



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Moldova

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 27, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We first of all welcome the statements this morning of the Moldovan Deputy Foreign Minister Stavila and of Deputy Foreign Minister Diaconescu.

For more than a decade now, the United States has consistently and strongly supported efforts to resolve the Transnistrian conflict. We have followed with great interest recent attempts to prepare a Russian-mediated document of principles that would provide a basis for a new state structure.

It was most unfortunate that neither the OSCE nor we were included, much less consulted, in the recent process. We note the statement by President Voronin that Moldova for now will refrain from signing the Memorandum on the Basic Principles of the State Structure of a United State given the need for endorsement of the plan of settlement by European structures, first and foremost by the OSCE. The way in which the Transnistrian conflict is resolved will affect all Moldovans, and all citizens should also be able to make their voices heard through open, public debate in advance of a referendum.

Additionally, we fully agree with the conclusion of the Chairman in Office that there is no consensus among state parties to endorse this Memorandum should the Memorandum eventually be signed.

We do believe that OSCE must play a key role in ensuring that an eventual referendum on a new Moldovan constitution is prepared and carried out in a fully free and fair manner in the entire territory of the country.

We have seen reports that speak of possible security guarantee arrangements that would have been concluded simultaneously with the signing of the Memorandum. Security and stability in Moldova are essential for the security and stability of a very important region. These matters are therefore of the utmost concern to the broader European community of nations. For this reason, the United States firmly believes that any international security guarantee arrangements should be made on a multilateral rather than a bilateral basis, and thereby have credibility with, and the support of, the international community as a whole.

If a political settlement acceptable to the Moldovan people can be reached, international assistance in implementing such a settlement will be essential, including perhaps the deployment of a peacekeeping or stabilization force. The U.S. believes that any such force should have an international mandate and be truly multilateral in character. In keeping with the situation on the ground, such a force should be small in size, have a narrow scope of activities, and be deployed only for a limited period while the two sides begin the process of reconciliation and reintegration. Of course, any such force would need to be consistent with fulfilment of the commitments made at the 1999 Istanbul OSCE Summit.

At this point, the United States believes that the next step should be to return the negotiating process and to the established, accepted format of the Five Party Talks, in which mediators from the OSCE, the Russian Federation and Ukraine can best help the parties search for a settlement that will be viable and stable, and that will be internationally supported and will promote the security and well-being of Moldova and the region as a whole.

Thank you.