



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Moldova

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Paul W. Jones
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
August 6, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Despite international condemnation, the Tiraspol authorities have continued their harassment of and attempts to close by force Latin-script Moldovan language schools in the Transnistrian-controlled region of Moldova. The schools in Tiraspol and Rybnitsa also remain closed. We again strongly condemn these despicable actions, and reiterate our demand that the Transnistrians reopen the schools immediately, restore the normal movement of people and goods, and stabilize the situation in the security zone.

Tiraspol's most recent step compounds our concern. This week, Transnistrian authorities have blocked the railroad between Moldova and many of its main trading partners and cut electricity supplies to parts of Moldovia. This is yet another example of the irresponsibility of the regime in Tiraspol, and of its willingness to take steps that can only undermine peace, stability and prospects for economic development in the region. Tiraspol needs to end these provocations and engage in political dialogue.

We take note of the initiative by Russia to hold urgent talks between the mediators and the two sides in Moscow. Russia's engagement is critical. We again urge the Russian Government to use its influence with the Transnistrian leadership to halt their current provocations, immediately reopen the Moldovan schools, ensure the observance of the human rights of all Moldovans residing in Transnistria, and return to the political settlement process. We fully believe this lies within the power of the Russian Federation.

The United States and EU are consulting closely on additional measures against the Transnistrian authorities that will underscore our concern over the current situation. We note that the Moldovan Government announced on July 31 that it is suspending export licenses and certificates of origin and withholding customs seals for Transnistrian companies. As a first step, we hope that all participating States will implement their existing agreements with Moldova by denying entry to any goods from Transnistria that do not bear the new Moldovan customs seals.

The current situation demonstrates the continued relevance of the five-sided talks. We strongly support the work of the OSCE Mission in Moldova. The existing five-sided talks remain the relevant mechanism both for working on contentious issues like the school crisis, as well as developing steps toward an overall settlement. We hope that all sides will resume these talks very soon.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman