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United States Mission to the OSCE**Response to Ambassador Philip Remler,
Head of OSCE Mission to Moldova**

As delivered by Political Counselor Casey Christensen
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 15, 2009

The United States joins other delegations in welcoming you, Ambassador Remler, and in thanking you for your comprehensive report.

Since you last spoke to us, on April 23, Moldova has held a second round of parliamentary elections; elected a speaker of parliament; confirmed the speaker as acting president; elected a prime minister; and confirmed a government. The United States welcomes these positive steps, and looks forward to working closely with Moldovans and their new government in their efforts to build a democratic and prosperous European state. The new government already has begun to take positive steps in this direction.

We appreciate the OSCE Mission to Moldova's ongoing support for Moldova's constitutional processes. The Mission rightly has encouraged Moldovan authorities to uphold the rule of law and to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms encompassed by Moldova's OSCE and international commitments. As you noted, Ambassador Remler, the Mission has urged Moldovan authorities to address election-related concerns; discouraged politically motivated selective prosecutions; and called for improvements in media freedom. The United States strongly supports these efforts. In particular, we look forward to the planned visit to Moldova of OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Haraszti, and hope his visit will further the new government's efforts to implement Moldova's OSCE commitments on media freedom.

The United States also strongly supports the Mission's efforts to promote a just and durable settlement to the Transnistria conflict—one that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova and provides for an agreed status for Transnistria that upholds OSCE principles and commitments. We remain committed to the renewal of formal negotiations in the 5+2 format—the only internationally accepted mechanism for reaching a negotiated settlement to the conflict—and continue to believe that confidence-building measures can contribute to momentum for the resumption of negotiations. Accordingly, we remain supportive of expert-level working groups on transportation, health, and other practical matters, and welcome the Mission's efforts to promote cooperation in the military and security fields. As this work progresses, we hope access to Transnistria for diplomatic personnel will improve, and existing travel bans will be lifted.

We take particular note of the thoughtful presentation delivered by the Moldovan ambassador to the United Nations at the UN General Assembly on September 29, which highlighted Moldova's commitment to progress on a settlement of the Transnistria conflict, the withdrawal of foreign troops from Moldova, and the replacement of the present peacekeeping operation with a multinational mission under international mandate.

In closing, allow me to thank you and your staff, Ambassador Remler, and to reiterate my government's support for your work. Allow me also to reiterate my government's commitment to working with Moldova and its people as the country continues its integration into European institutions. Respect for the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms will continue to be key elements in our relationship.

Thank you, Madam Chair.