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**Keeping the Peace
in the
Borderlands of Russia**

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Pragmatic steps toward ideal objectives



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About the Project

Over the past five years, with generous support from the Ford Foundation, the Henry L. Stimson Center has undertaken a series of projects on United Nations peacekeeping. Our initial project mapped the UN's decision-making process and derived political and operational lessons from the first forty-three years of peacekeeping missions (1948-1991), leading to publication of *Keeping the Peace: the United Nations in the Emerging World Order* (March 1992), and *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping: Case Studies and Comparative Analysis* (St. Martin's Press, 1993). The second project examined UN training requirements. Its final report, *Training for Peacekeeping: The United Nations' Role* (July 1994), recommended a pilot training project coordinated by UN Headquarters. The UN accepted the recommendation and is currently implementing the pilot project.

The present Stimson project, for which this occasional paper was written, addresses peacekeeping and US foreign policy, particularly the ways in which US policy, action, and inaction have affected the setup and implementation of peacekeeping and related operations since the end of the Cold War. Often, US influence on these operations has been substantial; other times, however, its leverage has been minimal, as in the case of Russian-led operations in response to conflicts in some of the newly independent states on Russia's southern borders. The UN's role in these operations also has been secondary, but not for want of Russian efforts to involve it. These operations reflect not only the limits of the international community's reach when dealing with conflict in the shadow of a major power, but the limits of its will to get involved, as well.

This paper will also appear as a chapter in *United Nations Peacekeeping, American Policy, and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990s* (St. Martin's, 1996).

About the Author

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Keeping the Peace in the Borderlands of Russia

The region of the newly independent states (NIS) that emerged from the Soviet Union presents a major challenge to traditional notions of peacekeeping. Perhaps the paramount legacy of the Soviet Union has been the development of numerous deep-seated ethnic and political conflicts. In a region characterized by weak states, disputed political borders, a plethora of militias, and no shortage of weapons, the demand for international mediation and peacekeeping is enormous.

Yet the prospects for traditional approaches to peacekeeping in this region are not promising. These conflicts have developed at the same time that the United Nations' capacity to undertake new peacekeeping missions has been taxed to the limit. But more importantly, conflicts and their resolution in the newly independent states are dominated by the regional hegemon--the Russian Federation. While the Russian government welcomes endorsement and financial support for its mediation and peacekeeping efforts by international organizations, Moscow insists that it take the leading role diplomatically and militarily. Not surprisingly, its role is rarely impartial. Although the UN, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE),¹ and the United States each has been involved in efforts to mediate NIS disputes, their limited means and Russia's at-times-active opposition have limited their effectiveness. Thus, the newly independent states represents a case where there is a pronounced tension between the objective goal of peacekeeping and the interests of the great power that is most interested in, and most capable of, carrying out the mission.

Yet despite their sometimes suspect motivations and means, most of Russia's peacekeeping efforts need not be cause for great alarm. Each of the conflicts discussed here developed independently of Russian involvement. Moreover, having no interest in instability on its borders, the Russian government's peacekeeping efforts in most cases have aimed to limit conflicts in the NIS region. The problems have been a by-product of the baggage that Moscow brings to its role as peacekeeper: the pro-Russian concessions it demands from the conflicting parties for providing a public good, its refusal to allow outside parties to play a major role, and the often heavy-handed way that it enforces settlements. Although the US, UN, and OSCE cannot--and should not--force their way into NIS peacekeeping, there are real opportunities to influence Russia into pursuing a more balanced policy of peacekeeping that is consistent with international principles.

This chapter analyzes the particular features and challenges of international peacekeeping in the NIS. It excludes consideration of the use of military force *within* the borders of the Russian Federation--the conflict in Chechnya, in particular--because that is, in international legal terms, an internal Russian matter. The first section addresses the interests and capabilities of the external actors most interested in the region: Russia, the United States, the UN, and the OSCE. The next section considers the broad trends of conflict and peacekeeping in the NIS as well as each of the current or likely peacekeeping

¹Until January 1, 1995, the OSCE went by the name of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). In order to avoid confusion, I will use the current title throughout this chapter regardless of the period.

operations, in detail. The concluding section offers suggestions for external institutions and states seeking to encourage more positive behavior from Russia's peacekeeping efforts.

The External Actors

Although they did not create the conflicts, the external actors discussed here have played a decisive role in their courses and resolutions. Ironically, each of these actors shares the common goal of peace, but the approaches with which they pursue this goal differ markedly. The most influential outside player is the Russian Federation, which, not coincidentally, is an interested party in each of the conflicts. The United States has peripheral interests in the region but has little inclination to pursue them actively in opposition to Russia, and has little leverage in any case. The United Nations has urged that Russia's mediation and peacekeeping efforts abide by UN standards, but its inability or unwillingness to provide UN troops or finances has hampered its effectiveness. The OSCE, meanwhile, has been more assertive in offering international peacekeeping forces and mediation. Although it, too, has thus far been unable to have much impact on Russian efforts in this region, it has the potential to make a substantial contribution.

The Russian Federation

Russia's approach to conflict mediation and peacekeeping in the NIS has been characterized primarily by insistence that Moscow remain the dominant player in regional politics and security. Although the Russian government seeks international recognition and financial support for its peacekeeping operations, it has jealously guarded its leading role.² Thus, instead of international peacekeeping forces dispatched by the UN, Moscow prefers that the UN support operations established by Russia or the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the regional body that it tends to dominate. At times, Russia's diplomatic initiatives even appear to be oriented toward undermining alternative peace efforts, as in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. If the price for international recognition and support of its peacekeeping efforts is outside control, Russia seems to prefer to go it alone.

Russia's Foreign Policy in the NIS

An activist Russian foreign and security policy in the NIS appears to be inevitable for reasons ranging from national psychology to interest. In the fractious realm of Russian domestic politics one clear consensus among groups of all persuasions is that Russia should remain one of the world's "Great Powers." The perceived requirement for membership in the

²In his September 1994 speech to the UN General Assembly, Russian President Boris Yeltsin explained, "We are interested in active participation of the world community in settling this difficult problem. But the main peacekeeping burden in the territory of the former Soviet Union lies upon the Russian Federation." See Boris N. Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, "Peace Keeping Burden in the Former Soviet Union Lies Upon the Russian Federation," reprinted in *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 15 October 1994.

great power club is a sphere of influence in the so-called "near abroad."³ Even if a Russian leader did not agree with this consensus, he would incur great political risk by pursuing policies that contradict it. Moreover, having lost Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Russian politicians and military officials are loathe to give up their historically leading role in what they consider to be their own backyard. In his September 1994 speech to the UN General Assembly, Russian President Boris Yeltsin explained that Russia considers its ties to the other members of the CIS to be a special "blood relationship." As a consequence, these states are Russia's foreign and economic policy priority.⁴

National pride, however, is not the only reason for Russian activism. Russia also has real national interests in developments in the other newly-independent states. Most importantly, instability there potentially poses a threat to the unity of the Russian state itself. The armed conflict that broke out in December 1994 between Moscow and the separatist Russian republic of Chechnya underscores the sometimes shaky ethnic foundation of the Russian Federation. Beyond Chechnya, there are several Russian regions that to lesser degrees have rebelled against Moscow--for example, Tatarstan and the Komi Republic. In other regions--in North Ossetia and Ingushetia, for example--violence periodically flares up between competing ethnic groups. Given this multi-ethnic character and potential for internal instability, permitting the redrawing of borders in the near-abroad states would set a dangerous precedent.⁵ Refugee flight to Russia caused by NIS conflicts might also exacerbate internal Russian ethnic strains.

Furthermore, the Russian government seeks to protect the 25 million ethnic Russians who have found themselves living in foreign lands after the sudden collapse of the USSR. A large number of Russian troops were similarly caught in the collapse, their bases relocated overnight, as it were, to foreign countries.⁶ Also, Russia and the other newly independent states continue to have close--if not interdependent--economic ties. Although Russia has reduced its dependence on these economies, it nonetheless has continued interests in their political and economic stability.

³Aleksey Arbatov notes that support for the Russian "Monroviskiy Doctrine" ranges from pro-Western liberals, to centrists, to moderate conservatives. See Aleksey Arbatov, "Russian National Interests," in Robert D. Blackwill and Sergei A. Karaganov, eds. *Damage Limitation or Crisis? Russia and the Outside World*, CSIA Studies in International Security no. 5 (Washington: Brassey's, Inc., 1994), pp. 55, 60.

⁴See Boris N. Yeltsin, "Peace Keeping Burden. . . ." In a more crass formulation, Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev stressed that Russia should not permit anyone to undermine "geopolitical positions that took centuries to conquer." See Maksim Yusin, Andrey Kozyrev: "Polgoda Nazad Rutskey Skazal Mne: 'Ya Ikh Nenavizhu Etikh Krasno-Korichnevyykh,'" [Six Months Ago Rutskey Told Me: 'I Hate Them, These Red-Browns,'], *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 8 October 1993, p. 3.

⁵See Foreign Minister Kozyrev's worries on this subject with respect to the danger of a dismemberment of Georgia, see Maksim Yusin, "Andrey Kozyrev. . . ." and Maxim Shashenkov, "Russian Peacekeeping in the 'Near Abroad,'" *Survival*, vol. 36, no. 3, Autumn 1994, pp. 48-49.

⁶In early 1994 there were roughly 175,000 troops still stationed in the non-Russian states of the CIS. See Bruce D. Porter and Carol R. Saivetz, "The Once and Future Empire: Russia and the 'Near Abroad,'" *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 3, Summer 1994, pp. 77, 82.

Finally, the Russian military is extremely sensitive to the involvement of non-CIS states in affairs of the countries on Russia's periphery. The security concerns that prompted Russian opposition to the expansion of NATO have been even more pronounced in their near abroad. Russian officials accurately perceive that Russia competes with a number of countries seeking a greater role in this region. Turkey and Iran seek to expand their influence in the Transcaucasus region while Afghanistan and Iran are pursuing roles in the Central Asian states.

Thus, Russian military doctrine highlights a number of NIS scenarios as grounds for military action. These include any foreign territorial claims on the Russian Federation *or its allies*, current and potential "hot spots" of local wars and armed conflicts in the vicinity of Russian borders, the suppression of the rights, freedoms and interests of Russian speaking citizens in foreign states, and attacks on Russian armed forces and military facilities in foreign countries.⁷ The common theme here, of course, is that Russia's military doctrine identifies Moscow's leading role in the NIS as a *security* interest.

In order to defend regional interests Russian Foreign and Defense ministry officials in 1994 began pursuing a series of bilateral agreements with CIS states willing to permit Russian military bases on their territory. The aim was to create a Russian-guaranteed "zone of stability" in the NIS.⁸ The Russian military believes that by maintaining bases in these regions, they will be able to deter foreign powers from becoming involved in the affairs of CIS states.⁹ In a similar vein, Russian officials increasingly have referred to a perceived need to defend the CIS borders as if they were Russia's own.¹⁰ Troops of the Russian Border Guards are already based on all of the CIS' outer borders except for those of Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Kazakhstan.¹¹

⁷See "Voyennaya doktrina Rossii," [The Military Doctrine of Russia], excerpts printed in *Rossiyskiye Vesti*, 18 November 1993, pp. 1-2.

⁸Georgia agreed in February 1994 to permit Russia to keep three military bases on its territory past the original 1995 deadline for their withdrawal. Russia intends to maintain one base each in Armenia and Azerbaijan, although the latter state has expressed great reluctance. See Celestine Bohlen, "Russia and Georgia Sign Military Cooperation Treaty," *New York Times*, 4 February 1994, p. 3; and Steven Erlanger, "Yeltsin's On-and-Off Decrees on Bases Cloud the Policy Outlook," *New York Times*, 8 April 1994, p. 5.

⁹See the editorial in the Russian Army's newspaper, "Perspektivy razvitiya SNG i positsiya Zapada," [Prospects for Development of the CIS and the Position of the West], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 28 September 1994, p. 3; and John W. R. Lepingwell, "The Russian Military and Security Policy in the 'Near Abroad,'" *Survival*, vol. 36, no. 3, Autumn 1994, p. 77.

¹⁰See Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev's characterization of Russian Security Council discussions on Russian borders in Pavel Fel'gengauer, "Staryye granitsy i <<novyye>> bazy: Strategicheskoye otstupleniye armii zakanchivaetsya," [Old Borders and 'New' Bases. The Army's Strategic Retreat is Ending], *Segodnya*, 16 September 1993, p. 3.

¹¹Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Moldova are the only CIS states not participating in a Commonwealth joint-border defense regime. Furthermore, according to the deputy chief of staff of Russia's Border Troops, Russian border guards are only "observing," not "guarding," Ukraine's outer borders. See Vladimir Socor, "One Border for All," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) Daily Report* (online), 29 November 1994; and Lieutenant Colonel N. Lobodyuk, "The Situation is Stably Complex," *Pogranichnik*, no. 6, June 1994 [signed to press 24

Russia's Approach to Peacekeeping

An active, leading role in enforcing peace in NIS countries is a central component of Russia's regional strategy. By permitting conflicts on its periphery to persist, Moscow fears that it is inviting both interested foreign powers to gain a foothold in the region and instability to spill over its own borders.¹² Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev highlighted these Russian concerns when he told the newspaper *Izvestiya* that plenty of Russia's Asian neighbors would be glad to infiltrate the former Soviet republics "under the guise of peacekeeping forces."¹³ It is an unstated assumption in all these calculations that preventing or stopping conflict in the NIS region is a Russian obligation. In fact, Russian government officials often appear to be perplexed by Western criticism of their efforts to achieve peace in the region.¹⁴

Russia appears to prefer two coalition models--local or CIS--for its peacekeeping efforts in the NIS. In both cases, Russian officers possess operational control of the peacekeeping forces and Russian troops predominate. The local coalition model is based on Russian forces with supplementary troops contributed in roughly equal number by the parties to the conflict. These peacekeeping forces are usually mandated to maintain a demilitarized zone between the warring parties. This model is currently being employed in Moldova, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia.¹⁵

The CIS coalition model is based on Russian forces and command but includes troops from other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States who are not involved in the conflict. Moscow has been able to revitalize the initially still-born CIS into a vehicle for providing a stamp of international legitimacy and outside material support for Russian peacekeeping activities in the NIS region.¹⁶ Russian forces predominate, however, as few of the other CIS members have military forces worthy of the name.¹⁷ The coalition model has been implemented in Tajikistan, where the Central Asian members of the CIS strongly support Russian action.

April 1994], pp. 14-22, translated in *Joint Publications Research Service--Central Eurasia Military Affairs (JPRS-UMA)*, 94-042, 19 October 1994, pp. 29-35.

¹²"Perspektivy razvitiya. . .," *Krasnaya Zvezda*.

¹³See "Perspektivy razvitiya. . .," *Krasnaya Zvezda*; and Maksim Yusin, "Andrey Kozyrev..."

¹⁴See Shashenkov, "Russian Peacekeeping. . .," p. 46.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹⁶Partly through Russian cajoling of the former Soviet republics to join, the CIS now includes twelve of the fifteen former Soviet republics. See Porter and Saivetz, "The Once and Future. . .," p. 76

¹⁷Russia blocked the establishment of a CIS military force. On the dissolution of the CIS joint military command, see Stephen Foye, "End of CIS Command Heralds New Russian Defense Policy?" *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2 July 1993, pp. 45-49.

Although these two models satisfy Moscow's desire for a leading role in NIS peacekeeping efforts, they share the common problem of imposing substantial financial and human costs on the Russian military. For the Abkhazia operation, Russia has had a difficult time getting anything more than an endorsement from its economically-pressed allies. Although each of the CIS participants pays for its own forces in the Tajikistan operation, more than half of the troops and most of the actively engaged forces are Russian. Thus, the Russian military unhappily bears most of the cost of the Tajikistan mission and consistently complains that other CIS members do not help enough.¹⁸

Formally speaking, the Russian Ministry of Defense has dedicated two of its divisions--the 27th Motorized Rifle Division of Totskoye, Volga Military District and the 45th Motorized Rifle Division of Kamenka, Leningrad Military District--as well as an airborne battalion exclusively to peacekeeping tasks. Apparently, the motorized rifle elements of these two divisions are maintained at full strength, while the tank, artillery, and other units are maintained at a cadre level. Personnel in each are supposed to receive a five-month training program.¹⁹

Yet peacekeeping operations are nonetheless taking a substantial physical and material toll on all Russian forces. As the military failures in Chechnya during 1994-1995 graphically indicated, the Russian armed forces are suffering from low levels of readiness, with many active units seriously undermanned.²⁰ Most of the operations discussed in this chapter have been carried out by Russian units already based in the so-called "hot spot." These units are usually at little more than cadre strength when they are initially called upon, so they must scrape together composite battalions from across the entire unit. For example, when the 145th Motorized Rifle Division in Batumi, Georgia, was called upon to provide forces for the peacekeeping mission in Abkhazia, it possessed only 3,000 personnel, instead of its standard allotment of 13,000. In order to put together two battalions for the peacekeeping mission, it had to use the bulk of the division's non-commissioned officers. Ironically, even the designated peacekeeping divisions appear to be suffering readiness problems. Regiments from

¹⁸See Steven Erlanger, "In Ex-Soviet Lands, Russian Army Can be a Protector or an Occupier," *New York Times*, 30 November 1993, p. 1; Yuriy Kushko, "Blue Helmets Also Go With Kyrgyz Boots," interview with Colonel General Boris P'yankov, *Rossiya*, no. 4, 26 January 1994 - 1 February 1994, p. 5, in *JPRS-UMA*, 94-009, 4 March 1994, pp. 19-20; Oleg Falichev, "General-polkovnik Boris P'yankov: V Oktyrbre kollektivnye sily pribudut v Tadzhikistan," [Colonel-General Boris P'yankov: Collective Forces Will Go To Tajikistan in October], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 29 September 1993, p. 1; and Colonel General Gennadiy Miranovich, "Bezopasnost' SNG: Rossiya gotova podelit'sya noshey. Ne vse gotovy eyo prinyat'," [CIS Security: Russia is Ready to Share the Burden. Not Everyone is Ready to Accept It], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 20 July 1994, p. 1.

¹⁹The first six weeks are devoted to all-arms training and the remainder to specifically peacekeeping training. See Michael Orr, "Peacekeeping--A New Task..." p. 307.

²⁰See, for example, the comments of the commander of the Russian ground forces, Colonel General Vladimir Semyenov, in Pavel Fel'gengauer, "Nikto ne khochet byt' mirotvortsem v Karabakhye," [Nobody Wants to be a Peacekeeper in Karabakh], *Segodnya*, 20 May 1994, p. 2.

the 27th Motorized Rifle Division performing six month peacekeeping tours in Moldova reportedly are short of junior officers.²¹

The readiness problem is the product of the financial crisis afflicting the Russian Ministry of Defense. Even before the costly Chechnya debacle, the Ministry of Defense complained bitterly to the Chernomyrdin government that its budget could not support housing for Russian officers, much less a normal procurement and operations plan. The problem has been aggravated by the refusal of the two houses of the Russian legislature to create a separate peacekeeping budget. Thus, these operations are funded directly from the Ministry of Defense's already-strapped budget.²²

This financial crisis is one of the many reasons that Russia looks abroad--outside the NIS--for peacekeeping support. Moscow has aggressively courted international organizations and the West for recognition of and material support for CIS/Russian peacekeeping efforts as fulfilling international objectives. Another reason appears to be the psychological benefit to the Russian national image that would accompany international reaffirmation of their perceived great power status.

Yet Moscow has not been willing to sacrifice much control in return. Yeltsin, for example, has declared that the UN and other international organizations should grant Russia "special powers as a guarantor of peace and stability in the region of the former Soviet Union."²³ As explained by another Russian official, Moscow welcomes OSCE and UN support, but not supervision, of its peacekeeping missions; it wants these organizations to authorize peacekeeping by Russian or CIS forces, provide logistical, financial, and other material assistance, and support Russia's political mediation efforts. Although the international organizations are free to send observers, they should not interfere with Russian or CIS operations.²⁴

Not surprisingly, Russia has had little success in gaining international support for its NIS activities. At best, it has succeeded in gaining UN "endorsement" of the Abkhazia peacekeeping mission. By Fall 1994, Russian foreign ministry officials appeared to be giving

²¹Michael Orr, "Peacekeeping and Overstretch in the Russian Army," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 1994, pp. 363-365. Another source reports that overall the 27th Motorized Rifle Division has only 8,500 troops, a deficit of at least 2,000 from normal combat strength. See Dr. Roy Allison, "Russian Peacekeeping--Capabilities and Doctrine," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, December 1994, p. 545.

²²As a result, the head of Russia's peacekeeping forces complained that during 1993 alone the military was forced to allocate more than 26 billion rubles of its funds on peacekeeping activities. See Colonel General Georgiy Kondrat'yev, Russian Deputy Minister of Defense, "Mirotvorcheskaya Rol' Rossii," [The Peacemaking Role of Russia], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 21 June 1994, pp. 1-2.

²³Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project (hereafter referred to as SDIP), *Report on Ethnic Conflict in the Russian Federation and Transcaucasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, July 1993), p. 105; and Boris N. Yeltsin, "Peace Keeping Burden. . ."

²⁴See the interview of Yuriy Ushakov, Russia's chief delegate to the CSCE Review Meeting in Budapest, in Vladimir Socor, "Russia Does Not Want 'Supervision' of its Peacekeeping," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 13 October 1994.

up their attempts to gain international financing and instead were emphasizing their autonomy in NIS matters.

There are numerous reasons for the international reluctance to give a blanket endorsement to Russian leadership in NIS peacekeeping. First, Russia generally has an exceptionally aggressive, often heavy-handed, approach to peacekeeping that often ignores international norms. The Russian approach is distinct in its willingness to use military force to suppress hostilities. This approach is rarely "peacekeeping" strictly defined, but rather is an open-ended, pro-active form of peace-enforcement that resembles Western concepts of counter-insurgency operations. Interestingly, there is as yet no word for "peacekeeping" in the Russian language: the commonly-used term "mirotvorcheskiy" translates into English as "peacemaking."²⁵ Indeed, Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev argues that the UN's ideal model of peacekeeping is inappropriate for NIS conditions.²⁶ The more "appropriate," or Russian, approach was explained by the former commander of the 14th Army, Colonel-General Aleksandr Lebed', and echoed by the Commander of the Volga Military District:

The main experience in preparing peacekeeping forces consists in the following: If a decision is made to use troops, they must be employed decisively, firmly and without delay. And it must be clear to everyone that a force has arrived capable of putting every insolent, encroaching bandit in his place. *Anyone attempting to throw a wrench into the works will be arrested or destroyed.*²⁷

²⁵Russian doctrine also refers to "operations to maintain peace" (operatsii po podderzhaniyu mira). See Michael Orr, "Peacekeeping--A New Task for Russian Military Doctrine," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, July 1994, p. 307; and United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (hereafter, UNIDIR), *Russian Approaches to Peacekeeping Operations*, Research Papers no. 28 (New York: United Nations, 1994), pp. 5-8.

²⁶Kozyrev argues:

'Classical' yardsticks which the United Nations applied to peacekeeping operations dozens of years ago are now unsuitable. . . We should . . . proceed from real life, not from a scheme, all the more so because new approaches have already proved their efficiency, as in the Dniester Region and South Ossetia.

See Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, "Rossiya fakticheski v odinokku neset bremya real'nogo mirotvorchestva v konfliktakh po perimetru svoikh granits: i nikto za neyo eto ne sdelaet," [Russia Actually Bears the Burden of Peacemaking in Conflicts on the Perimeter of its Borders Alone. And No One Will Do This For Her], *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 22 September 1993, p. 1.

²⁷Italics mine. The statement was cited approvingly by Lieutenant Colonel G. Zhilin, in "The Problem Demands a Solution: Troops of Peacekeeping Forces Must Operate Decisively, Firmly, and Without Delay," *Voyenny Vestnik*, no. 9, September 1993 [signed to press 20 August 1993], pp. 17-19, translated in *JPRS-UMA*, 94-005, 9 February 1994, pp. 32-34; see also interview with Volga Military District 1st Deputy Commander Lieutenant General Anatoliy Aleksandrovich Shapovalov by Colonel A. Bondarenko, "The Volga Soldiers Try on the 'Blue Helmets,'" *Voyenny Vestnik*, 22 March 1993, pp. 2-5, translated in *JPRS-UMA*, 93-026, 28 July 1993, pp. 21-24. For a more commonly used definition of peacekeeping, see William J. Durch, "Introduction," in Durch, ed., *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping: Case Studies and Comparative Analysis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993) pp. 3-4.

Second, the same factors that generate Moscow's interest in these regions often make it something of a less than neutral party in the mediation, resolution, and implementation of agreements. Although Moscow's ultimate goal is virtually always to settle the conflict, the Russian government is not above taking advantage of its position to promote its own foreign policy interests. Russia refused to assist Eduard Shevardnadze's Georgian government in its war with Abkhazian separatists and the domestic opposition until Shevardnadze abided by Moscow's wishes that Georgia join the CIS. Moscow also strong-armed Moldova's government with threats that it would weaken its peacekeeping commitment, in an effort to gain Moldovan flexibility on the issues of the Dniester break-away region and the basing of Russian forces.

Perhaps more disturbing, Russian military forces at times have played a direct role in some of these conflicts. Most of these cases appear to have been the result of a break-down in command and control between Moscow and forces in the field early in the conflicts. Russian forces still stationed in most of these regions were a steady source of weapons for the various hostile groups. Russian garrisons either sold their weapons to locals or gave them to friendly forces, the product of "free-lancing" or corruption on the part of local commanders.²⁸ Proximity also repeatedly made Russian units susceptible to direct involvement in the conflicts. When Russian forces are fired upon--for whatever reason--Russian Ministry of Defense rules of engagement permit field commanders to defend themselves forcibly.²⁹ Early in the conflicts in Tajikistan and Abkhazia, for example, Russian commanders ordered punitive strikes against local forces.

But in at least one case--Moldova--Russian military forces on the ground have intervened decisively in a local conflict with, at least, the tacit acquiescence of the government in Moscow. In that case, the local Russian military commander assumed a prominent role in local politics, the Ministry of Defense and the Yeltsin government were extremely reluctant to discipline him, and Moscow has ignored Western efforts to mediate.

²⁸Ironically, Russian units may have even sold weapons to the Chechen militia, which, of course, turned around and used them on Russian forces. See, for example, Robert Orttung, "More Revelations About the Beginning of Chechen War," *Open Media Research Institute Daily Digest* (online), 8 February 1995; and Doug Clarke, "Military Main Source of Criminals' Weapons," *Open Media Research Institute Daily Digest*, 5 April 1995.

²⁹This policy dates to the Gorbachev period when Soviet Minister of Defense Dmitriy Yazov announced that Soviet troops would be permitted to fire upon civilians if it were in self-defense. The policy at the time was partly a response to forces harassing Soviet troops in Georgia. See Statement by Defense Minister Army General Dmitriy Timofeyevich Yazov, from the "Vremya" newscast, Moscow Television, 1800 GMT, 27 November 1990, translated in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report: Soviet Union (FBIS-SOV)*, 90-229, 28 November 1990, p. 68.

Evaluating Russia's Role and Interests

Although a number of observers argue that Russia is pursuing a renewed empire in the newly independent states, the truth is more complex.³⁰ Arguments that Moscow has a master plan for reclaiming the Soviet/Russian empire ignore the schizophrenia in Russia's actions. Although in some regions--like Moldova--Russian diplomatic and military efforts have interfered with sovereign governments and clearly violated international law, in other areas--such as South Ossetia--Russia has played a constructive role. Even within a single case--for example, Tajikistan--Russia has played both a negative and positive role depending upon the time and conditions. Perhaps more importantly, the Russian government has exercised restraint in a number of areas that offer opportunities for adventurism. In the dispute with Ukraine over the Crimea, in particular, Moscow has pursued a generally cautious and diplomatic policy. Arguably, if the Russian government wanted to encourage heightened confrontation on the ground in this dispute, it had plenty of opportunities.³¹

Russia's primary interests in all of the NIS disputes appear to be maintaining its role as the dominant player and containing conflict in the region. It has very little interest in fomenting strife on its borders. While Moscow is not above using economic and, occasionally, military bullying to press its interests in the region, its dominant preference is still the maintenance of the status quo, especially borders. Thus, Moscow generally has pressed for federal solutions to crises of secession--permitting the break-away regions autonomy within the existing state.

The schizophrenic character of Russia's peacekeeping efforts has been most prominent in those regions where residual Russian military forces or ethnic Russians have found themselves, inadvertently, in the midst of local conflicts. In these cases, problems of command and control and Russian domestic politics have weighed heavily, resulting in constraints on the generally moderate Yeltsin government. In Moldova, in particular, the prominence of Russians in the break-away Dniester region's leadership has generated

³⁰For analyses that are critical of Russia's policy in the NIS, see, for example, Fiona Hill and Pamela Jewett, "*Back in the USSR: Russia's Intervention in the Internal Affairs of the Former Soviet Republics and the Implications for United States Policy Toward Russia*" (Cambridge, Mass.: Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project, John F. Kennedy School of Government, January 1994), p. 2; Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Premature Partnership," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2, March/April 1994, pp. 71-75; Yuri N. Afanasyev, "Russia's Vicious Circle," *New York Times*, 28 February 1994, op/ed, p. 17; and William S. Cohen, "The Empire Strikes Back," *Problems of Post-Communism*, January/February 1995, pp. 13-18.

³¹The election of a Russian nationalist as president of Crimea in January 1994 presented an opportunity for Moscow to encourage separatism by the ethnic Russian majority. There also have been a number of cases of political terrorism as well as confrontations between Ukrainian and Russian units, in the disputed Black Sea Fleet, in particular. In all of these cases, Moscow has not only passed on the opportunity to stir up trouble, it has encouraged a diplomatic solution to the dispute. See, for example, Lee Hockstader, "Brush with Black Sea Naval Battle Heightens Russo-Ukrainian Tensions; Warships, Fighter Jets Dispatched in Weekend Confrontation," *Washington Post*, 11 April 1994, p. 10; and Lee Hockstader, "Separatist Storm Brewing in Crimea; Return to Russia Beckons as Promises of Ukraine Independence Falter," *Washington Post*, 14 May 1994, p. 16.

enormous support from Russia's very vocal nationalist, imperialist, and even communist circles.

The United States

The United States government has found itself with conflicting objectives in its approach to peacekeeping in the NIS. The Clinton Administration believes there is a need for outside peacekeeping in the region and has serious misgivings about giving Russia a free hand. At the same time, the region is not sufficiently high on the Administration's list of priorities to warrant US--or even UN--peacekeepers, or a direct challenge to Moscow. NIS peacekeeping ranks well below broader US objectives such as Russian political and economic reform or denuclearization. Short of threatening a rupture of the larger US-Russian relationship, the US has very little leverage over Moscow's policies.

The pressing need for peacekeepers in the NIS developed at approximately the same time that the Clinton Administration was reformulating its international peacekeeping policy to be much less activist.³² The original draft of the Administration's peacekeeping policy reportedly explicitly opposed extending peacekeeping authority to the CIS and any UN payments to Moscow for its peacekeeping activities. Instead the US proposed a voluntary international fund to underwrite such efforts.³³

The Clinton Administration ultimately adopted a policy of cautious support for some of Moscow's efforts. In September 1994, the US representative to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, conceded that a significant Russian role is the only practical solution for policing conflicts in the region. While stressing that the "burden of proof" was on Russia to demonstrate that its peacekeeping activities were in fact benign, Albright announced US approval of Russia's peacekeeping role in the Transcaucasus region and Central Asia.³⁴ Reportedly, the Clinton Administration has expressed willingness in some cases to make financial contributions to a fund supporting the Russian operations.³⁵

At the same time, the US government has been critical of Russian activities in other regions, seeking the withdrawal of Russian forces from Moldova.³⁶ Given that it has little leverage over Moscow in this area, the Administration evidently believes that a policy of selective support is the best way to encourage Russian peacekeeping to adhere to some

³²See, for example, the account of the politics of Presidential Decision Directive 25 in Elaine Sciolino, "New US Peacekeeping Policy Deemphasizes Role of the UN," *New York Times*, 6 May 1994, p. 1.

³³See R. Jeffrey Smith and Barton Gellman, "U.S. Will Seek to Mediate Ex-Soviet States' Disputes; Aim is to Avert Russian Military Intervention," *Washington Post*, 5 August 1993, p. 1. The public white paper is perhaps purposefully unclear on this point. See The White House, "The Clinton Administration's Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations," White Paper, May 1994.

³⁴John Thornhill, George Graham, and Chrystia Freeland, "US Approves Role of Russian Troops Within CIS States," *London Financial Times*, 7 September 1994, p. 16.

³⁵See Smith and Gellman, "US Will Seek. . ."

³⁶Thornhill, Graham, and Freeland, "US Approves. . ."

international norms. On this score, the Clinton Administration may have achieved a significant victory by securing Russian acceptance of a prospective OSCE peacekeeping force in Nagorno-Karabakh, the location of an at-times-bloody conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The United Nations

The United Nations has adopted a relatively "hands-off" approach to peacekeeping in the newly independent states. The UN has been willing to mediate negotiations between conflicting parties, as well as to provide international observers, but refuses to become involved in armed peacekeeping missions. Although the Russian government and CIS officials have frequently and loudly requested a UN imprimatur and, perhaps more importantly, financial support, the UN has repeatedly demurred. Only after considerable Russian agitation did the UN Security Council finally "endorse" in July 1994 the Russian peacekeeping mission in Abkhazia, but without providing "blue helmet" status or financial assistance for the mission.³⁷

There are three reasons for the UN's reluctance. First, the UN is short of money. Second, few of the conflicts in the NIS meet the standards for a United Nations peacekeeping mission. Russian/CIS missions in the region have a peace enforcement character, and where ceasefires exist they are either frequently violated or persist only because of a preponderance of Russian force. Third, and perhaps most important, the Secretary General and some members of the Security Council have been concerned about Russia's role in the conflicts themselves, their settlement, and their enforcement. The UN has been especially reluctant to bless Russia's self-proclaimed "special" or "leading" role in the NIS. Secretary General Boutros-Ghali has stressed for some time that any UN peacekeeping operations there would have to be UN operations from the start, replete with UN commanders on the ground and restrictions on the number of troops from non-neutral states.³⁸

Inevitably, the Secretary General and the UN have had to defer to Russia. Because the UN offers neither troops nor funds for CIS peacekeeping, it has very little leverage on Moscow or, for that matter, on the parties to the various conflicts. Evidently concluding that some Russian-led missions are better than nothing, the UN has sent observers to monitor Russian and CIS peacekeeping operations in Tajikistan and Abkhazia.

The UN has also worked to mediate lasting settlements to several of the NIS conflicts after Russia and/or the CIS have secured a ceasefire. In particular, UN mediators have played a prominent role in facilitating negotiations between the Georgian government and the Abkhaz leadership, as well as between the Tajik government and its political opposition.

³⁷Reuters, "U.N. Endorses Russian Troops for Peacekeeping in Caucasus," *New York Times*, 22 July 1994, p. 2.

³⁸Suzanne Crow, "Results of Boutros-Ghali Visit," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 6 April 1994.

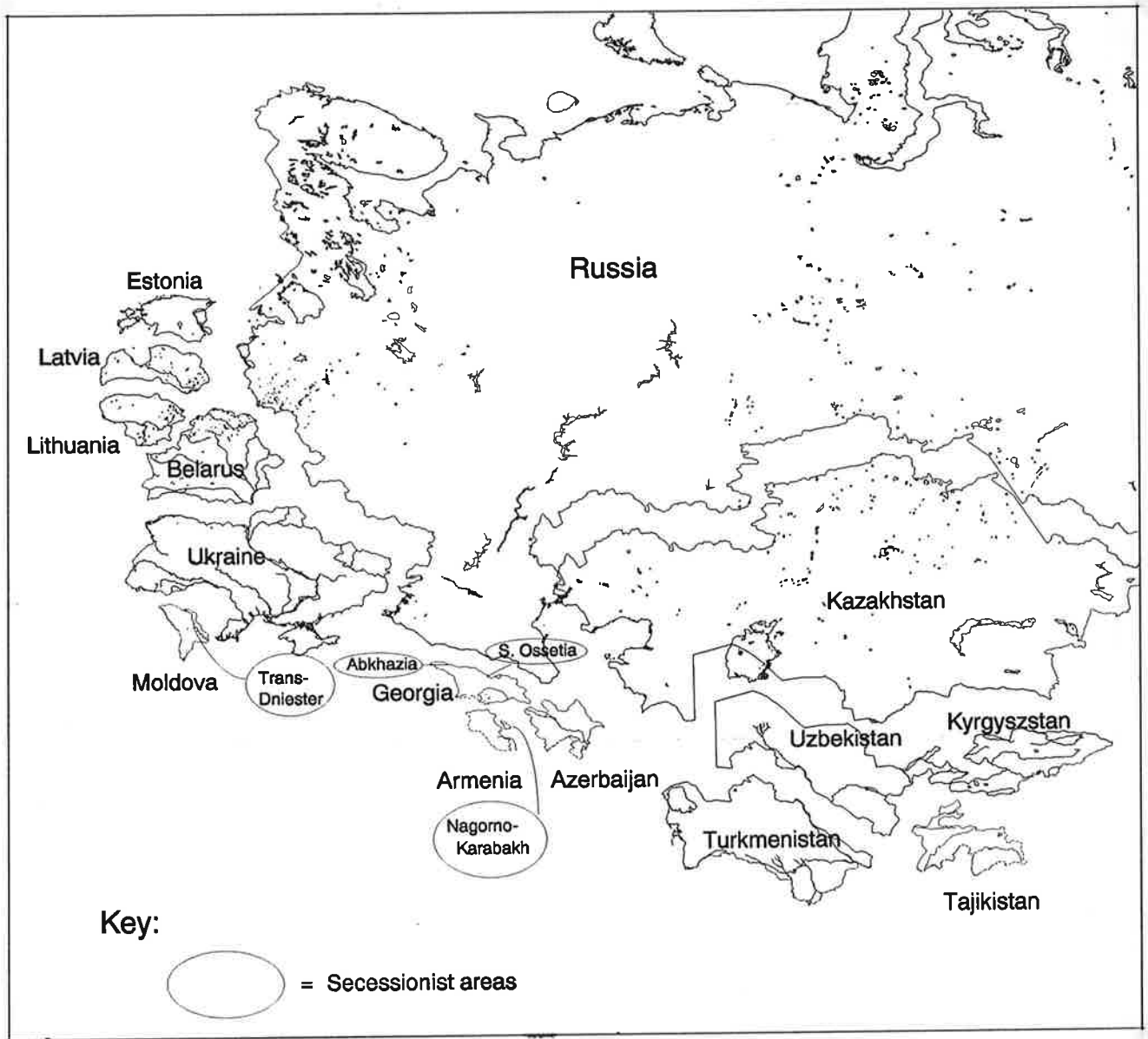


FIG 1: Newly Independent States

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The OSCE has been more energetic than the UN in attempting to mediate settlements and organize peacekeeping operations in the NIS, but has often found its efforts hampered by Russian opposition, the intractability of some of the conflicts, and the organization's own somewhat lumbering nature. Like the UN, the OSCE has refused Russian requests that the organization endorse Russia's peacekeeping missions and has, on a number of occasions, sharply criticized Russian behavior.³⁹ In June 1994 the OSCE presented the Russian government with a list of pre-conditions for its endorsement of peacekeeping activities, all of which were rejected by Moscow, reportedly because of clauses that required all sides in a conflict to agree to the introduction of peacekeeping forces, which were not to remain indefinitely.⁴⁰

In December 1994, the OSCE decided in principle to send a multinational peacekeeping force under its auspices to Nagorno-Karabakh. Although, at the time of this writing, many key details had yet to be worked out, Russia's acceptance of the OSCE decision represented a significant precedent for outside forces to be used in NIS peacekeeping.

The NIS Conflicts and The Peacekeeping Efforts

As of this writing there are four active operations in the NIS that the Russian government characterizes as "peacemaking:" in the break-away regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia, in Tajikistan, and in the Dniester region in Moldova. Russian peacekeepers are also likely to play a substantial role in the Nagorno-Karabakh operation. Four of the five conflicts derive from separatist movements seeking independence and/or unification with another state. The other conflict--Tajikistan--is a civil war with considerable foreign involvement. Only the Abkhazia and South Ossetia missions resemble true "peacekeeping" efforts, and the Abkhazia mission is the only one with United Nations endorsement.

The political instability in each of these regions predates the active involvement of Russia. The several-year collapse of the Soviet Union that concluded in December 1991 created a power vacuum in which ethnic and political groups could compete openly. But the weakness of the newly independent states, the divisions within them, and the abundance of weapons throughout these regions provided an extremely permissive environment for violent conflict.

³⁹For example, in December 1993 the CSCE Foreign Ministers' meeting in Rome rejected a Russian request for blanket authorization of Russian-led peacekeeping efforts in the FSU. The meeting insisted that the CSCE assess each case according to whether it meets CSCE objectives. See Konrad J. Huber, "The CSCE's New Role in the East: Conflict Prevention," *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 3, no. 31, 12 August 1994, p. 29. In June 1994 senior diplomats criticized Russia for not withdrawing its troops from Moldova and obstructing the work of the CSCE observer mission there. See Vladimir Socor, "Kozyrev Qualifies His Remarks On Troops In Moldova," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 16 June 1994.

⁴⁰See John Lepingwell, "CSCE on Russian Peacekeeping," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 15 June 1994.

Most of the new countries emerging from the Soviet order confront a difficult state-building problem. This is in part a legacy of Soviet ethnicity policies. In Central Asia and the Transcaucasus region, for example, republican boundaries were intentionally drawn to divide some large ethnic groups between two or more republics. Although this was a successful strategy for subjugating ethnic identities under a totalitarian regime, its legacy is weak political cohesion for each of these new states as well as a host of border disputes.⁴¹

The collapse of Soviet power also left these new states with weak or non-existent political institutions at a time when local elites--traditionally supported by Moscow--confronted challenges from newly empowered political groups. The lack of an organized army or police force in many of these states contributed to the rise of many undisciplined, competing militias. Yet none of these groups has suffered for lack of armaments. The ubiquitous presence of the Soviet military throughout the USSR resulted in large stocks of weapons being claimed--or seized--by political groups in each of the newly independent states.

The remainder of this section considers each of the active or prospective peacekeeping operations in detail. For each case, the origins of the conflict are discussed, with particular attention paid to the role played by Russia or other outside actors. The history and details of the peacekeeping operation are then analyzed. Each case concludes with an assessment of the success of, and lessons derived from, the particular peacekeeping mission. The order of the discussion is subjective, with those operations in which Russia is largely a positive force treated first, and the cases in which Moscow's behavior is most suspect--Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh--coming last. Table one provides an overview of the conflicts and peacekeeping operations. The table also serves as a frame of reference while reading through the details in the text.

South Ossetia

The peacekeeping mission in South Ossetia represents perhaps Russia's most positive involvement in conflicts in the CIS. The South Ossetia mission was Russia's first attempt to apply the local coalition model to peacekeeping. Moscow orchestrated the settlement and peacekeeping force directly with the conflicting parties--South Ossetia and Georgia. The CIS has played no role.

South Ossetia is the first of two conflicts that have threatened to tear the state of Georgia apart. One of the first union republics to declare itself independent of Soviet rule, Georgia has since been a tragedy of internal political divisions, external threats, and, most of all, contradictions. Although Georgian nationalists argued in terms of self-determination and human rights in breaking from the USSR, they have been reluctant to adhere to the same standards in dealing with minorities in their country. The first Georgian president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was a world famous dissident who became a paranoid autocrat once in office. The former Communist Party chief of the republic, Eduard Shevardnadze, returned as the

⁴¹For example, the border between North Ossetia, an autonomous republic in Russia, and South Ossetia, an autonomous oblast in Georgia, is completely artificial. See Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, *Russia and the New States of Eurasia: The Politics of Upheaval* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 53.

Table 1: Overview of the Conflicts and Peacekeeping Operations

	SOUTH OSSETIA	ABKHAZIA	TAJIKISTAN	MOLDOVA	NAGORNO-KARABAKH
Type of Conflict	Separatist movement.	Separatist movement.	Civil war.	Separatist movement.	Separatist movement; undeclared interstate war.
Type/Size of Peacekeeping Contingent	Local Coalition: 700 Russian troops plus 700 Georgian and joint N/S Ossetian units.	CIS Coalition: 3,000 mostly Russian troops with minor Tajik contribution.	CIS Coalition: up to 25,000 troops, mostly Russian and Tajik; small Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek contingents.	Local Coalition: 2-6 Russian battalions, 3 Moldovan battalions, 2 Dniester battalions.	OSCE Operation: 3,000-strong force to be deployed.
Date Initiated	July 1992	June 1994	August 1993 (2nd mission)	July 1992	[authorized, not deployed as of July 1995]
International Authorization	No: Trilateral agreement between Georgia, S. Ossetia and Russia in cease-fire and peacekeeping.	Yes: UN- and Russian-mediated cease-fire; UN and CIS endorsement of peacekeeping mission.	Yes: CIS-directed mission.	No: Bilateral agreement between Moldova and Russia.	OSCE authorization.
Other International Involvement	None.	UN Observer Mission; UN and OSCE Joint Commission to mediate.	UN-sponsored peace talks; OSCE mediation effort.	OSCE Observer Mission.	OSCE "Minsk Group" mediation effort; Turkey, Iran, and US also involved.
Mandate	Police cease-fire and disengagement of forces along S. Ossetia-Georgian border.	Separate factions and maintain demilitarized zone along Abkhaz-Georgian border.	Protect Afghan border and stop conflict within Tajikistan.	Separate factions along Dniester River.	OSCE mandate being negotiated.
Russian Interests Involved	Halt fighting; maintain border status quo.	Maintain existence of Georgia and keep it in CIS; seek federal solution to conflict.	Protect borders of CIS from Afghan incursions; maintain stability in Tajikistan.	Support Russian breakaway republic; prevent Moldovan union with Romania	Maintain Russian military presence and predominant military role in region; minimize influence of other foreign states.
Assessment of Current Russian Diplomacy and Peacekeeping	Positive: mission seems to have limited conflict but no signs of lasting political settlement.	Positive: mission appears to be engaged in honest peacekeeping effort.	Mixed: mission primarily one of border defense; few signs of lasting settlement to conflict.	Negative: mission biased toward Dniester side and has obstructed OSCE monitoring.	

savior of democracy and the Georgian nation. Among the numerous other characters in the Georgian drama, there is Tengiz Kitovani, a sculptor-turned-minister-of-defense who later became a militia warlord opposed to the Tbilisi government. The conflicts played out among these and other characters have made Georgia highly vulnerable to secession movements and outside intervention by Russia.

Origins

The South Ossetian conflict is an excellent example of many of the state- and nation-building problems that are rife in the newly independent states. The contradictions between Soviet nationality policy and the forces of national self-determination are felt acutely here. The new Georgian state has sought to maintain its territorial integrity as defined in the Soviet period, but the excesses of Georgian nationalists drove minority ethnic groups like the Ossetians and Abkhazians, in their turn, to seek independence from Georgia.

Located in the north of Georgia along the border with Russia, during the Soviet period South Ossetia was an autonomous oblast within the Georgian Republic. It shared a border, however, with a separate autonomous republic--North Ossetia--that was part of the Russian Republic. Ethnic differences between North and South Ossetia were and are practically non-existent while the differences between Ossetians and Georgians are substantial. For example, in 1989 only fourteen percent of Ossetians claimed fluency in Georgian.⁴²

Any misgivings that ethnic Ossetians had about the Soviet arrangement were reinforced by the nationalist character of the Gorbachev-era Georgian independence movement. Indeed, the movement appeared to have little tolerance for the rights or self-determination of ethnic minorities.⁴³ Open tension between Ossetians and Georgians developed in 1989 when South Ossetian intellectuals began agitating for independence from Georgia. Shortly thereafter Tbilisi initiated a republic-wide program for increased use of the Georgian language. This effort provoked bitter recriminations, charges of discrimination, and a request to Moscow from South Ossetian patriotic groups to permit their unification with North Ossetia. Increased agitation against Georgian rule provoked Tbilisi to deploy its Interior Ministry troops to South Ossetia in November 1989. Thereafter, the Georgian parliament and the South Ossetian Supreme Soviet engaged in a war of laws and charges that spurred conflict at the grass-roots level in Ossetia. In August 1990 the South Ossetian Supreme Soviet declared its sovereignty, and the next month it proclaimed the region to be a "Soviet Democratic Republic."⁴⁴

The Georgian Supreme Soviet, having elected Zviad Gamsakhurdia as its chairman in October 1990, abolished the "autonomous" status of the South Ossetia oblast in December. When South Ossetian radicals killed several ethnic Georgians in response, Gamsakhurdia

⁴²SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict*. . . , p. 95.

⁴³See, for example, SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict*..., p. 90; and Dawisha and Parrott, *Russia and the New States*. . . , p. 87.

⁴⁴SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict*. . . , pp. 95-96; and UNIDIR, *Russian Approaches*..., p. 25.



FIG 2: Georgia and South Ossetia

declared a state of emergency in the South Ossetian capital.⁴⁵ Moscow urged flexibility, but by mid-1991 there was inter-ethnic war replete with blockades, hostage-taking, and artillery attacks by the Ossetian guerrillas.⁴⁶

Because of open rebellion brought on by his erratic rule, Gamsakhurdia was forced to flee Georgia in January 1991. Ironically, Gamsakhurdia's ouster and replacement by Eduard Shevardnadze as Georgian head of state in March 1992 did little to improve South Ossetian-Georgian relations. Although he had been the most radical of Gorbachev's reformers and a champion of human rights, he was also a Georgian patriot who would not tolerate the disintegration of his state.⁴⁷

The conflict ultimately came to a head at Moscow's instigation. Chafing at the influx of refugees into Russia and worried about the risk of the conflict spreading north, Speaker of the Russian Supreme Soviet Ruslan Khasbulatov in June 1992 demanded that Georgia cease its provocations and allow refugees to return home. Otherwise, he warned, Russia would be forced to consider incorporating South Ossetia into the Russian Federation. Although Shevardnadze denounced Russia's political intervention into the conflict, he agreed to meet with Russian President Boris Yeltsin as well as representatives of the two Ossetias in late June 1992, at Dagomys, outside the Russian city of Sochi. At this meeting the parties agreed to a ceasefire and the deployment of a joint peacekeeping force.⁴⁸

The Peacekeeping Mission

The South Ossetian mission was the first application of Russia's local coalition model of peacekeeping. The peacekeeping force is comprised of troops from both sides of the conflict as well as North Ossetia and Russia. Although a joint command supervises the operation, because Russia provides the largest share of troops, it dominates. The Russian component of the peacekeeping force is 700 troops; Georgia and South Ossetia together contribute another 700 or so.⁴⁹

⁴⁵SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict*. . . , pp. 96-97.

⁴⁶The conflict forced 23,000 Georgians in South Ossetia to flee to Georgia and at least 50,000 Ossetians to flee to North Ossetia from the south and Georgia. See Daniel C. Diller, *Russia and the Independent States* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1993), p. 154; and SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict*. . . , pp. 96-97.

⁴⁷Gamsakhurdia's tenure as president was characterized by practically daily mass demonstrations led by Georgian liberals and intellectuals who opposed him. In late December 1991, armed opposition forces lay siege to the Government House in Tbilisi, where Gamsakhurdia was holding out. In early January 1992, Gamsakhurdia fled to Armenia, and then to Russia's Chechen Republic. Thereafter, he led a rebellion against the Shevardnadze regime. See Diller, *Russia and the Independent States*, p. 273; and Dawisha and Parrot, *Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, pp. 153-154. See also SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict*. . . , p. 97.

⁴⁸See SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict*. . . , pp. 97-98.

⁴⁹The first estimate is from Dmitriy Trenin, "Blessed Are the Peacemakers. . ." *Novoye Vremya*, no. 24, June 1993, pp. 8-12, translated in *JPRS-UMA*, 93-024, 14 July 1993, p. 26. Another estimate suggests 600 Russian troops, one Georgian battalion of approximately 300, and a joint North-South Ossetian battalion of 400-500. See Michael Orr, "Peacekeeping--A New Task. . ." A third report estimates one Russian paratroop battalion

The initial mission of the peacekeeping force was to separate the warring sides by creating a fourteen kilometer-wide buffer zone separating South Ossetia and Georgia. The peacekeepers maintained 12 observation posts and 20 control posts in the conflict zone, and on a number of occasions reportedly had to use force to separate the warring factions.⁵⁰

By June 1993 the operation appears to have expanded to a more general policing function throughout South Ossetia. A document from the Joint Military Command described the primary mission of the peacekeepers as stopping "criminal activity of destructive forces striving to exacerbate the situation [in the region] and striving to renew armed clashes. . ."⁵¹ The Russian commanders complain that because the South Ossetian government has not been able to assert any control over its territory and its local militia/police force is ineffective, all parties look to the peacekeepers to protect them from widespread crime in the region.⁵² By the fall of 1994, the lack of a settlement and demands for troops elsewhere drove the Russian command to reduce its contribution of peacekeepers to about 500.⁵³

The Dagomys agreement stipulated that compliance would be overseen by a specially created Mixed Oversight Commission comprised of representatives of Russia, Georgia, and North Ossetia. Although this commission was fairly successful in handling critical problems such as prisoner exchanges, confiscating weapons, and providing food for the local population, since the spring of 1993 its function has diminished except for occasional short inspection trips.⁵⁴

Assessment

The Russian-led operation has suppressed the wide-scale conflict in South Ossetia but, reflecting a pattern in Russian peacekeeping efforts, it has done little more than enforce

and some Interior Ministry troops (altogether approximately 700 troops); a regiment of Georgian National Guard (320 troops), North Ossetian Interior Ministry troops, and some South Ossetian volunteers (totalling roughly 470 troops). See James M. Greene, "Russia's Peacekeeping Doctrine: The CIS, Russia, and the General Staff," *Central and East European Defence Studies*, SHAPE, 11 January 1993 (unpublished), cited in Shashenkov, "Russian Peacekeeping. . .," fn 24.

⁵⁰Shashenkov, "Russian Peacekeeping. . .," p. 52; and SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict. . .*, p. 98.

⁵¹Order of Joint Military Command of Composite Peace and Law and Order Forces, 16 June 1993, city of Tskhinvali, *Prikaz Obyedinennogo Voyennogo Komandovaniya SSMP*, 16 June 1994, pp. 1-7, translated in *JPRS-UMA*, 94-040, 28 September 1994, pp. 14-17.

⁵²Yuriy Gladkevich, "Gody Bez Voyny: Oni tak i ne prinecli zhitelym Yuzhnoy Osetii ni spokoystviya, ni dostatka," [The Years Without War: They Brought Neither Peace nor Prosperity to the Inhabitants of South Ossetia], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 10 November 1994, p. 2.

⁵³*Iberia*, 1430 GMT, 20 June 1994, translated in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report--Central Eurasia (FBIS-SOV)*, 94-119, 21 June 1994, p. 69.

⁵⁴Aleksandr Iskandaryan, "Hot Spot. Three Questions from Tskhinvali or the Trigger Has Not been Pulled Yet... Russia is Tired of Bearing Her Cross in the Transcaucasus. But There are no Alternatives. Who Else?..." *Novoye Vremya*, no. 20, May 1994, translated in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Report: Central Eurasia (FBIS-USR)*, 94-063, pp. 9-10.

peace. There has been slight progress toward resolving the underlying conflict between Georgia and the South Ossetians. As a consequence, South Ossetia continues to be characterized by sporadic violence and is, generally speaking, an unpleasant place to live. In June 1994 the then-Russian Deputy Minister of Defense for peacekeeping, Colonel General Georgiy Kondrat'yev, complained that the delivery of food to the region has been meager, the crime situation has been deteriorating rapidly, and paper currency has been virtually withdrawn from circulation.⁵⁵

Abkhazia

Organized and implemented almost entirely by Russia alone, the peacekeeping effort in Abkhazia is to date the only NIS mission that has received the endorsement of the United Nations. The conflict is a clear case of Moscow using mediation and a Russian-led peacekeeping mission to achieve a foreign policy objective: in this case, coaxing a resistant Georgian government to join the CIS and permit Russian bases on its territory. Nonetheless, since Georgian head of state Eduard Shevardnadze requested Russian military support in the fall of 1993, the Russian role has become very constructive.

Origins

The conflict in Abkhazia pitted a minority separatist movement in the Abkhaz Autonomous Republic against the Georgian government in Tbilisi. Although there are relatively few Abkhazians, outside support for their cause and the weakness of the Georgian government contributed to a near-death experience for Georgia in the fall of 1993. Over the next nine months, the conflict caused 3,000 deaths and created 200,000 refugees.⁵⁶

During the 1920s, Abkhazia was formally a union republic (SSR) with the same status as Georgia. However, in 1931 Joseph Stalin downgraded Abkhazia's status to that of an autonomous republic within Georgia. Due to Georgian migration in the 1940s and 1950s, Abkhazians accounted for only 17 percent of the population of their titular republic before hostilities broke out. Nonetheless, Abkhazians were permitted to run the republic's government, and for the last thirty years of the Soviet period agitated for a return to their status as a union republic independent of Georgia. The agitation intensified during the Gorbachev period, generating counter-demonstrations in Tbilisi in March 1988 by patriotic Georgians opposed to Abkhazia's secession. In April 1988 a hunger-strike by Georgian protesters in Tbilisi was broken up by Soviet troops, leading to the deaths of 20 civilians and the acceleration of Georgian efforts to break from the Union.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Colonel General Georgiy Kondrat'yev, "Mirotvorcheskaya Rol' Rossii;" Dmitriy Trenin, "Blessed are the Peacemakers. . .;" M. Orr, "Peacekeeping--A New Task. . .," p. 309; and Yuriy Gladkevich, "Gody Bez Voyny. . ."

⁵⁶Lee Hockstader, "Russian Peacekeepers Approved for Georgia; Moscow to Send 3,000 Troops to Rebel Province," *Washington Post*, 22 June 1994, p. 16.

⁵⁷Diller, *Russia and. . .*, p. 274; and SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict. . .*, pp. 101-102.

Just as in South Ossetia, tensions between the Abkhazians and Georgians escalated in response to repressive, pro-Georgian measures adopted by Zviad Gamsakhurdia and the Georgian Supreme Soviet. In August 1990, the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet declared the region to be a full republic independent of Georgia at the same time as South Ossetia. The Georgian Supreme Soviet responded by annulling the decision. The battle was waged largely with legal measures until July 1992, when the Abkhazian Parliament revived its 1920s-era union republic constitution and again declared itself independent of Tbilisi.

Under circumstances that are still unclear, the following month Georgian Defense Minister Tengiz Kitovani ordered Georgian forces to deploy into Abkhazia. The initial pretext of the operation was to attack forces of deposed Georgian president Gamsakhurdia, who allegedly were allied with Abkhazian separatists. But it quickly became an effort to crush Abkhazian resistance to Georgian rule. Kitovani's forces seized the Abkhazian capital, Sukhumi, and shelled the parliament building.⁵⁸

What followed was an armed confrontation between the separatists and forces allied with the Tbilisi government, punctuated by a series of failed attempts at ceasefire. Moscow was instrumental in getting the two sides to agree to a short-lived ceasefire in September 1992. Yeltsin's subsequent order for Russian forces to seize control of strategic railroads along the Abkhazian coast, ostensibly to protect Russian interests, outraged Georgian nationalists. Subsequently, Shevardnadze complained that Russian forces were supporting the separatists, preventing Georgia from using its air force and navy to quash the rebellion.⁵⁹

In March 1993 the Abkhazians sought to retake Sukhumi in an offensive reportedly supported by fighter aircraft with Russian markings.⁶⁰ Yeltsin, Shevardnadze, and the Abkhazians agreed on ceasefires in May and July 1993, both of which were violated almost immediately by the Abkhazians. On the second occasion, the Abkhazian forces pushed Georgian forces out of Sukhumi.

This defeat nearly caused the dismemberment of Georgia. Having been routed in Abkhazia, Shevardnadze's forces suddenly found themselves under attack from the militias loyal to deposed president Zviad Gamsakhurdia ("Zviadists"). Shevardnadze had never been able to consolidate the disparate militias and their warlords into a coherent Georgian army and Ministry of Defense. The Georgian leader on a number of occasions appealed for

⁵⁸Several authoritative reports have stated that the assault on Sukhumi was a personal initiative of Kitovani. See, for example, Elizabeth Fuller, "Paramilitary Forces Dominate Fighting in Transcaucasus," *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 25, 18 June 1993, p. 81.

⁵⁹SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict*. . . , pp. 101-104.

⁶⁰Georgian forces downed an aircraft piloted by a member of the Russian Air Force, prompting Shevardnadze to declare in Georgian parliament: "I can boldly state that we are in fact dealing with a Russian-Georgian conflict. Thousands of Russian citizens, mercenaries, and regular army men are directly involved in military hostilities against Georgia." See SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict*. . . , p. 105-106. UN observers reportedly confirmed that the downed flier was a Russian air force officer. See Helsinki Watch, *War or Peace? Human Rights and Russian Military Involvement in the "Near Abroad"*, vol. 5, no. 22, December 1993, p. 7.



FIG 3: Georgia and Abkhazia

NATO and/or UN peacekeepers to be dispatched to the conflict zone, without success.⁶¹ As his army collapsed, Shevardnadze requested Russian intervention and accepted membership in the CIS as the price of that support. Russia then embraced Shevardnadze and intervened to turn back the Zviadists. In early December 1993, with the Gamsakhurdia forces defeated, the Georgians and Abkhazians reached a new ceasefire. The negotiations dragged on through the following April when, under Russian mediation in Moscow, the two sides agreed to repatriate refugees and deploy a peacekeeping force.

Although the agreement called for a force under UN auspices, Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, who was present at the signing, refused to endorse either UN military units or UN funding of CIS/Russian peacekeeping operations. The UN did send additional observers to the region and endorsed the Russian peacekeeping mission. The CIS conferred its official endorsement in October 1994 and later extended the mandate of the mission twice.⁶²

The Russian Role

Russia's role in the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict has shifted considerably over time from that of manipulator to relatively honest peacekeeper. Moscow has primarily reacted to developments in the region, although always in a manner that promotes Russian interests. If Moscow had consistent strategic goals, they were 1) to freeze the conflict and perhaps return to the *status quo ante*, albeit with increased autonomy for Abkhazia within a federal Georgia, and 2) to secure Georgia's joining the CIS as the price of Russian assistance. Although a number of Western analysts have argued that 93,000 Abkhazians could not possibly have defeated a nation of 3.8 million without substantial support from Russia, it does not appear that Russia ever allied with the Abkhazians.⁶³ Moscow refused to support Abkhaz claims of independence or even requests to join the Russian Federation. The virtue of the federal solution was there were neither outright winners nor losers in the conflict. Russia apparently opposed an Abkhaz victory because of the dangerous precedent that it would set for separatist movements in Russia, yet Moscow also would not tolerate a Georgian victory that resulted in Tbilisi's complete subjugation of Abkhazia.⁶⁴

⁶¹SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict*. . . , p. 106.

⁶²The first extension was through 15 May 1995. The second extension endorsed the mission through the end of 1995. See Suzanne Crow, "Results of Boutros-Ghali Visit," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 6 April 1994; Elizabeth Fuller, "Transcaucasia Peacekeeping," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 9 June 1994; Vladimir Socor, "Peacekeeping Update," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 26 October 1994; Elizabeth Fuller, "Abkhaz-UN Talks Deadlocked," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 18 November 1994; and Fuller, Shevardnadze on Abkhazia, South Ossetia," *OMRI Daily Digest*, 30 May 1995.

⁶³See Hill and Jewett, "*Back in the USSR* . . .," p. 48; Helsinki Watch, *War or Peace?* . . . , p. 6; Thomas Goltz, "Letter from Eurasia: The Hidden Russian Hand," *Foreign Policy*, no. 92, Fall 1993, pp. 92-116; and John Lepingwell, "The Russian Military."

⁶⁴See Maksim Yusin, "Andrey Kozyrev. . .;" and Helsinki Watch, *War or Peace?*, p. 7.

The participation of Russian forces in the conflict appears to have been primarily a locally-directed phenomenon with occasional encouragement by central authorities in Moscow. Russian forces stationed throughout the region inevitably became part of the hostilities, either caught in a cross-fire, defending strategic sites of Russian interest, or fending off raids by local fighters seeking weapons.⁶⁵ In other cases, weapons ended up in the hands of Abkhazian fighters, transferred from sympathetic Russian units or sold by corrupt ones.

As long as neither side seemed poised to win, the Russian Ministry of Defense appears to have tolerated or, at times, even encouraged the anti-Georgian actions of local commanders. The Russian military has carried a particular grudge against Shevardnadze, whom the high command blames for negotiating their humiliating withdrawals from Eastern Europe. Local Russian forces, furthermore, appear to have soured long ago on Georgia's militias. Thus, when Kitovani's forces attacked Sukhumi in August 1992, local Russian commanders, eager to punish him and other anti-Russian segments of the Georgian hierarchy, supported the Abkhazian defense.⁶⁶ Russian defense minister Grachev justified Russian Air Force bombing runs against Georgian forces in Sukhumi as retaliation for attacks against a Russian defense research center in Eshera.⁶⁷

Ultimately, Moscow was able to turn the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict to its benefit in a number of ways. Although Russia probably would have prevented the capitulation of the Georgian side in any event, it nevertheless withheld its support to extract concessions. As the Georgian state was collapsing under the two-pronged assaults of Zviadists and Abkhazians, Russian Defense Minister Grachev responded to Shevardnadze's pleas for help by insisting that Georgia first join the Commonwealth.⁶⁸ Since accepting the deal, the Tbilisi government has had to reconcile itself to a long-term Russian presence on its territory. In February 1994, Shevardnadze signed a treaty with Yeltsin that permitted Russia to maintain three military bases on Georgian soil past 1995.⁶⁹

Since it took on its formal peacekeeping role in the region, Russia's behavior has been far more even-handed. Then Russian deputy minister of Defense Colonel General Georgiy Kondrat'yev strongly pressed the Abkhazian side in the fall of 1994 to permit the full and immediate repatriation of Georgian refugees to Abkhazia. When negotiations between Georgia and Abkhazia appeared to be breaking down, Minister of Defense Grachev and later

⁶⁵Even some of the sharpest critics of local Russian military forces concede that Georgian militias at various times attacked Russian bases and engaged in considerable human rights abuses. See, for example, Hill and Jewett, *Back in the USSR*. . . , p. 50.

⁶⁶Dawisha and Parrott, *Russia and the New States*. . . , p. 239.

⁶⁷Helsinki Watch, *War or Peace?*. . . , p. 7. The Russian general in charge of the Eshera facility argues similarly that he ordered artillery strikes against Georgian forces that had been shelling him first. See Colonel Vladimir Zhitarenko, "General'skoye delo," [General's Business], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 20 March 1993, p. 3.

⁶⁸See Stephen Foye, "Grachev on Georgia, Doctrine, 4 October," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 20 October 1993.

⁶⁹Celestine Bohlen, "Russia and Georgia Sign Military Cooperation Treaty," *New York Times*, 4 February 1994, p. 3.

Yeltsin himself intervened diplomatically to push for continued negotiations.⁷⁰ By September 1994, Shevardnadze was reportedly praising Yeltsin and Grachev for their help in resolving the dispute.⁷¹

The UN Role

The UN was not active diplomatically in the Abkhazian conflict until the summer of 1993. In May of that year the Secretary General dispatched a special envoy and in July and August the Security Council unanimously approved sending military observers to Georgia to monitor the imminent ceasefire.⁷² After the short-lived 27 July ceasefire agreement, the UN provided a venue for further peace talks, but the Security Council became extremely critical of Abkhazian ceasefire violations and it consistently expressed support for the territorial integrity of Georgia.⁷³ In UN-sponsored talks after the December 1993 ceasefire, the two sides agreed to repatriate refugees, create a demilitarized zone along their border, and invite UN peacekeeping forces to monitor the truce.⁷⁴

Yet the UN has consistently refused to provide peacekeepers for the Abkhazian mission. Initially Secretary General Boutros-Ghali argued that no UN force would be sent until substantial progress was made toward a political settlement.⁷⁵ Later, in March 1994, Boutros-Ghali went so far as to suggest that Russian troops go into the region first without UN approval.⁷⁶

⁷⁰Aleksandr Pel'ts and Pyotr Karapetyan, "Rossiya, pokhozhe, uvodit Gruzuyu i Abkhaziyu ot novogo voyennogo protivostoyaniya," [Russia, It Seems, Is Leading Georgia and Abkhazia Away from a New Military Confrontation], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 20 September 1994, p. 1; and Aleksandr Koretskiy, "Three-Way Talks Could Not be Held," *Kommersant-Daily*, 20 September 1994, p. 3, translated in *FBIS-SOV*, 94-183, 21 September 1994, pp. 41-43.

⁷¹Teymuraz Mamaladze, "V Abkhazii sozrel khoroshiy urozhay 'Izabelly,'" [A Fine Crop of 'Isabells' Were Harvested in Abkhazia], *Izvestiya*, 20 September 1994, pp. 1-2.

⁷²See United Nations Security Council Resolutions 849 (9 July 1993), 854 (6 August 1993), 858 (24 August 1993). Resolution 858 formally established the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG).

⁷³See especially UN Security Council Resolutions 876 (19 October 1993) and 896 (31 January 1994).

⁷⁴Liz Fuller, "Abkhazia, Georgia Request UN Peacekeepers," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 14 January 1994.

⁷⁵Liz Fuller, "No UN Peacekeepers for Georgia," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 1 February 1994.

⁷⁶Elizabeth Fuller, "Abkhazia Sets Conditions for Resuming Talks," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 24 March 1994; and Elizabeth Fuller, "No UN Peacekeeping Troops for Abkhazia," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 6 May 1994. Initially consisting of less than ten observers, the mission expanded to 55 by mid-1994 and to one hundred twenty six by November 1994. See United Nations Security Council Resolution 858 (1993) and *United Nations Peace-keeping Information Notes* (New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, Update, December 1994), p. 171.

The Security Council had been very reluctant to "approve" or even "authorize" the Russian operation.⁷⁷ However, bowing to the reality that the Russian mission was the only realistic solution, on 21 July 1994 the Security Council endorsed the Russian deployment but without giving Russia a blank check: It simultaneously authorized 136 UN military observers to monitor the Russian peacekeepers.⁷⁸

Since that time the United Nations has been active in mediating talks between the two sides aimed at a permanent settlement.⁷⁹ The UN High Commissioner for Refugees also dispatched a representative to oversee and facilitate the repatriation of Georgian refugees to Abkhazia.⁸⁰

The US Role

The case of Abkhazia is a good example of the limits of US power in the region. Throughout the Abkhaz conflict, the United States has expressed support for the Georgian government and been suspicious of Russia's intentions, but Washington has been unwilling to intervene either diplomatically or with peacekeepers. In March 1994, during Shevardnadze's visit to Washington, President Clinton told the Georgian leader that he endorsed the proposal to dispatch a UN peacekeeping force to Abkhazia on the condition that substantial progress is made toward a political settlement; the proposed peacekeeping force would include only a limited Russian contingent and no US troops.⁸¹

Later, Washington reportedly opposed UN endorsement of a Russian-led force but had to relent when Russia threatened to veto Security Council support for a US invasion of Haiti.⁸² Although the Clinton Administration recognized that it had no alternatives to the Russian-led force, it nonetheless insisted that there were limits to its support for Russia in this area. In fact, during her September 1994 visit to Georgia, US Ambassador to the UN

⁷⁷Initially, diplomats predicted that the Security Council would do nothing more than "take note of Russia's intentions to send peacekeepers." See Paul Lewis, "Russia Seeking U.N. Backing for Caucasus Force," *New York Times*, 27 May 1994, p. 3; and Elizabeth Fuller, "UN Endorses Russian Peacekeeping Mission in Abkhazia," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 22 July 1994.

⁷⁸Resolution 937 (21 July 1994) stated that the Security Council "[w]elcomes the contribution made by the Russian Federation, and indications of further contributions from other members of the CIS, of a peacekeeping force. . ."

⁷⁹See, for example, UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General, Concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia*, S/1995/10, 6 January 1995; S/1995/181, 6 March 1995; and S/1995/342, 1 May 1995.

⁸⁰Elizabeth Fuller, "Repatriation of Georgian Refugees Gets Under Way," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 13 October 1994.

⁸¹Thomas W. Lippman, "U.N. Force for Ex-Soviet Georgia Wins Clinton Support; Funds Sought," *Washington Post*, 8 March 1994, p. 9.

⁸²See Daniel Williams, "Moscow's Troubling Intervention; U.S. Fears Troops in Former Republics May Lead to Expansion," *Washington Post*, 21 June 1994.; and Lally Weymouth, "Yalta II," *Washington Post*, 24 July 1994, p. C7.

Madeleine Albright stressed that Russian peacekeeping in Georgia must be temporary and kept under international scrutiny.⁸³

The Peacekeeping Mission

In contrast to other peacekeeping efforts in the NIS, the Abkhazia mission is based entirely on Russian troops, albeit with UN and CIS mandates. Georgian and Abkhaz representatives agreed in late June 1994 to deployment of a CIS peacekeeping force. Although the force was supposed to operate under CIS command, in addition to Russia only Tajikistan was willing to provide troops. Thus, the Russian forces already deployed in Georgia became the *de facto* CIS force.⁸⁴ The Russian peacekeepers began deploying on 24 June 1994, to police a "security zone" 56 kilometers in width and 78 kilometers in length along the Inguri River, which divides Abkhazia and Georgia. The area is divided into two zones.⁸⁵

According to Russian Colonel General Georgiy Kondrat'yev, the security zone would be stripped of all "heavy" combat hardware, which would be withdrawn into collection areas monitored by UN observers.⁸⁶ In addition, the peacekeeping agreement stipulated that all armed formations would withdraw to a distance of twelve kilometers from the Inguri River, beyond artillery and tank range of one another.⁸⁷ To facilitate this disengagement, Russian peacekeepers were ordered to protect facilities and main transportation routes and safeguard the return of refugees. The conflict had produced approximately 250,000 Georgian refugees from Abkhaz territory.⁸⁸

Following the Russians' broad definition of peacekeeping, Russian troops are permitted to open fire if fighting flares again, even if they are not directly under attack. As

⁸³Daniel Williams, "Moscow's Troubling Intervention. . .," and Elizabeth Fuller, "Georgian-Abkhaz Talks Focus on Refugees," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 2 September 1994.

⁸⁴Elizabeth Fuller, "Shevardnadze, Opposition, Clash Over Abkhazia," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 24 May 1994; and "CIS Defense Ministers Fail to Agree on Abkhaz Peacekeepers," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 20 July 1994.

⁸⁵Within the peacekeeping area, the Russian forces set up five checkpoints to regulate the flow of returning refugees and bar the passage of weapons into the security and arms limitation zones. In addition, twenty-two observation posts were created throughout the entire territory. Viktor Litovkin, "Glavnymi mirotvortsami v Zakavkaz'ye naznacheny desantniki," [Paratroopers Named as Chief Peacekeepers in Transcaucasus], *Izvestiya*, 23 June 1994, p. 2.

⁸⁶Heavy hardware is defined as artillery weapons and mortars in excess of 80 mm., as well as tanks and armored personnel carriers and fighting vehicles. See Gennadiy Sobolev, "Russian Peacekeeping Forces Move into Zone of Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict," *Rossiskiy Vesti*, 25 June 1994, p. 1, translated in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report: Central Eurasia (FBIS-SOV)*, 94-123, 27 June 1994, p. 15.

⁸⁷Viktor Litovkin, "Glavnymi mirotvortsami. . ."

⁸⁸Chris Bird, "Peacekeeping Role New One for Russia," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 June 1994, p. 3.

one general explained, "We are under orders to suppress any seats of fire, after a warning."⁸⁹ In addition to forces based at a number of observation posts, the Russian peacekeepers have organized four helicopter-mobile groups for rapid reaction to outbreaks of violence.⁹⁰

A total of 3,000 Russian troops deployed, most of whom were allocated from units already in the region: two motorized rifle battalions from the 145th Motorized Rifle Division based in Batumi, Georgia, and a composite battalion from the 345th Airborne Regiment. Russia's designated peacekeeping divisions, the 27th Motorized Rifle Division in Totskoye and the 45th Motorized Rifle Division in Kamenka, also deployed one battalion each.⁹¹

The funding of the peacekeeping operation in the near term appears to fall on the already strapped Russian Ministry of Defense, as the Russian Council of Federation refused the Ministry's request for a special line-item for the Abkhaz mission in the federation budget. The Ministry of Defense estimates that the cost of peacekeeper salaries alone will be one billion rubles per month (approximately \$526,000).⁹² It is not surprising, therefore, that some of the loudest calls for international funding of Russian peacekeeping missions have come from the Ministry of Defense.

Assessment

Georgian and some Western officials express concern that one of the aims--or at least one of the results--of the Russian peacekeeping mission has been the reinforcement of Abkhazia's *de facto* independence.⁹³ Shevardnadze increasingly has called for the size of and the mandate for the peacekeeping mission to be expanded to include police functions in the border zone and to guarantee the repatriation of Georgian refugees to their homes in Abkhazia.⁹⁴ The repatriation issue, of course, is controversial for both sides because of the effect that it will have on popular support for independence or federation within Abkhazia.

Although the agreement and the decision to join the CIS was a bitter pill for Georgians, peace has held within Georgia for the first time in years. Indeed, the Russian intervention and peacekeeping operation almost certainly saved the Shevardnadze regime.

⁸⁹Vladimir Sarishvili, "They Came for the Sake of Peace," *Trud*, 28 June 1994, p. 5, translated in *FBIS-SOV*, 94-125, 29 June 1994, pp. 9-10.

⁹⁰Viktor Litovkin, "Glavnymi mirotvortsami. . ."

⁹¹Orr, "Peacekeeping and Overstretch. . .," p. 365.

⁹²Viktor Litovkin, "Glavnymi mirotvortsami..." Although a half million dollars per month would not appear to be much to the average observer, it is nonetheless a substantial sum for the cash-strapped Russian military. An American report cites a cost of approximately \$1 million per month. See Lee Hockstader, "Russian Peacekeepers Approved for Georgia; Moscow to Send 3,000 Troops to Rebel Province," *Washington Post*, 22 June 1994, p. 16.

⁹³Chris Bird, "Peacekeeping Role New One for Russia."

⁹⁴See, for example, Liana Minasyan, "Tbilisi is Still in Need of Moscow's Help. Russian Peacekeepers on the Inguri River Have Had Little Success as Yet," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 18 May 1995, p. 1, translated in *East View Press Digest* (online), 18 May 1995.

The prospects for a lasting political settlement, however, have been mixed. On the positive side, in UN-mediated talks, the Abkhazians apparently dropped their insistence on independence and accepted the prospect of a federation within Georgian borders.⁹⁵ But the Abkhazians have blocked the return of Georgian refugees, demonstrating that achieving a permanent settlement between the two sides may be extremely difficult.⁹⁶

Tajikistan

The current peacekeeping effort in Tajikistan is the result of Russian and Central Asian fears that the civil war in that country will spillover into neighboring states. The conflict--and CIS fears--have been exacerbated by the ties between Tajikistan's Islamic opposition and radical groups in Afghanistan. Of all the governments in the NIS, Tajikistan's has had the greatest difficulty in consolidating control of its territory. As a consequence, until the fall of 1993, the Islamic resistance and their Afghan supporters were able to ship weapons and operate back and forth across the Tajik-Afghan border practically at will.⁹⁷

The large-scale Russian and CIS intervention is less a peacekeeping operation than a coalition defense of CIS borders. The peacekeepers have to varying degrees succeeded in sealing off the border and enforcing a ceasefire within Tajikistan. In the process, however, the country has become something of a Russian protectorate. Today the government of Imomali Rakhmonov--a former Communist who became head of state in late 1992--depends heavily upon Moscow for financial and military support.

Origins

Tajikistan has experienced precious little political stability since it became independent in September 1991. In contrast to the majority of union republics, Tajikistan had not sought independence from the USSR, and the Communist regime there was one of the few groups to support the attempted putsch against Gorbachev in August 1991. Located in extremely mountainous terrain that makes travel and communication very difficult, the country was the poorest and most underdeveloped republic in the USSR.⁹⁸ Thus, although the government has changed hands several times, no administration has succeeded in extending its control much beyond the capital of Dushanbe. From 1991 through 1994, a bitter civil war raged between competing political factions. Apparently, all sides of the conflict have been guilty

⁹⁵See Elizabeth Fuller, "Progress Toward Abkhaz Settlement?" *Open Media Research Institute Daily Digest*, 14 February 1995.

⁹⁶The UN Security Council deplored the Abkhaz leadership's continued obstruction of the return of refugees in a 12 May 1995 resolution. See UN Security Council Resolution 993, (12 May 1995).

⁹⁷Dawisha and Parrott, *Russia and the New States*. . . , pp. 222-223.

⁹⁸Diller, *Russia and the Independent States*, p. 257.

of atrocities such as ethnic cleansing and murder of civilians. One estimate holds that by January 1993 the conflict had caused 50,000 deaths and produced at least 500,000 refugees.⁹⁹

On the surface, the conflict has been political, pitting a series of governments run by Communists against an opposition coalition of democrats and Islamic groups. In fact, the conflict is based on historical, regional, and clan rivalries that have intensified in the quasi-anarchical post-Soviet environment. Throughout the Soviet period, the Leninabad (now renamed Khojand) province--the most economically developed part of Tajikistan--provided the elite that controlled the government in Dushanbe. This elite enjoyed the support of Tajikistan's large ethnic Uzbek minority and the pro-Communist clans of the southern Kulyab region. Largely excluded from any political or economic benefits were the Garmis, who were based in the Garm Valley in the east and the southwest province of Kurgan-Tyube, and the Pamiris, who lived in the mountainous eastern region. Kurgan-Tyube and the Pamir region were perhaps the poorest areas in Soviet Tajikistan, and belief in Islam was strong in both.¹⁰⁰ Although it ultimately demonstrated little affinity for Communism, after independence the traditional elite nevertheless demonstrated no interest in relinquishing its exclusive hold on the government. The Garmis and Pamiris united in opposition with intellectuals and democrats in Dushanbe as well as pro-Islamic groups.¹⁰¹

In the fall of 1991, what began as competing pro- and anti-government mass demonstrations in the central squares of Dushanbe quickly deteriorated into a bloody civil war. The opposition demonstrations forced the Communist president, Kakhar Makhmamov, to resign. When his successor banned the Communist Party, the hold-over Tajik Supreme Soviet replaced him with the former leader of the Tajik Communist Party, Rakhmon Nabyev. Although Nabyev won the popular election for president in November 1991, his efforts to restore Communist rule produced bloody clashes in Dushanbe between his supporters and the opposition. Nabyev tried to create a government of national reconciliation that included 33 representatives of opposition groups, but by this time pro-Communist, anti-Communist, and regional militias were ignoring Dushanbe and fighting it out on the ground. In September 1992 opposition forces captured Nabyev and forced him to resign at gunpoint. The pro-Communist Supreme Soviet--having fled the capital--responded by abolishing the presidency in November 1992 and installed Supreme Soviet chairman Rakhmonov as head of state. In December 1992, Communist forces recaptured Dushanbe and retired the government of "national reconciliation."¹⁰²

⁹⁹Raymond Bonner, "Tajik Civil War Fades, but the Brutality Goes On," *New York Times*, 26 November 1993, p. 3; and Bess Brown, "Central Asia: The First Year of Unexpected Statehood," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1 January 1993, p. 35.

¹⁰⁰Justin Burke, "Regional, Religious Rivalries Rend Tajikistan," *Christian Science Monitor*, 14 September 1992, p. 1; Serge Schmemmann, "War Bleeds Ex-Soviet Land at Central Asia's Heart," *New York Times*, 21 February 1993, p. 1; and Raymond Bonner, "Tajik Civil War Fades. . ."

¹⁰¹The Pamiris and Garmis joined with the nationalist Rastokhez Popular Front (which had been formed by a number of writers and intellectuals), the Islamic Renaissance Movement, and new pro-democracy parties.

¹⁰²See Bess Brown, "Tajikistan to Restore Presidency," *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 3., no. 31, 12 August 1994, p. 12; and Ann Sheehy, "Nabyev Resignation Accepted," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 23 November 1992, p. 3.



FIG 4: Tajikistan

Having consolidated his hold over the Dushanbe government, Rakhmonov and his supporters set about to crush those regions that were supporting the opposition. Rakhmonov's forces and allies reportedly razed entire villages in opposition strong-holds such as Kurgan-Tyube and pushed at least 100,000 Tajiks into Afghanistan.¹⁰³ As the civil war persisted, the Tajik opposition gained greater direct support from Afghan Mujaheddin forces across the border who were interested in promoting an Islamic republic in Tajikistan or were at least fiercely anti-Russian. According to one Russian estimate, in August 1994 there were roughly 4,000-5,000 opposition fighters operating within Tajikistan, and another 13,000 joint Tajik-Afghan guerillas based just over the border in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁴

By 1993-1994, the Dushanbe government appeared to control the western half of the country, but was having difficulty rooting out guerrillas in the mountainous eastern regions. The ferocity of the civil war abated somewhat as the focus of the battle shifted to preventing the infiltration of guerrillas through the Afghan border. A significant diplomatic breakthrough occurred when UN, Russian, and Iranian mediation helped the Tajik government and the Islamic opposition agree to a ceasefire in talks in Tehran on 17 September 1994.¹⁰⁵

Continued international mediation efforts kept the two sides talking and the formal ceasefire in place. Yet actions by both the Tajik government and opposition continued to aggravate the situation on the ground. The government went forward with presidential (in November 1994) and parliamentary (in February 1995) elections despite boycotts by the main opposition parties and substantial international criticism of their being neither free nor fair.¹⁰⁶ In January 1995, furthermore, the government violated the truce by moving its forces into the Gorno-Badakhshan region in order to suppress a strong guerilla presence.¹⁰⁷ The opposition, for its part, violated the ceasefire in the spring of 1995 by escalating its armed infiltration from Afghanistan and its attacks on border guards.

¹⁰³See Leon Aron, "Yeltsin's Vietnam: A Central Asian Quagmire May Wreck Russian Reform," *Washington Post*, 22 August 1993, p. C1; and Raymond Bonner, "Tajik Civil War Fades. . ."

¹⁰⁴Captain Igor Chernyshov, "Tajikistan: Concerns and Hopes," *Oriyentir*, no. 2, August 1994 (signed to press 12 August 1994), pp.12-17, translated in *JPRS-UMA*, 94-043, 26 October 1994, p. 30. See also, Steve LeVine, "Afghan, Arab Muslim Militants Back Rebels in Ex-Soviet State," *Washington Post*, 27 April 1993, p. 10.

¹⁰⁵Elizabeth Fuller, "Tajik Cease-fire Agreement Reached," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 19 September 1994. The ceasefire apparently did not enter into force until the arrival of eleven UN military observers on 19 October 1994. It was subsequently extended on repeated occasions. See Bess Brown, "Tajik Talks Resume," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 20 October 1994; Elizabeth Fuller, "Tajik Ceasefire Extended," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 11 November 1994; and Bruce Pannier, "Tajik Talks Yield Results," *Open Media Research Institute Daily Digest*, 31 May 1995.

¹⁰⁶See Bess Brown, "Tajik Elections Criticized," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 10 November 1994; and Elizabeth Fuller, "Elections in Tajikistan," *Open Media Research Institute Daily Digest*, 27 February 1995.

¹⁰⁷See UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Tajikistan*, S/1995/390, 12 May 1995; and *Interfax*, 1129 GMT, 19 April 1995, reprinted in *FBIS-SOV*, 95-076, 20 April 1995, p. 1.

The Russian Role in the Tajik Conflict

Russia initially had an indirect role in the Tajik civil war because it controlled a number of ex-Soviet military units based in the country and it had an interest in the 40,000 ethnic Russians still living there. Although a number of Western critics have charged that the Russian forces intervened to support the Communist side in the civil war, it appears that commanders of the main Russian unit in Tajikistan--the 201st Motorized Rifle Division--sought to remain neutral in the conflict throughout the most intense fighting in 1992.¹⁰⁸ Because they possessed a large quantity of weapons that local forces coveted or because they occupied strategic positions, Russian units frequently came under attack by all sides. Finding themselves in the middle of fighting and feeling compelled to defend themselves, these units intervened against forces of all sides in the conflict.¹⁰⁹ At one point, the 201st apparently weighed an armored attack on both sides as a warning not to engage in violence against Russian forces. Russian border guard units--organizationally separate from the Russian Ministry of Defense--appeared to side more often with the former-Communists, if only because they frequently engaged opposition forces infiltrating from Afghanistan.¹¹⁰

The watershed event for Russian involvement in Tajikistan occurred on 13 July 1993, when Tajik opposition forces and their Afghan supporters captured a border outpost manned by Russian border guards. The attack and subsequent fighting resulted in the deaths of 28 Russian troops and 6 Tajik soldiers as well as the destruction of a nearby village of 700 residents.¹¹¹ The Russian deaths and the brazenness of the attack infuriated the Russian government, which evidently concluded that its interests were under direct threat and that radical measures were necessary. Russian Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev depicted the attack as "an undeclared war *against Russia*" and ordered an immediate expansion of the Russian military presence. Russian border guards were authorized to fire across the border because, according to Russian Security Minister Viktor Barannikov, they had "the moral right

¹⁰⁸See Helsinki Watch, *War or Peace?*, p. 12; and Fiona Hill and Pamela Jewett, who argue that Russia intervened directly in the civil war in order to restore the pro-Communist, pro-Moscow Rakhmonov regime. Hill and Jewett, "Back in the USSR," pp. 40-42; and Bess Brown, "Central Asian States Seek Russian Help," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 18 June 1993, pp. 83-88.

¹⁰⁹Russian troops and citizens were occasionally kidnapped and murdered by the warring parties during this period. While there are reports that Russian units intervened against the opposition militia (especially during the fight for the southern city of Kurgan-Tyube), in December 1992 units of the 201st allegedly drove off an attack on Dushanbe by pro-Communist forces. See *Itar-TASS World Service*, in Russian, 1140 GMT, 4 December 1992 translated in *FBIS-SOV*, 92-235, 2 December 1992, p. 23; Bess Brown, "Russian Troops in Dushanbe Stop Pro-Communist Attack," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 7 December 1992; Brown, "Russian Border Guards Clash with Tajik Government Supporters," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 16 December 1992; "Russian-Speakers Taken Hostage in Dushanbe," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 17 December 1992, p. 3; and "Moscow Condemns Murder of Russian Servicemen in Tajikistan," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 29 December 1992; See also Helsinki Watch, *War or Peace?*, pp. 12-13.

¹¹⁰Bess Brown, "Russian-Speakers Taken Hostage in Dushanbe," and "Central Asian States Seek Russian Help."

¹¹¹See Keith Martin, "Russian Troops Retake Tajik Post," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 15 July 1993; and "Tajikistan: Russians Come. . ." *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 19 July 1993.

to raid Afghan territory" if border violations continued.¹¹² Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev described Russia's goals in Tajikistan as 1) guaranteeing the security and legal rights of 200,000 Russians living there; and 2) stopping the spread of regional, clan, and Islamic extremism in Central Asia. He later added to this list a historic Russian "duty" to guard the Tajik border.¹¹³

By instituting a wide-scale peace enforcement effort, Russia's actions thereafter inevitably supported the Rakhmonov government: any efforts to stabilize the military situation involved quashing the opposition militias. Russian officers evidently came to be a majority of the staff of the new Tajik Ministry of Defense and, since the summer of 1993, Russian forces appear to have carried out some operations against rebel forces within Tajikistan.¹¹⁴ During the border fights of the spring and summer of 1995, Russian Border Guards carried out major combat operations, including air strikes on rebel bases in Afghanistan.¹¹⁵

To Russia's credit, at the same time that it was defending the border and maintaining stability within Tajikistan, it was also pressing for a dialogue between the Rakhmonov government and the opposition.¹¹⁶ Russia pressed the Rakhmonov government throughout 1994 to accept opposition participation in the fall 1994 presidential election. When the opposition initially balked at participation, Moscow successfully urged the Rakhmonov

¹¹²Italics mine. Keith Martin, "Tajikistan: Russians Come. . .," and Martin, "Tajik Developments," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 21 July 1993.

¹¹³See Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrey Kozyrev, "Chego khochet Rossiya v Tadzhikestanye," [What Russia Wants in Tajikistan], *Izvestiya*, 4 August 1993, p. 4; and Suzanne Crow, "Joint Session of CIS Foreign and Defense Ministers," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 17 March 1994. The commander of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces, Colonel General Valeriy Patrikeyev, later provided a similar assessment of Russia's interests in Tajikistan, emphasizing a fear of an instability 'domino-effect,' in particular. See Mumin Shakirov and Otakhon Latifi, "The Tajik Knows: Two Views on the Situation," *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, no. 31, 3 August 1994, p. 11, translated in *FBIS-USR*, 94-091, 21 August 1994, pp. 103-106.

¹¹⁴For example, on 19 July 1993 Russian aircraft reportedly participated in the bombing of a strategic rebel stronghold east of Dushanbe. Despite repeated denials, Russian forces may also have joined Tajik units in fighting the rebels in July 1994. See Keith Martin, "Tajik Update," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 20 July 1993; the comments of Russian Deputy Minister of Defense Georgiy Kondrat'yev in Keith Martin, "Russian Official on Tajik Situation," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 8 June 1994; Keith Martin, "Tajik Forces Attack 'Rebels,'" *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 22 June 1994; and Martin, "More on Tajik Fighting," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 27 July 1994; and Oleg Panfilov, "<<Soldatskiye Materi>> Sankt-Peterburga Protiv Generala Gracheva: Storoniki Abdulladzhanova obvinyayut Rakhmonova v narushenii zakona o vyborakh," ['Soldier's Mothers' of St. Petersburg Against General Grachev: Abdulladzhanov's Supporters Accuse Rakhmonov of Violating the Law on Elections], *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 28 September 1994, p. 3.

¹¹⁵Russian Peacekeeping units reportedly were not involved in these operations. See Lowell Bezanis, "Tajik Roundup," *Open Media Research Institute Daily Digest*, 11 April 1995; and Bruce Pannier, "Many Casualties in Bombing in Northern Afghanistan," *Open Media Research Institute Daily Digest*, 18 April 1995.

¹¹⁶In late July 1993, Foreign Minister Kozyrev was named as Russia's special representative to the conflict with a top priority of opening up a dialogue between the conflicting parties. See Bess Brown, "Kozyrev Appointed Special Russian Representative on Tajikistan," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 29 July 1993; and Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, "Rossiya fakticheski..."

government to postpone the election.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, as the situation deteriorated in early 1995, the then-head of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces, Colonel General Valeriy Patrikeyev, strongly criticized the Dushanbe government for violating the truce.¹¹⁸

The United Nations' Role

Despite pleas from the participants, the United Nations has generally resisted active involvement in the Tajik conflict and peacekeeping operations. Although the UN has helped mediate a ceasefire and has dispatched observers to monitor and verify compliance, it has not been willing to send armed peacekeepers or to endorse the CIS peacekeeping force. After the July 1993 border attack, Rakhmonov appealed to the UN to force Afghanistan to stop the rebels and their Afghan backers, while Afghanistan sent a letter to the UN demanding that the expansion of Russian deployments on its borders be stopped. Russia then notified the Security Council that it would help Tajikistan defend itself against attacks launched from Afghan territory.¹¹⁹ In August 1993, CIS Foreign Ministers expressed hope that the UN would support the CIS peacekeeping coalition in Tajikistan. Tajikistan and the Kazakh foreign minister subsequently requested that peacekeeping forces on Tajik territory be recognized as UN forces.¹²⁰

The UN response to these various requests and initiatives has been lukewarm. Secretary General Boutros-Ghali reported that he was willing to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict through the good offices of a special envoy. In August 1993, the president of the Security Council expressed concern over the continuing violence in Tajikistan, terming it a threat to peace in Central Asia. But the statement limited UN involvement to calling for negotiations aimed at an early ceasefire and eventual national reconciliation.¹²¹

After the delay, beginning in June 1994 the UN organized talks between the government and the opposition aimed first at a ceasefire, then an exchange of prisoners, and ultimately a political settlement. Held in Tehran and Islamabad, the talks include mediators or observers from Russia, Iran, and Pakistan.¹²² In October 1994 a team of fifteen UN military observers was dispatched to monitor the September 1994 truce reached as a result of these talks. The Security Council formally established the Tajikistan observer mission in a 16 December 1994 resolution. By June 1995 the size of the mission numbered 72

¹¹⁷Bess Brown, "Tajik Election Date Postponed," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 8 September 1994.

¹¹⁸See *Interfax*, 1129 GMT, 19 April 1995, reprinted in *FBIS-SOV*, 95-076, 20 April 1995, p. 1.

¹¹⁹See Keith Martin, "Tajikistan: Russians Come...;" and "Update on Tajik situation," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 22 July 1993.

¹²⁰See Boris Sitnikov, *Itar-TASS*, in English, 2027 GMT, 31 August 1993, reprinted in *FBIS-SOV*, 93-169, 2 September 1993, p. 1.; Bess Brown, "Tajikistan Update," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 6 October 1993; and Brown, "Central Asian, Russian Foreign Ministers Confer on Tajikistan," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 15 March 1994.

¹²¹Elizabeth Fuller, "UN Security Council Discusses Tajik Situation," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 24 August 1994.

¹²²Keith Martin, "Tajik Peace Talks Begin," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 21 June 1994.

personnel, including 39 military observers.¹²³ The joint commission of government and opposition representatives that was created by the Tehran agreement evidently is chaired by the head of the UN mission in Tajikistan. The commission is mandated to work closely with the ceasefire monitors and to handle technical issues such as exchange of prisoners.¹²⁴

The Peacekeeping Missions

There have been two distinct CIS military operations in Tajikistan. The first began in December 1992, was relatively small in scale, and appears to have been a relatively honest attempt by the CIS countries to stabilize the military and political environment in Tajikistan. It originated in a meeting of the CIS defense ministers on 30 November 1992, when the ministers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Russia joined the commander in chief of the CIS Joint Armed Forces, Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov, and Tajik President Rakhmonov in calling for a CIS peacekeeping force for Tajikistan.¹²⁵

The first peacekeeping mission did not formally include the 201st motorized rifle division and Russian border guards units. Instead, the operation consisted of one reinforced Russian battalion and two Uzbek battalions. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan promised to contribute one battalion each, but ultimately failed to do so.¹²⁶ The mission was mandated to settle the conflict first and foremost through a systematic disarming of "illegal" groupings.¹²⁷ The force was not to be deployed until a ceasefire between the warring factions was reached. Ultimately, a ceasefire never occurred but the mission went forward anyway. It is not clear what effect, if any, this small force had on preventing continued conflict and atrocities.

The second effort was much larger and was a response to the collapse of order on the Tajik-Afghan border in July 1993. It represented a full-scale intervention by Russia and the Central Asian states into the Tajik conflict, ultimately making Tajikistan *de facto* a Russian/CIS protectorate. Following the bloody July 13-14 fight, Russia and the Central Asian states agreed to create a new, larger peacekeeping force through the CIS mechanism. In an early August CIS meeting, the participants in the CIS Collective Security Treaty expressed great concern regarding the inviolability of borders and pledged to send more

¹²³ See United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Tajikistan*, S/1994/1363, 30 November 1994, p. 1. Observers of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) are based in the cities of Dushanbe, Garm, Kurgan-Tyube, and Pyanj. See also United Nations Security Council Resolution 968 (December 1994), and *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Tajikistan*, S/1995/472, 10 June 1995.

¹²⁴Bess Brown, "Tajik Government-Opposition Commission Meets," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 15 November 1994.

¹²⁵ Bess Brown, "CIS Peacekeeping Force for Tajikistan," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 1 December 1992.

¹²⁶Kyrgyzstan sent its battalion in March 1993, but withdrew it the next month. See Shashenkov, "Russian Peacekeeping. . .," p. 54; and Mikhail Shevtsov, *Itar-TASS*, in English, 1924 GMT, 4 December 1992, reprinted in *FBIS-SOV*, 92-235, 2 December 1993, p. 1.

¹²⁷Aleksandr Karpov, "Soglasheniye o vvode mirotvorcheskikh sil SNG v Tadzhiqistan dostignuto," [Agreement is Reached on Sending CIS Peacekeeping Forces to Tajikistan], *Izvestiya*, 1 December 1992, p. 1.

troops to defend the Afghan border. By 25 August, five of the six signatories of the CIS Collective Security Treaty agreed to set up a "coalition" peacekeeping force for Tajikistan. The CIS subsequently extended the mandate for the operation through June 1995.¹²⁸

This second CIS peacekeeping operation dwarfed the first in terms of size and mandate. The entire coalition force numbered approximately 25,000 troops. Russia contributed the combat-strength 201st Motorized Rifle Division reinforced by an additional 6,000 personnel.¹²⁹ Tajikistan allocated its interior troops to the task. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan contributed one battalion (approximately 350-400 men) each.¹³⁰ However, at least one of the Kyrgyz units reportedly has continued to be based on Kyrgyz territory and is operationally useless.¹³¹

The national peacekeeping contingents sent to Tajikistan retain their uniforms and are fully financed by the state sending them. Only the command of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces (KMS) and combat support units are financed from a joint budget, to which each participating state contributes on the basis of agreed quotas.¹³² Initially, the CIS states considered a proposal for quotas governing each state's contribution of troops, funds, fuel, technical details, and so on. However, they ultimately opted for an arrangement in which each republic and its defense ministry would itself decide on the forces and facilities that it would contribute and the sectors of the country or roles for which it would be responsible.¹³³

Command and control of the coalition forces, at least initially, appears to have had serious limitations. The KMS command is supposed to have operational control over the 201st MRD and the Uzbek, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz battalions. But in practice, each of these units answers formally to their respective national command structures. Therefore, according

¹²⁸The five signatories that contributed forces were Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Only Armenia did not join the CIS coalition agreement. See Stephen Foye, "Collective Security Signatories Widen Cooperation," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 25 August 1993; and Vladimir Socor, "Military Decisions," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 24 October 1994.

¹²⁹Formally speaking, only one battalion of the 201st MRD has been designated to be a peacekeeping unit. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this paper the entire division will be considered to be carrying out the peacekeeping task. See Allison, "Russian Peacekeeping. . ." p. 544.

¹³⁰Larisa Kudryavtseva, "Peacemaking is a National Concern," interview with Colonel General Georgiy Kondrat'yev, *Chestu Imeyu*, no. 5-6, May/June 1994 [signed to press 10 July 1994], pp. 2-6 translated in *JPRS-UMA*, 94-041, 12 October 1994, pp. 4-7.

¹³¹Yuriy Kushko, "Blue Helmets. . ."

¹³²The quotas are: Russian Federation, 50 percent; Uzbekistan, 15 percent; Kazakhstan, 15 percent; Kyrgyzstan, 10 percent; Tajikistan, 10 percent. See Oleg Falichev, "General-polkovnik Boris P'yankov. . ." The KMS command staff reportedly consists of 200 people. Unattributed, "Stars Descend on Dushanbe," *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 21 December 1993, p. 2, translated in *JPRS-UMA*, 94-003, 26 October 1994, p. 40.

¹³³Igor Chernyak, "'Afghan War:' Act Two? CIS Troops are to be Transferred to Tajikistan Before First Snowfall," *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 25 August 1993, p. 1, translated in *FBIS-SOV*, 93-164, 26 August 1993, pp. 2-3.

to the first commander of the KMS, Russian Colonel General Boris P'yankov, planned operations would be coordinated with member states' defense ministers and would be carried out only with their approval. Only in special "emergency" cases was the KMS commander given the right to use the force's entire arsenal to repel an attack.¹³⁴

As a general rule it appears that the KMS command has had some difficulty imposing its will on the Russian contingents, which, of course, constitute the bulk of the force. While he was commander of the KMS, Colonel General P'yankov communicated with the commander of the 201st MRD, Colonel General Viktor Timofeyev, only through the chain of command in Moscow, with persons "of the highest military ranks" serving as intermediaries. This arrangement evidently leaves the Russian contingent commander with the considerable freedom of action. Upon their arrival in Tajikistan, for example, the Uzbek unit demanded fuel and ammunition from the KMS, which turned to Timofeyev for help only to receive "the cold shoulder."¹³⁵ P'yankov was replaced as commander of the KMS by Colonel General Valeriy Patrikeyev, but it is not clear that the problem of operational control of the national contingents has been resolved.¹³⁶

The mandate of the second peacekeeping mission was quite broad: to "stabilize the situation in Tajikistan and maintain peace." By early 1994, however, as the domestic situation appeared to stabilize, the mandate may have actually shrunk to border protection.¹³⁷ According to P'yankov, the main objective of the coalition force was to protect and defend Tajikistan's--and the CIS's--borders. Additionally, the forces would participate in the negotiating process and protect humanitarian aid columns. But, he stressed, they would provide no military assistance to local groupings.¹³⁸ Indeed, in September 1994 fighting, in which Tajik government forces suffered setbacks at the hands of the rebels, the CIS forces reportedly stayed out of the fighting, arguing that their mission was only to defend the border.¹³⁹ It appears that the non-Russian units are devoted largely to this mission, albeit as reinforcements for front-line Russian border guards.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴His only limitation, in this case, was a need to make a subsequent report to the heads of state and defense ministers. See Oleg Falichev, "General-polkovnik Boris P'yankov. . ."

¹³⁵*Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, "Stars Descend on Dushanbe."

¹³⁶Oleg Panfilov, "<<Soldatskiye Materi>>. . ." Patrikeyev himself was replaced by Lieutenant General Valentin Bobryshev in May 1995. See Rodion Morozov, "General Will Be Promoted," *Obshchaya Gazeta*, no. 22/98, 1 June 1995, p. 2, translated in *East View Press Digest*, 1 June 1995.

¹³⁷See, for example, Valeriy Nikishin, "In Hours of Calm, X-Hour Comes to Mind; the Campaign in Preparation for the Impending Tajik Presidential Elections Has Evoked a Sharp Reaction of the Opposition Forces," *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 8 September 1994, pp. 1, 4; and Vadim Makhin, "On the Firing Line. Reportage from the Tajik-Afghan Border," *Sovety Kazakhstana*, 7 September 1994, p. 2, both translated in *JPRS-UMA*, 94-040, 28 September 1994, pp. 22-27.

¹³⁸Kushko, "Blue Helmets. . ."

¹³⁹Bess Brown, "Tajikistan Update," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 12 September 1994.

¹⁴⁰See, for example, Valeriy Nikishin, "In Hours of Calm. . .," and Vadim Makhin, "On the Firing Line. . ."

Assessment

Since the first authorized peacekeeping effort in December 1992, the role and goals of CIS and Russian peacekeepers have shifted considerably. Initially an effort to separate the warring factions and introduce an element of stability to Tajik politics, since mid-1993 the peacekeeping mission increasingly has become a CIS collective security operation aimed primarily at defending the Tajik-Afghan border.¹⁴¹

The success of the CIS intervention has been limited. Despite the establishment of a truce and a process of internationally-mediated talks, the situation on the Afghan border shows no sign of improvement and low-intensity conflict persists in the east.¹⁴² The Rakhmonov government has demonstrated virtually no interest in accepting the opposition's main demand--a power-sharing arrangement while a new constitution is written. And although the opposition has adopted a relatively constructive approach in the negotiating process, it continues to prosecute the guerilla war on the border with vigor. Furthermore, as long as Afghanistan continues to be unstable, it is hard to imagine that there will not be radical elements in that country willing to support and fight with the Tajik government's most hard-line opponents.

By mid-1995, the apparent intractability of the conflict appeared to be wearing on all of the outside participants. The UN special envoy threatened to withdraw the UN mission because neither side appeared willing to compromise.¹⁴³ Despite their fears of spreading political instability and radicalism in the region, the Central Asian participants in the CIS peacekeeping force also were showing signs of wanting to withdraw.¹⁴⁴ Even Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev, whose attention clearly had turned to crises closer to home, showed signs of having had enough when he refused to reinforce the Border Guards or permit an increase in their number in April 1995.¹⁴⁵

Russia's role in the internal conflict in Tajikistan has varied over time. Yet throughout Moscow appears to have sought, above all else, stability and an end to the

¹⁴¹Shashenkov, "Russian Peacekeeping," pp. 54-55.

¹⁴²Between August 1993 and August 1994 border units reportedly engaged hostile forces 400 times. See Captain Igor Chernyshov, "Tajikistan: Concerns and Hopes," *Oriyentir*, no. 2, August 1994, pp. 12-17, translated in *JPRS-UMA*, 26 October 1994, pp. 28-32.

¹⁴³See "UN Threatens to Withdraw Mission from Tajikistan," *Open Media Research Institute Daily Digest*, 29 May 1995.

¹⁴⁴On 20 April 1995, the presidents of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan announced that they were considering pulling their peacekeeping units out of Tajikistan. The Uzbek president reportedly personally admonished Rakhmonov at a May 1995 CIS meeting for not being more flexible with the opposition. See "Moscow Criticizes Uzbek, Kazakh Positions on Tajikistan," *Jamestown Monitor* (online), 23 May 1995; and Lowell Bezanis, "Rakhmonov, Karimov Tangle?" *Open Media Research Institute Daily Digest*, 6 June 1995.

¹⁴⁵Grachev's resistance to helping the Border Guards was, no doubt, also influenced by a running political feud between him and the head of the Russian Border Guards. See Igor Korotchenko, "Is the Defense Ministry Ignoring Border Guards' Requests for Help?" *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 14 April 1995, p. 1.

conflict. Recalling the intervention into the civil war in Afghanistan and, more recently, the conflict in Chechnya, Russian officials apparently do not want another military and political quagmire within the borders of the CIS. Although it has backed the Rakhmonov government, Moscow would probably support any government save an Afghan-backed Muslim one.

Moldova

The situation in Moldova and the break-away Dniester region represents the most egregious example of Russian meddling in the internal affairs of a former Soviet republic. On one hand, Moscow seemingly has played a productive role in helping to police a ceasefire between Moldova and Dniester forces. Yet any positive contribution has been overshadowed by the actions of the Russian Federation's 14th Army, which has actively intervened in the conflict in support of the Dniester region. The schizophrenia in Russia's policy toward this area is largely the product of the political popularity of the Dniester cause among many Russians and some key members of the Russian military. As a consequence, despite international condemnation of Russia's activities in Moldova, the prospects for an internationally acceptable resolution of the conflict appear dim at least in the near-term.

Origins

The Dniester conflict is based on the efforts of residents of the east bank of the Dniester River to secede from Moldova and create their own republic.¹⁴⁶ The dispute is unique among conflicts in the NIS because it is as much based on politics as on ethnic differences. Although ethnic Russians and Ukrainians are overrepresented in the Dniester leadership, 70 percent of the Russians in Moldova live, apparently quite contently, to the west of the Dniester. At the same time, the largest group living on the east bank are ethnic Moldovans who evidently back the Dniester leadership. Both sides of the dispute are Orthodox Christians.¹⁴⁷

The two regions have a tradition of being separate political entities, however. The east bank of the Dniester was always a part of the USSR. Although the west bank, Bessarabia, had been part of the Russian Empire, at the time of the Russian civil war it became part of Romania. The USSR regained Bessarabia in 1940 through the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and linked it to the east bank region to create the new Union Republic of Moldova.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶Most press accounts refer to the western, Moldovan side of the river as the "right bank" and the side on which the Trans-Dniester Republic is based as the "left bank." These descriptions, based on the direction that the Dniester River flows, cause confusion when looking at a north-south oriented map of the conflict.

¹⁴⁷Ethnic Russians make up some 25 percent of the population of the Dniester Republic while ethnic Ukrainians constitute 28 percent. See Pal Kolsto and Andrei Edemsky with Natalya Kalashnikova, "The Dniester Conflict: Between Irredentism and Separatism," *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 45, no. 6, 1993, pp. 975-976, 979.

¹⁴⁸Until this time, the east bank had been part of the union republic of Ukraine. See Kolsto, et. al., "The Dniester Conflict. . .," pp. 977-981.

As Moldova moved toward independence in the late 1980s, these differences became significant. Popular movements and the Moldovan Republic leadership, based in Chisinau, agitated for reunification with Romania and passed laws reintroducing Latin--rather than Cyrillic--script and Romanian/Moldovan as the state language. The east bank, which had used the Cyrillic alphabet since the 14th century and had never been part of Romania, generally reacted to these developments with great alarm.¹⁴⁹

In September 1990, the east bank proclaimed itself to be the Dniester Moldavian SSR, a constituent part of the USSR--not Moldova--with Tiraspol as its capital.¹⁵⁰ Dniester independence became a *cause celebre* of Unionists and nationalist Russians throughout the collapsing USSR, and a great number of Cossacks and other volunteers filtered into the Dniester region to join the separatist militias. In the fall of 1991, separatist paramilitary groups lay siege to east bank police stations, demanding that the police either join them or cross the river. Tensions increased between the two sides until March 1992, when Moldovan President Mircea Snegur issued an ultimatum to east bank leaders, demanding full compliance with Moldovan laws. When the Dniester leaders ignored the ultimatum, Snegur declared martial law throughout Moldova.¹⁵¹

In the wide-scale fighting that ensued, the commander of the Russian 14th Army, a hold-over from the Soviet period based in the Dniester capital of Tiraspol, permitted separatist groups to take large quantities of weapons, ammunition, and equipment from his arsenal.¹⁵² Although President Yeltsin put the 14th Army directly under his control and replaced its commander with the fiery Lieutenant General Aleksandr Lebed', by summer 1992 elements of the 14th Army were directly supporting the Dniester forces in combat.¹⁵³ Entire units of the 14th Army reportedly were transferred to the control of Dniester forces.¹⁵⁴

The Moldovan government's war effort was neither successful on the battlefield nor popular with the public. As a result, the Moldovan leadership agreed to direct negotiations with Russia that began on 3 July 1992, in Moscow. Having participated as observers, not negotiating partners, Dniester representatives joined Russian and Moldovan envoys in signing an immediate ceasefire on 7 July.¹⁵⁵ In another example of Moscow's local coalition model for mediation and peacekeeping, Yeltsin and Moldovan President Snegur agreed to act as

¹⁴⁹The east bank was occupied briefly by Romania during World War II. Ibid., pp. 979-981.

¹⁵⁰Still later the republic was renamed the Dniester Moldovan Republic. Ibid., p. 983.

¹⁵¹Kolsto, et. al., "The Dniester Conflict. . ." p. 987.

¹⁵²Diller, *Russia and. . .*, p. 155.

¹⁵³For example, the 14th Army joined Dniester forces in seizing the city of Bendery, on Moldovan territory on the West Bank of the Dniester. See Vladimir Socor, "More Postmortems on Dniester War," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 30 August 1994.

¹⁵⁴This claim was made by the Dniester Republic's Defense Minister, Lieutenant General Stanislav Khazheev, in *Rossiskiy Vestnik*, as cited in Vladimir Socor, "More Postmortems on Dniester War."

¹⁵⁵Kolsto, et al., "The Dniester Conflict. . ." p. 994.



FIG 5: Moldova

joint guarantors of peace. The lengthy communique from the Russian-Moldovan agreement stressed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova as well as noting that the Russian 14th Army should be gradually withdrawn. However, the communique also stipulated that if Moldova were to change its status as a state--that is reunify with Romania--the east bank of the Dniester would have the right to secede.¹⁵⁶

Only Russia was willing to contribute peacekeepers to the Moldovan mission. The CIS and several East European states planned to send in peacekeepers but the initiative collapsed when participating states Belarus, Romania, and Bulgaria all backed out of the process and called for the use of OSCE mechanisms.¹⁵⁷ The 9-10 July 1992 OSCE summit in Helsinki refused the Moldovan government's request for a OSCE peacekeeping force. Thus, on 21 July, Chisinau had to accept a Russian proposal of a tripartite--Russian, Dniester, and Moldovan--force that was called a CIS peacekeeping force.¹⁵⁸

Although the ceasefire has held, movement toward a lasting political resolution to the conflict has been slow in coming. Since the war's end, Moldova has pursued a conciliatory policy toward the separatists, offering them a substantial degree of autonomy. Although Russian and Dniester fears of Moldovan reunification with Romania may have been warranted initially, since 1992 at least, most Moldovan political groups--including, most prominently, President Snegur--have opposed reunification.¹⁵⁹ Nonetheless, the Dniester leadership demands the functional equivalent of its own state with its own currency and armed forces, and will accept nothing more than nominal confederal status with Moldova.¹⁶⁰ They oppose any agreement that would result in the withdrawal of the 14th Army.¹⁶¹ More generally, they seek unification with Russia, an aspiration complicated by the lack of common borders or access to the sea.

The Russian Role

The Moscow government's Moldova/Dniester policy has veered between an even-handed diplomatic course and outright military intervention in support of the Dniester separatists. It appears that if Yeltsin government policy were free of Russian domestic politics, it would likely pursue a moderate course of a federal solution and an eventual withdrawal of the 14th Army, both of which would be acceptable to the Moldovan government. Most of Moscow's diplomatic initiatives have been constructive. For example,

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

¹⁵⁷Vladimir Socor, "Cease-fire Agreement in Moldova," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 9 July 1992; and "CIS 'Peacemaking' Plan for Moldova Stillborn. . ." *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 14 July 1992.

¹⁵⁸Shashenkov, "Russian Peacekeeping. . .," p. 53; Kolsto, et. al., "The Dniester Conflict. . .," p. 994.

¹⁵⁹See, for example, Dawisha and Parrott, *Russia and the New States. . .*, p. 79; and Kolsto, et. al., "The Dniester Conflict. . .," p. 986.

¹⁶⁰William D. Jackson, "Imperial Temptations: Ethnicity Abroad," *Orbis*, Winter 1994, pp. 6-7; and Vladimir Socor, "Dniester Autonomy Talks Launched," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 30 September 1994.

¹⁶¹See Vladimir Socor, "Russia Content With Stalemate in Moldova?" *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 24 August 1994.

Yeltsin and Moldovan President Snegur arranged the lasting ceasefire and, in August 1994, Yeltsin and the Moldovans agreed to a three-year timetable for the complete withdrawal of the 14th Army. Furthermore, the Yeltsin government has little reason to sympathize with the Dniester cause. It has not recognized the breakaway region as independent in part because of the implications for independence-minded regions within Russia. Moreover, the east bank leadership supported the putschists during the August 1991 Moscow coup and the October Events of 1993, while Chisinau backed the Yeltsin government on both occasions.¹⁶²

Unfortunately, Russia's Moldovan/Dniester policy is not made in a vacuum. The Yeltsin government's moderate line has consistently been overcome by the strong pro-Dniester feelings of many Russians and, especially, by the activities of the 14th Army's leadership. As a consequence, the Russian government has frequently reversed policy or, perhaps worse, has tolerated the seemingly blatant insubordination from its troops in the region.

The Dniester conflict has become a lightning rod for Russian nationalists angered by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Indeed, the dispute between the two sides in part has reflected a conflict over the fate of the Soviet Union. The Dniester leaders have largely clung to the concept of a unified Soviet state, while ethnic Moldovans are generally anti-Communist and anti-Union. Thus, Russian nationalists have embraced the East Bank as brethren seeking to restore the Russian Empire. When they discuss the conflict, it is as though all of the East Bank population is ethnic Russian, seeking reunification with the motherland and a break with pro-Romanian infidels.¹⁶³ More broadly, the Russian press also appears to view the conflict as a struggle of ethnic Russians against the Moldovan government. Despite its inaccuracy, this view led even the most liberal Russian commentators towards a positive assessment of the 14th Army's and Lebed's behavior in the Dniester region.

The Russian Ministry of Defense has grown less enamored of the Dniester cause than have the Russian nationalists, but it has consistently intervened in ways that support it. The key player here has been General Lebed', an officer who is extremely popular among the ranks of the Russian army and who might have presidential aspirations. General Lebed' permitted the 14th Army to become *de facto* the Dniester military. According to Lebed', 51 percent of the officers and 79 percent of non-commissioned officers are now locals.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶²Kolsto et. al., "The Dniester Conflict. . .," p. 993.

¹⁶³While Moldovan authorities refused to permit the March 1991 Soviet referendum on the Union to take place on their territory, the referendum was administered on the east bank. The Dniester side reported that support for the Union on its territory was greater than 93 percent. (See Kolsto et. al., "The Dniester Conflict. . .," pp. 984, 992.) The east bank also continues to use the hammer and sickle as its symbols and has not removed its Soviet monuments, as other republics have. Dniester leader Igor Smirnov describes the defense of his region as a cause for both Communists and Russian monarchists. See Henry Kamm, "Russian Troops Quitting a Hot Spot in Moldova," *New York Times*, 28 October 1994, p. 12; and Vladimir Socor, "Dniester' Leader Hails Russian Pan-Orthodoxism," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 13 October 1994.

¹⁶⁴In a clear violation of international law, furthermore, the Russian 14th Army has drafted local Moldovan-Dniester citizens into its ranks. See Svetlana Gamova, "Aleksandr Lebed': Sama Zhizn' Zastavlyayet Generalov Zanimat'sya Politikoy," [Aleksandr Lebed': Life Itself Compels Generals to Engage in Politics], *Izvestiya*, 20 July 1994, pp. 1, 4.

Lebed' himself briefly held a seat in the Dniester parliament before he broke with the leadership over their support for the anti-Yeltsin forces during the October 1993 rebellion. Although he is extremely critical of the Dniester leadership, he clearly is contemptuous of the Moldovan government and is adamantly opposed to the withdrawal of the 14th Army from the region.

Until June 1995, Boris Yeltsin and his government appeared unwilling to challenge Lebed' and his nationalist bedfellows.¹⁶⁵ One of the reasons for Yeltsin's reluctance appears to have been respect for Lebed's popularity in the Russian military: although Minister of Defense Grachev has long viewed him as a political adversary, Lebed' clearly has a substantial following in the Ministry of Defense. Senior Russian officers appear to support Lebed's demands that the 14th Army be based in Moldova permanently.¹⁶⁶ Thus, under pressure from Lebed' and the nationalist opposition, Yeltsin began backing away from the August 1994 agreement to withdraw the 14th army before the ink was dry.¹⁶⁷

After much temporizing and substantial international pressure, Yeltsin finally challenged Lebed' in April 1995. Despite the general's threats of resignation, Yeltsin and Grachev ordered the downgrading of the 14th Army to a single division, thereby requiring the transfer of Lebed' to a more senior post. Lebed' issued his resignation and, to the surprise of many, Yeltsin accepted it. Yeltsin and Grachev dispatched a strong Yeltsin ally, Major General Valery Yevnevich, to take over the remains of the Army.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵In an example of Yeltsin's deference to Lebed', in October 1993 the Russian president awarded medals to approximately 200 servicemen of the 14th Army, most of whom had taken part in the 1992 Dniester operations. See Vladimir Socor, "Lebed Licensed to Run Own Show?" *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 6 October 1993. Also, in a startling rebuke to his minister of defense, Yeltsin overruled Grachev's reassignment of Lebed' in August 1994.

¹⁶⁶For example, the commander of the Russian Ground Forces, Colonel General Vladimir Semyenov, told the press that the Transdnister area was "native Russian territory" and urged the creation of a Russian military base on the basis of the 14th Army. (See Pavel Fel'gengauer, "Voyennyye gotvyatsya k bor'be za den'gi," [The Military is Preparing Itself for a Battle for Money], *Segodnya*, 29 October 1994, p. 4.) The former chief of Russian peacekeeping forces, Colonel General Kondrat'yev, also proposed reducing the tripartite peacekeeping force and transferring its functions to the 14th Army. See Vladimir Socor, "More on Russian Military Demands on Moldova," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 22 February 1994. There are even reports that Grachev himself in mid-1992 signed a bilateral agreement with Dniester leaders that transferred weapons to the separatists. See Helsinki Watch, *War or Peace?*, p. 10.

¹⁶⁷For details on the agreement to withdraw the 14th Army, see Sergey Knyaz'kov, "Tri goda na sbory: Rossiya i Moldaviya okonchatel'no soglasovali tekst soglasheniya o vyvodye 14-i armii," [Three Years in the Making: Russian and Moldova Finally Agree on the Text of an Agreement on the Withdrawal of the 14th Army], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 19 October 1994, p. 3. Lebed's considered reaction was that his troops "would like to spit on this agreement." (See Henry Kamm, "Russian Troops Quitting a Hot Spot in Moldova," p. 12.) Civilian analyst Sergey Rogov argues that President Yeltsin finds it safer politically to let the military do what it wants in situations such as this. (See Steven Erlanger, "In Ex-Soviet Lands. . .")

¹⁶⁸See Robert Orttung, "Yeltsin Accepts Lebed's Resignation," *Open Media Research Institute Daily Digest*, 15 June 1995.

The US, UN, and OSCE

Virtually all of the major external actors are critical of Russia's behavior in the Dniester region and are generally supportive of the Moldovan government's position in the conflict. For example, no foreign country recognizes the Dniester region as a sovereign state.¹⁶⁹ While visiting Moldova in November 1994, UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali appeared to support the Moldovan government's position by condemning "separatist trends" and applauding Moldova's proposals on the Dniester issue.¹⁷⁰ During a September 1994 visit to Moldova, US representative to the United Nations Madeleine Albright joined President Snegur in condemning "separatism." She also handed over a message from President Clinton stressing support for Moldova's independence, territorial integrity, and democratic development. The message also affirmed that the US regards withdrawal of the 14th army from Moldova as a "matter of primary importance."¹⁷¹ The Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE has also criticized Russia's reluctance to withdraw the 14th Army.¹⁷²

In early 1993, the OSCE established a mission to promote dialogue among the main political actors, encourage the withdrawal of foreign troops (i.e., the 14th Army), and monitor human rights conditions and the implementation of any settlement. The mission has had modest success in helping to resolve a dispute over a new language law. It has also helped facilitate a preliminary agreement on negotiations concerning the eventual status of the Dniester region within Moldova.¹⁷³ But, as described below, the mission's observer functions have been consistently obstructed by the Russian and Dniester "peacekeepers."

The Peacekeeping Mission

The July 1992 ceasefire agreement provided for a tripartite peacekeeping force comprised of six Russian battalions (approximately 2,000 troops), three battalions from the Moldovan Army, and two battalions from the Dniester forces. The Russian share of the force is distinct from the 14th Army and is comprised instead of units from the 27th Motorized Rifle Division at Totskoye that are rotated into the area for six month tours.¹⁷⁴ The agreement also created a Joint Control Commission to monitor the armistice.

¹⁶⁹Porter and Saivetz, "The Once and Future. . ."

¹⁷⁰Vladimir Socor, "Boutros Ghali Condemns 'Separatism' in Moldova," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 9 November 1994.

¹⁷¹The US has maintained throughout the Moldovan conflict that the 14th Army must be withdrawn. See Vladimir Socor, "Albright Stresses US Support to Moldova on Russian Troops," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 1 September 1994.

¹⁷²In July 1994 The CSCE Parliamentary Assembly called for a rapid, unconditional, full withdrawal of the Russian 14th Army from Moldova. See Vladimir Socor, "CSCE Forum Calls for Russian Withdrawal From Moldova," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 7 July 1994.

¹⁷³See Konrad Huber, "The CSCE's New Role. . .," p. 28.

¹⁷⁴Orr, "Peacekeeping and Overstretch. . .," pp. 363-365.

The peacekeepers were deployed in late July and August 1992 in a zone separating Moldovan and Dniester forces. The zone is 225 kilometers long and from 4 to 15 kilometers deep. The peacekeepers established a checkpoint control regime, observation posts, and mobile groups to patrol the zone.¹⁷⁵

Although there has been no outbreak of large-scale hostilities since the peacekeeping operation began, the mission has been anything but impartial. In contrast to other examples of the Russian local coalition model of peacekeeping, Russia's activities in this operation have been largely unilateral and generally biased: consistently ignoring Dniester violations of the truce agreement and interfering with the OSCE Observer Mission's effort to investigate Dniester behavior.¹⁷⁶

Furthermore, citing costs, the Russian side unilaterally began to reduce its commitment to the trilateral peacekeeping force. Over the protests of the Moldovan government, beginning in September 1994 Moscow withdrew two of its six battalions and did not replace them. In November, Moscow replaced the remaining four with only two new battalions, arguing that their peacekeeping functions could be taken on effectively by the 14th Army. The Moldovan government protested the cuts because their unilateral character contravened the trilateral convention. More importantly, the Moldovan government feared that it was losing an important buffer between its military and the superior Dniester forces, which appeared poised to occupy the positions vacated by the departing Russian units.¹⁷⁷

Assessment

Overall, Moldova is the worst example of Russian meddling under the guise of peacekeeping. The peacekeeping mission there has helped to preserve the ceasefire, but done little else that is positive. The pro-Dniester bias of the majority Russian forces illustrates the limitations of Russia's local coalition model for peacekeeping. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the operation has been thoroughly undermined by the activities of Russia's 14th Army. In this light, Russian proposals to transfer peacekeeping responsibility to the 14th Army appear to be completely disingenuous.

The resolution of the conflict between the Dniester region and Moldova appears to be tied to the future disposition of the 14th Army. During Lebed's tenure, the Dniester forces clearly benefitted from training in and armaments from that unit. Less explicitly, the Dniester leadership was almost certainly emboldened with the knowledge that Lebed' would not permit Moldova to resolve the dispute by force.

¹⁷⁵See Colonel General Georgiy Kondrat'yev, "Mirotvorcheskaya Rol' Rossii."

¹⁷⁶See, for example, Vladimir Socor, "Russia Criticized for not Withdrawing from Moldova," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 16 June 1994; "CSCE's Moldova Mission Shows Meager Results," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 10 November 1993; and Porter and Saivetz, "The Once and Future. . .," pp. 84-85.

¹⁷⁷Vladimir Socor, "Russia Sharply Cutting Peacekeeping Force in Moldova," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 17 November 1994; Vladimir Socor, "Renewed Hostilities Feared in Moldova," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 1 December 1994.

Yet the departure of the Army and Lebed' pose potentially serious problems, as well. In particular, the fate of the Army's many arms depots and stockyards could well determine whether the Dniester-Moldovan dispute becomes a violent conflict again. While the Moldovan government lays claim to 35 percent of the 14th Army's property, the Dniester leadership claims all of it. In fact, by May 1995 the Dniester armed forces reportedly had surrounded many of the Army's depots, refusing to permit the transfer of the arms back to Russia.¹⁷⁸

Nagorno-Karabakh

The conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region in Azerbaijan was the only one of the five disputes discussed here that, by mid-1995, had yet to see a foreign peacekeeping force deployed. The interstate war between Armenia/Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan has proved to be one of the more intractable conflicts in the NIS. Although a variety of international organizations, such as the OSCE and UN, and foreign governments, such as Russia, the United States, Turkey, and Iran, have tried their hands in resolving the conflict, none has found a formula for peace that is acceptable to all the parties. By August 1994, the conflict had taken more than 15,000 lives and caused more than one million refugees.¹⁷⁹

Nagorno-Karabakh has been the subject of some of the most blatant attempts by Moscow to monopolize a mediation and peacekeeping process. Although Russian military forces and diplomatic efforts played little role in spurring the initial dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh, by 1994 Russian diplomatic initiatives increasingly undercut the efforts of other regional states and the OSCE to resolve the conflict. A potentially substantial and precedent-setting breakthrough occurred when Russia supported in principle a OSCE-organized peacekeeping force in December 1994.

Origins

At the root of the conflict is the presence of a large enclave of ethnic Armenians, formerly the Autonomous Oblast of Nagorno-Karabakh, within the territory of Azerbaijan. Open animosity between Armenians (a non-Slavic group who are predominantly Christian) and Azeris (a Muslim people of mixed Turkish, Iranian, and Caucasian ancestry) has a long history, aggravated by Soviet nationality policy. Partly to divide and rule the Armenian population and partly to reward the Azeris for their support of the Reds in the Civil War, the Bolshevik government in 1921 placed Nagorno-Karabakh--the permanent population of which was 94 percent ethnic Armenian--under the administrative control of Azerbaijan. Armenians

¹⁷⁸See Brian D. Taylor, "The Transdniester Conflict and Russia's Fourteenth Army," mimeo, May 1995; and Rodion Morozov, "Dniester Region: A Crime in the Making," *Obshchaya Gazeta*, no. 20/96, 18-24 May 1995, p. 1, translated in *East View Press Digest*, 18 May 1995.

¹⁷⁹Steven Greenhouse, "Armenia Says It Would Welcome Russian Peacekeeping Offer," *New York Times*, 12 August 1994, p. 3. Azerbaijan President Aliyev told the CSCE 1994 Budapest summit that over 20,000 Azeris had been killed in the conflict, while UN sources report that 6,000 people were killed in the conflict between December 1994 and December 1995. See Jonathan Rugman, "Oil Fuels Enclave Peace Initiative," *The Guardian*, 28 December 1994, p. 11.

apparently never accepted this decision and, by the 1960s, Nagorno-Karabakh was one of the few issues in the Soviet Union that generated public political demonstrations, some of which turned into violent clashes between Armenian and Azeri protestors.

As *glasnost*' and *perestroika* lifted political restraints in the late 1980s, control over Nagorno-Karabakh became a central issue to nationalist forces in both Armenia and Azerbaijan. A war of laws between the Nagorno-Karabakh government and Azerbaijan helped contribute to a cycle of anti-Armenian pogroms in Azerbaijan and anti-Azeri demonstrations in Armenia. Azerbaijan put Armenia in an economic stranglehold by blockading its rail and ocean links. A Moscow-imposed state-of-emergency in Azerbaijan later stopped the pogroms, but did nothing to resolve the hostilities.

When Azerbaijan declared its independence from the USSR in August 1991, the Nagorno-Karabakh government declared the oblast to be an independent Soviet republic. Although the Armenian government, fearful of Moscow's response, distanced itself from this declaration, the dispute between rival militias intensified. The Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian forces quickly gained the upper hand and by May 1992 had achieved a nearly total military victory over Azeris in the oblast. Ultimately, Armenian military forces joined in and were able to seize all of the Azeri territory separating Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia. Nagorno-Karabakh forces also pushed eastward, expanding their territory at the expense of Azerbaijan. Foreign diplomatic efforts produced a number of ceasefire agreements, which either were not implemented or quickly collapsed.

Russian mediation of the conflict finally produced a ceasefire agreement in Moscow in May 1994. Although the agreement also called for deployment of observers from the three sides, from Russia, and from the CIS, all to be safeguarded by CIS/Russian troops, by mid-1995 only the cessation of hostilities had been implemented.¹⁸⁰

This plan provoked mass demonstrations in Azerbaijan by groups opposed the potential deployment of Russian or CIS peacekeepers.¹⁸¹ Although General Grachev changed the proposal to reduce Russian participation in the CIS force, Azerbaijan President Aliyev subsequently opposed the deployment of any Russian peacekeeping forces in Azerbaijan without a mandate from the OSCE.¹⁸² By the summer of 1994, Azeri representatives were proposing a formula in which no single country would provide more than 30 percent of the peacekeeping troops. The leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh has been strongly opposed to any Turkish presence in the peacekeeping force, and Armenian president Levon Ter-Petrossyan has stressed that Russian peacekeepers are the only forces that could

¹⁸⁰See Elizabeth Fuller, ". . . And for Nagorno-Karabakh," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 8 June 1994; and Fuller, "Karabakh Ceasefire Agreement Signed," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 17 May 1994.

¹⁸¹Elizabeth Fuller, "Aliyev Holds Out Against Russian Peacekeepers," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 24 May 1994; and A.D. Horne, "Armenian Leader Argues for Russian Truce Force," *Washington Post*, 11 August 1994, p. 24.

¹⁸²The revised Grachev proposal limited Russian participation in the force to one-third of all troops. See Elizabeth Fuller, ". . . And for Nagorno-Karabakh," and Fuller, "Grachev in Security Talks with Azerbaijan," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 13 June 1994.

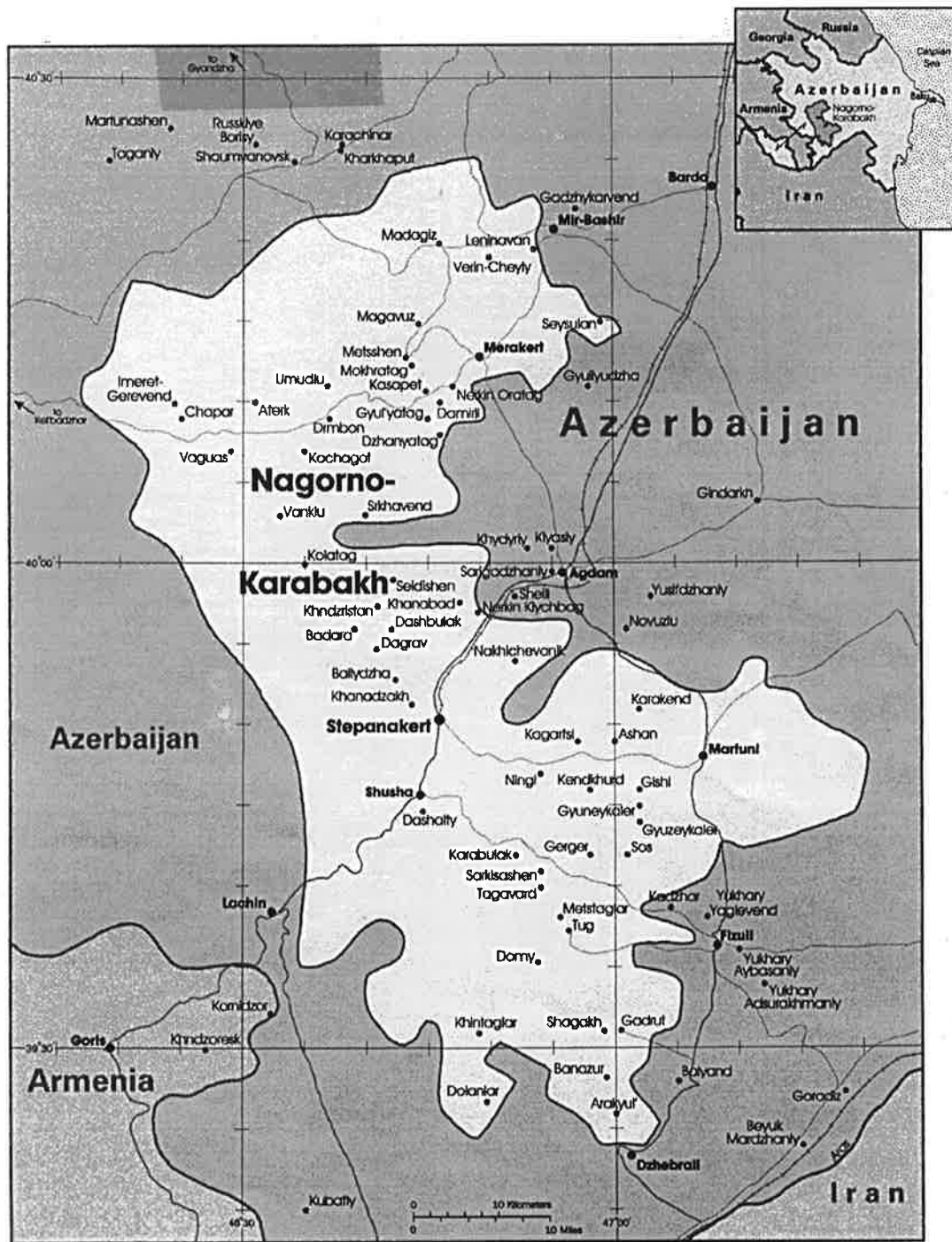


FIG 6: Nagorno-Karabakh

guarantee stability in Karabakh. So far, only Russia and Turkey have offered to participate in the force.¹⁸³

Russian Involvement

Since before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has sought a diplomatic resolution of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁸⁴ As the conflict has persisted and foreign states and organizations have attempted to assume a larger role in its resolution, Russia has increasingly asserted its perceived right to a leading role. For example, Moscow has rejected Turkish proposals that the two countries field a joint peacekeeping force in the region. A ceasefire proposal advanced by Grachev in April 1994 included OSCE peacekeepers, but evidently only as an addition to a CIS force.¹⁸⁵

At times Moscow appears to have purposely undermined foreign initiatives by pressing its own competing diplomatic proposals. The May 1994 Moscow meeting that produced the ceasefire was apparently convened with the goal of excluding the OSCE Minsk Group (see below). Responding to foreign criticism on this score, the Russian Ambassador-at-Large for Nagorno-Karabakh argued that some representatives of the Group are more interested in the "distribution of roles"--or whom gets credit for achieving a settlement--between OSCE, the CIS, and Russia than in the essence of the conflict.¹⁸⁶ Moscow adopted a more cooperative diplomatic stance by the end of 1994 and through much of 1995. At the December 1994 Budapest Summit of the OSCE, the Russian government relented on its insistence that it lead any peacekeeping force in Nagorno-Karabakh. Instead, Russia accepted in principle the deployment of an OSCE organized peacekeeping force in which the plurality of forces would almost certainly be Russian. Moscow also appeared to abandon its effort to compete with the OSCE mediation efforts as it assumed co-chairmanship of the Minsk Group (see below).¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³Elizabeth Fuller, "Progress Towards a Karabakh Settlement?" *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 12 July 1994; Fuller, "Karabakh Political Settlement Imminent?" *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 29 June 1994, and Fuller, "Russia Opposes Turkish Peacekeepers for Karabakh," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 11 July 1994. See also A.D. Horne, "Armenian Leader Argues. . ."

¹⁸⁴Beginning with a peace mission with Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Russian President Boris Yeltsin in the fall of 1991, and another mission in September of the following year, the Russian president or his representatives negotiated several ceasefire agreements between Armenian and Azeri leaders, none of which succeeded. Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev also tried his hand at forging a settlement, but without any success. See SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict*. . ., pp. 79-80.

¹⁸⁵Elizabeth Fuller, "Russia/Turkey/US/Karabakh," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 10 September 1993.; Fuller, "Azerbaijan Conditionally Agrees to Karabakh Ceasefire," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 27 April 1994; and Roland Eggleston and Fuller, "Russia Demands Responsibility for Karabakh Peacekeeping," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 25 October 1994.

¹⁸⁶See Aleksandr Kuzmin, *Itar-TASS*, in English, 1741 GMT, 19 August 1994, reprinted in *FBIS-USR*, 94-162, 22 August 1994, p. 1.

¹⁸⁷Interviews with US government officials, December 1994 and July 1995.

Other Regional Powers

Having ethnic and historical ties to Azerbaijan, Turkey has consistently politically backed Baku in the conflict. In May 1992, for example, the Turkish government threatened to cut off land routes to Armenia in order to scare Yerevan into abandoning its fight for Nagorno-Karabakh. When Armenian forces succeeded in creating a land-bridge between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, Ankara called for the UN Security Council to intervene while threatening its own political and military intervention.¹⁸⁸ Turkey also has pursued a diplomatic resolution, joining the US and Russia in a tripartite mediation effort under the auspices of the OSCE in May 1993, and has consistently offered troops to serve as peacekeepers in any settlement. Turkey also joined the OSCE and the US in their criticism of Russia's efforts to resolve the crisis on its own.

By 1994 Iran had become active in the diplomatic process as well.¹⁸⁹ Despite its concerns about Islamic fundamentalism, Moscow has been somewhat accommodating to Iran's interests in the region in order to counter-balance Turkey.

The OSCE, the UN, and the US

The OSCE has sought a central mediation and peacekeeping role in Nagorno-Karabakh. The OSCE established the Minsk Conference--or the "Minsk Group"--in March 1992, composed of Belarus, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Russia, Sweden, and Turkey. The mediation effort focused on the establishment of a ceasefire and the deployment of OSCE peacekeepers, rather than a fundamental political settlement. An advance delegation of OSCE observers arrived in the region in April 1993 to prepare for the eventual arrival of more permanent international observers.¹⁹⁰

By the fall of 1994, much of the OSCE appeared to have become very irritated at Russia's efforts to exclude it from the mediation and peacekeeping process. At a September meeting of the OSCE's Committee of Senior Officials, committee members from NATO and neutral countries complained that Russia had held a summit meeting in Moscow that month between the warring parties without informing the OSCE; that it had snubbed a meeting organized by the Minsk group; and that it had pressed for a Russian/CIS peacekeeping force to be deployed in Karabakh rather than a OSCE-sponsored multinational force.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸See SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict* . . . , pp. 77-78.

¹⁸⁹Elizabeth Fuller, "Russian-Iranian Talks on Karabakh," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 27 June 1994.

¹⁹⁰The team held negotiations with leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh to hammer out logistical concerns and secure a permanent ceasefire. See SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict* . . . , pp. 77, 79, 82; and Konrad Huber, "The CSCE's New Role. . .," p. 27.

¹⁹¹See Konrad Huber, "The CSCE's New Role. . .," p. 27; and Vladimir Socor, "CSCE Reacts to Russian Stance on Karabakh. . .," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 20 September 1994.

At the Budapest Summit in December 1994, the OSCE members may have achieved a substantial breakthrough by approving a OSCE-organized peacekeeping force for Nagorno-Karabakh. If carried out, the Nagorno-Karabakh mission would be the OSCE's first attempt at peacekeeping. Although the Summit's statement did not specify details on the make-up of the force or when it would deploy, the participants called for the establishment of a high-level planning group to organize the force.¹⁹² Other reports stated that the peace-keeping force would be composed of 3,000 troops and would cost approximately \$40 million for the first six months. Furthermore, in order to placate Azeri and Western fears of excessive Russian influence, the parties reportedly agreed that no single country would contribute more than 30 percent of the force.¹⁹³ Azeri, Armenian, and Nagorno-Karabakh officials all warmly welcomed the plan.¹⁹⁴

As of July 1995, the deployment of the peacekeeping mission appeared to be far from a done deal. The Vienna planning group responsible for organizing the mission had released its report of the mission's operational requirements, but fundamental decisions such as which countries would participate had not been hammered out. Furthermore, the situation on the ground showed no signs of resolution. Although Russia had ceased to pose an obstacle to the diplomatic process, the Azeris, the Karabakh Armenians, and the Armenians continued to disagree on key issues such as whether the Karabakh Armenians, were, in fact, an independent party to the conflict.¹⁹⁵ The web of intertwined complex issues--at both the local and international levels--provided little room for optimism that the OSCE mission could be deployed in the near-term.

The United Nations, meanwhile, has sought on a number of occasions to assist in Nagorno-Karabakh mediation. In March 1992, the United Nations dispatched former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance on a fact-finding mission and in October of that year named a special envoy to the region.¹⁹⁶ An April 1993 offensive by Armenian forces provoked a UN Security Council resolution calling for the cessation of hostilities and specifically condemning Armenian incursions into Azeri territory outside of Nagorno-Karabakh. In

¹⁹²The summit decision statement linked the beginning of the mission to a political agreement on the cessation of hostilities, beyond the existing ceasefire. See *CSCE Budapest Decisions*, December 1994.

¹⁹³Richard Balmforth, "CSCE Approves Peacekeeping Force for Karabakh," Reuters Wire Service, 6 December 1994.

¹⁹⁴See Azerbaijan President Aliyev's comments in *Turan*, in English 1445 GMT, 8 December 1994; and the comments of the acting press secretary for Armenian President Ter-Petrosyan in *Interfax*, 1857 GMT, 8 December 1994, both reprinted in *FBIS-SOV* 94-237, 9 December 1994, p. 51-52. See the comments of the foreign minister of the Mountainous Karabakh Republic (MKR) in *Noyan Tapan*, 1646 GMT, 12 December 1994, reprinted in *FBIS-SOV* 94-239, 13 December 1994, p. 48.

¹⁹⁵Interviews with US government officials, July 1995.

¹⁹⁶SDIP, *Report on Ethnic Conflict*. . . , pp. 77-80.

November 1994, UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali reaffirmed support for the OSCE's peace plan.¹⁹⁷

The United States has taken a special interest in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The US government apparently has favored the OSCE and, in particular, the Minsk Group, as the appropriate forum for a Nagorno-Karabakh settlement. As a result, the Clinton Administration appears to have taken a cautious stance regarding Russia's desire to lead the process. After the May 1994 Moscow agreement, the US joined Turkey in supporting the rival OSCE proposal.¹⁹⁸ At the September 1994 Clinton-Yeltsin summit in Washington, the issue of a peacekeeping force was discussed behind closed doors and the Clinton Administration did not openly criticize the Russian position. Later, Yeltsin told Russian television that Clinton had clarified that no US troops would take part in peacekeeping in Nagorno-Karabakh, but that the US might be willing to contribute financing to a mission.¹⁹⁹ Pressure by President Clinton at this summit and after may have played a decisive role in convincing Moscow to accept the OSCE-sponsored peacekeeping force in December 1994.²⁰⁰

Assessment

If implemented, the OSCE mission in Nagorno-Karabakh could become one of the most promising developments in peacekeeping in the NIS. It would represent an important precedent of Russia permitting outside forces to oversee peacekeeping and political mediation in the region.

As of the beginning of 1995, the multinational peacekeeping mission was hardly a done-deal. Although eighteen countries reportedly had offered personnel or equipment for the force, it remained to be seen whether these commitments would be adequate or whether the problem of insufficient foreign commitment to peacekeeping in the NIS would develop again in Nagorno-Karabakh.²⁰¹ If outside parties do not commit sufficient troops, the Nagorno-Karabakh mission, like other operations in the NIS, would likely come to be dominated by Moscow. Furthermore, the parties to the dispute seem far from any agreement on a political settlement. In particular, in early 1995 Azerbaijan continued to refuse to consider Nagorno-Karabakh forces to be independent parties to the conflict. The Azerbaijan government also feared that the introduction of a peacekeeping force *before* the withdrawal

¹⁹⁷See Elizabeth Fuller, "Boutros-Ghali in Baku. . .," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 2 November 1994; and UN Security Council Resolution 822 (30 April 1993).

¹⁹⁸Elizabeth Fuller, "Karabakh Mediation Update," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 20 May 1994.

¹⁹⁹The White House Press Office, however, clarified that any US contribution would be directed toward an OSCE mission, not a Russian peacekeeping effort. Yeltsin as cited in Vladimir Socor, "Russian Assessments of the Washington Summit," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 5 October 1994; and author interview, White House Press Office.

²⁰⁰Author interview with US government official.

²⁰¹Boris Vinogradov, "3000 mirotvortsev dolzhny sozdat' usloviya dlya uregulirovaniya v Karabakhye," [3,000 Peacekeepers Should Create the Conditions for a Settlement in Karabakh], *Izvestiya*, 9 December 1994, p. 3; Bruce Clark and Virginia Marsh, "CSCE agrees to Karabakh peace operation," *Financial Times*, 7 December 1994, p. 2; and Jonathan Rugman, "Oil Fuels Enclave Peace Initiative."

of Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh forces from Azeri territory would legitimize ethnic cleansing.²⁰²

Conclusions

Conflicts within the newly independent states seem sure to persist for the foreseeable future. The collapse of the Soviet Union has created an environment rife with territorial and ethnic disputes, and the means to wage war. Because of the political instability that these conflicts cause along its borders, the Russian Federation will continue to view as imperative an activist diplomatic and military role in its "near abroad." In particular, for reasons of national interest, national pride, and domestic politics, Russia will continue to insist that formerly Soviet territory is its international sphere of influence and that foreign powers defer to its leading role as both mediator and keeper of peace. Although Russian actions were not the cause of these conflicts, Moscow generally imposed its interests when settling them. And in two cases--Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh--Russia's diplomatic and peacekeeping efforts appear to have delayed the settlement of the dispute.

The Russian approach to peacekeeping in the NIS has rightly been the cause for some international concern. The same factors that make Russia the practical choice for leading peacekeeping missions in the NIS--proximity, a large military, and a willingness to provide forces--also make it at times a far less than altruistic peacekeeper. Furthermore, the Russian approach to "peacekeeping" is more force-prone than that of the United Nations or most of its members.

But arguably Russian activism in the NIS may at times be a good thing. In fact, in a number of cases Russian activities may be in the interests of the international community and may facilitate political resolutions if only because they will not permit a military dispute. One of the virtues of Russia's activist-peace enforcement approach is that it achieves ceasefire agreements quickly. Russia's current missions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia have reduced the violence in those regions. Although Russian behavior in Tajikistan may be at times suspect from an international legal perspective, it perhaps serves US interests by containing ethnic and religious conflict in the Central Asian tinderbox. More generally speaking, Russia's interest in preventing the redrawing of borders may also serve international interests in the general stability of the NIS region.

In coping with Russian activism in the NIS, the United States and the international community have limited influence. Because neither the United Nations nor the United States has been able or willing to provide troops for NIS peacekeeping efforts, Russia inevitably dominates these missions.

Although Russia is not likely to surrender its leading role in this region, through inducements the international community can perhaps encourage more consistent and

²⁰²See the comments of the Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry's senior negotiator on Nagorno-Karabakh in Jonathan Rugman, "Oil Fuels Enclave Peace Initiative."