Russian MFA Information and Press Department Commentary Regarding a Russia Media Question Concerning the Situation around Transnistrian Settlement

30-07-2005

Question: The developments in Moldova, the situation around Transnistria and the prospects for Transnistrian settlement have been attracting the heightened attention of the Russian public. How in this connection could you comment upon the law signed yesterday by the President of the Republic of Moldova on the principal provisions for a special legal status of the populated areas of the left bank of the Dniester (Transnistria)?

Commentary: The Moldovan Law, as stated by its crafters, was prepared in accordance with a Ukrainian plan for Transnistrian settlement. In the Ukrainian blueprint, however, the adoption of such a law was proposed in order to "legally confirm the previously agreed provisions of a special status for Transnistria" and it was straightforwardly pointed out that "the parties will refrain from unilateral actions which may create obstacles in the path of peaceful settlement."

Unfortunately, Moldovan parliamentarians, as they worked on this bill, deemed it inadvisable to discuss its content with those whom it must directly affect, and took the wrong path of unilateral measures to extend Moldova's jurisdiction to Transnistria. Under Article 1 of the new Law, moreover, Chisinau is now going to negotiate solely the terms of "democratization and demilitarization of Transnistria," including a full withdrawal of Russian troops from the region, and only then discuss any special status.

Actually the Moldovan side is again trying to stand everything upside down. For it is well known that tangible progress, including in terms of the implementation of the so called Istanbul agreements, proved possible to achieve only when in the negotiation process involving Chisinau and Tiraspol real prospects tended to open for Transnistrian settlement. It is as though there have been no thirteen years of not easy talks, in the course of which, after the tragic bloodshed of 1992, the sides under the auspices of the mediators from Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE were learning to build a civilized dialogue, restore normal engagement between them and assimilate the international legal experience in dealing with complicated problems of state building in a democratic way.

It is regrettable that the Moldovan politicians are giving up patient and responsible joint work. Evidently it seems to somebody that one's aims can be achieved through imposing political solutions, establishing an economic blockade and whipping up tensions. But such illusions have nothing in common with the principles adopted in the OSCE for the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

Russia as a guarantor country and mediator for Transnistrian settlement believes that the unilateral act of the Moldovan parliament is a counterproductive move. It complicates the prospect of a return to the negotiating table and impedes efforts by the mediators from Russia, Ukraine, and the OSCE to render necessary assistance in the elaboration by the parties of a viable and reliably guaranteed special status of Transnistria within integral Moldova.