



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement in Response to Report by Head of Mission to Moldova, William Hill

As delivered by Deputy Representative Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
February 2, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States extends a warm welcome to Head of Mission Bill Hill here at the Permanent Council, and thanks him for his comprehensive report on the situation in Moldova. Ambassador Hill and his staff have done important work in all three OSCE dimensions under what are often very trying circumstances. We applaud the Mission's commitment, hard work, and efforts to further the cause of peace in Moldova.

As we have consistently noted in numerous fora, the United States supports a peaceful resolution to the conflict that fully respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova.

We regret that last week's five-plus-two negotiations did not result in meaningful progress. We must sadly reach the same conclusion as Ambassador Hill: The real problem lies not with specific issues per se, and not with the readiness of the parties to discuss those issues. Rather, what appears to be lacking is the will to make constructive compromises and take decisions that lead to progress.

At base there must be a readiness among all parties in the talks to promote and agree up on a political settlement. There must be a common understanding that the status quo is not acceptable. That is the view of the United States, and we hope it is the view of all other governments represented in this room.

Ambassador Hill has outlined a number of areas where discussion has been ongoing for months or years, and yet no concrete results have emerged. We suggest the mediators and observers devote themselves to achieving results on at least some of these issues at the next session. Agreement should be reached on the technical aspects of the proposal to monitor enterprises in the military-industrial complex of Transnistria and on specific elements of the Confidence and Security Building Measures package, which would be implemented as a priority, including data exchange.

These would be useful steps, but not enough. The next round of talks should also address core issues of the settlement process. It is time for concrete work on these issues.

We believe that an International Assessment Mission to Moldova's Transnistria region could make a worthwhile contribution to democratization there. Unfortunately, the lack of consensus continues to block this potentially constructive initiative.

This would be one step in a range of measures that would help unfreeze this intractable conflict. Full implementation of the customs agreement between Moldova and Ukraine can play an important role in promoting good governance in Moldova's Transnistria region, and we hope Kiev will reconsider its recent decision to delay putting the customs agreement into effect.

Resumption of Russian military withdrawal from Moldova in accordance with the Istanbul commitments would also send a very important signal that Russia, a key player in the talks and in the region, does not regard the status quo as permanent or acceptable. It has now been six years since Istanbul, and this commitment remains unfulfilled.

We reject the notion that fulfillment of the withdrawal commitment is dependent upon a political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. No such condition was agreed to at Istanbul. And, as Ambassador Hill notes in his report, less than six months of work remains to complete the withdrawal. The Russian Federation has already accomplished much in this area. What's needed is to resume and complete the task. The OSCE Voluntary Fund has the financial resources. We therefore again urge Russia to immediately resume withdrawal of its forces.

Mr. Chairman, I would once again like to thank Head of Mission Hill for his thorough and professional assessment of the situation in Moldova, and wish him success in his endeavors. He and his staff will continue to have our support and gratitude.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.