



United States Mission to the OSCE

Transnistria Referendum

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 18, 2006

Mr. Chairman,

In the past week, the United States was truly disturbed to learn that the unrecognized Transnistrian Supreme Soviet on July 12th adopted two questions for a referendum set for September 17th. The first asks if voters "support the course of independence" for Transnistria and then "joining" the Russian Federation. The second asks if citizens favor "rejection of the independence" of Transnistria and subsequent reunification with Moldova.

This referendum cannot be taken seriously or treated as a legitimate vote; no state recognizes the so-called Transnistrian authorities as a legitimate government. We urge the Russian Federation to state publicly, as we have, that Russia supports Moldova's territorial integrity and that it does not recognize the validity of the referendum. We also urge the Russian Federation, in its claimed role as a neutral intermediary, to encourage the Transnistrians to cancel this provocative referendum and to pursue in good faith a settlement of the conflict. We also continue to urge Russia to fulfill its Istanbul commitments. Moldova has the right to choose whether to allow foreign military forces on its territory. The current Russian presence does not have Moldova's consent and is not contributing to a settlement of the conflict.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.