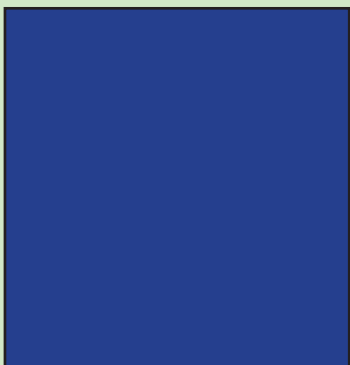


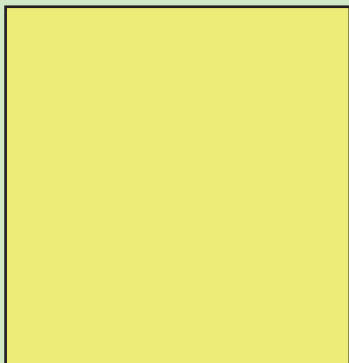
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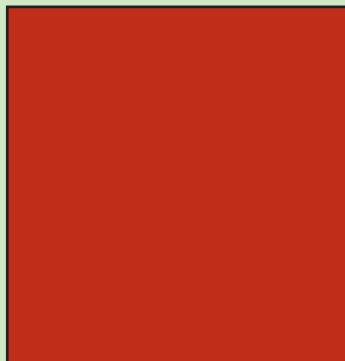


Focus

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The Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDS) Viitorul is a research, education and outreach organization which activates in the field of economic analysis, governance, law, political sciences, strategic and organizational science. It was set up in June 1993 in Moldova as a nongovernmental, not-for-profit organization, nonpolitical entity.





by **Ion Marandici**
ionmarandici@gmail.com

MOLDOVA UNDER WATER: A CRISIS THAT COULD HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED

Overview

During the last days of July and the first decade of August, Moldova had to face the challenge of flooding. Ukraine, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia were in the same situation. There were no human losses, but the damage caused by the natural disaster could have been avoided, if the country's crisis management agencies would have been better informed and better prepared. The North and the South of the country were mostly affected. At the end of the article, several recommendations were issued in order to improve the crisis management capabilities of the Moldovan specialized agencies.

The Extent of the Disaster

Last year, Republic of Moldova was affected by droughts and needed international assistance. This year, heavy rainfalls in the Northern part of Moldova led to increased water flow of the two major rivers in the country: Prut and Nistru.

The greatest threats were posed by the increased amount of water in the artificial lakes at Stâncă-Costești (Prut) and the Dubăsari Lake (Nistru). On July 30, Romanian and Moldovan authorities agreed to discharge water from the Stanca-Costesti Lake. As a result 27 localities on the left bank of Prut were flooded and over 30 localities on the right bank of Prut were inundated, but population was evacuated in time. While the situation on the Prut River was controlled, the situation on the Nistru river depended much on the actions of the Ukrainian

authorities and the separatist regime. The tensions between Moldova and Ukraine have risen when Ukraine announced it decided to open the gates of the Novodnestrovsk dam thus increasing suddenly the flow of water in the river. The opening of the gates led to the creation of two giant waves and it was not sure that the barrier constructed at the Dubasari accumulation lake would resist. The Moldovan authorities were unprepared, but managed to evacuate in time the population from the villages under threat.

International Federation of Red Cross estimated that the floods that hit Ukraine and Moldova were the most severe during the last two centuries. Romania, Hungary and Slovakia suffered too from bad weather. The Red Cross Federation declared that in Ukraine, Moldova and Romania, 42 persons died and 40 000 were evacuated. The total damage in all three countries amounts to one billion Euros and trying to alleviate the consequences Red Cross launched a campaign of help during the next eight months.

As a result of the rains, 46 villages were flooded and 836 houses and 10,500 ha of agricultural land were covered with water. A significant part of the wine harvest of the Republic has been destroyed. Some 5,700 people were evacuated by authorities from the flooded areas to temporary shelters in schools, hostels and tent camps. The northern parts of Moldova, especially Briceni and Ocnita were hit first. The first alert came on July 28 and in one night authorities had to organize the evacuation. Villages of Drepcauti, Criva, Sireuti, Lipcani (Briceni), Valcinet (Ocnita), town of Soroca, Cosernita

(Criuleni), town of Vadul lui Voda (Chisinau), Delacau (Anenii-Noi), Braniste, Avrameni, Reteni, Duruitoarea, Demeni (Riscani) were flooded. In Briceni, a local school was flooded. In Otaci, tens of families remained without natural gas for a few days. The water pump station that provides Chisinau with water was under threat, but during the whole period of crisis Constantin Becciev, the director of the municipal public company "Apa-Canal" declared the management of the company was prepared to cope with the flooding.

During the first days of disaster, 1371 children were evacuated from various summer camps. During the first decade of August, the South of the country was affected. On August 11, the level of Prut River has increased and some areas of the Leca village in Cantemir district were flooded as well as areas in natural parks. The Prut water invaded the Ungheni-Vale border crossing point and threatened the Danuteni village. The villages of Serpeni, Puhaceni, Calfa, Anenii-Noi have suffered. The Stefan-Voda district was the one affected the most by the Nistru waters; villages of Talmaz, Purcari, Rascaieti, Ciobruciu, Tudora, Olanesti, Crocmaz and Palanca suffered the most.

The final evaluation of the Moldovan Government states that the floods have caused damages valued to 120 millions USD of which: 20% are damages to the infrastructure, 15% are losses resulting from the flooding of agricultural areas. The bulk of the damage is represented by the damage caused to houses, summer residencies, shops, summer camps, various health resorts etc. Most of the houses were completely destroyed in Briceni (186) and Stefan-Voda (34).

At present, the most urgent task is to find housing for the remaining 233 families without shelter and to repair other 149 houses. As of August 28, the Moldovan Government bought 77 houses for the victims of the flooding. It was considered that it is cheaper to buy houses, than to build new ones. Another governmental decision was to offer to each victim for the purpose of rebuilding the homes: 1 ton of cement and 1, 5 m³ of wood. UNICEF offered 500 lei for each child from the

affected families. The persons who have lost their harvest will also receive compensations. The harvest on a total area of 3318 hectares in private property was lost and it is estimated that 5,400 families will get as compensation 10 000 lei for each hectare of farmland flooded. The Minister of Agriculture was announcing on August 5 that in the whole country there were 6900 hectares of farmland flooded of which 5500 with crop.

International and National Expression of Solidarity

In order to evaluate the damage caused by the flood a special commission was created. According to the Commission, a total of 1 813 houses and hundreds of summer houses were flooded on the right bank. The damage on the left bank, in the separatist region of Transnistria was even greater. Despite the proposal, the unrecognized authorities in Tiraspol did not accept the help offered by the Chisinau officials.

After the deluge, 3000 wells from the existing 4500 needed to be cleaned. For cleaning the wells a national project was started with a total budget of 700 000 lei. The ecologic damages were also enormous. Minister of Ecology, Violeta Ivanov claimed the overflows "hurt" a lot the Moldovan flora and fauna.

International relief services consider that Moldova asked too late for assistance from the international community. Especially pumps for evacuating the water were needed. The Transnistrian authorities asked instead for help from the Russian Federation Duma. Only later the leader of the self-proclaimed republic addressed a message seeking help from the international community.

The effort to overcome the disaster was understood by some parties as an attempt to organize political campaigning. The case of the Liberal Party in Briceni district is revealing. Liberal Party has sent some of its young members to the villages of Drepcauti and Criva in Briceni district to help the victims of the natural calamity. According to the press, the mayor of Drepcauti and the president of the district belonging to the Party of

Communists chased the young people away fearing they would gain political influence in the region. As a response the leader of the Liberal Party promised 100 000 lei to the victims in both villages and additionally promised to donate three water cranes. Our Moldova Alliance party mobilized its local leadership and created crisis cells in the affected regions.

On the public bank account, opened to help the victims as of August 28, already 17, 5 millions lei were gathered. The major part of the money will be spent for compensations. The major donors were state-owned companies, agencies and private banks and as well as foreign governments. Generally, 31, 4 tons of humanitarian aid was received from the population and economic agents. As a whole 2650 persons showed compassion and have made donations of which approx. 1600 were from Chisinau. 8000 packages were received weighing 73, 5 tons. A second bank account was opened in order to gather money for building new housing facilities for the families that lost their shelters.

As of August 14, the Government stopped receiving aid from private persons. To encourage donations, the Government proposed a draft law stipulating waiver from taxes for economic agents offering donations or building new houses for the victims. It was decided that until November 10, all the victims should be offered housing by the Government.

On the governmental level, Czech Republic, Turkey, Austria, Russian Federation, US and Lithuanian Embassy, Italy, Canada, Greece, Slovak Republic and Japan were the major states to assist Moldova. They sent water pumps, rubber boats, power generators, blankets, clothes, beds and other aid. From international organizations, UNICEF and International Federation of Red Cross reacted promptly and sent humanitarian aid. Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Center monitored the situation and spread information regarding the needed assistance. Items like dust masks, household gloves plus high-capacity pumping experts still are needed to fight the consequences of the disaster.

Strengthening the Capacity of Crisis Management Agencies Is Needed

Major agencies involved in the crisis management were the Agency for Material Reserves, Public Procurement and Humanitarian Aid, the Agency for Water Resources, the Extraordinary Governmental Commission for Evaluating the Damage caused by the Flood, the Direction for Civil Protection and Exceptional Situations from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Armed Forces and the Meteorological Prognosis Center. The presidency and the government assumed the whole responsibility and even if Our Moldova Alliance party pleaded for an extraordinary parliamentary session, the Parliament did not assemble.

The army played a significant role in helping the population to rebuild and consolidate the dams. At least 400 soldiers were sent to various localities to lend a hand to the people. Police was also involved in various operations, preventing looting. In the period after the flooding, the Public Health Ministry started a vaccination campaign against various diseases.

However, the premier and the president took a leave before the period of flooding ended which was seen by many as a sign of irresponsibility. Given the time at their disposal, the authorities managed to cope with the crisis and avoided the human losses.

It is obvious that the country could have been better prepared. Had the meteorological services functioned better, the flooding could have been anticipated and the dams could have been consolidated earlier. Anyway, the first lesson to be learnt from the event is that the protective dams should be consolidated in order to avoid such disasters in the future. Secondly, probably there should be more investment in the prognosis capacities of the meteorological services. Higher qualified specialists having access to the Western experience knowledge and acquiring new skills would be able to anticipate such events at least a week before.

Thirdly, there should be a specialized

governmental unit dealing with natural disasters; the sub-unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs is not sufficiently well-equipped and does not cover all the range of calamities. Another problematic area is the cooperation between the national authorities and local authorities; the local authorities in Chisinau are simply ignored by the national government.

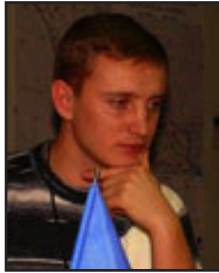
Better coordination with the Ukrainian authorities might have led to fewer losses. Even if the prime-vice premier Igor Dodon addressed on August 18 a gratitude letter to the Ukrainian government “for timely notification of the Moldovan party, understanding, support, close and fruitful cooperation during the catastrophic flood”, previously president Voronin partly blamed Ukraine for the late notification about the release of water from the Novodnistrovsk Lake.

Still, compared with the situation in Ukraine, the floods did not have such severe consequences. According to Ukraine’s Emergency Ministry, storms and floods last month in six western regions of Ukraine killed at least 36 people. Hundreds of towns and villages were flooded, 40,000 houses were damaged and thousands of residents were evacuated, officials said. The total

losses in western Ukraine are estimated at approximately 650-870 millions USD. The Ukrainian government called the flooding the worst the country has seen in years. On the other side of Prut, in Romania five people died, 10,520 evacuated and 8,941 houses damaged mainly in the Moldova region.

Prognosis

With the ongoing changes of the regional climate, it is highly probable that during the next years extreme weather conditions occur again. Unless the countries in the region learn how to cooperate in order to cope with such challenges, we would witness the same situation in the near future. Setting up a regional meteorological center to monitor the situation on Nistru and Prut would probably strengthen the cooperation in that field. It is essential for Moldova to build good relations with Romania and Ukraine, because both border rivers and are to some extent administered in common. Unilateral decisions in those areas are highly risky and would not be welcomed by the neighbor countries. It is difficult to prove that the drought of last year and the flooding this year are consequences of “global warming”, but it is certain that the problem will be under discussion more often in the media and public sphere in the region.



by **Sergiu Panainte**
 sergiu.panainte@gmail.com

THE RISE OF A NEW RUSSIA: HOW LONG “INDEPENDENT MOLDOVA” CAN SURVIVE?

Overview

In a postmodern era the system of international relations is being shaken deep down to its foundations by the rise of an old-new actor eager to regain the power lost after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russian Federation, its heir, tries to bring the established international order down to pieces returning to the era of bipolarism and realpolitik.

The events in Georgia, a sovereign state facing two “frozen conflicts” on its territory, the legacy left by the defunct Soviet Union, have triggered a brutal and unconceivable reaction from Russia, who started a full-fledged war against Georgia hiding behind weak excuses of protecting Russian citizens in South Osetia. South Osetia, a breakaway region of Georgia who enjoys de facto independence since 1991 and de jure being under Russian control served as motive for Georgian authorities to start military actions after continuous provocations from the unrecognized regime in Tshinval, the capital of South Osetia. Russian Federation retaliated as if Russian territory was attacked leading to an occupation of half Georgian territory, including key points as the town of Gori, military port to the Black Sea, Poti and military base in Senaki, all controlled by Russian troops even now when a six points cease-fire agreement was reached by EU mediation calling for a full withdrawal of Russian military forces from Georgia.

The reaction of international community was humble, to say the few. Both the US and the EU condemned Russian aggression in Georgia, but did nothing to stop it. Verbal warnings had no effect portraying a Russia who continued to argue

it was a righteous action and the blame belongs to Tbilisi.

The apogees nevertheless, was the Russian recognition of South Osetian and Abkhazian independence, which gives a new dangerous “perspective” over the resolution of frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet space. Following these events, Moldova should deeply reconsider its position towards Russia and the instruments used by Moscow in Georgia. While such a scenario has little chances to be repeated in Transnistria, precautionary steps and a new strategy have to be formulated in order to avoid a worsening of the situation in the Transnistrian conflict resolution process.

Moldova's Non-reaction Equals to Silence of the Lambs

Moldova and Georgia have a lot in common. They have been parts of the Soviet Union and after its disintegration they inherited separatist movements on their newly established territories. Both of them had a common actor to blame for that: Russia. After 2003 when Voronin turned down Kozak Memorandum and announced European integration as priority number one of Moldovan foreign policy, Moldova and Georgia got closer within a new regional organization, GUAM, featuring Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova, all united by a sense of opposition to Russian policies in the Commonwealth of Independent States and explicit will to join the European Union.

Unfortunately, since 2005 Voronin and his Communist rule abandoned the allies within GUAM building on a closer and privileged

relation with Russia. Heavily betting on the Russian support to find a solution to the Transnistrian conflict, Chisinau got blind to all the other matters in the post-Soviet space. Now, with the Russian-Georgian war unfolded, Moldova remained silent. The only thing to do was a communiqué of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration by which Moldova aligned itself to the EU declaration on the matter. No other official declarations on behalf of the Presidency or Parliament have followed. Compared to Ukraine's president Yushchenko who blamed Russian aggression, closed Ukrainian ports for the Russian fleet in the Black Sea and sent humanitarian aid to Georgia, Voronin was having his vacation in Croatia. In his absence, no other official expressed any position towards the outrageous actions of Russia. Just recently, after the civil society and a group of experts expressed deep concerns about the developments taking place in the region, the Government shamefully released a declaration by which declares that the conflict on Georgia will have no repercussions for Moldova and the resolution of Transnistrian problem. Even more, the Government considers there are good preconditions that will allow the parties to successfully bring the matter to a quick end.

This conviction obviously stems from the visit Voronin paid to Sochi where he met with Russian president Medvedev. Apparently, Medvedev warned Voronin not to repeat Georgian "mistakes" and declared that a peaceful solution can be found if to respect the actual format of negotiations and the commitments Moldova engaged to. Hence, one should think that Voronin pledged not to undertake any military action, which anyway would have been futile given the superior armed forces Tiraspol has at its disposal, but instead promised to stay quiet, follow Moscow's indications and everyone will be happy. This however means a return to Kozak plan rejected in 2003 by Voronin, if to cite Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, a situation highly unacceptable to official Chisinau. President Voronin was speaking after the meeting with Medvedev that Russia supports Moldovan territorial integrity and will go in accordance with the Moldovan Parliament's law from 2005. In this context it is difficult to discern where the truth lies. Nevertheless, given the fact Russia feels stronger than ever it will do the things its own way, either peacefully or militarily.

However Moldova's position is strikingly naïve and optimistic about its "independence" celebrated recently. Notwithstanding the regretful events happening in the Caucasus, Moldova's authorities still believe Russia will act within the provisions of the international law and will respect Moldova's territorial integrity, not mentioning the fact it has military forces deployed in Transnistria and no words were mentioned about this at the meeting in Sochi.

Moreover, the quick visit of Romanian president Basescu to Chisinau in the framework of his Black Sea tour to discuss the security matters in the aftermath of Russian aggression in Georgia did not bring the expected results. The experts consider that Basescu acted on the suggestion of EU and the US and had to rally support in order to prevent future possible developments of Russia's actions in its neighborhood. Most probably Voronin was advised to think over his position towards Russia and not to provoke the authorities in Tiraspol. This comes after Smirnov regime condemned Georgian actions in South Osetia and demanded that Chisinau does the same. Furthermore, Tiraspol interrupted any liaisons with Chisinau until the authorities on the left bank will adopt a clear anti-Georgia position. Following these developments it is hardly conceivable how both Russia and official Chisinau speak about the resolution process in such positive terms. Moreover, after Kremlin recognized South Osetia and Abkhazia independence, Tiraspol expects the same treatment. Voices in the political circles on the right bank declared that same scenario will develop in Tiraspol as well, no matter the official position in Chisinau.

It becomes more and more complicated since only the civil society got alarmed. The authorities continue to put their trust in Russia ignoring the voice of reason. Civil society limited in its actions and with the opposition totally ignored too, the Communists will take full responsibility for everything which might happen.

As in the past, Voronin favors to solve foreign policy issues directly with Russia and not to rely on the West. Now it is high time to question once again the military neutrality of Moldova, the commitments taken towards European partners as well as the allegiances to Moscow. Is Kremlin closer and better than Brussels?

What Comes Next?

In the last weeks Georgia held the frontlines in all major newspapers all over the world. As a side effect, the situation in Moldova was discussed as well depicting different scenarios for Transnistria. These scenarios are closely linked to the future of Ukraine, given the sharp reactions of Yushchenko administration to Russia's actions in Georgia. The explanation is the demographic structure of Crimea and its strategic importance in the Black Sea for Russia where its fleet is hosted. The majority of the Crimea population is of Russian nationality which holds Russian passports. A possible intention to join Russia and a disintegration of Ukraine, which is taken into consideration by the West as a follow-up to Georgia, could trigger even more dangerous developments in Transnistria.

One scenario would stand for an independent Crimea asking to be included into the Russian Federation. In this case Russia would prefer to link Crimea to Transnistria as a bridge to the Balkans as it always wanted. With disappearance of Ukraine as a state, other territorial claims would be submitted by other neighbors. One would be Romania to claim the northern part of Bucovina and Hertsa region as well as Southern Bessarabia with Ismail and Belgorod regions. Another claimant would be Poland to include all western Ukraine, eastern part leaning to Russia. In this case the solution for the rest of Moldova, favored by the West would be to unite with Romania. This is the most "fantastic" development which the EU and the US should not let happen.

Another scenario is that Russia will impose to Moldova a Kozak II plan given its rise and a policy based on force. With Georgia scenario in mind, Voronin will have to capitulate and accept a federal solution. This will mean a Transnistrianization of the whole Moldova, an already ongoing process as a consequence of the submissive policy promoted by Communist party. Hence, Moldova will become a puppet state ruled from Moscow. So far this scenario has the biggest chances to materialize, since the authorities seem not to be worried and ahead of the elections next year they can accept a quick solution to the conflict. If the EU and the US will not intervene in case the situation degenerates in such a way, as they did in 2003, Moldova might be lost.

The third scenario and the most desired one would be the replacement of Russian peacekeeper contingent with a mission of military and civil observers deployed by the EU under the mandate of UN. This should be followed by the total and unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops from Transnistria and all the stockpiles of ammunition. The negotiation format should exclude Russia as a party to the conflict and to include the EU and the US as mediators. Only this can bring a fair solution to the conflict and preserve territorial integrity of Moldova. This third scenario is totally impossible under the Communist government. If Moldova resists any Russian solution at least till the elections, one can hope that Moldovan electorate will punish the current party and vote for a change. A pro-Western government can advocate the above mentioned scenario which responds to the national interests of the state.

Prognosis

Russian aggression towards Georgia changed the way frozen conflicts are solved on the post-Soviet space. With the unilateral recognition of South Osetia and Abkhazia independence by the Russian Federation, the things will get more precipitated in Transnistria and possibly in Nagorno-Karabakh. The somehow hesitant position of the EU and its internal division leaves Russia with a free hand and the possibility to get away with it. While Germany, Italy, France showed a conciliating attitude, the new EU members called for action against the eastern giant. An emergency EU-Russia summit was scheduled to be held on September 1 approaching the situation in Georgia. Little can spring out of this event if the EU will not push for measures aiming to discipline Russia.

On its side, Moldova and its government have to keep the eyes wide open and not to step into Russia's trap with regard to Transnistrian settlement. Despite the huge desire to solve the issue before the elections, the Communist party has to think first of all about the long-term national interests of the state and not short-term gains before the electoral cycle. Now since Russia is showing a huge appetite for restoring its complete influence in the "near abroad", this appetite has to be contained by the EU, as it is the Union who may follow.



by Vitalie Grosu
grosuvitalie@hotmail.com

THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA'S SECURITY POLICY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE REGIONAL INSECURITY INCREASE

Summary

The Russian military aggression towards Georgia on August 8, 2008, represented a real aggression towards the regional and international security and its consequences are going to be felt for sure in the future. Being Georgia's partner in a range of regional organizations, Republic of Moldova's authorities woke up in an unpleasant situation when, on one hand realizes the necessity to support Georgia in promoting and defending its national interest, and on the other hand, by doing this, there was the danger of displeasing Russia. In this way, the Chisinau authorities preferred to adopt a strategy of evasion regarding the statement of its own position that represents an inefficient way of promoting the national interest.

Although the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by the Russian Federation on August 26, 2008 was pulled out of the Russian and Georgian conflict context, it is an event that has direct and indirect consequences on the Republic of Moldova's national security. The manifest of these consequences is correlated to the country's territorial integrity issue and the current negotiation process regarding transnistrian conflict.

The recent meeting of the Republic of Moldova's President and the President of the Russian Federation that took place in Sochi on August 25, as well as the later divergent declarations show the security policy's lack of transparency promoted by the current authorities, but also the president's monopoly on the right to decision regarding issues of national importance in the security field. In the absence of a discussion with

the opposition parties and the civil society on the acute problems in the security field, the current authorities set up the conditions for a deep political crisis and contributed to the increase of social insecurity level.

Along with the new national security threats generated by the unilateral actions of the Russian Federation based on force, Republic of Moldova had to face the consequences of the inundations that took place at the end of July and the beginning of August. The estimations made by the authorities show important economic losses that blocked a range of social initiatives in some key fields. In this way, because of the Government's adopted strategy, some social layers remain in a state of increased social and economic insecurity, all this contributing to the worsening of the relationship between the government and certain social strata.

The Threat to the Territorial Integrity or to the Republic of Moldova's Independence?

The unilateral recognition of the Abkhazia and South Ossetia separatist regions' independence by the Russian Federation on August 26, 2008 is a real challenge to the national security and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, that deals with a similar conflict in the case of Transnistria. The meeting of the Russian Federation and of the Republic of Moldova Presidents on August 25, pointed out clearly the intention of D. Medvedev to state that he won't abandon its interests in Transnistria, but concomitantly the intention of taking over the initiative in the current negotiation round regarding transnistrian conflict. In this way, the

statements of the Russian Federation Minister of Foreign Affairs on August 26, concerning the sides availability to revive the Kozak Plan of conflict settlement, shows the intention of promoting the Russian geopolitical interests in the detriment of the Republic of Moldova's national interests. Let's remember that the Kozak Plan proposed by the Russian Federation in 2003, stipulates the transformation of Republic of Moldova in a federation, in which Transnistria would have the statute of Republic with the right to veto in the country's foreign policy. And more, the plan also stipulated the right to locate the forces of the Russian army on the Republic of Moldova's territory with the mission of stability guarantee during the transition period of minimum 20 years. The Plan was revised by the authorities because of the opposition's pressures and as a reaction was adopted the 2005 Republic of Moldova's Law regarding the basic principles of transnistrian conflict settlement.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned it seems that the Russian Federation strategy is oriented to the accomplishment of two scripts, it is assumed the federalization of the Republic of Moldova and its re-entrance in the Russian sphere of influence, evolution that would guarantee a lot of advantages for Russia. The fact that the Russian Federation Minister of Foreign Affairs started again to talk about the Kozak Plan is very relevant in this case. The second script, in case the Republic of Moldova's authorities, in spite the Russian pressure won't accept the federalization, would be the recognition of Transnistria's independence. For this purpose, Moscow authorities offer the separatist regime plenty of power to act. In this way, after the Moldovan and Russian Presidents meeting, the separatist leader I. Smirnov started all over again the discussions about the independence stating the proximity of the transnistrian recognition of independence, fact that wasn't preceded by any reaction of approve or disapprove on the side of Russian officials.

In spite of the Moldovan officials statements that the event in Georgia won't affect the transnistrian conflict settlement process; the Tiraspol authorities' behavior demonstrated something else. In this situation, we should remember the adjourn of all relations with Chisinau imposed by the so called Minister of

Foreign Affairs from Tiraspol until Chisinau authorities won't denounce, according to Tiraspol, the Georgia's actions in South Ossetia, this fact being unacceptable for the Republic of Moldova. Secondly, we have to mention that contrary to the optimist statements of the Republic of Moldova and Russian Federation Presidents in Soci regarding the perspectives and good chances to settle the transnistrian conflict, the next day I. Smirnov, along with other officials of the transnistrian regime, stated the proximate recognition of independence for the transnistrian region. Thirdly, the Russian and Georgian war contributed to the worsening of the relations between Chisinau and UTA Gagauzia that took a similar position as the transnistrian region. In such conditions, it is clear that even if there are chances to obtain a consensus for the moment between Chisinau and Tiraspol, the concessions that are going to be made by Chisinau authorities on the current regional evolutions background should increase a lot and could be equalized with Republic of Moldova's capitulation to the Russian policy.

The Security Policy between Uncertainty and Expectations

The reaction of the Chisinau authorities to the military attack of the Russian Federation on Georgia on August 8, 2008, pointed out the existence of important lacks in the national security policy promoted by the communist authorities and denotes a general state of uncertainty and non-functioning of the national security system. The actions undertaken by the authorities expressed the personalized nature, monopolized by the President V. Voronin, of the decision taking mechanism on issues of major importance in the field of national security. So, in spite the legislation, during the crises was neglected the role of a top institution in the field of national security as that of the National Security Council. Such a situation reveals the undemocratic procedure and the ignorance of the legislative stipulations by the communist authorities, fact that contributes to the increase of the Moldovan society's insecurity.

The worries that were made public by a group of experts, representatives of the Moldovan civil society, on August 26, concerning the risks and threats that emerge after Russia's unilateral

actions in Georgia and its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are in contradiction with the official position of Chisinau authorities according to which there is no reason to worry about the transnistrian problem. Such a situation denotes the lack of dialogue between state authorities and civil society, which is in contradiction with the stipulations of the recent adopted National Security Conception regarding the state's commitment to develop a dialogue with the civil society. In this way, the promotion of a non-transparent security policy in the security field which is not oriented to social consensus on issues of major importance sets up conditions for deep political crises and increases the society's general insecurity.

The Republic of Moldova's adherence to the Declaration of the French EU Presidency concerning the worsening of the situation in South Ossetia represented an action that expresses the uncertainty of the policy promoted by the current state authorities, when on one hand the communist authorities were obliged to adopt a position towards the conflict, and on the other avoided to show clearly their own position. Such a strategy, according to some experts, is determined by the political interests that have the purpose to annoy the pro Russian poll. Nevertheless, undermining the national interest to the party's interest is unacceptable and also dangerous for the national security.

The Soci meeting on August 25, of the Republic of Moldova and Russian Federation Presidents showed the complexity of Republic of Moldova's position. Thus, the development of the meeting during the voting of Abkhazia and South Ossetia's independence by the Russian State Duma had a warning nature for the Chisinau authorities. Coming back to the discussions related to the Kozak Plan as a result of the Soci meeting points out the Republic of Moldova's federalization threat. In this way, the existence of Chisinau authorities' confutation regarding the Russian minister's statements indicates non-transparency and uncertainty of the Chisinau promoted policy.

The adoption by the Chisinau authorities of the state's position concerning Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia's independence fits perfectly in the uncertain

policy of the Moldovan authorities regarding security field. So, we should mention that Chisinau authorities adopted with delay the statement that disapproves the act of separatist regime's independence recognition by the Russian Federation. Secondly, such a declaration was adopted by the Government, and not by the President, a different situation comparing to Kosovo case. Thirdly, after the Russian Federation's example, Chisinau authorities make references to the Helsinki Final Act and UN Charter, which have certain ambiguities concerning this issue. In this way, the promotion of an uncertain policy and expectancies on issues of major importance for the Republic of Moldova contributes to the increase of the Moldovan society's insecurity.

Insecurity Increased by Inundations

The inundations during July and the beginning of August caused important damages to the national economy. According to the estimations made by the working groups set up by the government of the Republic of Moldova, the inundations made damages over 120 mln. USD. So, 20% represent infrastructure damages, 15% are agricultural losses and 65% are building damages.

As a result of the inundation at the end of July, as was expected, worsened the epidemiological situation of the country. In this way, the Ministry of Health announced an increased risk for the population's health and asked for the organization of preventive measures in the field by the central and local authorities, fact that requires additional expenses from the Government's part.

The unexpected expenses caused by the inundations determined the blocking of the discussions between the Government and the trade-unions in the educational field concerning the teachers wage increase, as well as a range of other social initiatives. According to some analytical centers the situation in the educational sphere is disastrous and requires immediate serious investments. The educational system analysis presented by the Ministry of Education and Youth represents a sad picture and asserts the deep deficit of personnel. The refusal of the government to answer positive to the union-

trades requires is not a correct choice and contributes to the destabilization of the situation in one of the fields of major social importance as education, as well as of the relation between the current government and the intellectual social layer, thus contributing to the political instability of the Moldovan society.

Forecasts

The worsening of the relations between Russian Federation and the western countries, as a result of the unilateral actions of Russia in Georgia will contribute to the deepening of the Russian and western conflicts, and in the transnistrian conflict framework as well. In this way, the Russian statement regarding reviving Kozak Plan of settling the transnistrian conflict is eloquent. It is expected that the Russian Federation is going to increase its effort to federalize Republic of Moldova using economic and political blackmail. The statement Gh. Oniscenco's, Chief of the Federal Service for supervising the Russia's costumers rights and welfare, regarding his dissatisfaction in the cooperation relations with the Moldovan side on the export of wine issue is eloquent. The Russian authorities' position

to revive the Kozak Plan will contribute to the worsening of the dialogue between the Chisinau and Tiraspol authorities and denotes the clear intention of the Russian Federation to put Republic of Moldova in the sphere of its interests.

In spite of the optimist statements of the president Voronin, the evolutions regarding the settlement of the transnistrian conflict will be affected by the recent event in the Caucasus. It seems that in the framework of the future 2009 elections and the success of the separatist regions in Georgia, the secessionist authorities will ask for substantial concessions even unacceptable for Chisinau, oriented to block the discussions. Because of electoral reasons, the Chisinau's communist authorities will continue to create the image of efficient discussions regarding transnistrian conflict. Nevertheless, in the framework of non-transparent security and transnistrian conflict settlement policy, as well as the Russian attempt to connect its geopolitical interests with the conflict settlement projects it is expected an increase of political instability in the country generated by the worsening of the relation between the opposition and the communist authorities.

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Political and Security Statewatch authors: Ion Marandici, Sergiu Panainte, Vitalie Grosu.

In order to subscribe to the distribution list of Political and Security Statewatch bulletin, please contact us by e-mail: ghenadie.mocanu@viitorul.org.

Coordination and distribution of the bulletin: Ghenadie Mocanu.

Contacts:
Chisinau, 10/1, Iacob Hincu Str., 2009 MD, Republic of Moldova
Tel/fax: (+ 373/22) 21 09 32; 21.36.32; 22.71.30
E-mail: idis_viitorul@mdl.net
Web: www.viitorul.org

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