

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SECURITY IN THE OSCE REGION

Statement before the
U.S. Helsinki Commission

Nicolae Chirtoaca
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Moldova
to the United States of America

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Chairman Hastings, Co-chairman Cardin, distinguished members of the Commission, excellences, and colleagues:

It is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today to discuss the developments related to security in the OSCE region, as well as the possible impact on the regional security and stability of the recent evolutions related to the CFE Adapted Treaty. In the past few months, the challenge of the possible reconsideration of the existing military security system in Europe has taken center stage on the agenda of policy makers not only in Washington and Moscow, but also in the capitals of the countries disturbed by the possible revisionist approach to the existing multilateral agreements in the field of military security, including Chisinau, the capital of Moldova.

My Government considers that the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Adapted Treaty is the cornerstone of the current European security system. Its ratification will further strengthen the confidence and will consolidate peace and security in the Eurasian space. Adapted in 1999, during the Istanbul OSCE Summit, the Treaty takes into the account the new geopolitical realities, in particular the break-up of the former Soviet Union and the enlargement of the North-Atlantic Treaty Alliance. The adapted version of this Treaty underlines the importance of a crucial CFE provision and one of the basic principle of the international law – the required consent for the stationing of foreign troops on a sovereign territory. Here, the Russian Federation has assumed the obligation and responsibility to withdraw its illegal military presence from the territories of sovereign Moldova and Georgia.

The unlawful presence of Russian troops in Moldova and Georgia constitutes one of the **key security challenges that the OSCE confronts with today**. It is also the main remaining obstacle to the CFE Treaty ratification by Western allies. In this context, I would like to mention that Moldova is grateful to all the countries that support the unconditioned and early withdrawal of Russian troops from the Transnistria region of Moldova, as well as from the Gudauta base in Georgia, as the initial step in a sequence of moves to bring the 1999 Adapted CFE Treaty into force and accommodate Russia on other treaty-related issues.

We also support the United States Department of State known as the “parallel actions” plan – the proposal to Russia that outlines a possible sequence of steps that would bring the unratified CFE Treaty into force and keep Russia on board with this Treaty. In the first two steps, Russia would withdraw its troops from the Transnistria region of Moldova and Gudauta base in Georgia and would then join an international peacekeeping operation in Transnistria.

The withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldova and Georgia, as well as a “creative solution” to peacekeeping in the Eastern region of Moldova, are prerequisites to this whole process. My Government supports this official position of the United States Government, which is shared, as far as we know, by the representatives of the allies countries. The resumption of "five-plus-two" negotiations on Transnistria conflict settlement, the withdrawal of Russian troops and munitions, internationalizing the peacekeeping force, manageable solution to Transdnistria separatist crisis that respects Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the promotion of democratic and economic reforms throughout the entire region are all important principles aimed at Transnistria conflict resolution.

Russia’s suspension of compliance with CFE Treaty means the failure of the Russian Federation to fully fulfill its international obligations in order to advance on the way of this Treaty ratification. This approach to one of the main multilateral international agreements in the area of military security in the modern Europe can undermine the entire system of conventional arms control on the Eurasia territory, raising a number of serious security concerns for the wider OSCE area.

The Russia’s unilateral action could also be considered as an attempt to find a way out of the commitments, undertaken by the Russian Federation at the 1999 Istanbul OSCE Summit, namely to fully and unconditionally withdraw its military presence from the territories of Moldova and Georgia. You may also want to know why the unconditioned compliance of Russian Federation with CFE Treaty and Istanbul conditionality is so important for my country?

First, because the Russian military presence on the territories of Moldova, as well as of Georgia, is a clear infringement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity of our countries, both members of the GUAM Organization, and violates the basic principles of the international law.

Second, along with political and economic support, the Russian military is a crucial ingredient of maintaining and fueling separatist regimes in Moldova and Georgia, which are still instrumental for Moscow policy in the ex-Soviet space;

Third, Russian military presence in Moldova and Georgia is Russia’s reaction to the struggle of our countries towards the real freedom and European reintegration, which means: efficient democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and free economic development.

Speaking about **the status of the Istanbul Commitments regarding Moldova and Georgia and their relationship to CFE**, I would like to underline that, to this day, they remain unfulfilled. In defiance of its international commitments and despite the financial resources made available for the withdrawal through the OSCE Voluntary Fund, the Russian Federation has stopped the withdrawal process in March 2004, when the last trainload with Russian military equipment left the territory of the Republic of Moldova. The remaining components of their conventional presence – the munitions (about 20,000 tons at the Cobasna depots) and the military personnel (over 1200 soldiers), continue to be stationed in Moldova, some of them under the auspices of a so-called peace keeping force, set up against all internationally recognized standards for such operations.

Another serious problem is the presence on the territory of Moldova of a significant number of Unaccounted Treaty Limited Equipment (UTLE), illegally transferred by the Russian Federation to the separatists in the breakaway Transnistria region of Moldova during the military phase of the conflict. According to a number of assessments, including the information made public by the separatist regime, their so-called “armed forces” of about 7,500 persons (potentially 25,000 with reservists), possess about 70 tanks, 150 armored combat vehicles, 122 pieces of 100 mm artillery, and 29 air vehicles, including combat helicopters.

As far as the third issue on the agenda of today’s hearings is concerned, namely **the proposed U.S. deployment of ground-based missile defense installations in Poland and the Czech Republic**, let me just state that my Government fully respects the sovereign right of the governments of the United States, Czech Republic and Poland to decide on bilateral legal arrangements and their technical implementation in order to ensure their national security.

My country is also ready to further contribute to strengthening the effectiveness of the **OSCE efforts to monitor weapons trade, enhance border security and joint efforts aimed at maintaining and upgrading OSCE confidence and security building measures in light of these key issues**. But my Government remains worried by the failure of the international multilateral institutions to contribute to the effective settlement of the existing conflicts that is eroding with every passing year their credibility as security actors and guardians of international law.

The position of the Republic of Moldova on the issue of OSCE Security Area from the perspective Adapted CFE Treaty ratification remains unchanged: the Moldovan Parliament will proceed with the ratification of this Treaty only upon the proved, full and unconditional withdrawal of Russian forces from Moldova.

Thank you very much for your attention. I appreciate the opportunity to testify here today and welcome any question that you may have.