



**NEW ZEALAND**  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE



New Zealand Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs and Trade  
Manuatu Aorere

12 November 2015

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Jamie

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Dear Jamie

I refer to your email of 10 August 2015 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*"... any information (including, but not restricted to briefings, emails and other documents) relating to Transnistria (also known as Trans-Dniestr or Transdnestr) held by the Ministry that has been generated in the past ten years."*

Please find attached extracts from documents relating to your request. The format reflects the fact that the majority of the information contained in the individual documents lies outside the scope of your request.

Some portions of the documents have been withheld under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the international relations of the Government of New Zealand;
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy; and
- 9(2)(ba)(i): to protect the supply of confidential information by a third party.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, no public interest in releasing the withheld information has been identified that would be sufficient to override the reasons for withholding it.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to seek a review of this response by the Ombudsman.

Yours sincerely

Joana Johnston  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

**Briefing: Georgia- Russia conflict:**

s6(b) (29 August 2008), para 4

s6(b)

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**Briefings: Meeting with Sir Peter Ricketts, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Friday 5 September, Auckland (3 September 2008), para 66; Sir Peter Ricketts Call on Minister of Trade Hon Phil Goff (3 September 2008) para 70; Meeting with Sir Peter Ricketts (4 September 2008) para 59; Georgia Discussion Points (8 and 19 September 2008), para 8**

[Out of scope]

s6(a)

[Out of scope]

s6(a)

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**Briefing: Georgia- Discussion Points (2 September 2008)**

s6(a)

[Out of scope]

s6(a)

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**News article: Delahunt Preparing Bill Graduating Russia From Jackson-Vanik**  
<https://dev.wtonewsstand.com/topic/russia?page=39>

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**External Report: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace "The Eurasian Customs Union Friend or Foe of the EU" (October 2012), para 72:**  
<http://carnegieeurope.eu/publications/?fa=49548>

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**Briefing:**  
**2014)**

s6(a) (2 April 2013 and 14 March

Although the country has been independent from the USSR since 1991, Russian forces have remained on Moldovan territory east of the Nistru River supporting a Transnistrian separatist region composed of a Slavic majority population (mostly Ukrainians and Russians), but with a sizeable ethnic Moldovan minority.

With few natural energy resources, Moldova imports almost all of its energy supplies from Russia and Ukraine. Moldova's dependence on Russian energy is underscored by an estimated \$4.3 billion debt to Russian natural gas supplier Gazprom (due largely to unreimbursed natural gas consumption in the separatist Transnistria region).

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**Briefing: Moldova Country Paper (17 April 2013)**

Although the country has been independent since the USSR collapsed in 1991, Russian forces have remained on Moldovan territory east of the Nistru River supporting a Transnistrian separatist region composed of a Slavic majority population (mostly Ukrainians and Russians), but with a sizeable ethnic Moldovan minority. New Zealand has not taken a position on this intractable and long-standing dispute involving Moldova, the Transnistrian separatist authorities, and Russia.

With few natural energy resources, Moldova imports almost all of its energy supplies from Russia and Ukraine. Moldova's dependence on Russian energy is underscored by an estimated \$4.3 billion debt to Russian natural gas supplier Gazprom (due largely to unreimbursed natural gas consumption in the separatist Transnistria region).

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**Briefing:**

**s6(a) (22 May 2013)**

Transnistria – Moldova's breakaway region, where a peacekeeping mission mandated by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is in place. The mission is comprised of Moldovan, Transnistrian, Russian and Ukrainian troops. Currently Moldova and Ukraine operate joint customs posts to monitor transit of people and commodities through the region.

Ukraine is the current chair of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

**s6(b)**

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**Briefing: Meeting with Foreign Minister Natalia Gherman (30 January 2014)**

Land-locked and located between Romania and Ukraine, Moldova has a population of around 3.6 million, with around 500,000 living in the break-away region of Transnistria, is one of the poorest countries in Europe: GDP per capita is US\$3,500 (2012).

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**MFAT Formal Message: Ukraine: Update: 18 March (18 March 2014); Ukraine Sitrep 1600 19 March (19 March 2014) (in attachment of the same name)**

**Moldova:** The chairman of the Supreme Council of the breakaway region (from Moldova) of Transnistria, Mikhail Burla, addressed the Russian State Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin on 17 March asking him to draft a bill that would allow Transdnistria's possible accession to Russia. Moldova's Prime Minister Lurie Leanca has stressed that Moldova will "never recognise" the results of the "false referendum... in Crimea that was held following the analogous Transnistria scenario."

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**Briefing: Frozen conflicts: list of Brussels' think tank papers (20 March 2014)**

- Paul Ivan, Transnistria: Where To? (13 March 2014)  
[http://www.epc.eu/pub\\_details.php?cat\\_id=3&pub\\_id=4257](http://www.epc.eu/pub_details.php?cat_id=3&pub_id=4257)
- Victor Chirila and Amanda Paul, Helping Moldova Stay on the EU Course (11 December 2013)  
[http://www.epc.eu/pub\\_details.php?cat\\_id=3&pub\\_id=4006&year=2013](http://www.epc.eu/pub_details.php?cat_id=3&pub_id=4006&year=2013)
- Stanislav Secieru, Can Moldova Stay on the Road to Europe? (28 January 2014)  
[http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/can\\_moldova\\_stay\\_on\\_the\\_road\\_to\\_europe303](http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/can_moldova_stay_on_the_road_to_europe303)
- Andrew Wilson, Moldova: The Real Struggle begins after Vilnius (24 October 2013)  
[http://www.ecfr.eu/blog/entry/Moldova\\_The\\_real\\_struggle\\_begins\\_after\\_Vilnius](http://www.ecfr.eu/blog/entry/Moldova_The_real_struggle_begins_after_Vilnius)

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**Briefing: Post March 2014 Summit Policy Briefing (23 March 2014), para 5**

[Out of scope] Then, the situation in Crimea **s6(a)** may become another frozen conflict as Transnistria, **s6(a)**

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**MFAT Formal Message: Ukraine: Update: 1 April (2 April 2014)**

Meanwhile, Chancellor Merkel spoke by telephone with President Putin yesterday (31 March),

[Out of scope] The two leaders also discussed "possible further steps to stabilise the situation in Ukraine and in Transnistria", and agreed to stay in close contact.

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**MFAT Formal Message: Upcoming Post Travel to Minisk, Chisinau and Tashkent (26 March 2014), para 2**

DHOM plans to visit Chisinau 10-11 April to prepare for the proposed visit by the Special Envoy there at the end of April.

[Out of scope] We are also looking to try and schedule calls **s6(a)** with the view to obtaining an on the ground perspective on latest political and economic developments, including Moldova's views on developments in neighbouring Ukraine and the Transnistria issue, to feed into the briefing for the Special Envoy's visit.

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**MFAT Formal Message: Ukraine: Update: 30 March (30 March 2014).**  
The first two sentences of the second paragraph also feature in **Briefing: Ukraine/Russia: Update as at 1130hrs 31 May 2014 (31 May 2014)**

At the initiative of President Putin, the Russian and US Presidents had an hour-long phone conversation late on Friday, while President Obama was visiting Saudi Arabia.

[Out of scope]

Following the call, the Kremlin website noted

[Out of scope] Putin also raised the situation of the Transnistria region (a breakaway region in Moldova which is seeking annexation by Russia) suggesting that the region was suffering under a Ukrainian 'blockade'. Putin reportedly stressed to Obama that Russia wanted to see a 'fair and comprehensive' settlement for Transnistria.

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**MFAT Formal Message: Ukraine update (31 March 2014)**

Late on Sunday night, US Secretary of State John Kerry met with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in Paris to discuss ways to de-escalate tensions over Ukraine ...

Lavrov also noted that he had discussed the situation of Transnistria with Kerry, outlining Russian concerns over steps being taken by the current Ukrainian government to restrict the freedom and movement of goods and people to/from Transnistria, which was in violation of understandings recorded in earlier agreements with Ukraine. Lavrov expressed a hope that the US would "treat these concerns with understanding". He also noted that in just under two weeks' time there would be talks on Transnistria in the 5+2 format (an existing political consultative mechanism to settle the Transnistria conflict) involving Russia, Ukraine, the OSCE, the Moldovan and Transnistrian authorities, as well as the US and EU as observers. He called on the US to make all efforts to ensure that the 5+2 format was effective.

Moldova's Minister of Foreign Affairs and European integration Natalia Gherman is scheduled to visit Moscow next week and meet with her Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on 4 April. In a joint news conference with US Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland on 30 March in Moldova's capital Chisinau, she emphasised that there was no blockade of Transnistria and that the Moldova government was doing everything possible to facilitate the free movement of people. She called on the Transnistrian authorities to give the OSCE access to the region to consolidate efforts to ensure freedom of movement for people and to build confidence between Moldova's two constituent parts.

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**MFAT Formal Message: Ukraine update (1 April 2014)**

President Putin and German Chancellor Merkel spoke on the phone on 31 March. According to a statement issued by the Kremlin,

[Out of scope]... The Russian President also reportedly raised the Transnistria issue, calling for an end to the "de facto external blockade" of the region.

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**MFAT Formal Message: Ukraine – Meeting with  
s6(b) (1 April 2014), para 6**

s6(b)

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**MFAT Formal Message: Ukraine:**

s6(b) (1 April 2014)

s6(b)

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s6(b)

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**Briefing: Ukraine/Russia: Weekly Update (31 March – 4 April 2014)**

s6(b)

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**MFAT Formal Message: Ukraine meeting with**

s6(a), s9(2)(ba) (22 March 2014), para 4

[Out of scope]

s6(a), s9(2)(ba)

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**File Note: Meeting with**

s6(a), s9(2)(ba) (2 April 2014), para 7

s6(a), s9(2)(ba)

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**MFAT Formal Message: Post Accreditation Visit Chisinau (10-11 April 2014)**

Useful meetings also held with

s6(a)

[Out of scope]

s6(a)

1-14 [Out of scope]

Transnistria

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s6(b)

s6(b)

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s6(b)

s6(b)

19-25 [Out of scope]

Comment

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s6(a), s6(b)

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**Briefing: Agenda Item #16: Situation in Ukraine (9 April 2014); New Zealand – France Pol/Mil Talks (13 April 2014), para 20**

s6(a)

[Out of scope]

s6(a)

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**Briefings: Visit to Belarus, Moldova, Czech Republic and Albania, Rt Hon Jim Bolger (13 April 2014); Special Envoy Travel To Belarus, Czech Republic, Moldova, Albania 24 April– 2 May 2014 (16 April 2014)**

s6(a)

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**Briefings: Special Envoy Visit April 2014 Moldova Country Status Report (16 April 2014); New Zealand – Romania Foreign Ministry Consultations (9 May 2014), paras 6-8; Visit to Belarus, Moldova, Czech Republic and Albania, Rt Hon Jim Bolger (13 April 2014)**

[Out of scope]

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s6(a)

...

s6(a) After a period of conflict following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Transnistria has been self-governing, with approximately 2000 Russian 'peacekeepers' stationed there. A '5+2' process with Moldova, the territory of Transnistria, Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE participating (and the EU and US as observers) has intermittently addressed reunification and practical administrative and governance issues, but progress has been limited.

s6(a)

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**MFAT Formal Message: Ukraine:**

s(b) (2 May 2014), para 6

s6(b)

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**MFAT Formal Message: Ukraine:**

**s6(a) (1 May 2014)**

**Summary**

**Report**

During Special Envoy Rt Hon Jim Bolger's visit to Moldova on 29-30 April, interlocutors gave an overview of

Transnistria.

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**s6(b)**

**[Out of scope]**

**s6(b)**

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**s6(b)**

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**[Out of scope]**

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**[Out of scope]**

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s6(b)

[Out of scope]

s6(b)

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s6(b)

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s6(b)

Comment

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s6(a)

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**Briefing: Romania Country Paper (31 March 2014); New Zealand – Romania  
Foreign Ministry Consultations (9 May 2014)**

scope]

[Out of

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s6(a)

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**MFAT Formal Message: German Foreign Minister Steinmeier to visit Moldova and Georgia (9 May 2014), para 3**

Steinmeier used the visit to express Germany's support for Moldova's territorial integrity,

**s6(a). Remainder of paragraph out of scope.**

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**Briefing: Foreign Ministry consultations with Romania (13 May 2014)**

1-2 [Out of scope]

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**s6(b)**

4-5 [Out of scope]

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**s6(b)**

7-11 [Out of scope]

12

**s6(b)**

13 [Out of scope]

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