

# POLITICAL & SECURITY STATEWATCH

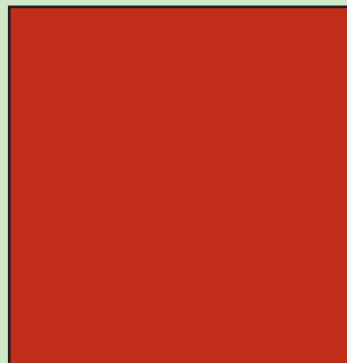
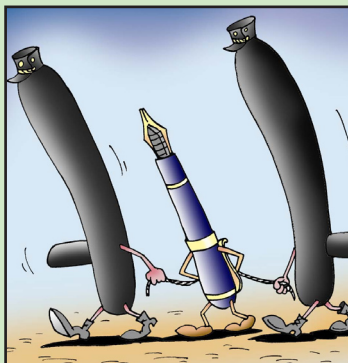
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The Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDS) Viitorul is a research, education and outreach organization which activates in the field of economic analysis, governance, law, political sciences, strategic and organizational science. It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





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## MOLDOVAN SOCIETY DIVIDED OVER THE SOVIET PAST, HUMAN RIGHTS AND MORAL VALUES

### *Summary*

Freedom of expression was not granted to sexual minorities as various religious groups blocked a protest of the Moldovan LGBT community. The incident determined critics in the European Union to demand a reevaluation of EU-Moldova relations. 9<sup>th</sup> of May showed that different parties value differently the Soviet past. While the human rights record of Moldova is worsening, US Congress decided to reduce financing for human rights and democracy support in Moldova. Freedom of movement dominated the domestic agenda and became an issue in the campaigning of the Opposition parties. President Voronin decided to reduce half of the traffic police officers, but it is not clear whether that was a populist step, an attempt to fight corruption or just a maneuver to divert the attention from the heroine case.

### *Religious groups against the LGBT community - moral values versus rights*

Even if many of the state officials claim that Moldova is a tolerant country, the failed attempt of the LGBT community to manifest in the centre of Chisinau proves the opposite. The rally was blocked on May 10 by a few Orthodox groups claiming that LGBT community destroys the moral values of the Moldovan society. Initially, the local authorities representing the Liberal Party did not raise any arguments against the event and only a day before it the town hall banned the demonstration. It was a symbolic ban, since according to the new Law on Freedom of Assembly the organizers of a protest do not need authorizations.

Usually police is watching the protesters in order to avoid violence, but in this case police was a passive witness and did not intervene. Only because the representatives of the LGBT community were in a bus, did the clash not become violent. While the police complains that the new law on public meetings is too

liberal and fears that there will be too many protests during the next months, the LGBT representatives defended by the NGO Genderdoc-M, say cases of violence against LGBTs became more often and police does not investigate them. Moreover, the gay media and the Intergroup of Gays and Lesbians from the European Parliament urge EU to reconsider its relations with Moldova, because rights of the sexual minorities are not respected.

Debates over the right of gays to organize public events spread in the whole society. Politicians avoided this issue, while the press trying to write about it in positive terms was termed as representing evil forces. In a society with 80% of the population trusting the Church and with over 90% Orthodox population, LGBT community will face hard times, before enjoying the right of expression. After the fall of the Soviet regime, religion got deep roots, old churches were rebuilt and new churches are founded. Even if there is a latent conflict between the Bessarabian Metropolitan Church and the Moldovan Orthodox Church, both share the same views regarding the rights of expression of the sexual minorities.

On paper legislative progress was achieved, but it still remains a lot to be done in order to make the freedom of assembly a reality. The main responsibility lies now with the police, but instead of applying the law, police follows political orders or acts arbitrarily. Another case, when the freedom of expression was not respected involved the Hyde Park Association. The next day, the new law on freedom of assembly was published in the Official Journal some of its members organized a protest in front of the Presidency building, but police interrupted their actions and detained them illegally.

The recently published report of Amnesty International for 2007 shows that torture and ill-treatment remained widespread and victims had great difficulty in pursuing their complaints and getting redress. The

reports mentions also that for the third year in a row Chisinau City Hall denied permission to the organization of a gay pride, despite a Supreme Court ruling in February that a similar refusal in April 2006 had been illegal.

It seems Moldovan society does not value tolerance and the myth of Moldavians being very tolerant is vanishing. Not even the president of the Moldovan Parliament thinks that sexual minorities should have the right to publicly express their views.

***9<sup>th</sup> of May – Parties value differently the Soviet past***

National holidays honor a certain moment from the past and thus are also about values. For certain observers a national holiday might seem irrelevant, but in Moldova, 9<sup>th</sup> of May showed that there is a cleavage in society regarding the Soviet past. In EU on that date Europe's day is celebrated, while Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova mark the Victory of URSS in the Second World War.

This year, certain parties distanced themselves clearly from the Soviet past condemning the Soviet period and the totalitarian regime, while others still continue to regard it as a positive period in the history of the country and organize celebrations similar to those organized in Russian Federation. The current authorities restore the monuments of Soviet military glory and spend great sums of money for events that aim to satisfy the nostalgia of the pensioners and veterans, trying to enforce also a certain view on the national history. The coincidence of Victory Day and Europe Day posed difficulties for the European Commission (EC) Delegations in the corresponding countries as they had to choose the most appropriate day to celebrate Europe. The Delegation of the EC in Moldova considered that the best way to avoid conflicts is to celebrate the Europe Day on 8<sup>th</sup> of May. The Liberal Party and the municipal authorities allied themselves with the EC Delegation decision and organized various events on that occasion. The most notable was the baptizing of a public place in Europe's place. The scandal provoked at that event by Valery Klimenko, the Ravnopravia leader showed that there are also enemies of the European integration.

Last year, major parties overlooked that date and the Victory Day was celebrated. This year, 9<sup>th</sup> of May was an occasion for youth organizations from certain opposition parties to take a stance regarding the

Soviet past. In a year declared by the Communist Government, the Year of the Youth, Europe Day was celebrated at the initiative of the youth organizations from the National Liberal Party, the Alliance Moldova Noastra party, the Liberal Democrats and the European Action Movement. The Communist youth and the party have chosen clearly the Victory Day. The Democrats tried to reconcile the extremes and proposed to celebrate both Europe Day and Victory Day at the same time, while for Social Democrats the Victory Day was by far more important than the Europe Day. The split between the parties is not an artificial one, but reflects a deeper cleavage existing in the Moldovan society over the Soviet past.

***US reduced its financing, while human rights record and democracy in Moldova worsened***

On the occasion of International Journalism Day, freedom of the media was largely debated in the first decade of May. The Union of Journalists and the Center for Independent Journalism organized seminars and a symbolic protest. The protests and public actions of the journalists did not change much, because on the same day the Broadcasting Coordinating Council, the institution watching over the media space and guarding the implementation of the Audiovisual Code, held its session and adopted discriminatory decisions regarding the Vocea Basarabiei radio station and the commercial broadcaster Pro TV. It granted the right to broadcast to TV stations like NIT, EU TV, and Antena C known for their proximity to the government. A number of NGOs and news media issued a joint statement criticizing the way the Broadcasting Coordinating Council allocated radio and TV frequencies during the two-day session on 7 and 8 May. "The decisions of Moldova's Broadcasting Coordinating Council are favoring media concentration by assigning frequencies above all to pro-government radio and TV stations," the statement said.

Vocea Basarabiei, a radio station that has been trying with little success for years to obtain new frequencies in order to expand its coverage, said the Broadcasting Coordinating Council was "distributing frequencies according to political criteria." The station has obtained only eight of the 120 frequencies it has requested in the past eight years. An independent station affiliated to Radio Free Europe, the BBC, Deutsche Welle and Radio Romania Actualitati, Vocea Basarabiei broadcasts news programs covering regional, national and international developments as

well as entertainment, current affairs and discussion programs.

According to another declaration distributed by the major NGOs dealing with freedom of the media the situation of the media is worsening. To a certain degree this corresponds to the conclusions of the Freedom House organization that labeled Moldova a country where the press is not free. This year newspapers "Timpul", "Jurnal de Chisinau", "Moldavskie Vedomosti", radio station "Vocea Basarabiei", Pro TV and local press were persecuted or discriminated. There are fears that with the upcoming elections, the pressure will increase.

Even if the situation of the media deteriorates, United States Congress decided to reduce the financial assistance for democracy and human rights promotion in Moldova. For the fiscal year 2007, the US Congress offered 8 314 000 USD for human rights and democracy promotion, but in 2008 the amount decreased by half a million and will constitute 7 801 000 USD. Despite the fact that the Bush administration proposed an increased budget of 8 800 000 USD, the Congress decided to reduce the amount of money for Moldova. Only in the case of Kosovo and Moldova the amount demanded was reduced by the Congress. Instead Belarus, Russia, Serbia and Georgia are the main priorities of USA in Europe and will receive more money than the Bush administration requested. For comparison Armenia will receive 21 millions USD, Azerbaijan – 9,8 millions, Georgia – 14,5 millions USD, Russia – 40,6 millions.

### ***Freedom of movement: between state ideology and people's needs***

Freedom of movement became an important issue after the Liberal Democrats revealed that the authorities were not willing to sign unconditionally the Convention on Small Border Traffic proposed by Romania. The document would enable the inhabitants from the border region to move freely without visas 30 km. inside Romania's territory on the basis of a special permit. Liberal Democrats managed to organize meetings with citizens and mobilize the population in the border area by presenting them the advantages of the free movement across the border. The greatest rally in Chisinau gathered several thousands people. Other parties also expressed their support for the immediate signing of the Convention on Local Border Traffic. Already, in Ungheni, the county councilors signed a Declaration demand-

ing from the national authorities the signing of the Convention. Moreover, the Communist councilors signed the Declaration too. Thus, the unity of the Communists Party might be questioned at the grassroots if the Convention will not be signed. Furthermore, the district councils from Nisporeni, Ialoveni and Cantemir also addressed the national government demanding the signing of the Convention.

The actions supporting the signing of such a Convention have the chance to gain the support of the majority of the population. According to a recent poll, European Union is associated by the majority of the Moldavians with prosperity and also freedom of movement. Ukraine has already signed such a Convention with Hungary and negotiates such agreements with Poland and Slovakia. Lithuania negotiates with Russia and even Belarus. The special border permits mentioned in the modified Schengen acquis are already issued by Hungary for Ukrainians, Moldova is in this respect again following the Ukrainian tail.

### ***Police: a corrupt instrument or the guardian of the laws?***

The fight with corruption took a new turn on May 20, when president Voronin presided a meeting at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and accused the traffic police of corruption. Voronin said 50% of the traffic police officers will be dismissed. So, from the approx. 800 policemen only half will maintain their job. Voronin quoted examples of corruption: he mentioned that the minivans coming from EU had to pay from 20 to 50 euro to the police in order to avoid problems. Again according to Voronin between 1000 and 3000 Euros were paid in order to get a job in the traffic police. Money was collected at lower levels and a specific amount was transferred then higher at the top of the pyramid. The accusations come after the head of the Centre for Fight against Corruption and Economic Crimes replaced Gh. Papuc as minister of interior.

It is not yet entirely clear whether that is another electoral initiative, but certain observers think this decision might be linked with the 200 kilos of heroine discovered in April, when observers supposed that Interior Minister was involved. The three persons arrested in that case are not yet convicted, but under strict surveillance and won't give interviews to the press. Investigations are not finalized, but again according to certain sources the fight against corrup-

tion in the traffic police is just an attempt to divert the attention of the public opinion from the heroine case to the corruption of the police officers. Voronin initiated a similar action in 2004, when at his initiative 30% of the traffic police officers were dismissed. However, it seems that measure did not change the situation.

### *Prognosis*

The free press will come under greater pressure as the elections come closer. The case of the Convention on Local Border Traffic will dominate the public agenda also the next two months. The human rights record will probably worsen as police becomes a political tool used by the party in government. In the following months, we might witness protests of the dismissed policemen. In general, protests will

become more frequent after the recent legal changes. Moldovan society will remain divided over moral values and rights of the sexual minorities, but attitude might change in what regards the Soviet past. Regarding the socio-economic situation, the recent IMF mission stated that inflation will rise above the 10% level in 2008. Increase of oil and gas prices as well as food products caught the Government unprepared. The most affected will be the socially vulnerable categories of population. Still, in case the harvest will be good, the food problems could be overcome. Another reason to be anxious about is the rise of the public debt that compared with the January April period last year increased with 500 millions lei. This shows that governmental spending increases as the elections approach.



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## RUSSIA'S CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGY IN MOLDOVA: BUILDING ON THE MOMENTUM FOR THE INTERESTS OF "GREATER RUSSIA"

### *Overview*

For the first time since 2003 a high Transnistrian official could travel to Europe to spread the word about the wishes of the "Transnistrian people" and its rightful quest for independence. On the other hand Russia is pushing forward a "unique" model of conflict resolution for the post-soviet space which from Moscow's point of view will end the territorial disputes and will bring peace and prosperity under the kind leadership of Russia.

The visit of the Russian Duma's speaker to Chisinau could be considered a new step in the scheme designed to make the reunification of Moldova possible under the Russian auspices whatever it may hold. As Communist party led by Voronin is approaching a critical moment to face the elections next year, the goal of reuniting the country appears to be paramount in boosting the party's popularity. The conditions under which this reunification has to take place are fully disregarded by the current leadership, Voronin submitting entirely Moldova's future to Russian interests.

However, a new Commission for European Integration has been created by a President decree to witness speaker Marian Lupu left outside alone, while Polish and Swedish governments are backing an "Eastern Partnership" to include the neighboring Eastern countries and develop closer relationships with the EU.

### *Russia's Emerging Power of Conflict Resolution*

Kosovo precedent made Russia look differently at the frozen conflicts in the post-soviet space and Russian leadership saw a possibility to avenge itself in the relation with the West. That would consist in Russia emerging as a key actor in solving these conflicts to its benefit and at the expense of the other actors concerned, primarily the EU. As such, Moldova is the best opportunity ever to accomplish this far-reaching goal. A successful reunification of Moldova under Russia's auspices will give it the right to claim first-hand actions on

the post-soviet space as well as elsewhere where Russian interests are affected. Since the EU and Russia dispute between themselves the influence in countries like Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, etc this "fight" for spheres of interest becomes fiercer and fiercer. Nonetheless, Russia holds the advantage of having tied these countries to its economy and controlling them through energy supplies which are vital for all of these states.

Why Moldova is fit for serving Russian interests? First of all, through its supportive policy towards Tiraspol, Russia estranged Chisinau and threw it in the arms of the West, who however did not take advantage from it at the right time. Now the situation changed and as Moldova intensified its relations with the EU, Russia became more aware of the fact that it may lose its influence in the region. Moreover, NATO enlargement and the prospect of Ukraine and Georgia joining it triggered a more active involvement on behalf of Russia towards resolution process in Moldova. Yet, this involvement has its cost which must be paid by Voronin.

The terms for reaching a final political settlement have been made clear by Russia – Moldova has to make its neutrality an internationally recognized matter in such a way cutting any possibility for Moldova to join NATO. Second, the reunification has to ensure and recognize Russian investments in Transnistria illegally carried out together with Tiraspol leadership. Thus, the strategic branches of Moldovan economy will be controlled by Russian business – wine and spirits sector, steel industry, energy sector. Third, Russia insists on a fair representation of Transnistria in the future political institutions of the reunited state. It would not matter the formula used for the new state – unitary, federation or anything else if Transnistrian politicians gained access to key positions in the government. The political analysts even coined a term for this "grand project" – Transnistriation. In some way, this is exactly what will happen if the settlement is to follow the Russian plan.

The application of this ostentatious project has actually already begun. First, Voronin met with Smirnov and it was made possible only by Russian interference. Furthermore, negotiations in the “5+2” format are strongly backed to be resumed and Russia is exerting pressure on Tiraspol to come back to the negotiations table. Third, Russia undertakes steps on strengthening the link with Moldovan parliament, as the most constitutionally important institution of the country and which will have to play a key role in the event of reunification. Thus, Mironov, the Russian speaker visited Chisinau and Comrat and publicly avoided to pay a visit to Tiraspol. This is a sign for Smirnov that he has to go into concessions with Chisinau - otherwise Moscow’s support will seize to exist for him.

Accordingly, Voronin has to pay back what Russia does for him. The new Concept of National Security has been adopted against the fierce disagreement of the Opposition. This new concept fails to account for Moldova’s interests and actually puts at risk its security with the Russian troops still present on its territory. Furthermore, Voronin voiced the intention of possibly leaving GUAM as an anti-Russian organization. Also, the relations with Bucharest are worsening again, fed by disagreements over Border Agreement, etc. In such a way, Moldova finds itself at Russian mercy which will not hesitate to take full advantage of it. The only hope is that the Opposition from Parliament, civil society as well as the EU will take a more active stance to preclude Communists from making Moldova a gift to Moscow and resuscitate the dream of a “Greater Russia”. With such a growing appetite, there is not too far the time when not Moldova will be at stake. That is why these “expansionist” ambitions and search for power have to be tempered now when it is not too late, while Moldova shall become a reintegrated state under the auspices of the international community, in accordance with the international law and the will expressed by its people.

***The Nature of the Beast: Economic Prowess – Political Clumsiness***

Since its inception the European Union, the then three European Communities wanted itself to be no more than an economic organization in order to rebuild Europe after the devastation of the Second World War as well as to put an end to the Franco-German hostility. As such it never was meant to go beyond this boundary and to merge into a political entity as to have “a Europe speaking with a single voice”. Undoubtedly, the progress made over decades deserves to be called a good try. Yet, Europe is as far from being a heavy political actor as it was 50 years ago. Hence, the best quotation for this “ambitious integration project” remains to be “EU – an economic giant and a political dwarf”.

Apart from all the examples in the past to illustrate this

postulate like the Balkan wars, disintegration of former Yugoslavia, the war in Iraq, the most recent would be Moldova. Why so? Moldova never was of interest to EU. However, the situation changed when the enlargement wave included Romania and the “black hole of Europe” became a problem to worry about. Secessionist region of Transnistria was no longer a concern only for Moldova. Nonetheless, the other major threat springing from the poorest country in Europe was the illegal migration which EU is unable to fight efficiently. As a result, Moldova found itself between “two fires” – Moscow and Brussels.

While economic attractiveness of EU has no match, Moldova is tied up historically to the Russian market, plus a heavy political influence exerted by Russian government over Moldovan political class. Given the frozen conflict which both objectively and subjectively hinders the development of the country, the battle over Moldova would be won by the one who manages to solve the conflict. Still, this is the simplest way of looking at things, in reality the situation being a lot more complex.

As mentioned above, Russia is developing a model of conflict resolution and Moldova is the experimental ground for it. On the other hand EU has its own model of conflict resolution – the Europeanization understood in terms of conditionality and socialization into European norms and values with a gradual integration with EU structures at a certain level the highest one being the actual joining of the Union. In this case Moldova could also be an experimental ground for EU to test its ability as a political actor and conflict resolution.

Accordingly, several steps have been made. One of them was the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine. The Mission renders good results, however no weaponry or big quantity of drugs have been discovered as it was expected at the beginning. In the same vein, the Mission is one of assistance and advisory with a limited mandate and no political power. The possibility for a Mission of Military and Civil Observers with an international mandate sent under the auspices of EU in tandem with UN in Transnistria to replace the Russian “peacekeepers” went unanswered. Maximum what EU was ready to do is to accept the observer status within the negotiation format “5+2” and earlier in 2005 to appoint a Special Representative for Moldova. Frankly speaking, all these initiatives proved futile and of little impact. None of these could counter Russian power in the region and as in the past Moscow gains more and more ground.

The recent trip of Transnistrian speaker to Europe was a breakthrough, but not for the conflict resolution process,

but for Transnistria's fight against isolation. All Sevcuiuk did was to let Europe know about the desire for independence of Transnistrian people. Any agreement for political settlement with Chisinau has to respect that will. The other meetings Sevcuiuk had in Brussels with EU officials and Moldovan speaker Lupu also rendered few results. Until the parties do not sit at the negotiations table to reach an agreement the situation will go unchanged. And that is specifically what Russia is trying to do – to bring the parties to speak to each other, but following the directives from Moscow. In this scenario the losers are Chisinau and Brussels. While this can have a small impact on EU now, in the long run the Union will have to face directly Russian strength along the whole eastern border. Instead Moldova will cease to exist as an independent and sovereign state, which it never actually was. A reunified Moldova under Russian guidelines will be a puppet state entirely controlled from Moscow. To wait until the 2009 elections can prove to be somewhat late. If the EU is to do something and disprove its fame of a political dwarf, it has to do it here and now.

### ***Eastern Partnership: A New Tool to Keep Away Undesirables?***

Recently the Polish and Swedish governments have come up with a new initiative to improve the effectiveness of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). That is to be called the *Eastern Partnership (EP)* and will include Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, with the possible inclusion of Belarus and Russia. The initiative in itself bears nothing new, as it replicates to some extent the Mediterranean Partnership. The declarative goals of this undertaking are a visa-free regime, free trade area, enhanced political ties. All in all, a beneficial policy for all the partners involved – EU-27 and target countries.

Nevertheless, the EP will not have a separate secretariat and will be administered directly by the Commission. Moreover, there is still lacking a full support among the member states for the initiative to be launched. And at the end of the day, the project lacks its finality. What should this EP accomplish? Membership to the EU is off the agenda for all target countries, no mentioning of an associate status either. It seems that the EP has finality just for EU – to keep away the undesirables. On the one hand it is clear that absorption capacity of EU decreased after encompassing ten new states during 2004–2007, following in the near future another wave of enlargement to bring in the Western Balkans. Yet, a clear-cut prospective for the eastern neighbors will only enhance their willingness to change and internalize European norms and values.

Poland always backed Ukrainian interests within EU advocating for its inclusion. Same policy it displays towards Moldova. To a certain degree the new members will possibly

support a European future for Moldova and Ukraine. What is unclear is the behavior of old members who are the biggest contributors to EU budget. Most likely a more distant approach would be the answer. Another drawback of the EP is its extension to Russia. Given the tacit war between the EU and Russia for control in this buffer zone, the latter will do anything to prevent Moldova and Ukraine as well as Georgia from developing closer ties with the EU. As long as there already a mechanism of cooperation with Russia is in place, namely the EU-Russia summits, it is at least incomprehensible why this state should be included. Plus, Russia never expressed the will to join the Union and the relations with it have to be built on another level compared to states who want to join the EU.

In conclusion, Eastern Partnership can be successful for the short-time period when it accomplishes the liberalization of visa regime, trade, investments. Afterwards it will stagnate without other incentives for target countries to move forward. There is still time for European chancelleries to think over the Polish-Swedish project and to come up with a genuine and successful Europeanization model of Eastern Neighborhood with a final objective to be the full integration.

### ***Prognosis***

Transnistrian resolution process gained a new dimension when Russia started to play a more active role as a mediator and mentor to supervise the reach of a final settlement. However, Russia conditioned the reunification of Moldova to several important clauses which undermine the sovereignty of the state. Nonetheless, with the full support of Moldovan authorities, Russia hopes to acquire the “experience” in conflict resolution which it could apply afterwards to other frozen conflicts in the post-soviet space. This trend will continue with Russia poised to rule out the EU from this region and to ensure on the other hand that NATO is not moving in.

Therefore, Moldova finds itself at the discretion of Russian might with no or little involvement on behalf of the EU. The policy of soft Europeanization carried out by EU is not rendering the expected results and initiatives like the Eastern Partnership do not have a desired finality.

On the internal scene with the electoral race taking amplitude, the stakes will focus on two issues: Transnistrian settlement and European integration. First is monopolized by the party in power and run in tandem with Russia detrimentally to state interests. The second is badly imitated and compromised by the aggressive policy towards Romania, an EU member. That is why the Opposition plays the card of EU integration and closer ties with Romania backing the Small Border Traffic Agreement. Thus, the following months will follow this scenario, with some possible minor adjustments.



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## THE NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPT: STRATEGIC DOCUMENT FOR TACTIC PURPOSES

### *Overview*

On 22-nd of December 2005, following the initiative of President Vladimir Voronin, a Commission has been established, in order to elaborate a new document, which will replace the older National Security Concept, drafted in 1995. After two years of discussions, in 2007, a project of the Concept has been placed on the website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. At that moment, this sign has been perceived as an attempt on behalf of state authorities to boost the cooperation with civil society.

At the same time, the new project was sent to the Parliament, where it was supposed to be debated by political parties. There have been several roundtables and workshops with the participation of experts, government officials, politicians and journalists, on the national and international level. Representatives from several governmental agencies have expressed their willingness to cooperate on different amendments. Suddenly, after a year of discussions, everything has changed. In April 2008, a new Concept enters the Parliament, and, without any further discussions, it is scheduled to be debated in the Parliament on the 16-th of May.

### *Back to the history of the Cold War*

Nevertheless, things were not let to go by their own pace. On 7-th of May, while participating at the meeting of The Parliament's Commission for National Security and Public Order, which started at 7:30 a.m., some deputies were surprised to find out that, on the following day, they were supposed to discuss the project of the National Security Concept. Despite the fact that the issue of National Security Concept, was scheduled to be discussed on 16-th of May, it was rescheduled on 8-th of May. Taking into

consideration that this project has been discussed for three years, there seems to be no problems with another week. Then, what is meaning of this rush?

One could not ignore the symbolic aspect of the problem. Unlike the EU member states, which celebrate Europe Day on 9-th of May, in Republic of Moldova, this day is celebrated on 8-th of May. Although, two fundamental principles of the new National Security Concept: the stress on the principle of neutrality and the celebration of cooperation with CIS member states, particularly with Russia, could not provide some reasons for optimism for the pro-European part of the population.

For this reason, the symbolic aspect of the document is revealed in connection with the next day, 9-th of May, which, in Republic of Moldova, is an official holiday, dedicated to the victory of the Allied Forces in the Second World War. By no accident, instead of the holiday, which would stress the importance of reconciliation with the past, Victory Day, has become a new bone of contention, in a rather vulnerable society. Since Communists seized power in 2001, Moldovan authorities have constantly neglected the veterans who fought on the side of Romanian army, during the Second World War.

On the contrary, they traced the tradition of Victory Day to Soviet period, constantly asserting the "liberation of Moldova from the Fascist occupation". In addition, the governing Communists Party is trying to convey a new meaning and to revive the concept of The Great War for the Defense of the Motherland, as contrary to the meaning of The Second World War. First name was used during the Soviet period in order to stress the important and exclusive contribution of Soviet people to the victory of Allied Forces. Soviet authorities even pleaded in favor of two different wars: one is the Second World

War, which started in 1939 and the other one is The Great War for the Defense of Motherland, which started in 1941, when Nazis attacked Soviet Union. By contrast, with the peaceful content of the new National Security Concept, which stresses the permanent neutrality of Republic of Moldova, the speech of Moldovan President, Vladimir Voronin, on the occasion of Victory Day, in front of the former Soviet Army veterans, at the Memorial Complex in Chisinau, has had rather aggressive and militaristic tone. This time the aggressive rhetoric of Moldovan President was directed against the representatives of the political opposition, which question “the freedom brought by the Soviet Army”. In this sense, the fact that his speech was held in Russian, added some value to the suspicions that it envisaged not only pro-Romanian and pro-NATO opposition, but also, indirectly, Romania and other NATO member states.

### *How many security concepts?*

The same anti-NATO behavior has become a constant feature of Moldovan authorities, since the Bucharest Summit in April. At all international meetings, Moldovan officials are constantly trying to stress the neutral status of Moldova, and the necessity to find a widely accepted and internationally recognized mechanism, in order to guarantee the permanent neutrality of Moldova. In this sense, The National Security Concept is not an exception. After reading this rather tiny 11 pages document, the general impression is that it was designed not as a long-term strategic paper, but rather to restate the neutral status of Moldova, as if the Article 11 of Moldovan Constitution, which clearly states that “Moldova declares its permanent neutrality”, would not be an appropriate proof.

In addition to neutrality, another key factor, which is predominant in the Concept, is the theme of the Transnistrian conflict. Its overwhelming presence is perceived in every chapter of the Concept. Reunification of the country is mentioned as the main strategic goal, while Transnistrian conflict as the main security threat. Moreover, under the heading “The national security system and its reform”, a whole paragraph is dedicated to confidence-building measures, launched by Moldovan President, in autumn 2007.

The first sentence of this paragraph, clearly states the necessity to reform the national security system in line with the implementation of confidence-

building measures, which explicitly refers to the demilitarization of Moldova. Thus, it is assumed that permanent neutrality would be achieved along with the demilitarization of both banks of Nistru. Besides this interesting assumption, there seems to be some strategic disparity, between the demilitarization program, mentioned in National Security Concept and the modernization of armed forces, precisely stressed in the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP), jointly approved by NATO and Moldova, in 2006.

Although, drafting a new version of the National Security Concept has been among the priorities of the IPAP, the Concept has ironically replaced or ignored the priorities of IPAP. As a matter of fact, compared to previous project unveiled, in 2007, by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, current National Security Concept does not mention the enlargement of NATO and EU, as key factors for the improvement of the security environment, on the national and regional level.

At this point, one could not ignore some radical differences, which characterize the two projects of National Security Concept. If the first project, issued and published on the website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, refers to different levels of national security, mentioning a detailed description of the role played by different institutions, in the structure of security system, then the second project, already drafted by the Parliament, seems to be a parody of a strategic document. One could draw this conclusion not only from the content, but also from the structure of this document. From 27 pages of the previous project, it was scratched to 11 pages. In fact the drafted law seems to be a cocktail of avant-garde collages from different sources.

### *From GUAM with love*

If the project of The National Security Concept published in 2007, clearly states the strategic importance of GUAM for the regional security environment, then the drafted law doesn't even mention the name of this organization. In exchange, it refers to several regional organizations, which derives their existence from the former Pact for the Stability in South Eastern Europe. This emphasis on the South Eastern Europe is due to the fact that, in 2008-2009, Moldova holds the presidency of several organizations from the region.

On the other hand, lack of any reference to GUAM seems quiet strange, due to common strategic goals shared by its members. First of all, three out of four GUAM member states have some frozen conflicts on their territory. The fourth country-Ukraine- is the only state in GUAM, which does not have any frozen conflict on its territory, but, there is constant pressure on behalf of Russian Federation, especially after the “historical decision” of the Bucharest Summit to give a NATO membership perspective to Ukraine.

Referring to the resolution of frozen conflicts, Ukraine is the initiator of several proposals, which might improve the security environment of these states. Although, in May 2007, at a meeting of GUAM leaders in Cracow, Ukrainian President, Viktor Iuschenko declared that parties have to adopt a common Declaration on the mechanisms of the resolution of frozen conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Azerbaijan, President Vladimir Voronin did not participate at this meeting.

The other initiative was launched in October 2006, when The GUAM Parliamentary Assembly has send a request to Council of Foreign Ministers of GUAM member states with the initiative to found a subdivision of peacekeeping forces, in the framework of GUAM. So far, nothing has been done in this respect, although this initiative has been launched in Chisinau.

Moreover, in The National Security Concept, drafted, in May, by the Moldovan Parliament, there are several hints that point to the redistribution of the role played by the Russian troops, still present in the Transnistrian area. First of all, they are not properly mentioned in the text of the Concept. Their presence is only presumed under the denomination of “foreign military presence” or “anti-constitutional military formations”. As a consequence, the Concept makes a distinction between the Russian peacekeeping forces, which is fulfilling its duties, and the so-called army of Transnistria, which is to blame as a main security threat. This rehabilitation of Russian military presence is increasingly visible, as long as the absence of any reference to the decisions of OSCE Istanbul Summit and to the CFE Treaty is noticed.

Another dimension of GUAM is the cooperation in the field of energy security. Recently, on the 16-th of May, at an energy summit in Kiev, Ukrainian

President has come with another initiative, to sign a Declaration on the principles of global energy security, which would establish common rules for the transit of energy resources. Being signed by the presidents of Ukraine, Poland, Baltic States, Georgia and Azerbaijan, this Declaration aims at limiting the usage of energy resources by Russian Federation in order to fulfill some political objectives. In addition, the same leaders signed another Declaration on the creation of a single energy space from Baltic to Black Sea. Despite numerous claims, in regard to the “total energy dependency of Moldova”, neither Vladimir Voronin, nor other Moldovan official, participated at this energy summit.

### *Prognosis*

Referring to the perspectives for the resolution of the Transnistrian conflict, President Vladimir Voronin, in a recent interview to a Russian newspaper, declared that Moldova should consider the possibility to get out of GUAM, as soon as this organization proves to be useless. The fact that the recently drafted National Security Concept does not mention this organization and Moldova has not participated at several GUAM initiatives, could point to the fact that Moldovan President does really mean what he said.

On the other hand, on 29-th of May, during a meeting in Bacu, dedicated to “The Strategy for the Development of GUAM”, Valeri Chechelashvili, GUAM Secretary General, has declared that in a near future, Moldova does not intend to get out of GUAM. Whatever would be the decision of Moldovan authorities, the fact that from the 1-st of July, Georgia will hold the Presidency of GUAM, will add some new arguments to those who claim the anti-Russian character of GUAM.

As long as there will be more tension between Russia and US, GUAM and its member states will receive more assistance from US. As a proof, at the same meeting Mr. Chechelashvili claimed that the budget of GUAM has grown from 1.5 to 3 billion USD. In addition, Anne Derse, US Ambassador to Azerbaijan mentioned that US will allocate 700 000 USD in order to expand GUAM presence on Internet.

Taking into consideration the significant increase in the budget of GUAM, along with different regional initiatives involving member state of this organization, Moldova is unlikely to get out of this

organization. This possibility is close to certainty at least for the next six months, because the process of opting out of GUAM involves some diplomatic procedures, which will take some time to implement.

In reference to the National Security Concept, its drafting is related to certain tactic goals pursued by the Moldovan officials. One of them is the necessity to accelerate the progress in the developments around the resolution of the Transnistrian conflict. The rapidity of this gesture is connected to the participation of Vladimir Voronin at a CIS Summit in St. Petersburg, on the 6-7-th of June.

Recently, one Russian newspaper has mentioned the possibility that during this Summit, Russian authorities might organize a meeting between Moldovan President and Transnistrian leader on the Russian territory. According to the same source, both leaders could appoint their representatives, who in their turn will negotiate further details of conflict resolution. In any case, the National Security Concept represents a gift to the Russian authorities, which would highly appreciate Moldovan neutrality and the legalization of Russian military presence in the region, where pro-NATO attitudes are extensively gaining ground.

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