

TENSIONS AT THE DNIESTR - THE STATEHOOD OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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The sinking of the Russian battle cruiser “Moskva”, three weeks ago due to a missile launched from the northern, Khilia branch of Danube, just west of Fidonissi (Insula Serpilor), momentarily shifted the spotlight of the war, to the southwestern part of Ukraine. The subsequent explosions a week ago against Russian interest installations in the breakaway from the Republic of Moldova region of Transnistria, raised alarm bells. Who made this? Who is to blame? Cui bono?

The case is obscure. Russia quite probably did not orchestrate this, as Transnistria is ruled since 1991/92 by pro-russian elements, directly dependent on Russian subsidies, mainly in the energy sector. The attack does not facilitate a putative foray of the stationed there thinned out Russian contingents onto Odessa.

In light of the above, it is worth wondering why the events have caused political uproar within Moldova proper, straining political ability of President Maia Sandu and her Foreign Minister Nicu Popescu to steer the Moldovan ship through rough waters.

The Republic of Moldova is a constitutionally neutral country. Her entire territory west of river Dniestr is part of the historic Romanian area of Bessarabia. Transnistria instead was affixed to Moldova by means of Stalin’s geographical engineering. The events have put pressure on the country to get rid of its self-imposed neutrality, and instead join NATO. (It is to be reminded that the Republic maintains close economic and commercial relations to EU, since November 2013, when the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, direct result of Eastern Partnership policies of Brussels, was signed). At the same time, “mother” Romania struggles not to go beyond political orthodoxy. Strong forces within Moldova advocate calmness, as Russia seems not to have interest nor excess power to open a western front.

The educated view of this page is to leave things Moldovan in peace; last year’s presidential elections ousted russophile president Igor Dodon and brought to the helm pro western Maia Sandu. Let assist her in the delicate task of managing existing internal and external equilibria. Second thoughts or hidden agendas are prone to foster this kind of instability we are collectively and separately struggling to contain. Romania, ethnically tied to Moldova, is keenly aware of the risks.

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