



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by HoM Moldova, Ambassador Philip Remler

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 23, 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is a pleasure to welcome Ambassador Remler to the Permanent Council today. His report bears witness to the continuing energy and focus of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, and highlights all efforts to resolve the Transnistria conflict and promote democratic progress.

The United States recognizes the Mission's important contributions to resolving the Transnistria conflict. In our view, under the leadership of Special Envoy Talvitie, the 3+2 mediators and observers have worked diligently to resume talks in the 5+2 format, and again in our view, the only appropriate mechanism for a transparent and enduring settlement supported by the parties, the neighbors, and the international community. Regrettably, the Transnistrian side declined to attend a 5+2 meeting scheduled for early October. It is our hope that all participants soon will return to the negotiating table to discuss the core issues of the conflict, including the definition of Transnistria's status within Moldova. To that end, we welcome in particular Ambassador Remler's report that President Voronin plans to share his ideas on a settlement with Transnistrian authorities. Those ideas we consider even-handed and thoughtful. A settlement respecting Moldova's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity must be the goal of all our efforts.

It is also our hope that participants will take practical steps to build confidence and clear the way for a final resolution of the conflict. We hope to see working groups identify specific means of improving cooperation and communication between the two sides. This month President Voronin proposed that the sides destroy all offensive military equipment, a constructive proposal that would build confidence across the Nistru River and contribute to a peaceful and secure Moldova. We also hope to see progress on the withdrawal of Russian munitions from the Transnistrian region of Moldova. This is an important practical aspect of the broader commitment Russia made at Istanbul with regard to the withdrawal of its forces. The OSCE Mission to Moldova is well placed to facilitate forward movement on this commitment, while also ensuring both sides continue to exercise restraint.

As Ambassador Remler noted, the OSCE Mission to Moldova is also ideally suited to provide advice and expertise on issues of democratic development, especially as Moldova's parliamentary elections approach. We welcome the Mission's efforts to help Moldova ensure that its electoral process and the overall electoral environment uphold OSCE principles and commitments, and commend the Mission's efforts to help Moldova broaden media access and guarantee freedom of assembly.

Mr. Chairman, the United States commends the Mission's dedication to helping government authorities and civil society build capacity to fight trafficking in human beings, one of the most serious problems Moldova faces today.

In conclusion, the United States continues to support the activities of the OSCE Mission to Moldova. We congratulate Ambassador Remler and his staff for their excellent work. We look forward to real progress in efforts to resolve the Transnistria conflict and advance Moldova's democratic development.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.