



United States Mission to the OSCE

United States Welcomes Russian-Georgia Declaration on Withdrawal from Military Bases

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 2, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States would like to join the Chairman-in-Office and the European Union in warmly welcoming the joint Georgia-Russia statement on the drawdown of Russian military bases in Georgia.

We applaud the two countries' declared intention to sign an agreement on the details of the withdrawal of Russian forces from Georgia as provided by the 1999 Istanbul Joint Statement by the two sides.

We congratulate both governments for working hard over the past several months and for demonstrating flexibility and a willingness to reach agreement after many years of difficult and technical negotiations.

A cooperative resolution of this issue is an important accomplishment not only for Russia and Georgia, but also for the region as a whole.

Important commitments on the withdrawal of Russian military forces from Moldova remain, and we hope that this agreement will provide an impetus for a renewed effort to complete the Russian withdrawal there also.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.