp.18-31.

³⁵¹ The expectations differed drastically from the reality the citizens of the USSR witnessed throughout individual republics. Soviet-era elites engaged in an expeditious appropriation of property and means of production as the collapsing USSR was exiting socialism. See for more details S. Kotkin. *Armageddon averted*, p. 93.

³⁵² Powaski writes that the Soviet membership request to the IMF was denied. No state was prepared to offer significant economic aid. Scowcroft was not confident the economic aid from the US would be used appropriately instead of being lost in corruption See R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.39.

³⁵³ See M. Sarotte, *Not one inch*, p.191.

³⁵⁴ These humanitarian assistance programs were another step in the “collective engagement” of the Bush Administration. “We wanted to see a truly global, coordinated effort.” Department of State staffers managed to successfully request millions of dollars in assistance from other government programs. See J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 618. The *NY Times*, “As Food Airlift Starts, Baker Hints U.S. Might Agree to Role in a Ruble Fund”, Feb 10, 1992.

³⁵⁵ J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, pp.59-61.

to secure agreements on nuclear non-proliferation and debt inheritance of the soon-to-be independent republics.³⁵⁶ After the Belavezha accords and the collapse of the USSR, Baker recounted that he was doubting the revolutionary spirit of Yeltsin and his team on the grounds of populism.³⁵⁷ Additionally, many decision-makers and the general public were wary of providing aid to first the USSR and then Russia, recently former enemies.³⁵⁸ The collapse of the USSR allowed Yeltsin to reform his cabinet of ministers and Yegor Gaidar, a young and radical reformer who was appointed a deputy prime minister dealing with economic affairs, started implementing sweeping reforms at the start of 1992. They resulted in “skyrocketing inflation that wiped out the savings of many ordinary Russians” which in itself did not promote a pro-Western sentiment.³⁵⁹ Scholars argue about whether Gaidar’s reforms were feasible at the time, given that no Western aid was given initially.³⁶⁰ Kotkin asserts that Russia was simply in too much economic and political disarray and could not possibly have undergone “proper” reforms.³⁶¹ Matlock contends that Gaidar managed to implement market reforms in several areas, such as “price liberalization, legalization of most private economic activity, free convertibility of the ruble, and new laws appropriate to a market economy.”³⁶² Matlock further lists that a few things were outside of Gaidar’s reach like monetary printing and high taxes which resulted in a currency devaluation and capital flight.³⁶³

³⁵⁶ This approach, per Goldgeier and McFaul, was fueled by the skepticism and lack of trust in the Russian authorities to deliver on Western-style economic reforms. J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, pp.59-61.

³⁵⁷ See J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, pp. 577-578.

³⁵⁸ J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.64.

³⁵⁹ Marten argues that the presence of American economic advisers and lack of Western funds contributed to the dissatisfaction with Yeltsin’s rapprochement policy and led Russians to put the blame on the USA. See K. Marten, “Reconsidering NATO Expansion”, p.148.

³⁶⁰ Zubok mentions that Gaidar’s initial request to the American delegation in December 1991 for a stabilization fund of 4 to 5 bln. dollars was not granted as Russia was depleted of liquid resources to sustain itself. See V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, pp. 657-660. Baker told Gaidar and Yeltsin to solicit aid from the IMF and the World Bank. See J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 655.

³⁶¹ Kotkin states that the economy was in the state of “free fall”, the debt of the USSR which Russia inherited alone was enormous and the expectations to overcome such hurdles simply could not outrun the time constraints. “Before Gaidar had lifted a finger, Russia was utterly broke and in chaos.” See S. Kotkin. *Armageddon averted*, pp. 93-97.

³⁶² J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p.683. Goldgeier and McFaul remark that Gaidar’s reforms managed to significantly bring down inflation over the course of 7 months from January to August 1992. See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.66. Kotkin argues that Gaidar failed to establish fiscal discipline. See S. Kotkin. *Armageddon averted*, pp. 98-102.

³⁶³ Matlock and Kotkin stress the issue of money printing. Ruble was saved as the currency of choice, only as the USSR collapsed, its bank was dissolved and 14 new banks took its role in new republics. Those banks had the opportunity to print money as they saw fit. Kotkin also tells of the private firms awarding themselves “free” money through subsidies extracted from the government. See S. Kotkin. *Armageddon averted*, pp. 98-102; J. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p.683.

Provided no sensible Western aid was granted, Western-style reforms were stumbling.³⁶⁴ Only in April, President Bush and Chancellor Kohl announced that 24 billion dollars would be provided, a move deemed by some scholars as haphazard as the G-7 “had not even been consulted about the announcement.”³⁶⁵ Throughout negotiations, the US was able to influence the governments in the post-USSR space, yet the Bush Administration did not proceed to effectively affect change.³⁶⁶ One of the most important reasons was that the Bush Administration could not readily “summon” money following debt relief for Poland, “skyrocketing” prices in unified Germany, and already staggering expenses of the US Government especially in the year preceding Presidential elections, where Bill Clinton presented a strong challenge to George HW Bush.³⁶⁷

While the scale of support for ex-Soviet states was much greater than that needed to rebuild Western Europe after the Second World War, the main issue was the source of aid.³⁶⁸ The first influx of money came from the IMF in July.³⁶⁹ Following Yeltsin’s visits to Washington and a series of negotiations, economic cooperation continued. The main goal of the US government was to crystallize the aid announced in April into the “Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act,” (or FREEDOM Support Act for short) which was meant to support first and foremost Bush Administration’s immediate power-balancing objectives such as arms control, nonproliferation, and nuclear safety.³⁷⁰ Critical in developing democratization and free market initiatives, the Act would come to bring peace and prosperity not only to the ex-Soviet states as recipients but also to the US and allies as

³⁶⁴ The US Congress did adopt the Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of 1991 to provide funds to nascent democracies dismantling their arms and appropriate humanitarian airlift. See H.R.3807 - 102nd Congress (1991-1992): Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of 1991. (1991, December 12).

³⁶⁵ Goldgeier and McFaul also believe that had the aid come sooner, the Russian state would have maintained a progressive economic policy, which was maintained by Gaidar and his staffers. See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.66.

³⁶⁶ Goldgeier and McFaul argue that such a passive course is partly because of Bush’s immediate concern with power-balancing and aversion to instilling democratic values abroad. Powaski argues that many in the Bush Administration were not prepared to give cheques to Russia to do economic reforms because of corruption and political instability. R. Powaski, *Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy*, p.40.

³⁶⁷ See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.80; J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 656.

³⁶⁸ Many states and international organizations realized that in order for any aid to work, it would have to be used coherently and transparently. However, the size of aid was also complicated to calculate and it was not certain that the aid given would be enough. As a result, many were hesitant to provide relevant money and resources. See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.65.

³⁶⁹ S. Kotkin. *Armageddon averted*, pp. 98-102.

³⁷⁰ Ultimately, Baker intended to expand “collective engagement” to assist the ex-Soviet states economically, as he described for the New York Times in August, 1992. See *The NY Times*, “What America Owes the Ex-Soviet Union”. Aug 5, 1992.

donors.³⁷¹ In August, the reforms were struggling and the rift between Russia and the IMF formed.³⁷² Stanley Fischer, an ex-World Bank economist criticized the US approach to helping Russia as one suffering from insufficient and slow monetary help, lack of coordination among donors, and no debt relief on top of the inefficient Russian government.³⁷³ Zubok states that Gaidar would have preferred the IMF to dictate terms to alter opinions of the status quo that change was necessary.³⁷⁴

As Russian reformers were losing credibility and the amount of economic aid required was not coming through, Gaidar was replaced. Per Zubok, seeing the apparent failure of Western-style reforms made many in Russia rethink their pro-Western stances.³⁷⁵ With the FREEDOM Act passed in the fall, the Bush Administration was unable to effectively provide economic assistance to Russia to conduct pertinent reforms, much less oversee any specific changes chiefly due to political and economic constraints, and uncertainty.³⁷⁶

³⁷¹ Baker emphasized that this help was not meant to be a handout and that the US was serious about integrating ex-Soviet countries, and most importantly, Russia into a cooperative framework. Otherwise, he stressed, the world would come back to militarization and tension as in the Cold War period. See *The NY Times*, “What America Owes the Ex-Soviet Union”. Aug 5, 1992.

³⁷² “Starting entrepreneurs complain they are choked by taxes, bribes and usurious interest rates, and any new kiosk or cafe is certain of a visit by racketeers demanding protection money.” The article highlights the “lack of enthusiasm” for the IMF among Russian industrialists and policy-makers. See *The NY Times*, “Yeltsin's Team Seems in Retreat As Its Economic Reform Falts”. Aug 2, 1992. Also, the Heritage foundation listed several potential problems with the aid for Russia, such as ruble stabilization, little possibility to measure progress, more foreign debt, and ultimately meddling with the privatization efforts. See W. Eggers, L. Aron, “Five problems with the Bush aid package to Russia”, *The Heritage Foundation*, 1992.

³⁷³ Fischer proposed steady flow of money on top of the 24 billion dollars pledged and a sustainable provision of Western experts to empower the Russian economists. See *The NY Times*, “A Strong Hand for Aid to Russia”, Aug 6, 1992. The provision of experts and economic cooperation echo similar measures adopted by Richard Nixon during his time in office.

³⁷⁴ V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, pp.348-352.

³⁷⁵ *Ibdi.*, 695-700.

³⁷⁶ See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.65; S.2532 - 102nd Congress (1991-1992): FREEDOM Support Act. (1992, October 24). <http://www.congress.gov/>

Chapter 3. US Policy Toward the Russian Federation in the Transnistria War

US foreign policy towards Russia, as one of the main successors of the collapsing Soviet Union, is characterized by a meticulous analysis of how various branches of US political influence have contributed to an approach aimed at facilitating a secure transition of the remnants of the USSR into a post-Cold War world order. This chapter focuses on US policy regarding the involvement of the Russian military against Moldova in the Transnistria War.

1. The Beginning: Establishing Diplomatic Relations and Granting International Recognition

As the Soviet Union was unraveling, US officials such as Baker thought it important to work on the process of integration of new republics into a new world order. After the failed August Coup of 1991 against Gorbachev, Bush on multiple occasions recounted the worry of instability stemming from the ethnic divides in the territories of the Soviet Union.³⁷⁷ Dick Cheney, Secretary of the Department of Defense, called for a radical rather than reactive approach to lead the change.³⁷⁸ But in the aftermath of the coup, the National Security Council officials were not decided on their preference for dealing with fifteen republics versus the new form of the USSR with a stronger center.³⁷⁹ As it became more apparent the Soviet Union would not last, the US officials intended to ensure the transition would be peaceful, whatever the entities would have been through the set of five principles from the OSCE legal framework listed in Chapter 2. In a conversation with Kozyrev, Baker insisted that there needed to be clarity on the transition through a new agreement among new republics before receiving US recognition.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁷ See C-SPAN. *U.S. Foreign Policy Overview*. [Video]. (February 5, 1992). C-SPAN.

³⁷⁸ Per Bush, Cheney pressed the need to take the lead to ensure the favorable outcome for the US national interests. Scowcroft and Baker, on the other hand, were adamant about a peaceful transition that they thought would happen if the US would not meddle. See G. Bush, B. Scowcroft, *A world transformed*, New York: Vintage Books, 2011, pp. 540-542.

³⁷⁹ G. Bush, B. Scowcroft, *A world transformed*, pp. 543-546. Vlad Zubok confirms the split of the NSC and writes that Dick Cheney advocated taking the course of recognizing Ukraine's independence and abandoning Gorbachev in Yeltsin's favor. See V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, pp. 550-553.

³⁸⁰ US recognition was handled as a potent chip of political power, the granting of which could either bring about positive developments or disrupt the existing attempts at a peaceful resolution. Staking such attention to withholding or granting recognition was a way to indicate how the US officials felt about developments and its national interests. As derived from G. Bush, B. Scowcroft, *A world transformed*, pp. 542-544; Baker deliberately focused on recognition as the "largest 'carrot'" available. It would only be applied after "certain understandings" would be reached. See J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, pp.566-567.

Such understanding came with the signing of the agreement underpinning the creation of the CIS, which every new republic apart from Georgia and the Baltics signed.³⁸¹

At the end of January and in early February 1992, following eventful bilateral negotiations, Yeltsin conducted a working visit to the US. At Camp David, US and Russia reached clarity on a wide array of issues, and in a press conference Bush declared that “Russia and the United States are charting a new relationship, and it's based on trust.”³⁸² In February, Baker made a ten-day trip to the new republics and made a stop in Moldova, where he discussed important matters with Snegur. Baker stated that the US expected Moldova to conform to the CFE treaty standards and have equal rights for ethnic minorities and said the US would not influence Moldova’s choice to unify with Romania.³⁸³ Moldovan officials assured the US of the democratic path of the nascent republic and that ethnic minorities would be granted a degree of autonomy.³⁸⁴ Baker in his turn stated that the US was ready to grant recognition to Moldova upon reaching certain assurances from Moldovan officials. In particular, the US wanted Moldova to not discriminate against the Russian minority.³⁸⁵

Baker also presented Snegur with an invitation to Washington as reported by the report of the Moldovan State News Agency.³⁸⁶ Snegur came to the US on February 18, 1992. “The democratization and reformation” of Moldova reportedly left Bush impressed and the US extended the most-favored-nation status to the Moldovan state to improve trade relations. Moldovan officials were happy with the level of US support following the visit, especially with the American recognition of Moldova. In the next couple of weeks,

³⁸¹ V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, pp. 662-668.

³⁸² The atmosphere of cooperation indeed existed on both sides. US officials understood the need to also display it to the public that while Gorbachev was out of the picture, the spirit of understanding and improvement were to stay. See J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p.625.

³⁸³ *UPI*, “Baker starts C.I.S. tour in Moldova”. Feb. 11, 1992; *The NY Times*, “Baker opens tour of the Caucasus”. Feb. 11, 1992. In retrospective, in his memoirs Baker listed this visit as an opportunity “to reinforce their sovereignty and independence” of the nascent republics “as a hedge against any Russian revanchism” and to inspire local governments to move “toward democracy and free markets. J. Baker, T. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p.626.

³⁸⁴ *The NY Times*, “Baker opens tour of the Caucasus”, Feb. 11, 1992.

³⁸⁵ In addition, the author of the news piece for *The NY Times* highlighted one obstacle to US influence over the nascent republics, “Mr. Baker tried to win commitments from each of these leaders to various democratic and market principles as a condition for American diplomatic contacts. Yet as he did so, he seemed to discover that relations with them are, for the near future, going to be based less on their desire to embrace American values, and more on America's decision to turn a blind eye to some of their behavior.” *The NY Times*, “Baker's Trip to Nations Unready for Independence”. Feb. 16, 1992.

³⁸⁶ *Moldpres*, “Breakaway region in eastern Moldova causes large-scale armed conflict”, Feb. 18, 1992. Retrieved from: <https://www.moldpres.md/en/news/2021/02/04/21000793>

the UN Security Council recommended Moldova's recognition at the UN with the admission passed on March 2, 1992. This legitimized the nascent democracy as a member of the international community with fixed borders and allowed for further integration with its Western partners.³⁸⁷

2. The Fighting and the Proactive Policy of the US Congress

As established in earlier passages, the Bush Administration sought to ensure a peaceful transition from the USSR given the ethnic makeup of the Soviet Empire. Yet, as the fighting broke out in late March and Moldova declared a state of emergency, the official channels of US diplomacy remained largely silent. News agencies in the US reported on clashes between the 'PMR' fighters and the Moldovan police and army units.³⁸⁸ Despite the US-Moldovan bilateral visit and the start of official cooperation just a month prior, armed clashes in Moldova, unlike in former Yugoslavia, did not provoke official statements from the Bush Administration. However, Congress took the lead in devising a policy regarding the conflict in Transnistria.

Legislative action toward Moldova was underway in 1991 before any full-scale fighting took place. One of the most noteworthy aspects of analyzing Congressional initiatives regarding the Transnistria War is setting the informational stage to justify US policy toward Russia. Among the first actions already early in 1991, Senators DeConcini (D-AZ), Helms (R-NC), and Pressler (R-SD) championed the legislative action on two resolutions to "express the sense of the Senate that the United States should support the right to self-determination of the people of the Republic of Moldavia and northern Bucovina" and to "support the right to freedom and independence for the people of the Republic of Moldavia", though neither passed the introduction phase in the Senate.³⁸⁹ On another occasion, Resolution H.Con.Res.232 to call on the republics of the USSR to adhere to the Helsinki Final Act among other international

³⁸⁷ United Nations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Delegations - Moldova, S-1086-0096-06-00002, (9 December 1992), available from <https://search.archives.un.org/delegations-moldova-19>, p.166.

³⁸⁸ *The NY Times*, "Russia Takes Over Command of Army in Moldova", Apr 2, 1992. *The LA Times*, "Ex-Soviet States at Odds; Group's Future in Doubt", Mar. 21, 1992. *The NY Times*, "Ukrainian Uses Summit to Berate Russians and the Commonwealth", Mar. 21, 1992.

³⁸⁹ See 102nd Congress - S.Res.148 - A resolution to express the sense of the Senate that the United States should support the right to self-determination of the people of the Republic of Moldavia and northern Bucovina. (1991, June 26); 102nd Congress - S.Res.222 - A resolution to express the sense of the Senate that the United States should support the right to freedom and independence for the people of the Republic of Moldavia. (1991, November 19).

agreements, to commit to cooperation in protecting human rights and stress the inviolability of borders, passed the House and was passed on to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.³⁹⁰

In June 1992, as the Russian military directly intervened against Moldovan troops following several months of a ceasefire, several US lawmakers took the initiative to propose bills and resolutions to call on the Bush Administration to act regarding the Russian active participation in the Transnistria War. This was even more important considering renewed negotiations and cooperation with President Yeltsin who conducted a visit to Washington to meet with Bush during June 15-16, 1992.

For example, Senator Bill Bradley (D-New Jersey), in the Congressional session of June 18, 1992, proved particularly concerned. He partially concurred with Bush on the new era of Russian-American relations. He emphasized the need to “stop talking about them as if they carry the taint of the old Union.”³⁹¹ Bradley stated, “Congress and the American people should help make this positive change irreversible. A new beginning is at hand.”³⁹² Bradley stresses that as new republics scrambled to update their economic thinking and security needs, so did Russia and it was important for the US to play a role. The senator highlighted the disoriented and uncertain future for Russia and the need for the US to become Russia’s key partner.

But then Bradley stipulated the main requirement for such a partnership to come to fruition:

Russia must redefine its military strategy, moving to a totally defensive posture. It must reduce spending on weapons and redeploy forces. Removing troops is the first test of such commitments, especially those troops that Russia has not even begun to remove in the Baltics, Ukraine, and Moldova. There should be a clear, short timetable for withdrawal from these newly independent states as well as from all of Eastern Europe.

³⁹⁰ See 102nd Congress - H.Con.Res.232 - Calling for acceptance and implementation by certain republics of the commitments on human rights, fundamental freedoms, and humanitarian cooperation contained in the Helsinki Final Act and other documents of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. (1992, June 12). It is important to stress that Moldova joined the CSCE in January and signed the Helsinki Final Act in February of 1992, just two months before full-scale fighting broke out and 6 months before direct Russian involvement.

³⁹¹ 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, June 18, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 11 – Bound Edition, p.15283.

³⁹² Senator continues the rhetorical discussion with the emphasis on the history of Russia and its relations with its former subordinate republics. Communist repressions temporarily froze ethnic grievances within its borders. With the USSR failing to hold on to power, said grievances came to the surface. See *Ibid.*, 15283.

Russia should recognize the independence of the newly independent states, exchange ambassadors, and forswear any future territorial designs.³⁹³

On June 24, 1992, Senator Pressler delivered a speech on the role of the Russian Army in Moldova.³⁹⁴ As the Bush Administration was mulling how to best assist Russia and other republics through the FREEDOM Support Act, Senator Pressler had his reservations “while the situation in the former Soviet Union degenerates into violence.”³⁹⁵ Pressler argued that American taxpayers should not be the ones helping “military intervention to support the oppressed Russian minority.”³⁹⁶ Senator further stressed that “if the violence in Moldova, with the direct participation of the Russian Army, does not end, a precedent will be set for the use of Russian military force in possible conflicts extending into the Baltic States and other areas of the former Soviet Union.”³⁹⁷

Pressler reminded of Yeltsin’s visit and a deeper sense of cooperation:

Mr. President, there is an unseemly eagerness in Washington to reward President Boris Yeltsin for his leadership and for his fine speech to Congress last week. The thought is that massive foreign aid can keep him in power against the entrenched Communists in the Russian military and bureaucracy. I commend President Yeltsin's words in support of openness, nonviolence, and peace. Yet, the facts in Moldova tell a different story and harken back to Russian imperialism.³⁹⁸

Senator then emphasized that had it not been for the presence of the 14th Army of the Russian Federation, the current internationally recognized borders of Moldova would not have been

³⁹³ Ibid., 15285

³⁹⁴ Senator Pressler was consistently the most ardent Senator to speak on Moldova throughout the war and who consistently denounced Russian military actions against the Moldovan government.

³⁹⁵ 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, June 24, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 11 — Bound Edition, p.15926.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 15926.

³⁹⁷ Pressler focused on a potential for spillover, whereby the Russian politicians would use their military to achieve political and military victories instead of converting the post-Soviet institutions and imperial mentality into pro-democratic and free-market spirit. See Ibid., 15926.

³⁹⁸ Senator also recalled that apart from the hawkish Vice President Ruskoi and Chief of CIS Central Command Shaposhnikov rallied to act militarily for the “PMR” but Yeltsin himself warned Moldova of the possibility of Russian imminent involvement “to defend people and stop the bloodshed.” See Ibid., 15926.

violated.³⁹⁹ Consequently, Pressler stressed the importance of conditionality in providing aid to Russia and called on the Bush Administration to “urge the Russian Government to end immediately the current economic blockade of Moldova.”⁴⁰⁰

On June 25, senators DeConcini and Pressler declared an intention to submit an amendment to the FREEDOM Support Act bill to call on Yeltsin to withdraw troops from the Baltic states and Moldova. In this way, the senators argued, the Russian Federation could better “demonstrate its commitment to CSCE and international law.”⁴⁰¹ On June 30, Senator Pressler submitted amendments 2643 and 2644. In 2643, it was suggested that Congress follow up on the signing of a Charter for American-Russian Partnership and Friendship by Bush and Yeltsin on June 17, 1992. Recognizing that Russian military presence, its actions coupled with those of the Transnistrian elites in Moldova “violate CSCE principles and international law,” “aggravate(s) the situation, violate(s) international law and the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova,” “without the agreement of the host country is a potential cause of instability and conflict,” the amendment prescribed:

The appointment of international observers, under the aegis of the United Nations, the CSCE, or other international fora to monitor the withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldova would serve to lessen tensions and promote a more orderly withdrawal of former Soviet troops. The United States should support the establishment of a joint military monitoring committee consisting of representatives of the military of all affected states, the United States, and the representatives of other countries, as mutually agreed upon, to observe the orderly and expeditious withdrawal of former Soviet troops from Moldova.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁹ Pressler stressed that while it is true that Transnistria is ethnically multicultural, the fact that such are Moldova’s international borders remained and that stationing a potent foreign army in a different state without consent is an invitation to restoring “communist orthodoxy.” See *Ibid.*, 15927.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 15927.

⁴⁰¹ 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, June 25, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 12 — Bound Edition, p.16328.

⁴⁰² The amendment intended for the US to urge Russia through all possible means of action to withdraw from Moldova. Regarding the monitoring procedure the amendment intended to set as example experience of the Joint Military Monitoring Committee on Angola. See 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, June 30, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 12 — Bound Edition.

Amendment 2644 tackled the issue of economic and financial autonomy of the new republics that required stabilization funds much like the one already intended for Russia to avoid “disastrous fiscal and monetary conditions.”⁴⁰³

Lawmakers prepared relevant research and justification grounds for US legislative discussion session on July 1, 1992. During the discussion on the FREEDOM Support Act, Senator Pell (D-RI) emphasized the need to focus on the other fourteen republics, not just Russia. He cited an article by Pamela Harriman, the vice chairman of the Atlantic Council, in the Washington Post titled “Our Moscow Blinders”. In it, Harriman warned against the obsession with Moscow as leaders of new republics before the collapse of the USSR felt a sense of condescension coming from Bush’s “realpolitik admonition not to work for their independence.”⁴⁰⁴ In Harriman’s view, Russian actions in Moldova and other places are “metaphors for a fear of Moscow's larger appetite.”⁴⁰⁵ During the same session, Senator Pressler stressed the importance of upholding territorial integrity as a key CSCE principle and Russia’s commitment to respect Moldova’s boundaries in a mutual recognition agreement.⁴⁰⁶ Pressler agreed with the Moldovan representative to the United Nations, who “asked the United States to postpone its assistance to the Russian Federation until it withdraws the 14th Army from the Republic of Moldova, ... to send observers to the region of conflict in order to verify the ceasefire, which currently is not holding and to monitor the withdrawal of the 14th Army.”⁴⁰⁷ When talking about a similar amendment for the Baltic states, Pressler highlighted that “Russia has a deep mentality that they want to keep troops there on the front with Russia for some reason.”⁴⁰⁸ He contrasted the Russian Army maneuvers to US culture, “every child in America is

⁴⁰³ The amendment intended to urge the US executive director to the IMF “to take concrete steps to support the right of these sovereign and independent states to issue currencies independent of the Russian ruble.” *Ibid.*, 17037.

⁴⁰⁴ As cited in 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, July 1, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 12 — Bound Edition, p.17371.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 17371.

⁴⁰⁶ Senator Pressler expands on the dichotomy between the Russian public recognition of Moldova’s sovereignty, an internal strife for power, and the readiness to use its army and unwillingness to organize its withdrawal from Moldova. See *Ibid.*, 17396.

⁴⁰⁷ Pressler contends that this amendment puts the United States firmly on the side of peace and future stability in Moldova and Russia. I urge adoption of the amendment.” *Ibid.*, 17397.

⁴⁰⁸ The comparison between Moldova and the Baltic states is of significance because the Russian Federation after the collapse of the USSR had sizable quantities of troops stationed outside of its new borders. While the US policy on Baltic states since 1940 had been that of denouncing Russian occupation, Moldova was not recognized as such despite also being attacked in 1940. Also, Moldova at the time of discussions was actively suffering from the Russian army units, unlike the Baltic states. The call to withdraw from the Baltics in this light was even more important for US Congress. Withdrawals from Moldova and Baltic states would serve as a “litmus test for the future of democracy versus militarism” to see “whether Soviet imperialists changed their spots in addition to changing

taught that he or she should not play in a neighbor's yard without asking permission.”⁴⁰⁹

Ultimately, Senator Pressler’s and DeConcini’s amendments 2657 and 2658 to the FREEDOM Support Act (changed from 2643 and 2644) that “the US should urge Russia to withdraw the 14th Army” was agreed to in Senate by Voice Vote.⁴¹⁰ On July 20-21, the bill was sent to the house, with amendments 2657 and 2658 becoming sections 125 and 126.⁴¹¹

Senator Pressler also conducted a visit to Moldova during the July 1992 Senate recess. In his statement in the Senate on July 22, 1992, he highlighted the importance of conditionality in aid to Russia to avoid indirectly subsidizing Russian troops stationed outside of their borders.⁴¹² His sentiment to the other senators was that “the current secessionist movement in Moldova and Russian territorial claims in Estonia are not the result of ethnic animosity-real or perceived-but an excuse on the behalf of some in Russia to hold onto territory ad infinitum.”⁴¹³ Pressler added that “the only way to achieve peace in Moldova and to prevent conflict in the Baltic States is for the Russian Army to declare itself neutral and to leave the foreign countries they still occupy as soon as they can pack their bags.”⁴¹⁴ He further emphasized that one day after the passing of Amendment 2657 calling for the immediate removal of Russian troops, Snegur and Yeltsin agreed to negotiate such a move.⁴¹⁵

Subsequently, Senator stressed the role the Congress can play,

If we are quiet on the issue of troop removal the troops will not leave where they do not belong. If we take a strong stand, our goals will be met. That is why I think the United States is in a unique position of leadership at this time to take a stand for democracy, for human rights, for free enterprise, and also for these countries to be independent without the presence of foreign troops.⁴¹⁶

their flag.” Ibid., 17406-17407. This was also highlighted by James Baker’s press briefing on September 4, 1991. Baker stated that “the Baltic states “have always been and indeed remain a special and separate case for the United States.”” As cited in V. Zubok, *Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Union*, p.551.

⁴⁰⁹ 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, July 1, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 12 — Bound Edition, p.17407.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 17396.

⁴¹¹ See for more details 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, July 20, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 13 — Bound Edition.

⁴¹² See 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, July 22, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 13 — Bound Edition, p.18877.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 18877.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 18877.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 18877.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 18877-18878. The visit to Moldova and convening on the ways to tackle the issue of Russian troops within Moldova was an important step for the American lawmakers to get a feel of how the traditionally inaccessible parts of the former USSR lived and how they could make a difference without the influence of the imperial center.

Senator's visit to Moldova to learn from partners and gain insight into local affairs to then craft American foreign policy is an important aspect of the difference that Congress can make. Without a strong American stand, he implied, Moldova was forced to agree "to limit Moldova's sovereignty by tying the future of the Transdniester region of Moldova to any decision about joining Romania in a political union."⁴¹⁷ "The solution in Moldova that is consistent with self-determination, independence, and sovereignty would include international peacekeeping observers possibly from the United Nations or the Conference on Security on Cooperation in Europe-as I called for in my visit to Moldova. It would also include complete withdrawal of foreign forces."⁴¹⁸ Pressler pointed to the attempts of the Transnistria elites to grab power and reinstate a return to the USSR. He circulated an article by *Washington Post's* Paul Goble. In it, Goble warned of the dangers of a potent Russian Army having a free pass to protect Russian people abroad.⁴¹⁹ Whether supported by the officials in Moscow, military commanders, who were usually not sympathetic toward local people, were not ready to be rid of the life they had while also spreading fearful paranoia about reprisal from oppressed minorities. Goble's message for the US authorities was to request Yeltsin's deliberate command to withdraw troops and in turn provide relevant support, which would also shield him from the conservatives demanding military action in Moldova.⁴²⁰ This logic, according to the writer, would be in line with Kozyrev's words that democracy and using military force to achieve 'national interests' are incompatible.⁴²¹ The discussion on Moldova ended with Pressler calling on Bush and Baker "aggressively to defend the rights of these nations for freedom from subjugation."⁴²²

More senators joined in on advocating more robust action from the executive branch over time. On July 24, Representative of the House Philip Crane (R-IL) circulated an article in the *Wall Street Journal* by Frank Gaffney, a senior arms-control official in the Reagan Defense Department. In it, Gaffney called for caution and action regarding approaching Russia. The arms-control specialist argued that Russia could revert its commitment to weapons treaties such

⁴¹⁷ Agreeing to this meant that Russia was getting a veto over Moldovan sovereign decision-making and that Transnistria had an open clause to leave Moldova, on paper upon a successful Moldovan referendum to join Romania. Ibid., 18877-18878.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 18878.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 18879.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 18880.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 18880.

⁴²² Ibid., 18880.

as START as mere declarations without actions are empty.⁴²³ In particular, he drew attention to Russian army actions in Moldova and that the Bush Administration must prioritize internal changes in Russia toward democracy and free markets to “allay” the dangers of militarism.⁴²⁴ As an intermediary solution, Gaffney suggested the Administration provide 80bln. dollars multi-year relief for states in the START treaty as an incentive.

On August 6, Representative Barbara Collins (D-MI) submitted an article in *Washington Post* by Gwynne Dyer concerning the actions of the Russian officials after the signing of the ceasefire agreement on July 21, 1992. In it, Dyer highlighted the ever-growing rift in the military actions of commanders appointed by Moscow like General Lebed, and rhetoric from Yeltsin. Dyer insisted that former Soviet forces are used by the commanders and many conservative Russian officials to “defend the rights of Russian speakers everywhere.”⁴²⁵ Dyer recognized the importance of containing and preventing the spread of Russian military power stationed abroad without the consent of former tsarist and Soviet territories. Again, the advocacy touched upon a similar issue of 100,000 Russian troops in the Baltic states. The fear of a similar development in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia demonstrated to be reason enough to not worry “about embarrassing Mr. Yeltsin by pressing hard on this issue.”⁴²⁶

On August 12, Pressler shared his thoughts on the ceasefire that Russia and Moldova achieved to stop hostilities in Transnistria. Pressler emphasized that “the very forces involved in the fighting will be given equal status to monitor a ceasefire formula for failure and continued conflict.”⁴²⁷ Senator stressed the danger of Russia dictating the terms of settlement going forward as the ‘PMR’ was were to be granted “a special status within Moldova, permitting the Dniester region the right to leave Moldova if Moldova undergoes a change in sovereignty, that is, reverses the consequences of the Nazi-Soviet Pact by rejoining Romania.”⁴²⁸ Pressler was

⁴²³ 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, July 24, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 14 — Bound Edition, p.19362.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 19326.

⁴²⁵ 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, August 6, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 15 — Bound Edition, p.21846.

⁴²⁶ Dyer stipulated that international action must happen with less consideration of worrying about inconveniences for Russia because allowing Russia overextend its stay in foreign states could lead to unpredictable consequences as once Russian soldiers are home “it will be far harder to send them abroad again on some trumped-up mission to save Russian minorities.” See *Ibid.*, 21847.

⁴²⁷ To Pressler’s chagrin, the solution to another powder keg in Europe after the Croatian-Serbian war in Moldova was to leave the resolution of to the incomparable by power states. See 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, August 12, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 16 — Bound Edition, p.23358; See for more details on the agreement United Nations, Security Council, *Agreement on the Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Dniester Region of the Republic of Moldova*, S/24369. (6 August 1992).

⁴²⁸ 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, August 12, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 16 — Bound Edition, p.23358.

alarmed at the solution being agreed to by the parties involved who enjoyed some mediation from Ukraine and Romania as Western observers were not invited to mediate and assist with the agreement. According to Pressler, the credibility and standing of the democratic reformers in power were challenged, which could lead to further destabilization and negate progress.⁴²⁹ Senator reiterated his understanding of the war being rooted in the presence of the Russian 14th Army, which destabilized the territorial integrity of Moldova.⁴³⁰ Pressler mentioned another statement given by Lebed about the impossibility to withdraw Russian troops for another “fifteen years” and how the local population spoke about the “devastation in their lands” and some of their constitutional rights being denied by the ‘PMR’ elites.⁴³¹ With the Senate calling on the Bush Administration and Russia to commit to the withdrawal of troops and Yeltsin’s hopeful statements at the 18th G-7 Summit in Munich on 6-8 July, Yeltsin ultimately did not act in line with his declarations. As such, for Pressler, the presence of the Russian military in Moldova “is an intolerable imperialist leftover.”⁴³²

On October 1, the committee of conference followed up on the amendment 2657 previously agreed to in the Senate and urged the Government of Russia to remove its military contingent “quickly as possible.”⁴³³ As the FREEDOM Support Act in itself was a highly complex bill and highly contentious in terms of specific provisions and financial disbursement, the hearings continued through October 3, when it finally passed the House, was delivered to Bush on October 16, and was signed by Bush on October 24, becoming law.⁴³⁴

As the FREEDOM Support Act finally bill became law in October 1992, Moldova amendments enjoyed powerful bipartisan support; they, however, did not have the same political and economic weight as Amendment 2664 restricting the assistance to the Russian Federation upon failure of troop withdrawal from the Baltic States.⁴³⁵ Additionally, despite the considerable weight of the Congress and its message, the resolution to the Transnistria War came without the effective contribution of its senators and representatives.

⁴²⁹ Opposition, some of which represented the reactionary communists, could legitimately challenge the status of the Popular Front officials. *Ibid.*, 23358.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 23358.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 23358.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 23360.

⁴³³ 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, October 1, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 20 — Bound Edition, p.29632.

⁴³⁴ 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, October 3, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 21 — Bound Edition.

⁴³⁵ See 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, July 1, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 12 — Bound Edition, p.17406.

3. The Policy of the Bush Administration

As some Congress senators and representatives eagerly attempted to help find solutions for a glaring security problem that the war in Transnistria presented, the Bush Administration was far less proactive but consistent. As intense fighting began in March of 1992, leading news agencies reported on the events and the Russian involvement. However, the Bush Administration did not make specific announcements regarding the Transnistria War in the initial months. That did not preclude bi- and multilateral negotiations, cooperation, and preparation of important agreements. Bush spoke of a new world order, as “the historic and revolutionary transformation of a totalitarian dictatorship, the Soviet Union, and the liberation of its peoples,” happened throughout 1991.⁴³⁶ Bush stated that support would be given to the Newly Independent States as the “future grounded in a world built on strong democratic principles, free from the specter of global conflict,” was going to come.⁴³⁷

A year before the USSR collapsed, in his 1990 address to the UN General Assembly, Bush spoke of moving “beyond containment” and emphasized the importance of preventing attempts at ruining territorial integrity.⁴³⁸ With the USSR, Bush focused on the importance of eliminating chemical, biological, and other kinds of weapons and moving toward partnership and “increasing democracy... and the peace.”⁴³⁹ In September 1991, at the forty-sixth session of the UN General Assembly, Bush insisted on a “peaceful negotiated settlement of border disputes.”⁴⁴⁰ He added that in the new world order with the help of the UN and the international community “no nation must surrender one iota of its own sovereignty.”⁴⁴¹ To achieve this, the US was not going to strive for hegemony or “retreat and pull back into isolationism,” but would offer cooperation to all who may have wanted it.⁴⁴² In January 1992, Bush delivered his State of the

⁴³⁶ For Bush, the confrontation was over, the nuclear talks were underway, and the prospect of integration of Newly Independent States out of the wreckage of the USSR was now on the table. Bush solemnly extended US recognition to five states, and conditioned more to come (including to Moldova). See *The NY Times*, “End of the Soviet Union; Text of Bush's Address to Nation on Gorbachev's Resignation”, Dec. 26, 1991.

⁴³⁷ *The NY Times*, “End of the Soviet Union; Text of Bush's Address to Nation on Gorbachev's Resignation”, Dec. 26, 1991.

⁴³⁸ Bush discussed the annexation of Kuwait and stressed that he prioritized peaceful outcomes instead of military ones, but given no other choice, the US will “demonstrate that aggression would not be tolerated or rewarded.” U.N. GAOR, 45th Sess., 14th plen. mtg., U.N. Doc. A/45/PV.14. (5 October 1990), p.66.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁴⁴⁰ U.N. GAOR, 46th Sess., 4th plen. mtg., U.N. Doc. A/46/PV.4. (24 September 1991), p.78.

⁴⁴¹ Bush spoke of “rule of law over rather than resort to force, the cooperative development of disputes rather than anarchy and bloodshed, and an unstinting belief in human rights.” *Ibid.*, 82-83.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 83.

Union Address to the American people. The President praised the “prudent use of power” and the ongoing attempts to negotiate with President Yeltsin the elimination of all land-based ballistic missiles among other important arms reduction agreements.⁴⁴³ While the Address was largely dedicated to domestic issues, Bush restated that US foreign policy would be focused on leading and supporting freedom everywhere because “isolationism in the pursuit of security is no virtue.”⁴⁴⁴

Just a month prior in Moldova, President Snegur already warned a civil war could be possible.⁴⁴⁵ Bush gave a speech to the UN Security Council in January 1992, before intense fighting in Moldova began. Bush highlighted the importance of supporting those countries and peoples who want to promote freedom and democracy and the need to reduce weapons stockpiles.⁴⁴⁶ At the same time, Russian-American cooperation continued as Yeltsin and Bush focused on “the promotion of our shared values of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, including minority rights, respect for borders and peaceful change around the globe,” and working on ‘enduring peace’.⁴⁴⁷

Before the beginning of serious fighting in Moldova in March 1992, US officials advocated for fruitful and close cooperation with Russia and Moldova and discussed handling regional conflicts involving Russian troops with several leaders of nascent democracies. For instance, in February, Baker outlined key priorities of US foreign policy, which included helping the New Independent States to become democratic and peaceful through Baker’s ‘collective engagement’ as temptations of ethnic strife remained.⁴⁴⁸ When Moldova introduced the state of emergency and the armed fights began, Moldovan, Russian, Ukrainian, and Romanian officials attempted to negotiate a settlement during a meeting in Kyiv in March.⁴⁴⁹ In April, the transcript of the conversation between the President of Ukraine Kravchuk, and Bush demonstrates that

⁴⁴³ Miller Center. *State of the Union Address*. [Video]. (1992, January 28). Miller Center.

⁴⁴⁴ Miller Center. *State of the Union Address*. [Video]. (1992, January 28). Miller Center.

⁴⁴⁵ The *NY Times*, “Soviet disarray: Moldavian President warns of a civil war”. Dec 15, 1991.

⁴⁴⁶ U.N. SCOR, 47th Sess., 3046th mtg., U.N. Doc. S/PV.3046. (31 January 1992), pp. 51-55.

⁴⁴⁷ *The NY Times*, “Presidents Bush and Yeltsin: ‘Dawn of a New Era’”, Feb. 2, 1992; *The LA Times*, “Bush, Yeltsin Vow Friendship; ‘Enduring Peace’ Their Goal”. Feb. 2, 1992.

⁴⁴⁸ C-SPAN. *U.S. Foreign Policy Overview*. [Video]. (1992, February 5, 1992). C-SPAN; Baker largely echoed similar ideas in his statement in April, already a month after the conflict in Moldova flared. C-SPAN. *U.S.-Former Soviet Union Relations*. [Video]. (1992, April 21). C-SPAN.

⁴⁴⁹ N. Belitser, “The Transnistrian conflict”, in A. Bebler, *“Frozen conflicts” in Europe*, p.46.

Bush was positive about the negotiations between the representatives of the four countries.⁴⁵⁰ During the meeting with Kravchuk on May 6, Bush demonstrated his curiosity about the details surrounding the armed conflict as he asked about the mercenaries from Russia who were not officially associated with the Russian government but who were not stopped on their way to fight in Transnistria.⁴⁵¹ Additionally, Bush insisted during the meeting with Kravchuk that working with Russia was important “to be sure that they stay with democratic reform. If we isolate Russia, that would make it even more imperialistic, which would be bad for other countries in the area.”⁴⁵² Bush also met with the Presidents of the Baltic States and discussed the similar issue of Russian troop withdrawals. In the conversation, Bush in response to Yeltsin’s troop removal promises to Baltic leaders said that “We want them to honor their public line, we want this to be followed through.”⁴⁵³ Ambassador Meri of Estonia explained that a “new Brezhnev military doctrine”, whose goal would be “to protect all Russians with military means if necessary” was in force.⁴⁵⁴ In response, Bush underscored the importance of eventual defense conversion from the highly militarized Soviet military structure to a functioning market society.⁴⁵⁵

Military officials of the Pentagon such as Colin Powell, Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made rather general statements focusing on the importance of active global engagement instead

⁴⁵⁰ Memorandum of telephone conversation, ‘Telephone Conversation with President Leonid Kravchuk of Ukraine’ April 10, 1992, Secret, Textual Archives at the George Bush Presidential Library, Declassified Per E.O. 13526, Bush Presidential Records.

⁴⁵¹ The arrival of the Cossacks in Transnistria is explained in Chapter 1. See also P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.987; *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 15. Cossacks also tried to lobby President Yeltsin with their call to defend the ‘PMR’, see Leader of the Cossack Union Martinov, “Телерамма о необходимости защиты всех мирных граждан Приднестровья (копия) [A telegram to Boris Yeltsin from Martinov, the Leader of the Union of Cossacks, about the need to defend all peaceful citizens of Transnistria (copy)]”, Ф. 6. Оп. 1. Д. 181. Л. 26., p.26. Responding to another Bush’s question on ethnic unrest in Russia, Kravchuk said that problems of dissolution exist in Russia. “But they’re not dealing with them. Rather they are active in Trans-Dniester and Ukraine”, said Kravchuk. See Memorandum of conversation, ‘Meeting with President Leonid Kravchuk of Ukraine’ May 6, 1992, Confidential, Textual Archives at the George Bush Presidential Library, Declassified Per E.O. 13526, Bush Presidential Records, p.3.

⁴⁵² Kravchuk agreed and stipulated that working with Russia meant that US assistance “should not go to support imperialism.” *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁵³ Latvian foreign minister informed Bush that the one of the four pillars of the Russian military doctrine is to protect the Russian minority abroad, the justification that was used by the Russian troops in Transnistria to shoot at the Moldovan army. See Memorandum of conversation, ‘Meeting with Presidents Ruutel of Estonia, Gorbunovs of Latvia, and Landsbergis of Lithuania’ July 10, 1992, Secret, Textual Archives at the George Bush Presidential Library, Declassified Per E.O. 13526, Bush Presidential Records, p.3.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 4. Bush’s answer to the Russian minority protection clause was “that’s a good reason to get them the hell out.”

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

of isolation in Eastern Europe, especially as the collapse of the Soviet Empire brought ethnic strife back to the surface.⁴⁵⁶ Powell, like Bush, emphasized that “a global war against a massive military machine” was not a possibility and that the US could focus on regional problems.⁴⁵⁷

Powell touched upon the raging conflicts in the free republics of the former Soviet Empire and Yugoslavia and said that “it is still a revolution in progress, a very uncertain period that we are living through” and that he would not have expected American troops to be involved there.⁴⁵⁸

Soon Russia took official command of the Soviet troops stationed in Transnistria.⁴⁵⁹ After a short ceasefire in spring, fighting resumed in May and the bigger scale of hostilities attracted more international attention.⁴⁶⁰ Before June 23, 1992, when the Russian Army openly engaged in the fighting, the Bush Administration did not address its view on the armed conflict in Transnistria. In the meantime, cooperation and state visits with Russian officials continued. On June 15, Yeltsin arrived in Washington to discuss bilateral agreements with Bush and to deliver a speech in front of Congress.⁴⁶¹ Bush stressed that, “President Yeltsin has some difficulties from his right, from the old militarists, and from others who may not be as committed to democracy as he is,” and that the two states are no longer adversaries, but rather “partners and even friends.”⁴⁶² Some of the focal points of the visit included discussing strategic arms reductions and economic assistance to Russia.⁴⁶³ Baker briefed reporters that a part of the agenda of Yeltsin’s visit was to “discuss European security... and the possible mechanisms that we might propose to improve Europe's ability to prevent and manage conflicts and to strengthen the

⁴⁵⁶ Powell emphasized the role of projecting power and exhibiting strength and reassurance to US allies to maintain peace. He also discussed a liberal and democratic victory of values suppression and an “imperial power.” See C-SPAN. *Johns Hopkins University Commencement Address*. [Video]. (1992, May 22). C-SPAN.

⁴⁵⁷ This for Powell meant significant cuts to the budget and saving the taxpayer money while not ‘diminishing’ US combat readiness. While a global war was then becoming a distant possibility, steps were still going to be taken to ensure proper training and technological advancement. C-SPAN. *U.S. Defense Policy*. [Video]. (1992, April 3). C-SPAN.

⁴⁵⁸ C-SPAN. *U.S. Defense Policy*. [Video]. (1992, April 3). C-SPAN.

⁴⁵⁹ *The NY Times*, “Russia Takes Over Command of Army in Moldova”. April 2, 1992.

⁴⁶⁰ *The NY Times*, “Ethnic Battles Flaring in Former Soviet Fringe”, May 24, 1992.

⁴⁶¹ *The NY Times*, “Summit in Washington; Yeltsin Arrives on a New Playing Field”. June 16, 1992. C-SPAN; C-SPAN. During the press-conference Yeltsin remarked that Russia would strive to “uphold democracy for all the world.” See C-SPAN. *Arrival of President Boris Yeltsin*. [Video]. (1992, June 15). C-SPAN;

⁴⁶² The main topics for discussion between Yeltsin and Bush were economic cooperation and help for Russia, security, and arms reductions. Both spoke of ‘strategic parity’ becoming an irrelevant topic as the two states could work together to promote peace. See *The NY Times*, “Summit in Washington; Yeltsin Arrives on a New Playing Field”, June 16, 1992.

⁴⁶³ J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, pp.57-58. C-SPAN. *Nuclear Arms Control*. [Video]. (1992, June 16). C-SPAN.

capabilities for peacekeeping, including a role for NATO.”⁴⁶⁴ Bush opened the welcoming ceremony for Yeltsin with remarks on “a new world of peace and hope, a new world of cooperation and partnership between the American and Russian people. Our hope is that this partnership will end forever the old antagonisms that kept our people apart, that kept the world in confrontation and conflict.”⁴⁶⁵

On June 17, the US and Russia signed the Charter for Partnership and Friendship.⁴⁶⁶ Upon his return from the visit to the US and other Western states, the fighting reached its peak with Russian troops overtly joining the fight on the side of separatists.⁴⁶⁷ Yeltsin warned the Moldovan government that the Russian Federation “we cannot remain idle... we must react to defend people and stop the bloodshed. We have the strength to do that.”⁴⁶⁸ At the same time, on June 25, Baker discussed how fruitful Russian-American cooperation was in terms of developing democracy and democratic peace.⁴⁶⁹

The Department of State and President Bush promptly called for a cessation of hostilities. Margaret Tutwiler, the spokesperson for the Department of State said:

The United States calls upon all parties to the conflict to demonstrate restraint, desist from all acts of violence immediately, and resume a process of good faith negotiation leading toward a peaceful resolution of the situation consistent with CSCE principles. We believe that the Moldovan and Transnistrian authorities should seek a negotiated, peaceful political solution within the framework of an independent and sovereign Moldova, which ensures that the rights of ethnic minorities are protected in practice as well as in law. We recognize President Yeltsin's concern for the safety of ethnic

⁴⁶⁴ C-SPAN. *Visit of President of Russia*. [Video]. (1992, June 15). C-SPAN.

⁴⁶⁵ C-SPAN. *Welcoming Ceremony for Yeltsin*. [Video]. (1992, June 16). C-SPAN.

⁴⁶⁶ Cambridge University Press, “Russian Federation-United States: Charter for Partnership and Friendship”, *International Legal Materials*, 31, no. 4, 1992.

⁴⁶⁷ *The NY Times*, “U.N. Peace Mission in Moldova Is Thwarted by Separatist Fighting”, June 30, 1992.

Additionally, a Human Rights Watch report collected multiple testimonies and private reports of Russia military and Russian officials admitting to Russian aggression on the side of ‘PMR’ and knowledge of arms transfers to the separatists. See for details Human Rights Watch. Report: *War or peace? Human rights and Russian military: Involvement in the “Near Abroad”*, 1993, no. 5 (22).

⁴⁶⁸ *The NY Times*, “Yeltsin Voices Russia's Anger at Ethnic Wars Roiling the Old Soviet Empire”, June 22, 1992.

Vice President of Russia Rutskoi after an ammunition depot of the 14th Army allegedly was targeted by Moldovan forces stated that if such actions were to continue, the Moldovan side would receive ten times the response. See *The NY Times*, “Yeltsin addresses rift with Ukraine”. June 23, 1992. *UPI*. “Yeltsin threatens Russian intervention in Moldova.” June 21, 1992.

⁴⁶⁹ C-SPAN. *The Post-Cold War Role of the U.S.* [Video]. (1992, June 25). C-SPAN.

Russians. At the same time, we encourage the Russian Government to enter into discussions with Moldova aimed at implementing President Yeltsin's earlier agreement to withdraw the 14th Army from the area. We understand that a meeting of Foreign Ministers of Russia, Moldova, Ukraine and Romania is scheduled for today to discuss the situation. We hope they will provide support for accomplishing these objectives.⁴⁷⁰

In clarifying reporters' questions, Tutwiler was cautious about determining whether the whole grouping of the Russian army was involved in the fighting or some of its elements who may have been "freelancing on their own."⁴⁷¹ She also stated that there had been discussions between Baker and Kozyrev, however, no definitive results could be stated during the briefing. Tutwiler emphasized that CSCE principles and mechanisms would play a key role in conflict settlement. Tutwiler also did not have a response to Yeltsin's warning to the Moldovan government.⁴⁷² Only one briefing over the four months of hostilities was dedicated to the war in Transnistria by the spokespeople of the Department of State. For context, military activity in Somalia and Yugoslavia was frequently discussed by the Department of State.⁴⁷³

On July 2, 1992, Bush delivered a speech in light of his upcoming trip to Europe. The President underscored that nuclear war was distant and how the Newly Independent States became US partners.⁴⁷⁴ When asked about bloodshed and fighting in different corners of Europe, Bush remarked that the US was not going to take "the lead in the peace process."⁴⁷⁵ President insisted that the US was "not going to inject itself into every single crisis," and that he was "not interested in seeing one single United States soldier pinned down in some kind of a guerilla environment."⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁰ University of Illinois. US State Department Daily Briefing. *Electronic Research Collection*. June 22, 1992; *The LA Times*, "Russian Role in Moldova Worries U.S.: Diplomacy: The Administration Sends Signals to Moscow Over Troop Involvement", June 24, 1992.

⁴⁷¹ University of Illinois. US State Department Daily Briefing. *Electronic Research Collection*. June 22, 1992.

⁴⁷² University of Illinois. US State Department Daily Briefing. *Electronic Research Collection*. June 22, 1992.

⁴⁷³ The Department of State was cautious in commenting on the actions of Russian troops in Moldova. Likewise, in one briefing, Spokesperson Boucher refused to comment on the presence of the Russian army in Tajikistan. See University of Illinois. US State Department Daily Briefing. *Electronic Research Collection*. September 29, 1992.

⁴⁷⁴ C-SPAN. *Upcoming Presidential Trip to Europe*. [Video]. (1992, July 2). C-SPAN.

⁴⁷⁵ Bush was answering the question related to the performance of the CSCE in promoting peaceful negotiations in Yugoslavia. C-SPAN. *Upcoming Presidential Trip to Europe*. [Video]. (1992, July 2). C-SPAN.

⁴⁷⁶ C-SPAN. *Upcoming Presidential Trip to Europe*. [Video]. (1992, July 2). C-SPAN.

4. Toward the Ceasefire

As the fighting spilled into July, Senator Pressler stated that it had been Bush's call on Yeltsin to withdraw the Russian army coupled with the statement of the Senate after the fight for the town of Bendery which had made Yeltsin call for a ceasefire and negotiations.⁴⁷⁷ In Pressler's conversation with Baker, the Secretary of State stated that the quantity of the Russian army stationed in the Baltic States and Moldova could not be reduced but never explained the underlying reasons.⁴⁷⁸ Throughout July, the Department of Defense continued working with Russia on the elimination of nuclear warheads. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney lauded the Newly Independent States for their democratic reforms and, in light of pro-democratic efforts being fragile, stressed the importance of nuclear safety and deterrence through START treaties.⁴⁷⁹ Cheney highlighted the enormous financial cost of dismantlement and the need to assist Russia and other nuclear states as "given the state of their economy and the state of their infrastructure, that this will not be a small task. There are a huge number of nuclear weapons to be dismantled and it's going to take seven years to get the job done, to get down to those levels."⁴⁸⁰ Two days prior, during another START meeting Cheney stated that in the Baltic states Russian troops "ought to be withdrawn, certainly to be consistent with the CSCE and the other provisions that speak against the deployment of foreign troops on the soil of a nation without their approval."⁴⁸¹ Many Defense Department briefings tackled the situation in Yugoslavia, where Assistant Secretary Pete Williams deferred to the UN for instructing US action.⁴⁸² Colin Powell of the Department of Defense spoke about US military strategy in the post-Cold War world and the need to be prepared for regional conflicts with some geographic areas deserving special attention.⁴⁸³ Powell did not specify the requirements needed for US forward presence in such territories as the decision would have to be firstly political.

⁴⁷⁷ Pressler emphasized that the US Congress is capable of making a change in international relations. With Congress calling on Bush to get Russia out of Moldova, there was a possibility of a more effective solution than just a ceasefire and unclear terms of Russian exit. See 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, July 1, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 12 — Bound Edition, p.17396.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 17406

⁴⁷⁹ C-SPAN. *U.S.-Russia Arms Reduction*. [Video]. (1992, July 28). C-SPAN.

⁴⁸⁰ Cheney said that relevant negotiations with Russian Defense Minister Grachev were underway. C-SPAN. *U.S.-Russia Arms Reduction*. [Video]. (1992, July 28). C-SPAN.

⁴⁸¹ While, the topic of Moldova was more pronounced in the sessions of the Congress, it was less prominent in the official meetings and hearings with the officials of the Bush Administration. See C-SPAN. *START Treaty*. [Video]. (1992, July 26). C-SPAN.

⁴⁸² C-SPAN. *Defense Department News Briefing*. [Video]. (1992, August 4). C-SPAN.

⁴⁸³ C-SPAN. *Post-Cold War Military Strategy*. [Video]. (1993, January 11). C-SPAN.

More than a month after the ceasefire agreement had been signed, George Bush in his last address at the UN General Assembly in September underscored the importance of the collapse of “imperial communism” and the awakening of a “democratic” Russia.⁴⁸⁴ He focused on the significance of the UN leadership in “resolving conflicts and brokering peace the entire world over, but securing democracy and securing the peace in the century ahead will be no simple task.”⁴⁸⁵ For Bush, the UN was particularly effective at peace-keeping and this challenge would require enormous contributions as “turbulent change” continued to “shake Eastern Europe and Eurasia.”⁴⁸⁶ President highlighted US readiness to support any competent regional and international organizations to “develop peace-keeping capabilities.”⁴⁸⁷

Deserving attention are also two public statements from Thomas Niles, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs. In a hearing of the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Niles expanded on US policy on ‘ethnic conflicts’ through the example of Yugoslavia,

The principal components of our policy in Yugoslavia today to work with our friends in Western Europe and other members of the United Nations, the international community, to achieve a peaceful settlement to the crisis that has developed in what we now refer to as the former Yugoslavia; to secure the recognition of the independence of the various republics under conditions acceptable to the international community; and to prevent the further spread of the violence which has wrecked particularly the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁴⁸⁸

Additionally, in October 1992, at a presentation organized by the American Enterprise Institute Niles responded to a question on whether the US supported ethnic self-determination in

⁴⁸⁴ United Nations, General Assembly, *Provisional verbatim record of the 4th meeting, 47th session, A/47/PV.4.* (24 September 1992), p. 27.

⁴⁸⁵ Bush stressed that the world was facing three challenges. First, the challenge of keeping peace and preventing future wars. Second, the likelihood of spread of weapons of mass destruction remained high. Third, economic assistance to the Newly Independent States was an enormous feat. United Nations, General Assembly, *Provisional verbatim record of the 4th meeting, 47th session, A/47/PV.4.* (24 September 1992), pp.30-31.

⁴⁸⁶ United Nations, General Assembly, *Provisional verbatim record of the 4th meeting, 47th session, A/47/PV.4.* (24 September 1992), pp.30-31.

⁴⁸⁷ United Nations, General Assembly, *Provisional verbatim record of the 4th meeting, 47th session, A/47/PV.4.* (24 September 1992), p.32.

⁴⁸⁸ C-SPAN. *U.S. and the Post-Soviet Transition.* [Video]. (1992, October 5). C-SPAN.

Transnistria and other places. Niles stated that “respect for international frontiers is an important principle and yet at the same time we have the principle of self-determination...” and that there would have to be precise principles in place and that the transition should happen peacefully and on a democratic basis like in Czechoslovakia, consistent with CSCE norms and the UN Charter.⁴⁸⁹ The Assistant Secretary also described US efforts in places of conflict like Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh as trying to involve multilateral international organizations to broker a peaceful resolution.⁴⁹⁰

The officials of the Bush Administration insisted that regional conflicts be mitigated and mediated by the participation of international organizations such as the UN or the CSCE. Concerning the work of the UN, there were several prominent actions during the Transnistria War. Moldovan officials advocated for strong action and UN involvement since the onset of fighting in Transnistria as evidenced by numerous letters and speeches, some of which were cited in Chapter 1. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali agreed to send a total of two fact-finding missions to Moldova in 1992. The use of fact-finding missions was seen by the Secretary-General as able to “help defuse a dispute or situation, indicating to those concerned that the United Nations and in particular the Security Council is actively seized of the matter as a present or potential threat to international peace and security.”⁴⁹¹ In the report of the first fact-finding mission dated July 16, 1992, after fighting escalated in June, Boutros-Ghali called upon “the parties concerned” to cease hostilities, respect human rights, especially those of minorities.⁴⁹² The mission provided an important understanding of the situation, and where the sides stood, and attempted to facilitate peace talks and an approximate step-by-step process of normalization of the situation.⁴⁹³ The report noted the appeal of the Presidents of Moldova and Russia to the CSCE to contribute to the settlement of the dispute through mediation and permanent monitoring of the human rights situation. Similarly, Presidents also issued a statement of readiness for a deeper UN peace-making role in Transnistria.⁴⁹⁴ After the signing of the

⁴⁸⁹ Niles said that “desires of the people” for an independent state should be respected. The official did not clarify the US position on foreign involvement in the local strife for self-determination as was the case in Transnistria. See C-SPAN. *U.S. and the Post-Soviet Transition*. [Video]. (1992, October 5). C-SPAN.

⁴⁹⁰ C-SPAN. *U.S. and the Post-Soviet Transition*. [Video]. (1992, October 5). C-SPAN.

⁴⁹¹ United Nations, General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, September 1993*, A/48/1, (11 September 1992), p.225.

⁴⁹² United Nations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Delegations - Moldova*, S-1086-0096-06-00002. (9 December 1992), p.38.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp.38-56.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

ceasefire agreement on July 21, following Snegur's request for the deployment of the second mission and the approval of the Russian representation, Secretary General dispatched UN staff to monitor the situation from August 25 to August 29.⁴⁹⁵ The mission noted that the situation in Transnistria improved.⁴⁹⁶ While the UN officials took necessary interest and care in the situation in Transnistria, US representation on record did not produce separate statements or encourage extracurricular initiatives about the peace process conducted by the regional leaders of Eastern Europe. At the same time, the topic of former Yugoslavia attracted multiple statements by the US representation with the US condemning the violations of human rights by the Serbs in former Yugoslavia as well as supporting the establishment of a commission to research war crimes.⁴⁹⁷ In a similar vein, the US Representative at the UN Sarbanes espoused readiness to support a draft resolution to withdraw Russian forces during a plenary meeting of the forty-seventh session but did not remark on the similar presence of Russian forces in Moldova, unlike the representations of Moldova, Romania, and Latvia.⁴⁹⁸

While the US officials greatly encouraged CSCE initiatives to help manage the conflict in Transnistria, the activity of the organization in Moldova did not begin in 1992. During the landmark CSCE meeting in Helsinki on July 1992, there was no specific decision regarding Transnistria.⁴⁹⁹ The Helsinki Summit declaration combined efforts of leaders of states and representations to "enhance our capabilities for concerted action and to intensify our co-operation for democracy, prosperity and equal rights of security."⁵⁰⁰ As the Stockholm meeting of the Council of the CSCE highlighted, the Chairman-in-Office and the ministers expressed support for efforts to remove foreign contingent from Moldova through "an appropriate bilateral agreement on the status and the early, orderly and complete withdrawal of foreign troops."⁵⁰¹ As such, the idea of the CSCE mission in Moldova was only initiated on February 4, 1993, and launched in April of the same year with the Clinton Administration taking the charge as Bush left office at the end of January. The mission later published Report #13 with its opinions on the

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁹⁶ U.N. GA, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization*, 47th Sess., Supplement #1., U.N. Doc A/47/1. (1993), p.18.

⁴⁹⁷ U.N. GAOR, 47th Sess., 47th plen. mtg., U.N. Doc A/C.3/47/SR.47. (24 November 1992), p.23.

⁴⁹⁸ U.N. GAOR, 47th Sess., 72nd plen. mtg., U.N. Doc. A/47/PV.72, pp.14-15.

⁴⁹⁹ As indicated by the fact-finding mission of the UN. See United Nations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Delegations - Moldova*, S-1086-0096-06-00002. (9 December 1992), p.56.

⁵⁰⁰ CSCE: Helsinki Summit, 1992. *OSCE*, p.2.

⁵⁰¹ CSCE. Third Meeting of the Council. Summary of Conclusions: Decision on Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, 1992. *OSCE*, p.8.

future of the Moldovan agreement with Transnistria and called on the Russian Federation to “speed up the withdrawal” of its troops from Moldova.⁵⁰²

The Bush Administration did not prioritize NATO mechanisms in dealing with the war in Transnistria, despite the organization being one of the most powerful international security organizations where the US has played a key role. In its June statement, the North Atlantic Alliance endorsed CSCE and insisted that regional conflicts be resolved “by peaceful means in accordance with international law and principles embodied in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris, and other CSCE documents.”⁵⁰³ The statement also emphasized the provision of stationing of foreign troops only with the consent of the host state.⁵⁰⁴ In December, NATO urged the Russian army to withdraw and stressed the importance to follow CSCE principles and mechanisms.⁵⁰⁵ As such, the US was part of the organizational advocacy statements but did not exercise state leadership over the organization in attempts to help resolve the Transnistrian conflict.

While US officials like Baker argued for the benefits of ‘collective engagement’, the problem of Russian violation of Moldovan territorial integrity was not apparent when conducting US policy toward Russia. Instead, the Bush Administration prioritized extensive cooperation with Russia through numerous sets of negotiation rounds and developing a framework for partnership through relevant charters and treaties. As remarked by Alla Roșca and Nataliya Belitser, any meaningful work of Western organizations only started after major battles were finished and neither the US nor its NATO partners affected the peace process in Transnistria.⁵⁰⁶ While the Yugoslav wars included some of the bloodiest fights in Europe since World War II, the war in Transnistria also caused immense damage, human deaths (albeit much lower in scale), and the displacement of nearly 130,000 people.⁵⁰⁷ Most of the peaceful regulation of the war in

⁵⁰² See for more details Report No. 13 by the CSCE Mission to Moldova, 1993. *OSCE*.

⁵⁰³ NATO, *Statement issued at the meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council*. [Statement]. (1992, June 5). NATO.

⁵⁰⁴ NATO, *Statement issued at the meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council*. [Statement]. (1992, June 5). NATO.

⁵⁰⁵ NATO, *Statement issued at the meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council*. [Statement]. (1992, December 12). NATO.

⁵⁰⁶ See for details A. Roșca, “Moldova in U.S. foreign policy: Geopolitical and strategic aspects”. *Revista de Filosofie, Sociologie și Științe Politice*, no. 2(162), 2013, p.143; N. Belitser, “The Transnistrian conflict”, in A. Bebler, *"Frozen conflicts" in Europe*, p.46.

⁵⁰⁷ V. Rosa, “The Transnistrian Conflict: 30 Years Searching for a Settlement”, *Sceus Reports on Human Rights And Security In Eastern Europe*, No 4, 2021, p.5.

Transnistria in 1992 and 1993 was handled by heads of Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, and Russia, the mechanisms of the CIS, and the Joint Tripartite Control Committee, formed through the July 21 agreement.

Conclusion

The Tipping Point of Inevitability

Making use of the counterfactual framework, this thesis comes to examine the ‘tipping point of inevitability’ and one major counterfactual scenario stemming from it. Provided the Russian Command established control of the Soviet troops into the 14th Army in April of 1992, within the same timeline as regional multilateral attempts to coordinate a ceasefire agreement were underway, the Russian military command and President Yeltsin were legally in charge of the troops in Transnistria. Moldovan President Snegur stated that some Russian elites were trying to resurrect a “totalitarian empire” already on April 11, 1992, and on June 20 the Russian troops in Transnistria used heavy equipment and artillery against Moldovan troops thereby engaging in direct interstate conflict. Regardless of whether the Russian military command had real issues exerting control over its troops as mentioned in Chapter 1, the official statements on readiness to engage in the conflict by President Yeltsin, Vice-President Rutskoi, and Defense Minister Grachev enhanced the tensions. The tipping point of inevitability was reached on July 21, the day the ceasefire agreement was signed. Before it, the Bush Administration and members of Congress were still working extensively on a policy choice. After the ceasefire agreement, mention of the armed conflict in the public media outlets virtually disappears.

Drawing on the research and parallels drawn concerning the scholarly analysis presented in Chapters 1 and 2 along with the foreign policy attention of US executive and legislative bodies demonstrated in Chapter 3, there is one primary alternative possibility worth discussing. This counterfactual consists of two components drawn on US policy in other regions such as the Baltics and Yugoslavia. It will also answer briefly the two potential counterfactual questions presented in the Introduction of this study, namely: Was Russian troop withdrawal from Transnistria feasible? Would the situation in Moldova become more peaceful, had Russian troops successfully withdrawn?

The first component is the idea that Russia should have withdrawn its forces from the internationally recognized territory of Moldova and the Baltic States. This was indeed discussed and voiced by US officials in formal and informal settings. However, discussions did not lead to meaningful action as seen throughout Bush’s tenure until January 1993. The focus of lobbying in the US official forums was placed with heavier weight on prioritizing Russian withdrawal from

Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.⁵⁰⁸ The second component of the counterfactual considers Russian troops' direct participation in combat against Moldovan troops and the probability of successful US advocacy to withdraw Russian troops based on the legal basis and political consequences of the 14th Army's participation. Cases of Russian soldiers destroying property in Moldova, lack of prevention of defections to the 'PMR' paramilitary group, and direct armament (regardless of deliberation) of Transnistrian separatists, maiming and killing Moldovan nationals were not officially raised during Bush's tenure. However, calls exactly like that were made by new US Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger regarding predominantly Serbian war crimes in Bosnia and Croatia and the need to conduct a "Second Nuremberg tribunal."⁵⁰⁹

The Counterfactual. The Withdrawal of the 14th Army from Moldova

While discussions and calls to withdraw the Russian Army units stationed in Transnistria were made as it was mentioned in Chapter 3, there was considerable deviation about the intensity and urgency of an arrangement on the part of the US officials. Yeltsin established control of multiple ex-Soviet military *de facto* extra-territorial units in multiple Newly Independent States. While countries like Ukraine assumed full control of the former Soviet forces within their territory (with the Black Sea Fleet negotiations ongoing), other nascent democracies like Lithuania, Latvia, and Moldova prioritized a significant reduction of military spending.⁵¹⁰ The Russian "exit" from Moldova was requested consistently throughout the conflict by Moldovan officials as evidenced by multiple speeches and letters in the UN and other platforms, especially after direct Russian involvement in combat against Moldova.⁵¹¹ The possibility of the withdrawal from Moldova was realistic and comparable to the situation in the Baltic states thus making this scenario important to entertain.

⁵⁰⁸ Even with relative prioritization of the military withdrawal from the Baltic states, Sraders points out less activity on behalf of the Administration compared to the efforts by the Congress. S. Sraders. *Small Baltic States and the Euro-Atlantic Security Community*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021, pp. 147-150.

⁵⁰⁹ *The NY Times*, "U.S. Names Figures It Wants Charged with War Crimes", Dec.17, 1992. It must be conceded that the scale and atrocities at which the Yugoslav Wars were raging, as reported by public media, were vastly bigger than those in the Transnistria War of 1992.

⁵¹⁰ *The NY Times*, "Russia and Its Nasty Neighborhood Brawls", Oct.18, 1992. Moldova did assume command over military units in all of its borders; however the reality was that it could not effectively control the units located in Transnistria as 'PMR' had already done that two months before Moldova in September 1991. *Ilascu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, 48787/99, p. 10.

⁵¹¹ United Nations, Security Council, *Letter dated 22 June 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Moldova to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary General*, S/24138 (22 June 1992).

As noted in Chapter 3, the question of Russian withdrawal of the three Baltic states, which were recognized as occupied by the US government was arguably of higher priority to American decision-makers on various levels.⁵¹² Russian withdrawal and liberation of the Baltics would come full circle for American diplomacy after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939 and World War II USSR occupation of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Hence, the course of action adopted by Congress and the Bush Administration reflected the urgency to ensure the peaceful gradual removal of Russian troops. As evidenced by Senate Amendment 2664, US Congress placed conditions on economic aid to incentivize Russian troop withdrawal. On July 10, during the CSCE summit in Helsinki, a declaration to strengthen CSCE's hand in intervening in ethnic disputes and supervising troop withdrawals was adopted.⁵¹³ On the same day, the meeting between Bush and Baltic Presidents displayed the readiness of the US President to ensure Russian withdrawal upon the suggestion of economic aid conditionality from Estonian President Ruutel.⁵¹⁴

Conditionality placed on economic assistance to Russia, as well as a more principled, "Baltic-like" stance on Moldova, may likely have worked as a stronger impetus on Yeltsin and the Russian government than just requests and discussions. The agreement on Russian withdrawal from Lithuania was signed in September 1992.⁵¹⁵ Similarly, there was a bigger need for the US to speed up the provision of economic aid to Russia, particularly as Yeltsin, Kozyrev, and Gaidar were losing political momentum amid economic issues. As more nationalist and conservative Russian politicians received seats in the Russian government, Russian policy became more active in its foreign affairs, particularly in the 'near abroad' area. While James Baker discussed how economic assistance to the Newly Independent States was an investment,

⁵¹² Congressional record of the same sessions in Congress where issues of Russian troops in Moldova and the Baltic were raised displays Congressional effort to establish conditionality on financial aid to Russia related to the withdrawal from the Baltic states only through Amendment 2664 that was adopted as part of the FREEDOM Support Act. See 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, July 1, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 12 — Bound Edition, p.17406.

⁵¹³ *The LA Times*. "Europe Moves to Curb Ethnic Wars", Jul. 10, 1992; OSCE: Helsinki Summit, 1992. OSCE.

⁵¹⁴ Memorandum of conversation, 'Meeting with Presidents Ruutel of Estonia, Gorbunovs of Latvia, and Landsbergis of Lithuania' July 10, 1992, Secret, Textual Archives at the George Bush Presidential Library, Declassified Per E.O. 13526, Bush Presidential Records, p.3.

⁵¹⁵ *The Washington Post*, "Russia To Speed Troop Pullout from Lithuania", Sep. 9, 1992.

Similar agreements with Latvia and Estonia were signed in 1994. See E. Holoboff, "National Security in the Baltic States", p.113 in B. Parrott, *State Building and Military Power in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*; Č. Stankevičius, "Lithuanian - Russian Negotiations in 1990-1993", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 13-14, p.90. Sraders argues that Russia's need for economic aid softened the Russian stance on troop withdrawal throughout 1992. See S. Sraders. *Small Baltic States and the Euro-Atlantic Security Community*, p.149.

the fear was that the FREEDOM Support Act bill could be bogged down amid an amendment hailstorm.⁵¹⁶ Indeed, after the Senate passed the bill in July and the House took it for consideration, there was an effort to consolidate amendments and settle on the final version, which was finally adopted and signed into law on October 24, 1992. On October 30, 1992, a day after Yeltsin suspended Russian withdrawal from the Baltics, the US State Department insisted that troops be removed unless Russian officials wanted delays in economic assistance.⁵¹⁷

While the extent of direct US participation in negotiations between Lithuania and Russia in 1992 is unclear, US officials championed Russian withdrawal at the UN and other international forums.⁵¹⁸ One such example is the provision in Article 15 of the Helsinki Summit Declaration that CSCE supported the removal of “foreign armed forces on the territories of the Baltic States without the required consent of those countries.”⁵¹⁹ Even barred expansive American participation and mediation of Russian troop withdrawal negotiations, the advocacy and political pressure put on Russia through bilateral and multilateral interactions had a significant influence on the Russian government’s readiness to act. The overall lack of such bi- and multilateral advocacy efforts in US policy for Moldova and the removal of the 14th Army despite bloody combat and destruction unlike in the Baltics points to the discrepancy within the general approach to US policy of ‘collective engagement’ and the rules-based order. However, the signing of the ceasefire agreement in addition to the already careful approach of the Administration might have facilitated a less tense bilateral cooperation path.⁵²⁰ The July 21 Agreement might have relieved the US government of a major obstacle in intergovernmental cooperation as the agreement on paper displayed the willingness of the Russian officials to settle the conflict with Moldova peacefully without US involvement and mediation.

The second component of the counterfactual is the US policy in Yugoslavia in 1992. It displays the degree of attention to the abuses of human rights and the proposed pathways of resolution. Despite the higher intensity of battles and enormous human casualties in the

⁵¹⁶ *The NY Times*, “What America Owes the Ex-Soviet Union”, Aug. 5, 1992.

⁵¹⁷ *The NY Times*, “Delay by Yeltsin In Baltic Pullout Irritates the U.S.”, Oct.31, 1992.

⁵¹⁸ The draft resolution “Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States” was adopted by the General Assembly on November 25 and finalized in March 1993. See U.N. GAOR, 47th Sess., 72nd plen. mtg., U.N. Doc. A/47/PV.72. (11 December 1992), pp.14-15; U.N. GAOR, 47th Sess., U.N. Doc. A/RES/47/21. (24 March 1993).

⁵¹⁹ CSCE: Helsinki Summit, 1992. *OSCE*, p.3.

⁵²⁰ This consideration coincides with the general scholarly assessment of the foreign policy of the Bush Administration especially provided the declared reformist and democratic aims of the Yeltsin Administration.

territories of former Yugoslavia and the higher degree of international attention devoted to the issue of conflict resolution, the US approach ultimately involved more of the Administration's attention without producing more US action.

This can be captured through multiple statements by high-ranking US officials. Deputy Secretary of State Eagleburger on August 9, 1992, prioritized multilateral efforts in providing humanitarian assistance and mediation.⁵²¹ In response to the question on the lack of urgency in the US response, Eagleburger stated that the Yugoslav crisis was an international crisis like “no other crisis we faced, thoroughly complicated... civil war.”⁵²² On a different occasion, James Baker stressed that “we ain't got no dog in that fight.”⁵²³ Thomas Niles, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, on August 4, 1992, said that the principal components of US policy in Yugoslavia at the time were to work with the international community “to achieve a peaceful settlement to the crisis [...] to secure the recognition of the independence of the various republics under conditions acceptable to the international community, and to prevent the further spread of the violence which has wracked particularly the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.”⁵²⁴

In the same session, Representative Owens of the House indicated to Niles that a dozen areas around the world could have ethnic conflicts, and that “the world's only superpower, which should, in addition to the military, be moral (sic), is refusing to act in what is the worst abuse since Hitler in Europe of an attempt on the basis of ethnic relationships, ethnic realities, to try to wipe out a group of people.”⁵²⁵ Representative Kostmayer criticized the Administration and particularly President Bush on the stance in Yugoslavia. He said, “This is the most weak-kneed, lily-livered presentation I've heard in 15 years in the Congress. You haven't shown any leadership, and neither has he, and there isn't anybody sitting up here or out there who thinks you've shown leadership.”⁵²⁶ Representative additionally stated that without significant deterrent on the part of the US

⁵²¹ C-SPAN. *Conflict in Former Yugoslavia*. [Video]. (1992, August 9). C-SPAN.

⁵²² C-SPAN. *Conflict in Former Yugoslavia*. [Video]. (1992, August 9). C-SPAN.

⁵²³ As cited in D. Hamilton, K. Spohr, *Open door*, p.9.

⁵²⁴ Niles like Eagleburger called the wars in the Balkans a civil war. This was criticized by Representative McCloskey as one that oversimplifies the situation on the ground especially amid states desiring international recognition. See C-SPAN. *Conflict in Former Yugoslavia* [Video]. (1992, August 4). C-SPAN.

⁵²⁵ C-SPAN. *Conflict in Former Yugoslavia*. [Video]. (1992, August 4). C-SPAN.

⁵²⁶ C-SPAN. *Conflict in Former Yugoslavia*. [Video]. (1992, August 4). C-SPAN.

and the international community at large, Serbian President Milošević would continue the aggressive and “Nazi-like” course of action.⁵²⁷

Speaking about ethnic conflicts on August 13, 1992, Eagleburger stated that the West needed to find ways to “manage” ethnic conflicts and “provide stability” and that a military solution involving Western troops would not “solve the problem but put all of us in the middle of another Vietnam.”⁵²⁸ Just a week before, Eagleburger called for a war crimes investigation on detention centers set up by Serbian forces.⁵²⁹ On August 13, the US backed a UNSC resolution on the authorization of the use of force to ensure humanitarian assistance got to the Bosnian people and throughout 1992 insisted on the need to bring justice to those who may have committed crimes.⁵³⁰ The US enforced sanctions on Serbia and per Niles, it was on track to make it a “pariah state” for committing aggression and war crimes against other states.⁵³¹

In parallel, the July 21 ceasefire agreement in Moldova established the Russian troops as a peacekeeping force.⁵³² As Moldova did not have agreements with the Russian side sanctioning the continuous stationing of the 14th Army before the July 21 agreement, the actions of the Russian troops can be treated as a party *de facto* co-exercising the effective control of the territory.⁵³³ Before the tipping point of inevitability, the Bush Administration and Congress

⁵²⁷ C-SPAN. *Conflict in Former Yugoslavia*. [Video]. (1992, August 4). C-SPAN.

⁵²⁸ C-SPAN. *Bush Agenda: Foreign Policy Initiatives*. [Video]. (1992, August 13). C-SPAN.

⁵²⁹ The NY Times news piece indicated the following: “The Administration's hesitant reactions this week are the latest expression of a policy that has fluctuated between near silence on the conflict in the former Yugoslavia to threats of military intervention to guarantee the delivery of humanitarian aid.” See *The NY Times*, “State Dept. Asks War Crimes Inquiry Into Bosnia Camps”, Aug 6, 1992.

⁵³⁰ *The NY Times*, “The U.N.'s Duty in Bosnia”, Aug. 14, 1992; U.N. SC, 3106th mtg., *Resolution 770*, U.N. Doc. S/RES/770 (1992). (13 August 1992). The US submitted four war-crimes reports to the UN. Also, in listing names potentially eligible for the new trials “Mr. Eagleburger later told reporters that although there was no plan to bring the accused to trial at the moment, “Over the long run they may be able to run but they can't hide, that we're going to pursue them.” But when pressed, he made clear that he was not calling for the forcible seizure of the 10 men he named for either committing or supervising war crimes.” *The NY Times*, “U.S. Names Figures It Wants Charged with War Crimes”, Dec.17, 1992.

⁵³¹ C-SPAN. *Conflict in Former Yugoslavia*. [Video]. (1992, August 4). C-SPAN.

⁵³² United Nations, Security Council, *Agreement on the Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Dniester Region of the Republic of Moldova*, S/24369. (6 August 1992). To view the agreement in Russian see The Government of Moldova, *Agreement on principles of a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the Dniester region of the Republic of Moldova*, July 21, 1992.

⁵³³ Human Rights Watch. Report: *War or peace? Human rights and Russian military: Involvement in the "Near Abroad"*, 1993, no. 5 (22). As stated by the Case of Ilascu, Moldova did not have effective control over Transnistrian territories and therefore could not secure the rights of citizens who were in ‘PMR’-controlled territories. The actions of the Russian troops could be seen as illegal due to the Decree no. 234 through which President Snegur declared all Soviet military assets the property of the Republic of Moldova.

worked on a policy that intended to condemn the actions of the Russian military as displayed in Chapter 3. Compared to Yugoslavia, the scale and the nature of fighting in Transnistria were smaller and ultimately did not draw as much attention from the US officials. After the July 21 Agreement, the urgency to investigate human rights abuses as reported by the Russian Memorial Human Rights Center or Human Rights Watch vanishes from the discourse.

Would the situation in the region be more peaceful if the Russian troops had withdrawn? As discussed by multiple scholars and presented in Chapter 1, because the ‘PMR’ military formations were supplied with heavy weapons like battle tanks and artillery and trained by the 14th Army, the Transnistrian elites believed they could use force and count on Russian support to defend their interests.⁵³⁴ The removal of the Russian troops, international pressure, and direct mediation from the US and partners might have helped with de-escalation and would have contributed to discouraging the ‘PMR’ from using force.⁵³⁵ De-escalation, lack of military superiority of either side and the general lack of support for the war in both Moldova and Transnistria in 1992 would have facilitated the search for an acceptable agreement for Moldova and Transnistrian interest groups and residents.⁵³⁶ Most importantly, the removal of the Russian forces would have been in line with Article 4 of the July 21 Agreement and would encourage a search for a framework for the restoration of Moldovan territorial integrity or another solution reasonable to the negotiating sides.

Analysis of Suggested US Policy Options toward Russia in the Transnistrian Conflict

Many scholars in academia and think tanks have shared similar general assessments of US policy. Researcher Alla Roșca argued that the US was driven by the rational actor strategy to maximize benefits and cut losses.⁵³⁷ A RAND report in 1995 stated that the US needed to

⁵³⁴ Among the discussions of the Transnistrian motivations and the balance of power in the region see A. Sanchez, “The “frozen” Southeast”, p.160; C. Borgen, “Thawing a Frozen Conflict”, p. 4; S. Roper, “Regionalism in Moldova”, p.109.

⁵³⁵ The absence of the Russian army units and the geographical distance of Russia from Moldova would alleviate the danger of Russia intervening on the ‘PMR’ side and would completely change the political and military calculus in the region.

⁵³⁶ For details on the lack of popular support of war in Moldova and Transnistria, see P. Kolstø et al., “The Dniester conflict”, p.994.

⁵³⁷ A. Roșca, “Moldova in U.S. Foreign Policy”, p.143.

exercise global leadership based on encouraging democratic processes and cooperating with the Newly Independent States to prevent possible future acts of aggression through deterrence.⁵³⁸ US policy in European states with raging ethnic conflicts was seen by scholars of the Institute for Security Studies of the Western European Union as that of relegating resolution to the “back-burner” and Europeans who needed to take care of their backyard as they seemingly had more leverage.⁵³⁹

Even barring direct US military commitment to the resolution of the Transnistrian conflict, it appears that the Bush Administration did not use its full might of political and economic incentives. Declared ‘collective engagement’ and peaceful democratic transition efforts did not always match US actions, particularly considering the coordination behind Operation “Desert Storm”. One study of the US Army College from January 1993 suggested the US provided offices to mediate ethnic disputes, a move that was later attempted by the Clinton Administration.⁵⁴⁰ Senator Pressler argued for a non-military observer mission to be coordinated by the US “to protect the right of the people of Moldova to exercise self-determination” as he warned that the July 21 ceasefire between two states with unequal military might not be a fair one.⁵⁴¹ Pressler also criticized Bush’s approach to multilateral diplomacy through international organizations. The Senator specified that while Bush highlighted the “unique opportunity” to form “a genuine global community of free and sovereign nations”, the US did not act accordingly in the matter of the presence of the Russian troops in the Newly Independent States.⁵⁴² Pressler also argued that “Early and effective action in the Baltic States and Moldova by the United Nations or - more ideally – CSCE can avoid the necessity of future

⁵³⁸ Z. Khalilzad, “From Containment to Global Leadership: America and the World After the Cold War”, Santa Monica, CA: *RAND Corporation*, 1995, p.27.

⁵³⁹ Scholars also were convinced that the upcoming election diverted Bush’s attention from getting embroiled in a potential quagmire, much like it discouraged his military advisors like Colin Powell, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. See P. Baev, A.H. Dessouki, S. Larrabee, D.B. Sezer, M. Wohlfeld, M. Jopp (eds). “The implications of the Yugoslav crisis for western Europe’s foreign relations”. *Institute for Security Studies*, 1994, pp.11-12.

⁵⁴⁰ W. Gray, “The chivalrous republic: intrarepublic conflict and the case study of Moldova”, *Strategic Studies Institute*, U.S. Army War College, 1993, p.22. For more details on how the Clinton Administration dealt with ethnic disputes see P. Baev et al. (eds). “The implications of the Yugoslav crisis for western Europe’s foreign relations”, pp.12-13

⁵⁴¹ Pressler also stressed the slippery slope that the Transnistrian precedent codified in July 21 agreement could encourage Russian involvement in other ethnic conflicts. See 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, July 22, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 13 — Bound Edition, p.18878.

⁵⁴² 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, September 25, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 19 — Bound Edition, p.27878.

peacekeepers.”⁵⁴³ US silence and inactivity on Russian troop presence was criticized in the article by Paul Goble of the Washington Post presented to the Senate as spurring Russian chauvinism and weakening Yeltsin and pro-Western camp.⁵⁴⁴ The article invited the Bush Administration to recognize that political reforms, as much as pro-market changes, should have been part of the conditionality on the provision of American aid.⁵⁴⁵ A different aspect of US policy was discussed by John Brademas, President Emeritus of the New York University, in his address to the Senate where he stressed the need for the creation of a multilateral know-how economic partnership that could help establish proper market economics and facilitate the growth of democratic institutions.⁵⁴⁶

Analytical Findings

The counterfactual inquiry into the US policy on Russia through the Transnistria War allows this study to highlight a few analytical findings.

First, the possibility of the US undertaking the task of mounting additional pressure on the Russian authorities to withdraw from Moldova was realistic provided the weak state of the Russian economy and the pro-Western foreign policy. Even with the coming elections, internal economic issues, and multiple crises around the world, particularly in Europe and other Newly Independent States, the dangerous precedent of the Russian troops engaging in hostilities in foreign states was not paid significant attention by the Bush Administration. The attempts of multiple senators and representatives of the House to encourage the Bush Administration to prioritize the withdrawal of the Russian troops did not alter the general policy vector. Congress was alone in its attempt to draw attention to the Moldovan matter and the Bush Administration acted without considering Congressional pressure. Admittedly, neither Congress nor the Bush Administration initiated conditionality on aid related to the withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldova. The weight of Congressional action in this regard could have been a serious factor

⁵⁴³ Ibid., 27878.

⁵⁴⁴ Goble stressed an example from the aggression of Soviet troops against Lithuanian citizens at the TV tower in Vilnius. “The administration seems to have learned nothing from an episode in 1991, when it refused to take a tough stand against Soviet violence in the Baltic states out of fear that to do so would somehow undermine Gorbachev. The unintended result: Violence continued, conservatives in Moscow were strengthened and any chance Gorbachev would resume reform was seriously reduced. 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, July 22, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 13 — Bound Edition, p.18879.

⁵⁴⁵ 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, July 22, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 13 — Bound Edition, p.18879.

⁵⁴⁶ 102nd Congress - Congressional Record, October 3, 1992 Vol. 138, Part 21 — Bound Edition, p. 30933.

contributing to the Bush Administration policy calculus. Greater US mediation, a more principled position on aid provision following troop withdrawal based on wider international economic effort might have helped get Russian troops out of Moldova by a specific deadline.⁵⁴⁷ With the signing of the July 21 Agreement, the need to conduct a more principled policy toward Russia on the 14th Army problem became less pronounced and largely disappeared from public discourse. One potential lesson from this analysis is that given the dissolution of the USSR and the nascent Russian government's new era of engagement with the United States, it is plausible that the Bush Administration's policy of restraint in the Transnistria conflict could have conveyed to the Russian counterpart a sense of entitlement to exert its sway over neighboring states by use of military force.

Second, despite Congressional pressure, amid the number of internal and external issues, the Bush Administration prioritized cooperating with Russian counterparts on a range of issues predominantly focusing on weapons balancing like the nuclear arms START I and conventional arms CFE treaties to "lock into place a balance of power in favor of the United States."⁵⁴⁸ This conclusion largely coincides with the findings of many other scholars in the field as described in Chapter 2. In the case of the Transnistria War, the Administration reacted publicly only to the Russian military firing at Moldovan troops, thus directly joining in to protect 'PMR' separatists and effectively intruding into Moldovan internal affairs without an international mandate. In the counterfactual framework, this development could have had the capacity to affect US policy significantly. However, after the 14th Army overtly joined the side of the 'PMR', the Moldovan government sought negotiations, hostilities stopped, and an agreement was signed within the following month.⁵⁴⁹ A protracted armed conflict might have challenged the values and the approach of the Bush Administration and Congress to conduct a more active policy toward Russia. In assessing the restraint of the Bush Administration, some scholars focus on the White House's reaction to the Pentagon's Defense Planning Guidance (DPG) in 1992, which advocated that the United States' top priority should have been preventing the reemergence of any power

⁵⁴⁷ Lithuania succeeded in signing a bilateral agreement with Russia providing for the removal of Russian troops from Lithuanian soil already in 1992; Provided greater US mediation and aid potential, similar agreements could have had a greater chance of happening sooner across the Baltics and in Moldova.

⁵⁴⁸ This cooperation with Russia fits the restrained power-balancing approach described by Goldgeier and McFaul, Onea, and others mentioned in Chapter 2. See J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.5.

⁵⁴⁹ Given the present public absence of records of conversations between US and Russian officials on the matter mentioned by the Department of State Spokesperson Margaret Tutwiler, the US policy toward Russia through the Transnistria War might have simply not had time to be challenged by the fighting on the ground.

capable of mounting a challenge to US supremacy as formidable as the one posed by the Soviet Union.”⁵⁵⁰ In practice, declared grandiose world-transforming plans backed by US ‘collective engagement’ with ethnic wars such as the one in Transnistria illustrated how both internal and external factors could hamper US actions. The Bush Administration continued cooperating with Yeltsin through bilateral visits, negotiations, and treaty preparations. In comparison with the US conduct regarding the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, US policy on Russia in the Transnistria War was vastly different as conflict resolution had to be conducted vis-à-vis the recent nuclear rival, albeit one trying to walk the pro-Western path. As discussed in Chapter 2, a significant part of the power-balancing policy of the Bush Administration as seen through the interaction with Russia was the view on deterrence and balance, which treated Russia as a rightful successor to the USSR, a powerful state.

Third, was US policy on Russia in the Transnistria War successful? While the Bush Administration did try to integrate Russia into the West, the actions undertaken were primarily focused on Russian foreign policy and transactional actions like consolidating the nuclear arsenal or avoiding the default on debt without implementing direct governmental initiatives to assist Russia with pro-democratic and pro-market changes.⁵⁵¹ Still in 1992, the immediate success of leaving the negotiations largely to the local states was dubious as the ceasefire was not quite stable and the balance of power between Russia and Moldova was not on the same level. The contribution of Romania and Ukraine as mediators is hard to gauge precisely, but US resignation on the matter throughout the whole conflict could have had a significant influence. Since 1992, the solution to the conflict did not materialize despite reaching withdrawal agreements as more clauses and Russian disapproval of Western interference complicated the process.⁵⁵² The US and the EU throughout the years did not elevate the issue of Moldovan territorial integrity and settlement in Transnistria to the top priorities of foreign policy.⁵⁵³ After 1992, the Russian

⁵⁵⁰ More on the DPG see T. Onea, *US foreign policy in the Post-Cold War era*, p.48.

⁵⁵¹ J. Goldgeier, M. McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p.10. As discussed in Chapter 2, part 3, the US Government did not implement relevant acts to directly assist Russia with reforms related to democracy and rule of law. Goldgeier and McFaul stress that American non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) funded by the US Congress did assist Russia. However, scholars clarify that relevant NGOs, per their mandates, conducted their activities independently of the Bush Administration, which was not interested in this policy track. See *Ibid.*, 38.

⁵⁵² Wolff Stefan, “The Transnistrian Issue: Moving beyond the Status-Quo.” *European Parliamentary Research Service*, 2012.

⁵⁵³ V. Rosa, “The Transnistrian Conflict: 30 Years Searching for a Settlement”, p.8. More on Russian disapproval regarding Western interference see M. Vahl, M. Emerson, “Moldova and the Transnistrian conflict”, *Jemie*, 2004, 1.

involvement in the conflict became more often characterized as Russian aggression rather than an intra-state conflict or a civil war due to the Kremlin not fulfilling the agreements and Russian troops effectively staying within Moldova's *de jure* borders.⁵⁵⁴ Mary Pendleton, the first US Ambassador to Moldova, in the interview with Radio Free Liberty, explained that the 'PMR' was not willing to talk to the American Embassy and peace talks among local actors were already underway when the Embassy started working.⁵⁵⁵

The restraint in the US policy toward Russia in the context of the Transnistria War falls within a wider picture of the general understanding in the academia of cautiousness and resignation from the internal developments in the Newly Independent States. While more academic research and debate are necessary to ponder if Russia could truly become democratic with the right support of the US Government, this study can conclude that restraint in addressing the 14th Army's intervention against Moldovan troops on the *de jure* Moldovan territory of Transnistria may have emboldened Russian officials to conduct a more aggressive foreign policy as seen in the later intervention against Georgia.⁵⁵⁶ Restraint in US policy during the Bush Administration remains a direction that instructs and may instruct modern-day US policy on Russia and this study provides a specific insight into the effectiveness of restraint relative to working with the Russian government, with the latter being much more prone to resorting to military solutions to achieve its foreign policy objectives.

⁵⁵⁴ "Russia's *de facto* aggressor role in Moldova is associated with both its destructive involvement in the incipient phase of the conflict in 1992, and the maintenance of a regular military detachment and ammunition depot on the territory of the Republic of Moldova since then." See V. Rosa, "The Transnistrian Conflict: 30 Years Searching for a Settlement", p.12.

⁵⁵⁵ In answering the question about the Transnistria war, Pendleton did not specify whether more meaningful contact was established with the Russian side. See *Radio Europa Liberă. Interview with Mary C. Pendleton, First US Ambassador to Moldova*. [Video] (2016, August 19). Radio Europa Liberă. Retrieved from: https://www.rferl.org/a/first_us_ambassador_to_moldova_reflects_on_pace_of_change/24315307.html

⁵⁵⁶ Robert Ware and colleagues argue that US Administrations have consistently failed to address Russian aggression against Georgia since the collapse of the USSR. See R. Ware, A. Matveeva, P. Armstrong, A. Foxall, N. Petro (eds), *The Fire below: How the Caucasus Shaped Russia*, New York: Bloomsbury, 2013, p.35. See also T. Hopf, "Identity, Legitimacy, and the Use of Military Force: Russia's Great Power Identities and Military Intervention in Abkhazia", *Review of International Studies* 31, no. S1, 2005, 225–43. The Human Rights Watch report from 1995 on the conflict between Abkhazia and Georgia indicates instances of Russian supplies of arms to both Georgian military formations and Abkhaz separatists in 1992 and Russian direct military involvement against Georgia already in 1993 particularly with the use of air raids. See Human Rights Watch. Report: *Georgia/Abkhazia: Violations of The Laws of War And Russia's Role in the Conflict*, 1995, no. 7(7), pp. 37-39.

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