

The Day the Bear Cowered: Russian Non-Intervention in the Baltics

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Introduction

After Russia's annexation of Crimea and subsequent involvement in the Ukrainian Crisis, the Baltic states and NATO have been worried about a possible Russian invasion. This has led to an increase in NATO troop deployment in the Baltics and an increase in Russian troop deployment close to the border. This has the potential to escalate into a militarization race and increase tensions between NATO countries and Russia to the point where they could snap, resulting in a militarized conflict. Traditionally, Russia has jealously guarded its "sphere of influence," which is mostly found in post-soviet republics. However, the Baltics managed to secede from Russia's sphere of influence in 2004 when they joined the EU and NATO. So would Russia really invade NATO and EU member countries, risking international retaliation? But more importantly, why didn't Russia militarily intervene in the Baltics before 2004, when the situation was more favorable?

This a puzzling question, because out of all the post-soviet republics, only the Baltic States were allowed to leave Russia's sphere of influence. Moreover, little research has been done as to why this happened, especially when all other attempts made by post-soviet republics have been met with militarized Russian intervention. Russia has invested interest to maintain in these post-soviet republics an informal empire, a concept formalized by David Lake's work in "escape from the state of Nature". To do so, Russia has turned to division tactics and deployment of troops that forcibly keep states within Russia's zone of influence and push foreign influence away.

After the dissolution of the USSR, the Baltics made it very clear that they wanted to join NATO and the EU and refused to join Russian pioneered unions such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Therefore, the Baltics presented a clear desire to leave Russia's sphere

of influence. But unlike other post-soviet republics which did the same, i.e. Georgia and Moldova, the Baltics were allowed to secede. If there ever was a time that Russia would've militarily intervened in the Baltics, it was during this thirteen year time period from independence in 1991 to NATO and EU accession in 2004. By doing so Russia would've prevented the Baltics from joining the EU and NATO, thereby forcibly keeping them within Russia's zone of influence, as was done with Moldova and Georgia in 1992. A militarily intervention in the Baltics was in Russia's economic, cultural and security interests and such a precedent had already been established in Moldova and Georgia. However, despite Russian interests in the Baltics, something must have dissuaded the use of force. So the question arises, why didn't Russia militarily intervene in the Baltics?

This is an important question to ask, because if Russia is a revisionist state that seeks to gain power relative to other states, it would disrupt the international order (Schweller, 87). Therefore, by studying the conditions in which Russia is dissuaded from military intervention, scholars and foreign policy makers can decipher when Russia is inclined to intervene and the best policies to address and prevent it. This would result in less international conflicts, less cold relations with Russia and the West maintaining its control of the current international system. Therefore, foreign policy makers, international relations scholars and even peace activists should be interested in answering this question.

The literature available that directly addresses this matter is sparse, and more often than not, it answers why Russia wants to militarily intervene in post-soviet states. While this is certainly an important question it has been studied and written about by many authors. To name just a few, Mearsheimer's famous "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault", Mead's "The Return of Geopolitics" and Lanoszka's "Russian hybrid warfare and extended deterrence in

eastern Europe” all address this question of why Russia uses military intervention. That is why this thesis focuses more specifically on why Russia didn’t intervene in a particular case, when all the literature, policy makers and populace said that it wanted to. This paper intends to show why the Baltic case was distinct from other post-soviet cases, particularly Moldova and Georgia, and that this distinction created a scenario in which Russia was unwilling to use military intervention, despite its interest to do so.

In order to do so, this paper shall look at the literature available and uses it to frame a theoretical argument that highlights the factors that explain Russian military intervention, and then applies that framework to several case studies. The central hypotheses of this paper is that Russia makes decision to militarily intervene based on levels of host country civic nationalism, the perception of international retaliation and the diplomatic relationship between Russia and Western states. This thesis begins first by conducting a literature review around literature surrounding empires, the mindset and culture of empire and Russian foreign policy. It then delves into a theoretical analysis of international relations theory, why and how Russia uses its military and what spheres of influence are and how they affect Russia’s conception of itself in the world. Next, this thesis shall propose three hypotheses that’ll attempt to explain Russian military intervention and shall go over the methodology of how they shall be explored and operationalized. Finally, these hypotheses shall be applied to three case studies: Russian military intervention in Moldova’s Transnistria and Georgia’s Abkhazia and Russia’s nonintervention in the Baltics, before concluding which hypotheses are found to be accurate explanatory variables for Russian military intervention.

Literature Review

The literature surrounding the Baltic secession from the post-soviet, Russian Empire focuses mostly on cultural differences between the Baltics and Russia and the other successor states (states that arose after the dissolution of the USSR) and the incoherence/failure of Russia foreign policy regarding the Baltic States. There is also little to no literature on why NATO and the EU allowed the Baltics states to join and why Russia did not pursue extraordinary measures (military intervention through the deployment of Russian Troops on the border or even deployment in the Baltics for the protection of Russian Minorities) to prevent this from happening.

The literature available clearly highlights that Russia had the justification and motivation to prevent the Baltics from joining NATO and the EU, so why didn't Russia pursue this. This is truly a puzzling question and the answer provided in literature is unsatisfactory. Most literature, like Smith's "Russian Foreign Policy 2000: The Near Abroad" and Herd's "Russia's Baltic Policy After the Meltdown" claim that Russian foreign policy was simply ineffectual and incoherent towards keeping the Baltics under Russian influence. However, this only tell readers what a country like Russia shouldn't do if they want to maintain a sphere of influence, instead of telling states in a sphere of influence how to secede from an informal empire or how other states might assist in the process. Answers that explain this latter case are more compelling and more useful for diplomacy and foreign policy making in regards to the West's approach towards Russia. Russia had real impetus to keep the Baltics from joining the NATO and the EU and this thesis argues that Russia was clear in its intentions and actively pursued coherent foreign policy to prevent the Baltics from joining NATO and the EU.

Susan Birgerson's book "After the Breakup of a Multi-Ethnic Empire" deals with the post imperial implications of the breakup of the Soviet Union's empire. Birgerson asserts that most literature takes the USSR as an empire for granted and haven't looked at what really makes an empire. First, Birgerson defines what an empire is in comparison to what a state is. According to Birgerson, "empires consist of a center and a periphery" (9). This center is territorially in the heart of the empire, is politically the center of decision making and is nationally consider the homeland (Birgerson, 9). Meanwhile, "there is no center or periphery in a state," (Birgerson, 15) they are fundamentally administered differently than an Empire. An empire is solely focused on outward administration, all decisions comes from the center and are implemented outwards. For Birgerson, an empire is dominated by one nationality that governs impartially (16).

In their article, Musgrave and Nexon define empire very similarly to Birgerson. They state that "empires are a form of transnational hierarchy involving a particular kind of core-periphery system, one combining indirect rule with heterogeneous contracting" (Musgrave and Nexon, 213). This definition uses the same kind of core-periphery structure that Birgerson uses, but goes further by defining it as an inherently unequal system that is based on authority and contracts. These contracts determine what goods the center can extract from the periphery and what benefits, usually security, the periphery shall receive from the center. However, this contract is lopsided in that only the center has the power to enforce it (Musgrave and Nexon, 214).

Musgrave and Nexon also make a distinction between informal and formal empires. For them informal empires are ones where the peripheries are allowed to develop their own relations to other peripheries or states. However this makes them hard to spot and the only way to tell is when the peripheries deviates beyond their contract and are punished (Musgrave and Nexon,

220). They characterize the USSR as having an informal empire in relation to the member states of the Warsaw Pact. From their logic it could also be assumed that Russia had a formal empire within the USSR. However, after the breakdown of the USSR, the informal empire slipped away and the formal empire became the informal empire. Musgrave and Nexon point to Russian involvement in Abkhazia and South Ossetia as a means in which Russia has incorporated more territory in its informal empire and as a way to punish Georgia for breaching the “contract” of its imperial relationship with Russia (222). From this similar, but more holistic definition of empire, it can clearly be seen that the USSR was an empire which fell and Russia is still trying to rule that empire.

Finally, David Lake also has a definition of empire. For him, empire is established when a state, in a hierarchical structure with another state or states maintains a certain level of security hierarchy and economic hierarchy (Lake, 59). The thought behind this, is that a state must control a certain level of the security and economy of another state before it can enter into a hierarchical relationship. From there, it must then control higher levels of security and the economy of that state before it can establish an informal empire, and then even more before it can establish a formal empire. While this definition is very different from both Birgerson’s and Musgrave’s and Nexon’s, it still firmly places the USSR as an empire, an example which Lake actually uses (61) and provides a clear way to identify whether or not Russia, after the fall of the USSR, can be considered owning an informal empire.

Birgerson also frames the USSR as an empire, because it contained a center, Russia, which was also the dominant nationality and governed outwardly to its periphery from Moscow. Importantly, it was Russia that was considered the center and therefore it was Russia that inherited the remnants of empire after the breakup of the USSR. Russia inherited the USSR’s

seat on the UN Security Council, all the debts of the USSR and the Soviet Military, therefore it was viewed as the clear successor. As such, its behavior after the breakup of empire has been heavily influenced by its past imperial position (Birgerson, 29). This results in its “superior attitude in its relations with the former periphery... heightened feelings of insecurity and inadequacy... and should foreign powers attempt to take advantage of the weakened position of the center by establishing a presence in the former periphery, the center can be expected to react negatively” (Birgerson, 29). Therefore, Russia can be expected to continue to act as an empire and maintain its influence, because such mindsets don’t die with the death of the empire.

In his “Long Telegram,” George Kennan goes deep into the Russian psyche. Kennan claims that Russian feelings of insecurity stems from that fact that Russians were “a peaceful agricultural people trying to live on vast exposed plain in neighborhood of fierce nomadic peoples.” This was then followed by a “fear of more competent, more powerful, more highly organized societies” once Russia came in contact with the West (Kennan). Moreover, Kennan claims that that Russia has “never known a friendly neighbor.” For these reasons Russia has “always feared foreign penetration” leading Russia to historically pursue security as their main interest (Kennan). This mindset of insecurity has forced Russia into a militarily powerful state as it needed to be for its survival. It also has forced Russia to pursue “security only in patient but deadly struggle for total destruction of rival power” (Kennan). Ultimately this mindset of insecurity turned Russia into an empire, as it continually sought the destruction of its neighbors so that Russia could be secure. Moreover, this mindset persists to this day.

Angela Stent also talks about the mentality of post-empire states in her article “Farewell to Empire?” Stent also goes into history to find that the concept of Russia has always been a concept of empire and territorial expansion for four centuries (4). Therefore, Stent questions the

idea that Russia would forgo imperialism after the death of its empire and instead argues that continued Russian imperialism should be expected due to the vast imperial history and mentality that has defined Russia and will continue to define Russia (6).

Pranas Ciziunas agrees with Stent and Birgerson. Russia has always seen itself as a great power and Russians suffer from the Greatness Syndrome, which is the desire to live in a superior nation (Ciziunas, 287). All four authors claim that Russia's imperial mentality shouldn't have, nor has changed since the fall of the Russian Soviet Empire. Russia still seeks to dominate its neighbors, which used to be the periphery of its empire. The Baltics incorporation into the Soviet Union was useful as a buffer zone against western encroachment and modern day Russia still views it the same way (Ciziunas, 287). Therefore, the incorporation of the Baltics into the West through NATO and EU ascension was contrary to Russia's interests and actively sought to prevent the Baltic incorporation into the West and maintain the buffer zone.

There is a lot of literature which outline Russia's interests in not just maintaining a zone of influence but also preventing Baltic NATO and EU ascension. Birgerson states that "Russia cannot ignore events taking place in the near abroad because of its central role in these conflicts" (69). Moreover, the international community was not about to take on the task of resolving and constraining these conflicts and these events impact to varying degrees the domestic situation in Russia (Birgerson, 69). Therefore, it is in Russia's best interest to police and control its zone of influence and remain the only actor in the region big enough to do so. Therefore, Russia has interest in keeping NATO from expanding eastwards into Russia's sphere of influence.

The common view in Russia, is that NATO was a security alliance to protect the West against the USSR. When the USSR dissolved and Russia took its place, Russia was no longer interested in engaging the West in conflicts. Therefore, the mission of NATO became obsolete

and its continued existence is inherently anti-Russian. While the mission directive of NATO could be debated, it doesn't matter. This is because even though there were steps taken to integrate Russia into the NATO structure to dismiss this animosity, it remained the popular Russian perception, which influences how it approaches NATO. This rift between NATO and Russia was reopened with NATO intervention in Kosovo, which set the precedent for possible NATO intervention in Chechnya (Birgerson, 70).

Since, NATO is seen as a competitor and possibly an adversary, the expansion of NATO into the Baltics was seen as a serious strategic problem. According to Stephan Blank, if NATO forces were to be deployed in the Baltics "they would be only 75 miles from St. Petersburg, able to launch tactical aircraft carrying precision guided missiles or nuclear weapons that would be less than an hour flight from St. Petersburg and Moscow. It could launch either conventional or nuclear sea-based missiles from the Baltic coast, greatly enhancing the potential for a surprise attack and gaining further control of the flight patterns for such missile launches against Russia. NATO could blockade the Baltic Sea against Russia and it could surround and cut off Kaliningrad from Russia" (58). Russia's minimum demands for further NATO expansion was that new members like Poland and the Baltics are demilitarized and that the NATO-Russia Council becomes an established governing body (Blank, 59). Needless to say none of these demands were met, which further antagonized Russia and its future relations with NATO.

Moreover, Russia is interested in protecting the 25 million ethnic and language speaking Russian in the post-soviet republics. More than 1 million of these lived in the Baltics. While Russia has historically used Russian minorities as a means to insert themselves into post-soviet republics, there is also legitimate concern with how Russian minorities are treated, particularly in the Baltics. Citizenship Laws in both Estonia and Latvia were extremely strict, and resulted in

the almost complete exclusion of ethnic Russians by denying them the right to vote, the ability to work in in civil service and government jobs, the ability to own land, and purchase housing from the state (which was the sole provider of housing), and were not guaranteed the right of reentry if they left the country (Birgerson, 174).

Moreover, the naturalization processing was slow and tedious, had limits to the number of new citizens, had short time limits for application, and was extremely dependent on the discretion of the authorities (Birgerson, 175-176). Russia was legitimately concerned about the treatment of its ex-nationals and often times held out on other important decisions such as border agreements and troop's withdrawal as a means to pressure the Baltics to improve the situations for Russian minorities. Russia also maintained that it had the authority and duty to protect Russian minorities abroad. Kozyrev, Russia's foreign minister from 1991-1996 did not rule out the use of force under certain conditions, in order to protect vulnerable Russian minorities (Birgerson, 71).

Finally, Russia has economic interests in the post-soviet republics. Their economies are inextricably linked which can easily be seen with the Russia 1998 financial crisis which effected all post-soviet republics. For these post-soviet republics Russia is their primary source of raw materials (Birgerson, 80), and it is in Russia's best interests to keep that relationship. If those republics were to sign trade agreements with the EU, as the Baltics sought to do, it would reduce their dependence on Russia, subsequently decreasing Russian influence and reducing Russian trade income. Another key aspect of Russian economic interest and influence is gas and oil dependency. Nearly all the post-soviet republics rely on Russian gas and oil, moreover, they can't afford to pay for it (Birgerson, 81). This gives Russian tremendous bargaining power in the region and it is a position Russia seeks to maintain.

Russia's foreign policy goals were quite clear and unwavering. In relations to the Baltics, it was quite simply to "oppose the Baltic strategic military re-orientation towards NATO" (Herd, 200). Moreover, from the literature available on Russian foreign policy in the Baltics, Russia can be seen pursuing multiple avenues of diplomacy in order to maintain influence in the area. Much of the literature claims that Russia used a hybrid of both hard and soft diplomacy. For Herd this resulted in feet dragging on important issues such as troop withdrawal and border negotiations and threats about intervention on behalf of Russian minorities (198-199). Russia also pushed back against NATO enlargement in the Russia-NATO council and tried to negotiate favorable concessions from NATO, including the de-militarization of new states ascending to NATO. Russia strategically used border negotiations with the Baltics to leverage NATO, because NATO was clear in that it would not accept new states without delineated borders (Herd, 201). For Herd, Russia also used soft power economics to maintain influence in the Baltics. This centered on "the integration of transportation infrastructures and the creation of a common market for communications, services and business information" (203). This resulted in the creation of a unified energy grid in the region and gas pipelines through the Baltics. Herd doesn't specifically talk about how Russia used economic leverage to pressure the Baltics to not join NATO and the EU, but other authors do.

Ciziunas highlights how Russia has tried to obtain a monopoly in the energy sector. Gazprom is the state owned energy conglomerate, which has purchased favorable contracts in the post-soviet republics. This makes Gazprom the single biggest supplier in the region, making states like the Baltics energy dependent on them. Using this kind of leverage, Russia has repeatedly shut of the gas pipelines in the Baltics as a way to punish the Baltics for mistreating Russian minorities and as a bargaining chip to get concessions. Ciziunas also highlights that

Russian seeks to maintain influence in the post-soviet republics through the use of diplomatic pressure, propaganda and disinformation campaigns, Military threats and peacekeeping deployments, and exploiting ethnic and social discontent (290-291). What is interesting is that Russia deployed all of these methods except peacekeeping missions. These peacekeeping missions have been crucial in keeping Georgia and Moldova from joining NATO and the EU.

Finally, Wilson and Popescu outline how Russia's foreign policy has actually been more successful than the EU's. They delineate between Russian cultural and political soft power and military and economic hard power. Russia soft power includes "web technology used to export its own brand of political technology" and the support of Pro Russian NGOs (Wilson and Popescu, 319). Ironically those NGOs often propagate concepts like "sovereign democracy" or "responsible democracy" (Wilson and Popescu, 320). All of these methods are ways in which Russia uses information campaigns to increase Russian sympathy in the post-soviet republics, thereby creating popular support for Russia and thereby more influence in the domestic politics. Wilson and Popescu also highlight how Russia has cut gas supplies or deployed peacekeeping troops to send signals (321). Russia has also used ethnic nationalism to foment discontent in the post-soviet republics, thereby forcing these states to take a more conciliatory approach towards Russia. So the question remains, despite Russia's broad use of all these different foreign policies, why were the Baltics allowed to join the NATO and the EU?

There isn't much literature on why Russia's foreign Baltic foreign policy didn't work, or why they didn't pursue more extreme measures. Ziugzda points to a "positive Baltic policy" adopted by Russia. This means that Russia encouraged the expansion of the EU into the Baltics (Ziugzda, 11). But also that Russia sought to improve relations in the Baltics. This meant granting them some autonomy, instead of forcing them into Russia's zone of influence as done

with the other post-soviet states. The problem with Ziugzda's article is that it doesn't look in depth enough. It outlines that Russia treated the Baltics more positively than the other post-soviet states in order to improve relations, thereby increasing influence, but it doesn't state why. Why did Russia not impose itself on the Baltics, they had the power and motivation to do so, but instead chose to follow a foreign policy that ended up failing.

Mihkelson doesn't explicitly give an answer, to this, but he does hint towards one. After the fall of the USSR there was a general warming of relations between the West and Russia. There was also a lot of pressure coming from the West and sheer determination from the Baltics that persuaded Russia to not pursue a harsher strategy. For one, the US never officially recognized the annexation of the Baltics (Mihkelson, 272) and the Baltics often state the illegality of their annexation as a means to justify their secession from Russia's zone of influence. Moreover, in 2002, Putin claimed that he believed it would be a tactical and strategic mistake to prevent the Baltics ascension to NATO (Mihkelson, 277). This once again hints that Russia was reluctant to follow more aggressive policies that would anger the West, since the West actively supported the Baltics NATO. Since the West was involved it was more likely that Western Nations would condemn and punish Russia for following a more aggressive policy.

Also the available literature seems to have taken for granted that the Baltics would leave Russia's zone of influence and join NATO and the EU. In his book, Spruyt displays this quite nicely, "With the exception of the Baltics, it seemed reasonable for Russian decision makers to presuppose that most of the other Union republics would continue to seek some form of association with Russia" (222). But why did it seem "inevitable" that the Baltics would join the West, but it was see as improbable that other post-soviet nations would leave Russia's zone of

influence. This view must've been forged, by the historical belligerence of the Baltics and their instance to join the West.

As Spruyt points out, "In Latvia... 73.6 percent favored Latvian independence. But with Latvians making up only 54% of the population and Russians 34%" (220), it wasn't just the ethnic population that felt they needed to be independent from Russia but ethnic Russians also felt the same way. This insistence from the Baltics stems from the belief that they were illegally annexed and had privileged access to Nordic countries and by association with the West through the Baltic Sea. Mihkelson also points to a culture in the Baltics that is historically Western and guided by western rationality (271). Therefore, the Baltics viewed themselves as more culturally western and this played a factor in their determination to secede from the Russian empire.

There is a lot of available literature on Russia. Moreover, a lot of the literature places the USSR as an empire, and Russia as either possessing an informal empire or trying to possess an informal empire. However, when reading the literature on Russian foreign policy goals, actions and capabilities, it becomes puzzling as to why Russia was willing to let go of its influence in the Baltics. What is more puzzling is that there isn't really any literature that explicitly deals with this conundrum. Partial answers can be gleaned from a myriad of various texts, but there hasn't been much work, if any, that bring these answers together to form a coherent logic to answer this question.

International Relations Theory

This paper operates under realist/rationalist conception of International Relation theory and their assumptions about the states system. In his work, Mearsheimer lays out these five assumptions as 1) States operate under a system of Anarchy, 2) Great Powers have offensive military capabilities, 3) States can never be certain of another state's intentions, 4) Survival is the primary goal of states and 5) states are rational actors (- a, 37-38). Anarchy refers to the fact that states operate without a higher authority that can set rules and enforce them. Therefore, states can pursue actions deemed to be in their own self-interest without penalty or restriction being dictated to them. Therefore, this makes the cost of pursuing self-interest significantly more affordable than in a non-anarchy world. The second assumption is fairly straight forward. It claims that great powers are actually threatening, because they have the ability use offensive action, and their military capabilities aren't just for defense. The third assumption is that states operate in a system of uncertainty where they cannot trust what other states say, and can never truly be certain of another states intentions. The fourth assumption claims that states will always prioritize their own survival. Therefore, states are overly sensitive to aggressive actions and power shifts, because they are seen as a threat to survival. Lastly, the fifth assumption is important because it means that states will make rational decisions based on the above assumptions, therefore, making it easier to understand and logically follow and predict how states will and should act towards one another.

Under these circumstances, states almost always act according to their own self-interest and do not subordinate their interests to the interests of other states" (Mearsheimer - a, 39). Therefore, Russia prioritizes the creation of spheres of influences and buffer zones, as a means to protect itself from western powers. Russia does not necessarily care about the West's interests in

post-soviet states or how Russia's action are perceived by the West. At least if Russia does care, it cares more about its survival and its own interests. As shall be highlighted later, a key part of the Russian psyche is the creation and maintenance of spheres of influence and buffer zones. Therefore, Russia shall seek to pursue its own self-interests in the post-soviet states regardless of whether it collides with Western self-interests. This is especially true since the West would get stronger and closer to Russia if it took over parts of Russia's traditional sphere of influence, thereby threatening the survival of Russia.

Conversely, The West does not necessarily see the importance of these spheres of Russian influence and does not believe that their implementation is key to Russian survival. Therefore, the West prioritizes the expansion of trade, NATO and the EU over Russian concerns. For the West, this form of Neoliberalism is also related to survival. Ever since the devastation of WWII, the West and especially Europe has used Neoliberal policies to deepen the economic connections of states, the thought being that it would make war so costly, that it would be utterly infeasible. Europe especially places a huge emphasis on this theory, eventually creating the EU as a regulatory body to monitor the economy of a united Europe.

However, this doesn't just have to be about survival. There are also other economic, security and cultural considerations. For instance, it is within Russia's self-interest to maintain a sphere of influence in post-soviet states, because it provides them with easy access to markets, a ring of allies around Russia's borders and it situates Russia as the cultural center of its informal empire. Meanwhile the EU would like to expand its borders or at least its free trade agreements, because EU member states reap the economic benefits of cheap access to raw materials and the ability to sell finished goods without the expenses of tariffs. Ultimately, the self-interests of

states is what propagates conflict and this paper is centered on Russia's calculations of its self-interests and when it should and should not act on them.

Additionally, according to Mearsheimer's conception of Realist theory, "great powers are always searching for opportunities to gain power over their rivals" (- a, 37). Therefore, Russia and the West are essentially predisposed to be adversarial. While there are also cultural and historical factors that contribute to this, Mearsheimer claims that just by being great powers, Russia and the West should bear a natural distrust towards one another and should attempt to balance each other's power (- a, 39). However, in reality this might look slightly different. The West has ascended to hegemony since the fall of the USSR, leaving Russia in a second class position. Thereby, making it in Russia's self-interest to increase its power relative to the hegemonic West, while the West will try to keep Russia in its place. Ultimately this can lead to the West trying to poach states within Russia's zone of influence, and Russia flexing its military might to maintain its influence and scare off its adversaries. To do this Russia has used military intervention as a tool to retain influence in its post-soviet sphere.

Military Intervention

Military intervention should be something fairly straight forward, but in regards to Russian military activities, this definition and what it constitutes needs clarification. Under normal circumstances, military intervention would be use of an outside military forces to assist a side in a conflict. This however, does not fully capture the way modern warfare has evolved. In 2014, the West was taken aback by Russia's involvement in the Ukraine Crisis and its sophisticated use of military and non-military tactics to create favorable outcomes in Crimea and the Donbass region. This type of warfare, because of its unconventionality, has been termed hybrid warfare by western scholars. However, had the West been paying attention, Russia has traditionally used hybrid warfare, its first applications were in Moldova and Georgia in 1992.

Hybrid warfare is the use of "both traditional and irregular warfare strategies along with the intense use of modern technologies, such as social and conventional media" (Oguz, 169). This type of warfare uses both military instruments and non-military instruments to achieve its objects. According to Oguz, these non-military instruments are used to increase plausible deniability in order to stifle international repercussions and bolster domestic support for Russia in the conflict area (171). Specifically, this includes economic manipulation, disinformation and propaganda campaign, fostering civil disobedience, and supplying proxy militias, thereby maximizing confusion and uncertainty (Monaghan, 66). According to Monaghan, Russia has adopted this type of warfare as a means to neutralize Western military superiority (67). This hybrid warfare does just that, it allows Russia to operate under the radar and without military intervention from the West, or at least none thus far.

The intended effect of Russian hybrid warfare is to foment local pro-Russian insurrections, which gives Russia the legitimacy to step in and claim it is protecting ethnic

Russians from discrimination. These insurrections serve as proxies for Russia, while Russia can also then deploy its own unmarked militias, as they did in Crimea, thereby allowing them to militarily intervene with a degree of plausible deniability, making it hard for the West to legitimately respond with repercussion for Russia's actions. Lanoszka claims that this type hybrid warfare works best when the belligerent has relatively weak neighbors, and these weak neighbors have ethnic and linguistic cleavages and ties to the belligerent (176). When looking at Russia and its post-soviet neighbors, it is a region that is very susceptible to hybrid warfare. "It is ethnically heterogeneous, has latent historical grievances and weak civil societies" (Lanoszka, 181). Russia is also in a better position to exploit these factors than the West and Lanoszka claims that it understands the dynamics of the region (181). This makes hybrid warfare an appealing option for Russia, as it lowers the cost of involvement, it is effective in the post-soviet sphere and grants Russia legitimacy to intervene and plausible deniability for its actions.

So is hybrid warfare considered military intervention? This is a hard question, because the point of hybrid warfare is to obfuscate military intervention and spread doubt of its presence. However, if the objective of hybrid warfare is to hide military intervention, then behind the curtains the actual intent is a military intervention. Moreover, by looking at specific Russian actions, it can be determined that Russia has used military intervention in its post-soviet sphere of influence. For example, the Russian 14th army actually took part in the Transnistrian War, Russia knowingly supplied and supported militias in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and later went to war in 2008 with Georgia over the independence of these regions. Russia also has deployed unmarked "militias" and armored vehicles in Crimea and Donbass, while also providing logistical and high level strategic help for rebels. These military aspects of Hybrid warfare, more than warrant the label of military intervention, as it is clear that Russia has directly deployed

military forces or directly supplied proxies with the equipment, training and logistics they needed to fight a secessionist war. Thereby, hybrid warfare is just a more specific definition for military intervention that tries to encapsulate all aspects of Russia intervention.

Spheres of Influence and Buffer Zones

Spheres of influence and buffer zones are often times confused and regarded as the same concept. However, the literature treats them as two separate foreign policy objectives. The difference between the two is especially necessary for the study of Russian Foreign Policy. For instance, what are Russia's objectives, is it to create a buffer zone between them and the EU, or is it to create a Sphere of Influence. Not understanding the difference between these two objectives could lead to serious misconceptions of Russia's foreign policy, making it likely that responses to the implementation of these objectives will not be complete or effective. Therefore, this next section shall highlight the differences between the two and situate them in Russia's foreign policy.

Buffer Zones

According to Menon and Snyder buffer zones are located between competing spheres of influence and are completely neutral states, whereas spheres of influence occur when powerful states maintain dominant control over neighboring states and this dominance is recognized by rival states (966). While Park defines a buffer zone or space as a "relatively weak state, space, or region that could serve as a shock absorber, padding or a distancing unit for another more powerful state adjacent to it" (4). From these definitions, buffer zones are essentially a "space", or more realistically a state, wedged in between two competing states and their allies. The key

characteristics being that a buffer state is weaker than its competing neighbors and is independent and neutral.

Competing states have an interest in maintaining a buffer zone between as an area of neutrality, so that neither side can profit off its resources and the extra bit of land between the two increases the time and resources it'll take to launch a war. This is because in order to invade an adversarial state, the aggressor state must invade the buffering state first. This creates padding/shock absorbing effect that Park highlighted. This essentially dissuades both sides from going to war with one another by increasing the cost of war, an equilibrium they both desire.

Spheres of Influence

On the other hand, Keal delineates a sphere of influence as a “definite region within which a single external power exerts a predominant influence (156). For Keal this influence must be independent of military means. In other words, for a state to establish a sphere of influence it must be done with cultural and economic means, because military means implies occupation and subjugation. Etzioni also agrees with this principle. For him, what determines a sphere of influence is intermediary influence, i.e. influence is lower than occupation or colonialization, but higher than just coalitions or unions (117). However, when considering Russia, this definition doesn't quite hold up.

A common thread between these authors is that spheres of influence must be territorially bound, clearly delineated and recognized by other states. Etzioni and Keal argue that when spheres of influence are not recognized by other states or aren't clearly delineated then states will clash over them. This has seems to be the cause of Western-Russia conflict in the East. As Mearsheimer argues in his “Why the Ukraine is the West's Fault” article, the Ukrainian Crisis,

and therefore other conflicts over influence in post-soviet states, is a result of Western expansion through NATO and this non recognition of Russian influence and interests in the region and its fears over NATO.

The literature does not really address what happens when states in a zone of influence decide to leave that zone and join another. Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia all attempted to do this, but Russia held on to this influence in these states by flexing its military might. These post-soviet states were already in Russia's zone of influence, and military aggression was a means to keep them from leaving that zone of influence and joining another. In this way the Russia's zone of influence remains, since Russia remains an important cultural and economic influencer. However, the zone of influence gains militaristic overtones, something scholars have not quite encountered, making their definitions of zones of influence ill-equipped to deal with Russia.

Specifically, Russia has fomented and supported secessionist conflicts in these post-soviet states in order to pressure them to remain in Russia's zone of influence, dissuade the West from increasing their influence in these states, and finally make it very difficult for these states to leave if and when they want to. Through this method, Russia has not occupied or subjugated these states, but has rather occupied and subjugated parts of these states or become important protectorate of these breakaway regions. In this manner, Russia has the influence and bargaining power to keep NATO and the EU from extending their influence. Therefore, Russia has gained indirect influence in these state's foreign policy, while also maintaining their cultural and economic influence in said states. This type of influence becomes akin to influence found in Musgrave and Nexon's conception of informal empire.

Application

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's formal empire became its informal empire, as explained by Musgrave and Nexon (221-222). This informal empire is informal because it lacks the high level of influence and control that occupation and colonialization bring. However, it still maintains higher levels of influence than simple coalitions, therefore this places informal empires at a more intermediary level of influence, which is exactly how spheres of influence are characterized. For this reason informal empire and spheres of influence are practically synonymous with each other. As shall be proven later, Russia had aspirations to maintain a sphere of influence in its post-soviet republics. However, the US and the EU, operating on a neo liberal conception of global politics after the fall of the USSR, failed to recognize these spheres of influence. Moreover, some states within this sphere sought to escape from Russia. Because Russia had invested interest to retain these states in its sphere of influence and its sphere was not recognized by the West, this led conflict between two. However, if Russia could not maintain its sphere of influence it would rather establish a buffer zone than let these post-soviet states join an opposing sphere of influence.

As stated previously, a buffer zone "lies between two more powerful rival states but are not dominated by or allied with either" (Menon and Snyder, 963). This makes it inherently different from a sphere of influence which is allied or dominated by one side. This zone refers almost exclusively to a state or states. In Menon and Snyder's article, they focus exclusively on buffer zones being used as a way to maintain a balance of power. Balance of power is maintained by the competing powers not invading the buffer zones, because of a high cost level. Therefore, the competing superpowers gain no benefits from expansion. Menon and Snyder use the France's, UK's, and Russia's support of a neutral Ottoman Empire to exemplify this point.

Furthermore, Russia has a long history of being invaded from as far back as the Mongols to as recently as WWII. These invasions have shaped the mindset of Russians to favor geopolitics in international relations. The logic goes, that if your enemies don't border you then it is much harder for them to invade you. For this very reason, Russia seeks to maintain spheres of influence and buffer zones. This is because it places either neutral or friendly states between Russia and its enemies, thereby making an invasion of Russia more costly and less likely. The Baltics play an integral role in this geo-strategy. According to Sotskov, "geographically, the Baltics is a transit territory, which Germans, Poles and Swedes in all sort of military-political combinations crossed to attack Russia" (105). Therefore, the Baltics are a very important geostrategic location for Russia and a region that if Russia couldn't maintain a sphere of influence over, would still prefer it as a buffer zone. However, the West and the Baltics ignored Russia's preferences and continued ahead with accession. While Keal, Etzioni and Menon and Snyder would predict that this advancement of western interests at the cost of Russian interest in the area would lead to conflict, this did not happen and the Baltics joined NATO and the EU quite peacefully.

Incentives for Intervention

Now that what a sphere of influence has been established, the literature seems to suggest that there are three incentives for why Russia has an interest in maintaining an informal empire and militarily intervening in post-soviet states to keep them in that empire. These are cultural, economic and security incentives. Maintaining a zone of influence helps give prominence to Russian culture, justifying Russia's claims to protect those who identify and speak Russian. It also grants Russia easy access to foreign markets, allowing it sell its raw materials and import cheap goods. Finally, it provides Russia with a buffer zone between itself and its competitors.

Cultural

The fall of the USSR created the Russian diaspora of around 25 million Russian almost overnight. These Russian minorities suddenly faced discrimination in the newly independent post-soviet states that began recreating their national identities (Sencerman, 98). Russia has a cultural interest to use these Russian minorities and their plight to maintain a sphere of influence in the post-soviet states. According to Sencerman, Yeltsin widened the concept of the Russian nation to include all ethnic Russian abroad (101-102). Thereby making Russia culturally important and responsible for all ethnic Russians. In order to foster this nationality, the government sponsored the Russkiy Mir Foundation and other NGOs that promote Russian language teaching and introduce Russia's history, art and culture in order to reconnect Russians abroad with their homeland (Sencerman, 103). This serves two purposes: it protects Russian culture and language in the near abroad and increases Russia's regional cultural influence in the near abroad.

Russia realized early on that it benefits from Russians located in the post-soviet states as a way to stir up trouble and to influence government policy (Ciziunas, 292). The Yeltsin doctrine essentially legitimates Russian military intervention in post-soviet states in order to protect its interests there because of the special status Russia has in the former republics due to Russian minorities (Ciziunas, 293). Thereby Russia seeks to propagate Russian culture and support Russian minorities, because it grants Russia legitimacy in the eyes of these Russian diaspora communities. Therefore, these post-soviet states have portions of their population who are more loyal to Russia, which could potentially be catastrophic for these states. Finally, every time Russia intervenes on “behalf” of these minorities, it only grants them more legitimacy. These Russian minorities see that Russia is willing to use military force to protect ethnic Russians, their culture and their language, which proves that Russia is their true protector, not their resident state.

Economic

Russia also has economic incentives to intervene. As both Lake and Musgrave and Nexon highlight, the benefit of establishing an informal empire is resources extraction and selling (217). By maintaining a sphere of influence Russia gains the upper hand in trade negotiations. This allows Russia to negotiate favorable agreements that gives them a level of special access to markets in wouldn't necessarily have otherwise. Hereby, Russia gains economic markets that'll buy Russian goods on favorable Russian terms. Moreover, Russia gains special access to cheap foreign goods, especially raw materials. So clearly there is an economic benefit to spheres of influence which serves as incentive to keep them in that sphere. But also, the more Russia controls those states, the more Russia can negotiate favorable trade agreements. Therefore,

Russia has a vested interest to not just have and maintain a sphere of influence, but also to grow and strengthen that sphere.

Security

As talked about previously, Russia also has a security incentive to establish and maintain a sphere of influence. Borders are especially important to Russia, since it has by far the longest borders of any state. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Russia operates on a geopolitical strategy centered on borders. A sphere of influence along Russia's border, essentially pushes Russia's border away from its adversaries' borders by creating friendly borders close to Russia and placing the borders of its sphere of influence or buffer zones between Russia and its adversaries. Therefore, if an enemy of Russia wants to invade, they must go through other states first, this increases the cost of war, takes away the element of surprise and gives Russia more time to prepare to defend its self. It also has to potential to move the heavy fighting into a different state, therefore keeping the cost and devastation of war for Russia lower. Also, establishing friendly borders lowers the cost to maintain those borders with troops. In this way Russia has an incentive to protect its sphere of influence or risk a subsequent decrease in its security.

Hypotheses

There are three variables that'll determine whether or not Russia shall use military intervention as a means of maintaining its sphere of influence. These are: the level of civic nationalism in the host state, the perception of international retaliation and Russia's diplomatic relations with the West. The level of civic nationalism determines how easy or hard it would be for Russia to militarily intervene. If civic nationalism is low then Russia can exploit difference to foment a separatist conflict. If civic nationalism is high, then Russia cannot exploit differences and could be looking at a long costly insurgency. The perception of international retaliation determines the economic, social cost and possibly military cost Russia believes it will pay for its military intervention. If there isn't much international attention on the host state, then it is less likely that repercussions such as war, economic sanctions or expulsion from international organizations shall occur or at least be more affordable. Finally, the way in which the West treats Russia determines whether or not Russia shall act in compliance to Western hegemony or against it as a revisionist state.

Civic Nationalism

Nationalism is the "ideas and beliefs which constitute nations and nationalism and which are nurtured by tradition" (Aronovitch, 470). A nation itself is not tangible, but it is normally conceptualized as a community of people who present themselves as being associated together, based on commonalities, to the outside world. These commonalities can be anything from identity to simply living in the same borders. From this conception, as Aronovitch emphasizes, literature on nationalism often creates a dichotomy between ethnic and civic nationalism. To put it simply, Ethnic nationalism is the idea and belief that your identity (race, language, culture)

forms your nation, while civic nationalism is the idea and belief that your state (government, borders, constitution, laws) forms your nation. Since a nation is a community, those in that community are protective of each other and loyal to each other since they share this commonalities. Therefore, the differences between ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism are consequential. Under ethnic nationalism, identity is the most important binding factor, which means that those who aren't included in that identity are not part of the nation and therefore excluded and often discriminated against. Moreover, a state often times has multiple identities within its borders, making the whole state fractious and unstable. However, civic nationalism creates support for the state. This means that in a state where there are high levels of civic nationalism, then citizens will identify with each other, making a much less fractious state and creating strong support for that state. These two nationalism play a direct role in the politics of post-soviet states.

As Ciziunas and Sencerman point out, Russia often uses Russian minorities to intervene in post-soviet states, aka they exploit divisions created by ethnic nationalism. Therefore, high levels of civic nationalism in a post-soviet state is important to keep Russia from exploiting ethnic and linguistic differences. Civic nationalism creates domestic support for the state, nation and government. Therefore, when civic nationalism is high in a post-soviet state, the ability of Russia to tap into discontent within the minorities and foment protests, revolts, or secessionist conflict is greatly reduced. This is important, because these types of divisions in post-soviet states, can be used by Russia to legitimize military intervention. This legitimization is important, because it grants Russia domestic support as well as support within the host state, thereby, making it more difficult for the international community to respond.

Also, high levels of civic nationalism raises the cost of a Russian invasion, by increasing the local resistance to military intervention, leading to prolonged insurgency and occupation. This makes total success, full capitulation of a state, less likely, more dangerous and more costly. So even though Russia could still use military intervention without fomenting discord and support in the host state, high levels of civic nationalism still acts as a useful inhibitor of Russian military intervention. Therefore hypothesis one is as follows:

H₁: High levels of civic nationalism in a post-soviet state will prevent Russian military intervention in that state.

Perception of Retaliation and Western Support

The second hypothesis is based on the Russia's perception of international retaliation. Retaliation could take the form of expulsion from international organizations, economic sanctions, or armed conflict. These forms of retaliation raises the cost of military intervention for Russia, dissuading it from using military intervention. However, before Russia can appropriately determine the costs, it must assess the likelihood of retaliation and if so what kind. Being expelled from international organizations does very little to effect the actual domestic situation of Russia, but rather only hurts its prestige and self-image. Economic sanction will affect the Russia public and economy, but once again, depending on the regime type and the prevalence of Russian gas and oil, it is possible for Russia to survive the economic blow. However, no state desires largescale interstate conflict, especially with western NATO states. This has the potential to leave Russia completely devastated and could spark a nuclear war. Therefore, if Russia judges that the risk of severe retaliation is high, then it'll more than likely not risk a military intervention. However, it becomes increasingly more probable that Russia will intervene the

more likely it is that there won't be international repercussions or that those repercussions won't be severe.

The best way for Russia to assess these risks is by paying attention to the amount of international attention from the West that a post-soviet republic is experiencing. If Western states are backing a post-soviet states actions and are making public declarations of support and friendship and signing trade and or security agreement then it becomes more likely that there'll be international repercussions. The more frequent and assertive this type of attention and support is and the deeper the trade and agreements are, then the more likely that repercussions will be severe.

H₂: High levels of Western support for a post-soviet state will prevent Russian military intervention in that state.

Diplomatic Relations

The final hypothesis is based on how Russia is treated by Western states. Russia is a state that behaves as if it has a fragile ego. As highlighted earlier, Russia still acts as if it still has an empire and had the capabilities of a superpower. This due to the greatness syndrome which Ciziunas claims still effects the political culture of Russia. Because of this, Russia still expects to be treated as an important international actor. If Russia isn't getting the respect it believes it deserves and is being shrugged off by Western states, then Russia will act as a revisionist state against Western hegemony. It does not matter if this is an attempt to either create a multipolar world where Russia is respected or to simply force the West hand in recognizing the importance and power of Russia, because Russian actions will be the same.

As a revisionist state, Russia doesn't necessarily care about the rules and norms created by the West, making it more likely to disregard the sovereignty of a neighboring state and militarily intervene in said state in order to maintain its zones of influence from hostile and encroaching Western influence. Conversely, if Russia is included in the current Western hegemony, or it feels as if the West respects Russia's power and sphere of influence than it gains nothing by acting hostile towards the West. For this would only antagonize the West, thereby increasing the likelihood that the West shall attempt to weaken Russia and poach states from its zone of influence.

This hypothesis predicts that good relations between Russia and the West fosters understanding between the two. The main part of having good relations, is Russia feeling respected and important by the West. Once this occurs, it is more likely for Russia to not use military intervention as a means to maintain influence in post-soviet states, because it does not feel threatened by increases in Western influence in those states.

H₃: Good relations between the West and Russia will prevent Russian military intervention in post-soviet states.

Methodology

The best method to test the hypothesis laid out in this paper is through a case study analysis. This is done by looking at specific cases to see what independent variables explain Russia military intervention. The universe of cases includes all Russian cases of actual and possible military intervention. Cases of military intervention include: the South Ossetian War from 1991–1992, the East Prigorodny Conflict in 1992, the Transnistrian War in 1992, the War in Abkhazia from 1992–1993, the Tajikistani Civil War from 1992–1997, the First Chechen War from 1994–1996, the War of Dagestan in 1999, the Second Chechen War from 1999–2009, the Russo-Georgian War in 2008, the Crimea/Ukraine Crisis from 2014–present and the Syrian Civil War from 2015–present.

Cases of non-intervention are those in which post-soviet states sought to breakaway from Russian influence, but did not see Russian military intervention. The only two cases available are the Baltics from 1991-2004 (the date of independence to their joining the EU and NATO) and Azerbaijan from 1991 – present. However, Azerbaijan does not make a good case study as it did not seek to join Western institutions, rather it just sought total autonomy. Moreover, the Armenian-Azerbaijani war over the region of Nagorno-Karabakh has led to significant Russian involvement in the region, which makes it hard claim that Russia has not used its military to maintain some sort of influence over Azerbaijan. However, the Baltics make a great case study for Russian non-intervention. By no means did Russia deploy its military or arm and train rebel groups in the Baltics. Also, the Baltics did not just seek autonomy from Russia. They sought to join Russia’s historical nemesis, the West.

In order to test cases as similar as possible to an intervention in the Baltics, cases will only be chosen to fit the following criteria: Russian military intervention in post-soviet states that

happened against the will of the official government there. This limits the cases to the South Ossetian War, the Transnistrian War, the War in Abkhazia, the Russo-Georgian War and the Ukraine Crisis. Moreover, a military intervention in the Baltics would've been before its inclusion into NATO and the EU in 2004, for this reason the Russo-Georgian War and the Ukraine Crisis can be excluded. The Russo-Georgian War and the Ukraine Crisis are mostly useful to show a perpetuation of the precedent created by Russia to militarily intervene when a state tries to leave Russia's sphere of influence. Moreover, the South Ossetian War, began before the collapse of the USSR, making hard to pinpoint whether the intervention was Soviet or Russian. For this reason, this paper shall test the two cases most similar to what an intervention in the Baltics would've looked like: The Transnistrian War in Moldova, and the Abkhazian war in Georgia. Finally, the paper shall test the hypotheses on the situation in the Baltics to see if they can explain Russia's non-intervention there.

The dependent variable of the hypothesis posited in this paper, is whether or not Russian militarily intervened in a foreign state. The problem with this variable is that it can sometimes be hard to determine. This is especially in the case of Russia, where various subtle and not direct methods of military intervention have been used. In order to capture all instances of Russian military intervention, the definition of "hybrid warfare" shall be used to encapsulate military intervention. This definition is use of "both traditional and irregular warfare strategies" (Oguz, 169). In regards to Russia, the traditional refers to the use of Russian military forces actively in engagement in a foreign state. Irregular warfare refers to the fomentation of rebel groups in a foreign state, the subsequent support of these rebels through training, logistics, and the supply of arms, as well as the covert deployment of "Russian" militias in a foreign state.

If there is any indication that Russia is doing this, then it shall be declared as a military intervention. However, this definition leaves out other soft-power methods Russia employs to keep states within its sphere of influence. This includes economic sanctions, debt restructuring, border/troop negotiations, peace negotiations and unions or partnership, free trade and travel. These are good indicators that show Russian interest in a region, but this paper focuses solely on the destabilization effects of Russian military intervention and ways to prevent it.

The three independent variables that this paper shall test are host country civic nationalism, threat of international retaliation, and the diplomatic relationship between Russia and the primary states in the international order. Host country civic nationalism tests the level of public support the state has and whether there are division in society that can be manipulated. Civic nationalism will determine whether or not the host state can stand united against Russian opposition or fracture into rivalrous groups. This, the paper shall look at opinion polls, strength and kind of nationalist movements and whether minority populations identify with their post-soviet state. These factors will determine whether a state has low, medium, or high levels of nationalism.

If polls and literature determine that most minority populations, especially Russians, identify with their post-soviet state, there is a lack of ethnic nationalist movements, and strong civic nationalism is shown through polls, literature and strong civil society then this is considered having a high level of civic nationalism. Whereas if most minorities, don't identify with their post-soviet state, there are frequent and large ethnic nationalist movements, and a weak civil society then this is considered as having low levels of civic nationalism. If results from polls and literature show that minorities are split on whether they identify with their state,

there are ethnic nationalist movements, but they aren't frequent, large, or strong, and a decent civil society then this is considered having a medium level of civic nationalism.

The threat of international retaliation tests the international communities support for the host state and willingness to intervene if a conflict arises. This determines the degree to which Russia shall be punished by the international community for its military intervention in a post-soviet state. Furthermore, the paper shall only look at the strong actors in the international community. This includes the US, NATO, and EU, because of their unrivaled military and economic power in the region. This variable shall be analyzed through public declarations of support by these powerful members of the international community, official negotiations between these members and the host state, as well as increases in trade between the host state and the West. This shall determine the level of investment and interest of the West in the host state.

If the US, NATO and the EU has signed trade agreements and or security agreements and has been vocal about its support for a post-soviet state then this is considered as having a high level of support from the West, which in turn translates to a high level of risk of retaliation for Russia. If the US, NATO and the EU has only signed basic agreements, have given some vocal support for a post-soviet state and has only made vocal agreements and commitments this is considered as having a medium level of support from the West and therefore a medium level of risk of retaliation for Russia. If the US, NATO and the EU have made no or only a few vocal agreements and has rarely or never voiced its support for a post-soviet state, then this is considered as having a low level of support from the West and a low level of risk of retaliation for Russia.

The final variable is the diplomatic relationship between Russia and the West. This tests whether the world and Russia sees itself as a revisionist state against a hostile Western hegemony, or as a part or ally to Western hegemony. In order to operationalize this, the paper shall look at diplomatic relations between Russia and the US and EU countries, to see whether it is positive or negative. Examples of a positive relationship are inclusion or promise of inclusion of Russia in important decision making organizations, declarations of cooperation and friendship and an increase in economic trade. Examples of a negative relationship are the exclusion of Russia from important decision making organization with no hope of inclusion, threats and warning being issued to one another and trade embargoes.

If the US, the EU and NATO have signed trade and or security agreements with Russia, have issued friendly statements towards each other and have cooperated in global missions and operations together, then this is considered as having a good diplomatic relationship. If the US, the EU and NATO have not signed any agreements, have issued some friendly and some not so friendly statements towards each other and have not, or rarely cooperated in global missions and operations together, than this is considered as having a neutral relationship. If the US, EU, and NATO have embargoes on Russia and vice versa, have issued mostly hostile statements towards each other, and actively operate against each other in global operations, than this is considered as having a bad relationship.

Moldova Case Study Overview

Figure 1: A map of Moldova showing the location of Transnistria (Dnestr Region) and the autonomous republic of Gagauzia



Source: *eurasiangeopolitics.com*

History of the Conflict

Before its annexation by the Soviet Union, Moldova was a part of Romania. In fact the Moldovan language is actually a dialect of Romanian and is culturally tied to Romania. Therefore, the Moldovan nationalist movement is closely tied to Romanianization. However, the Moldovan region of Transnistria, located on the east bank of the Dniester River, was never part of the Romanian empire and has historically been considered part of the Ukraine and the Russian empire (Dima, 37). Transnistria was removed from Ukrainian authority and given to Moldova under the Soviet rule in order to promote the Russification of Moldova. This has led to some ethnic and cultural/linguistic tensions between the two regions.

When the conflict arose in 1989, Moldova was 64% Ethnic Moldovan, 14% Ukrainian, 13% Russian, 3.5% Gagauzi (Crowther, 148). However, many of these Ukrainian and Russian minorities were located in the Transnistrian region. Transnistria itself was 32% Moldovan, 31% Russian and 29% Ukrainian (Borsi, 45). Just before and directly after the fall of the Soviet Union, ethnic Russians abroad were concerned with suddenly becoming an unprotected minority. In Moldova this fear was justified by the Moldovan nationalistic movement, which promoted the Romanization of Moldova. The government in Moldova backed this movement and the Moldovan flag was changed to the traditional Romanian flag with the Moldovan coat of arms and the national anthem was changed to the Romanian national anthem (Molcean and Verstandig, 131). This increased Russian and Ukrainian fears that Moldova was seeking to reunite with Romania. This would turn the Russian and Ukrainian minorities into insignificant minorities at around 2-3% (Trombitcaia, 570) forcing them to assimilate or risk severe discrimination.

A huge issue with assimilation was language. Under soviet rule, Russian was the lingua-franca and was used in all private and public enterprises. The Moldovan language was presented as its own language, unique from Romanian and the alphabet was changed from a Latin to a Cyrillic alphabet. This was all part of the Russification project under the soviets. By 1989, 68% of Moldovans spoke Russian as their mother tongue (Trombitcaia, 567). In fact a lot of the nationalist demonstrations in Moldova had to do with language. Eventually, the Moldovan government caved and the Moldovan language was recognized as Romanian dialect and was elevated to the official language of Moldova while Russian was denigrated to an inter-ethnic communication language (Molcean and Verstandig, 131). Moreover, the new language laws were adopted and were fairly discriminatory against Russian speakers. The laws transferred

record keeping from Russian to Moldovan and forced civil servants to learn Moldovan in five years in order to keep their jobs and required the Moldovan language to be used in all civil service jobs (Trombitcaia, 568). Therefore, the use of Moldovan became both officially and unofficially required for civil services jobs. However, no government funded facilities were created for language learning. Finally, Moldovan regained its Latin alphabet, further discriminating against Russian speakers. These laws served as the justification for “ethnic” purges based on language abilities in the Moldovan administration.

These laws were especially troubling for the Transnistrian region where around 60% of the population was Russian or Ukrainian and even more in the cities. The city governments of Tiraspol, Bendery and Rabnita, refused to accept the language laws and the legitimacy of the Moldovan government (Roper, 502). On August 11, 1989 the United Council of Work Collectives (OSTK) was created to combat nationalism and discriminatory laws (Kolsto and Malgin 107). This council became the de facto government of Transnistria and organized a referendum on January 1990. 96% of Transnistrians supported territorial autonomy in this referendum (Roper, 508). The OSTK created its own republic with its own elections and immediately started training paramilitary units. The new regime seized around three quarters of state assets in Transnistria and the majority of Moldova’s industrial capabilities (Borsi, 46). This new regime in Transnistria was militarily supported by Moscow through the 14th Army which was stationed in Transnistria. From the outset the 14th Army “provided crucial support to the local military and paramilitary units by arming and training them (Molcean and Verstandig, 132). In fact many army commanders officially led the Transnistrian forces like General Gennadii Yakovlev who was appointed the head of Transnistria Department of Defense and Security (Kolsto and Malgin, 111).

It is important to note that this happened in the waning years of the USSR. At the time Transnistria wasn't claiming to be an independent state, but rather a republic separate from Moldova. This is because at the time it seemed as if the Moldovan republic might break away from Soviet authority and join Romania. Therefore, despite a few clashes from 1990 to 1991 between Moldovan police and Transnistria, the actual conflict did not breakout until after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Kolsto and Malgin, 108). After the collapse of the USSR in August 1991, Moldova quickly built up a military forces and on March 2, 1992 President Snegur launched war against Transnistria to protect the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Moldova (Molcean, and Verstandig, 132).

The Russian military officially invaded on June 20, 1992, in regards to Moldova's assault and subsequent capture of the city of Bendery. The fairly new and ill-equipped Moldovan army could not compete against the Russian 14th army artillery and tanks and were routed in a matter hours (Kolsto and Malgin, 110). The fighting in Bendery was the heaviest fighting in the war, resulting in almost half of the total 1,132 the casualties of the war (Molcean and Verstandig, 132). This sudden escalation of the war by Russia undoubtedly forced Moldova to resign from the conflict and pushed them towards peace (Chamberlain-Creanga and Allin, 330). This is because, there was no way that Moldova could compete against the Russian army, and there wasn't likely to be any international support. The conflict ended with a ceasefire on July 21, 1992 (Molcean, and Verstandig, 132). Since the ceasefire, no meaningful agreements have been passed, nor has the conflict resurfaced.

Case for Intervention

Moldova is a small, landlocked country whose main outputs are agricultural, with some industrial capabilities. In fact, the most valuable part of Moldova is Transnistria, the breakaway state supported by Russia. Before its split from Moldova, this region contributed to 40% of Moldova's GDP, 33% of its industrial capabilities, and 90% of its energy production (Borsi, 46). Economically, Transnistria is definitely important to Moldova, which makes it important for Russia's control of Moldova. However, at face value, there is very little important about the whole of Moldova that would make Russia seek to retain its influence through military means. But, what made Moldova truly important was precedent and geostrategic aims.

Originally, Moldova was occupied as a soviet state for its geostrategic benefits. The Transnistrian city of Tiraspol was originally founded by the Russian Empire as a military base, due to its close proximity to Odessa, a key Black Sea port, and its ability to position close to the border that would allow troops to quickly deploy into Eastern Europe and the Balkans (Dima, 41). For the USSR Transnistria and Moldova served a similar purpose. Moldova was annexed from Romania, as a means of dividing the Romanian nation and state, thus weakening them. The Russian 14th army was then stationed in Tiraspol, Transnistria for the purposes of keeping both the Ukraine and Moldova under control, while also being able to quickly deploy to other areas in Eastern and Central Europe, especially the Balkans, in order to keep soviet dominance supreme (Dima, 41). Because of the military base in Tiraspol, the Transnistrian region of Moldova is disproportionately important to Russia.

However, Moldova was important to Russia for the value in precedent. Traditionally, Moldova has been a region of Romania. Following, a revolution in 1989, Romania had gained independence before Moldova's and was pushing hard for Moldovan independence and

subsequent reunification with Romania. Also, the Moldovan nationalist movement made it clear that independence and reunification with Romania were its ultimate goals. This would essentially, move Moldova out of Russia's sphere of influence and into Romania's and the West's, because Romania, is actually a bastion of the West in the East. The Romanian language is a Latin language similar to French and Italian, its culture is likewise similar to France and Italy, making it much more partial to Western powers than Russia. Moreover, there is a deep seated hatred of Russia in Romania.

This hatred stems from the brutal communist regimes, especially that of Nicolae Ceaușescu, and the feeling that Romanian culture and economy, which was on the rise, pre-WWII, was stifled and suppressed by the Soviets, turning it into a poor European country after the fall of the USSR. In 2015, Gallup conducted a poll that found that 57% of Romanians thought that Russia was the biggest threat to their country. This percentage is bigger than the percentage of Ukrainians, Latvians and Lithuanians who also thought that Russia was the biggest threat to their country and was second only to Poland and Estonia. Meanwhile Pew also conducted polls in 2017 that found that 82% of Romanians believe it is within their best interest to work closely with the U.S. and other Western countries. This data, was conducted recently, however, the trend has been that over the years Romania has been forming better opinions of Russia as the memories of Soviet dominance fade. Therefore, in 1991, a Moldovan-Romanian union would most certainly be anti-Russian and pro-Western. Thereby, Moldova would be the first post-soviet state to leave Russia's sphere of influence, signaling to other post-soviet states, especially Georgia and the Baltics, that they could also obtain complete independence from Russia.

Moreover, this fear was completely justified. In 1990, Romania's Prime Minister, Petre Roman, claimed that it was "Romania's task to fight for the independence of Moldova and that reunification was entirely possible" (Dima, 42). While on the other side, after Moldova's independence, President Snegur claimed that reunification with Romania was Moldova's long-term goal (Dima, 43). Also, pro-Romanian Moldovan leaders openly advocated for a pro-Western stance (Dima, 44). It is therefore, very clear that Moldova was Russia's first test on whether it would defend its zone of influence and how far it would go to do just that.

Therefore, it was in Russia's best interests to support the breakaway region of Transnistria, as indeed it did. A heavily backed Russian Transnistria meant that, after independence, Moldova had more pressing concerns than reunification with Romania. Also a militarized conflict quickly shooed away Western interests in the area, since they did not want to get embroiled in a conflict with a seemingly unpredictable post-soviet Russia. Transnistrians, who feared a Moldovan-Romanian unification, urged Russia to never let Moldova reunite with Romania (Dima, 45) and Russia has managed to do that by guaranteeing Transnistria's de facto independence through a frozen conflict.

If Moldova would seek unification with Romania, this conflict must be first solved, meaning Transnistria would have to be integrated into the Moldovan republic as an autonomous republic with veto power, as the almost successful Kozac memorandum proposed. However, this Veto power would prevent unification. The other option is recognizing Transnistria's territorial integrity, signing a peace agreement and delineating borders. However, this is also a non-starter for Moldova, who feels robbed of its own sovereignty and territorial integrity by Russia. Therefore, because of Russia's involvement and support for Transnistria, it has gained a very powerful bargaining position over Moldova, especially with its placement of troops in Transnistria. Russia

has more than once used promises of withdrawal to bring Moldova to the negotiation table, or coerced Moldova into talks and decisions through troop deployment or statements of non-withdrawal. Because of this carrot and stick method, Russia has maintained influence in Moldova and Moldova has been unable to make meaningful negotiations with Western powers, firmly placing it still within Russia's zone of influence.

Finally, Russia was fully aware of what it was trying to accomplish. After the fall of the USSR, Russia's deputy foreign minister, states that the newly independent states of the USSR belonged to Russia's "sphere of responsibility" (Dima, 52). Moreover, in 1993 Russia made clear statements that the Black Sea and Danube Basin were areas of "traditional Russian Interest" and foreign action in them required prior agreement from Moscow (Dima, 54). Thereby, early on, Russia had realized its desire to maintain its sphere of influence and was actively pursuing measures to do so.

Moldova Hypothesis Testing

Civic Nationalism

Moldova has experienced, intense ethnic division, and a war that was bordering on an ethnic war. The Moldovan nationalist movement was a reaction to decades of suppression under soviet rule. As stated earlier Moldova experienced severe russification, as the Soviets tried to recreate a separate Moldovan identity, from their Romanian identity. It was stressed that Moldovan was its own language and the alphabet was changed to be Cyrillic based. Finally a flood of Russians immigrated to Moldova and occupied top positions in the economy and government. By 1989, Moldovans, like most under soviet rule at the time, rose up against the decades of oppression. The Moldovan Nationalist movements were closely tied to the Moldovan speaking community (Molcean and Verstandig, 130). As stated earlier, at the time, ethnic Moldovans made up around 64% of Moldova (Crowther, 148). While this is a majority of the population, it by no means represents the entire state and many of the remaining 36% felt ostracized by the nationalist movement. According to Crowther, on August 27, 1989 this nationalist movement “staged a massive demonstration in central Chisinau” this demonstration to major language reforms passed four days later (Crowther, 148).

The Popular Front, was the political wing of this ethnic nationalist movement, advocating for full sovereignty of Moldova, political pluralism and a return to traditional national symbols (Crowther, 149). The Popular Front was so strong that it broke the stranglehold of the communist party by placing Mircea Snegur in the presidency, and many other members in the legislature. Thus by the time Moldova declared its independence on August 27th, 1991, the Popular Front was already in control of the government.

The Popular Front ended up losing power in elections three years later, but it was in power during the crucial years of Transnistrian independence, the war, and the immediate after effects. The Popular Front was also a party clearly based on ethnic nationalism. Its main purpose was to reform the soviet system to benefit ethnic Moldovans and promote Moldovan Culture. As claimed earlier the Popular Front was crucial in the passing of the new language laws, which discriminated against non-Moldovan speakers through the shift back to a Latin alphabet, transferring record keeping to Moldovan, and requiring Moldovan to be known for civil service jobs.

The Popular Front and the nationalist movement that took hold of Moldova was truly based on ethnic lines and was clearly very powerful. Therefore, this demonstrates a high level of ethnic rather than civic nationalism in Moldova at the time of Russian military intervention. Moreover, while many minorities in Moldova were fine with identifying as Moldovan after independence, there were also many minorities that were not ok with this. The Gagauzi were the first to step up. The Gagauzi are a small Turkish minority in Moldova that managed to secure an autonomous republic inside Moldova. The relationship between Moldova and Gagauzia is similar to a federal relationship. This demonstrates that the Gagauzi were concerned about their identity being smothered by Ethnic Moldovan nationalism and being forced to assimilate. Therefore they wanted a degree of autonomy that would protect their rights and culture. Furthermore, clearly a large portion of Ethnic Russians and Ukrainians in Transnistria did not want to assimilate in a Moldovan state. They identified themselves more with their ethnicity than the residency, otherwise there wouldn't have been a secessionist war.

Finally, civil society in Moldova was not robust. After years of Soviet suppression civil society did not really develop in Moldova. Moreover, afterwards civil society has continued to

not really develop. In 2009, one third of the population had general trust in civil society organizations, while another third had no trust in them (Venturi, 13). Venturi even mentions how the legislative system in Moldova discourages the registration of civil society organizations (12). Additionally, every year since 2015, the IRI has asked Moldovans if they had seen any political activists working in their area in the past 12 months. In 2018 only 18% claimed to see political activists, while 81% claimed not to see any. This seems to suggest a low level of at least political societies, a part of civil society, being active. In 2004, Freedom House conducted its first review on Moldova. On a ranking of 1 to 7, where one is the best and 7 the worst, Moldovan a civil society scored a 4, corruption scored a 6.25 and independent media scored a 5 (Freedom House). Things have improved slightly since then, in 2017, Freedom House gave a score of 3.25 for civil society, a score of 6 for corruption, and a score of 5 for independent media. It's clear that the situation in Moldova is improving slowly overtime, but that civil society is still not very strong, as in, despite gaining good scores, it has done very little in the past decade to improve democracy in Moldova. Finally, if it hasn't been strong in recent years, it was most definitely not strong in its weakest years. These weakest years were the first few years after independence, and consequently the year that Russia militarily intervened. Moreover, because it has improved much since then, this goes to show that the Moldovan society has not been, nor currently is the most conducive for civil society formation.

In Sum, since Moldova had and still has a fairly weak civil society, displayed clear ethnic, rather than civic nationalism and minorities were split between identifying with either their ethnic identity or state, Moldova ends up scoring a low for civic nationalism.

International Repercussions

Immediately after the collapse of the USSR, Moldova had not really been on the radar of Western countries. It was important to Romania, but in 1991 Romania was not a part of serious Western organizations like NATO and the EU. As such, there is very little in the way of agreements and statements coming out of Western nations about Moldova. According to the background notes at the State Department, On December 25th, 1991, the US officially recognized the independence of Moldova and the US embassy in Chisinau opened in March of 1992 (- d). However, an ambassador wasn't appointed till November 14th 1995.

The State Department Notes also claims that a "trade agreement providing reciprocal most-favored-nation tariff treatment became effective in July 1992" and an "Overseas Private Investment Corporation agreement... was signed in June 1992" (- d). These are the only agreements signed before the start of the Transnistrian War and is nothing different than what the U.S. would do with any other newly independent state. Therefore, this signals U.S. economic interests in Moldova, but not very strong interests. Finally, Moldova's President Snegur visited the White House on February 18th, 1992. The press release, by Press Secretary Fitzwater, for this meeting simply states that "the two Presidents agreed that the U.S. and Moldova will establish diplomatic relations and exchange Ambassadors in the near future. The President also expressed our commitment to continue U.S. humanitarian and technical assistance to Moldova" (- b). This highlights that the US was really only making verbal agreements and promises for the future. This signals support, but not strong support and is once again nothing out of the ordinary, and the US would do this with almost any newly independent state that was friendly.

Similarly, the EU, did not make formal indications of support for Moldova. First of all, the EU didn't sign any agreements with Moldova till after the Transnistrian war. This signaled to

Russia, in the waning years of the USSR and the first year of Moldovan independence, that the EU was not committed to Moldova, especially since commitments and agreements were being made in other post-soviet states, i.e. the Baltics. The first official agreement was on November 24th, 1994. Here the EU and Moldova signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which as it sounds is a 91 page document detailing the broad strokes of how Moldova and the EU will cooperate, and isn't a formal trade agreement (European Commission - c).

Finally, Moldova joined NATO's North Atlantic Cooperation Council early in 1992 (NATO - f). However, this forum was meant for all post-soviet states, and Moldova was just one of many. This council was more about showing broad support for all the newly independent post-soviet states and trying welcome them into a post-soviet world, where NATO doesn't have to be their enemy anymore. Later in 1994, Moldova joined NATO's Partnership for Peace (NATO - f), but once again this was open to all post-soviet states and even Russia joined. Therefore, there is nothing special about Moldova's inclusion in these NATO forums. If anything at all it just signifies general support for Moldova and a desire to keep relations cordial.

For these reasons, the level of International Support for Moldova is considered medium. Since international support is considered medium, Russia saw a medium level of international retaliation if it used military intervention in Moldova. However, this was not enough to dissuade Russia from intervention. Since, Moldova was newly independent, it had not fostered any relationships with the West, and therefore the West had no long standing interest in Moldova. Thereby, Russia perceived that the West would not risk antagonizing Russia, by retaliating economically, diplomatically or militarily, over Russia's use of military force in a small European country that the West has little invested interest in at the time, nor have publicly shown a high level of invested interest in for the future.

Diplomatic Relations

The early 1990s have been considered the Golden Age of Western – Russian Relations. In fact, when talking about this times period, Scholars often refer to the relationship between the West and Russia as a romance. This is because it was a time filled with hope and uncertainty. After, the collapse of the USSR, no one really knew how the relationship between the US and Russia would develop, but many hoped Russia would burgeon into a liberal democracy and would have good relations with the West. Generally speaking “Moscow now considered the West to be a friend and a role Model. The Russian people trusted the West and believed that Russia’s integration into the Western world was desirable and inevitable” (Piccardo, 122). Piccardo highlights, the EU was pursuing patient long term strategy of integrating Russia into Europe (122). The First step in this direction was the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Russia in 1994. Followed by an interim agreement on trade and economic relations on February 16th, 1996. (Piccardo, 122).

Richard Sakwa characterizes Western – Russian relations as a descent into a “cold peace.” In other words, relations started off hopeful and good, but then cooled and tensions arose, however, neither side considered the other an enemy. Sakwa wrote his article in 2013, before the Ukraine Crisis and the Civil War in Syria. So his conception of diplomatic relations is only up to 2013. Sakwa highlights that Russia’s first foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, declared that “Russia had no national interests outside of all-human values” (204). This is fanciful, liberal language, which displays how willing Russia was to adapting to the Western, Liberal Order.

The U.S. signed its first trade agreement with Russia on June 1990, which was then passed by Congress in November 1991 (White House). Russia, just like Moldova, joined NATO’s North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1991 and the Partnership for Peace in 1994

(NATO - e). All of this show a general trend where, Russia's relations with the West in the beginning of the 1990s were rather good and hopeful. However, relations began to cool fairly early on. Piccardo claims this started with the Washington declaration on April 23, 1999 (122), while Sakwa takes the other extreme and claims that relations started to cool on December 14th, 1992 when Russia's foreign minister, Kozyrev, attended a conference in Stockholm and gave a speech warning the West that "former Soviet territory is a post-imperial space where Russia has to defend its interests by all available means, including military and economic ones" (204). Regardless, at the time of Russia's military intervention in Moldova, Russia's Relations with the West were actually fairly good.

Conclusion

The case in Moldova does not seem to be explained by the third hypothesis. Relations between the West and Russia were good in 1992. Therefore, Russia did not seem dissuaded from military intervention on the basis that it might harm its crucial diplomatic relations with the West. However, the other two hypotheses tell a different story.

Since civic nationalism was low in Moldova, Russia was able to exploit ethnic differences in order to exacerbate an issue to the point of war and then use the 14th Army to militarily intervene and stop the conflict on Russian terms. Moreover, because of ethnic tensions, Russia was able to justify its intervention in Moldova, on the basis of protecting the rights of minorities, particularly Russian minorities. Moreover, there wasn't a lot of Western support for Moldova. The support available was most done through oral agreements and promises, without long term commitments. There were trade agreements, but they were minimal and trivial, since they resemble other trade agreements that were brokered with various other post-soviet states. In

addition, Moldova's inclusion into NATO forums was insignificant, because all other post-soviet states were invited and attended as well. Thereby, Western support for Moldova was shown through just general support for post-soviet states. Since Moldova only scored a low on civic nationalism and a medium on Western support, this created a favorable condition for Russia where they were able to maintain their zone of influence over Moldova and keep Moldova from joining Romania and the EU and NATO from signing meaningful agreements with the EU, or at least until 2016, that could've increased Western influence in Moldova.

Moreover, despite Russian aggression in Moldova, Moldovan public opinion of Russia has been positively increasing over time. According to the IRI's report when asked who are the greatest economic partners for Moldova, 70% responded the EU, 68% Russia, 44% Romania, 29% the US (Alisauskiene, 49). When asked who the greatest political partners for Moldova are, 55% responded the EU, 56% Russia, 38% Romania, 24% the US (Alisauskiene, 49). Moreover, only 30% of Moldovans believe that Russia is Moldova's greatest threat, while 37% believe the West (either the EU, Romania, or the US) is the greatest threat to Moldova (Alisauskiene, 49). Furthermore, in February of 2018 only 21% of Moldovan said they would vote for Accession into NATO, while when asked which custom union they would rather join, 43% responded EU while 42% responded with the Russian led Eurasian Union which also includes Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia (Alisauskiene, 50 and 52). Finally, when asked about the relationship between Moldova and Russia, 49% said the relationship was good, 21% said neither good nor bad and 28% said bad (Alisauskiene, 48). In sum, despite Russia's past actions, Moldovans tend to have a favorable opinion towards them. In this way Russia managed to use extreme military measures to hang on to its influence in Moldova, without irreparably damaging their relationship with Moldova.

Georgia Case Study Overview

Figure 2: A map of Georgia showing the locations of Abkhazia and South Ossetia,



Source: ontheworldmap.com

History of the Conflict

The Caucasus region is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in the world. For centuries the different ethnicities have been held together by strong empires. The Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arab-Islamic empires, Georgians, Mongolians, Ottomans, Safavids, Russians and Soviets have all laid claim to the region at some point or another and consequently gave a semblance of unity to the region. However, the region quickly turned into a powder keg after the dissolution of the USSR. Just in Georgia there are three autonomous regions, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Adjara. There is Nagorno-Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia and both Chechnya and Dagestan have attempted to secure autonomous rights from Russia. As stated earlier, while Russia has military intervened in practically all of these regions and conflicts, this paper shall only look at Abkhazia's first war of secession from 1992 to 1993.

The Abkhaz claim they are decedents of the Circassians, a group of Turkic people, thereby making them ethnically different from Georgians (Hunter, 117). Their spoken language

is also quite different from Georgian dialects, making this more of an ethnic linguistic distinction. On the other hand, according to Hewitt, Georgians are a group of ethnicities bound together by the Kartvelian language family (465). This linguistic ethnicity is one of the oldest and largest in the Caucasus region, hailing from the ancient Colchis and Iberian (not Spanish) civilizations found in the Caucasus several millennia ago. This ethno-linguistic distinction between the two is the foundation of the Abkhazian-Georgia conflict.

After Soviet annexation in 1922, Abkhazia enjoyed the benefits of being its own autonomous republic. However, in 1931, Abkhazia was incorporated into the Transcaucasian Federation, which then later dissolved in 1938, into three republics, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan (Hunter, 117). In true Soviet fashion, borders were drawn to facilitate ethnic tensions and most of the Abkhaz population was deported to central Asia (Hunter, 113). Moreover, large populations of non-Abkhazs were moved into Abkhazia (Hunter, 117). All of this was done to weaken the Soviet periphery, so that it'd be easier to control. By 1989, Georgians made up 70.1% of the total population of the republic, Armenians 8.1%, Russians 6.3%, Ossetian 3%, and Abkhazians 1.8% (Hewitt, 463). In Abkhazia, the largest ethnicity was Georgians at 45.7%, followed by Abkhazians at 17.8%, Armenians at 14.6% and Russians at 14.2% (Hewitt, 463). This led to a unique scenario where Abkhazians were a minority in their own home and felt suppressed by the more powerful Georgians. Abkhazians repeatedly requested from Moscow that they be in control of their own autonomous region as it was before 1931, but to no avail.

Weary of Georgia's attempts to seek independence and their treatment of minorities once freed from the USSR, the Mountain People's Congress gathered in Sukhumi, the capital of Abkhazia, and decided Abkhazia must secede from Georgia (Macfarlane, 513). As if to confirm their fears, on August 20th 1990, Georgia declared the Georgian language to be the official

language of the republic; resulting in Abkhazia's declaration of sovereignty five days later (Hopf, 228). Tensions rose for the next two years as the USSR dissolved, Georgia repeatedly annulled Abkhazian decisions of sovereignty and Abkhazia continued to insist of its independence. In July 1992, Abkhaz government formally annulled its current constitution and restored its 1925 one, from when it was an autonomous region (Macfarlane, 513). Depending on which account one draws from, either the Abkhazians instigated fighting resulting in Georgia mobilizing its military and capturing Sukhumi, or the Georgians seized the capital without warning instigating the war. Regardless, Georgia was in control of the Abkhazian capital and most of the region before Russia's military intervention began.

Russia both overtly and covertly supported the Abkhazians in their fight for independence. Hopf claims that Russian military archives detail that the Russian military covertly supplied the Abkhazians with tanks, planes, ammunition, and personnel and asserted that Russian planes in the area were on training missions (230). Hopf further asserts that there are photographs, documents and testimonies proving that Russia bombed Georgian forces, delivered ammunition to Abkhazians and had soldiers participating in battles against Georgia (230). Moreover, there were around 1,500 volunteer foreign fighters from the Caucasus that joined the fight on the side of Abkhazia (Alexseev, 198). These fighters were trained by Russia and crossed the Russian border with Abkhazia without opposition (Hunter, 118). The end result of this war was that by December 1993 Abkhazia managed to drive the Georgian military away from the borders, assert its sovereignty and deport 250,000 ethnic Georgians (King, 145). Finally, in order to stop the conflict, Georgia ultimately agreed to join Russia's Commonwealth of Independent States and give Russia access to four Soviet Military bases in Georgia and to have the Russian military act as peacekeepers (Hopf, 229).

The conflict today remains unsolved. Abkhazia is unwilling to give up its self-determination, while Georgia isn't willing to give up on its territorial integrity, nor is Abkhazia willing to resettle the mass of Georgians it displaced, because that would put them back in a minority situation (Hunter, 118). Therefore, the conflict has stayed as is, and Georgia's one attempt in 2008 to use military force to force Abkhazia back into the republic was met with a full scale Russian invasion of Georgia, thereby solidifying the situation further.

Case for Intervention

Georgia, is the most important Caucasus state; as it has road and railroad links to Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey, access to the Black Sea and it's the largest Caucasus State (Hewitt, 485). Moreover, it has 800,000 hectares of arable land for agriculture, has manganese, copper, iron, zinc, mercury and barium mines, access to oil and developed industries in metal processing electrical equipment, chemicals, food, textiles and more (Hewitt, 485). All of this makes Georgia an important bridge country, but also a state rich in resources. Thereby, unlike Moldova, Georgia is an economically important state for Russia to control. Also because of Georgia's importance in the region, if Russia could maintain influence there then it could maintain its influence in the other Caucasus states.

Because of its importance in the region, keeping Georgia under Russia influence was important. For it could've set a bad precedent for other Caucasus states and the ever troublesome Caucasus republics in Russia. For if Georgia was allowed to maintain its territorial integrity, it most certainly would've looked westward instead Northwards, likely increasing Western influence in the area and incentivizing either Armenia or Azerbaijan to do so, especially considering their war with each other and the U.S.'s willingness to supply arms.

Moreover, in Georgia “Russia had been demonized as ever ready to thwart Georgian independence by any and all devious means imaginable” (Hewitt, 466). As Jackson points out, this stems from the fact that Russia failed to defend the Georgian Kingdom when the capital was sacked by Persians in 1783 (76). Since then Russia has only given Georgians more reason to mistrust and hate Russia. This hatred grew so strong that “the Russians were hated almost as much as the Turks and Georgia was probably the only place in the former Soviet Union where Russians were hated as much as in the Baltic states” (Jackson, 76). Therefore, if Russia was able to use military intervention to keep Georgia in its sphere of influence then, it would prove that it truly was a useful method and would show other post-soviet states that not even Georgia could escape.

Therefore, it was important for Russia to use military intervention to aid the Abkhazians so that they could maintain influence over Georgia. There is little other reason for Russia’s support of such a small minority group that is not even ethnically related to Russians. Nor does Russia really care about the minority rights of the Abkhazians, for if they did, then Moscow would’ve listened to the Abkhazians before the fall of the USSR and made the region its own autonomous republic. Finally, Russian support was crucial in the conflict, for had Russia not intervened, Georgia likely would’ve maintained control of the Abkhazian capital and overwhelmed the small region, resulting in an Abkhazian defeat. Rather, Russia seized the opportunity to defeat Georgia and prolong a conflict that would entangle Georgia with Russia, discouraging Western powers from attempting to gain influence and reluctant to respond Georgia’s pleas for Western support.

Georgia Hypothesis Testing

Civic Nationalism

Just like Moldova, the conflict in Georgia was clearly based on ethno-linguistic differences. Moreover, Georgia also had conflicts with South Ossetians who claim to be of a different ethnicity and there have been severe tensions with the autonomous region of Adjara, the residents of which are ethnically and linguistically Georgian, but Religiously Islamic. Therefore, Georgia has displayed a willingness to resort to identity based nationalism. The Georgian nationalist movements was originally a drive towards greater autonomy in the USSR followed by a drive for independence. This movement, just like Moldova's movement, was responsible for the establishment of the Georgian language as the official language of Georgia, thereby causing fear of discrimination for Georgia's many minorities. Meanwhile, there was also a nationalist movement in Abkhazia that called for its own autonomy, followed by independence. This movement was based solely on ethno-linguistic lines, thereby ostracizing the many Georgians that lived in Abkhazia. This movement eventually proved strong enough to forcibly withdraw from Georgia.

Georgia's first President, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was an important leader in the nationalist independence movement and his party, Round Table Free Georgia, was based around leftist nationalism and the independence movement. This party is the heir to the current leftist nationalist party Free Georgia. Gamsakhurdia didn't remain in power for very long, controversies of corruption and abuses of power plagued him until Eduard Shevardnadze, seized the opportunity to orchestrate a bloody coup in march 1992 (Hopf, 228). After the coup there was no presidency until 1995, but Shevardnadze was appointed speaker of the parliament and wielded presidential power. Ultimately, Shevardnadze was the one in charge during Georgia's

war with Abkhazia. While Shevardnadze wasn't an ardent ethnic nationalist, based on the certain circumstance of the time, it's hard to claim that Georgia was not racked by ethnic nationalism.

Aspects of this ethnic nationalism can still be seen today in polls. Of a poll conducted by the Caucasus barometer in 2017, 84% identified as ethnically Georgian, 9% as Azerbaijani, 5% as Armenian and 2% as other. When asked whether they approved of women of their ethnicity marrying a Georgian, 87% approved and 12% disapproved (CRRC). When asked the same question but about marrying a Russian, 49% approved and 47% disapproved (CRRC). When asked about marrying an Abkhazian, 43% approved and 53% disapproved (CRRC). When asked about marrying an Ossetian, 39% approved and 57% disapproved (CRRC). This question was asked of many different ethnicities, generally speaking if the ethnicity was different but they were of a Christian culture then approval and disapproval were hovering around high 40s and low 50s (CRRC). If both the ethnicity and religion were different then approval would drop to low 30s and high 20s, while disapproval went up to the 60s (CRRC). The numbers for Abkhazians and Ossetians, along with Armenians, were the lowest of approval and highest of disapproval for of being the same ethnicity but Christian. Meanwhile, in a poll were 84% of the respondents were Georgian, 87% approved of marrying a Georgian (CRRC). This data shows that even today Georgia is still racked by ethnic differences and hatred/distrust of these differences. Georgians would rather marrying within their ethnicity and most disapprove of interracial marriages. If this is the case in 2017, it was likely even more prevalent in 1992, exemplifying that, at the time of Russia's military intervention in Georgia, there was a high level of ethnic nationalism, fueled by mistrust and hatred of different ethnicities.

Abkhazia was likely the real perpetrator of ethnic nationalism. Its conception of an Abkhazian nation was based on Abkhazian culture and principle. It was an independent nation

ruled by Abkhazians. Since they were a minority in their own nation, as stated previously, Abkhazia resorted to ethnic cleansing, mostly through the forcible deportation of over half its population. This allowed Abkhazians to finally be the major ethnicity in their nation. To do this Abkhazia relied heavily on ethnic nationalism to have the Abkhazian minorities identify with the conception of the Abkhazian nation rather than with the Georgian state. This sort of ethnic nationalism is also seen in Abkhazia's early reliance on the Confederation of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus (CMPC). The CMPC is a political and military organization established in Sukhumi for the purpose of defending the ethnic identities of the North Caucasus, mainly Abkhazians.

The fact that both Abkhazians and Ossetians felt the need to establish their own states, signifies that minorities in Georgia did not identify with the civic values of the Georgian state, but rather with their ethnic identities. Therefore, they felt the need to create states that represented that identity. Also, there likely wasn't much civil society in Georgia that could've changed this development. Using data from Freedom House where 1 is the best and 7 is the worst, in 2003 (the farthest back the data goes) Georgian civil society scored a 4, independent media scored a 4 and Corruption scored a 5.75. In 2017, civil society was a 3.75, independent media a 4 and corruption a 4.5 (Freedom House). If civil society in present day Georgia isn't great, it certainly wasn't great in the first few years after independence. Therefore, since civil society is an indicator of civic nationalism, since it can be reasonably concluded that civil society in Georgia was weak in 1992, there likely wasn't high levels of civic nationalism.

Because, ethnic nationalist movements were strong, ethnic nationalism sentiments were strong and civil society was weak, Georgia earns a low score for civic nationalism.

International Repercussions

From independence up to Russia's military intervention in the start of the war in August 1992, the US showed less support for Georgia, then even the little support it showed for Moldova. First of all, Georgian leaders were not invited to the White House. Second, the Press statement released by Press Sectary Fitzwater on US – Georgian relations, similar to one released about Moldova, said practically nothing. This statement broadly claims that “the President believes that U.S. interests will be best served by having diplomatic ties with the Georgian Government. The depth, extent, and richness of U.S. relations with Georgia will depend on the Georgian Government's commitment to these principles (restoring civilian rule, beginning a dialogue of national reconciliation and holding parliamentary election soon” (Fitzwater - a). This statement clearly says that the US's support for Georgia is conditional on Georgia's actions. This means that the US sees no inherent value in support Georgia, because if it did then it would offer unconditional support. Rather this statement seems more like a chastisement of Georgia's situation and the US makes absolutely no promise to even help Georgia through its troubles.

Moreover, in the same statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater, he promises that “the United States will open an Embassy in Tbilisi as soon as possible. In addition, the United States will support Georgia's membership in relevant international organizations, including the International Monetary Fund and World Bank” (- a). Fitzwater does not give a precise time that an embassy would be established, which means that at the time of the statement, which was already in late March of 1992, there had been no serious thinking about when something as simple as when to establish an embassy. Also the US will support the Georgia's membership into relevant international organizations is very important. Relevant international organization implies, basic organizations that allow a county to be part of the international order. For instance,

the UN, and the two given example, the IMF and World Bank. However, this does not include NATO and in fact implies that the US won't support Georgia's accession to NATO, because it isn't a relevant international organization for Georgia.

The US established its embassy in Georgia on April 24th, 1992. However, it did not immediately sign an official trade agreement. On June 20th, 2007 the US and Georgia officially signed their Trade and Investment framework. Until then they were operating under their Bilateral Investment Treaty, created in 1997, and they traded under the generalized system of preferences which requires all WTO member to treat third-world countries as equals to WTO members (Export.gov). Then in 2009, The US and Georgia signed the Charter on Strategic Partnership (State Department - e). However, all of these agreements happened well after Russia's military intervention. In 1992, The US exported \$16.5 million worth of goods to Georgia and imported only \$7.3 million worth of goods. With only the months of August, September and October reaching over \$1 million worth of goods on either side (US Census Bureau). This of course was directly after the conflict and Russian Military intervention. Also compare this to 2017 where the US exports \$383.4 million worth in goods and imports \$130.6 million worth in goods (US Census Bureau). Therefore, by the time of Russia's intervention, the US clearly did not have much economic investment in Georgia. Nor had it made formal commitments or even shown vocal support for Georgia.

Similarly, the EU also did not have much involvement with Georgia. They also traded with Georgia based on the WTO's generalized system of preferences until they signed an association agreement in 2014 (European Commission - a). The earliest agreement the EU signed with Georgia was a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in 1999, which like Moldova, was more about promises for the future and how they intend to generally work together (European

Commission - b). Therefore, it seems as if the EU was not all that committed to or supportive of Georgia in 1992, when Russia decided to militarily intervene.

Also, just like Moldova and Russia, Georgia joined NATO's North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1992 and the Partnership for Peace in 1994 (NATO - d). Once again, while this is an official agreement and theoretically shows NATO support for Georgia, because these programs also included most other post-soviet states and Russia, these agreements do not show significant NATO support for Georgia. These organization are so generalized, that all they do is show NATO's general interest in being friendly with post-soviet states and does not show real tangible support for Georgia.

Since, that by the time of Russia's military in Georgia in 1992, the US, EU had no official agreements with Georgia and NATO only had one superficial agreement, the U.S. had not issued really any supportive statements about Georgia, and had not even made any promises agreements with Georgia, the case study scores a low on Western support for Georgia. This low Western support translates into a low risk perception for Russia. Russia saw that Western nations were not being supportive of Georgia and its plight for territorial integrity and its desire to escape the clutches of Russia. Therefore, the West was likely not going to retaliate against Russia for its military intervention in Georgia. This is because the West had much more invested interest in Russia since they had little to no invested interest in Georgia or even made promises to Georgia about investment and support in the future. Therefore, the West had nothing to gain by confronting Russia over its intervention in Georgia. Hereby, Russia calculated the risk of Western retaliation and found it to be very low.

Diplomatic Relations

Because Russia's military intervention in Georgia was within months of Russia's military intervention in Moldova, the results for this variable are the same as the results determined in the Moldova case study. The relationship between Russia and the West was at an all-time high after the fall of the USSR and it only descended from there. However, in 1992, during the start of Russia's military intervention in Georgia, there was hope for positive relations between the West and Russia and the relationship between the two was determined earlier to be good (refer to diplomatic relations in Moldova case study).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the West's good relationship with Russia in 1992, did not dissuade Russia from intervening in Georgia. However, because Russia perceived that there was a low threat of retaliation due to the lack of Western support for Georgia at the time, Russia saw that there would be little to no international cost of intervention. Consequently, because of the lack of international dissuasion, Russia decided to pursue its interests to maintain its influence in Georgia. Moreover, the lack of civic nationalism created an ethnic fracture in Georgia, which was then exploited by Russia. There was also very little cost for Russia to exploit these ethnic tensions, because they were so prevalent. However, had Georgia had a high degree of civic nationalism, than there wouldn't be breakaway regions and Russia would've had to deliberately sew ethnic dissent in Georgia. If caught doing this, the cost would've been drastically higher. However, since Georgia was an ethnically fractured state, there was valid reason for Russia to militarily insert themselves in the conflict and it was easy for them to do so.

By militarily intervening, Russia hoped to keep a rebellious Georgia within its zone of influence. As stated earlier, Georgia has a deep, longstanding hatred and mistrust of Russia. Therefore, Georgia made it fairly clear that they intended to look westwards. Georgia attempted many times to have the West and the international community step in and mitigate the conflict. Shevardnadze attempted several times to bring in the OSCE and the UN to enforce ceasefires by sending peacekeepers and overseeing them, however this fell on deaf ears (Hopf, 229). The West was not particularly interested in to invest themselves in the conflict or Georgia. Ultimately, Shevardnadze buckled under the weight of Russian pressure and agreed to join Russia's CIS, legalize Russia troop deployment of border guards and grant Russia access to four soviet military (Welt, 23) bases in return for 3,000 Russian peacekeepers which were to be monitored by a UN observer mission.

This deal clearly underlines Russia's desire to maintain its influence over Georgia. The CIS was a Russian creation that would enable it to control post-soviet states in a structure similar to the EU, but based more on security guarantees. Since Russia is much larger, more powerful, and wealthier than the other CIS member, it would essentially be a one state dictatorship, with ultimate control of were CIS forces went. The CIS didn't last long though, but was replaced by the Eurasian Union. Therefore, it is significant that Russia required Georgia to join the CIS, especially since they had refused to do so earlier. Moreover, the deal allowed for Russian troops to legally be deployed in Georgia. Thereby, Russia could legitimately use its military to intimidate Georgia and forcing scared decision makers to support pro-Russian policies.

Finally, once the war was over, Russia went from starkly pro-Abkhazian to starkly pro-Georgian. Russia did not recognize Abkhazia as an independent state, shut down the Russian-Abkhazian border, cut off communication from Abkhazia to local sympathizers, prevented these

sympathizing military militias from entering Abkhazia, imposed a CIS sanction of Abkhazia, repeatedly cut off the electricity to Abkhazia, stifled rail traffic to Abkhazia and forced Sukhumi to close its port and airport through the lack of trade and tourism it was receiving (Hopf, 230). The fact that Russia switch from fighting a war with Georgia to quickly appeasing the request of Georgia, goes to show that Russia intervened to maintain its influence in Georgia and then once it did so, went through great length to indicate that it was Georgia's friend and that Russia supported Georgian territorial autonomy.

In some regards this method worked as by 1999 Russia remained Georgia's number one trading partner in imports and exports (Hewitt, 485) and by 2016 Russia had only recently been supplanted in the import market by Turkey (OEC). The military intervention also managed to scare away the West for a while. It took many years of Georgia attempting to get closer to the West before trade deals were signed and even longer before it could start getting military commitments. However, Russia's military intervention and subsequent attempts to improve relations with Georgia did not positively change Georgian's attitudes towards Russia or negatively towards the West. Polls indicate that in December of 2017 72% of Georgians supported joining the E U and 64% supported joining NATO (Thornton and Turmanidze, 54 and 57). Moreover, 81% of Georgian in 2017 saw the Russian as a threat and 69% thought it was in their best interest to work closely with Western powers (Pew). However, this type of determined attitude is not enough to keep Russia away. Still lacking high levels of civic nationalism and high international support, Georgia was invaded by Russia in 2008 in response to increasing Georgian movement towards the West and NATO.

Baltic Case Study Overview

Figure 3: A map showing the locations and borders of the Baltic States and the Kaliningrad Enclave



Source: languagesoftheworld.info

History of the Secession

The Baltics believe that their soviet occupation was illegal and infringed on their self-determination and culture. In 1940, The Soviets threatened to use military force on their significantly weaker Baltic neighbors, unless they agreed to allow Soviet forces to be stationed in the Baltics (Mihkelson, 272). This eventually led to large scale military occupation of the Baltics and their use as a buffer space between the Soviets and Nazis. After WWII, the USSR essentially annexed the Baltics turning them into Soviet Republics. This was a devastating blow to the Baltics who “historically have been guided by the West” (Mihkelson, 271), to suddenly become dominated by Russia. Therefore, the Baltics formed a deep resentment towards Russia and their

occupation of the Baltics. Thereby, it is no surprise that even before their eventual independence the Baltics called for their reintegration into the West.

Lithuania independence was led by the reform movement Sajudis, which formed in 1988. Under pressure from the reform movement, the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet passed constitutional amendments that separated Lithuania from the USSR and legalized a multiparty system (US State Department - c). This led to Sajudis backed candidates winning elections in 1990, filling the government with anti-Russian and Pro-Western officials. On March 11th, 1990 Lithuania declared its independence and began reforming their system (US State Department - c). In response the USSR imposed sanctions on Lithuania and used military deployment to threaten them to annul the decision. However, despite Soviet coercive actions Lithuania held a referendum on February 9th 1991 where 91% approved of independence (US State Department - c). A waning USSR did not have the capabilities to prevent such inevitabilities, and ended up collapsing not long after, making Lithuania officially independent.

Similar events occurred in Estonia. Here, once again under pressure from reform movements, the Estonian Supreme Soviet eliminated the Estonian Communist party's guaranteed power in government. This led to the breakdown of Estonia's communist party and other political movements formed parties and took over the government (US State Department - a). The two most powerful parties were the Popular Front and the Greens. These parties led Estonia towards its first declaration of sovereignty in November of 1989, and its language law that determined that Estonian was the official language of the State. On March 18th 1990, Estonia held its first elections, resulting in a Popular Front led coalition (US State Department - a). This coalition guided Estonia to its independence through harsh Soviet opposition until it finally gained unequivocal independence after the collapse of the USSR.

Similar to the other two Baltic States, In July of 1989, Latvia's Supreme Soviet annulled the supremacy of the USSR, legalized political parties and declared themselves sovereign (US State Department - b). In the March of 1990 elections, the Latvian Popular Front earned a two-third majority. On May 4th, Latvia released its intentions to secure full independence (US State Department - b). This led to the Soviet military attempting to overthrow the Latvian government, however, Latvians stood strong and on March 3rd, 1991 the vast majority of Latvians voted for independence in a referendum (US State Department - b). This independence was ultimately realized later that year with the fall of the USSR.

Once independent, the Baltics quickly began a process of reorientation towards the West / secession from Russia. Between January 27th, 1994 and February 14th, 1994, all three Baltic States joined NATO's Partnership for Peace (NATO - a-c). As said earlier this isn't a particularly big deal, but it is the first of a series of steps towards Western Realignment. In less than five years since independence, specifically between October 27th, 1995 and December 1995, all three Baltic States had submitted their applications for EU ascension (Europa, Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - a, and Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - a). In September of 1996, all three Baltic States promised to meet all NATO requirements for ascension (NATO - a-c). In March of 1998, Estonia and Latvia officially began EU ascension negotiations (Europa and Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - a). Two years later in February of 2000, Lithuania officially began their EU ascension negotiations (Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign - a). On November 21st, 2002, all three Baltic States began official NATO ascension negotiations (NATO - a-c). Shortly after in December of 2002, EU ascension negotiations concluded at the Copenhagen Summit (Europa). On March 29th, 2004, the Baltics joined NATO (NATO - a-c), closely followed by EU ascension on May 1st, 2004 (Europa, Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - a, and Latvian Ministry of

Foreign Affairs - a). Thereby, between 1991 and 2004 the Baltics were actively taking steps to reorient towards the West and these steps were plainly obvious and took 13 years to complete. Thus there is a 13 year timeframe where Russia knew for certain of the Baltic realignment towards the West and could've used military intervention to cease that alignment.

Case for Intervention

Russia had cultural, economic and security reasons to military intervene in the Baltics. Russia also had the military capabilities and support to do so. Comparatively speaking a huge amount of Russia minorities lived in the Baltics, primarily in Estonia and Latvia. Both of them had the largest percentages of Russians to population in the post-soviet world. In 1989, just before the USSR began to unravel, Estonia was 30.3% Russian, Latvia was 34% Russian and Lithuania was 9.4% Russian (Sencerman, 100). These Russian minorities suffered probably some of the worst discrimination in the post-soviet world. Not only were there severe language barriers, but the citizenship laws of Estonia and Latvia were inherently anti-Russian. This left ethnic Russians without the ability to vote, to have a civil service job or even own land. Moreover, the Baltics severely limited the path to citizenship. Estonia and Latvia had caps on the number of new citizens allowed, had short time limits for application, and the process was extremely dependent on the discretion of the authorities (Birgerson, 175-176). This continued even after EU accession. In 2013, "Latvia naturalized fewer than 1,700 people and Estonia about 1,300 people" (Skachkov, 129). In 1995, there were over 730,000 non-citizens in the Baltics, mostly Russians who were facing severe discrimination (Skachkov, 122). Therefore, Russia had the impetus to use these minorities to spread discontent and to protect the language and educational rights of these Russians. Had Russia done so, it mostly certainly would've

contributed to Russia's image as the guarantor of Russian rights. Which would've boosted Russia's appeal to Russian communities facing discrimination in post-soviet states, thereby giving Russia more influence in those communities and their host governments by association.

Russia also had economic interests in the Baltics. The Baltic's access to the Baltic Sea is of great interest to Russia, so that they can ship goods easily and efficiently to the Nordic countries, Germany, Poland and the rest of the Europe. This is especially relevant for Russian Gas and oil. Russia was also a huge economic partner for the Baltics. By 2002, Russia was still the #4 export market for Estonia, the #3 export market for Latvia and the #1 export market for Lithuania (Mihkelson, 275). However, according to Skachkov, once the Baltic joined the EU, trade plummeted. Moreover, as the Baltics were moving away from Russia, so to were business options. Lithuania refused to sell the Mazeikiiai oil refinery, refused invest in the Baltic Nuclear Power Plant, and Latvia tried multiple times to stop the construction of the Nord Stream natural gas pipeline (Skachkov, 124). Had Russia militarily intervened in the Baltics, it would've pushed Russian authority over the Baltics, making them accept trade agreements and other economic propositions that would've benefitted Russia.

Primarily speaking Russia had strategic interests in the Baltics. Keeping the Baltics within Russia's sphere of influence would've granted/allowed Russia easy land access to Kaliningrad, the early warning radar station at Skundra, the nuclear submarine training base at Paldiski (Herd, 198). It would've kept Russia's borders away from NATO and EU, thereby geostrategically maintaining Russian security by keeping NATO nuclear weapons aircrafts more than an hour flight from St. Petersburg and Moscow and NATO ground troops further than 75 miles from St. Petersburg (Blank, 58). Therefore, it was within Russia's interest to prevent the Baltics from joining the EU and NATO, otherwise the West would strategically gain at the

expense of Russian security. It is more likely than not that a Russian military intervention in the Baltics would've prevented NATO and EU expansion there.

Moreover, Russia did not lack the capabilities and support to execute a military intervention in the Baltics. In 1996 "93% of Russians were in favor of using military-political measures if the Baltics were accepted into NATO" (Mihkelson, 277). Therefore, the Russian populace most definitely supported the use of military force to protect Russian interests and its sphere of influence. Also Russia's foreign minister from 1991-1996 did not rule out the use of force under certain conditions, in order to protect vulnerable Russian minorities (Birgersson, 71). This shows that Russia was aware of the situation and was willing to engage militarily. Moreover, by September of 1994, most of Russia's military that resided in the Baltics had been relocated (Herd, 199). Therefore, before 1994, Russia already had its army in the Baltics. Russia could've reneged of troop withdrawal and there is very little the Baltics could've done to stop that. Even after Russian troops left, it wouldn't have taken much to invade the Baltics. Baltic military experts estimate they could only sustain four days of active defense in the event of a Russian invasion (Meyer, 77). Therefore, Russia not only had the motivation for a military intervention, but it also had the support and capabilities to carry one out.

Baltic Hypothesis Testing

Civic Nationalism

Despite high levels of discrimination, probably some of the worst of post-soviet states, the Baltics have experienced comparatively high levels of civic nationalism. This is quite interesting considering that in Estonia and Latvia, Russians were excluded from voting. After independence, this resulted in Baltic nationalist parties rising to power (Skachkov, 123). However, in Lithuania, relatively low levels of Russians didn't really pose a problem towards forming a national Lithuanian identity. This is because, of Lithuania's liberal citizenship laws. After independence, Lithuania allowed permanent residence to obtain citizenship if they took an oath of loyalty within two years of independence (Birgerson, 175). Hereby, Lithuania established a citizenry that identifies more with their citizenship than with their identity, thereby starting the creation of a civically nationalist society.

Data collected by the World Values Survey in 1996 and 1997 illustrates that despite discrimination against Russians in the Baltics, Russian minorities did not seem to identify with their ethnicity and Baltic society embraced civic nationalism. First of all, when asked what 5 values were important to teach children, tolerance and respect for other people was 3rd most popular in Estonia with 59.6% mentioning it and 3rd most popular in Latvia with 72.5% mentioning it and was understandably behind hard work and responsibility (Tiitma and Klingemann, 8 and Koroleva and Klingemann, 8). In Lithuania tolerance and respect for other people was 4th most popular with 54.1% mentioning it, behind independence as well as responsibility and hard work (Alishauskene and Klingemann, 8). Moreover, when asked which groups of people they would not like to have as neighbors, in Estonia, only 7.5% mentioned people of a different race, 4.5% said the same in Latvia and 14% said the same in Lithuania. In

all three states this was the least mentioned category (Tiitma and Klingemann, 16, Koroleva and Klingemann, 16 and Alishauskene and Klingemann, 16). All of this highlights the fact that Baltic society embraced tolerance of ethnically different people. This tolerance and acceptance of others reduces ethnic strife between different groups and helps foster civic nationalism.

This survey also emphasizes that most Russian minorities didn't tend to be overly connected to their nationality. For Estonia, the respondents were 59% Estonian and 41% Russian. When asked which of the following best describes them, Estonian, Russian, Citizen of their country or a member of a minority, 53.6% answered Estonian, 16.5% Russian, 26.6% Citizen of their country and 2.4% member of a minority (Tiitma and Klingemann, 60). In Latvia the respondents were 59 % Latvian and 41% Russian. When asked the same question, 41.8% answered Latvian, 12.8% Russian, 40.2% citizen of their country and 3.8% member of a minority (Koroleva and Klingemann, 60). The questionnaire for Lithuania was slightly different and flawed, when asking the same question, they did not provide an opt out of ethnicity option, aka citizen of their country, thereby the results are skewed more towards identifying with ethnicity and are not useful for this analysis. However, the results for Latvian and Estonia are telling. Even when adding the member of a minority and Russian groups together the total percent, 18.9% for Estonia and 16.6% for Latvia is less than half of the total percent of Russian speakers, 41% in both, interviewed in this survey. So while the majority of Latvians and Estonians identified with their ethnicity, the majority of Russians actually identify with their resident Baltic state rather than with their ethnicity. Finally, Latvia showed strong support, 40.8%, for civic identification, suggesting a growing sense of civic nationalism in Latvia.

Moreover, in a separate survey conducted in 1994, Baltic Russians were asked to rate Russia and their host state on a positive and negative scale. In Estonia, 27% had a positive rating

of Russia and 62% had a negative rating of Russia, while 50% had positive rating of Estonia and 37% had a negative rating of Estonia (Maley, 4). In Latvia, 19% had a positive rating of Russia and 66% had a negative rating of Russia, while 39% had a positive rating of Latvia and 43% had a negative rating of Latvia (Maley, 4). In Lithuania, 29% had a positive rating of Russia and 57% had a negative rating of Russia, while 58% had a positive rating of Lithuania and 27% had negative rating of Lithuania (Maley, 4). This data shows a significant trend where Baltic Russians are far more likely to approve of their host state than Russia and are far more likely to disapprove of Russia than their host state. Hereby, one can see that Baltic Russians had a more favorable opinion of their Baltic host state than of Russia.

Furthermore, this survey asked Baltic Russians if they considered attachment to Russia and then their host state important or not. In Estonia, 65% said attachment to Russia was important and 24% said it was not, while 86% said attachment to Estonia was important and 8% said it was not (Maley, 5). In Latvia, 58% said attachment to Russia was important and 20% said it was not, while 83% said attachment to Latvia was important and 6% said it was not (Maley, 5). In Lithuania, 67% said attachment to Russia was important and 20% said it was not, while 88% said attachment to Lithuania was important and 7% said it was not (Maley, 5). This data suggests that Baltic Russians, are more willing to establish connections with their host state than with Russia. Moreover, the fact that such high number of Baltic Russians believe attachment to their host State is important and such low numbers believe it is not important, shows a high level of civic nationalism in the Baltic Russian community

It's possible that Russian minorities didn't rebel because the quality of life was much better in the more industrialized and richer Baltics than in Russia or other republics. Therefore, Baltic Russians actually considered themselves lucky. According to the UN's data, after the first

year of independence in 1992, the Baltics had the highest GDP of any post-soviet republic, with Lithuania at \$2,183, being the poorest, ahead of the next richest post-soviet republic, Belarus at \$1,803, by over \$500 per capita (UN). Only Russia had a higher GDP per capita. However, in only 6 years, due to the growing economic strength of the Baltics and the contracting economy in Russia, all three Baltic States had surpassed Russia in GDP per capita. At this point, Latvia with the lowest GDP per capita at \$2,952 was over \$1000 per capita ahead of Russia at \$1,838 (UN). This was the point in which Russia and other post-soviet states were hit hard by a financial crisis, a crisis that barely touched the Baltic States. In fact the Baltic economies continued to make leaps and bounds through this financial crisis. Moreover, this data highlights a general trend where the Baltic States steadily economically developed and grew at an unprecedented rate, while other post-soviet states lagged behind, going between small bursts of growth and contraction.

However, just because this is true doesn't mean that Baltic Russians actually believed that they were economically better off in the Baltics. According to Maley, in 1994, "71% of Russians in Lithuania, 73% in Latvia and 82% in Estonia agreed that their country of residence offered a better chance to improve living standards than did Russia (and) 61% in Lithuania, 59% in Latvia and 66% in Estonia agreed that conditions were worse in Russia than in the Baltics" (5). Hereby, Baltic Russians correctly believed that they were better off living in the Baltics and that conditions for them were getting relatively better. Furthermore, after the fall of the USSR, Russia was in the best economic state over all the other non-Baltic post-soviet states. Therefore, if most Baltic Russians believed they were better off than they would be in Russia, than even more would believe the same about any other post-soviet state. Thereby, Russian minorities in the Baltics knew that they were better off economically in the Baltics than elsewhere in the post-

soviet sphere. Consequently, they did not have economic motivations to seek help from Russia or have major pro-Russian movements.

Moreover, many believed that because of the Baltics realignment towards the West, these minorities and ethnic Baltic citizens believed that the Baltics would reap the economic benefits of EU membership and that it would force positive change on the political system. This hope towards a better future can be shown through the Worlds Value Survey in 1996 and 1997. When asked on a rating of 1-10, where one is very bad and ten is very good, where they'd put their country's political system in ten years, most responded positively (6-10) rather than negatively (1-4). Specifically 53.5% in Estonia, 54.3% in Latvia and 36.5% in Lithuania gave a positive indication, whereas 13.7% in Estonia, 13.9% in Latvia and 9.5% in Lithuania gave a negative indication (Tiitma and Klingemann, 44, Koroleva and Klingemann, 44 and Alishauskene and Klingemann, 44). Compare this to the fact that 45% in Estonia, 56.4% in Latvia and 48.4% in Lithuania feel negatively about the current political system while only 28.9% in Estonia, 23% in Latvia and 28% in Lithuania feel positively about the current political system (Tiitma and Klingemann, 44, Koroleva and Klingemann, 44 and Alishauskene and Klingemann, 44). Hereby, it is easy to see that the residents in the Baltics fully expected the political system to improve, making it even better than other post-soviet states. Consequently, there were very few protests and no revolts or secessionist activities. Thereby, there was no precedent available for Russia to exploit and justify a military intervention.

Moreover, even though Russians in Estonia and Latvia faced discrimination, they were still in a freer society than other post-soviet states. Unlike other post-soviet republics, the Baltics had a very fast and successful transition to democracy. Unfortunately Freedom House data on the Baltics only goes back to 2003, but even then it gives a good look at Baltic society. According to

Freedom House, on a scale where 1 is the best and 7 is the worst, by 2003 Latvia had earned a 2 on civil society, a 1.75 on independent media, a 3.5 on corruption, a 2.25 on governance and a 2.25 on democracy. Lithuania earned a 1.5 on civil society, a 1.75 on independent media, a 3.50 on corruption, a 2.50 on governance and a 2.13 on democracy (Freedom House). Finally, Estonia earned a 2 on civil society, a 1.75 on independent media, a 2.5 on corruption, a 2.25 on governance and a 2 on democracy (Freedom House).

While this data is from 2003, it is significant that Baltic scores are generally half that of other post-soviet states during the same time. This implies, that the Baltics democratized and gained a free society much faster than the other post-soviet states. Also it is worth noting that the Baltics started off with a very similar baseline as other post-soviet states coming out of 1991. This goes to show that Russians living in the Baltics, not only were living in a better society, but that they also had hope for the future. Both the EU and Russia were putting a significant amount of pressure on Estonia and Latvia to liberalize their citizenship laws and to cease discrimination of Russia minorities. Therefore it isn't unreasonable that Russian minorities stuck it out through the discrimination, hoping that the situation would improve, especially once Estonia and Latvia joined the EU. Moreover, this data and Lanoszka's article highlight that there was a strong civil society in the Baltics and as Lanoszka claims "a strong civil society is one where different groups overcome the cleavages that may divide them to cooperate with one another in the interests of the larger political stability" (185). Therefore, civil society is an important indicator of whether there is civic nationalism.

Finally, there were practically no Pro-Russian nationalist movements or protests in the Baltics. The reason for this was extrapolated earlier, but history simply tells us that Ethnic Russians did not organize against their Baltic States. They preferred to stay home and keep their

heads down. Therefore, unlike in Moldova and Georgia there was no strong ethnic movement towards separatism or autonomy. Therefore, there was nothing for Russia to exploit. Also a comparative analysis on the World Value Survey highlights the fact that residents in the Baltics were less proud of their ethnicity. In 1996 and 1997, when asked “how proud are you to be (insert different ethnicity/nationality)”, Estonian residents replied with 54.4% being proud and 35.9% not proud, 51.9% of Latvian residents were proud and 25.2% were not proud, 65.7% of Lithuanian residents were proud and 29.4% were not proud (Tiitma and Klingemann, 60, Koroleva and Klingemann, 60 and Alishauskene and Klingemann, 60). Whereas, Moldovan residents were 74.4% proud and 23.9% not proud and Georgian residents were 93.2% proud and 5.4% not proud (Ishimova and Klingemann, 59, Pachulia and Klingemann, 60). Clearly Baltic residents were less proud and more not proud of their ethnicity compared to the other case studies that experienced ethnic strife. Thereby Baltic minorities were less willing to act on their ethnic identity by engaging in protests and nationalist movements. This is further amplified by the fact that only 16.1% of respondents in Estonia, 16.3% in Latvia and 20.7% in Lithuania believed that using violence to pursue political goals could be justified (Tiitma and Klingemann, 47, Koroleva and Klingemann, 47 and Alishauskene and Klingemann, 47). Thereby, even if there were a Russian minority movement, most would not see separatism through war as a desirable outcome. This displays a certain level of nationalism towards ones state and away from ethnicity. Therefore, Russia had little ethnic ground to stand on in the Baltics.

Through this analysis the Baltics score a high on civic nationalism. There were practically no ethnic nationalist movements in the Baltics states, data suggests a burgeoning civil society, early on, significant portions of the population identified more with their state than their

ethnicity, and most minority populations, particularly Russians chose not to identify with their Russian identity and instead with their state identity.

International Repercussions

There was a high level of international attention on the Baltics realignment towards the West. First of all the US never recognized the Soviet Union's annexation of the Baltics. Then upon the Baltics independence and subsequent desire for realignment, the US State department created the Office of Nordic and Baltic Affairs under the Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs (Meyer, 70). This sent a very clear message that the US considered the Baltics as part of Europe and the West. Then in 1996 the State department released the Baltic Action Plan. This plan had three tracks for Baltic integration into the West (Meyer, 70). This once again was a clear indication that the US was giving significant attention to the Baltic States and their realignment towards the West. Finally, at the Madrid summit on January 16th 1998 the US signed the Charter for Partnership with the Baltics. This agreement made commitments and promises for US-Baltic free trade, security and integration into the Western organization such as the EU and NATO (Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - b). This proves that there was a lot of international attention coming from the important actors towards the Baltics. Moreover, this attention was all about trying to reorient the Baltics towards the West.

Moreover, the US released very clear statements about its position on the Baltics. For instance, unlike any other post-soviet states, the State Department Spokesman, Nicholas Burns, released a statement on the 5th anniversary of the Baltics representation in the UN. In this Statement, Burns claims that five years ago, the Baltics representation in the UN "demonstrated the restoration of the independence of the three countries after fifty-one years, and the beginning

of their integration into the Euro-Atlantic.” This is a clear statement that details the US’s priorities and preferences when it comes to the Baltics. Burns jargon, implies that the Baltics were unjustly occupied for precisely fifty one years and that their independence is a restoration that should be celebrated. He also makes it clear that the Baltics destiny is their integration into the West.

A Statement was also released about President H.W. Bush’s conversation with a reporter about a phone call with Mikhail Gorbachev on January 11th, 1991. In this statement, President Bush says that they are monitoring the Soviet’s decision to deploy forces to Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and the Baltic, but then goes further by saying that “The United States is especially concerned that the Soviet decision to send military units into the Baltic States, which we view as provocative and counterproductive, could damage the prospects for peaceful and constructive negotiations on the future of those States. The United States, which has never recognized the forcible incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union, supports the aspirations of the Baltic people to control and determine their own future” (Bush). Hereby, it becomes clear that even before the USSR had collapsed, The US was supporting the independence of the Baltics states and had aspirations for their integration back into the West. This statement made it very clear to the USSR that attempts to prevent this will stress US-Soviet relations. This sentiment partially stems from the repeated Western statement that Baltics were illegally occupied by Russia and therefore should be allowed to naturally return to their rightful place in world, alignment with the West. Another interesting aspect of this statement, was that President Bush specifically singled out the Baltic States over the other post-soviet states. This once again exemplifies the high importance the West was putting on the Baltics independence and integration into the West.

The EU was also very clear that it was keen on integrating the Baltics into the EU. On June 12th, 1995 the EU and the Baltics signed an association agreement. The end goal of the association agreement was the eventual integration of the Baltic States into the EU. Therefore, this event symbolized the Baltics return to Europe (European Commission - d). This Association agreement included making steps towards free trade, investment and visa free travel, showing a clear interest in the EU extending its economic influence of the Baltics. The Baltics also joined the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe on September 10th, 1991 (Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - b). Then Lithuania and Estonia Joined the Council of Europe on May 14th, 1993, while Estonia joined on February 10th, 1995 (Council of Europe). The Baltic States were the first post-soviet states to join these European organizations, showing a strong Baltic aspiration of realignment to the West and the West's willingness and support for such a realignment, more so than any other post-soviet state. Finally, on November 21st, 2002 NATO began official Ascension talks with the Baltics, putting the final capstone on Western Support for the Baltics Ascent into NATO and other Western organizations.

Since the West showed consistent and early, strong support through statements, official talks and agreements, even before Baltic independence, the score for Western support of the Baltics is determined to be high. Therefore, Russia's perceived threat of retaliation is also high. Early on, the West made significant, economic, security and verbal investment towards integrating the Baltic into the Western sphere of influence. Therefore, Russia military intervention would be met with retaliation, most likely in severe economic sanctions, which would've crippled the early post-soviet Russian State. It's also plausible that the West would militarily support the Baltics, dragging out the conflict and increasing the economic and military cost for Russia's military intervention. All this greatly increases the cost of intervention and

drastically lowers the success of intervention, thereby dissuading Russia from using military means to maintain its zone of influence in the Baltics.

Diplomatic Relations

The final factor was between 1991 and 2004, Russia was still largely being included in the international order and had high hopes towards its own liberal reorientation. According to Sakwa, Russia was essentially a status quo state after 1991 with no signs of a different interpretation of the post-Cold War international order (204). Piccardo takes one step further claiming that after the collapse of the USSR the relationship between Russia and the US looked like a romance, Russia considered the West a friend and a role model (121-122). In the beginning both the US and the EU chose a path of more positive diplomacy that sought include Russia in the international Order.

NATO formed the joint NATO-Russian Council, Russia joined the Partnership for Peace and the EU sign the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Russia. Under the PCA the EU began integrating the Russian economy with Europe's through increases in trade between the two partners. William Hill, a retired Foreign Service officer, recalls that there was a great deal of cooperation with Russia after the fall of the USSR over conflicts in the post-soviet space. Hill recalls that the US, Russia and Europe cooperate quite positively in the Minsk group (a group attempting find a peaceful solution to the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh) until recently, i.e. 2010 (221). This cooperation between the West and Russian incentivized Russia not to act like a revisionist state against Western Hegemony by militarily intervening in states, because this would be against the rules and norms that Russia was buying into at the time. Sakwa attributes this to that Russia was "happy to endorse American

hegemony as long as what it perceives to be its vital interests and prestige are acknowledged” (205).

Unfortunately these relations did not last, they seemed to have soured around Putin’s first term. This is partially because overtime, Russia felt like its interests and prestige were not being acknowledged. The steps the West took after the fall of the USSR look like they were meant to include Russia as an equal partner by including them in international organizations like the Partnership for Peace, the Partnership and Cooperation agreement and the G8. However, accession to higher level organizations stopped. It became very clear that the EU and NATO had little to no interest in including Russia. Moreover, these organizations continually seem to tread on Russian interest by expanding their influence and power into the post-soviet space, something Russia was very clear about wanting to maintain its own interests and influence there. Hereby, Russia began to mistrust the West and their motives. Therefore, as Sakwa projects, Russia stopped cooperating. For instance, Putin started acting bilaterally between states and excluded the EU from negotiations. Moreover, by 2007 Russia had let the PCA expire.

Therefore, in the timeline from 1991 to 2004 there is a trajectory of chilling of relations between the West and Russia. As stated in the other two case studies, relations started off on good terms in 1991 and remained this way generally until the late 90s. Also as mentioned earlier Piccardo claims that the true turning point is the Washington declaration on April 23rd, 1999 (122). From there relations continually cooled until the current day where relations would be categorized as bad. Likely, the turning point between neutral and bad relations is based around the Syrian Civil War and Russia’s involvement there. For these reason, in the Baltic timeline of 1991 – 2004, Russian – US relations can be scored as generally good for the first half, and generally neutral in the second half.

Conclusion

Russian non-intervention in the Baltics can be explained by a high level of Western support for the Baltic States and high levels of civic nationalism in the Baltics. This high level of support greatly increased the threat of International retaliation against Russia if it used military intervention in the Baltics. Russia saw that the West was making economic, security and verbal commitments in the Baltics and therefore would have much to lose from a Russian intervention. This means that they would retaliate in a way to make Russia withdraw from its intervention. This could happen in the form of severe economic sanctions to possibly a proxy or direct militarized conflict between the West and Russia. This was certainly not a desirable outcome for Russia, especially since it also drastically lowers the success of the military intervention in terms of keeping the Baltics within Russia's sphere of influence. Therefore Russia was dissuaded from using military force to maintain its influence over the Baltics. It did however, unsuccessfully, exercise soft power. Russia tried economic coercion and delayed troop withdrawal and delineating borders for as long as possible, because one of NATO's requirements for membership is clear delineated border.

Moreover, a high level of civic nationalism allowed the Baltic States to form a more cohesive society built around state identity, allowing different people to overcome their differences and minorities to tolerate the present discrimination with the belief that conditions were progressively getting better and they did not need to have massive demonstrations for improvement. Ultimately, this ended up not giving Russia an ethnic movement and ethnic divisions to exploit. Therefore, there was little support for Russia inside the Baltics, making it hard for them to foment dissent and to justify any sort of military intervention in the Baltics. This

lack of support for Russia inside the Baltics also would make it hard for them to find allies in the case of military intervention. Thereby, intervention is more costly, since it requires greater Russian military involvement and less likely to succeed, increasing the cost of intervention whereby it was no longer worth the benefits to intervene in the Baltic States.

It is also possible that good Western – Russia relations originally dissuaded Russia from military intervention in the first years after independence. However, this variable does not explain why Russia didn't intervene after 1999, where a relations between the West and Russia were scored as neutral. Here, there is no risk of losing Western friends, because they've already been lost. Moreover, this variable failed to dissuade Russia from intervening in the other two case studies, so it is likely not the main explanatory factor for this case study.

Conclusion

This Thesis has attempted to discover the variables which determine whether Russia will use military intervention as a means to maintain its informal empire in post-soviet republics. Russia has done so in three post-soviet states, but it did not do so in the Baltics. Why was this the case, what made the Baltics the exception to rule? Something must have been different in the Baltics that dissuaded Russia from using military intervention. This makes the Baltics a unique case in which when examined can hopefully affirm what variables will hold true once tested. To do that, this thesis posited three hypotheses. The first was, that high levels of civic nationalism will prevent Russia from using military intervention in a post-soviet state. The second was, that high level of Western support and therefore a high level risk of international retaliation would prevent Russia from using military intervention in a post-soviet state. The third was, that good diplomatic relations between the West and Russia would prevent Russia from using military intervention in a post-soviet state.

These hypotheses were then tested in three case studies, Russian military intervention in Moldova over Transnistria in 1992, Russian military intervention in Georgia over Abkhazia from 1992-1993 and Russian non-intervention in the Baltics from 1991 – 2004. In this study, the First Hypothesis, was proven true as an explanatory variable for each case study. In Georgia and Moldova low levels of civic nationalism failed to prevent Russian military intervention in those states, and in fact encouraged it. This is because in the absence of civic nationalism rose ethnic nationalism, which lead to ethnic strife and conflict, creating easy scenarios in which Russia could easily successfully intervene with a justified military force. In the Baltics though, a high level of civic nationalism, prevented ethnic strife. This resulted in there being few opportunities for Russia to exploit ethnic differences and use preexisting conflict to justify military

intervention. Thereby, high levels of ethnic nationalism increased the cost of military intervention in the Baltics, dissuading Russia from using military intervention in the Baltics as a means to prevent them from moving closer the West.

The Second hypothesis also proved to explain each case study. There were was a low level of Western support and thereby a low level of international risk in Georgia and a medium level in Moldova. Thereby, Russia was not dissuaded from using military intervention in these two states, because it concluded the West would retaliate against Russia due to the lack of high interest in these states. However, in the Case of the Baltics there was a high level of Western support, thereby a military intervention in the Baltics incurred a high risk of international retaliation, thereby dissuading Russia from military intervention.

The third hypothesis proved relatively ineffective. Good relations between the West and Russia did not dissuade Russia from using military intervention in Georgia and Moldova. It also only partially explained Russia's non-intervention in the Baltics, because only part of the timeframe was determined to have good relations between the West and Russia while the other part was determined to be neutral. Instead this variable might actually be better explained as a factor in the second hypothesis. For example, if Russia and the West are one good relations and the West is showing a high level of interest in a post-soviet state, then Russian military intervention would strain Russian-Western relations. This would, increase the cost of a military intervention, as Russia would not want to alienate itself from the West. However, if the West doesn't have interest in a post-soviet state then a military intervention there does not concern the West and would not strain Russian-Western relations. Therefore, there is little to no diplomatic cost of a military intervention in that post-soviet state.

Therefore, what determines whether Russia will use military intervention in post-soviet states is based on Russia's threat perception about international retaliation and host state civic nationalism. Since this case study analysis found these two variables to be correct in all the case studies, both are deemed to be accurate, but inseparable. In other words, the analysis of these particular cases cannot conclude that just having one of these variables be true will dissuade Russian military intervention in a post-soviet state. Instead the analysis can only conclude that high levels of both civic nationalism and Western support are needed to effectively dissuade Russia from using military intervention in a post-soviet state.

This is an important conclusion to make because it informs how Western foreign policy makers should act towards Russia. If the West is interested in increasing its influence in post-soviet states and keeping the region stable, then it should be showing high levels of support for these countries and encourage the development of civic nationalism. By doing this hopefully, Russian military interventions can be prevented, thereby increasing the security and stability of the region and the world.

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