

# Russia's War in Georgia: Causes and Implications for Georgia and the World

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*Central Asia- Caucasus Institute  
Silk Road Studies Program*



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## Introduction

In August 2008, Russia launched an invasion of Georgia that sent shock waves reverberating – first across the post-Soviet space, but then also into the rest of Europe and the world, as the magnitude of the invasion and its implications became clear.

This invasion took the world by surprise. But what should have been surprising about it was perhaps the extent of Russia's willingness to employ crude military force against a neighboring state, not that it happened. Indeed, Russia had for several years pursued increasingly aggressive and interventionist policies in Georgia, and had employed an array of instruments that included military means, albeit at a smaller scale. In the several months that preceded the invasion, Moscow's increasingly blatant provocations against Georgia led to a growing fear in the analytic community that it was seeking a military confrontation. Yet western reactions to this aggressive behavior remained declaratory and cautious in nature, and failed to attach cost to Russia for its behavior.

After invading Georgia on August 8, Russia did score some initial successes in portraying the invasion as a response to a Georgian decision to militarily enter Tskhinvali, the capital of Georgia's breakaway region of South Ossetia. Yet a growing body of evidence rapidly emerged, implying that Russia's invasion was premeditated, not reactive – or in the words of a leading Russian military analyst, planned, not spontaneous.

Indeed, as the chronology included in this paper shows, Russia had been meticulously preparing an invasion of Georgia through the substantial massing and preparation of forces in the country's immediate vicinity. Scholars will debate whether Russian tanks were already advancing inside Georgian territory when Georgian forces launched their attack on Tskhinvali; yet there seems little doubt that they were at least on the move toward the border. And the scope of the Russian attack leave little doubt: it immediately broadened from the conflict zone of South Ossetia, to include

the opening of a second front in Abkhazia and systematic attacks on military and economic infrastructure across Georgia's territory. Within days, tens of thousands of Russian troops and hundreds of tanks and armored vehicles roamed Georgian roads. Russia's subsequent decisions to ignore the terms of a cease-fire agreement it signed, and to recognize the independence of the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, all complete the picture of long-hatched plan. The purpose was not merely related to South Ossetia or even Abkhazia: it served to punish Georgia and expose the inability of the west to prevent Russia from moving aggressively to restore its primacy over the former Soviet Union's territory, irrespective of the wishes of the governments and populations of the sovereign countries on that area.

It is indeed the predetermined nature of this war that makes its implications so far-reaching. It constituted Moscow's first military aggression against a neighboring state since the invasion of Afghanistan in 1978; and it took place, this time, against a member state of European institutions such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and to that a country on track to integration with NATO.

As such, political leaders and analyst soon understood that it formed the largest crisis to date in Russia's relationship with the West; some have even come to realize that the Georgian war of 2008 may be the most significant challenge to European Security since the Cold War's end. It is therefore of particular importance to document, already at this stage, how this war started and draw some preliminary conclusions regarding what it means for Georgia, the post-Soviet space, and Europe and the United States.

The following pages propose to do so by providing a chronology of events before, during, and immediately after the war; as well as to propose some initial conclusions that could be drawn from this chronology, as well as regarding its implications.

# Chronology of Events<sup>1</sup>

## *Summer 2004*

Following an operation launched by the Georgian governments to curtail rampant smuggling across South Ossetia, clashes between Georgian forces and South Ossetian separatists take place as Georgia sought to restore authority, with numerous deaths on both sides.

## *Winter 2005*

Sergey Bagapsh assumes the *de facto* presidency of Abkhazia, following an election in which Moscow backed his opponent, Raul Khadzhimba. Bagapsh's electoral victory led to strong Russian pressure on the *de facto* leadership, which forced Bagapsh to include Khadzhimba into his government as Vice President and hand him control of security and defense affairs.

Subsequently, serving Russian security and military officials are appointed to leading positions in the *de facto* governments of the unrecognized republics. Hence Russian general Soltan Soslaniev served as Abkhazia's defense minister, while Anatoly Zaitsev became the *de facto* republic's chief of staff. Likewise, South Ossetia's prime minister, Yuri Morozov, and security chief, Anatoly Barankevich, were among several Russian officers in the South Ossetian *de facto* government.

President Saakashvili presents peace plans to both Abkhazia and South

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<sup>1</sup> This chronology has been assembled to the extent possible based on multiple and independent sources, as well as on the personal notes of the authors, including experiences on the ground during the conflict. Given the recent nature of the events, however, it is possible that some information reflected here will need correction as more solid evidence emerges. The authors express their gratitude to David J. Smith and Jonathan Kulick for their comments on the chronology. The authors will be grateful to receive additional suggestions for corrections or additions at [info@silkroadstudies.org](mailto:info@silkroadstudies.org).

Ossetia, both of which are rejected.

*January 2006*

Explosions occur on the Russian side of the Georgian-Russian border, damaging a gas pipeline and an electricity transmission line and cutting gas and electricity supplies to Georgia. These explosions occur days after Russia cut energy supplies to Ukraine, and are blamed on unidentified terrorists.

*Spring 2006*

Russia introduces an import ban on Georgian wine and mineral water, Georgia's most lucrative export products, citing health and quality concerns.

*Spring 2006*

Russia builds a military base in the district of Java, north of Tskhinvali in South Ossetia, an area off limits to international observers. The base includes substantial refueling capabilities for tanks and armored vehicles.

*July 2006*

Under what is officially a law enforcement operation, Georgia takes control of the Kodori Gorge in Abkhazia, previously run by a local (Georgian) warlord. The Georgian Government-in-Exile for Abkhazia is installed in the Gorge. Georgia also intensifies efforts to internationalize the Russian-led peacekeeping formats in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

*September-October 2006*

Georgia expels six Russian intelligence agents accused of espionage. Russia responds with a full economic embargo of Georgia, including the severance of all transportation and communication links, including rail, road, sea, air, postal, and banking ties. Russian law enforcement raids Georgian businesses in Russia and begins deporting Georgian citizens.

*March II, 2007*

Georgian-controlled villages in the Kodori Gorge are attacked by ground-to-ground rocket fire, likely from territory controlled by the Abkhaz *de facto*



authorities. The attack is supported by Russian military helicopters, a fact obliquely confirmed by a subsequent report of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). Western leaders fail to react to the UNOMIG report.

*May 2007*

After elections held in parallel with elections for the Tskhinvali authorities, Georgia introduces a provisional administration in the parts of South Ossetia it controlled since the cease-fire of 1992, under the leadership of Dmitri Sanakoyev, a former high official in the separatist government.

*August 6, 2007*

A missile dropped by an aircraft lands undetonated near a Georgian radar in Tsitelubani in close proximity of South Ossetia, recently upgraded to NATO standards. Two teams of European and American experts conclude that the action must have been performed by the Russian Air Force. A Russian team of experts instead argues the incident had been staged by Georgia to create an impression of Russian aggression against the country.<sup>2</sup>

*February 17, 2008*

Kosovo declares independence. President Putin claims Kosovo's independence, if recognized by western states, will set a precedent with consequences for Abkhazia and South Ossetia. A few weeks later, in an interview with *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Konstantin Zatulin, Deputy Chairman of the Duma Committee on CIS and Compatriot Affairs, suggests the draft presidential decree may be just the first step toward Russian recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It is important to move now, says Zatulin, while Kosovo is still a fresh issue and well before the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

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<sup>2</sup> For full details and documents, see the October 2007 *Silk Road Paper* published by the Joint Center, *The August 6 Bombing Incident in Georgia: Implications for the Euro-Atlantic Region*, by Svante E. Cornell, David J. Smith, and S. Frederick Starr.

*March 5, 2008*

Tbilisi withdraws from the Joint Control Commission overseeing negotiations over South Ossetia. It instead proposes a format which, apart from Georgia, South Ossetia and Russia, also envisages active roles for the EU, OSCE and the Sanakoyev administration.

*March 6, 2008*

Russia announces its withdrawal from the 1996 CIS sanctions treaty, which banned trade, economic, financial, transport and other links with Abkhazia.

*March 28, 2008*

President Mikheil Saakashvili outlines a new peace initiative for Abkhazia, including the establishment of a free economic zone, representation at all levels of the Georgian government, and far-reaching autonomy for Abkhazia.

*April 3, 2008*

At the NATO summit in Bucharest, Georgia is denied a Membership Action Plan. Georgia and Ukraine are nevertheless assured they will be offered NATO membership at an unspecified point in the future. German chancellor Angel Merkel stresses that a country with unresolved conflicts can nevertheless not join NATO.

*April 16, 2008*

A Russian presidential decree signed by outgoing President Vladimir Putin instructs the Russian government, as well as Russian regions, to open political, social, and economic relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The decree in many ways establishes relations between Moscow and the two territories that approximate relations between Moscow and its federal subjects. This is interpreted in Tbilisi as a move to legalize a Russian annexation of the two regions.

*April 18, 2008*

Abkhazia claims Georgia is reinforcing its troops along the cease-fire line and in the Kodori Gorge. UNOMIG nevertheless states that no troop

increases have taken place.

*April 21, 2008*

An unarmed Georgian UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) is downed over Abkhazia. Citing footage from the UAV's camera capturing its own destruction by a MiG-29 aircraft as well as radar recordings showing an aircraft taking off from the Gudauta airbase in Abkhazia and departing into Russian airspace, Georgia accuses the Russian Air Force of downing the UAV. This triggers a diplomatic row, as Tbilisi claims Russia is engaging in military action in Abkhazia, while Russia denies responsibility, claiming the plane was shot down by the Abkhaz air defenses. A UNOMIG investigation subsequently concludes in May that the aircraft was Russian.

*April 24, 2008*

At the UN, the U.S., UK, France and Germany, all members of the Group of Friends of the Secretary General for Georgia, express concern over Russia's policy toward Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and President Saakashvili calls for talks on internationalizing the peacekeeping missions in the two regions.

*April 29, 2008*

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims Georgia has reinforced its military presence in the Kodori Gorge, preparing for an invasion of Abkhazia. Russia confirms it is reinforcing its peacekeeping contingent in Abkhazia, and setting up several new checkpoints along the Inguri River. UNOMIG subsequently denies any troop buildup in the Kodori Gorge or along the cease-fire line.

*May 8, 2008*

Russia confirms having increased its peacekeeping contingent in Abkhazia from 1997 to 2542 soldiers.

*May 14, 2008*

Abkhazia's leader Sergey Bagapsh requests permanent Russian military presence in Abkhazia. Such plans are later denied by the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces. Georgian officials say a war between

Georgia and Russia has been avoided due to French mediation.

*May 16, 2008*

The UN General Assembly passes a resolution tabled by Georgia on the right of return of all IDPs to Abkhazia. The U.S. votes for the resolution, Russia against; most western European states abstain.

*May 21, 2008*

Georgia holds parliamentary elections. Two buses intended for transporting Georgians in the Gali region to polling stations are blown up in Khurcha, just across the border in Georgia, injuring four. Tbilisi claims the Abkhaz side is responsible. Later reports by UN observers suggest the incident was staged by Georgian officials.

*May 31, 2008*

The Russian Ministry of Defense sends about 400 troops from the Russian Defense Ministry Railway Forces to rehabilitate Abkhazian railways. Tbilisi accuses Russia of improving the infrastructure in Abkhazia in preparation for a military intervention.

*June 16, 2008*

One person is killed and four injured in a skirmish between Georgian and South Ossetian forces in the outskirts of Tskhinvali.

Georgian forces confiscate heavy equipment including anti-tank missiles from Russian peacekeepers on the Georgian side of the Georgian-Abkhaz administrative border – weaponry that, according to the agreement on peacekeeping, required notification of Georgian authorities.

*June 21, 2008*

In an interview with the Georgian newspaper *Rezonansi*, respected Russian military analyst Pavel Felgenhauer stated that a political decision to start a war in Georgia had been taken in Moscow as early as April. He predicted that a war would start in Abkhazia no later than the middle of August.

*July 1, 2008*

Sukhumi closes Abkhazia's *de facto* border with Georgia.

*July 3-4, 2008*

An explosion in the South Ossetian village of Dmenisi kills a South Ossetian police chief. Later the same day, a mine attack on a convoy carrying Dmitri Sanakoyev injures three Georgian policemen near Tskhinvali. The attack is followed by an exchange of fire between Sanakoyev's security personnel and unknown gunmen. At least two people die in shellings in Tskhinvali and surrounding villages.

*July 5, 2008*

The information services of the North Caucasian Islamic resistance publish an article on their website, Kavkaz-Center, stating that Russia will wage a war in Georgia in August, but placing it in Abkhazia.

*July 8, 2008*

The Georgian MOD reports the intrusion of four Russian aircraft over South Ossetia. Russia confirms its aircraft entered Georgian airspace to "cool hotheads", marking the first instance of a violation of airspace not denied by Russia.

*July 15, 2008*

Russia launches a large-scale military exercise, "Kavkaz-2008", in 11 regions in the vicinity of the Georgian border. Approximately 8,000 army servicemen participate in the training, which engages paratroopers, the Pskov Airborne division and the Black Sea Fleet. 700 combat vehicles and 20 aircraft are activated and undergo readiness inspections. The Russian authorities refer to the exercise as a pre-planned counter-terrorism operation, but states also that it aims to prepare the troops for involvement in special peacekeeping operations, due to the latest developments in the region.

*July 30, 2008*

The Russian Ministry of Defense announces the completion of the repair of

the 54-kilometer railway linking the Abkhazian capital of Sukhumi with the region of Oчамchire in the Abkhazian conflict zone.

*August 1-2, 2008*

Tensions in South Ossetia escalate when a military vehicle carrying six Georgian police officers is hit by two remote-controlled explosive devices while travelling on a bypass road linking Georgian villages in the conflict zone with Georgia's interior. Violence continues in the evening and overnight on August 2. The South Ossetian side reports that six persons, including a member of the North Ossetian peacekeeping battalion, were killed and 15 injured in shelling and sniper attacks from the Georgian side. Georgian authorities report that seven people, including six civilians and one police officer, were injured in mortar attacks against the Georgian-controlled villages of Ergneti, Nuli, Zemo Nikozi and Kvemo Nikozi.

The South Ossetian *de facto* authorities state that they will mobilize their troops, including volunteers from the North Caucasus and Russia, if tensions in the region escalate further. Russian airborne troops commander Valery Evtukhovich announces to Interfax their readiness to assist the Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia if needed.

*August 2, 2008*

Russian armed forces complete the "Kavkaz-2008" military exercise. However, rather than returning to their bases, the troops remain in their positions by the Georgian border.

*August 3-5, 2008*

On August 3, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs accuses Tbilisi of aggravating tensions in the South Ossetian conflict zone and announces that Moscow is undertaking efforts to defuse tensions on the ground. Georgian State Minister for Reintegration Temuri Yakobashvili states that Moscow is attempting to stage an illusion of war, aimed at derailing the peace processes in Georgia's separatist regions.

In Abkhazia, *de facto* President Bagapsh declares that the Abkhazian side will refuse to take part in talks with the Georgian side and the Group of

Friends until tensions in South Ossetia deescalate.

The *de facto* South Ossetian authorities announce that 819 women and children are being evacuated from the conflict zone to North Ossetia.

The Russian chief negotiator in South Ossetia, Yuri Popov, announces that bilateral talks between the Georgian and South Ossetian authorities will take place under Russian supervision in Tskhinvali on August 7.

*August 6, 2008*

South Ossetian *de facto* leader Eduard Kokoity and chief negotiator Boris Chochiev declare their refusal to take part in the meeting with the Georgian side scheduled for August 7, stating that the South Ossetian side will only agree to talks within the JCC format (refused by Tbilisi since March 2008).

Tensions escalate again in the afternoon with exchanges of fire between the Georgian-controlled villages of Avnevi and Nuli and the Tskhinvali area.

*August 7, 2008*

The South Ossetian *de facto* authorities report that 18 persons have been injured in overnight shelling attacks against the breakaway capital of Tskhinvali and the South Ossetian-controlled villages of Khetagurovo, Dmenisi, Sarabuki and Ubait. The Head of the South Ossetian Security Council, Russian officer Anatoly Barankevich, announces that armed groupings from North Ossetia are headed towards South Ossetia to assist the separatist army to fight the Georgian troops.

Georgian State Minister Temuri Yakobashvili departs for South Ossetia in the morning to participate in scheduled talks with the South Ossetian side, but neither the Russian chief negotiator Yuri Popov, nor the South Ossetian side, shows up. Yakobashvili is received instead by Russian peacekeeping commander Marat Kulakhmetov, who states that Russia has lost control over the actions of the separatist army and advises the Georgian government to declare a unilateral ceasefire to allow Russia to defuse tensions in the conflict zone. Shelling and shooting between the Georgian armed forces and South Ossetian rebels resume in the afternoon, killing and wounding several servicemen from both sides.

In Tbilisi, the Georgian authorities receive foreign intelligence reports about

movement of Russian troops towards the Roki tunnel, connecting North Ossetia with the South Ossetian conflict zone. Georgian President Saakashvili consults Western diplomats and is advised by U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza not to fall into a trap and to avoid a confrontation with Russia.

At approximately 7 PM, the Georgian government announces its decision to cease fire in order to defuse tensions and offers to engage in talks with the South Ossetian side. A few hours later the Georgian authorities report that several Georgian-controlled villages, including Avnevi, Prisi and Kurta, have come under heavy fire from the South Ossetian side.

According to multiple and consistent Georgian sources (including witnesses to the discussions), at approximately 11 PM Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili receives information that a convoy of over 100 Russian military vehicles is passing through the Roki tunnel.

The Georgian government informs U.S. envoy Bryza that it has no other choice but to advance towards the tunnel in an attempt to push the Russian troops back. Shortly before midnight, the Georgian Ministry of Defense announces its decision to restore the constitutional order in South Ossetia. Russian Defense Ministry sources, meanwhile, claim its forces did not enter Georgia until the afternoon the next day, but have failed to state the exact time of entry.

*August 8, 2008*

From midnight on August 8, Georgian troops begin an attack intended to destroy the road connecting the Roki tunnel with Tskhinvali, and advance towards the breakaway capital. Georgian forces seize several South Ossetian-controlled villages located on higher ground around the breakaway capital. According to Georgian authorities, at approximately 1 AM the Georgian troops succeed in shelling the road south of the Roki tunnel, thus delaying the advance of the Russian convoy. At 2 AM, Georgian ground troops reach Tskhinvali and begin firing rockets against governmental buildings in the city.

The shelling of the city continues overnight. In the early morning, the Georgian side reports that additional Russian troops have passed the Roki



tunnel and are advancing towards Tskhinvali. At 8 AM, the Georgian air force bombards the Gupta bridge (connecting the region of Java, south of the Roki tunnel, with Tskhinvali), delaying the advance of Russian units on approach to Tskhinvali.

At 10 AM, the Georgian government announces that 1,500 of its 9,000 troops have entered Tskhinvali and that they now control the main part of the conflict zone.

At approximately the same time, a first Russian military aircraft enters Georgian airspace from the South Ossetian side, firing several missiles against a radar station in the Georgian-controlled village of Shavshvebi. Air attacks are also carried out against the villages of Variani and Kareli, located 20 km outside the conflict zone, and against the city of Gori.

Over the next two hours – that is, only 12-14 hours following the Russian move into Tskhinvali – Russian air and ground troops launch a heavy counter-attack in the South Ossetian conflict zone, which forces the Georgian military out of Tskhinvali. Fighting continues throughout the afternoon, with Georgian troops attempting to push back into the city, but intense artillery and air attacks from the Russian side push them back.

Between 3 and 5 PM, three military bases, Vaziani, Marneuli and Bolnisi, all located within 50 km of Tbilisi, are attacked by Russian jets. The Marneuli base is bombed on three occasions, reportedly causing casualties and the destruction of three Georgian military jets and several military vehicles.

At approximately 7 PM, Georgian forces come under additional intense fire from ground forces of the Russian 58<sup>th</sup> Army, which entered Tskhinvali through the Dzara bypass road, west of the breakaway capital. At approximately 8.30 PM, the Georgian troops are forced to retreat from Tskhinvali, holding their positions south of the city.

Throughout August 8, Georgia is exposed to continuous cyber-attacks, disabling access to numerous Georgian websites. Meanwhile, Russian Defense Ministry officials state that Georgian shelling killed of 2,000 civilians in South Ossetia. However, official figures released by the Russian Prosecutor General on August 21 put the number of dead at 133.

*August 9, 2008*

Overnight on August 9, Russian jets carry out several attacks against the Black Sea port of Poti. Attacks are also carried out against the military base and railway station in the town of Senaki in western Georgia, causing several casualties. The Vaziani base close to Tbilisi is bombed again. Bombs also fall close to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline in the Gardabani district, 20 km southeast of Tbilisi.

Throughout the morning and early afternoon, the Russian Air Force continues carrying out attacks against strategic targets around Georgia, including several attacks against the town of Gori, Kopitnari airport on the outskirts of Kutaisi and in the Georgian-controlled villages of Kodori in upper Abkhazia.

Russia gradually increases its number of ground troops in South Ossetia, outnumbering the 9,000 Georgian troops by nearly two to one. Over 300 Georgian troops go missing in the heavy fighting.

The Russian Black Sea Fleet, deployed from bases in Sevastopol, advances towards the port of Poti and towards Abkhazia.

In Abkhazia, the Abkhazian militia opens a second front in the war, launching an attack against the Georgian-controlled Kodori gorge. In the late evening, Russian forces bomb Chkhalta, home to the Georgian-controlled administrative center in Abkhazia.

*August 10, 2008*

6,000 new Russian troops arrive through the Roki tunnel to South Ossetia. Meanwhile, 4,000 Russian ground troops are deployed by sea at the port of Ochamchire in the Abkhazia conflict zone. Russian Air Force units taking off from Dagestan bomb the Tbilisi airplane factory.

Georgian troops retreat from South Ossetia to the city of Gori.

Russian General Sergey Chaban, head of the CIS Peacekeeping Force in Abkhazia, demands Georgian officials in Zugdidi, Mingrelia, to disarm, citing the arrival of 9,000 troops and 350 tanks that would otherwise be deployed into Georgia's interior.

The Russian air force carries out several attacks in the regions bordering the

Abkhaz conflict zone, including the Zugdidi area and Upper Abkhazia. Abkhaz and Russian ground troops engage in joint attacks against the Kodori valley.

The highway connecting eastern and western Georgia comes under attack by the Russian Air Force. A bridge on the highway is bombed. The city of Gori is also exposed to new air attacks.

The Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs passes a formal request for cease-fire to the Russian Embassy in Tbilisi.

*August 11, 2008*

Overnight on August 11, Russian aviation destroys the civilian radar stations in Shavshvebi, west of Tbilisi, and Makhata, 5 km from the capital. Attacks are also carried out in the Batumi area on the Black Sea coast, and against an airfield in Dedoplistskaro by the Azerbaijani border.

In the early morning, the town of Gori is exposed to new air attacks, destroying civilian apartment buildings. Attacks are also carried out against the airport in Senaki, and against Georgian positions in the Kodori valley in Upper Abkhazia.

In the late afternoon, Russian ground forces enter the cities of Zugdidi and Senaki in northwestern Georgia. Russian ground troops also advance towards the town of Gori, attacking and entering surrounding villages.

Russian battleships block the Black Sea coastline, preventing Georgian cargo ships from reaching Georgian Black Sea ports.

In the late evening, Russian ground troops take control of Gori, cutting the highway connecting eastern and western Georgia. The Georgian authorities call on its troops to concentrate around Tbilisi to protect the capital, as reports on the advance of Russian ground troops towards Tbilisi emerge.

*August 12, 2008*

Throughout August 12, Russian aviation attacks numerous targets in the vicinity of Tbilisi, including new attacks against the Vaziani base, and villages in the districts of Kaspi, Khashuri and Kareli. An area close to the BTC pipeline in Kvemo Kartli is bombed.

The city of Gori is exposed to new bombings, causing a number of civilian casualties. The Gori broadcasting station is stormed and destroyed by Russian ground troops.

Reports of ethnic cleansing in Georgian villages emerge, later confirmed by international human-rights bodies. South Ossetian militia enters and attacks villages close to Gori, looting and destroying civilian homes.

In a meeting with French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Moscow, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signs a cease-fire plan. The plan provides for the withdrawal of troops from both sides to their positions as of August 7, an end to military actions, and free access for humanitarian aid. President Sarkozy departs to Tbilisi to present the plan to the Georgian side.

In the evening, Russian troops take control over Upper Abkhazia and villages north of Zugdidi. French President Nicolas Sarkozy arrives in Tbilisi to present the peace plan to the Georgian side. Georgian President Saakashvili rejects a provision calling for international talks on the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. After telephone consultations with Russian President Medvedev, Russia agrees to removal of the provision. President Saakashvili accepts the cease-fire plan. (see appendix for text)

#### *August 13-14, 2008*

Attacks against Georgian villages close to the South Ossetian conflict zone continue. Russian troops move from Gori towards Tbilisi, but reroute east before reaching the capital. Russian troops continue to destroy military infrastructure in Senaki, Zugdidi and Poti. The city of Gori remains under Russian control.

After continuous attacks against civilian homes by Russian troops and South Ossetian militia, a large number of civilians escapes the city of Gori and surrounding villages. Western media reports that over 100,000 people are internally displaced as a result of the conflict.

#### *August 15, 2008*

Human Rights Watch reports on the use of cluster bombs by Russia in the attacks against Gori and Kareli on August 12, which killed 11 civilians.

Russian ground troops continue to arrive from South Ossetia and Abkhazia

to the cities of Gori, Kutaisi, Poti and Khashuri. Civilians report continued looting and destruction of property.

In the afternoon of August 15, the Borjomi National Park is firebombed at more than 12 locations. Large areas of forest are destroyed.

*August 16, 2008*

Russian air attacks are carried out against several villages in the Kaspi district, including the wine factory in Okami. At mid-day, the Grakli railway bridge in Kaspi is mined and destroyed.

Turkish and Ukrainian planes, tasked to assist Georgia in putting out the forest fires in Borjomi and Kaspi, are denied permission by the Russian military to enter Georgian airspace.

In the late afternoon, Russian ground troops enter the town of Akhlagori, a Georgian village in the former South Ossetian Autonomous Region, never under Tskhinvali's control. The troops offer Russian passports to the population.

*August 17, 2008*

President Medvedev promises President Sarkozy a withdrawal of Russian troops in Georgia to commence on August 18.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel arrives in Tbilisi after talks with President Medvedev in Moscow and stresses the urgency of immediate Russian withdrawal from Georgia and a German preparedness to contribute peacekeepers to the conflict zones.

*August 18, 2008*

The Russian Armed forces claim to have begun its withdrawal from Georgia. Georgian government sources state there are no signs of withdrawal. Russian armored vehicles remove a Georgian police roadblock at the village of Igoeti, halfway between Gori and Tbilisi. Georgian sources report additional Russian troop movements within Georgia.

*August 19, 2008*

Reuters reports there are no indications that Russia has started to withdraw

its troops. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice says Russia is delaying its withdrawal from Georgia and urges an immediate fulfillment of the cease-fire agreement on Russia's part.

The Russian MFA pushes for a discussion of Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's status to be included in the sixth point of the cease-fire accord, and to reinforce the accord with a UN Security Council Resolution.

The OSCE decides to send 20 observers to monitor the cease-fire in areas bordering South Ossetia, envisioning a future increase of observers to 100.

NATO foreign ministers hold an emergency meeting, agreeing to set up a NATO-Georgia commission and deliver emergency aid to the country.

*August 20, 2008*

Two Russian checkpoints are removed from Gori. Reports circulate that Russian forces are reinforcing their positions on other locations.

Matyas Eörsi, representing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, reports there are no signs of any larger Russian withdrawal from Gori.

U.S. government statements say the small signs of withdrawal so far are insufficient and urge that efforts be speeded up.

Russia rejects a UN Security Council resolution on Georgia drafted by France, calling for a withdrawal of all forces to lines held before August 7 and stressing respect for Georgia's territorial integrity. Russia's UN envoy states the resolution fails to incorporate the six points of the cease-fire agreement.

*August 21, 2008*

A U.S. government statement urges a complete Russian withdrawal and considers efforts to date minimal or non-existent.

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner states that certain troop movements from South Ossetia indicate Russia is beginning to remove its forces.

A spokesperson of the Russian General Staff says Russian forces will withdraw its forces to what is termed "the zones of responsibility of the Russian peacekeepers" by August 22.

Explosions are reported from the Georgian military base close to Gori. Georgian officials state that Russian forces are destroying Georgian military infrastructure and ammunition depots in the area.

*August 22, 2008*

The Russian Defense Minister claims Russia has withdrawn its forces in accordance with the cease-fire agreement, as it dismantles checkpoints and moves troops from several locations in Georgia, including Gori and Iogeti. Russia however states it intends to maintain troops and checkpoints within zones of responsibility of Russian peacekeepers outside Abkhazian and South Ossetian territory. These zones include Senaki, containing a Georgian military base and an airfield, the Poti port, and areas outside South Ossetia, including a portion of the Georgian east-west highway. Russia also states its intention to maintain 2,142 soldiers and a large amount of heavy equipment in Abkhazia, in addition to its peacekeeping contingent.

Georgia claims these measures are in breach of the cease-fire agreement. This stance is supported by a U.S. government statement, terming the Russian troop withdrawals insufficient and urging Russia to comply with its obligations under the cease-fire agreement and remove all its remaining forces on Georgian territory.

South Ossetian leader Eduard Kokoity states all Georgian enclaves in South Ossetia are now "liquidated".

*August 23, 2008*

U.S. and German government statements request Russia's immediate withdrawal from all remaining positions within Georgia. The German statement requests Russian forces outside South Ossetia to be replaced by OSCE observers.

Russian forces withdraw from the Georgian military base in Senaki, but keep a checkpoint outside the town.

*August 24, 2008*

The US destroyer USS McFaul arrives in Batumi, but anchors at sea since its draft is too deep for the port.

A train carrying fuel exports from Azerbaijan explodes close to Gori. Georgian officials state the train hit a mine left by Russian troops.

President Sarkozy's press office states an agreement has been made to replace Russian forces in the South Ossetian buffer zone with OSCE monitors. Russia denies agreeing to this.

*August 25-26, 2008*

The Russian upper house of Parliament passes an appeal to President Medvedev to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. The following day, President Medvedev expresses his intention to recognize the two territories. Strong verbal western reactions follow.



## Conclusions and Implications

The August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia has substantial implications for the security of Georgia, the broader former Soviet Union, Europe and the United States. Indeed, it is increasingly apparent that the war forms a turning point in post-Cold War European politics. The following pages suggest conclusions that may be drawn regarding the events themselves, as well as their implications for Georgia, its neighbors, and the West.

### Conclusions regarding the events themselves:

- The Georgian government had for several months prior to the war been operating under the fear of Moscow trying to provoke it into war. However, since the Russian provocative actions were centered around Abkhazia, not South Ossetia, Tbilisi was caught unprepared by the escalating tensions in the latter region in late July and early August.
- Whereas Russia's leadership sought to portray its invasion of Georgia as a legitimate response to Tbilisi's move into Tskhinvali on the night of August 8, a conclusive body of evidence suggests Moscow had planned for a war in Georgia since April 2008. This conclusion is borne out by several factors:
  - Moscow's escalation of tensions with Putin's April 16 decree;
  - The subsequent introduction of paratroopers and heavy equipment into Abkhazia;
  - The introduction of railway troops to rebuild the railway to Ochamchire, which served no other purpose than to facilitate the later deployment of troops from Russia into Georgia;
  - The prediction by several analysts during spring that a war would take place in summer;

- The massing of military forces and hardware near Georgia's borders (as well as likely in the Java district of South Ossetia), and the Kavkaz-2008 military exercises, which prefigured the subsequent invasion;
  - The increase of attacks by the Russian-controlled South Ossetian forces on Georgian posts and villages on August 1-6, which Russian peacekeepers did nothing to stop;
  - The movement of Russian armor through or at the very least toward the Roki tunnel *before* the Georgian entry into Tskhinvali;
  - The opening of a second front in Abkhazia without any provocation or pretext whatsoever;
  - The rapid deployment of coordinated ground, air and naval attacks within hours of Georgia's entry into Tskhinvali, which could not have been undertaken without meticulous and long planning – especially the landing of several thousand troops and armor by sea in Abkhazia.
  - The political recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, while retaining firm military and political control over these territories and their leadership.
- It is therefore beyond reasonable doubt that Russia's invasion was premeditated. Therefore, it is highly likely that any pretext – real or conjured – would have been used as a rationale to intervene.
  - Russia's invasion was hence not a response to the situation in South Ossetia, but a move with strategic aims that far surpass South Ossetia. Indeed, as subsequent Russian statements have confirmed, the Russian aggression appears to have sought to punish Georgia for its pro-Western foreign policy, and to achieve the demise of the Georgian government.
  - Georgia's decision to move into Tskhinvali late on August 7 must be interpreted in this context. The move into Tskhinvali may still plausibly have been a rash miscalculation on the part of the leadership, as suggested by many observers, including Georgians and those

friendly to Georgia. The Saakashvili administration likely did not expect the Russian military response to immediately broaden to the entire territory of Georgia. But given the military logic on the ground, it was also equally plausibly a purely pragmatic tactical move:

- Tskhinvali is the first and main obstacle to an invading force from the north, lying just at the foothills of the Caucasus mountains, from which the terrain opens up to the south, toward Gori.
- By seeking control of Tskhinvali and the road north of it connecting to Java and the Roki tunnel, engaging the Russian forces there, the Georgian defense forces were able to delay the Russian invasion into Georgia proper, perhaps even enough to forestall a possible military move against the capital Tbilisi, only 50 miles from Gori.
- Russia mounted a sophisticated disinformation campaign, accusing Georgian forces of widespread human rights violation in South Ossetia, and gaining traction in the western media. While it is likely that Georgian forces indeed did hit a limited number of civilian targets, independent human rights organizations have been able to substantiate fewer than 150 deaths there, in stark contrast to Russia's initial claim of 2,000 deaths and allegations of ethnic cleansing.
- Irrespective of how the war started, Russia's response lacked any proportion to the stated aims and rationale – and indicated this war was only ostensibly about South Ossetia.
  - Moscow immediately engaged in the bombing of military and economic targets across Georgia's territory;
  - A massive cyber-attack ensued on Georgian official and non-governmental mass internet sites;
  - Russia occupied and subsequently refused to withdraw from key cities well outside the conflict zone that were not included in any “security measures” approved by the cease-fire, most notably Poti;
  - Russia enforced a blockade of Georgia's Black Sea coast,

followed by the bombing of a railroad bridge connecting western and eastern Georgia, and further moves to effectively threaten Georgia's statehood and economic viability.

- While Russia claimed to intervene on the basis of humanitarian concerns, its forces subsequently permitted or endorsed the systematic ethnic cleansing of ethnic Georgians from South Ossetia. UN Satellite images available at [<http://unosat.web.cern.ch/unosat/>] provide graphic evidence of the systematic destruction of Georgian villages in the conflict zone, mainly after the end of major hostilities.
- While the international community, led by the European Union, reacted to the crisis relatively rapidly, the international reaction lacked coherence and clarity.
  - Western states failed to foresee Russia's invasion in spite of multiple indications that it was forthcoming.
  - Western leaders failed to plan for the contingency of Russia simply ignoring the terms of a cease-fire agreement it had signed, and failed to prevent Russia from setting up buffer occupation zones outside the secessionist territories. When this happened, western leaders lacked instruments to respond.
  - French and American negotiators appear to have failed to understand the consequences of the terms of the cease-fire agreement they negotiated, most specifically the loopholes and lack of clarity. The subsequent clarification letters sent by President Sarkozy, attached in appendix to this report, testify to this.
- European and international institutions failed to respond coherently to the war, much as in previous crises in the region such as the Tsitelubani attack a year prior to the war, the downing of a Georgian UAV in March, and Putin's April 16 decree. Internal divisions in the EU and NATO, and a weakened U.S. administration, all combined to provide Moscow with what it perceived as a low-risk opportunity to punish Georgia for its independent foreign policy, halt NATO's expansion, and restore its own primacy in the former Soviet Union.

**Conclusions that the EU and US would be warranted to draw:**

- For the first time since 1979, Moscow waged a premeditated war of aggression against a neighboring state. This took place on the European continent, against a member country of the Council of Europe and the OSCE, with a democratically elected government. Russia has hence passed a key threshold in its exercise of power.
- In spite of Moscow's subsequent recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, its direct ambitions in Georgia were not related primarily to the conflict zones. While control over the conflict zones was and has long been a part of Moscow's agenda, the direct objective was the destruction of Georgia's democracy and its economy, and the overthrow of President Saakashvili's government.
- During the spring and summer of 2008, the government of Georgia with some exceptions responded in a responsible manner to continuous and escalating Russian provocations. Moscow therefore failed to provoke Georgia to a war in Abkhazia, which may explain its subsequent move in late July to shift the focus of tensions to South Ossetia.
- The Kosovo "precedent" cited by Moscow lacks basis in reality; in fact, Russia stands the Kosovo "precedent" on its head. In Kosovo, as in Bosnia, western multilateral intervention sought to prevent ethnic cleansing from succeeding, rewarding the victims of ethnic cleansing. In Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Moscow explicitly rewarded and endorsed ethnic cleansing. This includes both the ethnic cleansing of over 240,000 persons, mainly ethnic Georgians, from Abkhazia in 1992-93, and the ethnic cleansing of several tens of thousands of ethnic Georgians from South Ossetia as a direct result of Russia's invasion.
- NATO's decision in Bucharest not to grant MAP to Georgia and Ukraine inspired Moscow to action, believing it had a window of opportunity to stop these countries from exercising their sovereign choice in foreign and security policy.
- The West's refusal to seek the internationalization of mediation and peacekeeping mechanisms on the Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts; and its pressure on Georgia not to withdraw host country

consent for Russian peacekeeping forces during 2008 in spite of the obviously biased nature of these formats, allowed Russia to portray its invasion as a part of its peacekeeping mission.

- The West's failure to attach costs to Russia's earlier and escalating aggressive acts against Georgia and other post-Soviet states created a sense of permissiveness and impunity that prevented cooler heads in Moscow from prevailing against the hardliners led by Vladimir Putin. More broadly, appeasement policies towards Moscow served to strengthen the most autocratic, imperialist and adventurist forces in the government, while weakening the moderate and progressive forces.
- That said, Russia's decision to wage a war of aggression in Georgia may be a sign of might, but not one of strength. In fact, it indicates that Russia for years failed to reach its political objectives in the South Caucasus with political instruments, and saw no other option but to employ war, the ultimate and most costly instrument to its international reputation, to achieve these objectives.
- This war was initiated at a time when Russia is led by an unstable tandem in power, with unclear distribution of powers between President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin. Whether this was a coincidence or a factor in the launching of the war deserves closer study, as it reflects upon the type of regime in power in Moscow.
- Russia's stock market reacted with a deep plunge to the war, providing a powerful indication of large investors' interpretation of what the war says about Russia's stability.
- In the absence of a tangible Western reaction that attaches costs to Russia's policies, Moscow is likely to draw the conclusion that the use of military force to accomplish foreign-policy objectives in Europe is useful.
- Russia has mounted a direct challenge to the norms and principles of European security. This challenge arguably constitutes the most serious danger to the European security architecture since the Cold War ended, because it undermines the very assumptions that European security is built upon. While Europe has been moving

toward the realization of a zone of prosperity, peace and democracy, Russia seeks a return to a division of the continent into spheres of influence.

- A Russia that behaves in this manner cannot be a viable partner for either the United States or the European Union.
- It is imperative to act by sending strong signals to both Russia and the states on its periphery. Strong moves to strengthen the statehood and independence of Georgia and Ukraine in particular are needed; as are steps to attach costs directly to Russia for its aggression.
  - Western powers must strongly denounce Russia's direct territorial claims on Georgia, as well as resist the creation of occupation zones in Georgia's interior.
  - NATO should rapidly extend Membership Action Plans to Georgia and Ukraine, indicating to Moscow that its calculations were mistaken, and that aggression does not pay.
  - The United States should push strongly for security guarantees through NATO if possible, but bilaterally if not, to Georgia, Ukraine and Azerbaijan. This could take place through the extension of status as Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA).
- The European Union should realize that had an internationalized peacekeeping and negotiation format been in place in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Moscow would have been much less likely to go to war. It is therefore key for Europe to dispatch a peacekeeping mission to Georgia.
  - The first purpose of such a force would be to secure Georgian statehood by interposing a peacekeeping force that would serve as a deterrent for a new Russian aggression against Georgia's interior. This force would also reduce the likelihood of incidents of skirmishes occurring that could escalate to renewed war.
  - For this force to be effective, it needs to be more than symbolic, and to consist of peacekeepers, not observers. The EU should learn from the experience of the UN observers in Abkhazia, who were not even a concern for Russia when it opened a second

front.

- This force will in a first phase be practically obliged to focus its presence on the Georgian side of the current cease-fire lines. However, it is imperative that the deployment of this force not serve as a tacit legitimization of the new borders that Russia has illegally sought to draw. Therefore, the force's mandate must include the entire territory of Georgia including the conflict zones, and its purpose in a second phase must be to deploy – whenever practically feasible – in the conflict zones, in order to provide the ground for the return of internally displaced persons.
- The U.S. and EU should design a substantial aid package to rebuild Georgia.
  - This aid package should focus on strengthening Georgia's economy, and must but be one that makes Georgia self-sustaining. Emphasis should therefore be put on strengthening and guaranteeing private investment in Georgia, a goal that the government was working successfully towards prior to the war.
  - The package should pay considerable attention to supporting Georgian democracy, not least by strengthening institution-building programs in the Georgian government and bureaucracy, as well as increased educational exchange programs.
  - The package should include substantial funds for the rebuilding of Georgia's defense capabilities, enabling Georgia to move rapidly to NATO standards.
- The U.S. and EU should warn Russia in no uncertain terms about the strategic importance to them of the East-West transportation corridor, and the consequences for Russia of any attempt to undermine or sever this corridor. It should equally warn Russia of the unacceptability of attempts to overthrow neighboring countries' legitimate governments, particularly democratically elected governments.



**Conclusions that Georgia's Government would be warranted to draw:**

- Its decision to invest heavily in a modern military force was crucial to saving the country's statehood, and may have ensured the survival of its government and its democracy in the face of external assault. Nevertheless, Georgia's military remained unprepared for a ground assault, its training having been largely in counter-insurgency tactics, and Georgia lacked the capacity to prevent an aggressor from acquiring control over Georgia's airspace.
- Georgia's ambition to integrate into Euro-Atlantic collective-security mechanisms reflected a correct analysis of Russia's aggressive ambitions toward it.
- Its democratic credentials were a key factor in the mobilization of western support that, albeit belatedly, took place, and it is therefore key for Georgia's democracy to be further strengthened.
- That said, there are limits to the support Georgia can expect from the West for its defense and security, and Georgia has to take appropriate measures to include this consideration in its risk assessment.
- Russia's occupation of Georgia's interior is unlikely to be sustainable if met with substantial civil disobedience and strong international condemnation.

**Conclusions that Governments in the Baltic States, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Moldova and Central Asia would be warranted to draw:**

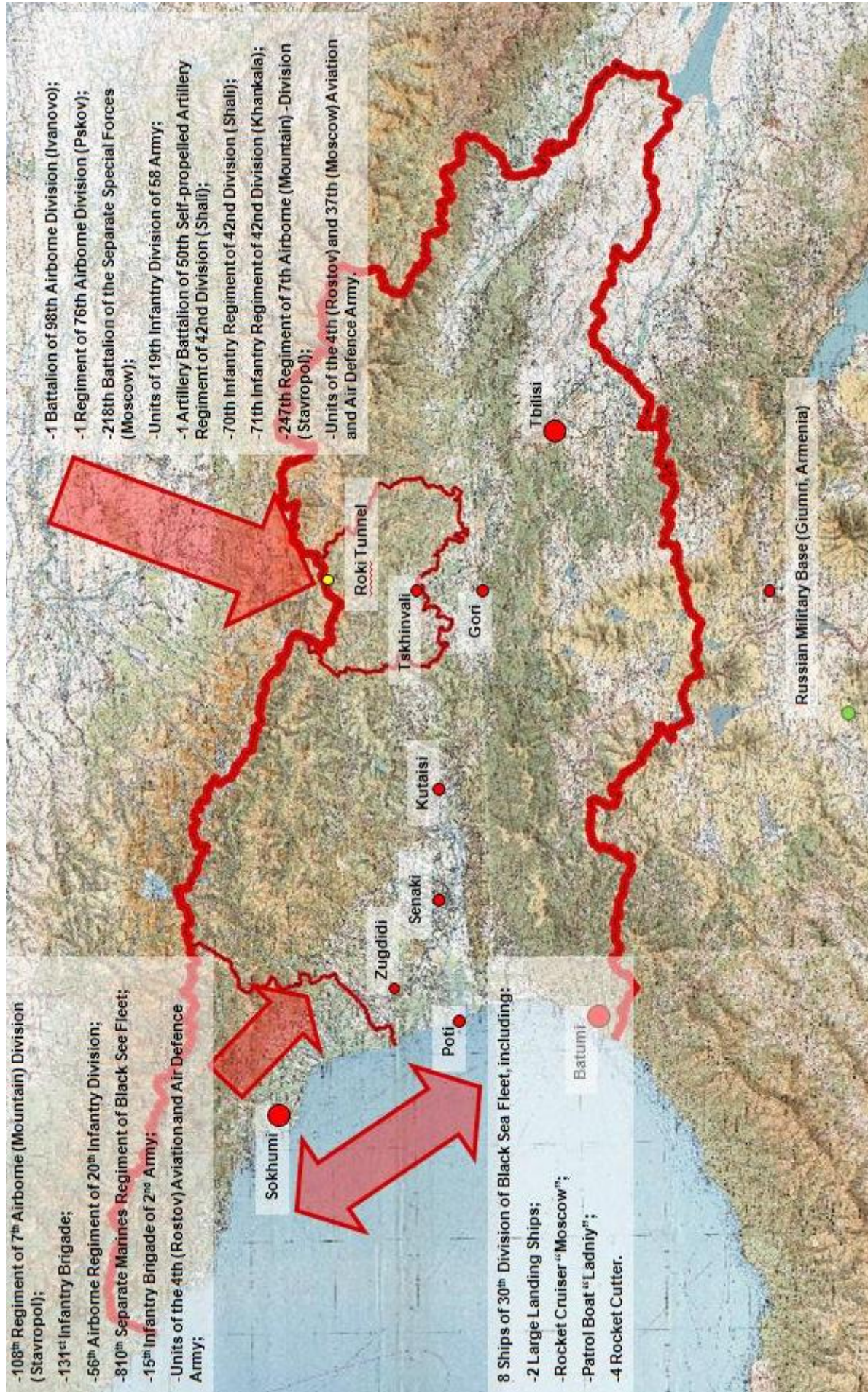
- The "Putin doctrine", seeking the restoration of Russian domination over the former Soviet Union, leaves them with a stark choice:
  - Either, to accept a status as a Russian dominion, effectively abandoning ambitions to function as truly independent states;
  - Or, to push ahead with the ambition of becoming truly independent states able to exercise their sovereign choice, risking a fate similar to Georgia's or at the very least strong aggressive measure on Russia's part.
- Russia has effectively nullified its credibility to serve as an honest broker in conflicts on or near their territory, including the Nagorno-

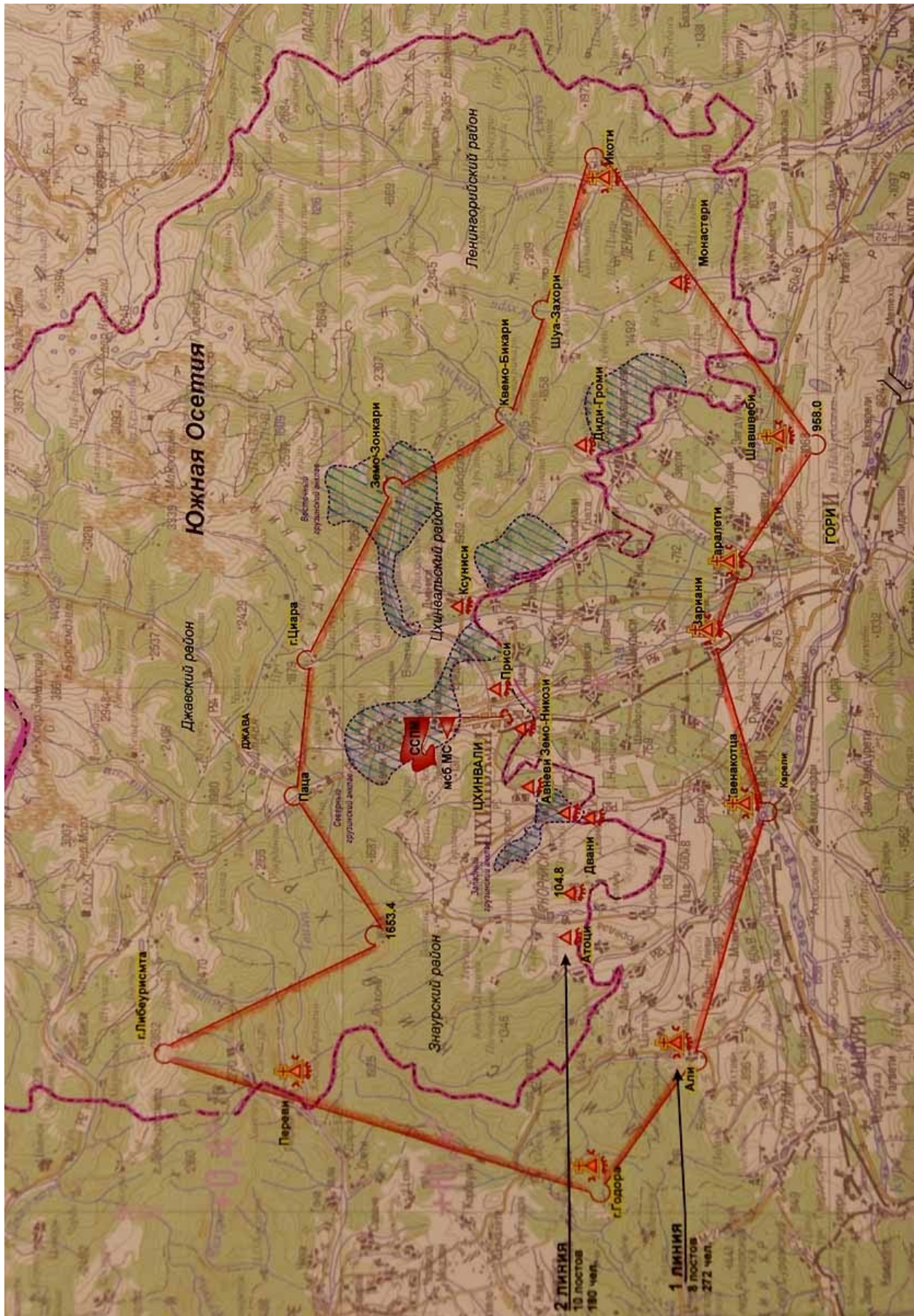
Karabakh and Transnistria conflicts.

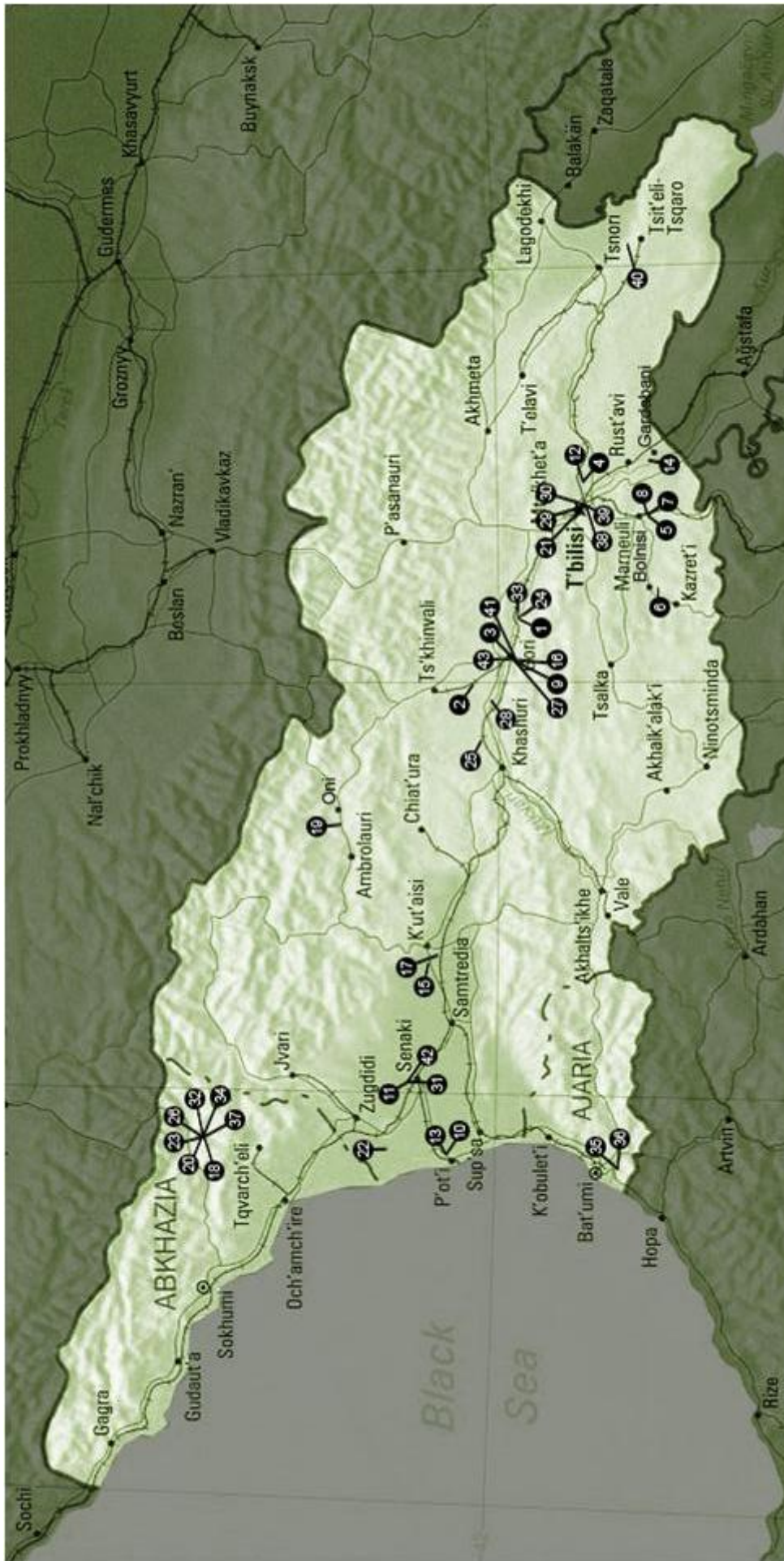
- The West is unlikely to step forward to defend its own and their interests in the case of military aggression from a neighbor, be it Russia, Iran, or another power.
- The West's failure to intervene credibly in Georgia reduces the prospects of strong Western action to strengthen and broaden the east-west energy transportation corridor across the South Caucasus, and Central Asian states may be better served by turning to China to secure diversity in their energy exports.

## Maps and Appendices

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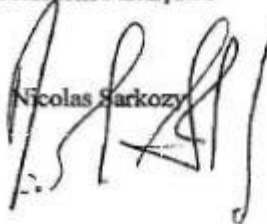


*Le Président de la République*

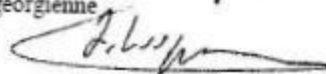
**Protocole d'accord**

- 1/ Ne pas recourir à la force.
- 2/ Cesser les hostilités de façon définitive.
- 3/ Donner libre accès à l'aide humanitaire.
- 4/ Les forces militaires géorgiennes devront se retirer dans leurs lieux habituels de cantonnement.
- 5/ Les forces militaires russes devront se retirer sur les lignes antérieures au déclenchement des hostilités. Dans l'attente d'un mécanisme international, les forces de paix russes mettront en œuvre des mesures additionnelles de sécurité.
- 6/ Ouverture de discussions internationales sur les modalités de sécurité et de stabilité en Abkhazie et en Ossétie du Sud.

Pour l'Union européenne,  
la Présidence française

  
Nicolas Sarkozy

Pour la République de Géorgie,  
la Présidence géorgienne



Mikheil Saakashvili

## Unofficial English Translation

### Protocol of Accord

- 1 – Not to use force.
- 2 – Cease hostilities in a conclusive manner.
- 3 – Provide free access to humanitarian aid.
- 4 – The Georgian armed forces must withdraw to their habitual places of cantonment.
- 5 – The Russian armed forces must withdraw to the line where they were stationed prior to the beginning of hostilities. Awaiting the establishment of an international mechanisms, the Russian peacekeeping forces will implement additional security measures.
- 6 – The opening of international discussions on the modalities of security and stability in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.



*Le Président de la République*

Paris, le 14 Août 2008

Monsieur le Président,

S'agissant du point 5 de l'accord en six points auquel vous avez –après le Président Medvedev- donné votre accord le 12 août dernier lors de notre rencontre à Tbilissi, et qui prévoit que « les forces militaires russes devront se retirer sur les lignes antérieures au déclenchement des hostilités » et que « dans l'attente d'un mécanisme international, les forces de maintien de la paix russes mettront en œuvre des mesures additionnelles de sécurité », je souhaite vous faire part des précisions suivantes :

- Ainsi que je l'ai précisé lors de notre conférence de presse conjointe à Tbilissi, ces « mesures additionnelles de sécurité » ne pourront être mises en œuvre que dans l'immédiate proximité de l'Ossétie du Sud, à l'exclusion de toute autre partie du territoire géorgien ;
- Plus précisément, ces « mesures » ne pourront être mises en œuvre qu'à l'intérieur d'une zone d'une profondeur de quelques kilomètres depuis la limite administrative entre l'Ossétie du Sud et le reste de la Géorgie, de façon à ce qu'aucun centre urbain significatif n'y soit inclus –je pense en particulier à la ville de Gori- ; des arrangements particuliers devront être définis pour garantir la liberté de mouvement et de circulation le long des axes routiers et ferroviaires de la Géorgie ;
- Ces « mesures additionnelles de sécurité » prendront la forme de patrouilles effectuées par les seules forces de maintien de la paix russes aux niveaux autorisés par les arrangements existants, les autres forces russes se retirant sur leurs positions antérieures au 7 août conformément au protocole d'accord ;

*Son Excellence*

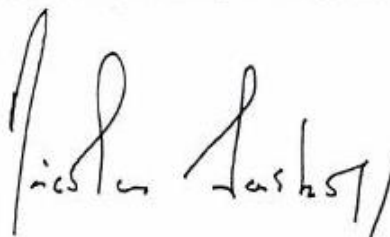
*Monsieur Mikhaïl SAAKACHVILI*

*Président de la Géorgie*

- Ces « mesures » auront un caractère provisoire, en attendant l'établissement dans les meilleurs délais du « mécanisme international » dont la nature et le mandat sont d'ores et déjà en cours de discussion dans différentes enceintes internationales, en particulier l'OSCE, l'Union européenne et les Nations Unies.

Fort de ces précisions, je vous demande de bien vouloir confirmer l'accord que vous m'avez donné et que vous avez annoncé publiquement à Tbilissi, en apposant votre signature au bas du protocole d'accord en six points que j'ai moi-même signé en tant que témoin et garant au nom de l'Union européenne. Le Président Medvedev m'a assuré hier que votre signature conduirait au retrait des forces russes conformément à l'accord conclu.

Je vous prie de croire, Monsieur le Président, à l'assurance de ma haute considération.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicolas Sarkozy', written in a cursive style.

Nicolas SARKOZY

## Unofficial English Translation

Paris, 14 August 2008

Mr. President,

Regarding point 5 of the six-point agreement to which you – following President Medvedev – gave your consent on 12 August during our meeting in Tbilisi, and which foresees that “the Russian military forces will have to withdraw to the lines prior to the outbreak of hostilities” and that “in awaiting an international mechanism, the Russian peacekeeping forces will deploy additional security mechanisms”, I would like to communicate to you the following clarifications:

- As I had stated during our joint press conference in Tbilisi, these “additional security measures” may only be implemented in the immediate proximity of South Ossetia, excluding any other part of the Georgian territory;
- More precisely, these “measures” may only be implemented within a zone of a depth of several kilometers of the administrative border between South Ossetia and the rest of Georgia, in such a way that no significant urban center is included – I am referring specifically to the town of Gori - ; particular arrangement will have to be defined to safeguard the freedom of movement and traffic along the road and rail link of Georgia;
- These “additional security measures” will take the shape of patrols carried out solely by Russian peacekeeping forces at level as authorized by existing agreements, with other Russian forces withdrawing to their positions prior to August 7 conforming to the protocol of agreement.
- These “measures” will have a temporary character, in awaiting the establishment in with the shortest delay of the “international mechanism” whose nature and mandate are already under discussion

in different international bodies, in particular the OSCE, the European Union, and the United Nations.

With these clarifications, I request you to confirm the agreement that you gave me and that you publicly announced in Tbilisi, by adding your signature at the bottom of the six-point protocol of agreement that I myself signed as witness and guarantor on behalf of the European Union. President Medvedev assured me yesterday that your signature would lead to the withdrawal of Russian forces in conformity with the agreement.

I request you to accept, Mr. President, the assurances of my high esteem.

Nicolas Sarkozy

- Dans la lettre accompagnant le document relatif au cessez-le-feu, le territoire mentionné se comprend comme l'immédiate proximité de la zone de conflit, telle qu'elle est définie par les arrangements antérieurs, à l'exclusion de toute autre partie du territoire géorgien. Les mesures définies par ce document ne pourront être mises en œuvre qu'à l'intérieur d'une zone d'une profondeur de quelques kilomètres, autour Tskhinvali dans la zone de conflit.

- En aucune manière les mesures mentionnées dans la lettre ne pourront limiter ou mettre en danger la liberté de mouvement et de circulation le long des axes routiers et ferroviaires de la Géorgie. D'autres aspects du processus de résolution du conflit seront discutés ultérieurement.

- In the letter accompanying the cease-fire document, the mentioned territory is defined as in the immediate proximity of the zone of conflict, as defined by previous agreements, to the exclusion of any other part of Georgian territory. Any measure referred to in this document shall be implemented within an area not further than a few kilometers, around Tskhinvali within the zone of conflict.
- In no way can these measures limit or jeopardize freedom of movement and traffic along the length of the major highways and railways of Georgia. Other aspects of the conflict resolution process will be discussed in the near future.