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The 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit
Decisions on Moldova and
Georgia: Prospects for
Implementation

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Occasional Paper #284

The 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit Decisions on Moldova and Georgia: Prospects for Implementation

INTRODUCTION: BY AMBASSADOR WILLIAM HILL

In November 1999, members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe convened in Istanbul. One of the most noteworthy provisions of the documents signed by the heads of state at the summit was the commitment by the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops and military equipment from Moldova and Georgia by 31 December 2002. Although Russia had agreed in previous OSCE ministerial and summit documents to withdraw from Georgia and Moldova, implementation of these Russian promises had been steadily delayed, making these unfulfilled commitments a source of tension between Russia and a large number of OSCE participating states. For the first time, the specific deadlines agreed in the Istanbul summit documents held out the hope for a near-term resolution of these lingering irritants in relations between Russia, the neighboring newly independent states of the former Soviet Union, and the major states of western Europe and North America.

The establishment of Georgia and Moldova as independent, sovereign states and the removal from them of a Russian military presence were difficult and complicated processes. The majority Georgian and Moldovan populations were deeply resentful of what they saw as almost two centuries of Russian and Soviet occupation, and uncompromisingly insistent on national self-determination as the Soviet Union disintegrated in the late 1980s and early 1990s. However, both Georgia and Moldova were part of the Russian empire and Soviet Union for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and by 1991 both countries had a substantial indigenous ethnic Russian population. Over the course of centuries, the Russians and the Soviets had established a number of important military objects in Georgia and Moldova. These military facilities and their weapons and personnel remained in place when the

USSR suddenly collapsed in December 1991, leaving their status and future totally unclear.

Both Georgia and Moldova also had regions and populations—Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria—that did not desire to leave the Soviet state or to become parts of independent Georgia or Moldova. These separatist entities fought armed conflicts with forces of the Georgian and Moldovan governments. Russian troop remnants of the Soviet Army intervened in both countries to stop the hostilities and separate the belligerents. It is widely believed, especially among pro-independence Georgians and Moldovans, that the Russian troops actually supplied and supported the separatist forces. There is probably some—perhaps considerable—truth to these allegations. A decade later, all three conflicts remain unresolved. In both countries the Russian troops remain as part of the peacekeeping forces that monitor and enforce the ceasefires and serve to discourage a resumption of hostilities.

Since 1992 the policy of all OSCE participating states, including the Russian Federation, has been to support the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Georgia and Moldova. No state recognizes the separatist entities in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, or Transnistria. All OSCE participating states accept and support the request of Georgia and Moldova for the withdrawal of foreign (i.e. Russian) military forces from their territories.

Within Georgia and Moldova, pro-independence and nationalist forces have continuously and impatiently demanded the withdrawal of Russian military forces, and angrily denounce Russia for alleged deceit and foot dragging in implementing its stated intention to withdraw. However, portions of the local population in Georgia and Moldova, in particular some ethnic Russian elites, are hesitant to see

all the Russian forces go. There are also some noisy and influential groups in the Russian government, legislature, and academic establishment that desire to maintain a Russian presence and connection in Georgia and Moldova and vehemently oppose Russian government efforts to withdraw military forces from Georgia and Moldova. Finally, even if the commanders are prepared to withdraw, they have nowhere in Russia for their troops to go—that is, no billets and no budget.

Despite the political, technical, and financial obstacles, Russia has made progress over the past decade in removing its weapons, ammunition, and troops from both Georgia and Moldova. The number of Russian troops and amounts of weaponry, ammunition, and equipment are much less than they were a decade ago, in many cases by an order of magnitude or more. The OSCE Istanbul Summit decisions on Georgia and Moldova played a crucial role in achieving a large measure of this success.

The major innovations at the Istanbul Summit with respect to the Russian withdrawal from Georgia and Moldova were the adoption of specific, near-term deadlines for implementation of the withdrawal, and the linkage of the entire process in both countries to the adapted Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE). The Russian Federation had committed itself in a string of high-level OSCE documents from 1992 forward to withdrawal of its military forces from Georgia and Moldova, but always found convenient explanations why circumstances prevented for the moment implementation of these commitments. Adoption of a set of deadlines at Istanbul put increased pressure on Russian authorities to begin real operational planning for the withdrawals. Linkage of the withdrawals to ratification and entry into force of the adapted CFE Treaty gave Russian leaders much greater political and

military incentives for fulfilling their commitments. Finally, at the Istanbul Summit participating states expressed a willingness to provide financial support for the Russian Federation in the withdrawal of its forces and equipment from Georgia and Moldova.

Following the Istanbul Summit, the Russian Federation made progress in both Georgia and Moldova on the withdrawal of its weapons and troops. To be sure, the Russian withdrawal in both countries was uneven, often interrupted, and plagued by arguments and delays. Nonetheless, in 2000-2001 the Russians removed considerable amounts of heavy weaponry from Georgia and successfully emptied some of the key facilities specifically mentioned at Istanbul. However, contentious disputes arose over delays by Russian forces in removing equipment and abandoning other sites. Spillover effects from the conflict in Chechnya, including an OSCE border monitoring operation and political tensions over the presence of Chechen and foreign combatants in Georgia's Pankisi gorge have, especially during the past year, somewhat overshadowed public discussion of progress (or the lack of it) in meeting the Istanbul deadlines. Under the pressure of events, Georgian President Shevardnadze has backed away somewhat from absolute insistence of full implementation of the Istanbul decisions.

The process of the Russian withdrawal from Moldova took somewhat longer after Istanbul to get going than in Georgia. All of the Russian military facilities in Moldova are located in the Transnistrian separatist region, and separatist leaders sought to prevent any movement on the withdrawal. Also, financial assistance to Russia for the withdrawal from Moldova was provided through the OSCE Mission, a first for the OSCE and for Russia, which required the negotiation of formal procedures, including observation and verification. In 2001

the Operative Group of Russian Forces in Moldova overcame Transnistrian resistance and destroyed or withdrew all of its heavy weaponry, as required by the interim Istanbul deadline. Agreement was also reached in October 2001 on a project for the destruction or removal of the vast amount of Russian ammunition stored in northern Transnistria. However, separatist resistance resuming in November 2001 has stalled implementation of the ammunition project since that time.

In recent weeks Russian Federation Deputy Foreign Minister Trubnikov and State Duma Speaker Seleznev have both admitted it is likely Russia will not meet the overall 31 December 2002 deadline for complete withdrawal of all troops, arms, and ammunition from Moldova. Like other Russian officials, they blame the resistance of Transnistrian separatist authorities, and pledge Russia will finish the job as soon as political circumstances permit.

Thus at the end of this year Russian military forces will not have withdrawn fully either from Georgia or from Moldova, contrary to the formal political commitments adopted at the Istanbul Summit. This failure to meet all the deadlines set raises several questions: 1.) is this a failure for the OSCE as an institution, and does it reflect poorly on the capabilities and prospects of the organization? 2.) whether a failure or not, why should the Istanbul commitments and the process of Russian military withdrawal from Georgia and Moldova matter to the U.S.? 3.) given the impending failure to meet these Istanbul deadlines, what should the U.S. and other OSCE participating states do about it?

These issues and others were explored at a Kennan Institute seminar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars on 24 October 2002.

**The 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit Decisions on Moldova and Georgia:
Prospects for Implementation
24 October 2002**

**Kennan Institute, Woodrow Wilson Center
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C.**

Panelist List

Chair: Blair A. Ruble, Director, Kennan Institute.

Panelists:

Rudolf Perina, Special Negotiator for Nagorno-Karabakh and Eurasian Conflicts, U.S. Department of State.

William Hill, former Head of Mission, OSCE, Moldova, and former Public Policy Scholar, Woodrow Wilson Center.

Ceslav Ciobanu, former Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to the United States, and Public Policy Scholar, Woodrow Wilson Center.

Craig Dunkerley, former Special Envoy for Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, U.S. Department of State.

Charles King, Assistant Professor, Department of Government and School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, and former Short-term Scholar, Kennan Institute.

Ruble: Welcome to today's session on the 1999 Istanbul summit decisions on Moldova and Georgia. Let me introduce today's speakers... Ambassador Perina, Special Negotiator for Nagorno-Karabakh and Eurasian Conflicts, U.S. Department of State, is on my right. Ambassador William Hill, former Head of Mission, OSCE, Moldova, and a former Public Policy Scholar at the Wilson Center is next. Ambassador Ceslav Ciobanu, former Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to the United States and Public Policy Scholar at the Wilson Center is to my left. Ambassador Craig Dunkerley, former Associate Dean at FSI, is to his left. And Professor Charles King from Georgetown is at the end. And what's exceptional is not just the presence of four ambassadors but four ambassadors who really have quite substantial academic credentials as well. I actually have their extensive bios, and I could go on and tell you all the wonderful things that they've done, but I think in the interest of time we will just begin. What I do want to emphasize, however, is that these are all people who personify the Wilsonian idea of bringing together the world of ideas and the world of public affairs, and they've done so for decades very effectively both as diplomats and as scholars. The plan is to start on my far right and move to my far left. So let us begin with Ambassador Perina.

Perina: Thank you very much. First of all let me thank the Wilson Center for organizing this event and this discussion. I think it's a particularly timely discussion given that some of the original deadlines in the Istanbul commitments are coming up this year quite rapidly. I also want to thank you and congratulate you on the participation that you have gotten. Certainly it is very impressive. When I look around I see a number of people who in the past have worked directly on the implementation of the 1999 commitments in Moldova. Ambassador Dunkerley, of

course, had a very direct role in the original negotiation of these commitments in Istanbul. And that is a very direct source for these commitments. And I see in the audience also—I will not let him escape—Ambassador Swartz, who is now directly involved in Moldova as head of the OSCE mission and the current implementation of these commitments, at least in the case of Moldova. So it really is a very impressive gathering to look at this important subject. Let me just begin, since there are a number of us who will be giving oral remarks, and I think then that we probably want to get as quickly as possible into questions and discussion, which always tends to be, I think, the most interesting part of these seminars.

Let me make a few broad comments about how I think we look at this at the moment in the State Department, to the degree that it's a mixture of official and personal views on this subject. In a broad sense, let me say that, getting right to the crunch of the matter of our discussion, the "Prospects for Implementation of the Istanbul Commitments," there is obviously an element of concern about the prospects for implementation. We have made progress on both the commitments in Moldova and the commitments in Georgia. And I'm starting out here with the presumption that most people know what the commitments are. Rather than getting into a historical discussion, I think we can get right to the crunch of the matter. We have not been happy, very frankly, with the amount of progress that we have seen over the past year. It is a matter of some concern, and it is a matter of concern for us as we approach the Porto OSCE Ministerial in December where obviously this issue will have to be looked at and will have to be reviewed.

I think the commitments are somewhat different, and we should take them one at a time because they do differ in nature. If we look at Moldova, for ex-

ample, we have basically, over the past year, only had one train leave very recently with the armaments that are all supposed to be withdrawn this year. Now we did have last year, to look at the past a little bit, we did have last year the TLE [Treaty Limited Equipment] commitment on equipment withdrawal. The CFE [Conventional Forces in Europe] treaty was completed last year. It was expected that that would be completed last year. I think we should be glad that was implemented. It was not an exceptionally challenging task, I think, to withdraw the TLE equipment by the end of 2001.

Everybody always knew the bigger challenge was to withdraw all the remaining aspects of Russian forces by the end of 2002. Everybody knew that this would be a difficult task, because there is a lot here to withdraw. I mean, the estimates are over 40,000 tons of ammunition in the Colbasna Arsenal alone. So this was going to be a challenge. Nobody ever doubted that. There was a voluntary fund established to help the Russian Federation in this task because we all knew that it was also going to be expensive to move this amount of ammunition and weapons. But I must say we have been disappointed. We have been disappointed that over the past year really only one train has left. There is some discussion now of a subsequent train going, but obviously we have not made the progress over the past year that is necessary to fulfill this commitment.

Now the reasons for this, I am sure, will be discussed here. Frankly, a variety of reasons were given, but they all came down to what the Russian Federation said was obstruction caused by the Transnistrian regime in Tiraspol. One demand after another kept coming from Tiraspol, all of which, I think, could be put in the general category of sort of extortion, frankly, and wanting money and payment and claiming that this was materiel belonging to Transnistria, and that it could not be exported and so on.

We all recognize that this problem existed, but frankly we were and we are disappointed that greater efforts were not made to deal with this. These after all are commitments made by the Russian Federation, a very significant power in Europe today, and it's always difficult to believe that somebody like Mr. Smirnov in Transnistria can effectively block the implementation of an important serious commitment that was made to the entire international community at the highest level in Istanbul in 1999. Looking at the situation now, it is of course unlikely and perhaps physically impossible that the commitment as stated in Istanbul will be implemented by the end of this year. It seems very difficult if not impossible to imagine how that can be done.

But I would say one very important fact to keep in mind is that there is still time left in this year to do a lot and, in a sense, to turn the situation around. We do have several months left when the *de facto* stalemate that has existed here, the paralysis that has existed here, can be turned around. The obstacles which have been put forth in the withdrawals can be removed, and a lot can be done between now and the end of December. And frankly, I think how much is done will be a crucial factor in determining how this issue is looked upon and how it is discussed at the Porto Ministerial at the beginning of December. If we have the situation as it is now, where very little is happening with the exception of the one train that left several weeks ago, I think this will become a real problem at the Porto Ministerial. It will have to be addressed, and it will clearly not be a success for OSCE, and it will not be one of the positive aspects of the Ministerial.

Hopefully we can, though, get a process going between now and the end of the year, where we see that the roadblocks that the Russian Federation has been dealing with are removed, that the trains are moving, and that the removal of

this ammunition is underway. It would also be helpful to see some things that we believe can be done despite the obstruction of the Transnistrian authorities; for example, the removal by air of small arms and a lot of destruction that could perhaps be undertaken in place in Transnistria. If efforts are being made to implement this—and let me say that there's been a lot of Western assistance given here. There's been technology put in place at considerable expense to Western countries and to the World Voluntary Fund in order to facilitate this, and this technology has unfortunately not been taken advantage of. If all of these things are reversed, and we see that serious efforts are underway and serious efforts are being taken and that some of these problems are being addressed, I think then this would be seen in a very different light at Porto.

We would certainly regret that the original deadline has been missed, but we would clearly see evidence of an intention here to fulfill the commitment. We would see evidence that the problems are being effectively dealt with, and we could, to some degree, feel that we have had a success and that we are on track and are making progress in these commitments. So I think a lot will depend on what happens in the next few months. And as I say, even though the deadline itself probably will not be met, and this will have to be addressed at the Porto, a lot definitely can be done in the next few months, and a lot depends on in fact how much is done. That's in regard to Moldova.

In the case of Georgia, we have a somewhat different situation in that the matter relates not so much to removal or destruction of large amounts of weapons and ammunition, but it relates to agreements regarding bases on Georgian territory which were used and in some cases are still being used by the Russian forces, and to agreements on the disposition of these bases and the return of these

bases to Georgian authorities. This is what was in the Istanbul commitments. Some of the deadlines, in fact, have already been missed here, but I think the good news here is that, in our assessment, this does not involve sort of a physical process that by definition takes a certain amount of time and cannot be hastened. This really involves a question of political will and making the effort to reach agreements on the disposition of these bases and to come to some agreement between Georgia and the Russian Federation on when these bases will be handed over to Georgian authorities and the conditions of transparency under which this will be done.

We think that since this is a political process, it is a matter of agreement that this eminently can be done. It can even be done in time for the Porto Ministerial, and we certainly hope that it will be done. It is not a question of physically removing large amounts of weapons, which in some cases is just physically impossible to do. This is something that is eminently possible to do. It depends very much on the negotiation process between Georgia and the Russian Federation and their political will. We believe that Georgia does want to resolve these issues, and is making an effort to engage in a serious negotiating process. We think that if this is reciprocated by the Russian Federation we do have a chance of resolving these issues and of coming to a conclusion here, and we think this would be a very positive development. But, again, as in the case of Moldova, an enormous amount depends on what happens in the next few months, and I think that will be the key to determining how both of these issues are dealt with at the Porto Ministerial. Perhaps I should stop there and let all the others speak, and then we'll have a chance to get into discussion. Thank you very much.

Ruble: Before Ambassador Hill speaks, I would like to welcome Ambassador Manoli, Moldovan Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Stewart, the

former U.S. Ambassador to Moldova, and Ambassador Mikeladze, Georgian Ambassador to the United States, to our discussion.

Hill: Thank you very much, Blair. I have a brief paper of prepared remarks that, if anyone is interested, afterwards I'll be happy to give you a copy, but just drawing briefly from that, I'd like to say that what's new about the OSCE Istanbul summit commitments was not the commitment by Russia to withdraw its military forces from Georgia or Moldova. Since 1992 Russia has recognized the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Moldova and Georgia, had accepted both states as members in the UN and the OSCE, and had promised or undertaken obligations to regularize the status or remove troops and bases from the territory. But Russia had always found excuses or circumstances that prevented this from happening quickly.

What you had in the Istanbul summit, at least from the perspective of somebody who then worked in the trenches on this, first of all there were deadlines set for things to happen with the withdrawal of Russian military forces. And this had not been done in previous documents. There had been political commitments, but general ones, without specifics. And second, the withdrawal of the Russian forces was linked to the adapted CFE treaty, and the adapted CFE treaty made explicit at the time of adoption that the CFE treaty would not be ratified by a number of states and would not go into force until and unless there was satisfactory progress on the Russian withdrawal from Georgia and Moldova. And this provided a very important political reason, in addition to those that existed beforehand, driving the withdrawal. Now, in the wake of Istanbul, progress was made on removing Russian troops, military equipment, arms, and ammunition from both states. The process was uneven. It was different in Georgia

and in Moldova. In each place it was beset by difficulties, disputes, delays, starts and stops; but real progress was made. The numbers are lower now, sometimes by an order of magnitude or more. And I would argue that things happened because of the additional pressure afforded by these decisions.

Things happened that might not have happened had events simply continued as they had in the 1990s. But the simple fact is, looking at the arithmetic, and in terms of Moldova particularly, at recent statements by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Trubnikov and by Russian Duma Speaker Seleznev, who was in Moldova early this week, some of the deadlines are going to be missed. Now you can argue over who is at fault. I can see from being in Moldova and Transnistria, there was real Transnistrian resistance. It is also true that somehow Russian Federation officials managed to overcome this resistance every year just before OSCE Ministerials. So there are at least two sides to that coin, but the point is that looking at the things that have to be done and the time left to do it, it's not going to happen by the Porto Ministerial.

So there are three questions that I ask about this. Does this mean that the Istanbul Accords, and the OSCE by implication, are failures? Secondly, why should we care? Why should the U.S. care? Is it important that the Istanbul commitments be met? And, third, what should the U.S. and other OSCE participating states do about this?

Well, I think I've already hinted at the answer to the first question. I think the decisions adopted at Istanbul on Moldova and Georgia provided the impetus for progress that otherwise would not have been made. And I think the OSCE and the states involved have had successes in both Georgia and Moldova since that time. Unfortunately, these successes are not total. One could re-criminate over why the successes weren't

greater, but I don't think there's a terribly great use in that. Why is this important? Well, I think generally for two reasons. There's a geopolitical reason. The conflicts on the periphery of the former Soviet Union are unresolved conflicts. They constitute an irritant in relations, certainly in the case of Georgia and Moldova, with most of the states in the Black Sea Basin—including two current allies (Greece and Turkey), two presumptive allies (Romania and Bulgaria), and others—and in Russia's unsettled relations with the other independent states of the former Soviet Union, also in its unsettled relations with Western European states and ultimately with the United States.

The U.S. alone can't find solutions to these conflicts, but we can work in concert with European allies and other states to try to promote reasonable solutions and the achievement of stability, because with what else is going on with Central Asia and the Gulf, it's in our interest to seek and achieve stability and cooperation in these areas where there are not, at least in terms of the United States, vital interests at stake. Secondly, the argument of arms control, the CFE regime: the CFE regime is a cornerstone of stability, predictability, and basically peace in Europe. When you think that this is a continent that experienced the two largest wars in history and a forty-year period of an armed stand-off, then the degree of stability, the reduction in the number of arms, and really the evaporation of the danger of conventional war in Europe since the MBFR [Mutual Balanced Force Reductions] and CFE process began and succeeded, are really remarkable historical achievements. And the CFE treaty maintains a regime of inspection, reporting, predictability, and confidence. It eliminates or reduces the fear of surprise attack. It increases confidence in the behavior of other states. It's a cornerstone, really, of this entire regime that's been built up since the first confidence-building measures were included

in the Final Act in 1975. And this is something that is in the overriding interest of all of the states' parties and all of the states in Europe to continue.

With the CFE tied to the Istanbul decisions on Moldova and Georgia, it's in the interests of all the parties to work to find a satisfactory resolution to these particular issues or problems so that the treaty can proceed towards entry into force. So what should we do now? I think this is a classic case of the glass being half full or half empty, and I would look at it and say that as a result of the OSCE summit decisions in Istanbul, considerable progress towards a resolution has been made in both Georgia and Moldova. Circumstances have changed. Unforeseen complications have arisen. And we're not going to meet all the deadlines. But all the states of the OSCE, including Russia, remain committed to the substance of these commitments. So my view would be that the Ministerial at Porto should adopt decisions that provide new driving mechanisms, whether these are revised deadlines or measures in addition to the deadlines, such as increased inspection or mediation. But the substance of the commitments should be reinforced. Recriminations should be avoided: simply say that for various reasons the deadlines weren't met but the states remain committed and will fulfill these commitments in a prescribed time.

The other thing that needs to be done is the unspoken part of the accords. The conflicts in Ossetia, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Transnistria remain unresolved. In each case there is still a necessity for interposition forces. These interposition forces are currently Russian. And in many ways the current peacekeeping forces have provided a rather thin and shaky justification for the continued deployment of Russian forces in Georgia and Moldova. Something needs to be done about this. The question I raised is if all the Russians are withdrawn from

Moldova on 31 December 2002, who are going to be the peacekeepers on 1 January 2003? There is still going to be a need, I believe, certainly in Moldova and Abkhazia. You'll need something in South Ossetia also. In any case, there's no reason why the OSCE could not provide mandates, or the OSCE together with the UN, could not provide mandates and truly international forces. I see no reason why the Russians couldn't take part in such international forces—they do so in Bosnia and Kosovo—but it is time to address this part of the problem associated with the conflicts to provide a more stable international framework in which the conflicts can proceed to resolution. The Russian presence, or the presence of relics of Russian and Soviet bases, is part of the problem, but it's not all of the problem, and one needs to address the rest of the problem. So this would be my prescription for Porto, looking from the outside now rather than from the inside. We'll see what happens. Thank you.

Ruble: Thank you for those remarks, now we will hear from Ambassador Ciobanu, currently a Public Policy Scholar here at the Wilson Center.

Ciobanu: Thank you. This issue was the subject of United States Helsinki Commission hearings last year, in September, as well as a seminar at the Woodrow Wilson Center last December. The majority of today's panelists participated in these events. Last year's hearings on Capitol Hill reconfirmed the interest in the destruction or removal of Russian materiel in Moldova and the withdrawal of Russian armed forces by 31 December 2002, the deadline specified by the OSCE Declaration. At the same time, concern was expressed that "the status of Transnistria within the sovereign nation of Moldova is still very unclear." What is the status of this problem now? What will be the next step if the provisions of the Istanbul Declaration are not met? Can the recently proposed project of the OSCE

mission to federalize Moldova lead to the settling of the Transnistrian conflict and thereby create a precedent for other such frozen and forgotten conflicts in the region?

Addressing these questions in connection with today's subject is important for Moldova and Georgia, the interests of which are deeply affected by the presence of foreign troops on their territory. But this is also important for other countries involved in these conflicts and in the process of negotiated solutions, because it acts as a test for their political will and maturity. This subject is important for the United States, which invested a lot of effort and money to facilitate a solution and create a good precedent for other hot spots. Finally, this is the problem of credibility of the OSCE and the international community as a whole, as represented by the fifty-five heads of state who signed the Istanbul Declaration.

I'd like to address this issue from Moldova's perspective and as an independent Public Policy scholar on the part of the Wilson Center and Senior Research Scholar at James Madison University. First of all I'd like to summarize the current situation as already mentioned by my colleagues. Thirty days ago, on the eve of the CIS summit in Chisinau, a trainload of twenty-four carriages, which carried 320 ground-to-ground missiles, Urgan rocket launchers, and over 5,000 howitzer projectiles, left Transnistria for Russia. The train was prepared for departure as far back as December 2001, but was allowed to be evacuated from Transnistria only after Russian Deputy Defense Ministers and the leader of the Transnistrian separatist regime, Igor Smirnov, signed a protocol. According to this protocol, Moscow had to pay \$100 million for the opportunity to execute its commitment from the OSCE Istanbul summit and withdraw the arms and troops from Transnistria. This amount represents so-called compensation to the region in place of the property of the

Russian authority, which has already been withdrawn. They are assessed at one billion dollars. According to the signed document, the Transnistrian region's debt of approximately \$400 million for Russian gas was decreased by \$100 million. In exchange, separatist authorities promised not to interfere with the evacuation of Russian armaments and ammunition. Mr. Isakov, the Russian Deputy Defense Minister, stated that the Russian military is prepared to move one trainload of munitions out of the region every three days in order to fulfill the time limits fixed by the OSCE summit. He also said that Russia plans to withdraw half of its 2,500 soldiers from Transnistria by the end of 2002. A Russian official made these statements two weeks ago.

Two days ago, on 22 October, Gennady Seleznev, the speaker of the Russian Duma, headed a Russian parliamentary delegation visit to Moldova and declared that the Russian Federation may not meet the deadlines for military withdrawal. "We are doing the best we can, but circumstances that do not depend on us, including the transit of trainloads through Ukraine may break the succeeding holiday starts by the end of this year," he said at a news conference. He mentioned this because if the delay is not due to the bad will of Moscow, the OSCE is likely to accept a new deadline for the evacuation of weapons and troops. I do not know what are the impeding circumstances to which Russia must refer, but I'm asking myself, "Was three years not enough to comply with the established time limits? What kind of circumstances did not permit the Russian Duma to ratify the OSCE 1999 Istanbul documents?"

Recently the Duma overwhelmingly voted for the opening of a consulate in Tiraspol, capital of the breakaway enclave Transnistria in eastern Moldova. It takes just a few days for the Russian lawmakers to accept this way, an initiative from Zhirinovski's Liberal Democratic Party, at

the request of Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov. The political analysts are considering that this is practically *de jure* recognition of the separatist regime. I want to emphasize that in keeping with the Istanbul commitments, the Russian Federation is supposed to evacuate and scrap about 42,000 tons of ammunition, about 150 trainloads, before the year is up. If they maintain the current speed of repatriation, one trainload in ten months, it takes 122 years before the last load of ammunition leaves Moldova. The total cost of ammunition withdrawal, according to Smirnov's accountants, amounts to \$500 million, which is almost ten times more than the Transnistrian budget but is four times less than the annual profit of its mafiosi clan from contraband, smuggling, money laundering, et cetera. This last figure was mentioned by Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin in one of his televised speeches.

In my opinion, there really are some new circumstances, linked first of all with the proposed federalization project from Moldova, and the interest of Moscow to change the status of the Operational Group of Russian Forces, formerly the 14th Army, as some political analysts speculated, into a peacekeeping force in the region under the OSCE umbrella. Addressing this issue, I would like to focus on the federalization plan for Moldova proposed by the OSCE Russian-Ukraine mediators as a solution for Transnistrian settlement. At first glance, these two problems (withdrawal of ammunition and troops and settlement of the conflict with separatist leaders) are unrelated issues. *De facto*, they are very closely linked with each other. The most intriguing comments, which I found on this situation, are those of Stefan Kitsak, Minister of Defense of the so-called Transnistrian Republic. According to him, Transnistria has billed Russia only after it became clear that Russia would leave the region. As is known, during the referen-

dum, the population of Transnistria supported the presence of the Russian Army in the region as a guarantee for its safety and, what is implicitly understood, as the current status. Now, citizens of the unrecognized Republic say that Russia is giving up its place in the region to the Americans. When asked this question, the Tiraspol representatives replied, "Nature abhors a vacuum..."

Another comment regarding this issue is that of Mr. Stepaniuk, leader of the Communist majority fraction of the Moldovan Parliament. One month ago, in an interview to Moscow, he declared that Russian troops should not be removed from Moldova until the new federalization agreement proposed by the OSCE is signed. In his opinion this may happen within next 18 months. Stepaniuk also stated that it is too early to replace these troops with other peacekeeping forces or to transfer these responsibilities to the OSCE Mission. Finally, an article recently published by Moscow's *Noviye Izvestiya* entitled "Chisinau Does Not Hurry Moscow" stressed that there is no reason to move Russian troops until parties involved in the conflict solve the Transnistrian problem. Unfortunately, neither Tiraspol nor Chisinau are rushing Moscow to liquidate its military base in Transnistria. Period.

So, the question, "Are the Russian troops really leaving?" probably should be reformulated: "Are any of the involved parties really interested in withdrawal of Russian troops from Transnistria?" Someone can put the question even in a more drastic manner, concluding that there is no strong interest in a settlement, at least for the moment, in Chisinau, Moscow, or Kyiv—not to mention Tiraspol. I don't want to argue with such an attitude. Instead, I would like to point to some facts concerning the federalization initiative as an eventual solution for Transnistria settlement, a "historical opportunity to resolve that long-standing problem," as

recently mentioned by the Honorable Pamela Smith, U.S. Ambassador to Moldova. I share the Ambassador's opinion that a reintegration of the country "would have overwhelming benefits for the people, for all parties of Moldova, by promoting stability, economic growth, and the rule of law."

Because of federalization, the solution for conflicts like Transnistria is neither new nor definitive. Although this approach has been suggested among other major principals of common settlement, particularly by the OSCE 1996 Lisbon signing, and was accepted by some leaders—President Shevarnadze, for example—it never brought the desired result. In the case of Moldova, it might lead to a solution if some major obstacles are eliminated. First, the proposed model based almost entirely on Russian Federation practices—twenty-three of the forty-two articles were borrowed from the Russian Constitution—is asymmetrical in its socioeconomic and constitutional dimension. The ten years of Moldova's independence, also harshly criticized by the country's current Communist government, was marked by radical economic reform, successful privatization, democratic transformation, and declaration of democratic institutions, including free elections from which, by the way, the Communist Party benefited at the last elections. Moldova's economic, social, and political structure is totally different from that of Tiraspol's Soviet-style regime. It would take time and a confrontation on principles to reconcile these incongruities in a functioning federal state, even though to do so is questionable.

Second, in the short run, federalization can possibly create a framework for integration of the separatist regions and offer a compromise to balance the conflicting interests. It can create a precedent of successful conflict resolution under the umbrella of OSCE. But the experience of the last decade, including that of Russia

and other former Soviet states, has generated a lot of doubt that federalization can prevent ethnic and political conflicts. There are no guarantees at all against the evolution of a separatist regime into a secessionist one in the frame of a federal state and against discrimination toward other ethnic groups. The presence of Russian troops and materiel in Transnistria and their eventual transformation into peacekeeping forces may cause rather than prevent destabilization. The closed relations between separatist leaders and Russian military forces in Transnistria and the North Caucasus are fairly well known.

Third, it is obvious that, for example, within the Caucasian context, autonomy has been a source of conflict and not a solution to it. Will federalization as the highest level of autonomy offer a viable solution for Moldova? It is clear that Transnistria's separatist leaders will never voluntarily give up their ability to retain control on the illegal multimillion dollar transiting of drugs, tobacco and weapons. Federalization can legalize the regime on that but not eradicate the causes of conflict. In my opinion, the problem is not in the proposed federalization model, which might be perfect from my point of view. The problem is to understand why these stalemates—unrecognized separate regimes and territories—have continued for so long. The existing “no peace/no war” situation permits the consolidation of these regimes, encourages their transformation into effectively independent state-like structures. The solution is found in the fact that not only separatist leaders benefit from cash flows generated by the status quo in these conflict regions. For a complete explanation, it is necessary to follow the money trail—in the case of Transnistria, for example, from its capital Tiraspol to the capitals of Moldova, Ukraine and Russia.

Obviously there is no universal generally applicable resolution for such

frozen and forgotten conflicts. Even if a settlement for one conflict can be found successfully, remember it cannot be applied to others as a pattern. The situation differs from case to case, and of course that is mildly different. From my point of view, the closest to a peaceful solution is the Transnistrian conflict because of a combination of favorable factors such as acceptance in principle by leaders, by the leaders of legitimate and separatist regime of the OSCE proposed federalization project, tolerance and indifference of the population on both sides of the Nistru River, and the lack of struggle in the Moldovan Parliament. Conflict resolution might be facilitated even by the similarities of the Moldovan and Transnistrian Russian-speaking elites with a Pan-Eastern Slavic and Soviet appeal/orientation, as it was observed by Taras Kuzio recently. Nevertheless, it will not be easy to win acceptance of the OSCE proposal, which has already attracted heavy criticism and provoked harsh turbulence in the political life of Moldova. Mr. George Soros, who recently visited Moldova has spoken out categorically against settling the Transnistrian conflict through federalization. Mr. Soros said he had been shocked at the USA's support of that document. He believes that the effect of that document would be Moldova's complete falling under the protectorate of Russia. Walter Schwimmer, the Council of Europe's Secretary General, referring to Transnistrian settlement, suggested during his visit last week to Moldova that the negotiators not cling to the term “federalization,” or to limit themselves to only one plan for solving the conflict that must be settled through a national consensus.

Ruble: Thank you Ambassador Ciobanu. We will now hear from Ambassador Dunkerley, former Associate Dean at the State Department's Foreign Service Institute and a key participant in the 1999 Istanbul negotiations.

Dunkerley: One of the inevitable disadvantages of speaking in the latter half of a panel like this is quite often you run the risk of simply ending up nodding vigorously in assent to good lines that have already been delivered. And certainly there's a lot that I would want to second—points that have already been made by the first three speakers. I think Rudy Perina is correct. We shouldn't get involved in a long discussion of history, counting individual trainloads and such like that. But I do think it is worthwhile at this point to step back a little and reflect a bit more about how we actually got here to this particular point in regards to these Istanbul commitments, with the idea that, by looking at those elements, they may give a certain sense of where we might go next.

How did the CFE treaty end up getting so intimately involved in these issues related to Russian bases in Moldova and Georgia? And there is, of course, an irony here, because the CFE treaty was originally conceived of and originally negotiated in very different circumstances, and focused on very different sorts of political/military problems. At times, the CFE treaty in the past has been used as a political vehicle. Certainly the original CFE treaty played an important political role in facilitating acceptance of German unification. CFE adaptation, the updating of the CFE treaty in the late 1990s, played a similar role regarding NATO's first tranche of post-Cold War enlargement. The adapted CFE treaty is going to continue to play a role in connection with the next round of NATO enlargement, probably with regards to the accession of Baltic States. At a certain point in the negotiation of the adapted CFE treaty, running in the period 1997-99, it began to become increasingly clear that the adaptation negotiations and CFE could provide a powerful vehicle for countries such as Moldova and Georgia to pursue their security concerns with regard

to residual Russian forces on their territories.

Bill Hill has touched upon some of the reasons why that was so. In the first instance, CFE—the treaty, the negotiation process, and the like—provided a means by which there could be much greater specificity of commitments. CFE moved beyond simply the reference in past OSCE documents about an early and orderly withdrawal of Russian forces by establishing levels, by establishing timelines, and by providing the means for monitoring and verification. It provided a much-needed specificity to the general principle that's written into the treaty of the necessity of host state consent for the stationing of forces on a country's territory.

Even more important than that, however, the adapted CFE treaty provided a means of legitimizing “multilateral kibitzing” of what had previously been treated as bilateral basing issues between the Russian Federation and these individual countries. I think back to the OSCE discussions of some of these issues in Vienna in the early 90s when the question of the 14th Army in Moldova would come up. And essentially the response at that time was, “That's a bilateral basing issue being handled elsewhere.” By putting this question into the CFE treaty context, however, it becomes a multilateral issue. And in that context, both Georgia and Moldova gained the ability to draw more effectively on political and material support from the rest of the international community.

And finally and most importantly, during this period of 1997-99, these issues began to be linked to questions of high political importance for a variety of capitals—that is, the successful conclusion of an adapted CFE treaty, a point of great importance in Moscow, in Washington, and in Western capitals. And it also provided a linkage to specific decision-forcing events. In this case it was the

OSCE Istanbul summit in November of 1999, which provided the pressure for governments—not just the Russian Federation, but Western governments and the two governments involved—to take tough decisions. The Istanbul commitments laid out in detail commitments by the Russian Federation to do certain things with regards to withdrawal or destruction of their forces in Georgia and Moldova.

Now, I would suggest as we look towards the future we keep in mind those elements which made that possibility of arriving at the commitments; that is to say the specificity of these commitments, the multilateral context of these commitments, and not least their political linkage. I agree with Bill Hill's characterization that as we think about the implementation of these commitments, we take a view that recognizes there has in fact been some very significant progress achieved. Significant numbers of Russian TLE (including tanks, artillery, armored combat vehicles) have either been withdrawn or destroyed. Important bases have been already turned over. I'll leave to Ambassador Mikeladze of Georgia to comment, if he wishes to, about just how important the Russian turnover of Vaziani Air Base can be for Georgian security in this regard. We should not be at all surprised that this has not been an easy process. There are a variety of equities and interests involved, certainly on the Russian side but also in the countries concerned, including elements which are at best grudgingly ambivalent about the implementation of these commitments and at worst are actively opposed to these commitments. So it is not at all surprising that at this particular point progress has been made, but significant problems continue.

Of more interest, what do we do now? Fortunately, my current duties do not include having to write the memo to the Secretary of State outlining the game plan on the way ahead in CFE, although I

see at least some people in the room who probably will have to work on that memo. I would suggest the following game-plan. Given the fact that such memos must concentrate on the basics, the first point is that progress on this issue needs to be a regular item in our high-level dialogue, not just with the Russians but also with other concerned states in this regard. Now, the Porto Ministerial, the OSCE Ministerial that is coming up at the end of the year, provides one such reason for injecting that into our high-level dialogue, but I would make the point that it needs to be there more regularly. That's easy to say, with the luxury of speaking here on a panel in the halls of academe. We know, however, it's hard to implement in practice. Whenever we have high-level exchanges with the Russians, there's already an awfully packed agenda. I don't have to spell out the more pressing, immediate crises that need to be addressed when we meet at that level. But I do think that we do need to do a better job of registering an interest in the Istanbul commitments more regularly. Bill Hill spoke of the importance of this particular issue in that context. Here again, that's easy for us to say in this particular room. I have to say that those of us involved and interested in this particular issue within the government have to do a better job of spelling out just why this issue is important.

As we think about pursuing a more cooperative partnership with the Russian Federation that our two presidents have outlined and suggested, the degree to which this issue of withdrawal either reinforces or undercuts the pursuit of that partnership needs to be made clearer. Again, I would emphasize it should be an issue in our dialogue as well with Georgia and Moldova, because I have to say that at certain points in the past there has been ambiguity or uncertainty as to the specifics of their course as well.

The second basic point I would make in that notional game plan is the

absolute importance of keeping these issues firmly linked to CFE. It is not enough to treat these solely as OSCE issues. Why? Because CFE is a vehicle which provides the best context in which some of these issues can be discussed in specific and detailed terms. In this regard, the U.S. has made clear that we would not go forward with submitting the adapted treaty for ratification by the Senate unless and until there is full implementation of the Istanbul commitments. I think that is a good and wise posture to hold. I think it's one that we should actively encourage our NATO allies to support as well. At this stage I do not see any reason to step back from making clear that absolute linkage.

On the question of specifics, it's not enough simply to suggest, to hector, or to accuse. I think it is very important, and here I very much second Rudy's point, to focus on specifics of process. If particular deadlines are not being met, we should continue to press the Russian Federation and other parties for specific follow-on dates, follow-on processes, and the like. In turn, I think the U.S. and other like-minded members of the CFE/OSCE community also need to do what has been done quite effectively in the last year or so, which is to continue to put forward very specific suggestions aimed at overcoming practical operational problems on the ground. And here I'm thinking of the active financial assistant program managed by the OSCE Mission in Moldova.

I'm thinking also of some of the things that have occurred in the Georgian context. I think we need to think more imaginatively, more creatively, in this regard. For example, one of the main roadblocks relating to one of the remaining Russian bases in Georgia, Akhalkalaki, relates to the very dismal economic circumstances of that particular region of Georgia. And under that circumstance, it is not surprising that the local community is indeed resistant to the closure of that particular military base. I know that the

Georgian government has been trying to think about ways to enlist more effective international assistance to address the economic problems of that region, which would facilitate withdrawal. Those are areas in which I think we in the West need to think more creatively.

Bill Hill has brought up the issue of peacekeepers. I agree that fairly soon we should think more seriously about how to pursue meaningful, credible alternatives to the current peacekeeping arrangements in Transnistria and in Abkhazia. But that will require a very clear decision on our part to address this seriously. In years past, in months past, we've tried to get such a discussion going in Vienna and elsewhere about other alternatives, but we've also, as a government, been very, very careful about not suggesting our own participation or a more ambitious role or commitment on the part of the U.S. And at some point we need to think about a more effective way to enlist others in making that option meaningful. But I'll pause here.

Ruble: Thank you for your comments Ambassador Dunkerley; we will now turn to our last panelist, Professor Charles King, Assistant Professor of Government at Georgetown University.

King: Thank you very much. I'm in an even more difficult position than Craig Dunkerley was, but I found myself agreeing with just about everything he had to say, and especially the point about thinking more creatively about how we assist some of these processes. There is a great deal of expertise in this room on both these countries as well as on the OSCE and on military/political affairs in general, so let me not stand in the way of a broader discussion. What I want to do is just make three very brief points, as a way of wrapping up.

First of all, I think even though we often do want to separate the disputes ongoing in Georgia and Moldova with regional separatists from the CFE com-

mitments, I do think they are inextricably linked in many instances. We have to keep in mind, of course, that in the wars of the early 1990s, separatists in every case—in South Ossetia, in Abkhazia, in Transnistria, if you wanted to expand the discussion we could also talk about Karabakh—won the wars militarily. We are now in a rather difficult position of trying to convince the victors to negotiate with the vanquished, which is never a terribly easy thing to do.

The status of Russian forces there, I think, is inextricably linked to the outcome of these particular negotiations. The CFE commitments, and particularly the Istanbul commitments from 1999, are not just aspects of the bilateral relations between these individual countries and the Russian Federation. They are general OSCE commitments now. Nor are they simply a matter of U.S.-Russian relations. They're wrapped up in domestic politics not only between the capitals and the separatist zones but also within the capitals themselves, and within the separatist zones. Some of the bases, of course, are in the separatist areas themselves, in Transnistria and, in the case of Gudauta, in Georgia. Even beyond those areas, as Craig Dunkerley pointed out, the bases are wrapped up in ongoing discussions about regional development and so forth in other parts of Georgia. He mentioned the base in Akhalkalaki, which is vital to the regional economy there. Very recently the Georgian government has made an effort to think more broadly about regional development in the south. But there's also, of course, the base in Batumi, which is wrapped up in discussions between Georgia and the autonomous Republic of Adjar, perhaps even wrapped up in the personal political ambitions of Aslan Abashidze, the ruler of Adjar.

Secondly, the longer the conflicts have ground on, the larger the constituency has become for keeping the situation exactly the way it is. Not only in terms of relationships between the separatist zones

and the central government, but also, as part of that, keeping either the bases where they are or Russian equipment where it is as well. Ambassador Ciobanu addressed this point in some detail. In the Moldovan case one can also make parallels with the Georgian case. The situations have not yet reached what a colleague of ours just over at Johns Hopkins, Bill Zartman, famously called "a hurting stalemate," the kind of situation that leads to resolution in any sort of conflict. In fact, these situations are at the very least acceptable stalemates in both Georgia and Moldova. And to some degree we might even describe them as "winning stalemates" for lots of people concerned.

Finally, the tragedy at the heart of many of these disputes, and their connections to the status of Russian troops and equipment, is that where there is a constituency for resolving the conflicts, that constituency is virtually powerless. Where there are groups that have the power to resolve the conflict, there are not constituencies for resolving it. For example, you might think that the close to 300,000 internally displaced persons in Georgia who have been living in temporary housing for close to a decade would be a genuine constituency for resolution and change. That group is virtually powerless when it comes to real political power in the country. In fact, they have become something of a political football used by the government in exile from Abkhazia, which still has set-aside seats in the Central Georgian Parliament, which so far has been a major block on real resolution with Abkhazia.

Perhaps one of the most worrying things in terms of a long-term resolution of these conflicts, of the long-term stability of both Moldova and Georgia, and of when, especially in the Georgian case, bases in Abkhazia in the south of the country, in Batumi, are closed down, is the degree to which over the last several years Russia has made citizens of what were

simply either ethnic Russians or, in some cases, people with no connection to the Russian Federation itself other than political sympathy. It may well now be the case that a plurality, perhaps even in some of the conflict areas, a majority, of inhabitants of these areas are now Russian passport holders, which raises an extremely important question about the degree to which Russia now has created, in fact, a legitimate political interest in what happens in those areas on the ground. We're not talking any more about illegitimate Russian attempts to influence the affairs of countries on its border. It has now created a situation in which it has, under international law, quite a legitimate interest in the affairs of its own citizens in other countries.

Now that certainly doesn't extend to the right to keep a base there indefinitely, but it does mean that there is a certain piquancy to Russian arguments now that was not there in the past. In all of these ways there are a variety of complex issues that are intertwined. We can separate them from the point of view of analyzing separately the commitments that the Russian Federation made in 1999, but in terms of moving forward and thinking more creatively about how we assist in the resolution of these conflicts, I think we do have to recognize the ways in which they interrelate. I'm going to stop there. Thank you.

Ruble: Let me ask if a panelist who spoke earlier would like to make a second intervention. You're under no obligation, but I want to be sure people have a chance to respond before I open it to discussion. If no one on the panel has anything they would like to add, I know that there are a lot of people in the room who have direct experience with the issues on the table, and so I think we'll open the discussion. We have approximately one hour left and I would ask that people please identify themselves. I would also remind you that we are taping

this event.

Stewart: I'm Todd Stewart. Just to clear up any possible misunderstandings, I'm the former U.S. Ambassador to Moldova, having left that job in 1998 and retired from the Foreign Service. This means that I do enjoy the luxury of frankness in my retirement and consequently can go ahead and say the following in that spirit. Given the levers of power and influence that Moscow exercises over Tiraspol, it's laughable to maintain, as Moscow has, that Tiraspol can effectively block a determined effort by Moscow to implement its obligations under the 1999 Istanbul declaration. The real question, therefore, is why Moscow has not made that determined effort. Some motives were suggested, particularly by Ambassador Ciobanu, but I would be interested in hearing from other members of the panel who are free to speculate on this sort of thing as to exactly what the Russian motives are in this situation—in other words, why they have not done what they said they were going to do.

Ruble: Would anyone on the panel like to address that question?

Hill: I think I can say a couple of things about it at the moment, and even in the hopes that I'll be able to get back to Moscow, but I think in what I wrote I suggested that this is as much not just a question of Transnistrian resistance but a political problem in Moscow. There are political reasons. There are economic/commercial reasons. There are reasons of nostalgia for empire. There are reasons of the presence of ethnic Russian populations. And they come together, but for a long time one of the reasons the Russians gave for not submitting the bilateral treaty reached with Moldova in October of 1994 to the Duma was that it would be rejected by the Duma. And I think this case fits the old adage that I got from my superiors in Moscow when I served there years ago. They said, "Never exclude the possibility that they might actually be telling the

truth.” The Duma has remained a center of support both because of political ties and economic ties for support for Transnistria and other separatist movements, and it’s ultimately, I think, been a political calculation in Moscow for some time.

What needs to be done is to get the government to act, to overcome, to make it important enough for them to override the interests of the separatists so that they’re willing to take whatever political flack they’re going to get from domestic opponents in Moscow. But the fact remains that the Tiraspol regime—it’s not the only one, but it’s one that I know intimately—has strong connections, and it has strong connections not only in Moscow. It has strong connections with highly placed political circles in Kyiv. And the separatists work these, and it’s been for some time a situation where one can recognize that the executive branch in Moscow has the levers to overcome local resistance, if it makes a political decision and exercises the political will to use these levers. But the political calculations domestically, within Moscow, have been such that it’s been rare that you have been able to get a government in Russia to maintain an extended push on this that hasn’t been eroded by internal opposition, especially from the Duma but also within the executive branch and particularly old defense and intelligence ministries.

Ruble: Would any of the other panelists care to respond to the points raised by Ambassador Stewart?

Perina: I agree with what Bill is saying, but I would maybe phrase it a little differently in one sentence, and that is to say that I think simply in the past it has not been a high enough priority for Russia to act on this, that some of these other considerations that Bill has mentioned (Duma pressure and so on) just made it difficult to really deal with this issue. And the countervailing pressures

have not been strong enough to overcome the pressures of inertia. Now, I also think that this is changing to some degree. It’s always easy to kick issues down the road, and I guess we’re all guilty of that to some degree, but it catches up with us. And I think that is what is happening in this issue. The deadlines are coming due. There is this linkage to CFE that has been mentioned by all of the other speakers. CFE, in turn, is related to many other issues that have been mentioned (NATO expansion, and so on).

I also sense that it is becoming a larger issue internationally, with Western governments. A lot has been done in good faith by Western governments in terms of the Voluntary Fund and so on to facilitate this. Significant amounts of money have been donated, not just by the United States but also by Western governments. All of this has made this a greater priority, I think, among Western governments. It has given the issue greater visibility. And I think all of these are also exerting greater influence.

Finally, I would say on the ground that the frustration is rising. I think there’s a new situation in Moldova with the present Moldovan government. President Voronin is absolutely determined to do something about this, and I think he is upping the ante here and exerting his own pressures. I think, likewise, in Georgia the frustration is growing. It is growing year by year with the continuation of the present situation. It is becoming a real political problem domestically. So in the past when the commitments were made it was easy to kick this issue down the road, but all of this is catching up. And if it wasn’t a high priority in the past, I think people are going to have to look at this again, and I think it is becoming certainly a bigger problem for the Russian Federation.

Ruble: Another question from the audience, may I remind you to please remember to identify yourself.

Joyal: Paul Joyal, Daily Report on Russia, Intercon International. Ambassador Mikeladze was the Georgian Ambassador to the OSCE during this period, and I would be very interested to hear his view both from a personal and a professional level of the discussion today and his inside views into the decisions that we're speaking about.

Ruble: I have no problem giving the Ambassador the floor if he feels comfortable, but my rule of thumb is that people who are in the audience have the right not to participate. They have the right to speak or remain silent, as they feel comfortable.

Mikeladze: Thank you very much, and I thank my old friend Paul Joyal for inviting me to say a couple of words, but first of all I'd like to thank—I recognize here in this hall a number of people who directly participated in this process before the Istanbul, in the process of adaptation of the CFE treaty and of course at the summit and then afterwards in the implementation of the CFE treaty, adapted CFE treaty. I don't want to name them since I'm afraid to miss someone, but they have my admiration. First of all, of course, the Istanbul commitments are extremely important for my country since they have contributed immensely to our move to independent statehood, but again I don't want to go into history, into a historical discussion, as Craig has said, but to comment on some of the ideas which I heard today, and maybe raise a couple of questions which seem important to me.

First of all, about the assessment of where we are, assessment of the state of where we are, and what has been done, and what has to be done. In general, in my view, there was a very provoking, intriguing question from Mr. Hill on whether it is a failure or not. In my view, of course, this state of affairs cannot be called a "victory," but at the same time I wouldn't call it a complete failure. We are somewhere in between, and I think that

one should not turn blind eyes to what has been really achieved and I have to recognize that there was a certain level of progress both in Moldova and in Georgia. But I will speak about Georgia, first of all in terms of reduction of the overall numbers of the conventional armed forces on the Georgian territory and also with regard to the closure of one of the bases—Vaziani, as was mentioned by Ambassador Dunkerley.

And, of course, again, Georgia also never closed its eyes, let's say, never looked through fingers to what was done by the Russian Federation. We were the first, in fact, who have recognized the progress achieved by the Russian Federation in the Georgian territory. But at the same time, of course, one cannot turn a blind eye at what has not been achieved. And there are significant, very important elements still in the Istanbul statement and the joint statement of the Russian Federation in Georgia—elements that are still open. And I have to admit, I have to recognize again, that unfortunately there is no progress in the discussion on these problems. Again, in the Georgian case, these are the duration for the remaining two bases in Georgia. We have the problem of Gudauta Military Base, with different, much deeper aspects to these problems. But, again, I think we do not have the time, the possibility, to go into detail.

My next question is—and I think this somehow will be the answer to the question of the Ambassador—what are the reasons of not having achieved big progress? Our own impression is that at the operative basis, the Russian Federation lacks the political will, and as Ambassador Perina said, "the reciprocity on the Russian Federation side." But in general, and in broader terms, in my view, the major problem is that of course the Russian Federation has *de jure* officially recognized the state of independence of these two states but *de facto* the Russian

government speaks absolutely opposite. And we can bring a number of proofs, a number of examples to prove this idea. Another thing, since the separatist movements and the end result of these frozen conflicts also have been mentioned, in my view the policy, official or unofficial policy, of the Russian Federation is the full integration of the separatist regions into the Russian Federation. And this regime, which Mr. King spoke about, of the introduction of Russian citizenship to the separatists, of course serves this interest. And since we have again also touched this problem of unresolved conflicts and citizenship and these sorts of things, in my view this policy also puts a very big question mark about the peacekeeping and mediator role/function of the Russian Federation in the peace process both in Moldova and Georgia. So I simply do not understand what sort of mediation...how Russia can mediate between its own citizens and another country, independent state.

Now, in answer to your question, what can be done? First of all, in my view, I share fully what Craig said, that we have to all recognize that this is the question of the CFE and, of course, that this is a multilateral problem. It is a problem of the international community. And I think the multilateral means and multilateral methods should be applied. Otherwise, leaving this question at the bilateral level would mean not solving the issue for many years. And the next point I want to comment on is what Craig said about the necessity to generate very concrete and specific ideas concerning both the withdrawal of the military bases and the solution of the consequent possible hypothetical problems which could emerge afterwards in the post-withdrawal process.

Finding some financial resources to support the development of the local infrastructure and so on and so on would be, of course, of crucial importance. And

not only the varied concrete projects but also it seems to me that sometimes Georgian fantasy and imagination is very limited in this regard because all that I've witnessed personally, all our new suggestions/offers/proposals are rejected. And the suggestion of new ideas, new views on this issue, would be welcomed, of course, by us. Thank you very much.

Ruble: I'd like to thank the Ambassador for offering his insight on this topic. Another question from the audience, please go ahead.

Cheney: Owen Cheney, the Army Staff. The question I have is with regard to Ambassador Hill. You mentioned the internationalization of the peacekeeping force. In each one of these places you have the OSCE and perhaps the UN there as observers, especially in the case of Georgia. Georgia has asked and several times been rebuffed on either making the force more international, maybe have the UN take over the peacekeeping role as well as have observer status. And the U.S. has also been very reluctant, especially now with the global war on terrorism going on. What approaches do you have, or what new ideas do you have, in order to break the resistance either on the Russian side (the reluctance to give up their presence, which is justified by performing those peacekeeping duties in those countries) and also the Western resistance (in order to place the amount of resources and troops on the ground in order to make a sufficient UN or OSCE peacekeeping mission really work in those areas)? If you could comment on that, please.

Hill: Sure. Well, first of all, in overcoming or convincing the Russian Federation, I don't think this would be easy, but I think increasingly Russia has realized that in the case of the peacekeeping presence in both Georgia and in Moldova, the legal basis of this presence is limited and shaky and increasingly is seen by partners, whose acceptance Russia

desires in other areas and for other reasons, as insufficient and simply masking the perpetuation of a Russian military presence there for other reasons. There's a long history with this where Russia tried as early as 1992 to get an OSCE mandate as a justification for CIS peacekeeping in a number of these areas. And it's popped up again from time to time. But from my personal experience I've come to believe that the Russian Federation might be open to a serious discussion of finding a broader international mandate for a truly international force in both of these countries that would provide some real solid international legitimacy to a peacekeeping operation beyond simply bilateral agreements seen as fig leaves reached under pressure for continuing a Russian imperial presence.

Now, in terms of the force in each of the conflict areas here, looking at a different kind of force with somewhat different tasks and functions facing it, in no case do I think it has to be terribly large, and in no case do I think that it necessarily has to include U.S. forces. I think you can look for the inclusion of truly neutral forces to provide the bulk, if you're putting in national troop units. In the case of Moldova I think we're probably talking companies. In the case of Abkhazia, maybe battalions, but not large units. In all of the cases, the other things you're talking about are military observers. They can be very, very small, but mobile, groups. And there, I think, both the locals and the Russians would be prepared to accept forces from say all of the states participating in PFP, which gives you a wide range. The details are difficult or complicated, but they're not insuperable. This has been done in other places. But the transition to such forces and to such a mandate accomplishes a couple of things that are highly desirable in terms of really consolidating the independence and sovereignty of the states involved and putting the actions of all the states, including the Russian Federation, into corre-

spondence with generally accepted international law and international practices. And, therefore, it's something to point to rather than simply accepting a continuation of the status quo.

Dunkerley: Well, I'd certainly second what Bill has just said. One, this peacekeeping force need not be unusually large or ambitious in terms of size. Two, it doesn't require U.S. forces, though we should be careful that our own decision not to be engaged in such peacekeeping not become a political excuse for others not to face up to tough decisions. I think the details, as Bill says, are difficult, but workable. But the problem is to get other nations to take tough decisions involving their own participation. An OSCE agreement to the formation of such forces really would, one, require a major political push in which we would have to be actively engaged in promoting such a venture. And two, it would not take place in isolation. It would have to be in the context of some meaningful movement towards a genuine political settlement, whether that is in a Transnistrian or Abkhazian venue.

Ruble: Dr. King, would you like to add anything to what Ambassador Hill or Ambassador Dunkerley have said?

King: Well, I just think Craig's last point is absolutely key. I mean, in the current context I can't imagine why the UN or OSCE would want the peacekeeping role in either of these conflicts. The only reason that Russian peacekeeping in both Abkhazia and Transnistria works, insofar as it does, is precisely because it's not really a peacekeeping mission. It is a Russian troop presence that by and large turns a blind eye to smuggling that goes on back and forth across those boundaries. It turns a blind eye to the actions of the military forces of the separatists that are active in that zone. And so having a group in that would be a real peacekeeping mission actually trying to control what was going on across those

boundaries would be incredibly destabilizing, it strikes me.

Hill: Well, I was basically just going to endorse the view that Craig and Charles both made. Really, I think in this whole debate about the Russian peacekeeping forces, people don't often say it directly, but the debate is are these peacekeeping forces part of the problem or part of the solution? I think this is how it is seen in the countries themselves. In truth, the answer is mixed, because on the one hand nobody really wants to see a return to violence and conflict and to a real hot war in these areas. And probably the Russian presence does prevent that. On the other hand, when you just have a troop presence without progress toward political settlement, it is something that is seen as perpetuating the status quo, freezing the conflict, freezing the status quo, and not providing motivation towards solution of the fundamental problem. And I think, increasingly, the problem that Russia faces in both Moldova and Georgia, but particularly in Georgia, is its presence is increasingly seen by most Georgians as being part of the problem and not part of the solution.

Obviously the way to deal with this is that we have to have more progress on the fundamental issue here, which is really behind Istanbul and behind peacekeeping forces and behind everything, and that is finding a settlement to these conflicts. And everything else we're doing is in a sense dealing with the symptoms of this fundamental problem. And I think we have to always keep that in the back of our minds. I did not originally speak very much about the political settlement, the specific topic of this discussion, but if I could, let me just say that in the case of Moldova where we have come, I think, closest, closer than we have probably ever been to a political settlement of the conflict, this is really key. I mean, Istanbul and a political settlement are not strictly speaking linked in any way, in the sense

that we would still want withdrawal and implementation of the Istanbul commitments if there were no political settlement, and we would still want a political settlement even if there were no progress on Istanbul. But clearly, in a realistic sense, they are very, very much interrelated. And if we had a political settlement, in fact it would greatly, greatly facilitate the implementation of Istanbul, and it would resolve many of the issues that we're facing.

One other point on the issue of making a mandate for the peacekeeping forces in the absence of a political settlement: I feel a little uneasy about this, frankly, because we are in a sense then creating a situation to make the status quo more acceptable, to make it easier not to find a solution here. In the case of Moldova, our position has always been that we would like to see a political settlement, to see what a political settlement looks like, in order to be able to judge what kind of a peacekeeping force or implementation force would be necessary. And I still think there's a lot to be said for that sort of logic. So, really, when you get down to it, the key thing here is a political settlement. We really have a ways to go on that, very frankly, in Georgia. But we have made considerable progress in the last six months in the case of Moldova. Cezar Ciobanu referred to aspects of this: the federalization program, the federalization concept that was put forward by the mediators. We have, for the first time, a document that is endorsed by all of the mediators and basically accepted by the Moldovan government. And, again, the obstacle here seems to be Tiraspol. And the question is, in this case, can we really deal with Tiraspol now to change this fundamental situation?

Ruble: Thank you for your response. We will take a question from this gentleman here in front and then we will take a question from the back of the room.

Merry: Wayne Merry, American Foreign Policy Council. A couple of points: one, I've noticed no one has mentioned the GUUAM, which is interesting since it was created as a reaction to CFE adaptation issues, not just with Georgia and Moldova but also, of course, Azerbaijan and Armenia and Ukraine, and is somewhat indicative of the nature of multilateral diplomacy here because it was an entirely reactive measure driven by the unwillingness of Washington initially to take concerns of the regional new states seriously, when we really wanted to deal just with Moscow, given our sense of the greater importance of CFE. And my conclusion from that, to some degree fast forwarding, is that I would question whether it is in the interest of the United States to make the adapted CFE treaty ratification hostage just to Istanbul Summit fulfillment, because there's an enormous amount, I think, of American national interest involved in CFE. And given the vagaries of treaty ratification, not just in this country but in other places, anything that delays bringing that treaty into full force, I think, is a very risky proposition. I simply think that the issues involved in the Istanbul Summit are much less important than what's incorporated in that treaty as in the interest of the United States to get it into force right away.

Second, while I would never ever question Moscow's willingness to be mendacious in its conduct in its periphery—I didn't spend all those years in the service and not learn something—still, there's a tendency, I think, to see Moscow as more monolithic than it is in many of these issues. I think in the Caucasus, obviously, its perspective in recent years has been overwhelmingly driven by its disastrous policies in Chechnya. I remember very well how the positions on Transnistria in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense virtually inverted with change in leader-

ship. When Primakov came in and when Rodionov came in, those two ministries almost traded the positions that they had carried out under Grachov and Kozyrev. But I think Moscow is a little more dynamic over time than some people would think it is, and I think personalities often have a lot to do with it. Obviously, the personality of Shevardnadze has a great deal to do with it, but the personalities of the top leadership in all of these things, I think, sometimes determines a great deal as to how much the diplomacy can conduct.

But there's a very strong tendency of both those governments, Georgian and Moldovan, to try to portray this as being all Moscow's fault. And that reflects the extent to which the Istanbul Summit and these weapons issues and deployment issues are really sort of the tail of the dog of the regional disputes—first Ossetia, then Transnistria and Abkhazia. And they reflect the extent to which, bluntly, Georgia and Moldova are two of the more dysfunctional states that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Empire. They may not be the most dysfunctional, but they're fairly dysfunctional, and neither of them has even begun the process of taking serious political responsibility for the situations that created those regional disputes in the first place. And I think that's particularly true in Georgia, where there's been very little effort to try to come to grips with the legacy of the Gamsakhurdia Period, and what that meant both in Ossetia and for the Abkhaz. And as both Charles King and Ambassador Ciobanu mentioned, the web of corruption that's involved with flows of money—not just from Transnistria to Moscow and to Kyiv, but heavily through Chisinau—has created what I think in both of these countries is considerable body of shared cynicism and a shared self-interest in not bringing these issues to any kind of resolution.

And, finally, I will end on a really

dreadful point, which is to question whether or not the continuation of multi-lateral diplomacy in these two cases may also be perpetuating the stalemate. Now, as a former diplomat, I know diplomats abhor the thought that diplomacy could ever not make things better or might potentially make things worse. There are other instances of multilateral diplomacy that are smokescreens that prevent local and regional leaders from dealing with issues that they don't want to deal with. I think these two are classic candidates for precisely that. And some of the participants will know that the State Department has on several occasions tried to get me to go out to some of these missions and, despite the considerable temptations, I declined to do so, largely because I'd come to the conclusion that Abkhazia and Transnistria were two instances in which multilateral diplomacy, while it was not perhaps part of the problem, certainly was no longer part of the solution and, like the Russian peacekeepers themselves, had become an institutional mechanism for perpetuating the status quo rather than getting political leaders to face up to local issues.

Ruble: I suspect that comment might warrant a response from our panelists. Ambassador Dunkerley will respond first to Mr. Merry's comments.

Dunkerley: Well, I'll respond to the first point, in regards to the question of CFE ratification. I readily agree with the basic proposition that the CFE treaty and particularly the adapted CFE treaty is very much in the U.S. national interest, and is in the interest of our allies and others party to the treaty. It is already bringing us particular and important benefits. I think when the time comes and the adapted treaty is submitted to the Senate, there will be a very good story to tell on behalf of ratification of the treaty. Underlying the treaty, however, is a basic political question of confidence in compliance and implementation of the obligations undertaken. And this is a real world concern. You

alluded to the vagaries of Senate support for arms control treaties. I would submit that to go forward now with submitting a treaty on which the U.S. Government and NATO allies have all attached great importance to full compliance in particular obligations—to change and to submit the treaty at this particular time, essentially giving up on the problems that we've been discussing today regarding full Russian compliance and fulfillment of particular commitments—would be a mistake. In that particular situation we would in fact be inviting even more trouble and more questions about whether or not that treaty should be ratified by the Senate.

I take your point. It's a particular judgment call as to at what point one should submit the treaty, but I would submit that there are some very good reasons for following the course that we and the other members of the alliance at this stage have taken. As for your comments about our OSCE missions, I'll defer to one or two of my colleagues.

Ciobanu: I would like to make just a few comments. Sometimes it seems to me that multilateral diplomacy is an excuse to not do anything. I'm sorry to be so leery, but we had multilateral diplomacy in Moldova during the last ten years. And what really happened in these last ten years of conflict is Transnistrian separatists. The Transnistrian region is much more close to being recognized now—officially recognized—than it was ten years ago. And the solution of this conflict is still uncertain. Is federalization the solution or isn't it? In my opinion, sometimes it's necessary to apply bilateral diplomacy in a more active way, a more drastic manner, let's say.

I remember meeting with one high official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia when I used to be Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova. He told me that we know about the leader of the Transnistria region, this

guy, you know, this son of a bitch, but we had no time to deal with him. And that's it. I think that sometimes it's necessary to just be more active in bilateral diplomacy and to combine both approaches, bilateral and multilateral. Second comment: recently I saw some very interesting information. Moldova was ranked number ten in the world among weapons trader specialists. Number ten. It is very interesting. Moldova exports a lot of wine, and wine especially now is like a political life, especially young wine. You know that Moldova hosted an international wine festival, which was a successful event. Moldova was at the CIS Summit, so-called presidential club, but Moldova became a leader in weapons trading because of Transnistria, first of all. And it's a very serious issue, which affected not only the security of Moldova, Ukraine, and other countries, but international security as well.

Hill: I wanted to say particularly to Wayne's concluding shot, as a former colleague in Moscow, I would say you really missed a chance. I don't agree with your assessment of the multilateral diplomacy. I do know, with all due respect to my friend Ambassador Ciobanu, that when I used to go into the Moldovan Foreign Ministry they would tell me that the mission wasn't being active enough. What they usually meant was the mission wasn't doing what they wanted, but it was doing something with which they disagreed or with which they had problems.

I think that the OSCE missions in particular in Moldova and Georgia are two of those—and you can exclude my period, but certainly with my predecessors and successor and the mission in Georgia—these are two of the missions that have functioned and done some of the best work that OSCE has done. OSCE missions in the Baltics and Ukraine and others have produced effects, and the effects of the activities of the OSCE missions have varied. And in some of the

places you haven't had success. Other multilateralizations also have stunning, not only lack of success but stunning failures. But the point is that if a multilateral institution is going to be worth anything, it has to take on the tough problems, the stubborn problems, as well as those that are subject to easy resolution. And it's not always a measure of the effectiveness of the diplomacy that you don't produce immediate and newsworthy results. I mean, I think in some of these cases you have to look rather to Arthur Conan Doyle and talk about the dogs that don't bark, because there's an element of that there, too.

It's hard to argue about what-might-have-beens or could-have-been-worse, but there are records, I would say, if you go back and we went into the details in both of these places where you could look at things that have been done. No, the problems haven't been solved here, but that's because the conflicts in both states are part of larger historical processes involving the disintegration of the Soviet Empire, the relationship of Moscow with its former vassal states, and the shifting of tectonic plates in Eurasia. And to expect it all to be settled in a few years, I think, is overly optimistic. To draw a very broad historical analogy, in 1989 you had a process start in Europe that's somewhat akin to what happened in 1789, and if you remember in 1802 what was Napoleon doing and what was the status of the various European states? So I think in terms of historical transitions, we may actually be in much better shape than the Europe of the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th Centuries. And part of that is because we've developed better tools, including the multilateral institutions. They're not perfect yet, but my own inclination is to look at how to make them more effective and better rather than to give up the ghost on them.

Perina: Just very briefly, because as sometimes has been the case in the past, I

could not disagree with my friend Wayne Merry more on most of the points he made, but let me address the one about where he said that these are basically dysfunctional states, which I think is a very unfair characterization. But it's also a self-fulfilling prophecy, given the current situation, because certainly these states do have very big problems, but these problems are compounded and made all the more difficult to resolve by the existence of secessionist states on their territory. In the case of Moldova, it is hemorrhaging funds and taxes and custom duties than any state that size desperately needs. And it is hemorrhaging these because of the existence of a secessionist Transnistria, which is Europe's biggest duty-free shop now. I think, also, in the case of Georgia, the solution for Georgia is to create a state that controls its own territory and controls its own borders, and this is key to making it a viable state. And these secessionist movements are a key part of the problem.

But, moreover, if Wayne is right and, you know, these are dysfunctional states, I would argue that this is all the more reason for Western engagement rather than for Western disengagement. It is a key interest of the United States that these states prove successful, because if they do not prove successful, you will have a major regional crisis. For the same reason, we are interested in Macedonia becoming successful in the Balkans, and for other states being viable; because if they did not exist there would be a vacuum which would draw in many countries and which would create a crisis far greater than the present one. Basically, our experience over the last decade, particularly looking at Yugoslavia, has been that when you see regional crises, it is better to engage earlier rather than later. As in the case of Kosovo, the subsequent consequences were greater, and the international community was still in the end drawn in, perhaps much more deeply than it might have been if it had tried to resolve those

conflicts earlier.

Ruble: Thanks to each of you for your responses. Currently, we have about ten or fifteen minutes left and I see there are other people who have responses to the points raised by Mr. Merry. Following those remarks, I will then give Wayne a very brief rejoinder, if he feels he needs it. And there's a gentleman in the back who's been very patient who will get the last question. So let's begin to keep the time frame in mind.

Mikeladze: I'm sorry to be so late. I think Ambassador Perina already stated what I wanted to say, and my thoughts go in line with what Ambassador Perina has expressed with regard to the notion of dysfunctional states. It may be partly true, of course, and we regret to recognize it. But at the same time if we try to analyze what are the reasons, the simplest explanation for this failure or dysfunction is that these are the only two states where we still have the presence of the Russian military troops, which of course contributes significantly to first the instigation and then the non-resolution of the ethnic conflicts in Georgia and Moldova. And when we speak about the problems existing in these countries (crime, corruption), of course the level of these things are very high in Georgia and Moldova, and we recognize this fact, but at the same time we have to think also how these problems were created. Of course, mostly they are result of the non-resolved conflicts in Moldova and Georgia.

When one-third of the population became refugees in their own country, when the government simply does not have all methods to control its own territory, when the country cannot get rid of the foreign military presence in violation of the principle of the host nation's free consent of foreign military presence, then how can one speak about the failure of these states and the dysfunction of these states? And now about multilateralism: like democracy, of course,

it is not perfect, but we do not see anything better than multilateral diplomacy in the solution of these conflicts. The problem, again, is not the peacekeeping itself, which I like... and you reminded me of a very interesting idea of one well known analyst who said that peacekeeping in the Russian interpretation is to keep this piece and that piece of land. [Laughter]

So the problem is to break through the Russian monopoly over the peace process in these countries, Moldova and Georgia. It's been completely monopolized by one neighboring country that has direct strategic interests in this area. Then, if not multilateral, then what? A bilateral framework for the solution? I would gladly invite you to one of the bilateral meetings between Georgia and Russia, either on political/military issues or the general framework agreement. Then you will see everything with your own eyes. Thank you very much.

Ruble: It appears that several other people would like to comment on that subject. We'll take a comment from Ambassador David Swartz, current Head of the OSCE Mission in Moldova.

Swartz: I had a brief comment on Ambassador Perina's linkage between the political settlement and the carrying out of the 1999 Istanbul Summit commitments. Ambassador Perina argued, I think quite rightly, that indeed if there were a political settlement it would be easier to carry out the 1999 commitments, but I would argue that the reverse is true also, that the presence of Russian forces over and above the peacekeeping forces is widely seen as a sign of Moscow support for the Tiraspol regime. If those forces were removed in accordance with the Istanbul commitments, this would be a pretty clear signal to Tiraspol and to everyone else in the region that that support was substantially weakened and would certainly encourage Tiraspol to come to the table and arrive at a settlement.

Ruble: Thank you for your remarks, Ambassador Swartz. Would anyone else like to comment on this?

Joyal: Yes, Paul Joyal again. I just wanted to follow up on a point that Charles King made in his presentation. In your first point, Dr. King, you emphatically stated that the separatists did win these conflicts. The Georgian ambassador just referred to an instigation of at least the Abkhazian conflict—I assume the implication is Russian instigation. Well, whatever the case is, could you please better define how you define the Abkhaz separatist victory and how they were able to constitute an Air Force and Navy during that conflict as quickly as they did?

Ruble: We will have Dr. King respond to Mr. Joyal's question, and then we'll finish with one final question.

King: Two points. First, very few people in Washington are more supportive of the OSCE and CFE than I am. In fact, the American cynicism towards these two organizations depresses me enormously. I have the greatest regard for the work that OSCE missions do. But, two, it's an axiom in mediation theory that the parties to a dispute have to want to settle at least as much as the mediator. In labor mediation there are certain modalities that are established that determine when the mediator should walk away from the table. Multilateral diplomatic institutions have not yet established mechanisms for determining how and when to do that, but there are times when multilateral diplomacy could contribute by at least holding out the credible threat to the parties that it will walk away.

Ruble: One final question from this gentleman and then we'll wrap up.

Shayan: Scott Shayan, former intern here at the Center. I was wondering, in light of the mediator's proposal to federalize Moldova, I was wondering how feasible you fellows think it would be with men like Smirnov holding power in Tiraspol. In other words, to actually

maybe paraphrase some of Dr. King's work, why be a mayor of a city when you can be the president of your own country? And using that logic, how many of these leaders who have tasted state-like sovereignty already, how do we avoid a zero-sum game in coming to a political solution, especially with something like federalization?

Ruble: Since we have a couple questions on the table, I'll give Dr. King the opportunity to respond and then I'll give each panelist an opportunity to make a final observation.

King: Just very briefly, on Paul Joyal's point, all I meant was of course we all know that in the origins of all of these conflicts, the Russian Federation—either in the form of individual military units and military commanders on the ground or even in terms of the support of the defense and foreign ministries—the Russian Federation plays a key role in supplying weapons, even men and soldiers and officers to the separatist sides. So I wouldn't contest that at all. But it is clear that that separatist side with Russian support won militarily, which sets up a very difficult negotiating arrangement now. That was my only point.

Let me make just a brief point that I didn't get to make earlier, then I'll comment very briefly to the question of federalization, and that is Wayne Merry's issue about the sides actually wanting a settlement. The real difficulty is, even if we charitably concluded that all of the elite negotiating sides really did want a quick settlement to this (I think that even is being charitable in the extreme when we look at various negotiating positions) farther down there is very little constituency to solve the separatist issue. The great irony here is that the more democratic any of these countries become—and we can add Azerbaijan into the mix—the more democratic they become, the less these conflicts matter to individual citizens. If you take a poll in Azerbaijan

about the greatest threat facing the country, Karabakh comes very close to the top. If you take a poll in Moldova, Transnistria comes very close to the bottom. That is, the more democratic the countries become, the more individuals feel that they have other issues, other political issues on the table that they want to discuss. The more authoritarian the country is, the more these issues can be used for popular mobilization. One only has to look for the degree to which now parliamentarians in Azerbaijan have started a voluntary fund to increase the strength of the Azeri military to fight groups that are increasingly being known in Azerbaijani parlance as terrorists, as the Armenian terrorists in Karabakh. So that puts anyone from the outside in a very difficult position.

On the federalization plan, I'm not terribly keen on it. I agree with much of what Ambassador Ciobanu said. I do think it yokes what has been a relatively, relatively successful process of democratization and openness in Moldova proper, with a regime that has done very little to reform itself. The great irony here is that the old idea of a common state, put forward by Primakov, looks actually rather better than the plan I think currently on the table, but that's my own view, and Ambassador Perina and others may have different ones.

Ruble: Ambassador Dunkerley, would you care to add any final observations or comments?

Dunkerley: When we were on the shores of the Bosphorus in 1999 negotiating late-night the substance of the Istanbul commitments, all of us recognized at the time that we were not creating some new silver bullet. We recognized the complexity of the problems in Georgia and Moldova. We recognized that what we were trying to eke out might represent a modest step towards affecting aspects of the problem, which might hopefully facilitate broader positive movement.

When the agreement on the Istanbul commitments was concluded, I recall turning to the Georgian Foreign Minister and observing that now the hard part begins. There has been a great deal of energy and imagination—and dare I say it, even creativity—expended, in trying to move this implementation forward. There has been some significant results, some significant success, but also—and it's no surprise, nor should we be particularly dismayed—some outstanding problems still persist. All of this underscores a need not for despair but a renewed, patient, determined diplomatic effort. And for those multilateral diplomats who feared unemployment, this simply confirms that there are more jobs there.

Ruble: Ambassador Ciobanu, any final thoughts on the points that have been raised here today?

Ciobanu: Yes. As Lee Hamilton recently observed in one of his comments about the new Middle East initiative by President Bush, it is not enough to set clear goals in crisis resolution; it is important to provide a mechanism for achieving these goals. So I have a lot of respect and I appreciate the personal contributions of Ambassador Hill, Ambassador Perina, Ambassador Dunkerley, Ambassador Stewart, and many present key actors to the solution, but I think it is the right time to make some conclusions after all these efforts and activities. In the case of Moldova and Transnistria, the situation is not very much different from that of the Middle East in this respect. It is difficult to reach a reasonable solution. Finally, I would like to thank you, Blair, for putting on these discussions.

Ruble: Ambassador Hill, would you care to add any final comments?

Hill: Thank you very much. Two quick points that have come up in the discussions: First, on the sequence of doing a mandate for peacekeeping or interposition or stabilization or whatever-you-want-to-call-them forces and reach-

ing a political settlement: This is and has been a chicken-and-egg process, and in the end I think, in terms of practicalities, what is needed right now is a force that separates and keeps the former combatants apart. What you call it and how it's composed and other details (what it does) are things that need to be worked out. Right now, it's basically Russians and representatives, in Moldova at least, of former combatants who are in direct contact. Now, we can do better than this, and I think changing it might well, as Professor King suggested, be somewhat destabilizing in the sense that it will be conducive, leading towards conditions that might actually promote or make easier a political settlement by enforcing more consistently and more effectively existing agreements. But it's a complicated and interrelated process.

Secondly, on the federalization plan, the reaching of a political settlement in both Georgia and Moldova—I'm much more familiar with Moldova—but the crux of the problem here is sharing power from the center with areas outside the center. And in Moldova it's certainly a problem that Moldova is a multiethnic, multinational, multilingual state. And a state that is unitarist in terms of the political center, linguistics, or other things is not going to be successful in enlisting the cooperation of all its citizens. The OSCE mission recognized this early on in its activity, if you read Report 12 from August or September of 1993 of the original OCSE mission. It pointed out that the interference from the north, from outside, was not the sole reason, in its estimation, for the secession conflict, and the remedy of that was not going to be the only thing necessary in order to reach a political solution. There are other possible solutions. Federalization is one. Autonomy is another. If you look at it, though, the autonomy agreement with Gagauzia is working badly. And why is it working badly? It's not just the Gagauz

being unreasonable, but it's the fact that especially in the executive branch in Chisinau now there are ministries that don't want to share authority with the constituent parts. And until this is remedied, I have no brief for the Transnistrians, and it may well be the only way to reach an agreement with them is to remove certain of the individuals who are in the Transnistrian regime. But nonetheless, there are actions that are going to have to be taken from Chisinau now.

I personally believe that federalization is a workable and perhaps desirable solution. In fact, this is what a group of academics and diplomats from the rest of Europe—the Council of Europe and from Moldova and Transnistria—reached at an informal seminar in Kyiv that we had in 2000. It remains a workable solution if all parties will commit to it and work out the details. But solutions require all parties and not just some.

Ruble: Ambassador Perina, any final thoughts you would like to add in closing?

Perina: Just two quick points on what Charles King said, and then the question back there about federalization. Charles made a valid point that solutions to these secessions, conflicts may be getting less important to local populations. I would say that that's interesting, but it is not the decisive factor. I would again argue that the international community has its own interests, regardless of whether the local population wants to solve these conflicts or doesn't want to solve them. It is in the interests of the international community to resolve these, in a sense, black holes in Europe, these sources of potential instability, in very sensitive regions, regions where there are now pipelines going out, where there are many, many important things taking place that are vital to the international community. And, again, if there is not enough interest locally to solve these conflicts, it is all the more argument for engagement of

the international community to do all it can with negative and positive incentives to motivate the parties to reach a solution.

Secondly, on federalization, this is a controversial issue in Moldova. I very much agree with what Bill said. I think ultimately any solution to this conflict is going to have a federalist type of structure. Of course, with Smirnov around, it will have to be imposed. Smirnov does not like this kind of a solution, but inherently many people just react to federalism as though it is an unworkable model in a country of this size, which I think is not true. You have many federal models from Belgium to Switzerland of small countries where this kind of a solution would be acceptable. But the key thing here—and we really don't have time to get into that—is that if you look at the draft document and you cannot separate the concept of federalism from a specific proposal in a specific document, I think if you look at the document itself that has been put forward by the mediators, it is clear that the overwhelming authority in such a structure would be with the central government and that a separatist entity like Transnistria would lose many of the sources of viability that it now uses, from customs duties to a monopoly on taxes, to all kinds of things. This, in fact, would lead, I am confident, to a transformation of Transnistria from what it is now to something different. I think what goes on now in Transnistria, the kinds of actors who are now active in Transnistria would find it very, very difficult to continue these kinds of activities in the kind of federal structure which has been proposed by the mediators. And I would say, ultimately, the greatest source of argument for this is that all of the key players now accept this document or are supportive of it except Mr. Smirnov, and that is not a coincidence. Thank you.

Ruble: I'd like to thank each of the panelists for what has been a very engaging conversation. I'd like to thank the

audience for being perhaps particularly provocative this morning. I especially would like to thank Ambassador Ciobanu for arranging the session. I have observed that it appears that we need to have a continued discussion on the fate of future federalism in Moldova at some future seminar. We opened the question; we didn't answer it. Thank you very much.

