U.S. Policy in Moldova: Balancing the Threat of Russian Influence and U.S. Interests

Prepared for: International Security Affairs Office, at The Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy

Prepared by: Caitlin Skinder
Master of Public Policy Candidate
The Sanford School of Public Policy
Duke University

Faculty Advisor: Hal Brands, PhD

Disclaimer: This student paper was prepared in 2015 in partial completion of the requirements for the Master’s Project, a major assignment for the Master of Public Policy Program at the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University. The research, analysis, and policy alternatives and recommendations contained in this paper are the work of the student who authored the document, and do not represent the official or unofficial views of the Sanford School of Public Policy or of Duke University. Without the specific permission of its author, this paper may not be used or cited for any purpose other than to inform the client organization about the subject matter. The author relied in many instances on data provided by the client and related organizations and makes no independent representations as to the accuracy of the data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIENT</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICY QUESTION</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BACKGROUND</strong></td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOLDOVA, TRANSNISTRIA, AND RUSSIA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE EU-MOLDOVAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKRAINE CRISIS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CRIMEA</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURRENT STATE OF THE REGION</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSSIAN PERSPECTIVE</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESCALATION SCENARIOS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESCALATION TRIGGERS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESCALATION MECHANISMS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEY STAKEHOLDERS</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The United States</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RISKS TO MOLDOVA</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRATEGIES</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYSIS CRITERIA</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYSIS</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. REDUCE SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO MOLDOVA</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. MAINTAIN CURRENT LEVEL OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO MOLDOVA</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. INCREASE NON-LETHAL AID TO MOLDOVA</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. PROVIDE LETHAL AID TO MOLDOVA.</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYSIS BREAKDOWN</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKS CITED</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

Introduction
In recent months, disputes between Russia and its neighbors have accelerated to levels nearing those seen during the Cold War. The effects of globalization and Western economic integration have initiated democratic development in many former Soviet states, pulling those nations further from Russia’s sphere of influence. Once a global superpower, Russia has scrambled to retain its regional influence and preserve what remains of its former authority. Former Soviet states and neighbors that have not already integrated with the West remain especially vulnerable to Russian influence.

Moldova is among those nations straddling the line between Western integration and remaining in Russia’s economic and political sphere. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Moldova has encountered Russian resistance when exercising its democratic right to pursue new opportunities. What is additionally unique about Moldova is the existence of a frozen conflict zone: Transnistria.

In recent months, Russia and Transnistria have increased the volume and nature of military exercises performed on the Moldovan border. Russia’s annexation of Crimea has further expanded Russian military buildup near Moldova’s borders. Russia’s violation of a former Soviet state’s sovereignty has created uncertainty surrounding Russian intentions towards other former state’s authority, especially those with vulnerable frozen conflicts like Transnistria.

The United States has maintained an open relationship with Moldova, encouraging Western integration and development. Much of the U.S.’s current policy in Moldova attempts to protect U.S. interests in the region by limiting Russian influence. The U.S.’s interests include: preventing spillover conflict into NATO member territory, assuaging fears of NATO members most vulnerable to Russian attack, and reducing Russia’s ability to interfere with the policy decisions of independent states, potentially undermining U.S. foreign policy.

This report attempts to evaluate future U.S. policy towards Moldova in the event of escalated tensions in the region. This report will present four different strategies for the U.S. to consider:

1. Reduce security assistance to Moldova
2. Maintain the current level of security assistance to Moldova
3. Increase non-lethal aid to Moldova
4. Provide lethal aid to Moldova

1 International Business Times. 2014.
Using five criteria (financial cost, feasibility and implementation, Russian reaction, expected program impact, and effect on other U.S. relationships) this report will examine each option and highlight the potential risks and benefits.

**Recommendation**

In the event of escalated tensions, the United States should pursue Strategy 2 by continuing to provide the current level of security assistance to Moldova. Strategy 2 allows the U.S. to maintain its relationship with Moldova and NATO members, while limiting potential Russian provocation. Providing advanced equipment (non-lethal and lethal), as suggested in Strategies 3 and 4, could provoke a violent reaction from Russia. Furthermore, the likelihood of an aggressive Russian response to Strategies 3 and 4 is high, and ultimately not worth the meager benefits of providing additional assistance to Moldova. Yet, reducing assistance, as presented in Strategy 1, could damage U.S.-Moldovan relations, pushing the U.S. out of Moldovan favor thereby allowing Russia to impose its influence, unrestrained.

**Client**

This report is being completed for the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy – Russia Team. The Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy (OSD(P)) is responsible for the policy development, planning, and resource management of the U.S. Department of Defense. Within OSD(P), the office of International Security Affairs (ISA) provides strategic guidance on Department of Defense (DoD) issues concerning the countries and organizations of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, including the U.S. mission to NATO. ISA is organized regionally to oversee security cooperation programs, foreign military sales programs, defense establishments, and governments within specific areas of interest. The Russia Team develops defense, security, and military policy related to Russia.

**Policy Question**

The policy question directing this research and recommendation is:

*What can the United States do to limit Russian influence in Moldova and Transnistria if regional tensions escalate?*

Within the context of OSD(P) responsibility, this report will examine the United States’ policy towards Moldova with respect to the status of Transnistria and its relationship with Russia. Policy considerations will be measured against the ongoing regional conflict in Eastern Europe. U.S. policy has many facets, ranging from diplomatic maneuvers and economic action, to military policy. This report will primarily focus on defense-based strategies that OSD(P) could pursue, as well as examine the potential effectiveness of those strategies. There will be consideration given to other types of policy, but only as a secondary means of addressing the policy question. Furthermore, there are few policy objectives that OSD(P) could achieve without the assistance of other U.S. agencies and International organizations. Given agency interdependency, this report will evaluate the
roles other agencies play in contributing to OSD(P) policy, while still remaining focused on defense-based strategies from DoD.

**Methodology**

Research for this report was conducted between August 2014 and April 2015. Findings are based on existing academic literature, up-to-date newspaper sources, and interviews with experts in various fields of study.

Academic literature, government reports, and newspaper sources represent the bulk of the information analyzed in this report. Since the major sources of this conflict date back to the 1990s, academic literature and journal articles were essential for establishing the foundation and driving force behind Russia’s relationship with its former Soviet states. The academic and journal sources included think tank reports and comprehensive “Backgrounder” pieces. Congressional Research Service (CRS) Reports were useful for understanding leaders’ perspectives as well as the dynamics of U.S. policy as conflict was unfolding. Given the ongoing nature of the crisis, daily news articles were crucial for maintaining accurate information relating to troop movement, diplomatic dialogue, and viewpoints of important stakeholders.

Personal interviews supplemented written sources and helped provide a nuanced detailed view into policy decisions and events. As of April 2015, ten people have been interviewed for this report. Seven interviews were conducted over the phone and three were conducted via email.

Interviewees had a range of experiences, but can be sorted into two broad categories: (1) Regional experts who specialized in Russian/Eastern European issues. Experts in this category were predominantly associated with think tanks and other research institutes. (2) Military Strategy/U.S. Policy experts. These interviewees were experienced in broader U.S. policy and had detailed experience with U.S. military strategy. Interviewees represented came from multiple backgrounds, including think tanks, government, and private research institutions. Interview questions followed a general format, but differed based on each individual’s unique background.
Background

Relationship between Moldova, Transnistria, and Russia
Transnistria is a long, thin strip of land that spans almost 250 miles between Moldova’s eastern border and Ukraine (See Appendix 1: Map of Major Players). Transnistria has declared itself an autonomous nation that ultimately seeks independence and integration with the Russian Federation. Ethnic divides in Transnistria and Moldova are a primary source of conflict in the country. Transnistrian residents are largely ethnic Russian and Ukrainian, while Moldovans are predominantly ethnic Romanian. This ethnic and resulting political divide resulted in a violent war between Moldova and Transnistria. The war was never officially resolved, but when the fighting ceased, Transnistria declared independence and OECD Peacekeepers helped mitigate further violence.

Despite the war and diplomatic fallout, the three regions remain interdependent. Following Transnistria’s declaration of independence from Moldova in 1991, Transnistria formed a dependent relationship with the Russian Federation. Today, Russia has permeated most aspects of the Transnistrian region: Russia supplies weapons, training, troops; members of the government are former Russian parliament and military members; and Russia supports the economy with trade and aid. Moldova also remains heavily dependent on Russia and Transnistria for trade and natural resources. Russia accounts for more than 90% of Moldova’s energy imports. Most of Moldova’s electricity is generated in Transnistria, which also operates through Russian gas supplies.

Transnistria as a Frozen Conflict
Frozen conflicts refer to unresolved engagements between parties or nations. These situations may have previously involved armed disputes, but remain dormant since they lack any official resolution. Russia uses frozen conflicts to undermine a nation’s ability to control its territory, interfering with that nation’s right to exercise democratic authority. Russian interference forces these already vulnerable nations to concentrate on re-stabilizing their country at the expense of state-wide core reforms that could address corruption, the economy, and other capacity-building initiatives.

Transnistria is a regional hot spot of Russian driven corruption, human trafficking, and arms production and smuggling. The autonomous region has little national and international oversight, creating an ideal atmosphere for Russia to cultivate illegal operations. Transnistria is also home to some 2,500 Russian troops who have access to the largest stockpile of Soviet weapons in Eastern Europe.

Russia has used the frozen conflict in Transnistria as a way to leverage authority in Moldova and keep Moldova in its sphere of influence. As of 2011, Moldova had a $3.9 billion debt to Russian oil company Gazprom. Transnistria is responsible for $3.5 billion of that debt, which Russia claims Moldova is accountable for since Transnistria is still

---

3 Sanchez. 2009, Page 159.
5 Sanchez. 2009.
legally part of Moldova. In 2006 Gazprom doubled Moldova’s gas prices, eventually cutting off access to the reserves when Moldova refused to pay the debt. Two weeks later Russia agreed to resume gas supplies if Moldova agreed to a modest price increase and to transfer equity in Moldovagaz, which controls Moldova’s pipelines, to Russian ownership. In the end, Russia was able to leverage Transnistria’s debt to secure partial control over Moldovan gas lines.

The EU-Moldovan Economic Association Agreement
Moldova ratified a Western-leaning economic agreement with the EU in November of 2014. The EU–Moldova Economic Association Agreement (EU AA) creates a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), which will reduce tariffs, promote Moldovan exports, and decrease Moldovan dependency on Russian energy. Russia has expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the agreement since it effectively prohibits Moldovan participation in the Russian-lead Eurasian Customs Union, reducing Moldovan-Russian trade, and will further draw Moldova deeper into the West’s sphere of influence.

Even though Transnistria declared its independence from Moldova, the breakaway region is not internationally recognized. It legally remains a part of Moldova and is therefore subjected to the terms in the EU AA. The EU AA nullifies Autonomous Trade Preferences under which Transnistria previously operated and creates different European opportunities for Transnistrian exports. Currently, Transnistria depends on foreign aid and trade with Russia, but this agreement could upset Transnistria’s dependence on Russian support. Transnistrians supported further integration with the Eurasian Customs Union and condemned Moldova for their one-sided decision to ratify the EU AA.

Russian Reaction to the EU AA
Russia openly opposed the agreement, arguing that Transnistria should have been involved in the decision-making process since the terms of the treaty apply to Transnistria as well. Transnistria’s absent voice and legal obligation under the EU AA, combined with Moldova’s rejection of Eurasian integration for the Western EU AA, have reinvigorated tensions between Moldova and Russia.

Leading up to, and following the ratification, Russia attempted to intimidate and discourage Moldova’s participation by issuing a series of escalating embargoes on Moldovan exports (including wine, spirits, meat, and fruit). Previously, Russia has gone so far as threatening to cut off energy supplies to Moldova. As the primary supplier of Moldovan energy, this could have catastrophic consequences.

---

6 Koretsky. 2012.
7 Woehrel, S. 2014.
11 Rusnac. 2014.
12 Bruce. 2007. Page 34.
Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov threatened to recognize Transnistrian independence if Moldova joined any political or military Western organization.\(^{13}\) Russia’s Deputy Prime Minister, Dmitry Rogozin, has further commented that Russia will protect the rights of all ethnic-Russians, “no matter how far away they live”. Russia has continued to expand the list of items it refuses to purchase from Moldova and made several threats concerning Moldova’s continuing European integration.

**Ukraine Crisis and the Importance of Crimea**

In late 2013, former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych refused to sign an economic agreement with the European Union, similar to Moldova’s EU AA, upsetting many Ukrainians who supported further European integration. Throughout late 2012 and early 2013, Russia imposed sanctions and embargoes on Ukraine, hoping to pressure Yanukovych to choose the Russian-led Eurasian Customs Union, instead of the EU agreement (See Appendix 2: Timeline of Ukrainian Crisis). Yanukovych’s decision to boycott the EU AA for the Eurasian Customs Union came as a surprise to the EU and Ukrainians alike. Ukrainian citizens rioted, forcing Yanukovych to flee the country in February of 2014. Two months later, “little green men” in unmarked uniforms and bearing modern weaponry, seized Crimea. Within weeks, Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula, still claiming that local Ukrainian militias were responsible for the invasion.

The Crimean Peninsula has a unique history that makes it particularly significant to Russian interests. Until 1954, Crimea had been part of Russia for almost 200 years. Similar to Transnistria, Crimea’s population is overwhelmingly Russian: 60% Russian, with over 75% of citizens claiming Russian as their native language (See Appendix 3: Russian as Native Language).\(^{14}\) Groups within Crimea have unsuccessfully advocated, on two separate occasions (1992 and 1994), for secession from Ukraine and integration with Russia.

In addition to common ethnicity and language, Crimea is home to Russia’s Black Sea Fleet. Through various leases, Russia had over 1,000 facilities in Crimea, including the naval base in Sevastopol, which was home to almost 25,000 troops, equipment and artillery.\(^{15}\) The Sevastopol base served Russia as a strategic military buffer in the Black Sea against less friendly nations, such as Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania. Russian troops in Crimea were essential to Russia’s success in the 2008 war with Georgia. Like Transnistria, Crimea had a Russian-friendly populous, had previously sought to separate from their home country in favor of Russian-relations, and served as a strategic military defense and weapons storage location on Russia’s periphery.

It has since been established that Russia was behind the Crimean invasion, additionally supporting separatist forces with weapons and other resources.\(^{16}\) DoD refers to the pro-

\(^{13}\) Mirror Weekly. 2014.
\(^{14}\) Mortimer. 2014.
\(^{15}\) Mackay. 2014.
\(^{16}\) Mahon. 2014.
Russian forces as “Russian-backed separatists.” Russian forces and aid moved covertly, and overtly, into Crimea under the pretense of defending ethnic-Russians in the region. Conflict continued in Eastern Ukraine when Russian-backed separatists overtook the cities of Donetsk and Luhansk, again proclaiming that the protection of ethnic-Russians was the primary motivation. The conflict is now centralized in these Eastern Ukrainian territories. NATO estimates that there are over 2,000 soldiers in the region (Ukraine estimates 9,000). Additionally, there is a growing contingent of more than 50,000 Russian troops amassing on the Russian-Ukrainian border. A ceasefire took effect on February 15, 2015, although fighting has continued.

The U.S. currently provides non-lethal military support to Ukraine and has contemplated providing lethal aid. The debate rests in two camps. First, an armed Ukraine will raise the cost of conflict for Russia and make a strong stand against Russian action in the region. On the other hand, even with lethal weaponry, Ukraine will not be able to win a conflict against Russia without military support from other countries. Moreover, arming Ukraine will only further draw the U.S. into a protracted conflict, potentially provoking Russian escalation, which will be difficult to counter.

**Current State of the Region**

Starting in early 2014 Russia and Transnistria have increased the volume and nature of military exercises performed on the Moldovan border. Russia’s annexation of Crimea has resulted in a growing Russian military buildup on Moldova’s borders. Although military conflict between the separatist region and Moldova has remained latent since the early 1990s, the combination of Russian sponsored military exercises on the Transnistrian border, intensified anti-Moldovan rhetoric, and continuing violent conflict in Ukraine have inflamed Moldovan-Russian relations and created an atmosphere of uncertainty.

While Russia has yet to escalate conflict with Moldova, the Russian threat of force looms heavy over Moldova, which would be unable to defend itself.

The Moldovan military is small, poorly equipped, and poorly trained. Even though the U.S. and NATO are working with Moldova to develop capabilities, the Moldovan government gives little priority and funding to the military. Much like the Ukrainian military (before the influx of U.S. assistance in 2014), the Moldovan military relies upon Soviet-era munitions that are unreliable and low in number. Moldova has the smallest troop presence in Eastern Europe with approximately 5,000 troops (See Appendix 4: Military Data for Eastern Europe).

Moldovan authorities understand that as the crisis continues in Ukraine, Moldovans are growing cautious of European integration. Parliamentary elections in late November highlighted Moldovans’ hesitancy toward expanded relations with the EU. One fifth of

17 Interview-DoD Employee
18 Zverev. 2015.
19 Meladze. 2015.
20 “What Russia Wants: From cold war to hot war.” 2015.
21 International Business Times. 2014.
22 “After Crimea, secessionist Transnistria filed request to join Russia.” 2014.
citizens voted for the Socialist party, which supports Moldovan integration into Russia’s Eurasian Customs Union. However, various Western-leaning parties together earned 45% of votes. While only 55% of Moldovans voted, it appears that Moldovans still support a growing relationship with the EU, but support has waned since the last election.23

Meanwhile, EU members on Russia’s periphery are becoming increasingly anxious about Russia’s use of force and escalating means of intimidation. Russia has repeatedly violated Swedish, Estonian, Latvian, and Finnish airspace laws, and additionally invaded Swedish waters. With little regard for international borders, Russia has made few excuses for its violations. Furthermore, intelligence reported that in October, Russia performed large-scale military exercises, involving over 70,000 personnel that simulated Finland and the Baltics as enemy targets.24

**Russian Perspective**

Russian President Vladimir Putin seeks to reestablish the economic and political power that Russia lost following the Cold War. Having once exercised unrestricted control over its neighbors, Russia was not only a regional hegemon, but also a global superpower. Since the Cold War, many of Russia’s neighbors have pursued Western integration to varying degrees, seeking political, economic and cultural independence from Russia. In an effort to protect its basic security and move towards regaining its former glory, Russia seeks to restrict Western integration of those neighbors it still maintains influence over, including Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia.

Russia believes that it is at war with the West.25 NATO and EU military and economic expansionist policies obstruct Russia’s influence and pose a continued threat to Russia’s own security. Russia sees many of these policies as American-fueled and has attributed Western economic pressure and aggression as the source of conflict in Ukraine.26 From Russia’s perspective, the United States seeks to limit Russia’s power by influencing and Westernizing Russia’s neighbors and former states. Russia not only wants to reclaim its former power, but to counter the U.S.’s pervasive global influence and expansion towards Russia’s borders.

NATO’s growing presence is a primary fear for Russia. While Russia views the EU and the U.S. as harmful to Russia’s economic and political power, NATO represents an unstoppable lethal danger that has identified Russia as one of its top concerns.27 NATO’s military capabilities are far more advanced than Russia’s and collectively carry the force of 28 developed nations. In addition to NATO’s overpowering military capabilities, Russia despises NATO’s Western values and institutional governance model, which threaten Putin’s regional authority and power. By serving as a successful economic model and providing developmental opportunities to countries in Russia’s former sphere.

---

23 Rebegea and Doran. 2014.
24 Seip. 2014.
25 “Putin’s war with the West.” 2015.
26 “From cold war to hot war.” 2015.
27 “Breedlove: Russia’s reaction to arming Ukraine impossible to predict.” 2015.
of influence, NATO possess the ability to politically and economically empower former Soviet nations, thereby eroding Russia’s regional influence.

Regarding Moldova, Russia has two main concerns. First, Russia resents the economic and political losses associated with Moldovan Western integration. Second, Westernization could mean curbing corruption throughout Moldova and Transnistria. Weapons and mineral smuggling operations through Moldova and in Transnistria have been tied to Russia for years. Tighter security and Western systems would interfere with many of these operations, imposing huge inconveniences on Russia.

**Escalation Scenarios**

**Escalation Triggers**
Tensions in Moldova could increase at any time and for a variety of reasons. Having laid out the current environment between Russia, Moldova, and Transnistria, it is necessary to explore a range of events that could accelerate tensions between these actors. Below are three different scenarios that could serve as trigger points for escalated conflict. These three scenarios are not exhaustive and are meant to paint a picture of events the U.S. may face in the future.

**Moldovan authority in Transnistria**
Moldova continues to exercise control over issues that impact Transnistria, since Moldova refuses to recognize Transnistria’s independence. Moldova could trigger conflict in Transnistria by attempting to tighten border security, limit cross border trade, or exert other forms of authority over Transnistria. This type of power from Moldova would provoke Russia to defend Transnistria, as well as its own operations and interests in the region, which would suffer from such interference.

**Further Western integration**
Moldova maintains an economic and diplomatic relationship with Russia, in spite of the EU AA. Were Moldova to pursue additional forms of Western integration (political, economic, legal, etc.), it would further remove itself from Russia’s sphere of influence. This could trigger a Russian attempt to regain influence. Russia’s reaction to the EU AA lends credence to this possibility. Moldova’s pursuit of the EU AA was met with multiple forms of Russian intimidation, meant to discourage the agreement.

**Power shift in Ukraine**
Russia’s continued presence in Ukraine is a source of international condemnation and concern for former Soviet nations. Were Russia to lose ground or incur increased casualties in Ukraine, Russia could leverage its power in Transnistria to create additional conflict in Moldova. This conflict could be used to bargain with the international community, or periphery nations, to improve its position. When put into a corner, as with the EU AA, Russia has chosen to leverage its influence to regain authority. Alternatively, were Russia to gain ground and prove successful in Ukraine, Russia may feel empowered
to extrapolate on its success and pursue additional “land-grabs” in other vulnerable territories.

**Escalation Mechanisms**
Having provided a range of situations that could trigger increased tensions with Russia, it is additionally necessary to explore the mechanisms by which escalation could occur. The range of mechanisms employed by Russia will be crucial in analyzing potential U.S. policy responses.

**Russian economic authority**
Russia could leverage its economic power and interfere with regional trade. For years Russia has imposed embargoes and threatened to cut off gas supplies as a source of leverage over countries where it seeks to regain authority. Moldova has been the victim of a variety of different Russian embargoes, ranging from wine and fruit, to meat and canned goods. Other countries along Russia’s periphery have similarly been subjected to export embargoes as well as gas shutdowns. Russia could increase the number of Moldovan products banned, as well as threaten to cut off gas supplies to Moldova. This would represent a serious threat to the Moldovan economy, which is already weak and vulnerable to interference. Since ratifying the EU AA, Moldova has received assistance from the EU and has decreased trade reliance on Russia, but is still dependent upon Russian trade and resources.

**Increased troop presence in Transnistria**
Within Transnistria, Russia commands about 2,000 of its own troops and maintains privileged control over some 2,500 Transnistrian troops. Russia could increase troop presence on the Transnistrian border with Moldova. These troops could be Transnistrian or Russian and would create tension in the buffer zone and along the border. Further escalation through increased troop presence is feasible and in line with past Russian tactics. Russia has already increased their troop presence along the border in response to Moldova’s participation in the EU AA. This move could be a form of intimidation and not indicate imminent Russian threat, or it could mean that Russia intends to upset peace in Transnistria and the buffer zone. Increased troop presence represents a threat to Moldova because it creates increased anxiety and uncertainty regarding future Russian action in the area.

**Russia provides weapons to troops in Transnistria**
Russia could provide weapons or equipment to Russian and Transnistrian troops stationed along the border or in the buffer zone. Whether Russian contributions are lethal or non-lethal, this scenario represents an elevated threat towards Moldova. This act signifies a new level of Russian intent towards creating tension in Moldova. Russian arms provision represents a real threat to Moldova for two main reasons. First, while Russia has maintained a presence in Transnistria since 1991, there has never been a violent crossfire since Transnistria declared their independence. Arms provision would break from this established norm and change the dynamics in Transnistria and the buffer zone.

---

28 Kashi. 2014.
Second, Russia was accused of providing arms to separatists fighting in Ukraine. Russian arms provision was directly linked to active crossfire, and thus represents a physical threat to Moldova’s security. However, it is unlikely that Russia would suddenly provide weapons without first having tried to leverage its economic power or build up its troop presence.

**Russian recognition of Transnistrian independence**

Finally, Russia could recognize Transnistria’s independence. Recognizing Transnistria’s independence would increase Russia’s political, financial, and legal influence in the region. This act represents a serious threat to Moldova’s sovereignty and security and would escalate tensions with Russia, as well as the international community. However, this scenario is less probable than the other mechanisms discussed. Recognizing Transnistria’s independence would place an incredible financial burden on Russia, potentially transferring over $404 million in Transnistrian debt to Russia. In the past, Russia has preferred inciting controllable chaos in vulnerable countries to deter from the countries’ ability to administer foreign policy. Recognizing Transnistria’s independence would abolish this power and most likely only be pursued in the most extreme circumstances.

In addressing the policy question, this report will assume that the most likely form of regionally escalating tensions would stem from increased Russian troop presence on the border.

**Key Stakeholders**

As events unfold in Eastern Europe, there are a number of key stakeholders that have the power to influence the next stage of the crisis. This report will evaluate the two main entities capable of confronting Russian aggression: NATO and The United States.

This report seeks to identify meaningful U.S. strategies towards Moldova based on OSD(P)’s capability and associated risks. However, as an international actor, the U.S. often chooses to pursue policy through other organizations, which have the ability to provide unique advantages the U.S. may be lacking. As a result, this report will first assess NATO’s role in this regional conflict and its relationship to the U.S.

**NATO**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a security alliance that seeks to safeguard the freedom and security of its 28 members. NATO serves as a primary line of defense for the United States in Europe. The U.S. is a leading member of the organization and bears considerable influence in guiding NATO policy.

In response to the growing Russian threat, NATO has enhanced its Response Force capability in Europe. In September, NATO created the Rapid-Reaction Force consisting

---

Puiu. 2015.
of several thousand ground, air, naval, and special forces troops representing different NATO members. Further escalating its Response Force, NATO created a Spearhead Force in late 2014. This high-readiness force will consist of 5,000 troops deployable within 48 hours, with an additional 25,000 deployable within weeks. This brings the total Response Force to 30,000. NATO members alternate leadership of the forces and the troops move on a rotating basis through five different Eastern NATO bases.

**NATO Policy in Moldova**

Moldova is not a NATO member, but does participate in numerous official activities and partnerships within NATO. As part of Moldova’s Partnership Action Plan (PAP), which is meant to facilitate cooperation with NATO, Moldova receives developmental support for domestic policies as well as military education, training, and joint exercises. Within the PAP, NATO establishes political and economic milestones that Moldova needs to meet before additional assistance is provided. NATO provides a Western framework for development in addition to resources and guidance that help Moldova reach these milestones. Through this partnership, Moldova has contributed troops to NATO exercises and has participated (in very low numbers) in other NATO operations.

**Article 5**

Under the Washington Treaty, Article 5 broadly requires NATO troops to come to the military defense of an attacked member state. As a non-NATO member, Moldova does not have a right to invoke Article 5. The security of full NATO members would ultimately triumph against the needs of non-member states, like Moldova and Ukraine, when issues arise. Article 5 was written to maintain flexibility (See Appendix 5: NATO Article 5). There are at least two portions of the article that provide NATO members with discretionary power. First, the parties together will agree if an armed attack has occurred. The members hold the power of judging whether or not action could be seen as “armed attack.” Second, NATO members together decide how they want to react. This means they could react as a party or as individual nations, and they have considerable discretion over the amount and type of assistance the organization will provide to the nation under attack. Overall, there is considerable flexibility in implementing Article 5, but as a non-NATO member, Moldova is not privileged to any of its benefits.

**NATO Interests**

**Regional Stability**

NATO’s primary goal is to maintain the security of its members. Regional instability in Moldova would pose a significant physical and economic threat to member safety. Since the ratification of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement, General Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander of NATO’s European forces, noted that the combination of increased military activity on the Transnistrian border and a growing presence of soldiers

---

30 Pessin. 2014.
31 Bendavid. 2015.
32 “Individual Partnership Action Plan: Republic of Moldova-NATO.”
33 “What is Article 5?” NATO.
in Crimea could be a threat to Moldova’s sovereignty. General Breedlove commented that Russia is well positioned to make a move in the breakaway region. Clashes in Transnistria or Moldova are bound to have spillover effects that bring conflict closer to NATO member territory. Spillover could have particularly devastating effects on Moldova’s neighbor and economic partner, Romania, as well as the entire European Union. Former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated earlier this year that “...increasing instability in the region will also have an impact on the overall Euro-Atlantic security.”

Regional security is also dependent upon the steady and fair supply of energy to the EU. Unfortunately, periphery conflicts can directly affect NATO member nations’ security. The EU’s largest energy supplier is Russia. During the 2008 conflict between Russia and Georgia, Russia cut off the supply of natural gas to Georgia for almost two weeks. Many NATO countries that received gas through Georgian pipelines lost access to their normal energy supplies in what became the largest drought in decades.

**NATO Member Reassurance**

Protecting Moldova’s sovereignty is necessary to reassure security concerns of former Soviet countries that are now NATO members. Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania are especially vulnerable to Russian advances. In Ukraine, Russia used defense of ethnic-Russians as a justification for intervention; as former Soviet states, these four countries maintain varying populations of ethnic-Russians and are thus vulnerable to the same intervention argument. Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that Russian troops had the power to take the capitals of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, and Romania within two days if he felt the rights of ethnic Russians were threatened. Furthermore, given Russia’s long-term desire to regain regional power, history has shown that Russia has attempted to exert influence and intimidation tactics in its former states as a means to reasserting that power.

In April of this year, feeling threatened by Russia, Poland and Lithuania invoked article 4 of NATO, which requires an emergency meeting of NATO if any member feels there is a need for emergency discussion. These former Soviet countries have faith in NATO’s ability to defend member states, but are concerned that because of their history and ethnic ties to Russia they are more vulnerable to Russian aggression. Because of these vulnerabilities, these countries worry that they may not have the same value as Western members, and fear NATO will be reluctant to act. Continuing to protect the sovereignty of former Soviet states is crucial to maintaining the integrity and power of NATO as well as reassuring members that NATO is serious about countering Russian offensive moves.

---

34 Kashi. 2014.
36 A Force for Freedom. 2014.
38 Loskot-Strachota. 2009.
39 Tamkin. 2014.
40 Rettman. 2014.
The Split in NATO
NATO members can be categorized into four camps regarding their policy on Russia. First, Hungary stands alone, outwardly supporting Russia’s annexation of Crimea, and further supporting Russian-backed separatists in Ukraine.\(^4\) Hungary has been vocal about limiting NATO involvement. Second, economic relations between a large number of NATO members and Russia create support for a restrained NATO response. Germany, France and Italy are among the countries in this group. France’s relationship with Russia is worth €1.2 billion euros,\(^4\) while Germany has over €20 billion invested in companies inside Russia.\(^4\) While they condemn Russia’s actions, they are hesitant to support sanctions and other NATO policies that could interfere with their business relationship.

The third group contains former Soviet states, as well as countries formerly in Russia’s sphere of influence, that are now NATO members. As mentioned earlier, this group feels particularly vulnerable to future Russian intimidation and supports an aggressive physical response by NATO towards Russia. This group is additionally anxious because should conflict breakout, their proximity to Russia places them closer to spillover conflict.

Finally, the fourth group contains the U.S. and other members who are more or less removed from the direct conflict, lack close relations with Russia, but still risk participation through article 5.

This internal divide can be further demonstrated when applied to non-NATO members, such as Moldova. General Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander of NATO’s European forces, has commented that NATO has no formal policy for dealing with non-member partners who face threats to their security.\(^4\) This can be problematic since military instability could quickly spill over onto NATO member soil, thus requiring NATO action. Similar to about NATO’s Russia policy, members are split along the same lines in approaching non-NATO members. Germany and Hungary have expressed the most hesitation regarding support for Eastern European non-NATO partners. Meanwhile, Eastern European members and the U.S. have advocated for a more active response. Preventing this schism from growing will be essential to ensuring NATO’s power. A divided NATO could be perceived by Russia as a diminishing threat.

The United States

U.S. Interests
The U.S. shares many of NATO’s interests in the region, but has additional concerns that complicate the U.S.’s approach to this situation.

Global Right to Sovereign Foreign Policy
Ensuring Moldova’s continued sovereignty is important for a number of reasons. The U.S. cannot allow Russia to exert privileged influence on the policy decisions of independent states, which would give Russia expanding control over political and

\(^4\) Zoltan. 2015.
\(^4\) Tunakan. 2015.
\(^4\) Gardiner. 2014.
\(^4\) Alexander. 2014.
economic decisions that could potentially undermine U.S. foreign policy.\textsuperscript{45} Moldova’s Association Agreement with the EU will decrease Moldova’s economic dependency on Russia. By attempting to intimidate the former Soviet state into remaining under Russian authority and joining the Eurasian Customs Union, Russia has obstructed Moldova’s right to economic freedom and independent choice.

**Regional Stability**

Ensuring regional stability in Moldova is necessary to protecting NATO’s member nations. The U.S. has a vested interest in continued European security and economic progress; any disruptions in energy supply will have a significant negative impact on the security and overall health of both economies. The U.S. is more insulated against regional instability in Europe than other NATO members, which somewhat reduces the potential consequences for the United States compared to European members.

**NATO Member Reassurance**

The United States must ensure it maintains diplomatic credibility in NATO assurances. Russia’s recent land-grab and intimidation tactics are a cause of great concern among former Soviet states that fear Russian attempts to undermine their independence and reassert dominance. As a leading NATO member and ally to many former Soviet nations, the U.S. must contribute to the maintenance of NATO-member security.

**Avoid Direct Conflict between the United States and Russia**

Russia is still a formidable nuclear threat. Combined, the U.S. and Russia maintain control over 95% of the world’s nuclear arsenal. In addition, the U.S. relies on Russian military support and intelligence sharing to address growing threats of terrorism. Furthermore, Russia has impressive influence over a number of foreign policy issues. Aside from their veto power on the United Nations Security Council, Russia maintains diplomatic relations with a number of U.S. adversaries such as Syria, Iran, China, and North Korea. Russia has the ability to negatively impact U.S. global policy.

**Interests Analysis**

While the U.S. maintains a range of interests in a sovereign Moldova and stable Eastern Europe, the depth of those interests and their relevance to U.S. security is more or less superficial. Analysts have argued that U.S. foreign policy needs to distinguish between simply an \textit{interest} to the U.S. and what can be considered a \textit{vital interest}.\textsuperscript{46} Yes, Russian escalation in Moldova can affect all of the U.S. interests listed above, but is this scenario a direct threat to U.S. security? Probably not. There is no denying that there will be some sort of impact on the U.S. were Russia to escalate tensions, but the impact will most likely be secondary. Even as one of the world’s primary advocates of democracy, the U.S. does not need to lend their support to every battle. The question is: Is protecting Moldova’s sovereignty and fighting Russian influence in a democratic nation a vital interest to U.S. security? Ultimately, the answer is no. The U.S. would face no immediate or substantial security threat from Russian escalation; therefore, the U.S. must keep its

\textsuperscript{45} McNamara. 2012.
\textsuperscript{46} Posen. 2013.
interests in perspective and balance its continued involvement in Moldova with the maintenance of a tactful relationship with Russia.

U.S. Policy in Moldova
Over the past few years, the U.S. has taken a number of steps to support continued Moldovan independence. Created in June 2012, the Congressional Moldova Caucus promotes U.S.-Moldovan cooperation on issues such as Euro-Atlantic integration and increased trade relations with the U.S. In December 2014, Congress passed the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). This effort allocates up to $1 billion towards deterring destabilization in Eastern Europe. The initiative includes increased exercises, trainings, troop and presence throughout Europe, including, Moldova.\(^{47}\) The U.S. gave over $41 million to Moldova in 2014, including funds from the ERI.\(^{48}\) Projected aid in 2015 is expected to surpass $20 million. Funding will most likely not reach levels seen during 2014, but are nonetheless higher than in years preceding the Crimean crisis. Through these programs the U.S hopes to “ensure Moldova’s political development as a European state…and promote a future Moldova that reintegrates Transnistria…”\(^{49}\)

The U.S. has also initiated a robust military support program with Moldova, including partnership training, rations, and supplies, but has stopped short of sending weapons.\(^{50}\) Much of the U.S.’s tactical efforts can be grouped into three categories: security assistance, training and exercises, and long-term institutional support. The Department of Defense plays a large role in providing all three to Moldova. DOD provides financial aid for military equipment and training (estimated between $7 and $10 million this year as part of European Reassurance Initiative\(^{51}\)). They work to enhance Moldova’s ability to identify and address threats to its security by establishing communications infrastructure and secure networks. Finally, DoD has worked towards creating a sustainable military by reducing corruption and increasing training, education, leadership, and other incentives that encourage lasting dedication. Broadly speaking, the U.S. seeks to build partnership capacity (BPC) with Moldova by increasing interoperability with U.S. and NATO forces and helping Moldova gain the tools and understanding necessary to properly provide for its own defense.\(^{52}\)

The U.S.’s $20 million per year package to Moldova is very low considering the U.S.’s total yearly foreign aid package in 2013 was over $55 billion. Moreover, there are marginal benefits to the additional levels of security assistance provided by the United States. The U.S. tries to provide basic equipment, uniforms, and rations to help establish a working foundation. The program serves as more of a “winning hearts and minds” campaign, rather than providing tools which can truly impact the military’s capabilities.\(^{53}\) The U.S. wants to maintain favor and an open relationship with Moldova as a way to control Russian influence in the country. A major overhaul is needed to create any

\(^{48}\) “White House Facts on U.S. Aid to Moldova” 2014.
\(^{50}\) Malishhevski. 2014.
\(^{51}\) Interview-DoD Employee
\(^{53}\) Interview: Former DoD Country Director for the Region
substantial reforms within the Moldovan military, and without Moldovan government support, U.S. assistance can only do so much.

**Relationship between NATO and the United States**

Although the United States can deploy its own military forces in Europe without NATO approval, in doing so it risks upsetting the integrity of the organization and its mission. In order to take action in Moldova, the U.S. will need to work through NATO, which makes decisions on a consensus system. Each member state has a representative on the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the political decision-making body of the organization. To pass a resolution, the NAC does not require favorable votes from all 28-member countries; instead, resolutions are passed if there are no outstanding objections from member states.54 The U.S. faces potential difficulty from internal NATO divisions, which are hesitant to support a physical response.

**Risks to Moldova**

Russia’s swift participation in the Crimean crisis and continued provocation in the region has created a situation of uncertainty and unrest that leads many to question Russia’s true commitment to peace in Europe.55 Even with the recent ceasefire in Ukraine, Russian support in Transnistria exits as a constant vulnerability to Moldova. Russia maintains the ability to continue amassing troops in the frozen region, incite conflict, and even threaten to embargo key Moldovan exports in an attempt to preserve authority over the region. Before presenting strategies to address Russia’s influence in Moldova, it is important to analyze the risks Russia possess towards Moldova.

**Strategies**

The United States, both as an individual actor and through cooperation with NATO, is in a position to adjust its policy in Moldova with respect to Russian activity. This report will present four strategies that the U.S., through OSD(P), could pursue in Moldova.

1. **Reduce security assistance to Moldova**
   - The United States could reduce assistance to Moldova back to levels observed before the Ukraine crisis. This reduction would occur on a number of levels:
     - Reduce Equipment: radios, rations, uniforms, night vision equipment, first-aid kits, other medical supplies, body armor, etc.
     - Reduce Activities: trainings and joint exercises (other than those associated with their previous partnerships)

---

2. Maintain the current level of security assistance to Moldova
   • The United States could maintain its current basic assistance to Moldova, which includes:
     • Equipment: Radios, rations, uniforms, night vision equipment, first-aid kits, other medical supplies, body armor, etc.
     • Training: foreign-language and military inter-operability training with U.S., NATO, and other member/partner countries.\textsuperscript{56}

3. Increase non-lethal aid to Moldova
   • The United States could increase the amount and expand the nature of aid it provides to Moldova. Non-lethal aid builds defense capabilities through secure communications networks, missile and location detection capabilities, and provision of medical supplies and counter battery/attack equipment.
     • Equipment: Advanced communications software and technology, Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), counter-measure software, armored Humvees, and body armor.
     • Training: Equipment training (UAVs, radars, Humvees), communication and exercise interoperability, and medical techniques.

4. Provide lethal aid to Moldova
   • The United States could provide lethal aid to Moldova. Lethal aid would include a mixture of lethal offensive and defensive machinery as well as advanced training.
     • Equipment: various firearms, ammunition, and precision anti-armor and anti-tank weapons.
     • Training: Equipment use, repair, and maintenance training.

Analysis Criteria
The analysis section provides specific details of each strategy, as well as an assessment against five criteria.

Financial costs: Different financial components of each strategy are presented and coupled with pricing estimates. For many of the strategies, prices are presented as a range.

Feasibility and implementation: This section assesses how challenging a particular strategy will be to implement and what pieces of the strategy affect implementation. A range of factors can influence feasibility, including: political support (Congress plays a large role for the U.S.); coordination between different agencies and organizations; and financial obligations. The length of time needed to implement this strategy as well as how long the strategy is expected to operate is additionally included in this criterion.

\textsuperscript{56} Malishevski
**Russian reaction**: For each strategy, this report will evaluate potential reactions from Russia. A range of potential Russian responses will be analyzed, and the likelihood of those responses will be addressed. The threat level posed by Russian response will have a significant effect on the strategy’s analysis and position relative to other U.S. options. The more hostile the expected range of Russian response, the more unlikely the U.S. will be to pursue the strategy.

**Expected program impact**: This criterion highlights the potential effects of the proposed strategy. More specifically, this aspect will explore the benefits and disadvantages of the strategy, in addition to the likelihood of achieving desired strategy outcomes.

**Effect on other U.S. relationships**: Potential changes in the United States’ relationship with NATO, NATO members, or Moldova will be presented as they relate to each strategy.

**Analysis**

1. **Reduce Security Assistance to Moldova**

   **Details**
   The United States could reduce military assistance to Moldova that has been in place since the Ukraine crisis started in early 2014. While the U.S. prefers a stable and sovereign Moldova, if tensions were to escalate on Moldova’s border, the U.S. may decide that the additional Moldovan aid costs are not worth increasing the threat of direct U.S.-Russian conflict. Avoiding conflict with Russia is the main impetus behind this strategy, as opposed to potential benefit of future cost savings.

   This strategy would restrict equipment such as body armor, uniforms, rations, and night vision equipment. Since the Ukraine crisis, the U.S. has provided additional assistance to Moldova to ensure readiness in NATO interoperability training and exercises. Those U.S. activities would stop, but NATO partner exercises would still be active. This strategy focuses exclusively on the U.S.’s additional contributions to Moldova since Ukraine.

   **Financial costs**
   Pulling back security assistance in Moldova would save between $11 million and $20 million, freeing up U.S. funds for other future initiatives.  

   **Feasibility and Implementation**
   Since the United States would be acting in isolation, restricting further allocations of financial assistance to Moldova would be easy to implement. Since much of the United States’ additional security assistance to Moldova has already been delivered, this strategy would restrict future assistance allocations to Moldova.

---

57 This is based on increases in U.S. assistance that target Russian aggression. $2.7 million in March 2014; $8 million in June 2014; and $20 million projected from U.S. in 2015.
This strategy would be considered a long-term policy with a short execution time. The implementation is uncomplicated and would have long-term effects on U.S. policy in Moldova.

**Russian reaction**
During the recent Ukrainian ceasefire, Russian-backed separatists took advantage of the peace and violently gained additional Ukrainian territory. With this strategy, Russia would most likely act in a similar spirit, disregarding any diplomatic opportunities for discussion. If Russia were already amassing troops on Moldova’s border, U.S. withdrawal would leave Moldova even more vulnerable. Russia could use this opportunity to increase its troop presence in Transnistria.

Perhaps even more powerful than the increased physical presence of Russian and Transnistrian troops would be Russia’s ability to influence Moldovan politics and policy. Russia could use this opportunity to publicize the U.S.’s “abandonment” as a tool to increase Russian popularity in Moldova. Regaining political influence remains a primary Russian goal, and this strategy could open the door for Russia to deepen its economic and political ties with Moldova, further interfering with U.S.-Moldovan relations. As a result, it is likely that Russia would encourage and ultimately seek Moldovan participation in the Eurasian Economic Union.

Restricting U.S. assistance in Moldova may not significantly alter the U.S.’s relations with Russia, but this strategy will potentially lower the risk of future confrontation between the U.S. and Russia over Moldovan sovereignty. Russia has repeatedly requested the U.S. refrain from interfering in issues pertaining to Russia’s sphere of influence. So, this would be, at the very least, a way to acknowledge Russia’s security concerns and attempt to repair U.S.-Russian relations. However, if the U.S. is still supporting Ukraine’s attempts to regain sovereignty, U.S. policy in Moldova may have little impact on relations with Russia since Ukraine is higher on Russia’s list of priorities.

**Expected program impact**
Currently, there are marginal benefits to the additional levels of security assistance provided by the United States. As discussed earlier, without large-scale changes to Moldova’s military, it is unlikely that any meaningful development will occur. Since the increased aid contributes such a small amount to overall change, there will be nominal adverse effects to its dissolution. Moldova will still receive a scaled-down basic aid package from the U.S., which is rather minimal, containing food, uniforms, and other fundamental items that address basic needs. By scaling back assistance, the U.S. can reallocate funding to other programs that may need to be prioritized.

**Effect on other U.S. relationships**
Critics have argued that the U.S. established unrealistic expectations for the Moldovan military through its escalated security assistance. With a scaled back approach, the U.S.
would pursue a more realistic relationship with Moldova, mitigating any misunderstandings regarding military progress and Moldova’s ability to defend itself in the event of conflict.

As discussed earlier, the most recent Parliamentary election demonstrated Moldovan hesitancy towards pursuing Western integration at the sake of relations with Russia. While Moldovans want a more secure and prosperous economic foundation, they do not want to completely turn against Russia, especially when they see the potential consequences in Ukraine.  

If the U.S. were to limit military assistance with Moldova, this may drive Moldova closer to Russia. Furthermore, this could put a severe strain on Moldova’s relationship with the United States. Even though Moldova maintains a partnership with NATO, the programs with the U.S. are more robust and specialized. This strategy risks losing U.S. influence in Moldova and pushing Moldova closer to Russia.

U.S. reductions in Moldova will signal to NATO allies that the U.S. may be rethinking its interests in Eastern European security. As one of NATO’s leaders, this could have two potential effects. First, this may create anxiety among Eastern European members that are the most vulnerable to Russian action. Alternatively, NATO members opposing further engagement with non-member Eastern European states would be pleased with this strategy. Second, by deviating from NATO’s current policy in Moldova, the U.S. risks hurting NATO’s credibility in Moldova and creates uncertainty about U.S. support in the region moving forward.

2. Maintain current level of security assistance to Moldova

Details
Since the Ukraine crisis, the United States has involved Moldovan troops in more frequent and complex military trainings and exercises with U.S. and NATO troops. Moldova participated in Rapid Trident, one of two joint exercises promoting interoperability with the U.S., NATO, and Ukraine. This strategy promises future Moldovan participation in similar exercises, as well as continued financial and material assistance by the U.S., including additional supplies of rations, uniforms, night vision equipment, first-aid kits and other medical supplies, and basic body armor. These materials address basic military needs that Moldovan troops often lack and are meant to supplement a fundamental level of operation for the troops.

Financial costs
Based on spending in 2014 and 2015 projections, the costs to maintain the current level of security assistance to Moldova would be between $20 and $30 million.

---

60 Interview- Former DoD Country Director for the region
Feasibility and Implementation
As part of the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), the Department of Defense has the ability to allocate funds (with Congressional notification) to continue providing security assistance to Moldova as a form of “building partner capacity”. This form of assistance is already legally supported and implemented, and there remains room to increase and easily alter the forms of assistance under the ERI.

Since this strategy is currently being implemented and there are no significant efforts to halt or change the program, continued implementation should not be problematic. This strategy achieves short to medium term goals. Maintaining current levels of security assistance will continue meeting DoD’s current assistance goals in Moldova. This assistance could continue for a period of time, but simply supplementing basic military needs does not ensure long-term success or sustainability for Moldovan troops.

Russian reaction
Current Russian reaction to U.S. security assistance in Moldova has been more or less muted. Russia had stronger reactions to other portions of the ERI, in particular those relating to NATO reinforcement in Eastern Europe. Even though U.S. security assistance persists, Russia’s reaction remains complacent and so far non-discriminatory towards Moldova. If the situation remains the same in Ukraine, then the U.S. may be able to continue providing security assurance with little expectation of interference from Russia.

However, if Russia escalates tensions in Moldova, Russia could target the U.S.’s heightened support of Moldova as a point of discontent. Russia could assert that U.S. security assistance is aggressive policy and puts ethnic Russians in Transnistria in danger. Reaction could begin as Russian rhetoric and may not materialize, especially since increased U.S. aid has already been established and elicited minimal Russian reaction. However, there remains a small risk that Russia may use any sort of U.S.-Moldovan engagement as justification for troop presence.

Expected program impact
Security assistance measures provide an opportunity for the U.S. and Moldova to continue cultivating their partnership. Preserving beneficial programs and open relations in Moldova allows the U.S. to maintain its political influence and support of Western integration, thereby lessening the authority Russia can exercise over Moldova. If the U.S. can integrate Western operations and equipment into fundamental Moldovan operations, the two countries can create a system that employs Western practices at its core. If Moldova feels they are benefiting from interoperability training or are valued as a nation, then they have a strong case to maintain relations with the West.

Continuing to provide the current level of security assistance to Moldova will contribute to the United States’ goals of building partnership capacity in Moldova through the ERI. This level of security assistance helps establish an operational foundation for the

---

Moldovan military, filling in essential gaps where Moldova otherwise lacks necessary supplies and training. Building the Moldovan military’s ability to independently function is a necessary step to creating long-term, sustainable security and a necessary prerequisite for interoperability training. This strategy provides essential elements to building a military, but the contribution is very surface level. Maintaining scaled-up U.S. aid will not make the Moldovan military an operational force capable of countering any sort of Russian offensive.

**Effect on other U.S. relationships**

Other NATO member countries are not as proactive in providing direct military and economic assistance in Moldova. Only the U.S. has passed resolutions directly mentioning Moldova to increase aid and assistance. However, NATO members have not opposed the U.S.’s increased form of security assistance in Moldova.

Sustaining security assistance may evoke frustration from some NATO members that seek an escalated Western response. Baltic NATO members, such as Poland, Estonia, and Latvia, have been vocal in their advocacy for strengthened security measures along Russia’s periphery, including Moldova. Poland has previously met with Ukrainian and Moldovan officials to discuss continued Western integration and its impact on regional security.63 The U.S.’s unwillingness to pursue a harder stance against Russia by increasing support to regional vulnerable nations may create minor tensions.

### 3. Increase non-lethal aid to Moldova.

**Details**

Non-lethal assistance will strengthen Moldova’s defense-based capabilities. While non-lethal aid will not win a war against Russia, it could help reduce the impact of an attack through deterrence and physical capabilities. As the weakest military in Eastern Europe, Moldova lacks formal communications networks, has a troop presence of only about 5,000 men, and maintains zero tanks or combat aircrafts. While current U.S. security assistance bolsters basic military needs, non-lethal assistance will involve advanced trainings and operations. Before the Moldovan military can employ any new equipment or exercises, they will need to undergo weeks of training to learn about proper usage and repair techniques.

**Financial costs**

Program scale would be smaller than that executed in Ukraine since the Crimean crisis. Using 2014 appropriations to Ukraine for non-lethal aid, this strategy cost could be between $120 million and $350 million.64

**Feasibility and Implementation**

63 “Ukraine, Poland, Moldova meet to talk about Russia.” 2014.

64 Daalder, Flournoy, Herbst, Lodal, Pifer, Stavridis, Talbott, and Wald. 2015.
This strategy would operate mainly through the Department of Defense and Department of State (DoS). Congress would appropriate funds to DoS, which would work with DoD to coordinate equipment and training. Since the U.S. already works with Moldova and provides security assistance, the infrastructure is already in place to transfer equipment to Moldova and relationships have already been established to train their military.

This is a medium-term program that would require congressional approval. Congressional approval would create a lag of several weeks to months between the initial call for non-lethal aid in Moldova to physical program execution. During this lag, the situation in Moldova could change rapidly, providing Russia the opportunity to move in before the U.S. has a chance to respond.

Gaining Congressional approval will be challenging for two main reasons: political and financial concerns. First, if Russia were to boost troop presence on the border, Congress would be faced with the decision to further engage with Moldova, or remain neutral and avoid conflict with Russia. As discussed earlier, while the U.S. does have interests in the region, some argue that these interests are not strong enough to justify involvement in an Eastern European crisis. Furthermore, looking at Congress’ recent approach to the Ukraine crisis, even when Russian-backed separatists invaded, Congress was slow to act and torn about involvement. Congress didn’t pass the Ukraine Freedom Support Act (UFSA) until December 2014, nine months after annexation. Providing a similar non-lethal assistance package to Moldova, a poorer, less vital nation, when there aren’t boots-on-the-ground, may prove to be difficult. Second, in addition to Congress’ political concerns, the $120 million plus price tag would need to be justified as well. Congress may be unwilling to increase Moldova’s current aid package by over $100 million.

Provision of non-lethal aid would come in one of two forms: donation or sales. If the U.S. decided to sell non-lethal aid to Moldova, there is a very good chance that Moldova would never be able to repay the loan (given its status as the poorest country in Europe). Either way, the U.S. would work through the State Department’s Directorate of Defense Trade Controls to facilitate weapons transfer.

**Russian reaction**

Providing non-lethal aid to Moldova would most likely provoke one of three responses from Russia: diplomatic, economic, or military. First, looking at Russian response to the UFSA, Russia may seek a diplomatic response. Following the UFSA in December 2014, Russian-backed separatists engaged in high-level peace talks with Ukraine, Russia, and the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe. The two sides additionally exchanged prisoners as part of the peace initiative. Even though the peace talks were short-lived and fighting resumed, diplomatic discussions remain a realistic potential Russian response.

---

65 Ashford. 2014.
66 Zuesse. 2014.
67 Shchetko. 2014.
68 McDuffee. 2014.
Second, Russia could increase economic bans on Moldovan exports, further restricting Moldovan work visas in Russia, or even go as far as leveraging energy supplies to Moldova and Europe. Disruptions in Russian energy could have a significant impact on many NATO countries, which still rely on Russian sources. Russia cut off energy supplies in 2008 through Georgia, and it is certainly likely that they could repeat those actions if tensions were to escalate. Furthermore, even though the United States has additional sanctioning powers on Russia since passing the UFSA, this power has done little to deter Russia from its current activities. To this point, imposing embargos has been Russia’s punishment of choice towards Moldova, and it is likely they would impose such restrictions again.

Third, immediately following UFSA’s passage and after the peace talks were cut short, Russia was very vocal about its discontent with the bill. Russia declared that U.S-Russian relations would suffer severely in the future because of the bill, which only served as a legal foundation to undermine Russia. About a month later, the Russian-backed separatists launched a powerful offensive, overtaking the Donetsk airport and gaining significant control of the city. Were the U.S. to respond to escalation with non-lethal aid, there is a risk that Russia would initiate physical countermeasures. If Russia had already escalated measures to the point of provoking a U.S. response, this may be an indication of Russia’s dedication to maintaining control in the region. In this case, Russia would be willing to continue upping the ante to pursue its goal, instead of being dissuaded by U.S. assistance.

Regarding the U.S., Russia will most likely increase its hostile rhetoric and decrease its willingness to negotiate and work with the U.S. on issues ranging from Moldova and Ukraine, to Syria and Iran. Continuing conflict in Ukraine has contributed to worsening U.S.-Russia relations. As recent as April 2015, the U.S. and other world powers reached the preliminary stages of a nuclear agreement with Iran. However, within days of this progress, Russia complicated the agreement by lifting its ban against missile rocket sales to Iran. This deal creates a lucrative (potentially $800 million) opportunity for Russia, but the U.S. views it as contradictory to the nature and progress of the ongoing nuclear talks, potentially increasing Iran’s nuclear aggression. Analysts have speculated that Russia’s decision to remove the missile ban in Iran could be a tactic meant to pressure the U.S. into rethinking its participation in the Ukraine crisis.

In the most extreme situation, tensions could escalate to physical conflict. While the threat of physical war between the U.S. and Russia would be disastrous, it is highly unlikely. U.S. weapons provision, of any kind, creates the opportunity for a proxy war to develop in Ukraine between the U.S. and Russia. The greatest risk would be a resurgence of Cold War-era hostilities between the U.S. and Russia, particularly on the nuclear and international cooperation levels. Were the U.S. to provide non-lethal assistance to

---

69 If Russia chooses to interfere with energy resources of any NATO member, Moldova, Georgia, or Ukraine, then the President can impose escalating sanctions on people or entities associated with such obstruction.  
70 Russian Embassy. 2014.  
71 “Rockets kill 30 in Mariupol as rebels launch offensive.” 2015.  
72 “Iran nuclear talks to resume on April 21, Zarif says.” 2015.  
73 MacFarquhar. 2015.  
74 Isachenkov. 2015.
Moldova, there may be a move toward these Cold War-era tensions, chilling the U.S.’s influence abroad and further exposing the U.S. to the growing Russian threat.

**Expected program impact**

Additional weapons and training could have a positive impact on the Moldovan troops. Communications interoperability would allow Moldova to interact with U.S. and NATO troops more fluidly, helping to secure borders and increase reaction times. Russian backed-separatists have been able to jam communications and signals from the Ukrainian military, interfering with operations. Moldovan troops could be more prepared to protect themselves against a possible Russian invasion with the Humvees and detection equipment. In a best-case scenario where Moldovan troops learn quickly and properly, non-lethal aid could boost their defensive posture by a marginally small amount.

However, as discussed earlier, the Moldovan troops are small, poorly funded, and lack cohesive structure. Without discipline, advanced training on non-lethal equipment will be cumbersome, time consuming, and potentially ineffective. This strategy also assumes there will be sufficient time between non-lethal aid provision and Russian invasion. Moldova would need months to learn proper techniques, and if Russia were aware of the partnership they could interfere before training was complete, preventing any potential Moldovan advantage.

Furthermore Moldova may not learn to use the weapons properly or effectively, potentially countering the original intent. Even if the Moldovan troops learned to use the weapons effectively, they may still prove to be ineffective in countering Russian advances, given the size of the Russian military.

**Effect on other U.S. relationships**

This program will have a positive effect on the United States’ relationship with Moldova. Continued U.S. investment in long-term Moldovan security will enhance the relationship between the two countries, particularly from Moldova’s point of view. U.S. military training and advanced non-lethal equipment contributes to the Moldovan government’s long-term Western integration plans.

NATO could have varying participation in the program, mostly through NATO allies participating individually. Among NATO allies, Germany and Hungary have expressed the most hesitation regarding support for Eastern European non-NATO partners. Since this strategy involves the direct contribution of military equipment, it will most likely not be fully supported by the two nations, potentially contributing to the schism in NATO. When the idea of U.S. sponsored non-lethal aid was presented in Congress, Germany was vocal about its opposition. If the U.S. were to pursue this route, Germany may undermine U.S. efforts by pursuing its own policy with Russia, potentially agreeing to limit aid and support to Ukraine.

---

75 Interview- U.S. Army War College Expert
76 Sonne. 2015
Countries that have supported bolstering defenses in the region, such as Poland, Latvia and Estonia, may use U.S. aid provision as a justification to join the effort. Many of these countries have also debated whether or not to send aid, and if the U.S. were to initiate a non-lethal aid package, it may pave the way for other countries to contribute. Finally, countries such as the UK and France, which have tried to remain neutral in the conflict, may have varying responses. While these countries are not likely to contribute equipment, they may escalate joint training exercises with troops or find other, less provocative ways, to show support. In March of 2015, after the U.S. pledged $75 million in non-lethal military aid, the UK refused to contribute equipment, but did provide increased first-aid trainings to Ukrainian troops.  

4. Provide lethal aid to Moldova.

Details
If tensions were to escalate in the region, the threat of Russian invasion and possible crossfire could increase. Hoping to maintain regional stability, the U.S. could reasonably seek to react in-kind by providing lethal aid to Moldova. U.S. provided offensive and defensive lethal aid consists of machinery and trainings that could bolster Moldova’s capabilities. Similar to providing non-lethal aid, the goal of providing lethal aid to Moldova is two-fold. First, by providing lethal capabilities, the U.S. hopes to deter Russia from further escalation by increasing their risks and costs to engagement. Second, if tensions boil over, Moldova would have access to weapons to defend itself and impose damage.

Financial costs
Similar to this report’s non-lethal aid estimates, pricing is based on U.S. weapons provision estimates in Ukraine. Providing lethal aid to Moldova may cost anywhere between $300 million and $1 billion.

Feasibility and Implementation
U.S. provision of lethal aid faces similar challenges to providing non-lethal aid. The DoD and DoS would be in charge of acquiring and transferring weapons once Congress provided approval and appropriated funds. However, gaining Congressional approval for lethal aid will be more challenging than approval for non-lethal aid.

If tensions escalate, and the United States responds with lethal aid to Moldova, Congress would be allowing the U.S. to engage in conflict that could create a proxy war with Russia. Unlike non-lethal aid, Congress would additionally need to evaluate the risk of associating the U.S. with potential casualties from weapons use. Congress would need to justify the threat of Russian tensions against U.S. interests in a sovereign Moldova and stable Eastern Europe. Looking at the current debate in Congress over non-lethal and lethal equipment provision to Ukraine, there is likely to be significant pushback regarding provision in Moldova, especially if the situation lacks physical confrontation or crossfire.

77 Foster. 2015.
78 Bora. 2015.
Financial requirements only further complicate this debate. Congress will need to decide whether how to appropriate lethal aid: sales or donations. Congress may be unwilling to essentially donate up to $1 billion in arms and equipment to Moldova before physical conflict has actually materialized.

This is a medium-term program that could face a lag of several weeks to months before lethal aid would be delivered. Lethal aid would require additional training for operations, maintenance, and repair, further elongating the time before Moldovan forces could use the weapons.

Russian reaction
Providing lethal aid to Moldova could result in one of two outcomes. First, Russia could de-escalate tensions when faced with the threat of U.S. involvement and a lethally armed Moldova. As mentioned earlier, Russia inflicts chaos in its frozen conflicts as a source of leverage and power. By introducing U.S.-backed lethal aid in Moldova, the U.S. is changing the nature of conflict in Transnistria, thus forcing Russia to reassess the costs of further engagement. Russia has previously responded to the threat of U.S. weapons provision with negotiations and peace talks and may be willing to respond peacefully.

Alternatively, Russia could respond to lethal aid by increasing the stakes. Russia could further expand its troop presence, perform escalate exercises on the border, encourage troops to cross the Moldovan border and other intimidation techniques, or provide both non-lethal and lethal equipment to their troops. If Russia does not back down, they may rise to the challenge and engage Moldovan troops. This reaction becomes all the more likely since Russia is capable of defeating Moldova, regardless of Moldova’s weapon capability. Russia has responded vehemently to the threat of U.S. lethal aid provision in Ukraine. Russia has responded to these threats, noting that lethal aid would be a direct threat to its security. It is likely that lethal aid provision in Moldova would provoke some sort of escalated response from Russia.

If the U.S. provided lethal aid to Moldova, U.S.-Russia relations would suffer greatly. On the precipice of a physical proxy war in Moldova, Russia would likely attempt further interference with U.S. relations abroad, further threatening the U.S.’s reliance on Russia on international matters. The danger of some sort of Russian nuclear reaction would become more menacing. Russia could reaffirm its nuclear rights to the world, and initiate nuclear exercises as a form of intimidation and recognition of its power.

Expected program impact
U.S. provision of lethal aid will put modern weapons in the hands of Moldovan troops. In theory this appears to be an effective strategy to defend a sovereign Moldova; however, given the Moldovan military’s current operating level, this could prove to be ineffective.

80 Heinrichs. 2014.
In order to effectively operate modern lethal equipment, the Moldovan military will need months of operational trainings. Because they lack discipline, a command structure, and other components necessary for a successful military, the training may take longer or prove to be ineffective. At that point, the potential benefit of providing lethal equipment would diminish, since the troops may not be able to use them properly. Furthermore, the troops may pose a risk to themselves if equipment is not handled with care.\(^{81}\)

The potential lag time between Congressional approval and weapons receipt by Moldovan troops is a potential impediment to this strategy’s effectiveness. Russia could have the opportunity to react to lethal aid provision before the weapons are physically delivered. If Russia chooses to pursue an escalating Moldova policy knowing that the U.S. has approved lethal aid provision, Russia could attempt to abolish any potential Moldovan advantage. In response to this policy, Russia could fortify troop presence on the border, escalate exercises and weapons supplies, and could go as far as invading Moldova to claim the territory as its own.

**Effect on other U.S. relationships**

This program would have a positive effect on U.S.-Moldovan relations. The Moldovan government has been very open about its desire for further western integration.\(^{82}\) In the event of escalation, the government would be open to U.S. assistance. However, there may be hesitancy from some of the citizenry, as discussed earlier, since certain portions of the population are cautious not to isolate Russia. Furthermore, U.S. provision of lethal aid is a financial and diplomatic commitment that could shift the onus of Moldovan sovereignty toward the United States. If the U.S. was the only country providing aid, it may become liable for situational fallout, further integrating the U.S.’s relationship with Moldova and potentially increasing risks to the United States.

If the U.S. pursued this strategy, they would likely do so without NATO’s approval. This report previously discussed NATO’s internal divide regarding support for Eastern European non-NATO partners. Lethal aid raises the stakes and risks for not only Moldova, but also regional NATO members who could be victim to spillover conflict. Eastern European members would most likely support this measure as a way to both counter Russia and protect their own borders, but face steep opposition from other members, even members who have been neutral up to this point. Spillover conflict could bring NATO member countries closer to Article 5 participation, which has only been invoked during the 9/11 crises.\(^{83}\) It is unlikely that NATO would support lethal aid in Moldova given NATO’s response to the Ukraine crisis. Currently, NATO Commander Breedlove opposes lethal aid to Ukraine even though Ukraine is in the midst of physical crossfire; it is therefore unlikely that NATO would support lethal aid to Moldova before physical conflicts has even materialized.\(^{84}\)

Isolating NATO by providing lethal assistance in Moldova is a dangerous strategy for the United States. Were the U.S. to pursue this path countries like Germany, may openly

---

\(^{81}\) Frye. 2015.
\(^{82}\) Interview-Moldovan Ambassador to the United States
\(^{84}\) Watson. 2015.
criticize U.S. action and chill foreign relations with the U.S. This move would not only harm the U.S.’s relationship with NATO, but could potentially weaken the alliance’s global power and ability to counter Russia.

**Analysis Breakdown**

Providing lethal aid to Moldova (Strategy 4) is the most extreme option this report provides. While there is a small chance lethal aid provision will deter Russian aggression, the likelihood is low. In addition to the low likelihood of success, the financial costs and risks associated with this strategy’s implementation are high, further offsetting any potential benefits. Potential Russian military confrontation, further deterioration of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Russia, damage to the U.S.’s relationship with NATO, and loss of NATO’s credibility are among the biggest risks the U.S. faces. This issue is more than just the risks outweighing the benefits, but a matter of U.S. interests in Moldova not being strong enough to justify these risks. The U.S. should not pursue a strategy that cannot guarantee Moldovan security and chances physical confrontation with Russia. All of this is further compounded by the fact that there is very little chance Congress would pass a resolution allowing the U.S. to provide lethal aid, for the reasons stated above.

U.S. non-lethal aid provision, Strategy 3, presents both benefits and considerable challenges to U.S. policy. The potential physical benefits of non-lethal aid provision are short-lived and are burdened by the financial and diplomatic costs that would likely result. Non-lethal aid could provide some short-term defense for Moldova, but does not provide enough assistance to improve Moldova’s long-term capabilities. Any Moldovan success would be short-lived. Yet, there are some likely benefits that may result from Strategy 3. Non-lethal aid provision forces Russia to consider the steep costs involved with continuing escalation. By changing Russia’s calculus, the U.S. hopes to dissuade Russia from pursuing aggression. Furthermore, non-lethal aid demonstrates U.S. support to allies in the region who are in need of security reassurance.

Looking at the risks, non-lethal assistance provision could provoke Russian aggression, thereby initiating a physical conflict that Moldova is incapable of winning. Non-lethal aid may not bring the U.S. as close to conflict with Russia as Strategy 4, but U.S.-Russia relations are still likely to deteriorate. Furthermore, providing non-lethal aid risks amplifying NATO’s internal divides. Since NATO is the U.S. and Europe’s strongest defense against Russia, any potential loss in NATO’s operational credibility could damage their joint power. While Strategy 3 may not be as risky as Strategy 4, it could still damage U.S.-NATO relations and pull the U.S. further into conflict with Russia, all while not changing Moldova’s power position on the ground.

Reviewing the remaining options, Strategies 1 and 2 present less severe risks and lower costs for the United States moving forward. Reducing security assistance (Strategy 1), could elicit an array of responses from Russia, ranging from diplomatic talks to Russian occupation and heightened political influence in Moldova. Meanwhile, the potential range of responses for Strategy 2, status quo, are simpler to gauge since the program is already in place. It is reasonable to suggest that since the current level of U.S. security
assistance to Moldova produces only marginal effects on the country’s overall military, it may not be a worthwhile option. However, the benefits of Strategy 2 extend beyond material improvements and address the greater policy of Western influence in Moldova. Moldova wants to develop (and needs) assistance. If the U.S. were to restrict assistance, not only would it damage U.S.-Moldovan relations, but it would essentially open the door for increased Russian involvement in Moldova. Strategy 2 allows the U.S. to maintain its influence, blocking Russia, while additionally preserving U.S.-Moldovan relations. Finally, Strategy 1 could create additional issues within NATO. Eastern European members would be upset if the U.S. scaled back its current assistance, potentially creating feelings of betrayal and anxiousness over future U.S. policy towards Russia. Even though some NATO members may want more regional assistance, Strategy 2 is NATO-approved and does not add to internal disputes.

**Recommendation**

In the event of escalation, the United States should pursue Strategy 2 and continue providing the current level of security assistance to Moldova.
Appendices

Appendix 1:
Map of Major Players Moldova, Transnistria, Ukraine, Crimea, Russia, and Georgian Frozen Conflicts.


Appendix 2
Ukraine Crisis

1954 - Crimea becomes part of Ukraine.
1991 - Ukrainian Independence from USSR.
March 2012 - EU and Ukraine Draft Economic Association Agreement
2012-2013 - Ukrainian President Yanukovych negotiates possibility of cooperation with Eurasian Customs Union
July 2013 - Ukraine continues pursuing EU AA, Russia halts Ukrainian chocolate imports.
Nov. 2013  - Ukrainian Government abandons EU AA, pushing forward with plan to joint Eurasian Customs Union. Ukrainian citizens protest.


March 2014  - Russian backed troops seize and annex Crimean Peninsula. U.S. and EU initiate economic sanctions against Russia.

April 2014  - Russian-backed separatists seize Ukrainian border regions of Donetsk and Luhans, NATO suspends activities with Russia. Transnistrarian citizens request Russian recognition of their independence.

May 2014  - Ukraine elects pro-west President, Petro Poroshenko.

June 2014  - Poroshenko signs EU AA.

July 2014  - Malaysian Airplane shot down in Ukraine.

Aug. 2014  - NATO openly announces that Russia is directly supporting Ukrainian separatists.

Sept. 2014  - Minsk peace plan initiating ceasefire is signed and shortly violated.

Jan. 2015  - Russian-backed separatists capture Donetsk airport, Ukrainian troops retreat.

Feb. 2015  - Germany and France broker new ceasefire.


Appendix 3
Russian as Native Language

http://www.cnn.com/interactive/2014/02/world/ukraine-divided/
Appendix 5
NATO Article 5

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.
Works Cited


