

RUSSIA, GEORGIA, AND THE RETURN OF POWER POLITICS

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS SECOND SESSION

SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

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SEPTEMBER 10, 2009

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE,
Washington, DC.

The hearing was held at 1:35 p.m. EST in 2325 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, Hon. Benjamin Cardin, Co-Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Commissioners present: Hon. Alcee Hastings, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; and Hon. Chris Smith, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Witnesses present: Matthew Bryza, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, European and Eurasian Affairs; David Bakradze, Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia, Georgian Government; Paul Sanders, Executive Director, The Nixon Center; and Paul Goble, Director of Research and Publications, Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy in Baku.

HON. BENJAMIN CARDIN, CO-CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. CARDIN. The Helsinki Commission will come to order. Let me first apologize for the schedule we're going to have to follow for today's hearing. The House members are in the midst of a series of votes, and we expect that they'll be here probably in the next 15–20 minutes.

I'm required to be on the Senate floor at 2:00. I'm going to have to leave here about at about 10 of two in order to be able to get back to the Senate floor. We could have a break in the action, and if that happens I will recess the committee subject to the call of the chair at that time, which will be Chairman Hastings when he gets back from the floor. We do apologize for that.

But I must tell you, this is one of the most important hearings that the Helsinki Commission is conducting this year dealing with Russia, Georgia and the return of power politics.

I was attending a Foreign Relations Committee hearing a little bit earlier today where we were having a hearing on NATO expansion dealing with Albania and Croatia. Most of the questions at that hearing by senators focused on Russia. Even though their impact on Croatia and Albania is not very great, what they did during the Bucharest Summit, their influence in the judgment made collectively by our NATO allies on extending invitations to Georgia and Ukraine is well documented. And since that time, of course,

with the Russian use of military within Georgia, it represents a new chapter in the relationship between the United States and Russia.

We obviously strongly condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's use of military force within Georgia. We also are concerned as Russia is gaining more aggression internationally they are also internally moving in the wrong direction as it relates to the liberties of the people within Russia. The freedom of press, the freedom of expression—all that is being moving in the wrong direction. One of the consequences of what has been done by Russia and Georgia is a concern that there could be more independent thoughts within Russia in which how Russia responded to Chechnya we are concerned we could see a breakout of certain concerns within Russia itself.

For all of these reasons, today's hearing becomes particularly important. I think what we're looking for, we're looking for a way in which the United States can constructively engage Russia. Russia is a major player internationally. We need to constructively engage Russia. But at the same time we've got to make it clear that we cannot allow or tolerate or condone Russia's aggression and the use of military in the sovereign country of Georgia.

That's going to be our challenge, and I really do look forward to our witnesses. We have three panels that we will hear from today, starting with the deputy assistant secretary for the State Department, Matthew Bryza. It's a pleasure to have you back before our committee. We would welcome your testimony.

**MATTHEW BRYZA, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE,
EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS**

Mr. BRYZA. Thank you, Senator. It's a pleasure to be here, and I'm so pleased to have a chance to speak about something a lot of us feel passionately about Georgia and its freedom, its democracy, its prosperity—as well as what you talked about: coming up with a way to engage with Russia in a constructive way, which we believe is possible if we handle what just happened in Georgia appropriately.

As you were suggesting, by simply acquiescing to Russia's flouting of its international commitments to recognize and support Georgia's territorial integrity as expressed in numerous UN Security Council resolutions, we do not do a service to Russia. Russia for centuries, as many of the experts sitting behind you and in the audience are aware, has had a centuries-old foreign policy quest of stabilizing its southern border, going back to Ivan the Terrible and even before. Therefore, a stable Georgia that's democratic, prosperous, successful—even, we would argue, within NATO—is something that ultimately help Russia achieve one of its most enduring, most fundamental national security objectives.

For a moment, I'd like to talk about why Georgia matters to us. I mean, we all feel strongly about Georgia in this room. Then I'd like to address the narrative that's been coming out of Russia with which we have some serious differences. And finally for a couple of minutes describe where we go from here with Georgia and in the region.

Georgia matters to us. It mattered to us in the beginning of the last decade, in the '90s, initially in a strategic way because of oil and gas pipelines. That's how many people in Washington first drew their attention to Georgia. We were successful in working with the Georgian government, with the Azerbaijani government, with the Turkish government to develop a new generation of oil and gas pipelines that for the first time provided a way to get Caspian oil and gas to global markets free from either geographic chokepoints, like the Turkish Straits or the Straits of Hormuz, and free of monopoly power.

Georgia then came to matter to us even more because of security, a second set of interests, especially after September 11th. And we know that in the case of Iraq, Georgia had the third largest contingent in our coalition. And then Georgia in recent years has really elevated its strategic importance to us because of democracy, because of a remarkable transformation that began with President Eduard Shevardnadze—let's be fair. He was a leader of heroic proportions. Unfortunately, under his leadership, his tiring leadership, the State of Georgia nearly ceased to exist. He acquiesced in an attempt by a regional strongman, the Ajaran leader Aslan Abashidze, to steal an election, contravening an agreement that former Secretary Baker had negotiated with the opposition and Eduard Shevardnadze. The Rose Revolution followed.

The Rose Revolution brought to power people that we knew well but, not as well as we knew Eduard Shevardnadze. He was a darling of Washington, as you recall. But the people that came into power through the Rose Revolution were friends whose friendships we had developed through their active participation in a whole variety of assistance programs here in the United States that aimed to strengthen democracy and, well, by design build a cadre of young reformers who we hoped someday would take over. Suddenly in November of 2003 they found themselves in power. And their record on reform has been remarkable. Today we learned that this year the World Bank has dubbed the Georgian economy the 15th easiest place to do business in the world—it was 18th last year—15th in the world. The only EU member states that are ahead of it are the United Kingdom, Finland, Ireland, and Denmark. So Georgia's doing pretty well on economic reform. The World Bank also in 2006 tallied Georgia the world's reforming economy.

On democracy there've been dramatic strides, but there are shortcomings. Perhaps we'll talk about those in the question and answer session. Difficulties came to the fore last November. I had the honor to come up here and testify before you in the wake of those events in November of last year.

Georgia matters to us for these three sets of interests: energy, security cooperation, and democracy.

What's the narrative, my second set of points? The narrative that's been coming out of Russia is that Russia was obligated to intervene in Georgia to protect its citizens in South Ossetia and defend its peacekeepers because Georgia, out of the clear blue sky, started to attack Russian peacekeepers and the city, or the town, of Tskhinvali in South Ossetia on August the 7th. We have said—I have said, but my superiors have said repeatedly, we urged the Georgian government not to attack the town of Tskhinvali and not

to engage the Russian military at any cost because there was no way to prevail in such a conflict. That's true. That's on the record.

But there's much more to the story than that. The conflict certainly did not begin on August 7th. If we just dial back a couple of days, in the early part of August there was a tit-for-tat exchange of explosions, on August 6th some firing of artillery initiated by the South Ossetian side, we believe, and rocket-propelled grenades by so-called South Ossetian peacekeepers whom we believe were positioned behind Russian peacekeepers firing over the head of the Russian peacekeepers at Georgian villages and Georgian peacekeepers. Already we saw that the Russian peacekeepers were playing a role in providing a shield, we believe, to the South Ossetians who were shooting at the Georgian positions.

We also know that atop the chain of command in the South Ossetian de facto government were active duty Russian officials from military and other services in positions such as the so-called minister of defense, secretary of the national security council, head of the security services, who were running the security apparatus of South Ossetia. It appears that the chain of command of those South Ossetians firing on the Georgians before the Georgians attacked Tskhinvali were Russian officials seconded from Moscow. It's an oversimplification by far to say that the Georgians attacked Tskhinvali; the Russians intervened to protect their citizens and their peacekeepers.

We should really look at what actually happened and then recognize that for months before that Russia had put in place a whole series of provocative steps in Abkhazia—including declaration that Russia essentially would no longer honor its commitments to support Georgia's territorial integrity but would instead develop new, specific special relations with the separatist leaders in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as the shooting down of an unmanned aerial vehicle, reinforcement with combat troops of so-called Russian peacekeepers—a whole series of steps that escalated tension in Abkhazia in the period from April to June. It led to a very active period of diplomacy with our German allies taking the lead within the UN grouping, the UN friends group that mediates the Abkhazia conflict.

Throughout that period, I hate to say, my very professional and pleasant Russian diplomatic colleagues did not wish to engage, failed to show up to a couple of meetings, and as the tension was really increasing in July said they were simply unavailable due to vacations. This was in a period of heightening tension that culminated, unfortunately, in armed conflict in August.

The narrative is much different from what we've been hearing from Russia. It wasn't that the Georgians out of the blue provoked something. It's that the Georgians were provoked for months, and I would even argue years—and we can go into that in the question period.

Finally, where do we go from here? We believe we need to pursue three sets of goals.

One, we need to support Georgia. We need to support its economy, as is evident in this \$1 billion economic support package we're pulling together. We need to make sure that the presence of Russian troops in the Port of Poti and along the east-west highway

does not strangle the Georgian economy or undermine confidence in the banking sector.

We welcome news that there appears to be a new agreement, brokered by French President Sarkozy with President Medvedev, according to which the Russians will pull those troops, and already may be pulling out the troops from the Port of Poti, and will pull back all of their forces by October 1st from anywhere in Georgia beyond South Ossetia and Abkhazia. That's a step forward.

That said, it's essential that we remember that we are, well, under UN Security Council resolutions, obligated to support Georgia's territorial integrity. We cannot simply acquiesce to Russian claims that it can keep, as it says, now 7,600 soldiers in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. That is in sharp contrast to a whole line of Security Council resolutions until now.

We need to support Georgia, make sure that the democratically elected government of Georgia cannot be ousted by this Russian military operation. Our own secretary of state had stated how she had heard from the Russian foreign minister that, in fact, changing the government in Georgia was one of the objectives of these military operations. Cannot oust a democratically elected government.

Secondly, we need to then blunt these objectives of Russia including the potential ouster of this democratic government. We need to make clear that the east-west corridor on energy, which I began talking about, continues to function fine. Even the Russian military operations cut the flow of oil to the Black Sea coast of Georgia. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the South Caucasus gas pipeline continue to function throughout these military operations.

Finally, we need to shore up the neighbors of Georgia but also all the states along Russia's periphery. Many of these countries worry that somehow Russia has dealt a serious blow to stability in the region. They want to make sure the United States is going to remain engaged. We are going to remain engaged. We are going to do all we can to strengthen our relations with Azerbaijan, with Ukraine, with the Baltic states, with Kazakhstan. I myself am leaving in a couple of hours to go to Armenia, to Nagorno-Karabakh and the rest of Azerbaijan in an attempt to lay the foundation for a highly energized effort to come up with a framework agreement to that conflict within the next couple of months.

That's it. I've gone, probably, over my time. I just wanted to lay out where we hope to go from here, try to correct the narrative, and underscore the importance the Georgia to us.

Mr. CARDIN. Thank you very much for your testimony.

It is extremely disturbing to hear that one of the strategies is to unseat the the democratically elected government of Georgia. There was almost universal support for Georgia's policies in regards to what Russia was doing within Georgia. But the ground circumstances being what they were, it clearly has an impact on the domestic politics within Georgia.

I know we have the speaker of the parliament that's with us today, but I would like to get your assessment as to what impact this has had on the stability of the current government in Georgia and the politics within the country itself.

Mr. BRYZA. It appears that Georgians have rallied behind their elected government. There have been large-scale demonstrations,

and statements across the board from former opposition leaders, perhaps future opposition leaders, that first and foremost it's important that this democratically elected government of Georgia flourishes, survives, is not threatened. We heard statements from very senior leaders within the NATO alliance, some people who had their own questions about the way their relations were going with the current government of Georgia, who have echoed exactly what I said. Given what we had heard and what transpired on the floor of a UN Security Council at the very beginning of this conflict, it's critical that we all make clear we support this democratically elected government of Georgia.

But I want to make clear that what we support is any democratically elected government of Georgia. We may be personally fond of or dislike current leaders in Georgia—that's not relevant. Our personal feelings are not relevant about personal leaders in Georgia, with all due respect to the speaker of whom everyone in this room I'm sure is quite fond. What matters is that the Georgian people elected this leadership, and it is the Georgian people that must determine the political future of the country. There may be early elections. Who knows? There could be referendum. Whatever the Georgian people decide in consultation with their elected leaders is fine by the United States government as long as it is the Georgian people deciding the course of their political development.

Mr. CARDIN. I should point out that we did extend invitations to both the Russian Federation and Georgia for representation here today. We're very pleased that the government of Georgia made available the speaker of the Georgian parliament for our hearing. We regret that the Russian Federation did not accept our invitation and, therefore, we do not have a representative from the Russian Federation that is with us today.

You believe that what Russia is doing here as a signal to Georgia is meant to be a clear warning to some of the republics of the former Soviet Union that Russia intends to be active—they said they're going to protect Russians wherever they may be. I assume that the most direct focus of that statement would be the former republics of the Soviet Union, even though Russian population is throughout the world including the United States. But what impact is this having on the Ukraine? Or what impact is this having on some of the other former republics that are developing close ties with the West?

Mr. BRYZA. Yes, it's hard to discern what was floating through the minds of those decision makers in Moscow when they decided to invade Georgia in terms of relations of Russia with the other states in its periphery. The impact has been quite negative. In Ukraine, in particular, people listen very carefully to some statements coming from the very top in Moscow suggesting that Russia reserves the right to use force again, to, quote, "protect the rights," unquote, of its citizens, instant citizens—people who are suddenly issued passports and then are dubbed a justification for the potential use of force. In Ukraine, of course all eyes are on Crimea. And there have been additional statements, rumblings, coming out of high levels in Moscow that will perhaps the decision of Nikita Khrushchev to cede Crimea to Ukraine was a wrong decision.

We can only hope that those are no more than bluster, those sorts of statements. Those sorts of policies hearken back to, actually, a different century. A different century is when the invocation of protection of either Orthodox Christians in the Balkans or Russian Citizens led to outright warfare. We hope these are mere examples of bluster when it comes to Ukraine.

When it comes to some of Russia's closest allies, let's say in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, again the impact of the recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and the invasion of Georgia has not gone over well. If you look at the statement that was issued, the communique issued by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which includes the five Central Asian states, Russia and China, it's remarkable. It's remarkable in what it doesn't say, which is that it does not endorse at all the recognition by Russia of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It's remarkable in what it does say, which is that all states reiterate their support for the principle of territorial integrity, which is amazing in that every time we try to insert reference to territorial integrity at the United Nations, Russia vehemently opposes that.

Mr. CARDIN. What good timing.

I'm going to turn the gavel over to Chairman Hastings. I thank you very much for your testimony. Chairman Hastings is a very quick learn. He's going to pick up immediately every word you said and is going to be ready to challenge the statements and properly represent the commission.

Mr. BRYZA. Thank you.

Mr. CARDIN: And thank you for being here. And I apologize to the witnesses of my requirement to be on the Senate floor.

Mr. BRYZA: Thank you.

**HON. ALCEE HASTINGS, CHAIRMAN,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

Mr. HASTINGS. Secretary, how are you doing?

Mr. BRYZA. Hello, Mr. Chairman, very well, thank you. Thank you for a chance to speak here today.

Mr. HASTINGS. OK. You just finished testifying, I gather.

Mr. BRYZA. Yes.

Mr. HASTINGS. And did the senator get an opportunity to ask you some questions?

Mr. BRYZA. He sure did. Yes.

Mr. HASTINGS. OK. Well, correct me if I then ask a question that he's already asked.

But let me begin by asking you what if any leverage do you feel that we have in dealing with this situation, more specifically dealing with the Russian Federation.

Mr. BRYZA. Number one, our leverage is limited in a situation in which a country with 30 times the population of its neighbor and a military that's nearly 100 times larger than that neighbor decides to invade it. Once you get into that situation there's, I don't think any country on earth has leverage to turn around that calculus.

Now we are in a different realm—a realm in which, I think as our president, our secretary of state has said, Russia is forced to weigh some serious costs not only to its reputation but in addition

to its economy. We have seen already that there have been over \$20 billion worth of investment that have left Russia since this happened. There was a drop in the stock market just last night—8 to 10 percent—\$200 million plus have gone away in the stock market.

There have been some serious economic impacts. There's been serious reputational damage to Russia. I think that in this case words really do matter. I think back to my experience when I was on the ground in Georgia during the military operations when there was serious concern that perhaps there was about to be Russian assaults on Tbilisi. It happened three or four times while I was there where everybody in the city got very nervous, and we wondered what was going to happen. At one point, the reports of Russian armor moving toward Tbilisi happened to coincide with President Bush's impending press conference. I can say I talked to several European journalists who were positioned up in hills above the road between the town of Gori and Tbilisi who said that within minutes of President Bush's strong statement finishing, they saw those armored columns turn around and head back toward Gori.

To me at the time, that was a powerful reflection of the fact that words really do matter and that Russia really does care about its reputation. It cares about the reputation in terms of its investment climate. It cares about its reputation in the world. If it didn't, Russia wouldn't want to be a member of the G-8. Russia wouldn't say, "We don't care about being in the G-8" if it really didn't care. If Russia didn't care about being in the G-8, it wouldn't mention it at all. It would just remain silent.

We have leverage that can play itself out in a whole series of ways—in terms of reputation, in terms of economics. And it could go beyond that in terms of other measures that are being considered. But for now, we don't want to be sounding like we're wagging our finger, raising threats. We don't want to burn bridges. We want to escalate, if need be, prudently, whatever leverage we might employ, but always with the hope and the anticipation that at some point Russia will recognize the costs are simply too high of continuing on this path and that Russia will fully implement its obligations under the cease-fire agreement and will restore its respect for Georgia's territorial integrity as outlined in so many Security Council resolutions.

Mr. HASTINGS. In South Ossetia and in Abkhazia in the last few days, Russia has increased its number of troops and indicated very strongly that they are going to be there for a substantial period of time and then are making the efforts in the United Nations to have recognition of these two areas. How do we assess their actions in that regard, and is it not that they are in complete derogation of international norms as it pertains to sovereignty when it comes to invading a sovereign territory?

Mr. BRYZA. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we do take that position, that Russia has made numerous commitments, again under Security Council resolutions to which it signed on, that it will support Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. And it has blatantly contradicted those commitments. It's not ironic, but maybe it's just unfortunate that Russia was able to contradict itself after a few

weeks earlier it invoked the principle of noninterference in other countries' internal affairs.

Mr. HASTINGS. On that point, do you think they adhered to the six-point agreement to the letter?

Mr. BRYZA. No, absolutely not, absolutely not.

Mr. HASTINGS. Tell me where they did not.

Mr. BRYZA. Sure. First of all, in point five of the agreement, there's talk of additional security measures. What those security measures are is clarified in a subsequent letter from President Sarkozy and in additional clarifications that Secretary Rice negotiated with our French ally.

Taking that body of information, what is there is a statement that Russia has the right to carry out patrols within a few kilometers of Tskhinvali, not fix checkpoints either along the highway or any road in Georgia, and certainly not 200 kilometers from South Ossetia out in Poti or in Sinaki. That's a blatant violation. We hope that this agreement that President Sarkozy negotiated yesterday with President Medvedev will lead to Russia pulling out its forces from Poti. We did receive initial reports today that Russia has begun removing its equipment from around Poti. But at the same time, Russia has announced that it is reserving the right to bring in another 7,600 soldiers into Abkhazia and South Ossetia, they say at the request of the leadership of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Again, to us that absolutely violates the territorial integrity of Georgia. South Ossetia and Abkhazia remain part of Georgia. It's irrelevant that Nicaragua, the only country in the world besides Russia, recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. These areas remain part of Georgia. Point five is where there's a blatant violation of the cease-fire agreement.

In point six, we believe that's violated because by recognizing the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, we believe Russia is prejudging the outcome of the negotiations that are foreseen in that sixth point of the cease-fire agreement.

Mr. HASTINGS. Secretary Bryza, there are few people that have had as much input and involvement in Central Asia and Georgia specifically, the Caucasus, than yourself. And I have great respect for the extraordinary work in the area of diplomacy that you and Dan Fried and others have put forward. Last week, the vice president went to Tbilisi and in the course of his meetings offered that there would be \$1 billion that would be in the hands of the Georgian government for purposes of infrastructure development.

I've had a little involvement in these areas as well. It is so regrettable that for 10 years, really 11 years, I served on a committee dealing with Abkhazia in the OSCE, and we were never really able to get the cooperation that we needed to try and remedy what was described as the "frozen conflict." I have concerns about the \$1 billion, and yesterday I filed legislation that is missing a component that I intend to amend that legislation.

It's the question that I put to you. One, do we have the exacting restrictions or outlines and guidelines as to how the money is to be spent? Second, if all of it is to be spent—the \$1 billion I'm talking about now—for infrastructure and reconstitution and humanitarian aid, does that not ignore the extraordinary need for a country that has made positive steps in democratization to make fur-

ther steps and to have the needed resources in order to be able to do that, in two areas, maybe three: judicial reform and/or the development of an independent judiciary? I have maintained and will continue to maintain that for as long as we promote democracy, if we do not promote judicial independence in the various countries that we participate in, then we are missing a major component. You and I know that before the presidential elections that the media was under assault by the Georgian government as is presently constituted, or at least some of this administration and more specifically President Saakashvili and those that were associated with him—closing the television station that you and others and I and all of this commission railed against them actively about.

Obviously there's a need to understand that in a democracy there is a component called media that needs to be addressed in a positive manner, and the further development of civic society, a society where people have freedom of expression and their rights. If we spend \$1 billion, shouldn't we spend some money to develop in those areas? Otherwise, you build a road, and you still have the same inequities in the society that are missing. That was a long way to say that I want to know what's going to happen with the billion dollars.

Mr. BRYZA. OK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As you could imagine, of course I couldn't agree with you more about the need to keep working on Georgia and helping Georgia strengthen its democratic institutions. Independent judiciary of course is crucial to that, as is free media, as is the emergence of a viable opposition that will contribute to an open and constructive debate on how to improve the country. Of course we're going to continue our democracy assistance. In FY '08 we've got \$14 million budgeted. In FY '09, \$15 million.

Mr. HASTINGS. That's a pittance.

Mr. BRYZA. Well, it's where we were earlier, and it's what we calculated working together with congressional staffs as what we thought was a reasonable amount at the time given the absorptive capacity. But of course, we're happy to look again at it, particularly in this environment now where there's so much more money, as you just described, coming in.

In my testimony, in my statement I should say, I did talk about the fact that of the three sets of interests we have in Georgia, strategic interests—in energy and regional economic cooperation, security, and democracy—democracy has become the most strategically relevant of the factors of them all in the last couple of years. Of course we have to keep working on democracy.

Let me answer the second part of your question: Where the heck is this money going, and how did this come about? It came about in conversations we were having when I was in Tbilisi in the midst of the military operations with the prime minister of Georgia, Lado Gurgenidze, who expressed real concern that it was possible the banking system could suffer a loss of confidence and that commercial goods shippers could also lose confidence and therefore not wish to let contracts or implement them and provide Tbilisi and other Georgian cities with the goods they need because of the military operations. At the time, nobody knew what was going to happen with the military operations. Still, when you've got Russian

military checkpoints, or observation points, around the Port of Poti and along roads that are used for commerce, there is a danger that the Georgian economy could lose the confidence that has sustained it. We already have seen a drop, a severe drop, in foreign direct investment. It is FDI that has sustained Georgian economic growth, near double-digit growth. If that's gone, if the confidence is gone, then the economy can suffer seriously, and that can lead to a non-democratic change in government.

The initial, urgent request from the Georgian government was for budget support to help them address what the Georgian government estimates is about \$400 million in immediate needs—immediate damage, immediate steps that must be taken to get people in shelter, to address their basic humanitarian needs, to begin repairing some of the damage, and also to sustain confidence in the economy.

We're not doing this all on our own. There's \$400 million in damage to the Georgian economy. We're going to provide \$250 million quickly. There's still almost half that's left for someone else to handle. We hope the European Union is going to pick up that part of the tab. Then there's the need to shore up confidence in the banking system. The IMF is taking that on with a \$750 million standby program. We worked actively, of course, with the government of Georgia and the IMF to set that up. It's not as if the U.S. government is trying to take on the task of repairing all this damage on its own. But we wanted to make sure that we sent a clear signal to everybody who cares about the Georgian economy that the Georgian economy is not going to go away.

Then we also want to provide \$150 million worth of assistance from OPIC to help with mortgages so that the Georgian people can rebuild and purchase new houses. In general what we're trying to do besides addressing humanitarian concerns is to restore growth in the economy and then, as I said, repair the damage.

That's what it's all going to. We could down into even more detail if you wish.

Mr. HASTINGS. I understand. Then let me ask you to make a submission to us that would be more detailed.

Mr. BRYZA. OK.

Mr. HASTINGS. It would be deeply appreciated. In an effort not to take up all the time. I do have one more question. I have several, but this one is just a question of how diplomacy is undertaken and coordinated with those who are involved. First, my compliments to Mr. Sarkozy and the EU and those who have been involved in working to achieve some positive results. I have a concern, and I'll share it from the perspective of one who is not a diplomat but that from time to time, I think that I have tried, especially in this area, to wear a bigger hat than just a policy-maker's. When I first became president of the Parliamentary Assembly, my first act was to go to Russia and to meet with Sergei Lavrov. Obviously, 31 countries later in two years supplied an opportunity to meet with lots of folk and, indeed, go back and meet often with our Russian interlocutors. When the vice president or Secretary Rice were the two of them are recent visitors to Tbilisi and elsewhere in Georgia, they did not go to Moscow. I think that's a mistake. I understand that there are all sorts of channels of communication

that are undertaken between parties of interest. But as a for example, in the development of the six-point plan, Mr. Sarkozy did go to Moscow and did go to Tbilisi. Earlier this week, he did go to Moscow, and he did go to Tbilisi.

I don't understand that missing link. I don't suggest that you should have an answer. I communicated to you for purposes of carrying it back to those that are going to be involved. There are two sides, and probably as many as 20 sides in this story, and they have to be communicated with actively and directly. Otherwise, I think, we send bad signals. That is my story, and I'm sticking to it.

Mr. BRYZA. Thank you.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Smith.

**HON. CHRIS SMITH, COMMISSIONER,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for convening this very important hearing. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for testifying.

You know, the week before last, I went to Georgia and spent four days on the ground there. I first want to commend our ambassador, Ambassador John Teft, for the extraordinary job I believe that he has done, is doing, and I hope will continue to do. He is a seasoned professional. It came through in all that I found that he was doing on the ground, a good manager, and really helped to cobble together what was a crisis situation, a good response, and I think he represented our country extraordinarily well.

Along the way, while I was there I joined Senators Lieberman and Graham and met with President Saakashvili and the prime minister and others. We did hear from them in terms of their economic needs. They provided us with a detailed road map to recovery. I know that they had also met with Senator Biden as well as with Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee Berman and provided them with that same information, and the billion-dollar price tag order of magnitude was what was discussed as well in our conversations as enough to really make the difference and to help keep that confidence in this very important democracy and economy.

I also met with the patriarch, and I want to commend him publicly for his bravery in going to the war-torn area and retrieving some of the dead individuals. Though he did it as an act of bravery, I think he sent a clear message to all that the church cares for the dispossessed, the disenfranchised, and in this case those who had died a very cruel death.

I met with a number of the representatives. Human Rights Watch had a strong message, especially as it relates to cluster bombs. You might want to speak to that. As people flow back, they were very concerned that, the Russian cluster bombs and those red, looks like toys type of deal, that many people could find themselves dead as they're plowing their fields or as kids walk in the meadows. I also met with the Red Cross.

I will say that, and this is with a little bit of regret or disappointment, one of the things, the overriding reason why I first got on the plane and went to Tbilisi was the fact that two young people from my congressional district were in Chiatura and were behind

the Russian lines, had tried at least once to make their way through, were turned back at gunpoint. This 7-year-old and 3-year-old, who were not with their parents but with the grandparents, were very frightened. When I got over there, because of the publicity that was generated about these two Evans girls, Sophia and Ashley, all of a sudden a number of members of Congress and individual families contacted me with a very similar plight of Russian children who were in harm's way.

My first stop was with the OSCE Mission and with the Red Cross, both of whom said that they would be more than happy, and the Red Cross says "This is what we do," to send in a van, a vehicle, with all sides aware of it, and that includes the Russians, retrieve these children and bring them to safety. To my shock, our consulate general did not know about this option. I brought the names to the Red Cross, and several of those kids now have been safely extracted.

I want to thank Eric Fournier, the French ambassador, and John Teft again for his marvelous work in helping to facilitate this. He went and got the two kids from my district and went through what should've been a two-and-a-half-hour trip, it turned into a six-hour trip—three hours at one particular Russian checkpoint. Not only was he very brave, but he was very diplomatic and as the father of the Evans girls said at a press conference in Tbilisi, "Viva la France." I think it brought us closer together because it was an act of kindness, but it was also of courage.

My hope, Mr. Secretary, would be that we really, stay up a little bit later at night and think how we can come up with a protocol that when Americans are behind lines, no matter where it is—Lebanon, and most recently, and of course this South Ossetia and Abkhazia turmoil—that there is an immediate go-to to the NGOs. And it seems to me the Red Cross jumps off the page as the people who do this and do it extraordinarily well. So I would hope there would be a lesson learned on that one because my trip might not have been necessary if the Red Cross had done that, that job.

But I did learn a lot. It reinforced much of what I had already thought. As Chairman Hastings and I know from Nina Berganazi, all those years when she would raise the issue of South Ossetia and Abkhazia that this has been a simmering, festering problem. The Russians, regrettably, acted like bullies and went in and used brute force to drive people out and to ethnically cleanse both of these areas.

I couldn't agree more with the administration that territorial integrity is extremely important. The real politic of it is that those lines probably are there at least on the short term because aggression sometimes does work. But now we've got to work very hard, overtime, to secure and show our solidarity with, along with our European Union partners, with the people, with the leadership of the Georgian government. They are unified, very, to a large extent about the importance. While there may be individual people who raise issues about accountability and that all happens in a democracy. But when it comes to this foreign threat, which remains potent and real and menacing, they are in solidarity, and we need to be in solidarity with them.

The sooner that legislation moves, the better because we have to send that clear signal that we stand in solidarity with Tbilisi.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you. Any reaction?

Mr. BRYZA. Yes, one reaction, sure. I wasn't privy to, of course, the conversation with our consul general. But we were, at least back in Washington, looking at all the options possible to get access to the Evans girls. And yes, we do, we are deeply grateful to Ambassador Fournier for that and for all that he does. He is a tremendous ambassador and a real ally in every sense of the word. I make it a point every time I'm in Tbilisi to spend a few hours with him just to think things through.

But we should also underscore that actually Russia has not been allowing international human rights organizations into South Ossetia. It's been blocking them, blocking assistance convoys. We strongly support the United Nations' and the secretary general's push for there to be a humanitarian investigation as well as an investigation of how the conflict started. But people need to get into South Ossetia to deliver humanitarian assistance, to assess what has happened, to assess the cluster bomb reports that Human Rights Watch put out. The Georgian government has also conceded that it used cluster bombs, but only against military targets near the Roki Tunnel. We hope that nobody ever uses cluster munitions, but it's certain testimony to the Georgian government that it came out and came clean that in a military situation it used these munitions on the military situation.

I'd also like to laud the efforts of Human Rights Watch in general. They somehow got their people in and were able to counter the absolutely untrue narrative coming out of Moscow that genocide was committed by the Georgian government, that 2,000 South Ossetians were killed or murdered. As Human Rights Watch found, during the period of the hostilities, they could identify 44 people that were killed rather than 2,000. And now even independent Russian organizations say it could've been a bit over a hundred. Also Human Rights Watch has documented that the damage inflicted on Tskhinvali by the Georgian government was considerably less than the damage inflicted on the neighboring villages of Ergneti and Tamarasheni, the Georgian villages, by Russian military operations.

I'm not here to excuse the Georgian military operations against civilians in Tskhinvali. We urged the Georgian government not to do that. But Georgia found itself in a very difficult situation believing that Russian forces had crossed into South Ossetia through the Roki Tunnel, and sensing that despite a cease-fire South Ossetians continued artillery fire, heavy artillery fire on Georgian positions, and the Georgian government thought they were about to lose these villages. Again, we urged the Georgian government not to engage in a military conflict. The Russians claimed, they were simply intervening to save these citizens that they had generated through passport issuances and that the Georgians had leveled Tskhinvali. As Human Rights Watch has shown, that isn't exactly what happened.

Mr. SMITH. One quick follow-up. Your assessment of the OSCE Mission—I was impressed with Steve Young, the senior military,

and Ambassador Hakala. They were professional, and they were on the job, and they have 20 and upwards of 100 people who will be deployed as monitors. They recently got in on September 4th and did some monitoring. How would you assess their mission—whether or not it's enough people, do they have access? Secondly, our mission of assessment is there on the ground now. How soon before we get some at least preliminary reports of what the needs are for the Georgian military as well as the humanitarian crisis, too?

Mr. BRYZA. Thank you. I have only the highest possible regard for Ambassador Hakala and her team, Steve Young and the others. They showed foresight, the wisdom and bravery during the military operations when Ambassador Hakala had Steve and others out on the road to Gori while tanks were bearing down on them to figure out what's going on, to see whether we could get access in the international community to these areas of South Ossetia for humanitarian purposes. Then a week-and-a-half ago, we're on the scene in the village of Akhagori in the southeastern corner of South Ossetia, where there was a high degree of tension, and I would credit the OSCE directly for helping to reduce the level of tension and therefore potentially avoiding further armed conflict.

Also, we should laud the efforts of the chairman-in-office of the OSCE, Foreign Minister Finland Stubb, a fellow countryman of Ambassador Hakala, who also has shown strong leadership, particularly in fielding quickly an additional 20 OSCE observers, which will then escalate up to a full hundred. We believe that 100 OSCE observers coupled with the 200 or so EU observers is plenty to make clear that the point, by the way we talked about with the chairman before, point number five in the cease-fire agreement that affords Russians additional security measures, is no longer valid because there is an international mechanism in place with these OSCE observers augmented by the EU observers. So that they're enough.

The problem is that Russia is refusing to allow any additional OSCE observers entrance into South Ossetia or Abkhazia. We categorically reject that and will continue to fight hard to make sure we can get people in to find out what happened but to deter people from taking any further actions that violate human rights.

Today, there was a shooting of a Georgian policeman, it looks like by, potentially, by a South Ossetian. We hold the Russian government responsible. If Russia is occupying these areas, it must fulfill the obligations of an occupier, and that means law and order and preventing human rights violations. We hold Russia responsible for that.

Our assessment mission, we have EUCOM assessment team on the ground now, and we hope that maybe by the middle of October they have will completed the assessment. It's a pretty thorough-going assessment, and they have to look some tough choices that the Georgian military itself will have to make about whether it wants to focus on homeland defense and/or whether it still wishes to contribute to more expeditionary ventures, like contributing to the coalition in Iraq or Kosovo or Afghanistan.

Mr. SMITH. Again, will you please convey to John Teft how grateful I and our delegation was very impressed with the professionalism and his leadership. He was excellent.

Mr. BRYZA. Thank you. Few things I could hear that make me happier than that. He is one of the best ambassadors I've ever experienced in any country. And he's such a human. There were some dark moments when we were together as we heard that the Georgian line had broken outside Gori, and we thought that the tanks were rolling toward Tbilisi. Besides my wife, there's nobody else I would've rather had been with in that situation because it was—we were. He was thinking clearly, totally calm. We were talking about the Chicago Bears, my team, and his Green Bay Packers. I guess he made the right decisions because our team was kept safe. And then we got an announcement that the military operation was over. We all went home, and we were smiling.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Secretary, just a recommendation and to look back in trying to determine what happened, there are obviously disagreements. And it would seem to me that an independent analysis would help the reconciliation that's going to be needed. I recommend, among other things, that OSCE be given a role in that. And the reason that I do is very simple: There are opportunities for discussions between Russia and Georgia and those who are parties that could assist in various of the structures of the OSCE including the Parliamentary Assembly. Therefore I would hope that such a role is envisioned for the OSCE.

I do want to get to the other panels. But I'd be terribly remiss if I did not ask you at least: How do you see the impact of this crisis on other former states? And I guess I specifically raise Ukraine as a concern. The governing coalition has already felt some of the fallout. Give me a snap reaction to that, if you would.

Mr. BRYZA. Sure. I agree that there has been a negative impact on political stability—if there ever was a lot of stability in Ukrainian politics—unfortunately, as a result of this. The statements that came out of senior levels of Moscow in recent weeks are chilling in that Russia reserves the right to use force if necessary to protect its citizens or passport holders in Ukraine with a particular focus on Crimea. That's simply unacceptable. That is behavior that is not consistent with 21st century norms or with membership in the institutions of the 21st century, as Secretary Rice has said so many times. We have to make clear we absolutely stand with Ukraine. Completely, absolutely, unabashedly support its territorial integrity. By the way, just as the international community stood with Russia all of these years as it invoked the right to sustain its territorial integrity within the case of Chechnya; although we condemned the way Russia did that. But the international community stood with Russia.

I wanted to make one point about the resolution in Security Council a couple of weeks ago on Zimbabwe. Russia vetoed it citing noninterference in internal affairs of foreign countries, and a couple weeks later invaded its neighbor. That is a sharp contradiction, and we can't simply allow that.

Mr. HASTINGS. I do have a series of questions, and I'd normally do this perfunctorily. But because of the heightened importance of matters and the fact that I, and I'm sure the International Relations Committee and other members of Congress are going to be tooling our legislation supplemental to the administration's ideas in

this matter, I'd appreciate it if I could get as early a response from your good offices as I can.

Mr. BRYZA. Of course. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HASTINGS. All right. I'd like now to call the Honorable David Bakradze, the speaker of the Parliament of Georgia and former foreign minister. I'm more than delighted that you are here. I never anticipated that we would have an opportunity—we've met before on a couple of occasions, but I didn't think we would have this kind of meeting.

The speaker's biography is on the table available to all of the persons that are here. I won't go into detail of it for the reason that I do want to get on to others as well. But, sir, you have the floor.

**DAVID BAKRADZE, SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT OF
GEORGIA, GEORGIAN GOVERNMENT**

Mr. BAKRADZE. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It's my pleasure and honor to be here. I'll try to be brief in my presentation, and then I'm looking forward for the series of questions which will help me to bring my case and clarify the issues which you think are interesting and important.

The topic of this presentation is return of power politics. It's quite precise description of what's happening and what happened in Georgia. And I believe that what happened in Georgia is much more important than fate of one small country or fate of two tiny separatist enclaves because it challenges the basic principles which today constitute the foundation of international security. Let me elaborate briefly how we see return of power politics based on what happened in Georgia.

What Russians did in Georgia directly contradicts to the principle of inviolability of borders. This is the key principle which constitutes today the cornerstone for European security. This is the key principle recognized by Helsinki Final Act. This is the principle on which OSCE as an organization is based. By using military force against Georgia and by eventually recognizing two Georgian regimes, Russians tried to change Georgian border by use of force. That is major development since the post-cold war period because this is the first time when Russians openly challenge post-Soviet borders by use of force. We had many cases in the past when Russian rhetoric was focused on border changes, Russians had territorial disputes with Baltic countries, and as Secretary Bryza mentioned, Russian statement concerning Ukraine and possibility of revising borders with Ukraine. We had other examples. But it is the first case since the dissolution of Soviet Union when Russians actually physically change borders by use of military force. And this is something which is a significant challenge not only for my country, which is immediate victim of that action, but for the entire international community thinking that inviolability of borders is a key principle on which the security rests.

Now, with this small accident, let me turn to another issue, which is energy. Which is also very important. Because what happens, and most of you know the geography, that Georgia is the only alternative route for Caspian and Central Asian gas and oil resources to Europe. By controlling Georgia, actually Russia controls the bottleneck, and by that completely isolates Azerbaijan, isolates

Central Asian states, and leaves no alternative ways of delivery of Caspian and Central Asian resources to Europe, which means that Russia will significantly strengthen its energy monopoly over European energy resources. Energy is the second very important reason why we believe that what is at stake is more important than physical control of these two small regions.

The third reason, and very fundamental reason in our view, is human rights. Because what happened a few days ago in Georgia was actually an ethnic cleansing—ethnic cleansing confirmed by all observers who were able to reach the area. I agree with Undersecretary Bryza who mentioned Human Rights Watch, and that was the organization that confirmed the ethnic cleansing in Georgian villages in South Ossetia, confirmed the massive looting of Georgian villages, confirmed the massive execution of male population and massive rape of female population and all the terrible facts happening on the ground. That's ethnic cleansing.

Sometimes people think about Kosovo as a precedent in South Ossetia, and I attended yesterday a number of hearings where Kosovo was mentioned. So in my vision the difference is very simple but very important. In Kosovo, there was international intervention which stopped ethnic cleansing. In Abkhazia, the reason for ethnic cleansing was Russian intervention. This makes these two cases absolutely different. Let me be very clear: What happened in South Ossetia two weeks ago was ongoing ethnic cleansing which changed the balance of population. What happened in Abkhazia in 1993, 16 or 15 years ago, was then ethnic cleansing. You know better than anybody else, sir, from OSC that this is the ethnic cleansing confirmed by OSC. Three summits of OSC in Istanbul, in Lisbon, and in Budapest confirmed ethnic cleansing. Those are summit documents having signature of then Russian President Boris Yeltsin, then U.S. President Bill Clinton, as well as other 53 presidents of OSC member countries.

We have confirmed cases of ethnic cleansing conducted in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The scheme is that in Abkhazia, for example, from 75 of 80 percent of population has been expelled from their houses—based on ethnicity, based on the fact that they were loyal to Tbilisi government, based on the fact that they wanted to be part of the Georgian state. One expels 80 percent of population under the foreign military support from homes. Then this same foreign country distributes its own passports, and then the citizens of that foreign country—actually foreign citizens—make a decision whether to be part of that state or not. I mean, it's simple but effective but very brutal in the human scheme.

How can Russian citizens make a decision to be part of Georgia or not after they expelled 80 percent of local population who was in favor of Georgia and in favor of being part of Georgia? This is something very, very different from Kosovo, from any other case of self-determination. By recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia what Russia did, Russians recognized and accepted results of ethnic cleansing. By that, Russia legitimized ethnic cleansing as a way of self-determination. That is something very dangerous and very bad.

I think this human rights issue, the fundamental human rights issue that ethnic cleansing cannot be seen as a legitimate tool of

self-determination of any people is at stake now. By not following Russia's example, international community should confirm that independence cannot be based on ethnic cleansing, which is one of the most terrible human rights violations.

Another reason and another case what is at stake and why we believe that it's return of power politics is that it's return of sphere of influence and buffer zone policies. The biggest lesson learned by Europe after the Second World War was this new concept of security, which is indivisible and where security of small countries matters exactly as much as security of big countries.

By doing so, by invading, by occupying Georgia, by change borders of Georgia by use of force, actually Russians bring back the policy of sphere of influence because they openly claim "This is our area of our national interest." Because we have their Russian citizens, because we have historic ties, because Russian Empire is present in this region, was present in this region for last two hundred years, this is our area of influence, so we can do whatever we want in our area of influence. If this concept of areas of interest and concept of buffer zones and buffer states come back to European security, that will be substantial undermining of European security because it will bring Europe back to 19th century or beginning of 20th century with all the instabilities which were caused that time by this concept.

Last thing which we think is at stake and is more important than Georgia, is Russia itself and what kind of Russia we have, international community has, as a partner. Absolutely, Russia is important partner. Russia is important in terms of political cooperation, in terms of economic cooperation, in terms of energy cooperation.

The question is: Is it the right Russia which we are having now as a partner? Is Russia which made a decision to send tanks to the soil of the neighboring country right partner for Europe or for United States. What can be the basement of American-Russian cooperation? What kind of values, what kind of interest, this cooperation can be based if Russian policy develops in a way or deteriorates in a way it does? How can Russia able to make a decision to send tanks and troops to the neighboring country be a reliable partner for United States or for Europe?

This is a fundamental question. How can Russia which signs agreements that it withdrawals from Georgia—and I refer to the six-point agreement—and confirms that, the presidential signature is there and they will implement this, and it still is not implemented? It was signed Thursday, 29 days ago, and still it is not implemented. How can Russia which does not respect signature of its own president, which does not respect its own commitment, which does not respect international law, how can such Russia be a reliable partner for United States or for anybody else?

It's about Russia, and it's about what kind of developments will take place in Russia tomorrow. Because if there is no price for what happened in Georgia, this will clearly encourage this folkish thinking in Russia, this thinking that the bullying policy is successful, and this thinking that Russia is too important to pay price for anything which they do. In such case, price tomorrow will be much higher than the price today.

We believe that this is another good reason why this issue should be addressed very carefully and based on the long term consideration. We're talking about set of measures which I believe, I mean, are important. So it's about borders and European security. It's about human rights. It's about energy. It's about major geopolitical developments in Europe. It's about Russia as a future partner and whether Russia can be a future partner. It's a set of very important issues which we believe make this case an exceptional case. It's the end of the Cold War and the case which can, like 9/11, change the entire geopolitics in the upcoming years.

We have all the signs, unfortunately, that the power politics at least from the side of Russians is back. The issue is how to respond, how to answer, and how to go forward. But I guess that will be part of your questions as well as how we started and, I mean, obviously you may have some of the same questions which you had to Undersecretary Bryza to me, I stand ready to answer any questions in good faith and to the knowledge I have. I thank you very much for this opportunity again.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for being here and for your presentation. I'm going to go straight to the very hard question, and it is that there have been a substantial number of articles in the press on the crisis, and in many of those articles U.S. officials claim they've consistently warned Tbilisi not to launch a military campaign against South Ossetia. Why, then, did President Saakashvili do precisely what it is said that the U.S. had warned specifically against?

Mr. BAKRADZE. Thanks. I regret that Matt Bryza left already the room here. I think he could confirm, and I'm talking on the record now. It's a very important clarification. We have been warned many times, and I confirm that, not to get entrapped by Russian provocations, not to respond to Russian provocations, and to be careful in our policy planning. That's absolutely true, and I confirm. But to my knowledge, at none of the meetings was I presented with this specific case of Georgia in attacks against South Ossetia or Tskhinvali because there was no such plan and no such attacks planned.

Mr. Chairman, that we had this plan for South Ossetia. Three years ago it was endorsed by OSC. Only reason why it was not implemented was Russia's resistance. I was myself minister for conflict resolution for seven months. And I'm still proud that I was one of the officers of the new peace policy in South Ossetia that was policy of reconciliation, policy of investments.

What happened in South Ossetia: this tiny region was divided in two parts. About half was controlled by Moscow-backed parties, half was controlled by local administration which was loyal to Tbilisi. We heavily invested in that half. We invested not in weapons. We invested in building schools. We invested in building hospitals. We invested in building discos, swimming pools, and amusement parks exactly to show to population on the other side that life is not about war, life is not about fight, and life is about much better things than trenches.

Our policy was policy of economic attraction and economic reintegration, and as one of the authors of that policy I'm still proud. And I do believe that we were close to resolution, peaceful resolu-

tion of conflict in South Ossetia because we had all the signs of heavy erosion of the regime in Tskhinvali. And that's one of the reasons why Russians changed entire leadership in South Ossetia, in Tskhinvali and instead of local Ossetian officials, they brought Russian high-ranking officers. And as I confirmed words of Matthew Bryza, that all high-ranking security officials in Tskhinvali were acting high-level Russian security and military officials.

We had all the signs of peaceful resolution of conflict and having all that—I apologize for this long prehistory—having all that in place, we had never planned any kind of military action against South Ossetia. That's true. I confirm that. I can tell you that there was no meeting in my memory and in my knowledge where we specifically discussed with anybody from United States administration the issue of possible Georgian military action against Tskhinvali.

It's absolutely right that we have been warned many times not to respond to provocation. We have very good record of not responding to provocations, especially starting from March this year when we had non-stop series of provocations, sequence of provocations, from side of Russia both in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

But unfortunately what happened on August 7 was no longer a provocation. It was already an action. Because when Russian military jet intrudes the Georgian airspace, it's a provocation, and government may respond or may not respond. But when Georgian villages, Georgian civilian population, are under heavy artillery bombardment, are under heavy artillery barrage and there are civilian casualties in place, this is no longer a provocation. This is already and action which needs to be addressed by government. I do believe that no democratically elected government can sit and wait until there are casualties in the civilian population when the civilian population is under artillery attack.

To explain to you that we never had the specific discussion because we never had a plan to attack South Ossetia. I think the timing itself confirms. This was the timing 7th of August when big part of Georgian leadership was on vacation, and president himself had his plane ready to depart for Beijing, and he has to cancel this trip 20 minutes before it was canceled. I think this is a small detail, but again it shows that we had no plans whatsoever to start military action that day or any other day against South Ossetia.

Mr. HASTINGS. But did you start military action?

Mr. BAKRADZE. Mr. Chairman, I agree with Matthew Bryza who described the sequence of events on the ground. We should look into the concrete pretext of events but not single out any particular event out of this chain. And that's actually what Russians are trying to do at the moment, the Russian propaganda machine. What they are trying to do, they are trying to say that, while for example at 11 a.m. Georgians did something and that was beginning of war. But they fail to mention what happened at 10:55 a.m. or 11:05 a.m. That's the sequence which shows. It comes how one defines the beginning of military action.

I told you that our villages have been under heavy artillery barrage. And that was very dangerous because of the civilian population and because of possibly huge civilian casualties which we might have on the ground. The same morning, we sent our minister for conflict resolution to Tskhinvali with the objective to nego-

tiate with Ossetians and to stop somehow the fire. But he arrived to Tskhinvali, he was not met by any South Ossetian official. The only person whom he met was commander of Russian peacekeepers, General Kulakhmetov. And General Kulakhmetov confirmed to our minister that Ossetians are acting on their own will, and the Russian peacekeepers are not able to control what's happening on the ground. He had to leave.

We asked Russian special envoy Ambassador Popov, to go to Tskhinvali and to communicate and to talk to local Tskhinvali officials to stop this fire. Popov failed to go there, justifying this failure that his car was broken and he was not able to go physically there. President Saakashvili spoke with Finnish foreign minister and asked to send his special envoy as soon as possible so that he also goes to Tskhinvali and negotiates to stop this fire. Because, again, our civilian villages, peaceful villages, were under artillery fire, and that was something requiring urgent response.

This diplomacy failed during the daytime of August the 7th, in the evening President Saakashvili declared unilateral cease-fire. And his hope was that this unilateral cease-fire would cause Ossetians to stop firing as well. But it did not happen.

It's political conflict; it's not ethnic conflict. When Tskhinvali leaders started more intensive, and this bombardment turned into the carpet bombardment of Georgian villages, that is confirmed. I again confirm words of Matthew Bryza who said that Human Rights Watch confirmed that Georgian villages near Tskhinvali are heavily damaged by this bombardment. When this bombardment started to be carpet bombardment, so-called indiscriminate bombardment of population, we had to take, government had to take a decision to fire back in order back to stop this fire.

But it would still be a local skirmish unless one thing which happened on the ground, that which influenced every sort of development and that was Russian military call on of about 150 tanks and about 2,000 personnel, troops, entering through territorial Georgia through the Roki Tunnel. We have evidences of that. Part of that evidence is two days ago we made available to, at this level, to ambassadors accredited to Georgia and we're thinking whether to make this evidence public or not. At this point, this is still not public, but I can just mention that we have radio interceptions confirming Russian troops entering Georgian territory in the evening of August the 7th. This was the turning point. And plus to that, of course, I mean, we have the fact of their physical entry to Georgia. This was the point.

I have a question whether massive bombardment, indiscriminate bombardment of civilian population, can be seen as a beginning of war or not. And if it is not beginning of war, why response to that bombardment in order to stop it should be seen as a beginning of war. I have a question whether intrusion into the territory of the neighboring country violating the recognized border and sending 150 tanks and 2,000 troops to the neighboring country, is this a beginning of war? Or, if it is not, why then the following reallocation of Georgian troops is a beginning of war?

It's a delicate question how one defines what happened and what was the initial point of the war. In our understanding, the immediate reason was massive bombardment of Georgian villages and

the starting point of war because otherwise I still think we could somehow localize the skirmish. But the immediate point when the war started was the fact when Russian troops entered Roki Tunnel and entered territory of Georgia. That was the point when government of Georgia was forced to take a decision to about the troop allocation. That's the concrete pretext of these August 7 events.

Mr. HASTINGS. It sounds, among other things, that there was a bit of ingenuity on behalf of the Russians, and your government kind of fell into that trap. There are questions that still remain, and I understand that. Regrettably, the Russian Embassy, who was in fact invited to participate in today's hearing, chose not to. I would urge upon them that I think that's a mistake. As a former judge, I learned in many actions to try and listen to all sides. Hearing one side skews the process, and it gives the impression that someone is on one or the other side.

I would hope because of the extraordinary cultural and historic aspects that exist between Georgia and Russia that whatever the reason was for this particular conflict would be mediated toward positive resolutions in the interests of both countries. I find it all over the world astounding that people that know each other very well—for example, Mr. Putin's mother lives in Georgia, you know. And Sergei Lavrov is from the Armenian section of Georgia. I could go on and on and on. When I'm in Moscow, I don't drink wine but I drink Crouvasier, but I see Georgian wine when I'm in Moscow. I see Russian food when I'm in Georgia. And so somehow or another cousins and brothers and sisters have to stop fighting. I don't know how we accomplish that.

I also note that the realities on the ground have changed. It would be difficult. In a totally separate but similar situation, yesterday I participated in a hearing dealing with Iraqi refugees. In essence what has happened is Sunnis have been driven from certain areas and replaced by Shiite. The big question is in reintegrating them—and I understand that President Saakashvili's goal is still reintegration of South Ossetia and Abkhazia—if that is true, then the question is: Who wants to be the first person that was removed to return? And that was the question that was put to me yesterday: What Sunni is going to show up in Anbar and say, "I'm back now"? You know, it's kind of difficult, the situation that we're in. I won't go further because the ranking member has questions, and we have two other panelists and I'd like to get to them as well. Mr. Smith?

Mr. SMITH. Speaker Bakradze, thank you very much for being here, for your wonderful testimony. I think it's incisive and really gives us the lay of the land from your government's perspective, which we need to hear.

You mentioned a couple of things with regards to massive rapes. Is that quantifiable as to how many women were abused in that way, and what has happened to those women?

Mr. BAKRADZE. I'm afraid I'm not able to give you exact figures now. And this is something which still needs to be verified and investigated, and we are very open. We invited, and we invite all interested human rights organization to come and to go to those refugees and to check because, I mean, it's difficult because, you understand, it's a delicate issue. Not everybody may be willing to de-

scribe and to talk about this issue. These ladies need careful approach and very balanced approach. I mean, if any international human rights organizations are willing to help us in that, are willing to help our ministry of health and social care in that, we are very open, and we ask them to come. But at this point I'm not able to give you exact figures.

What we know, we know evidence is from eyewitnesses that the ethnic cleansing was conducted but by so-called Balkan model, when we know these irregulars or paramilitaries enter the village, and they loot the village. They torch houses. They separate male and female population. They take male population out of the village, and then some of them are beaten, some of them are executed, some of them are left somewhere in the forest, and the female population, children, I mean, women, elder people are subject to, brutal physical action including also the rape. That was the scheme which was used in all Georgian villages in South Ossetia that we know from Human Rights Watch, that we know from other eyewitnesses, that we know from people who went through themselves. But so far I cannot give you the quantitative assessment of victims.

Mr. SMITH. In the meeting I had with the Deputy Minister of Interior Golodsta she mentioned that there were at least stories of women being taken off buses. There was one in particular that I guess made the television news while I was there. Have any of those women been recovered, brought back to safety? Secondly, is there any suggestion that anyone was trafficked? As the irregulars and the Russians came in, we saw that during the Kosovo crisis, we saw throughout the Balkan Wars that exploiters found opportunity to steal away women and to put them into human trafficking and forced prostitution.

Mr. BAKRADZE. We still have missing persons, so I cannot confirm whether these missing persons are victims of trafficking or they have been executed or they are just hidden somewhere and will show up later. We have missing people, yet so far I cannot give you exact numbers. When we find everybody, identify everybody, then we will be able to give you more detailed information.

The problem is that so far we are still not allowed to have any access to Georgian villages, remaining Georgian villages in South Ossetia, and that includes also possibly the remaining population being in villages or outside villages in the forests of South Ossetia. We still have almost no access even to those villages which are outside South Ossetia but are within the so-called Russian buffer zone, or security zone, as Russians describe, so which means beyond the Russian fixed checkpoint. That is completely illegal, and I again agree with Matthew Bryza on that, that is completely illegal but that is the de facto reality, and we do not have access beyond checkpoints. We have absolutely no access to South Ossetia itself to check the situation on the ground.

What we know we know from people in mostly international human rights organizations or, for example, Council of Europe observers who are able to take this trip. We know it from them, and we know it from people who managed to escape from there. But we still need to go and make evidences ourselves, which we are not able to do at the moment.

Mr. SMITH. Are there any preliminary estimates, and perhaps you could provide this for the record, as to how many people died, how many have been wounded, and how much property damage really has been imposed?

Mr. BAKRADZE. As of casualties, we know exactly about casualties on the side of Georgian militaries and law enforcement because besides militaries, our law enforcement structures, our police was subject target for very intensive attacks. After the conflict when we still had Russian planes bombarding Georgian territories. One of their targets was usually police stations or police patrols on the roads. That was done on intention, and I have every reason to believe that it was done in order to break down law and order in the country because attacking police can lead to nothing else but the breakdown of law and order and the establishment of chaos in the country. Police was under attack as well as military.

We have casualties among militaries as casualties among police. All in all, that's about 160 militaries and policemen together. As of civilian population, as I said we are still missing people and we still cannot identify what happens with those who we are missing. Right now we have confirmed deaths of up to about 70 people, civilians. But, again, more than that is considered as missing population, and we still don't have information on them.

As of economic damage, again, since we cannot access the area we may have only very preliminary estimations, and that was partly what Undersecretary Bryza gave you. What we know that Georgian villages in South Ossetia are completely destroyed using the bulldozers and technical equipment. Everything is destroyed there.

Mr. SMITH. Now, with regard to the IDPs, that number has fallen significantly—and it was over 100,000 when I was there. What are they returning to? And how are the ones —what's it, over 60,000 still, I think you had indicated earlier—how are they faring? Is the humanitarian aid getting to them? Secondly on that question, we know when people are put to flight that a lot of the individuals, especially the children, suffer posttraumatic stress disorder. Are there grief counselors or people who can help them cope with, the frightfulness of tanks coming down the street?

Mr. BAKRADZE. Absolutely. We had 118,000 registered IDPs. I say registers because we had actually we had even more than that. Now this number is down. It's about 78,000 at the moment, and the rest have returned. Because there are three different categories of IDPs. One, people from Gori and adjacent Georgian towns and villages. Once the Russian occupation of Gori and adjacent villages was over, is over, these people were able gradually to start return back. Because immediately once Russians are out, our police is in, and state is back with its basic functions with supplies, with police, with law and order. Immediately we have been able to start return of our IDPs from those areas, Georgian villages which are in the rest of Georgia, not in or in the vicinity of conflict zones. Majority of these people are already back.

The second category of IDPs is Georgian villages located between Gori and Tskhinvali. Geographically this is southern of Tskhinvali and northern of Gori where there is this so-called security buffer zone of Russian military forces, and the people there still cannot return. But we expect that at least this time Russians will respect

their commitment. During President Sarkozy's trip to Moscow two days ago, again it was a very clear commitment from Russia that they will withdraw this so-called checkpoint and the security zone. Once Russians withdraw from this so-called buffer zone, then we expect that we will be able to bring people back to this area.

The third category of IDPs is IDPs from South Ossetia itself. Those are people from mixed villages, from Georgian villages, and this is the most painful and vulnerable category because unless there is a real perspective of conflict resolution, unless this international remediated process of IDP return starts, these people will not be able to return back because they don't have security guarantees, they have no property, they have no security, they have no conditions. We can take care of people from Georgian, from the rest of Georgia. We will take care of those people from the so-called security buffer zone once Russians are out. But as of the IDPs from the conflict zone itself, there we will need an international directive, international engagement, and the beginning of the genuine process of conflict resolution which will include the return of IDPs.

Mr. SMITH. I have other questions, but I'll just reduce it to: Human Rights Council, have they done anything to investigate, to send investigators? We know how the United States has responded, many of our European allies, how have other countries, particularly in Latin America, Africa, Asia, responded to this crisis?

Mr. BAKRADZE. We are very open for investigation. We offered European Union to set up a special group or commission which will look into all the details and investigate happenings including, the human rights aspect, which is one of the key components for us.

I had a meeting two days ago. I was in New York. I met UN secretary general, and one of the topics of our discussion was having UN mission to Georgia, special fact-finding mission, which would include humanitarian and human rights components to investigate to check what happened on ground. I hope that in the near future we will have this special UN team arriving verifying the facts on the ground. Plus to that, we asked for debates within the UN General Assembly. We asked for debates in Council of Europe. We asked for debates in OSC Parliamentary Assembly and NATO Parliamentary Assembly. We are very open for these debates.

This is coming back to your comment, Mr. Chairman. We are very open for these debates. Truth is on our side, so we are not afraid. I really regret that I do not have my Russian counterparts here today because I believe truth speaks for itself. I would really love to have Russian counterparts here to listen to them how they explain what happened. We are very open for debates. We are very open for any kind of fact-finding mission and investigation, including the one from UN. And I got the promise from UN secretary general that this mission will take place.

As of the reaction of the rest of the world, I had 17 meetings in UN during one day. Mostly I met countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, and I think they understand. At least those whom I met understand that it's not about making choice between Russia and Georgia, because in such case we would be in a very difficult situation. Russia is very important partner. For some countries, Russia is important as a trade partner. For some countries Russia

is important as a security provider. For others there are different reasons. We are a small country—we can never compete.

But what is good is they all understand it's not about making choice for Russia or for Georgia. It's about making choice for principles. The principles which I said that there should be no forceful change of borders. There should be no ethnic cleansing as an instrument to self-determination.

These principles are very important to many countries across the globe, because there are many countries having territorial disputes with their neighbors. There are many countries having separatist enclaves or having ethnic minorities on their territory. If today we all allow a precedent that a big country can use force and change borders of the neighboring country, we are the first victims, but there may be a lot of countries in many different of the world troubled by that.

As well as if we allow ethnic cleansing to be recognized as a legitimate way to self-determination, I expect that many countries will be in trouble after that. What unites these countries—and despite Russia's very active diplomacy and active pressure, there is still only one country, Nicaragua, which says it will recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia—is, I think, the understanding that it's not about Russia or Georgia.

It's about the basic principles on which the international law and order rest today. I hope that with this understanding we will be able to show to Russia how far it went to isolating itself from the world community—not only from United States or European Union, but even isolating itself from its traditional allies. Matthew Bryza mentioned Central Asian countries, mentioned Shanghai Organization, and I think that was a very good example of how far Russia went in isolating itself even from its most important and traditionally loyal allies.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. There will be a robust debate, I'm sure, in Toronto next week during the meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly. A recommendation to you: After the attack on the United States on September 11th in 2001, the U.S. government formed a commission to investigate those tragic events, and the commission members included very distinguished figures from the major parties, and I would urge also the possible participation of non-partisan representatives of civil society. You might consider that while you're about your business. But I thank you so very much for your participation.

Mr. BAKRADZE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. If I just may end with responding to your comment about cooperation with Russia. Of course, I can confirm even today in this critical time that we are ready to cooperate with Russia. But this cooperation should be based on the mutual respect and mutual recognition of sovereignty, territorial integrity and legitimate interests.

Mr. HASTINGS. Interesting that you should put that in. That first meeting that I said that I had with Foreign Minister Lavrov, the first statement out of his mouth was, I appreciate the fact that we are dealing in the arena of mutual respect. I'll never forget it. I'll remind him if I get an opportunity.

Mr. BAKRADZE. It's not our guilt that we are located next to Russia as country. It's not our guilt that we are 5 million but not 500

million. And it's not our guilt that unlike some people in Kremlin, we don't see dissolution of Soviet Union as a disaster and tragedy but we see it as a moment of happiness which gave us freedom, life to many Central and Eastern European countries. Unfortunately, or fortunately, we will not compromise on those values. I will never say dissolution of Soviet Union is a tragedy.

Mr. HASTINGS. All right. I'm going to need to move on to the next panel. Thank you so very much.

Mr. BAKRADZE. Thank you very much.

Mr. HASTINGS. At this time, I'd like to invite the executive director of the Nixon Center, Mr. Paul Saunders, and Mr. Paul Goble, the director of research and publications of the Azerbaijani Diplomatic Academy in Baku. Toward that end, I would appreciate it Mr. Saunders if you would proceed, and then you Mr. Goble. If we have time for questions—the only reason I say time is the fact that we are expecting a vote real soon. I'll listen to you all as will the ranking member, and then we'll try to get some questions in if time permits.

Mr. Saunders.

PAUL SANDERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE NIXON CENTER

Mr. SAUNDERS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, also to the ranking member, for the opportunity to be with you here today. I'll try to be very brief and maybe just hit a few high points from my written statement.

The first point that I'd like to make—Mr. Bryza and the previous witness, the speaker of the Georgian Parliament, went through the long and very complex chronology of events that led up to the events last month. I won't try to do that. I won't try to assess what both of them said. I would like to make one point, however, and from my perspective there are really only two things that are important about what happened. One is that Russia clearly had prepared well in advance for this kind of situation and was waiting for the right opportunity. The second is that the government of Georgia and President Saakashvili personally knowingly gave them that opportunity against the advice of American officials. Without going into all of the ins and outs, that's what I really think the central point is there.

Next, I'd like to focus on what lessons should we draw from this experience, because I think there are a number of important lessons. And after touching on those, I'll try to very briefly talk about some of our policy options.

First of all, frankly, I think the Bush administration has profoundly overpersonalized our relationship with the Georgian government. This was a problem, of course, that executive branches under both administrations tend to have. But I really think there was an undue focus on President Saakashvili. There was excessive and needless praise of President Saakashvili. The president of the United States on March 19th when Mr. Saakashvili was meeting with him in the Oval Office said that he admired the president of Georgia who just a few months before, as we all remember, had declared a state of emergency, forcibly dispersed protesters, shut down TV stations.

And certainly the administration considers Georgia a friend of the United States, but I think it's absolutely unnecessary for the president to say he admires the president of Georgia, and it leads Georgian officials to perhaps think that they have a relationship with the United States that the facts demonstrated they don't. That's dangerous.

Secondly, I think our administration needs to be much more careful in how they put American credibility on the line. Our reputation in the former Soviet Union, to my mind, has been very seriously by the events that transpired. How? The United States accepted from Georgia, from its very tiny army, 2,000 soldiers to send to Iraq. Georgia sent soldiers to a combat zone to help the United States. In Georgia's hour of greatest need, the United States did not reciprocate that commitment. I'm not arguing that we should have. I'm arguing that the administration accepted that assistance from Georgia without thinking through some of the very predictable expectations and consequences that it could have. This conflict in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, they existed at that time. The administration, to my mind, should've thought more carefully about that.

Thirdly, I think we should all learn from this that Russia has a lot more at stake and is willing to pay a much higher price to advance its interests on its borders than the United States does. That doesn't mean that the United States should allow Russia to create a sphere of influence. But it does mean that we need to be extremely careful in the kinds of commitments that we make, the kinds of expectations that we create, and we really need to calibrate our policy to what we're ultimately going to be prepared to do.

Fourthly, I think we've learned some lessons about precedents and vetoes. The Bush administration and others have been saying very energetically that Kosovo is not a precedent, that Russia doesn't have a veto over Georgia joining NATO. The problem with that line of argument is that, we get to decide what we think is a precedent. We get to decide what we think our national interests are. We get to decide what we should do about that. We get to decide how to explain it. We don't get to decide what other people think is a precedent. We don't get to decide how they react to actions that we take. They get to decide. Russia doesn't have a veto over Georgia joining NATO or not joining NATO. It doesn't, and it shouldn't. But if we pursue that course of action, then we need to understand that the United States doesn't have a veto over how Russia decides to respond. I think that's something that has been, unfortunately, demonstrated very clearly during recent weeks.

Finally, one other lesson—and it's useful to reflect back on the 1990s and NATO enlargement in the 1990s, because NATO did something very important at that time which was to insist that aspiring members resolve their internal ethnic conflicts if they wanted to be part of NATO. Because the alliance, did not want to import these problems into its membership. Perhaps in retrospect we should've thought a little bit more about that before pursuing the course that was taken.

Our policy: What do we do about this situation? I think there's a short-term element to it. I think there's a long-term element to

it. In the short term, we need to make the best of a bad situation. We need to salvage what we can of American credibility in this region. To that end, actually I would broadly agree with the position that the administration has taken. We need to provide support to Georgia. We need to continue to articulate our support for Georgia, hopefully more for Georgia and much less for President Saakashvili as we do that.

We need to prevent a situation in which the Kremlin believes that it has deposed the Georgian leadership and that we did nothing about it or were not able to do anything about it.

We also need to ensure that Russia follows through on its commitments and the agreement of the last couple of days to have the troops out of these special security zones by October 1st.

Finally, we need to try to salvage as much as we can of the existing post-Cold War security architecture in Europe. And to do that, I think we're going to have to be very careful. I think that the administration, again, has been correct by all accounts in making a determination that unilaterally attempting to punish Russia won't be a successful course of action.

Over the longer term, we have to do a number of different things. First of all, we cannot condone and should continue to express our displeasure with what Russia did in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. But I don't see how we get those two territories back and make them a part of Georgia again. And, you know, we don't need to announce that. There doesn't need to be a press release from the State Department. But I think we need to acknowledge that to ourselves as we move forward and to be honest with ourselves about what our capabilities are and what they're not. We can't make this issue a defining issue in our relationship with Russia. We have too much else at stake: nuclear proliferation, arms control—there's a long list of other issues.

Secondly, I don't know whether or when President Saakashvili will leave office. Matt Bryza left open the possibility that from his perspective it could be before 2013 when his term runs out. Whatever happens, I don't think we should be excessively concerned when Mr. Saakashvili eventually leaves the scene. I think there are a number of other politicians in the Georgian leadership who are committed to democracy, committed to friendship with the United States, and it would not be a tragedy to see Mr. Saakashvili go.

I'll be very brief and just give kind of telegraphic points for the last few things here.

I think we need to have a real debate about NATO, and I think the Congress can play a very important role in that. I don't think we've had a serious debate about NATO. I think we had a debate about enlargement instead of a debate about NATO. So that's one thing.

And finally, you've already, Mr. Chairman, mentioned the need to engage with Russia. I think we do need to engage with Russia. We need to come up with some creative new ideas for a security architecture in Europe that is going to be sustainable. To be sustainable, they have to buy into it.

So I'll wrap it up there and happily turn over the floor.

Mr. HASTINGS. I appreciate that very much. For the record, I had an opening statement that I did not offer, and I'll accept it by unanimous consent. Any opening statement that Mr. Smith may have should be made part of the record as well as if Senator Cardin didn't. I guess he had some things to say, but his official statement will be made part of the record.

Mr. Goble, thank you so much for being patient. It's hard to apologize for working, but we do have to vote.

**PAUL GOBLE, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS,
AZERBAIJAN DIPLOMATIC ACADEMY IN BAKU**

Mr. GOBLE. Mr. Chairman, thank you for including me. It's a pleasure to appear before you and Congressman Smith again after so many years in a very different capacity. Because I've prepared written remarks, I want to just hit several of the high points.

First, two preliminary observations. What has happened in Georgia is a disaster that was waiting to happen and that can be repeated elsewhere across the former Soviet space. The reality is that the border system that was created in Soviet times was intended to create tension and to justify authoritarianism.

In 1991 the United States welcomed the end of authoritarianism but also said the borders could never change because we were concerned that that could tear things apart. The consequence of that was to delay this problem. But it is going to be a worse future, not a better one.

Second, I would like to call attention to one specific aspect of this conflict that has not been hit very hard. We talk a great deal about the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia. If the Republic of Georgia has territorial integrity, or did, internationally recognized, that included both South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the fact is that the actions of President Saakashvili, however foolish they may have been, were in full congruence with the right of a government to act on its own territory. The actions of the Russian government were a violation of international law because they went across an international boundary.

It is important that we do not make a distinction between territorial integrity that we're talking about now and territorial integrity which existed prior to August 1st. That has tended to get lost in most of the media and most of the discussion in this city.

Now, there are many lessons, and those are what I want to end with to be very brief. A large number of countries are going to have to learn lessons from this conflict. Georgia, along with its neighbors, is going to have to learn one that many of the post-Soviet states have—and that is that 1991 did not repeal history, and it did not repeal geography. It's best that you try to find a way to live with your neighbors, as unpleasant as they may be and as much as you hate them for what they have done. That's just a reality.

The Russian Federation, however, is going to have to learn—and how well we can teach it is a big question—that it cannot be a full member of the international community if it is not willing to play by the rules. The fact is that invading other countries, like killing people, is wrong. It is terribly important—many references have been made to getting to the essentials. The reality is that the Russian government engaged in an act of aggression across an inter-

national boundary. That doesn't mean we nuke Moscow, but it means we recognize the fact. And trying to make this into a moral equivalency does not justify an act of violation of international law of the kind that the Russian government has engaged in.

But I would like to end by just giving you what I see are the five lessons we should learn and give you three policy prescriptions that I think are essential

First, despite all our hopes and expectations, 1991 was not the end of history. Ending communism didn't end conflict, and the fact is we're going to have more conflict in this part of the world in the future than we did in the past. As much as people don't want to believe that, that's going to happen.

Second, and I will second Paul Saunders' comment, we have got to end our personalization of relations with foreign leaders. It is not only that we have sometimes sacrificed our own ideals and interests in the name of maintaining a friendship with the leader of a large country—the Russian Federation—but we have found ourselves made hostage to the actions of a leader of a smaller country who thinks we will have no choice given what we have often said. We have been made hostage, in this case and some others.

Third, we need to learn how to deliver clear and consistent messages to leaders and populations. The fact is we have delivered a consistent message to Georgia over this period. We have had statements about how we always defend our friends from very senior people, and we have had specific warnings not to do it. We have had people going in and providing military instruction, and we have said, "But you don't want to use these forces if someone invades your country." The fact is that if you don't have a common that is delivered the same way every time, you have a problem. There's another way about delivering a message: It is one of the great tragedies, and it's one of the reasons I'm no longer in the U.S. government, that we have destroyed U.S. international broadcasting; we lack the ability to reach the peoples of this area. The Voice of America, Radio Free Liberty, all need to be expanded. They're more necessary now than were 25 years ago, and unfortunately in the last 10 years we have watched them be destroyed. That's one of the reasons I took early retirement and was in Estonia, where I had the pleasure of meeting you, Mr. Chairman, and am now in Azerbaijan, because I'm trying to what I can't do on the airwaves by being there. This is critically important.

Fourth, we need to insist on universal standards of international behavior. That has two implications, neither of which is entirely welcome. First, we cannot credibly ask other people to obey the rules if we don't obey the rules ourselves. We have to be very careful when we take action that we don't do things that violate the rules, because that subverts our possibility of asking anyone else to behave. We have done that, tragically, a number of times. Second, we need to understand that when the Russian government currently talks about double standards, and does all the time, the Russian government complains that we're engaging in double standards. The fact is the Russian government wants to be treated by a different standard than anyone else. It wants us to recognize that it has a right to use military force across an international boundary, to illegally distribute passports in countries which do not

have an agreement with dual citizenship or even constitutionally ban it, as is in the case of Ukraine. But the Russians insist that because they're big and important that has to be.

Fifth, we need to recognize something else. All too many times in the last month we have heard people talk about what's going on and what we should do with respect to the Russian Federation in terms of the risk of a new Cold War. Let me tell you that invocations of a new Cold War are precisely designed to force the United States not to do anything. It is quite amazing to me that with every other country in the world we know we have things we agree with, and we know we have things we disagree with. That's going to be true with Russia, too. It was even true during the Cold War. Invocation of a new Cold War is a way, an act, of public diplomacy intimidation against the United States people and against the United States government.

I would recommend three things that we need to do to get out of this current problem we're in. First, I agree that we are not going to see South Ossetia and Abkhazia reincorporated immediately. That does not mean there isn't something we should do. In 1932, Secretary of State Simpson announced that it was American policy never to recognize border changes brought about by force alone. That led to the non-recognition policy, which was declared in 1940, for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. It is my view that the United States government should immediately proclaim a new non-recognition policy that the United States does not recognize the forcible inclusion of these countries by military is a violation of a policy that we are supposed to have had online since 1932. It is something that would be easy to do, would be fully understood, and it would signal to those people and to the Georgian people that we have accepted a reality even if we can't change it immediately.

Second, we need to expand our ties with the peoples of this entire region and our expertise on these areas. It is a tragedy how few people there are who speak Georgian, who have lived in Georgia, who know the region or any of these countries. It should never happen again, as it did during this crisis, that the Department of State should announce that it could not spare Mr. Bryza to take a particular trip because it didn't have anyone else on whom it could count here in Washington for expertise. When you don't have a bench, it's really tough to field the first team. But we have got to address that. I believe the way you do that is to rebuild our area studies programs by the revival of the National Defense Education Act Title VI program which was responsible for a lot of us getting trained.

Finally, it seems to me that recognizing that the borders of the republics of the former Soviet Union were drawn in order to create problems rather than to resolve them that the United States needs to begin to understand that the right of nations to self-determination is also important and not just border stability. When we declared border stability was above everything else in February of 1992, when we said that we would never recognize any secession, we set in play the forces that ultimately led to the destruction of Grozny in the genocide of the Chechen people, first by Mr. Yeltsin and then by Mr. Putin. It is in many ways our fault because we sent the signals.

I believe we need under the current circumstances to begin to think about how we create mechanisms of negotiation and of conversation so that the rights of nations to self-determination, the right of peoples to democratic choice, will be respected rather than sacrificed as they have sometimes been in recent years on the altar of territorial stability. But if we're going to say territorial inviolability, then let us make it very clear that if a country does something on its own territory we have said that's its choice, instead of as we have done in the Georgian crisis acting as if Moscow has an equal right to be on the territory of the Republic of Georgia as the Republic of Georgia government has. This is in no way an endorsement by me of some of the decisions that Mr. Saakashvili has made with respect to the media, with respect to military action, or with respect to his moves against the opposition.

Having said that, we need to take seriously that Georgia is a full member of the international community, and that if we're going to recognize the rights of states and the territorial inviolability of their borders, then Georgia had a right too, and it has been brutally violated by the Russian Federation and not because of anything the Georgian government did, however unfortunate it was.

Mr. HASTINGS. I thank you, Paul. We're going to have to proceed apace to vote. I would like to make it clear that all of our testimonies will be on our Web site, and your full written statements will be included therein. It would be my hope that, to the extent that it would be possible, that I could have a casual meeting with either or both of you, even if it requires coming to Estonia. Thank you.

Mr. GOBLE. It would be nice. Thank you.

Mr. SAUNDERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.



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