

GEORGIA 2008, UKRAINE 2014: IS MOLDOVA NEXT?



MAY 6, 2014

**Briefing of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

Washington: 2015

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
234 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-1901
csce@mail.house.gov
http://www.csce.gov

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ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Helsinki process, formally titled the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, traces its origin to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in Finland on August 1, 1975, by the leaders of 33 European countries, the United States and Canada. As of January 1, 1995, the Helsinki process was renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The membership of the OSCE has expanded to 56 participating States, reflecting the breakup of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

The OSCE Secretariat is in Vienna, Austria, where weekly meetings of the participating States' permanent representatives are held. In addition, specialized seminars and meetings are convened in various locations. Periodic consultations are held among Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State or Government.

Although the OSCE continues to engage in standard setting in the fields of military security, economic and environmental cooperation, and human rights and humanitarian concerns, the Organization is primarily focused on initiatives designed to prevent, manage and resolve conflict within and among the participating States. The Organization deploys numerous missions and field activities located in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The website of the OSCE is: <www.osce.org>.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, is a U.S. Government agency created in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance by the participating States with their OSCE commitments, with a particular emphasis on human rights.

The Commission consists of nine members from the United States Senate, nine members from the House of Representatives, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce. The positions of Chair and Co-Chair rotate between the Senate and House every two years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff assists the Commissioners in their work.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Commission gathers and disseminates relevant information to the U.S. Congress and the public by convening hearings, issuing reports that reflect the views of Members of the Commission and/or its staff, and providing details about the activities of the Helsinki process and developments in OSCE participating States.

The Commission also contributes to the formulation and execution of U.S. policy regarding the OSCE, including through Member and staff participation on U.S. Delegations to OSCE meetings. Members of the Commission have regular contact with parliamentarians, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and private individuals from participating States. The website of the Commission is: <www.csce.gov>.

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May 6, 2014

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Washington, DC

The briefing was held from 12:03 to 1:34 p.m. EDT in 268, North Congressional Meeting Room, Capitol Visitor Center, Washington D.C., David Killion, presiding.

Mr. KILLION. Ladies and gentlemen, if we could get started today with this important briefing. Good afternoon. I'm Ambassador David Killion. I'm the chief of staff of the Helsinki Commission and this is my first event as chief of staff, so it's very special to me. I think this is an incredibly timely event. I want to welcome our speakers as well as our audience to this important briefing to examine Russia's intention toward Moldova and Transnistria, its secessionist region, in the face of growing violence and instability in southeastern Ukraine.

This briefing is occurring at an urgent time, as violence in Odessa, which borders Moldova, continues to escalate, aided and abetted by Russia. In fact, we heard some information indicating over the weekend that many of the individuals arrested for violently attacking peaceful demonstrators for Ukrainian unity in Odessa were actually Russian nationalists and residents of Transnistria. At the same time, Ukrainian authorities reported that arms found in the building where over 30 of the individuals instigating violence and secession were tragically killed last Friday also originated from Transnistria and Russia.

Equally concerning is the continuing lawlessness and violence across the region that's being perpetrated against state institutions and Ukrainian citizens who do not want to see their country Balkanized, occupied or controlled by Russia. Fighting continues in Slovyansk, where pro-Russian secessionists launched violent attacks upon supporters of Ukrainian unity, occupied government buildings and held OSCE military observers hostage for over a week. Pro-Russian thugs shot down two Ukrainian military helicopters in Slovyansk last week, resulting in the death and injury of several military officers. Only yesterday, other casualties were added as fighting persisted between the military and pro-Russian insurgents.

The destabilizing events in Odessa are occurring a little over a hundred miles from Transnistria, where Russia maintains military forces and weapons against the wishes of the Moldovan government. Along with political and economic coercion, Russia has used this military presence to impede a peaceful and lawful settlement of Transnistria for over 20 years.

Today, the presence of Russian armed forces on Moldovan territory, on Ukraine's borders and in occupied Crimea violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both countries and aim to prevent their integration into Europe and hinder their economic and democratic development. Russia's actions violate every core principle of the OSCE and the United Nations, as well as Russia's obligation to guarantee Ukraine's sovereignty under the Budapest Memorandum.

We look forward to this opportunity to discuss Russia's intentions in Moldova and Transnistria, and what the ongoing insecurity and conflict in the region portends for countries in the southern Caucasus and beyond. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Labor Thomas Melia was not able to join with us, so we will first hear today from our very distinguished guest, Moldova's deputy prime minister for reintegration, Mr. Eugen Carpov.

Mr. Carpov has held the office of deputy prime minister of the government of Moldova since 2011. He has an extensive background in foreign affairs and has held positions in both the public and private sectors. From 2002 until 2005 he served as the Moldovan ambassador to Poland, before becoming the head of the Moldovan Mission to the European Union in 2005, a position he held until 2007. Following this, he became the chief of the International Cooperation Department of ASCOM Company from 2007 to 2008, and subsequently was the deputy general manager of the Komet Group Corporation from 2009 to 2011.

We will then hear from Mr. Paul Goble, a longtime specialist on ethnic and religious matters in Eurasia. Paul has had a distinguished career. He has served as the director of research and publications at the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy and as vice dean for the social sciences and humanities at Audentes University in Tallinn. His previous work includes tenure as a senior research associate at the Euro College of the University of Tartu, in Estonia, during which he launched the Window on Eurasia series. Prior to joining the faculty of Tartu University, he served in various capacities in the U.S. State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and the International Broadcasting Bureau, as well as the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty and at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He's a prolific writer on ethnic and religious issues and has edited five volumes on ethnicity and religion in the former Soviet space. We're very, very pleased to have him with us today.

Finally, we'll hear from Dr. Stephen Blank, a senior fellow at the American Foreign Policy Council in Washington and a leading international expert on Soviet, Russian, U.S., Asian and European military and foreign policy. From 1989 to 2013, Dr. Blank was a professor of Russian national security studies at the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College, in Pennsylvania. During 1998 to 2001 he was Douglas MacArthur professor of research at the War College. He's testified before Congress on Russia, China and Central Asia, and he has published or edited 15 books focusing on Russian foreign, energy and military policies and on international security in Eurasia.

Following the statements of our panelists and questions from this panel, the audience will have an opportunity to ask questions.

So, Mr. Carpov, the floor is yours.

Mr. CARPOV. Thank you, Ambassador. Dear colleagues, thank you for organizing this event. The Helsinki Committee continues to serve as perfect platform for trans-Atlantic dialogue on important issues where U.S. and Europe have mutual and shared interests.

Today's event has quite a provocative title. So at this session we will share our thoughts on the situation in Moldova and in our region. I hope this will be helpful to you to understand better what is going on in our part of the world and what are the perspectives.

Since I'm dealing in the government of Moldova with the resolution of the Transnistrian conflict, it will represent major part of my remarks. First of all, let me set the parameters of the issue we are discussing. Transnistrian conflict has, at its basis, mainly a political dispute. It does not have ethnic or a religious background. The situation in the conflict area is generally peaceful. There were no military hostilities between sides since 1992. Certain tensions or incidents appear from time to time, but they have no direct military character and involve mainly law-enforcement bodies.

The dialogue on conflict settlement process is taking place through a number of channels. The most-known is the five-plus-two negotiations format, where the Moldovan and Transnistrian region are the sides; OSCE, Russia and Ukraine mediators; and U.S. and EU observers. We have also meetings of the political representatives of the sides: the chief negotiators. In parallel, senior experts and decision-makers from various authorities are meeting in the sectoral working groups. There are contacts on higher political level as well. From our side, this is the prime minister and from the Transnistrian side is the leader of the region's administration. These meetings are taking place with different intensity depending on the situation. The key unresolved issue of the conflict settlement is: What status would the Transnistrian region have within Moldova?

All international players involved in the conflict resolution have committed to assist in resolving the Transnistrian conflict on the basis of respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova and providing the Transnistrian region with a special status.

Where the conflict settlement stands now: Current situation in the Transnistrian conflict settlement process can be characterized as stalemate in terms of the moving towards political settlement of the conflict. Regretfully, the trust and confidence between sides has been undermined by increasing negative rhetoric and unilateral actions which run against the ongoing negotiation process.

About political aspects: The strategic goal of the Republic of Moldova is to achieve a lasting political settlement of the conflict based on the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. The Transnistrian region should have a special status within the reintegrated country. Such a status would enable the administration of Transnistrian region with sufficient level of competences to enjoy large autonomy within Moldova. The political solution of the conflict should ensure an effective and balanced decision-making mechanism.

The European vector of the development of the Republic of Moldova after reintegration should also be preserved. Currently, Tiraspol, supported fully by the Russian Federation, refuses to talk, in the five-plus-two negotiations, on political and security issues. In the meantime, Tiraspol is promoting, outside of the political negotiations, the so-called concept of civilized divorce, as well as recently has made an address to the Russian Federation to be recognized as an independent state.

Our position with regard to these steps is clear. The demands of the Transnistrian region are based on illusions and have no real perspectives. The Transnistrian region is recognized by all as part of the Republic of Moldova, and any request for international

recognition contradicts the international law and principles of the conflict resolution process.

On official level, all international partners which are participating in the negotiations process are unanimously supporting a peaceful solution based on the principles that I outlined earlier: respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity of Moldova, and special status for Transnistrian region within the Republic of Moldova. Basically, these principles are stipulated in the OSCE ministerial statements of the Transnistrian conflict adopted at the meetings of the OSCE Council of Ministers in Dublin 2012 and Kiev 2013.

At the same time, we keep reiterating that real actions of the international partners should be in line with their official positions. This is not always the case. While the political process is stagnating, the efforts are concentrated on tackle some technical issues, but even in technical issues, the room for maneuver is limited due to difference in approaches. Chisinau is promoting proposals based on the idea of a rapprochement between sides, while Tiraspol is insisting on further separation. For example, when we are talking about radio frequencies or access of the Transnistrian companies to international transportation corridors, our view is that solutions should be based on, or at least not contradict, the existing international commitments that Moldova has undertaken. Also, such solutions should not lead to further separation. So we are a bit in a vicious circles there.

In 2013, we managed to find agreement on few issues related to ecology, pensions, dismantling of some old and dangerous infrastructure objectives, and some aspects of freedom of movement. These are positive developments, but to move ahead, the conflict resolution process needs more comprehensive forward-looking decisions. There are a number of issues that could generate tensions. I will go briefly just to list them.

A general point that I would like to make is that since the end of the last year, we feel increased pressure on every element of the Moldovan presence in the Transnistrian region. This is the case of Moldovan Latin script schools, case of access of Moldovan farmers to their lands on Transnistria-controlled de facto territory, case of the Moldovan police and two penitentiaries located in the Bender town. The line that we observe in each case is that Transnistrian side tries, by various means, to impose their rules or take under their control institutions subordinated to Moldova or apply pressure on people working in these institutions.

Security situation in the region remains under our constant monitoring. In the last period of time, you observe that Transnistrian side is taking actions aimed at consolidation of its infrastructure at the administrative boundary line. The risk of increase of the presence of the Transnistrian military and security structures above notified limits also remain real. The deployment of military observers of the peacekeeping mechanism, whose main function is to monitor the situation, is frequently blocked because it's matter of consensus decision by all parties to the peacekeeping mechanism. The main supervisory body in the security zone, the Joint Control Commission, in many cases does not have a clear assessment of the situation. So all in all, there are a number of vulnerabilities that could turn into security challenges if there will be such an intention.

The Russian military presence in Moldova remains factor of our concern. Our long-standing position has not changed. We call for finalization without any precondition of the withdrawal of ammunition stockpiles from Kobasna and remaining Russian forces in accordance with the relevant international commitments. We also consider that efforts

toward modernization or buildup of this military presence would not contribute to security in the region and therefore are not welcomed.

Let me sum up the approach of the Republic of Moldova. We put main focus on peaceful political dialogue. We will keep all channels of dialogue with Transnistria open to prevent unilateral steps and deterioration of the situation. We will demonstrate a calm approach and avoid involvement in any provocation. Prime Minister Iurie Leanca is ready to meet with Shevchuk without any preconditions. We also continue the dialogue at the level of chief negotiators and working groups.

Our short- and medium-term goals are the following: maintain stability in the security zone; resolve issues like Moldovan Latin script schools or access to farmers' lands without any tensions; discourage pressure applied on police and penitentiaries in Bender; keep dialogue ongoing at all levels and try to achieve progress in all areas to create positive dynamics; maintain close contacts with all international partners involved in the settlement process and encourage their joint actions; move forward with the 5+2 negotiations.

Situation in Ukraine and implications for the Transnistrian settlement—let me make a couple of remarks on the implications of the situation in Ukraine on the Transnistrian settlement process. First of all, as a neighboring country, and as friendly nation to Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova is very much concerned about what is going on there. We condemned the so-called referendum in Crimea and did not recognize the further annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. We consider it as a major challenge to the international law, political cooperation and security architecture in Europe.

We are also very worried about spreading violence in east and south of Ukraine, in particular in the Odessa region. We consider that all efforts should be focused now on finding a peaceful solution that would preserve sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Ukraine. Nationwide dialogue between all political players that are acting in the legal and constitutional framework of Ukraine is needed.

We continue to believe that the way towards de-escalation should be found jointly by Ukrainian government in cooperation with all international actors that could influence the situation on the ground. International engagements such as the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, transparency mechanisms of the Vienna Document on CSBM and other tools should be applied to their full capacity.

One of the trends which has become visible in the context of the situation in Ukraine is an intensified propaganda regarding the fact that Transnistrian region is under blockade. Tiraspol tries to provide it by saying that the crossing points on the border are empty and the flow of goods and people has decreased. Another element is that Russian citizens are almost prohibited to enter Ukraine through Transnistrian segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border. The reality is that the movement of persons has decreased due to objective reasons related to people's safety. Despite the increased control measures by Ukrainian authorities on this segment, available data shows that the refusal ratio of foreign citizens entering Ukraine remains extremely low, about 1 percent of total entries.

Concerning goods, the available statistics from both Tiraspol and Chisinau show that the foreign trade operations, in particular exports from the Transnistrian region continue to register positive dynamics. There was no disruption in cargo traffic. Moreover, in April this year, the Moldovan parliament canceled a number of taxes previously applied to the Transnistrian companies. All these facts clearly demonstrate that the rhetoric about blockade is not proved by facts.

Let me also add a few more points about the political context in which Moldova lives these days. First of all, we are approaching a breakthrough in our relations with the European Union. Recently Moldova was granted a visa-free travel regime in Schengen Area for short-time trips. This was a result of major efforts undertaken by all national authorities in law enforcement, human rights, and document security areas. In June we are planning to sign the association agreement with the European Union and DCFTA. This event will mark the irreversible character of our European path.

At the same time, we face some counteractions to European integration. I'll just exemplify it by recent developments in the southern part of the country, namely the Gagauzia autonomous unit. We feel that skeptical mood towards European integration is being worked up in this region. The government of Moldova is committed to dialogue, and we are already taking actions to explain better our policies and perspectives. The parliament has also formed a special group for dialogue with the legislative body of Gagauzia. So we are intensifying our dialogue with the autonomous region Gagauzia.

The last point is the upcoming parliamentary elections in late November this year. We anticipate quite a tough competition between the governing parties and opposition. In recent years elections in Moldova have quite a visible geopolitical dimension, and we expect it to be so in current year.

Summing up, I would say that these days Moldova finds itself in a crucial moment of its history, being geographically very close to the center of major dispute and tension between the key international players, facing a number of security challenges and experiencing ongoing political debate about the future of the country. This is time to support Moldova, and we thank again the Helsinki Committee for this opportunity to present our story.

Thank you.

Mr. KILLION. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Prime Minister.

Now I give the floor to Paul Goble. Thank you very much.

Mr. GOBLE. Thank you, Ambassador.

I thank the commission for calling this hearing and giving me an opportunity to speak on Moldova. It is a country I care very much about, and unfortunately, it is one that has not gotten the attention it deserves.

The topicality of the focus of this hearing is obvious. I suspect that my colleagues, like myself, felt in preparing our remarks that we had a very real risk that developments on the ground were moving so fast that anything we might have written even last night might be overtaken by events given what is occurring in Ukraine and in Moldova itself.

The importance of Moldova simply cannot be overstated at the present time. What Moscow is up to in Moldova as an extension of its policy Ukraine and into the Balkans could easily prove far more fateful to Europe and the West than Russia's invasion of Georgia six years ago did, or than its ongoing aggression in Ukraine is. The three reasons that that may very well prove to be the case can be quickly stated. First of all, the outcome of Vladimir Putin's actions in Ukraine, and thus of his entire imperial project, will depend in large measure on what Moscow is able to do and make use of Moldova's Transnistria.

Second, in his efforts to derail Moldova's efforts to join Europe, where it quite properly belongs, Putin has put in play, as has been mentioned, the Gagauz, a Turkish commu-

nity in the country's southeast that would likely secede in a violent fashion if Transnistria is allowed to exit or even gain significant autonomy as a result of Russian pressure.

Third, the demise of the Moldovan state—which would likely occur if those two things took place—could trigger changes not only in the borders of Moldova but throughout Southeastern Europe, force the federalization of what could become a greater Romanian state, reverse the post-World War I settlement there of Trianon, and contribute to a radical destabilization of the continent. Consequently, focusing on Moldova should be a matter of concern for everyone.

Each of these possibilities requires a great deal of additional comment but I will simply limit my remarks to this: These dangers are so great that we can identify them quite easily and we can, at the present time, take steps which maximize the area we have a relative advantage in, which is in soft power, and reduces the possibility that in the future we will have to make use of hard power, which is someplace where in Southeastern Europe we enjoy a comparative disadvantage. Consequently, it is terribly important that groups like the OSCE and the Helsinki Commission make demands on what we need to do immediately.

For two decades Moscow has consistently supported, both in public and covertly, the breakaway Transnistria region, a place where many have observed that the August 1991 coup against Mikhail Gorbachev in fact succeeded. It may have failed elsewhere but it succeeded there—and one which has the largest, or almost the largest, Soviet arms cache, which this regime has sold off to terrorists and others to support itself and to promote a variety of nefarious missions around the world, giving Russia plausible deniability but in fact being done in closest coordination with the Russian government.

The Putin regime has declared Transnistria a frozen conflict, and all too many in the West have been willing to accept that idea and that there must be a negotiated settlement in which Moscow will have the whip hand. That acceptance of course has meant that no settlement is possible or will be possible because the Russian government, at least under Vladimir Putin, prefers the managed instability in this region to a stable, thriving and pro-Western Moldova.

In recent weeks—and this is terribly important to take note of—Moscow propagandists have changed their thematics on Transnistria. They have proclaimed it, quote, “a second Crimea,” arguing that, like Crimea, its population—which Moscow untruthfully claims consists of a Russian majority; there is no ethnic Russian majority in Transnistria; there is a Slavic plurality but that is not the same thing—that Transnistria should and must become part of the Russian Federation, and that if an application is made, Moscow should agree.

But far more disturbingly, in the last few weeks Moscow writers and officials have begun talking about Transnistria as an ally of Russia's in Putin's project of creating Novo Rossia, a new Moscow client state stretching from Crimea on the east to Transnistria in the west and reducing Ukraine to a landlocked country, or even eliminating it altogether by partition. There have already been credible reports that armed individuals and groups from Transnistria have entered Southwestern Ukraine and were present in Odessa during the recent troubles, in support of secessionist groups.

If Moscow does launch an overt invasion of Ukraine—something I think it probably will not do precisely because its subversion of Ukraine is succeeding as well as it is from Moscow's point of view—it seems clear that Transnistria will play a major supporting

role, at a minimum forcing Kiev to divide its forces and, at a maximum, catching Ukraine in a two-front war that it would find far more difficult to win.

The second Russian action in Moldova, one that has attracted far less attention but may ultimately play an equally large geopolitical role, is a promotion of Gagauz's separatism. The Gagauz, a 200,000-strong nation living in a dispersed rather than compact area of settlement which is conveniently neglected by many of the Russian commentators, have long wanted greater linguistic and political autonomy. In the early '90s their activism forced the Moldovan government to cede power to them and to agree that should Moldova's external borders be changed by the exit of Transnistria, the right of the Gagauz would exist to move toward independence.

The Gagauz have neither the numbers nor the arms supply nor the international contacts that the regime in Transnistria does, but they do have an important political resource in addition to the support they are getting from Moscow. They are Christian Turks and thus enjoy the attention and potential support of both the Moscow patriarchate and the Republic of Turkey. In the event of a crisis, either or both could come to their aid, something the Russian government would undoubtedly use as a cover to promote a new wave of secessionism, just as they used that technique in Crimea and in greater Ukraine in recent weeks.

If both Transnistria and Gagauzia, defined in border terms were to secede, Moldova would, like Ukraine in the Putin project, be left a rump state where a large percentage of the population would likely have to find union with someone else. It's been suggested that a rump Ukraine would have to be absorbed by Poland and a rump Moldova would have to go for some kind of union with Romania.

That is the third action that Russia has a longstanding and long-term interest in. Indeed, some in Moscow now appear to be more interested in destabilizing the broader region and undermining Europe than even in seizing control of particular territories, given the social and economic costs that Moscow would have to bear. It is far better to destabilize areas and keep other people out than it is to take control and have to pay for the social welfare costs that are involved.

What would happen if Moscow provoked disintegration in Moldova and alleged a union with Romania? Almost certainly, given the differences in historical experience deriving from Soviet control in Moldova, that new state would be federalized, and federalization in this case would spark demands for a Hungarian autonomy in the north. And such demands, given the Hungarian government in place at the present time, would likely enjoy support from the north, and that would create a very unstable situation that could lead to the kind of controversy that the settlements after World War I were intended to eliminate and start destabilization that would go even further into the former Yugoslavia and south to Greece as well, all of them affecting American interests.

Given how serious this potential threat is, we need to think what we can do now. None of them, of course, are inevitable. Russia's "victory," quote, unquote, in Crimea is not inevitable. It is not necessarily that it will stay the course. I welcomed your remarks about nonrecognition of the Russian occupation of Crimea, which is an illegal act. I believe we must articulate a clear nonrecognition policy with regard to Crimea and other Russian areas, just as we did with respect to Estonia and Latvia and Lithuania in 1940. That was a policy that was kept in place for more than 50 years and became the birth certificate

of the recovery of independence of those three countries. We need to understand that we are in an equally fateful situation now.

I would like to argue that we need to do five things right now. First, we need to recognize Moldova's centrality to our security concerns and to build up expertise inside the government and in the American For far too long—based as a personal experience, I can tell you—Moldova has been treated as a, quote, “orphan” country, as a country that doesn't have domestic support in this country because of the Romanian connection and that is not somehow terribly important. In fact, Moldova's geographic position means that in an age of geopolitics, which Mr. Putin is playing even if we are not, it is much more important than anyone can imagine. It isn't about size. It's about location.

Second, we need to expand Western broadcasts to Moldova and especially Russian-language broadcasts there. The fact is that Vladimir Putin has transformed Moscow television into an organizing tool, much as Lenin used Iskra a hundred years ago to organize and undermine stability in neighboring countries. We need to have an alternate voice. It is terribly important that the people in Transnistria who do speak Russian get their news from a Russian-language channel that is not propaganda from the central government in Moscow.

Third, we need to promote change within Moldova, not by holding it up to standards that will allow us to say no. Too many of the suggestions about how we should assist countries other than Russia start by saying, these are the standards we have to require, but that is usually a covert way of saying, and we'll then have an excuse not for doing something. We need to have a much bigger picture. We need to promote exchanges, sending Americans to Moldova and bringing Moldovans to the United States. Such exchanges were the heart and soul of American policy in Western Europe after 1945. They should be at the heart and soul of American policy now.

Fourth, we need to recognize, and be open about it, that our approach to Transnistria, like our approach to Nagorno-Karabakh, and our approach to almost all of the frozen conflicts on the territory of what once was the Soviet empire, has been wrong. Involving Russia in these things is a guarantee that they will not be solved, because Russia has no interest in solving these conflicts. What we need is to promote bilateral talks of the kind that the deputy prime minister has discussed rather than injecting things in a way to allow Moscow to have a veto.

Fifth, in my view anyway, we need to offer a united Moldova immediate membership in NATO and, together with our European allies, put it on the fast track to European Union membership. Despite the vocabulary of many in Washington over the last two decades, one does not, quote, “qualify” for a defense alliance. One includes a country in a defense alliance either because of its position or its ability to contribute to the goals of that alliance. Moldova, by its position, can do that. It is worth noting that one of the earliest members of NATO does not even have a military, something those of us who were part of the Baltic cause frequently had occasion to note.

In considering these ideas, I would like to suggest that we need to remember the implications of a remark that Winston Churchill made to the American ambassador in 1944. He said at the time that, quote, “The Americans can always be counted on to do the right thing—after they've tried everything else.” That is often quoted as a suggestion that Americans are simply bumbling incompetents. In fact, what Churchill was calling attention to is something that we have not yet been willing to focus on, and that is we

no longer have such disproportionate economic, political and military power that we can afford to make mistake after mistake. We have to get things right soon. That requires expertise. That requires attention. And it requires that we use the soft power, which is where we will always enjoy a comparative advantage, before it's too late. Moldova is a very good place for us to start. Thank you.

Mr. KILLION. Thank you, Mr. Goble, for your very powerful testimony and the bright lines that you drew for us. And now, Mr. Blank, it's your turn.

Mr. BLANK. Thank you, Ambassador Killion. I'd like to thank you and the Helsinki Commission for inviting me and for holding this hearing. I agree with what has been said here before, that Moldova is a critical country which does not receive the attention it deserves. It plays an important geostrategic part in Southeast Europe, for a number of reasons.

Basically, Moldova serves as a precedent, as a template, and as a lynchpin of Russian strategy to destabilize the entire area from the Balkans to the Caucasus by exploiting and inciting conflicts using the ethnic card and all the instruments of power at its disposal to prevent the creation of consolidated states, whether it be in the former Yugoslavia, in Moldova or in the Caucasus, or in Ukraine, and to regain the empire. It is very clear from what we are now seeing in Ukraine, which acts by Russia constitute an act of war, and that has to be understood. When people say we are risking a war if we do something in retaliation for all this, the fact is that there already is a war. Invasion, occupation and annexation, as in Moldova, are acts of war, as in Georgia, as in Ukraine, and they need to be recognized as such.

Moldova is a precedent. It is the first place where the Russian government used the ethnic card and the military card 22 years ago in order to establish a kind of neo-Soviet criminalized regime, which looks to Moscow, and which Moscow has gradually come to recognize as its own and therefore to resist negotiation. It is a template for what is happening now in the Ukraine by virtue of that operation, but furthermore because Mr. Putin has been preparing for this operation for the 15 years that he's been president.

Already in 2000 he made clear that he did not believe that Moldova was really a genuine state and that it had to acknowledge the special interests of the Russians there. His federalization plan of 2003, the so-called Kozak plan, would have destroyed any genuine sovereignty in Moldova and is a template for what he is trying to impose now on Ukraine. Moreover, at least since 2006, we know for a fact—this has been published in open sources—that Mr. Putin and the Russian government were training Russian, Ukrainian and Moldovan soldiers at a camp in Solnechnogorsk to conduct the kinds of operations we see going on in Ukraine that have gone on since February 27th.

So there is no excuse for anyone to say that this was unforeseen. It certainly wasn't unforeseen by Mr. Putin. He was planning this operation for years. And he even said to George Bush at Bucharest that he would dismember Ukraine if it moved to the West, and that it was not a state and that its territory, meaning Crimea, was a gift from Russia. We need to keep an eye on what's going on here and pay greater attention to the Balkans and the Caucasus and Ukraine, because the future of European integration and European security, which are the vital interests of both the United States and of Europe, are at risk here, as Paul Goble and Deputy Prime Minister Carpov have pointed out.

In the Caucasus we see Moscow inciting the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Four billion worth of arms has been sold to Azerbaijan in the last four years, the buildup of the Rus-

sian forces in the Caucasus, the achievement of a base at Gyumri for 25 years, plus arms sales to Armenia indicate that Moscow has no interest in solving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict because it is profiting from keeping it going, not just in financial terms but in geopolitical terms, because it is able to impose its will on Armenia and to prevent Azerbaijan from getting closer to the West.

What's more, it is inciting conflict by running guns covertly from Montenegro in the Balkans to Stepanakert. From 2010 through 2013, for example, 38 Ilyushin-76 planes took off from Montenegro, loaded top to bottom with arms, heading for Stepanakert, the capital of the, quote, "independent" Nagorno-Karabakh. It doesn't take much imagination to understand whose weapons these are and whose planes these are, and what that means in terms of Russia's ability to corrupt officials in Montenegro, and its efforts to use the Balkans in order to incite trouble in the Caucasus.

Moreover, historically the conquest and incorporation of Ukraine has been the basis from which Moscow has then proceeded to launch all of the imperial gambits it has launched in the Balkans, going back to Catherine the Great. Today that is—there is no difference. We look at the pattern in Ukraine. The territories that are being threatened are precisely those that would allow Russia a direct landline to Moldova. I don't think that's a coincidence.

Furthermore, in the Balkans Moscow's project is to prevent, frustrate and obstruct European integration and democratization, and to project its military power. It has asked Serbia for a base ostensibly for humanitarian interventions at Niš. It restored a naval base on Montenegro at Bar in the Adriatic. And it has projected its power into Transnistria and then used that power, as we have heard, to go back in and incite difficulties in the Ukraine.

If Moldova is allowed to be truncated in its sovereignty, abridged in its territorial integrity, then all the kinds of consequences that Paul Goble has just specified become real, relevant and potential threats to European security. And they will not only take place around Romania, Moldova and Hungary because the Russians are also busy trying to prevent Serbia and Kosovo from achieving a lasting piece by inciting every kind of Serbian nationalist outrage against Kosovo that it can and to prevent the unification of Bosnia Herzegovina in the Baltics, just as it's doing in the Caucasus. Whereas in the Caucasus, it runs guns, or uses the military arm in order to prevent Georgia from achieving its integrity and sovereignty over Abkhazia and South Ossetia or to prevent conflict resolution in Nagorno-Karabakh. It is doing exactly the same thing in the Balkans. It is all part of a single strategy whose objectives are, A, restoring the Russian empire, if not necessarily the Soviet Empire; B, solidifying Mr. Putin's domestic hold by playing the imperial card to claim that he is a gatherer of Russian lands. C, preventing European integration in the Balkans and the Caucasus, and D, perpetuating what can be called a state of siege in East-West relations; much like Lenin did in 1917 when he took power.

For all those reasons, Moldova is a state that deserves much more consideration and interest and attention from the United States. Apart from the recommendations that Paul Goble has made, all of which I support, it is necessary also for us to understand that the threat we now face in Ukraine is one that will not only be dealt with by sanctions, although much more rigorous sanctions are needed. The ones that have been imposed to date are clearly insufficient, and have been reported as such.

But it is also unfortunately necessary that we have to help Ukraine with the instruments of hard power: training, weapons, and I would argue, also, an invitation to NATO to bring in NATO forces as peacekeepers into the afflicted areas, because I believe that that will deter Russia, and unfortunately, only that will deter Russia, because what has been done up till now is not enough and will not be enough and certainly has not altered Mr. Putin's decision-making calculus, as President Obama has indicated.

Therefore, much more vigorous action is needed and is needed over the long term. What is at stake today, as Secretary Kerry has observed, is the European settlement after the Cold War's termination in 1989 to '91 to the extent that we continue to be missing in action in the Caucasus, in the Balkans and in Ukraine, it turns out that that revision of the settlement is likely to occur without our participation and against our interests, and those interests are the same as our allies' interests.

So if we abandon our alliances because we don't understand what's at stake, or are too selfish or apathetic to care, we will have indeed harvested a much greater danger. Ukraine is not the end of Mr. Putin's ambitions, it is only the beginning. Thank you.

Mr. KILLION. Thank you, Mr. Blank, and thanks to all of the witnesses for very provocative testimony, and food for thought for the commission and for others. I'd like to start by asking a question to our very distinguished deputy prime minister, Mr. Carov. An issue that was raised in Mr. Goble's testimony—recent poll results in Moldova indicate that Russian television and other Russian media have a very strong influence in Moldova in reflecting Moldovan and international news, especially related to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. EU integration—Eurasian customs union, et cetera. Does your government plan any action to put Russian TV channels on the same footing with other foreign channels?

Mr. CARPOV. Thank you for this question, Ambassador. It's really a sensitive one. We are facing difficult times in the Republic of Moldova, and I mentioned why. Well, informational competition is a real thing that exists in the Republic of Moldova. We also can see that different Russian channels in this specific period are using elements that are not corresponding fully to different democratic standards or levels according to the legislation of the Republic of Moldova, according to the international standards and rules.

That's why now we started a process—when we tried to monitor closely—very close the way that Russian channels are presenting the information that is spreading over the media area of the Republic of Moldova. Based on the results of this monitoring, we will definitely decide what are the next steps in order to assure there are equal rights and possibilities for all channels, national and foreign media channels and full respect of the legislation that is governing the activity of foreign media channels. Thank you.

Mr. KILLION. Thank you very much. And now a question for Mr. Goble. You stated that the leadership in Transnistria has sold arms caches from the Soviet Union era. Could you advise as to the recipients of such arms and what the Moldovan government and the international community is doing to prevent the proliferation?

Mr. GOBLE. The problem is that during the Cold War and during the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe, there were a number of arms caches that were put in forward areas to be used in the event of a NATO-Soviet conflict. One of those places with millions of tons of arms was in what is now Transnistria. That has been an arms bazaar, and it has gone to a variety of groups. I know that it has gone to a number of Islamist radical

groups. There are reports, which I find credible, that it has gone to terrorist organizations that are directed against Western countries.

I do not believe that those sales were undertaken autonomously by Tiraspol. I believe that they reflect a way of Moscow providing arms to anti-Western forces with the kind of plausible deniability, which I regret to say is rarely challenged. The Moldovan government, I am absolutely certain, would not tolerate these sales if it were in a position to control that territory if, in fact, what the international community said were realized, namely that the borders of Moldova include a place called Transnistria, rather than Transnistria being run as a Russian project outside of the control of Kishinev.

One of the many reasons for doing away with the idea that Moscow can be our partners in solving Transnistria is that Moscow has no interest in doing that, because this is a resource it is quite interested in continuing to use. I believe that we have a compelling interest in preventing terrorist groups from being armed, and I believe that we have an immediate danger that that will continue to be the case out of Transnistria unless and until the Russian government is not in a position to make use of Transnistria as it has for two decades. I suspect it's true that some of the sales that went out of the Soviet arms cache were done to make money for the people in the Tiraspol government, and to even pay some of the Tiraspol government's bills. But I believe that on the whole, those sales have been coordinated carefully with Moscow rather than being an autonomous action, even of Tiraspol.

Mr. KILLION. One additional question, Mr. Goble. You talked about the establishment of a clear nonrecognition policy regarding Crimea. Could you elaborate a little bit about what elements would be included in such a clear nonrecognition and how that would be different from the status quo?

Mr. GOBLE. There's an enormous difference, and I'm delighted to have that question and have a chance to speak to it. Since 1930, the United States has taken a position that was articulated by then Secretary of State Stimson that it did not recognize any territorial change achieved by force alone. That is to say that if force is used, and then there's a post-force settlement, as there was in 1918, 1919, that that might be the case. Indeed, when, in 1940 American nonrecognition policy with respect to Estonian, Latvia, Lithuania was articulated, it was on the assumption, at least I believe so from what I've read—that there would be a peace conference after World War II was concluded.

Nonrecognition policy for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is a useful model. It is important to say what it specified and what it did not specify and why it's so important to have such a policy in place with respect to Crimea or any other place that the Russian government tries to seize.

First, nonrecognition policy said that the United States did not recognize this seizure, period. That we've already done. But that's not enough. Second, this specified that no senior American official—that was defined as someone confirmed by the Senate—would ever visit that territory while it was under occupation. Third, in the case of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, we recognized the diplomats of the pre-war governments. We did not recognize governments in exile. Fourth, the United States specified that any map produced by the U.S. government—we produce an awful lot of them, would carry on it the statement that the borders as claimed by the USSR were not recognized by the United States and that we did not recognize the forcible inclusion of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into the USSR, and that policy stayed in place. We have already seen the problem of not having

a clearly articulated policy like that, which was crafted in 1940 by Loy Henderson. In that, there have been several American government websites that have put out maps showing Crimea already part of the Russian Federation. That's intolerable and would not be the case if there were a clear policy statement. Simply saying we will never recognize it isn't enough. You have to say what that means.

Now, two other points that I think are important. The U.S. non-recognition policy of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania never carried with it a suggestion that the United States was committed to doing anything military to the liberation of these places not even in the darkest days of the Cold War. That was important because it is not that we would engage in a response to aggression by using military force, but rather we will use moral suasion, and this is why we will have maps that should show as long as Moscow claims that Crimea belongs to it and is part of the borders—inside the borders of the Russian Federation, that the United States government, as a matter of settled policy, does not recognize that, but not that the United States is committed to using force from the Black Sea or anywhere else to drive the Russians out. That's important because the distinction, which gives us some moral high ground, and does not create expectations, which I regret to say we would never realize anyway.

The second thing is that by articulating a new nonrecognition policy in Crimea, we can revive a policy which was one of the most morally important during the Cold War. We did not do that, tragically, after the Russian invasion of Georgia in August of 2008. We did not articulate a nonrecognition policy of that kind. Crimea is a second occasion when we should do that. And it would serve notice to Moscow and to a variety of other governments around the world that the United States, as a matter of settled policy, is going to not recognize the results of aggression as legitimate, period. That is something that flows from our own national tradition. It's a policy that was the right thing to do from 1940 to 1991 for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and is the right thing to do with respect to Georgia and now with respect to Ukraine, and I would like to see it ready and we can fill in any place else that the Russians or anyone else tries to use military force. But just saying that you'll never recognize it isn't enough, because it does not create the doctrinal basis within the bureaucracy to prevent errors, which will be used by the other side to chip away at this attack on international legitimacy. As Steve Blank has quite accurately said, what Mr. Putin is doing is a regression not only against the settlement of 1991 but against the settlements of 1945 and 1919. And nonrecognition policy is a way of making it very clear the United States is opposed to the revision of those three settlements and that we have a policy in place that will prevent any American official, be he an embassy officer in Kiev, someone at a U.S. international broadcaster or anywhere else from crossing a line that the Russians will make and other people may make use of to legitimate a criminal act.

Mr. KILLION. Thanks for that clarification.

I want to ask you, Mr. Blank, you talked about a hard power dimension of policy response to the current situation in Ukraine, and you spoke about NATO and training and so forth, and I just would like you to elaborate a little bit and talk about how the timing of your proposed policy response would work with the speed at which events seem to be unfolding on the ground in eastern Ukraine and other parts of the country.

Mr. BLANK. Well, thank you. It's necessary really to begin right away. What is necessary here is, I would say, that if the Ukrainian government were to invite NATO peace-

keeping forces—which is its sovereign right—then the response should be yes and we should start moving forces into Ukraine right away. They would have restricted rules of engagement. They would not be able to conduct offensive operations, but they would be given the capabilities to protect themselves against either regular or what we might call irregular forces that are currently involved, and that means also air and air defense capabilities if necessary.

Beyond that, it is urgent to help the Ukrainian government stabilize its Ministry of Defense and command establishment, and to start providing training for Ukrainian soldiers, because there is a great danger that Ukrainians who are opposed to this Russian invasion will start organizing themselves and that the Ukrainian government will lose control of that instrument of power, plunging the country into something let's say similar to Bosnia or Northern Ireland or Syria. So it's important for us to help the Ukrainian state get a handle on its own military and to devise a strategic coordinated approach to prevailing over and repulsing the Russian invasion, because it's very clear that the Russians have now decided to up the ante and use violence. Shooting down helicopters clearly indicates the presence not only of Russian weapons but of Russia officers, because you just don't give people air defense weapons and say go ahead and use this. There's training involved here, as we know from our own experience in—for example, in Afghanistan. So there is that. Second, we also know that what is going on already in these occupied territories is repression. We've had numerous cases of reports already of anti-Semitic outrages, attacks on Crimean Tatars, and coercion. It was just revealed last night, for example, that the Russia government's own information sources indicated that only 30 percent of Crimea voted in the quote "referendum," and only 15 percent of those voting supported it. That's hardly a sign of the democratic will of the people. What that means, therefore, is an occupation by force. So that has to be countered.

Now, the rules of engagement for that force are to be clearly marked out as being purely defensive, but I think that sanctions alone are not going to do the job, because, first of all, European energy and other companies are busy making private deals with Mr. Putin, as we have seen. Secondly, a lot of European governments really don't want to impose sanctions. Wall Street and Bulgaria are looking for ways to bring about the South Stream pipeline, which is the key to Russian domination of the entire area through energy. The European Commission has not yet said that it will under no circumstances allow South Stream, which is what it should do, because that would make it clear to Russia what's going on. There are other sanctions that we have the capability of doing on our own or together with our allies, and nothing is happening in that regard. So as a number of analysts—for example, George Friedman of Stratfor point out—sanctions provide the illusion that we're doing something when we are really not doing enough or doing serious activity to roll back and prevent further incursions. It is my firm conviction, therefore, that if we allow this to go forward, then we will face further questions in Europe, and not only in Europe, and not only from Russia, and that therefore the blend of hard and soft power instruments, with a coherent strategy in mind, is the only way forward.

Mr. KILLION. Thank you very much.

Very shortly we're going to turn questions over to the audience, so please be prepared for that. Before we do that, I'd like to turn the floor over to my colleague Winsome Packer, who is the Helsinki Commission's expert on the security dimension of the Helsinki Final Act and also this region, including Moldova.

Mr. PACKER. Thank you, Ambassador.

I'd like to ask a question about the conflict resolution mechanisms in Transnistria, Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh. They have, by a limited estimation proven entirely ineffective over the 20 years that they have been in place. And I'd like to ask the panel's recommendations as to what you think might be done to modify them and achieve some progress in any one of these areas.

Mr. BLANK. If I may go first, there has to be a recognition in the United States that—A, that these programs have failed, as you have said; and that, B, that it is in our important, if not vital, interest that we regenerate the conflict resolution process in order to bring both sides, in at least one or more of these conflicts, to the table and to an ultimate solution. And unfortunately, that means that we would have to take the lead and sponsor, if you like, a Camp David type situation with regard to any or all of those conflicts.

It is patently clear that Moscow has not only no interest in resolving these conflicts, but that it has a positive interest and is undertaking actions toward those ends to incite them further, and not only these, Kosovo and Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well.

I would recommend—and I have written this before about Nagorno-Karabakh, but it applies to the others—that the president invite the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan to the United States and essentially conduct that kind of negotiation that President Carter did with regard to Camp David, because that's the only way it's going to come about. Armenia, for example, been virtually deprived of its ability to conduct a sovereign foreign policy, thanks to Russia. We saw that last September when Russia said, if you sign the association agreement with the European Union, we will cut off aid, we will make sure you can never get Nagorno-Karabakh back, and we may destroy your economy and so forth and so on. And Armenia caved in to that.

So it's necessary for the president to undertake the action. There's no guarantee of success. The same thing is true with regard to Moldova. Moscow will no doubt tell Armenia and Transnistria not to attend these conferences, and it will certainly prevent the South Ossetians and the Abkhazians from doing so. But in that case, we can then turn around and say, in that case, we will not participate in any of those processes, and there will be no conflict resolution, and what's more, we will support our allies, and make the cost of doing so much greater to Russia, because there is no way at present in order to bring about conflict resolution given what is going on.

If you understand that Moscow not only wants to block this, but wants to incite conflict, then it is our responsibility to understand that the only way forward is to prevent Moscow from gaining its objectives. And their objectives are to prevent both European integration and the spread of democracy in Europe. And the spread of democracy in Europe cannot take place in conflict zones.

Mr. GOBLE. I would just add to that—I agree with everything Steve has said. I would just point out, as someone who's old enough to have been completed the Minsk Process about Karabakh, wrote at the time that it was a recipe for making sure there was never a settlement, because it insisted that one of the players that would have a veto was over it was the Russian Federation. I remember visiting Baku in 1996, and Heydar Aliyev, who was then the president, asked me, how long do we have to be independent before we will stop being treated as newly independent states and appendages of Russia?

It is worth remembering that the closest that Armenia and Azerbaijan ever got to a settlement was not because of the Minsk Process, but the Key West meeting where

it was a bilateral conversation. The United States has an important interest in promoting resolutions of these conflicts, but we have to understand that you don't invite someone who is a longtime arsonist to the table to talk about how to put out fires. And that is what the Russian government is doing.

The tragedy is that if these conflicts go on, at some point someone will use force—Azerbaijan in Karabakh is a possibility—and that works to Russia's advantage as well. So it's very much in our interest to promote bilateral talks. It's very much in our interest to stop assuming that the Russians should have a seat at the table.

This country failed utterly for the first decade in treating the countries that emerged when the Soviet Union disintegrated as separate and independent. The only time that an empire has fallen apart and where for a whole decade the United States kept all of those countries in the same bureaucracy they'd been part of at our key institutions of foreign policy was with respect to what had been, in effect, the Soviet Russian empire. That drove an awful lot of things where the assumption was that Russia should have a seat at the table. It is the only time in the history of American diplomacy that a man who's been an ambassador at one of the countries that gained its independence in this process is subsequently, quote-unquote, promoted to become deputy chief of mission in the imperial capital. That sends a very profound message. If you do that, if you keep acting as if Russia has regard in this area, the Russians will pocket that and continue.

We've got to promote bilateral talks. The Key West model, I don't believe at present, is practical, but I think that's what we should be moving toward. We should recognize that Armenia is in a much weaker position vis-à-vis Moscow than it was when Key West happened and that the Azerbaijanis are less susceptible to Western influence. But that's an indictment of what we've done for two decades, not something that was unknowable at the time. It's going to be bilateral talks.

I was delighted to hear the deputy prime minister talk about the importance of bilateral talks between Chisinau and Tiraspol. If we insist on thinking that everything has to be multilateral, which is a way of getting us off the hook, in a way, what we will do is we will guarantee that you will not get a settlement and that the situations will deteriorate because one player that we will insist at being at the table will do this.

One last thought on this. I think it was a horrific mistake to have the meeting between the foreign minister of the Russian Federation, the international affairs representative of the European Union and the United States and the foreign minister of Ukraine in Geneva because in effect, what we asked the Ukrainians to do was to agree to their own submersion. With respect, even the people who are most criticized for the way they responded to Nazi aggression in the '30s did not ask the Czechoslovaks to be present at their own submersion. You don't do it that way.

When a country has engaged in open aggression—and this is open aggression, it is time not to talk about pro-Russian forces. This is an action of the Russian state. And it is something much worse for those who are concerned about the OSCE project. As Steve has said, and as I tried to indicate, what we have seen is a man who is reversing the settlement of 1945, the basis of the United Nations and the basis of the international order. Vladimir Putin is insistent that ethnicity is more important than citizenship. That is what got us into World War II. That is what is the basis of Russian aggression in Ukraine, Moldova and in the Balkans, not to speak of Central Asia and the Caucasus. This is what people should really be worried about—if that principle goes unchallenged

in the Russian case, there are a number of other rising powers that will invoke the same thing, and we will have problems in Asia as well. And that is something we can't afford to counter then, so we had best counter it now.

Sorry to be so emotional about this, but it's outrageous to constantly assume that we are talking with people who want to find a settlement when what they want is American cover for aggression that they have committed. And that's what we have with respect to the Russian government of Vladimir Putin.

Mr. KILLION. Mr. Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr. CARPOV. To add some words based on our experience with the Transnistrian conflict settlement, well, from the very beginning, I mentioned that in Moldova, there were no ethnic or religious roots for the conflict. It's a, purely political conflict, and political elements that generated the violence in Moldova. If we agree with this, then we have to clarify from where these political interests are coming and who are the international actors interested in such processes.

In our case, and now having Ukraine in the situation that it is, it's clear that it's a geopolitical competition between East and West. Unfortunately with Moldova and Ukraine—we are a part and we are suffering part from this competition.

Conflict resolution—it's obvious that if there are powerful international actors interested in a specific development in a country, we have to see who can be a real co-partner for such a dialogue. In the case of the Transnistrian conflict, you remember that until 2005, the negotiation format was composed by five participants: Chisinau, Tiraspol, and only Ukraine, Moldova and OSCE. That is why we considered that the format was unbalanced. It was Moldovan efforts to bring to the table of negotiations some other participants, and now we have United States of America and the European Union unfortunately, as observers. We are pleading further for the increasing of the role of United States of America and EU at the level of the mediators to have an equal dialogue between all really important international actors that can bring positive evolutions in the settlement.

Well, as I mentioned before, we see a vital necessity to maintain contacts at the level of Chisinau and Tiraspol, because this is also an additional way to understand better the mentality of the opponents and to bring arguments in case there are elements that are not corresponding to the realities. Now, this is an additional element to the 5+2.

Then looking at the procedures, it's obvious that consensus in adopting decisions is a democratic principle, consensus. But in many cases, this element becomes an obstacle when if there is one participant who is not agreeing because of some internal, arguments, not agreeing with the decision shared by all other participants, it becomes a problem. It becomes a problem, and then probably there is a need to have additional instruments of explaining, convincing such actors in the truth of some arguments and coming to this common idea.

Thank you.

Mr. KILLION. I would like to now jump quickly to the audience. We need to move to your questions because we will lose the deputy prime minister very soon. As you can imagine, he's very much in demand at this moment in history and his visit to the United States.

QUESTIONER. Thank you.

Mr. KILLION. Our former ambassador to Moldova. Please introduce yourself.

QUESTIONER. I'm Pamela Hyde Smith. I was ambassador to Moldova some years ago and, like many Americans who spend time there, fell in love with the place and have stayed that way. So thank you for your excellent testimony.

I would like to follow up on a question I've had about Moldovan public opinion, Right-Bank Moldovan public opinion. I heard some months ago that there was limited enthusiasm for European integration among a majority, a plurality of Moldovans, and also not much interest in the Transnistria issue. Is that still true? And if so, what should we be doing to help it not be so? Thank you.

Mr. CARPOV. Well, thank you, Ambassador, for being here with us and for your question. That's true, there are different polls showing different figures of support of the Moldovan society for the European integration process and Euro-Asian aspects of possible integration. Well, I personally think that it is also a part of a beginning of a campaign, electoral campaign that Moldova will face in November this year. That's true in Moldova, we have pro-European forces and parties, political parties, and there is opposition, with mainly Communist Party being clearly pro-Customs Union now, promoting this message in favor of pro-Eastern Europe integration, Euro-Asian integration.

But I'm convinced that we have a clear majority in the Republic of Moldova pleading for the European integration. And the results of the voting in November will show this. At least I'm convinced that this is the only possible way for Moldova to continue democratic reforms and transformations is to have the democratic government and majority in parliament for the next four years, and not only for four years.

Transnistria—that's true probably; 22 years of negotiations is a long period of time, and maybe some sensibilities of this issue have been lost and the society somehow is now acting with the sentiment that Transnistria is a problem, and the end of the story is not even very visible. That's why the interest is not so high. But this is probably also a part of our homework for the next immediate time, to have an informational campaign to really try to explain to our society, especially to the Transnistrian region, to Gagauz autonomy, other Russian-speaking areas, what are the real content of the European integration process, what are the benefits, what it means—European perspectives and re-integration of the country. This is what we have to intensify.

Mr. KILLION. If you could identify yourself.

QUESTIONER. Thank you. Margarita Assenova, of the Jamestown Foundation. I have a question for Deputy Prime Minister Carпов. What kind of assistance would you like to receive from the United States to deal with the illegal smuggling of weapons from Transnistria to other regions, and radioactive materials? I realize it's about a depot that stays there with so many years and how it can be dismantled and destroyed, so it's a wider question, but it's time to be solved. Thank you.

Mr. KILLION. Simon, one more question right here. We'll collect the last two questions and then let the panelists deal with the collective.

QUESTIONER. Thank you very much. I am Batu Kutelia, The McCain Institute. I'm from Georgia. I am former Georgian ambassador to the U.S. In the '90s, we were facing a very serious problem of the building up a cornerstone of European security. In the process of the adaptation of Conventional Forces in Europe, there was quite a significant achievement based on the regional cooperation when Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan formed a group called GUAM, and in particular the CFE dimension, this group

achieved a lot while having a consolidated approach against Russia's interest to maintain its military presence in so-called near abroad.

So what would be your assessment of need or necessity of that type of regional cooperation by countries concerning the Russian aggressive behavior?

Mr. KILLION. Who would like to go first in dealing with those questions?

Mr. GOBLE. I'll just say three sentences. First, I think the United States has to get involved in international broadcasting into Moldova, both television and radio, and in both Moldovan and in Russian language. Second, I think that GUAM is a wonderful organization; I'd like to see it get its second U back. I'd like to see it get some others added. That is a very hopeful thing. It would be very important as a counterweight and as a forum for discussions that would clearly indicate that a rejection of the CIS and its latest Russian imperial incarnation, the Eurasian Union, which I think is going to fall under its own weight, but Putin has moved much too fast, and I think Lukashenko can see that. I'll stop with that.

Mr. CARPOV. Thank you. On the assistance, I have to admit that we have a very good level of cooperation with partners from the United States of America on different concrete projects. And if it is about border control or radioactive materials—and I understand—you based your question on the last information from Ukrainian sources that they stopped a car with 1.5 kilograms of radio and nuclear materials coming from Transnistria region for not very clear purpose, and now we are in contact with our Ukrainian colleagues to clarify the situation.

But about assistance for the Ministry of Interior—the institution dealing with the border guards and combating international crimes, they have a very good program of assistance from the United States of America in this respect, but now we are discussing possibility to increase the support that we are receiving from our American friends in order to be prepared to react promptly at the new elements of risks that can occur.

On the GUAM, that's obvious that Moldova supports different forms of regional cooperation, and we were among the countries that initiated the GUAM cooperation. We maintain our interest for this group. We think there are a lot of positive possibilities to develop cooperation between us in the different areas, and we think that while it doesn't necessarily to have evolutions like we have in Ukraine in order to strengthen regional cooperation; it should be natural—coming from participating countries as part of getting better life for our societies. Thank you.

Mr. BLANK. I would add to that that for an organization like GUAM to succeed—and is one of many attempts to create regional security organizations on the peripheries of the Russian Empire, which have historically all failed, it is necessary for the parties to work out a genuine strategic consensus that they keep to, because if they allow themselves to move apart, then the whole organization will fall apart. Furthermore, with regard to the CFE treaty—this is another case which—that U.S. policy, I think, has failed to assess the situation. When Russia suspended its participation, which is a nonexistent legal category with regard to an international treaty in the CFE seven years ago, we didn't do anything about it. I would argue that it's really no longer possible to sustain that treaty and that given the fact that the Russian military is almost always going to be stronger than any of its neighbors, just given the preponderance of resources at its disposal, which we need to come up with a new modality.

I'm not altogether certain that regional organizations are going to prevail when they appear to be much more attracted to the European Union and NATO. Given that, although I would support something like GUAM, and provided that there is a genuine working consensus that leads to it, I think it's necessary for us and for Brussels—and that's both organizations in Brussels—NATO and the EU—to make it clear that we are prepared to take action to expand both organizations and invest the necessary resources not only in European self-defense but also in European energy and freedom from Moscow, and therefore, to invest in these countries and to help them strengthen their capabilities to be independent and resist Russian subversion and threats and make it clear to Russia that, just as is the case in Ukraine, any attempt to undermine them carries severe costs.

The fact of the matter is, Russia has declared itself to be an outlaw state, and second and this is even more critical, based on what Paul has said, that it has told the world that it believes Russia can only be secure if it's an empire, that the system of governance in Russia can only continue if Russia is an empire, which means the diminished sovereignty, if not territorial integrity, of all of its neighbors, not just the former Soviet neighbors, because it doesn't really recognize the sovereignty and integrity of Poland, Romania, et cetera. Therefore, if they are going to act in such a way as to preserve the state of siege in Europe, then Europe must return to a policy of deterrence, which means building up strong states on the peripheries.

Mr. KILLION. Thank you very much, and thank you to all three participants. It's been a very useful briefing for us, and we'll take back what we learned to our commissioners. Thank you very much.



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