

Remarks on the Situation in Georgia August 15, 2008

Good morning. I've just received an update from my national security team on the situation in Georgia. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is in Tbilisi. She's conferring with President Saakashvili and expressing America's wholehearted support for Georgia's democracy.

She will be traveling to Crawford, where I will meet her, and she will bring me up to date on what she has seen and what she heard in Georgia as well as in Paris—I mean, in France; she did not go to Paris. Secretary of Defense Gates will keep me briefed on the humanitarian assistance to the people of Georgia. We're working closely with our partners in Europe and other members of the G-7 to bring a resolution to this crisis.

The United States and our allies stand with the people of Georgia and their democratically elected Government. Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected. Moscow must honor its commitment to withdraw its invading forces from all Georgian territory.

Some Americans listening today may wonder why events taking place in a small country halfway around the world matter to the United States. In the years since it's gained independence after the Soviet Union's collapse, Georgia's become a courageous democracy. Its people are making the tough choices that are required of free societies. Since the Rose Revolution in 2003, the Georgian people have held free elections, opened up their economy, and built the foundations of a successful democracy.

Georgia has sent troops to Afghanistan and Iraq to help others achieve the liberty that they struggled so hard to attain. To further strengthen their democracy, Georgia has sought to join the free institutions of the West. The people of Georgia have cast their lot with the free world, and we will not cast them aside.

Georgia's emergence as a young democracy has been part of an inspiring and hopeful new chapter in Europe's history. Europe has moved beyond the world wars that killed millions of people and the cold war that divided its citizens between two superpowers. Every administration since the end of the cold war has worked with European partners to extend the reach of liberty and prosperity. And now, for the first time in memory, Europe is becoming a continent that is whole, free, and at peace.

Unfortunately, Russia has tended to view the expansion of freedom and democracy as a threat to its interests. The opposite is true. Free and prosperous societies on Russia's borders will advance Russia's interests by serving as sources of stability and economic opportunity.

We hope Russia's leaders will recognize that a future of cooperation and peace will benefit all parties. The cold war is over. The days of satellite states and spheres of influence are behind us. A contentious relationship with Russia is not in America's interest, and a contentious relationship with America is not in Russia's interest.

With its actions in recent days, Russia has damaged its credibility and its relations with the nations of the free world. Bullying and intimidation are not acceptable ways to conduct foreign policy in the 21st century. Only Russia can decide whether it will now put itself back on the path of responsible nations or continue to pursue a policy that promises only confrontation and isolation. To begin to repair its relations with the United States and Europe and other nations and to begin restoring its place in the world, Russia must respect the freedom of its neighbors.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:13 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mikheil

Saakashvili of Georgia. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

The President's Radio Address *August 15, 2008*

Good morning. For more than a week, the people of the nation of Georgia have withstood assault from the Russian military. The world has watched with alarm as Russia invaded a sovereign, neighboring state and threatened a democratic government elected by its people. This act is completely unacceptable to the free nations of the world.

The United States and our allies stand with the people of Georgia and their democratically elected Government. We insist that Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity be respected. And Moscow must honor its pledge to withdraw its invading forces from all Georgian territory.

Earlier this week, I directed a series of steps to demonstrate America's solidarity with the Georgian people and to help bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict. On Thursday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was in France, where she conferred with President Sarkozy about the diplomatic effort that the French Government is leading on behalf of the European Union.

Yesterday she was in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi, where she conveyed America's support for Georgia's democratic Government. And next week, Secretary Rice will travel to Brussels, where she will meet with the foreign ministers of our NATO allies and EU officials to continue our efforts to rally the free world in defense of a free Georgia.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates is overseeing a mission by the United States military to provide humanitarian aid for the people of Georgia. In recent days, U.S.

cargo planes carrying humanitarian supplies have arrived in Georgia. In the days ahead, we will continue using U.S. aircraft and other assets as needed to deliver more humanitarian and medical supplies. Russia has agreed to let in all forms of humanitarian assistance, and Russia must keep open all lines of communication and transport, including seaports, airports, roads, and airspace for civilian transit and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

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Since the Rose Revolution in 2003, the Georgian people have held free elections, opened up their economy, and built the foundations of a successful democracy. Georgia has sent troops to Afghanistan and Iraq to help others achieve the liberty that they struggled so hard to attain. To further strengthen their democracy, Georgia has sought to join the free institutions of the West. The people of Georgia have cast their lot with the free world, and we will not cast them aside.

Georgia's emergence as a young democracy has been part of an inspiring and hopeful new chapter in Europe's history. Europe has moved beyond the world wars that killed millions of people and the cold war that divided its citizens between two superpowers. For the first time in memory,