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**WILL RUSSIA END EASTERN EUROPE'S
LAST FROZEN CONFLICT?**

A REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

UNITED STATES SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC, February 8, 2011.

DEAR COLLEAGUES: In August 2010, I directed my Senate Foreign Relations Committee professional staff member for European Affairs, Marik String, to conduct a review of U.S. policy in Moldova and, in particular, Transnistria, a disputed territory within the Republic of Moldova controlled by Russian-supported separatists.

Among the frozen conflicts in the former Soviet Union, Transnistria is unique in having experienced no significant political violence since a brief separatist war with Moldovan forces in 1992. Since then, Russian forces have served in Transnistria, ostensibly as peacekeepers and protectors of an estimated 20,000 tons of arms and ammunition left behind by the Soviet 14th Army, despite Russia's 1999 pledge to remove all equipment by 2002 and Moldova's strong advocacy for a transition of the current Russian-led military peacekeeping force into an international civilian mission.

Recent events should provide the United States with an opportunity to renew high-level engagement in support of forging a solution to this conflict. In 2009, a reform-minded, Western-oriented government was swept to power in Moldova. However, its efforts at reform and European integration continue to be saddled by the unresolved status of Transnistria. While status negotiations under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have dragged on since 1993, senior European Union officials, including the German Chancellor and French President, have publicly pressed the Russian Federation over the last year to cooperate constructively in resolving the conflict as a condition for deeper EU-Russian security dialogue.

The United States should strongly support European efforts to resolve the conflict and thereby assist Moldova in advancing its Euro-Atlantic aspirations. A resolute U.S. commitment to this cause will ensure that we do not cede influence in a region of paramount importance to U.S. foreign policy.

A solution would also bring greater pressure against reported human rights and trafficking abuses in Transnistria. It would strengthen export controls that have enabled illicit trade, which threatens U.S. and allied interests, including illegal trafficking of proliferation-sensitive conventional and nuclear items. For instance, \$11 million worth of uranium-238, which could be used in a dirty bomb or in a nuclear weapon program, was seized in Moldova in 2010.

Given the lack of military tensions and relatively amicable relations between the residents of Transnistria and Moldova proper, the outlines of a civilian-led peacekeeping mission in Moldova under the OSCE or European Union are readily envisioned. A past U.S. proposal to broker a solution under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council may also deserve reconsideration and could demonstrate that recent developments in NATO's relationship with Russia can redound to Eastern Europe's security.

In the United States Congress, we have an opportunity to provide important support for Moldova's Western ambitions by graduating Moldova from Jackson-Vanik trade restrictions.

This staff report presents the background of the dispute in Transnistria and tangible recommendations for advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives in this important region. I welcome any comments you may have.

Sincerely,

RICHARD G. LUGAR,
Ranking Member.

WILL RUSSIA END EASTERN EUROPE'S LAST FROZEN CONFLICT?

At the direction of Senator Richard Lugar, Senate Foreign Relations Committee minority staff undertook a review of U.S. and international efforts to broker a settlement for the protracted conflict in Transnistria, a separatist region of Moldova. In addition to briefings in Washington, staff travelled to Moldova and to the Secretariat of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna, Austria.¹ The purpose of this study was to:

- Evaluate international efforts to resolve the status of Transnistria through the “Five plus Two” talks held under the auspices of the OSCE;
- Assess U.S., European, and OSCE confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) between residents of Transnistria and Moldova proper;
- Recommend to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and United States Government steps to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives in Moldova.

INTRODUCTION

Situated between the European Union’s easternmost border and Ukraine, Moldova represents a frontier of the West. Throughout much of its independence, gained from the Soviet Union in 1991, Moldova’s European prospects were dimmed by ineffectual public institutions dominated for many years by Communist Party officials, a moribund economy, constraints on civil society, and a series of separatist movements, including in Moldova’s eastern region of Transnistria.

Transnistrian separatists, armed and financed by Moscow and remnants of the Soviet 14th Army, fought a brief war with Moldovan forces in 1992, and a contingent of approximately 1,500 Russian soldiers continues to serve in Transnistria, ostensibly as peacekeepers and guardians of an estimated 20,000 tons of Soviet-era weapons and ammunition. In 1999, Russia pledged to remove this equipment, but withdrawals ceased in 2004. Although tensions remain, little political violence has ensued since the conflict, and residents of Transnistria and Moldova proper experience relative ethnic homogeneity and regularized contact compared to other Eurasian frozen conflicts. Nonetheless, Transnistria overtly seeks inte-

¹Based on the principles of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the OSCE is a European security organization with 56 participating states stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok. The OSCE maintains a Secretariat in Vienna and a network of field missions throughout Europe and Eurasia. Its work focuses on early warning, conflict prevention, post-conflict rehabilitation, conventional arms control and military transparency, human rights, democratization, and other issues.

gration with Russia, and formal status negotiations (the “Five plus Two” talks) held under the auspices of the OSCE have been stalled since 2006.

In 2009, Moldovan voters dismissed the Communist Party from office amid unrest known as the “Twitter revolution,” which swept to power the Alliance for European Integration (AEI), a coalition of reform-minded, Europe-oriented politicians. This is a notable development in light of the flagging democratic reform movements within other post-Soviet states. Although AEI has pushed through important economic, rule-of-law, and civil society reforms, its lack of the requisite supermajority in parliament to elect a President has resulted in political uncertainty (Moldova has experienced eight national elections or referenda since April 2009), which is routinely cited by Transnistrian and Russian officials as a pretext for spurning status talks.

Given the European Union’s strict border control and visa regime requirements, the lack of uniform Moldovan control over the Transnistrian region hampers Moldova’s Western aspirations. Moreover, the current situation in Transnistria has allowed its leadership to escape sustained pressure for shortcomings in the realm of civil, political, and media freedoms and has left its residents isolated from their European peers.

Despite important border control assistance provided by the European Union, the status quo has also enabled illicit commerce that could threaten U.S. interests, including trafficking in persons, drugs, weapons (past sales of anti-tank grenade launchers without serial numbers have been reported), and sensitive materials with applications for nuclear weapons. In 2010, Moldovan authorities seized \$11 million worth of uranium-238, which could be converted to plutonium-239 (fissile material for nuclear weapons) or a dirty bomb, from a criminal enterprise with reported links to Transnistria.

Since June 2010, senior European leaders, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy, have brought high-level visibility to the situation in Transnistria by personally raising with Russian President Medvedev the need for Russia to fulfill its 1999 pledge to withdraw its military equipment from Moldova and to coax its partners in Transnistria back to the negotiating table as a test case for broader EU-Russia security cooperation. The United States should seize this opportunity to bring similar attention to recommencing negotiations over Transnistria and building support for Moldova’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

BACKGROUND

Located within historical Bessarabia, Moldova has spent the last centuries under the tutelage of the Mongols, Ottomans, Romanians, and Soviets. Transnistria, present day Moldova’s easternmost region on the east bank of the Dniestr River, has experienced considerable autonomy since 1924, when it constituted part of the Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MASSR) within the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. After the dislocations of World War II, the Transnistrian part of the MASSR was ceded to the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR) and its capital of

Chisinau, a political entity approximating the borders of present day Moldova.

Upon the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the MSSR was succeeded by the independent Republic of Moldova. However, Transnistria, emboldened by Russian nationalists and those fearing annexation by Romania,² declared itself the “Transniester Moldovan Republic,” a move that led to a 4-month conflict between Moldovan forces and separatists backed by the Soviet 14th Army that claimed an estimated 1,000 lives. The 1992 ceasefire agreement created the Joint Control Commission (JCC), under which 1,500 Russian, *de facto* Transnistrian, and Moldovan forces continue to serve ostensibly as peacekeepers in Transnistria in roughly equal proportion.

U.S. INTERESTS

TRANSNISTRIA AND RUSSIA

The destination for an estimated 300,000 ethnic Russians under Soviet resettlement policies and host of key Soviet-era military-industrial enterprises, Transnistria still enjoys privileged relations with and access to Moscow. The main thoroughfare of Tiraspol, Transnistria’s “capital,” is adorned with placards of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, and polls indicate that the most popular politician among Transnistrians is Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. Although Transnistria is wedged between Moldova proper and Ukraine, both of which openly seek European Union accession, Transnistrian authorities look east, seeking assimilation with Russia; with the nearest Russian border over 350 miles away, Transnistria would become another Russian exclave similar to Kaliningrad on the Baltic coast. In addition to 500 Russian peacekeepers under the JCC who guard Transnistria’s boundaries, bridges, and strategic assets, 700–1,000 additional Russian forces guard ammunition depots left behind by the Soviet 14th Army. After U.S. missile defense plans were unveiled for Romania in 2010, Transnistrian “President” Igor Smirnov offered to host an emplacement of Russian Iskander missiles; Russia declined.

Transnistrian politics and economics remain heavily influenced by Russia. Its parallel administrative structures include a “parliament” called the Supreme Soviet; its currency, along with only Belarus and Russia, is called the ruble; and its citizens and industry rely on substantial energy and economic subsidies (and passports)³ from Moscow. Russian-owned Gazprom possesses a controlling stake in Moldovagaz, which offers Transnistria subsidized energy purchases, while holding the Moldovan Government in Chisinau responsible for Transnistria’s mounting energy debt, now over \$2.1 billion. Moreover, Transnistria has marginalized the Moldovan/Romanian language in Latin script that is used in the rest of Moldova in favor of Russian in Cyrillic script. Civil society and free media have also been heavily restricted, and human rights abuses, including torture and arbitrary detention, are regularly re-

²Due to ethnic and linguistic homogeneity, elements in both Romania and Moldova have historically sought integration of the two countries.

³An estimated 120,000 of the 555,000 residents of Transnistria are reportedly Russian citizens.

ported. Still, no nation, including Russia, has recognized Transnistria's independence.

Transnistrian and Russian authorities contend that the Russian-led peacekeeping force has been a nearly unqualified success, pointing to the lack of political violence since 1992. However, relative tranquility between Transnistria and Moldova proper has benefited equally from relative ethnic homogeneity;⁴ sustained people-to-people contacts; and the near complete lack of any offensive military capacity in Moldova.⁵ Moreover, Transnistria's status has allowed its leadership to escape sustained pressure for its significant shortcomings in the realm of civil and political freedoms and has left its residents isolated from their European peers.

Moldovan officials remain hopeful that the Russian-led peacekeeping forces can be transitioned into a truly international civilian force but remain prepared to consider a continued Russian civilian role in any future mission. Transnistrian "President" Igor Smirnov, however, has warned that replacement of Russian peacekeepers with an international contingent will lead to "new bloodshed."

CONVENTIONAL ARMED FORCES IN EUROPE

For the past decade, U.S. policy in Moldova has focused largely on issues relating to the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. The CFE Treaty was signed in 1990 among 22 states and placed limits on five categories of treaty-limited equipment (TLE)⁶ between two Groups of States, 16 NATO members and 6 former Warsaw Pact countries.⁷ Moldova was not an original signatory to the Treaty but acceded in 1992 following the Tashkent Agreement that divided erstwhile Soviet TLE among its successor republics. During this process, Transnistria became a repository for over 40,000 tons of weapons and ammunition left by the Soviet 14th Army at the Colbasna depot and Tiraspol airfield. Since 1992, Russia has also reportedly transferred approximately 18 T-64 tanks to Transnistrian authorities, as well as BM-21 GRAD rocket systems.

In Moldova, the CFE Treaty has served predominantly as a vehicle for advancing the notion of "host nation consent," the modest but fundamental concept that military forces should not be stationed on an independent nation's soil without that nation's con-

⁴Despite Transnistrian fealty towards Moscow, the dispute is not based predominantly on ethnicity, unlike other frozen conflicts in the former Soviet Union. The ethnic composition of Transnistria is comprised of ethnic Moldovans/Romanians (40 percent), Ukrainians (28 percent), and Russians (23 percent). The ethnic composition of the rest of Moldova consists of Moldovans/Romanians (83 percent), Ukrainians (7 percent), and Russians (1.7 percent).

⁵In addition to Russian troops and equipment, Transnistria itself maintains an estimated 2,000–4,000 indigenous troops under arms consisting of a T-34 tank battalion, an anti-aircraft regiment, and motorized rifle brigades; Transnistrian authorities also maintain an internal security contingent of an estimated 2,000 troops and Black Sea Cossack militiamen. Analysts view this force capacity to far surpass Moldova's own: Moldova maintains only 5,000 troops, no tanks, and a deteriorating air force consisting of 8–10 MIG jets.

⁶Limits are included for Tanks (20,000 units), Armored Carrier Vehicles (30,000), Artillery (20,000), Combat Aircraft (6,800), and Attack Helicopters (2,000).

⁷The CFE Treaty also includes limits on individual state TLE holdings; geographical limits to prevent a destabilizing concentration of conventional forces along the primary military approaches through Central Europe, where a Soviet-led attack was seen most likely; and "flank" limits in northern Europe, southern Europe, and the Caucasus, where NATO was adjacent to the Warsaw Pact.

sent. In 1999, simultaneous to revisions to the CFE Treaty,⁸ Moscow made a series of agreements, known today as the “Istanbul Commitments,” pledging to remove CFE TLE from within Moldova’s internationally recognized borders by 2001 and all equipment by 2002.⁹

The 2001 TLE deadline was met by Russia, but its pledge to fully withdraw has not been fulfilled. Half of the arms at Colbasna had been removed or destroyed under OSCE monitoring by 2004, but since then, removal has ceased. In response to Russian claims that it could not afford further removal, the OSCE continues to make available a \$5.5 million voluntary fund to fully finance the destruction of the remaining armaments. Consistent with the U.S. Senate’s Resolution of Advice and Consent to the CFE Flank Document in 1997,¹⁰ the United States and NATO allies have insisted since 2002 that ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty would not be sought until the Russian Federation fulfilled its commitment to withdraw remaining forces from Georgia and Moldova.

Moldovan and international officials do not view the equipment as a military threat as such but report that the ammunition is held under dangerous conditions, posing a threat to civilians.¹¹ Although Transnistrian authorities claim inheritance of the equipment under the Tashkent Agreement, international officials do not believe that Moscow would agree to this reasoning but suggest that it acquiesces because it serves Russia’s interest in maintaining sway with Transnistrian authorities and preserving a *cordon sanitaire* against NATO expansion.

Amid growing distrust in NATO-Russia relations and Russia’s revisionist posture towards a raft of agreements, Russia announced “suspension” of its implementation of the CFE Treaty on July 14, 2007, an action of dubious legality under the terms of the treaty and under customary international law. Russia specifically cited its frustration with NATO’s reluctance to ratify the 1999 Adapted CFE Treaty until Russia fulfilled its pledges to Moldova and Georgia, to which a similar commitment was made. CFE Treaty discussions remain at an impasse, and Russia appears disinclined to fulfill its 1999 pledge.

TRAFFICKING IN URANIUM, ARMS, AND PERSONS

Corruption within Transnistria’s law enforcement institutions and its absence of civil society watchdog groups have allowed Transnistria to fester as a source of trafficking in persons, arms, and other illicit goods. In 2010, Moldovan authorities broke up a criminal ring in Chisinau with reported ties to Transnistria that

⁸These revisions resulted in the Adapted CFE Treaty, which was ratified by Russia in 2004 but has not been ratified by any member of NATO.

⁹Specifically, Russia committed “to complete withdrawal of [all] Russian forces from the territory of Moldova by the end of 2002.” Moldova also renounced “the right to receive a temporary deployment on its territory due to its Constitutional provisions which control and prohibit any presence of foreign military forces on the territory of Moldova.”

¹⁰The United States Senate’s 1997 Resolution of Advice and Consent to the CFE Flank Document included a condition for ratification that “Nothing in the CFE Flank Document shall be construed as altering the policy of the United States to achieve the immediate and complete withdrawal of any armed forces and military equipment under the control of the Russian Federation that are deployed on the territories of the independent states of the former Soviet Union . . . without the full and complete agreement of those states.”

¹¹Some international officials suggest that Russia impedes greater international access partly because it would be embarrassed by the condition of the equipment.

attempted to sell four pounds of uranium-238, reportedly worth \$11 million on the black market, that could be converted to plutonium-239 (fissile material for nuclear weapons) or a dirty bomb. In the past, authorities have seized weapons, including anti-tank grenade launchers without serial numbers (ideal for trafficking) that were reportedly manufactured in Transnistria.

In 2005, the European Union Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) partnered with the Governments of Ukraine and Moldova to address border control challenges through seven offices in Ukraine and Moldova. EUBAM does not monitor in Transnistria itself but has built indigenous customs and border patrol capacity along the border with Ukraine to intercept and deter illicit trade.

EUBAM also facilitates enforcement of a common registration system, whereby exporters of goods from Transnistria must obtain Moldovan export certification. Although some exporters continue to operate outside the system, this arrangement promotes Moldovan sovereignty, prevents importers from circumventing Moldovan customs and excise duties, and confers to legitimate Transnistrian exporters the trade preferences associated with Moldova's status as a member of the World Trade Organization.

5 + 2 STATUS TALKS

In talks over the past 17 years to reintegrate Transnistria with the rest of Moldova, several federalist structures have been explored, but none has received sufficient traction.¹² Prompted by Transnistria's alleged failure to bargain in good faith, the European Union and United States implemented travel sanctions against senior officials in Tiraspol in 2003. The international status of Transnistria is currently being addressed through the "Five plus Two" talks under the auspices of the OSCE, to which the United States is observer.¹³ The last official "Five plus Two" meeting occurred in 2006, but informal meetings occur four to six times annually at the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, where 33 discrete issues focused predominantly on access and confidence-building measures with Transnistria are discussed.

In June 2010, German Chancellor Angela Merkel provided impetus for renewed settlement talks by challenging Russian President Medvedev that Transnistria would be used as a test case for deeper EU-Russia security cooperation. In exchange for restarting the negotiations within the "Five plus Two" format and for Russia's fulfillment of its 1999 pledge to withdraw its troops and materiel from

¹²The Kiev Document of 2002 envisioned a federal state built on a "contractual basis"; Moldova rejected this plan, in part due to its purported conferral to Transnistria of equal status under international law. The 2003 Constitutional Initiative, presented by then Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin, invited Transnistria to co-author a new Constitution for the Republic of Moldova based on a federal structure but faltered due to Transnistria's preference for a confederation or contractual arrangement between two equal political units that would lack a strong central authority. The Kozak Memorandum, negotiated mostly in secret by Russian presidential advisor Dmitry Kozak with Transnistrian and Moldovan authorities in 2003 without input from OSCE mediators, envisioned an asymmetric federation granting Transnistria expansive powers, which, analysts contend, would have nearly enshrined the status quo. Upon discovery of the document, the OSCE, EU, and United States intervened and noted that the arrangement would be detrimental to Moldova's relationship with Europe, and Moldova ultimately rejected the memorandum as unconstitutional.

¹³The talks between Moldovan and *de facto* Transnistrian authorities are mediated by Russia, Ukraine, and the OSCE (the "5"), with the European Union and the United States serving as observers since 2005 (the "2"). In practice, however, officials report that the roles of mediators and observers are indistinguishable.

Moldova, Chancellor Merkel agreed to explore the creation of an EU-Russia political and security committee, a forum long coveted by Moscow.¹⁴ The proposal was again tabled at the German-Russian-French Summit at Deauville in October 2010.

SUPPORTING MOLDOVA'S PRO-WESTERN GOVERNMENT

Since independence, Moldova has struggled to implement reforms due to ineffective public institutions, a moribund economy, and political capital spent dealing with the separatist conflict in Transnistria. From 2001 to 2009, Moldova was governed by leaders from the Party of Communists, until their plurality victory in April 2009 parliamentary elections sparked civil unrest and a subsequent crackdown by government forces. Known today as the "Twitter revolution," the Government's violence provoked a backlash in the subsequent snap election as voters sent to power a coalition of reform-minded politicians, the Alliance for European Integration, who were strongly oriented towards the European Union. Its parliamentary majority was re-affirmed in November 2010 elections, but AEI has lacked the supermajority required to elect a President, a conundrum that could result in new parliamentary elections and further political uncertainty (Moldova has experienced three national parliamentary elections, four unsuccessful parliamentary votes to elect a president, and a nationwide referendum since April 2009). Russian and Transnistrian authorities have used this uncertainty as a pretext for spurning formal status discussions.

Nonetheless, the AEI coalition has expressed an unequivocal ambition for Moldova to join the European Union, which would be a milestone as the first member of the post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States to achieve such status. AEI has pushed through important institutional and market-oriented reforms and has exhibited a respect for civil society and media freedoms that its Communist predecessors lacked, although execution of such reforms remains a substantial challenge.

Boundary and access issues with Transnistria continue to saddle Moldova's path towards Western institutions, especially with regard to visa policy. While firmer boundary controls with Transnistria could propel Moldova's EU ambitions, such an eventuality would also favor separatists by creating greater political separation between Transnistria and Moldova proper. Consequently, broader progress on Transnistrian status issues will be essential for moving Moldova and the entire region closer to Western institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recent political developments in Moldova and the high-level attention paid by allied leaders to the situation in Transnistria offer the United States an opportunity to enlist similar attention to resume negotiations over Transnistria and build support for

¹⁴These elements were enshrined in the June 2010 Merkel-Medvedev "Meseberg Memorandum," which envisaged a committee that could be charged to cooperate "towards a resolution of the Transnistria conflict with a view to achieve tangible progress within the established 5 + 2 format."

Moldova's Western aspirations. Specifically, the United States Government should:

- Devote high-level diplomatic attention to restarting status talks over Transnistria to build on similar efforts launched by the German and French Governments. Decades of experience suggest that U.S. leadership on issues of European security remains indispensable. A durable settlement would advance political stability and economic growth in all of Moldova; assist in moving the region towards Western institutions; curtail trafficking in illicit goods and persons and marginalize those who prosper from such trade; and enhance the protections of individual rights and freedoms in Transnistria.
- Advocate transitioning the Russia-led peacekeeping arrangement into an international civilian force. Military tensions between the parties to the 1992 conflict have been all but eliminated, and the remaining arms depots and military peacekeeping forces have become anachronistic. A past U.S. proposal that merits reconsideration is the deployment of an international fact-finding mission to establish baseline transparency, which could serve as an initial step towards the deployment of a truly international civilian or police mission under the aegis of the EU, OSCE, or NATO-Russia Council.
- Emphasize to the Russian Federation that its assistance in brokering a settlement in Transnistria, and other conflict regions in Eurasia, would serve as an illustration that developments in NATO-Russia relations can tangibly advance Eastern European security and that relationships in the post-Soviet sphere are not "zero sum."
- Consider utilizing, if an arrangement is reached for the complete withdrawal of Russian military equipment from Moldova, authority under the Conventional Arms Disarmament Act (Section 11 of Public Law 109-472) to provide additional funding to safeguard and eliminate small arms, light weapons, stockpiled munitions, abandoned ordnance, and other conventional weapons systems left in the region.
- Continue to affirm that discussions concerning conventional arms control in Europe will be guided by the need for progress on the principle of host nation consent for the stationing of foreign military forces, reflected in the Senate's 1997 Resolution of Advice and Consent to the CFE Flank Document, which stated that "Nothing . . . shall be construed as altering the policy of the United States to achieve the immediate and complete withdrawal of any armed forces and military equipment under the control of the Russian Federation that are deployed on the territories of the independent states of the former Soviet Union . . . without the full and complete agreement of those states."
- Work to repeal Jackson-Vanik trade restrictions on Moldova, which would serve as a basis for improving bilateral trade relations between the United States and Moldova. Moldova has been found to be in compliance with Jackson-Vanik-related concerns and is already a member of the World Trade Organization. A bill to extend permanent normal trade relations treatment to the products of Moldova (S. 334) was introduced

by Senator Lugar in the 111th Congress and will be reintroduced in the 112th Congress.

- Explore the development of a U.S.-Moldovan partnership charter to institutionalize cooperation across the bilateral agenda.
- Provide technical assistance to the Government of Moldova in the realm of institutional reform and economic growth, which will enable more foreign investment to Moldova. Although the World Bank placed Moldova among the top 10 *Most Improved Business Reformers* in 2010, it still ranks 19th out of 25 countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia in its 2011 *Ease of Doing Business* report, behind many of its peers in Eastern Europe, including Romania, Belarus, and Bulgaria.
- Offer regular briefings to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the status of negotiations over Transnistria and other protracted conflicts.