



A Georgian sniper takes aim at Ossetian soldiers in South Ossetia to make sure that a small Georgian army unit can move forward. (Creative Commons Photo by Jonathan Alpeyrie)

Situation Report: The Russian Crisis Update

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Update #18 (current as of 11:45 p.m., Saturday, September 13, 2008)

Analysis

Georgia

- Russian troops have withdrawn to within the boundaries of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, abandoning Poti, Senaki, and Zugdidi. Russia has agreed to (and in fact insists upon) the rapid deployment of international peacekeepers to Georgia (but not on the lands of South Ossetia and Abkhazia), and says that Sarkozy has committed the EU to ensuring that Georgia does not again use force in the region.
- Russian recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia stands, but Moscow has been disappointed by the refusal of any state other than Nicaragua to recognize the republics. South Ossetian President Kokoiti said that he wanted South Ossetia to join Russia—but then immediately took it back. Abkhazian President Bagapsh has said that Abkhazia does not wish to join Russia—but does intend to join the Russian-Belarussian union.
- Russia has announced that it will station 3,800 soldiers each in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and has stated that they will be regular forces of the Russian Federation and not peacekeepers. Abkhazia has denied that the Black Sea Fleet will transfer its home port from Sevastopol to Sukhumi.
- Both Russian and Abkhazian leaders have asserted that Georgian “partisans” and/or terrorists have conducted attacks or are planning to conduct attacks in Russia and Abkhazia. South Ossetian President Kokoiti has said that he intends to lay claim to additional lands beyond the current South Ossetian border in Georgia. Russian President Dmitrii Medvedev has said that Russia will not face any separatist problems in Ingushetia, Daghestan, or elsewhere unless foreign forces intervene in Russia’s internal affairs. But Pravda reports that separatists within Georgia are about to blow the country apart.
- The Russians believe that they have tricked the EU into guaranteeing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. With 7,600 Russian troops in the republics and EU observers on the Georgian side, there is absolutely nothing that Tbilisi could do to reclaim the territories, and Moscow may claim that the EU has de facto accepted the republics’ independence by deploying forces to monitor the new “international” borders. This may become the *faute de mieux* position if Nicaragua remains the only state other than Russia to recognize the republics.
- “Provocations” will be a weekly occurrence in the region for as long as the Russians choose—and possibly longer. It is not at all clear that Moscow can control Sukhumi or Tskhinvali completely, or that Bagapsh and Kokoiti can control all of their people—incidents are likely even if all leaders attempt to behave responsibly, which is unlikely. When “provocations” occur after the deployment of EU and OSCE observers, what will Moscow do or demand? The game remains very much on.
- Moscow is now probably relying on internal Georgian problems, exacerbated by the pressure Russia continues to exert, to bring Saakashvili down. What happens then? It is not immediately apparent that the Russians have a coherent plan and, if so, what it is, for a post-Saakashvili Georgia.
- Like it or not, Europe now owns this conflict, and the conflict will in all probability continue. European forces will be sufficient to involve the credibility and honor of the EU but probably insufficient to prevent the Russians from claiming that Georgia is violating the agreement. Europe and the US must start now considering their options if the conflict escalates after the deployment of international monitors.

Russian Military Developments

- Russia is conducting very large scale military exercises across the breadth of the Russian Federation. It is conducting two army-level exercises simultaneously—one in the Privolga-Ural region and the other in the Far East region. Both exercises emphasize long road-marches and air movements to the training areas and highlight efforts to improve the deployability of Russian military formations. Russian railroad troops, also key to the movement of almost all of Russia's ground formations, have also been rehearsing outside of these two army-level exercises. Exercises involve combined-arms training incorporating ground-attack fixed-wing aviation and anti-aircraft systems, and culminate in force-on-force battalion combats. The 15th Separate Motor Rifle Brigade (Peacekeeping), elements of which fought in South Ossetia, has been involved in the training, which is said to incorporate lessons from that fight. Considering that the North Caucasus Military District completed a large-scale exercise in July (including rehearsals for the operations in Georgia), Russia has conducted three large-scale maneuvers, including air-ground coordination, live fire exercises, and force-on-force exercises, as well as pre-exercise deployments, in the last three months. These exercises have involved upwards of 20,000 Russian troops of all services (conservative estimate), including the Strategic Rocket Forces.
- The exercises appear to emphasize not only deployment, but mobilization—in each major exercise and many minor exercises, Russian commanders emphasize that mobilized reservists (i.e., not volunteers) were involved. The scale and scope of the exercises means that they were very likely preplanned before the Georgia conflict, although it is quite possible that they were adjusted after the outbreak of hostilities.
- This is a very intensive (and expensive) training program, involving the expenditure of a lot of ammunition, the burning of a lot of fuel, and putting a lot of miles on equipment. I have not yet checked to see how it compares to previous years, but a military that maintains this kind of effort can improve dramatically in a few years' time, particularly in hard-to-detect or quantify areas such as command-and-control, combined arms coordination, air-ground coordination, the ability to plan and conduct decentralized operations (which is clearly a priority in these exercises), and other niche capabilities. These exercises track with the notion that Russia intends to develop a very skilled and precise but relatively small professional military that can be rapidly mobilized and deployed from one end of the federation to the other, but probably not very far beyond the federation's borders.

Russia-NATO Relations

- NATO leaders are talking a good game, but not all NATO countries are playing it: Belgium, Norway, and Germany have all continued military-to-military connections with Russia at low levels. In each case, the connection was unnecessary—a Belgian frigate visited St. Petersburg; a senior Bundeswehr officer attended the opening of a war cemetery in Krasnodar; Norwegian ships exercised together with Russian ships. In each case, the Russian military made much of it. If NATO is serious about sending a message, these sorts of apparent trivialities send needlessly mixed messages to Moscow.

Russian Bilateral Military Developments

- The last month has seen the deepening of Russian military relations with Venezuela, Syria, and Iran. The relationship with Venezuela is the most obvious, with the announcement of planned naval exercises in November, of the planned stationing of anti-submarine aircraft in Venezuela soon, and the flight of two Russian strategic bombers to Venezuela that has already occurred. Those bombers conducted flights in international waters in the Atlantic and the Caribbean. A Russian auxiliary ship sailed to the Syrian port of Tartus, worked on rebuilding decayed mooring and maintenance facilities, and returned to station in the Black Sea. And reportage about the provision of advanced Russian air-defense systems to Iran becomes ever more complicated—some Israelis now assert that Iran already has the S-300 system. Both Russia and Iran now deny that Iran will obtain the system from Russia, but a Russian military expert disagrees and says that the system will likely move from Russia via Belarus to Iran.

Diplomatic Developments Among Russia's Allies

- Strains between Russia and Belarus appear to be increasing, with Lukashenko releasing his political prisoners in an apparent attempt to move closer to the West. He also publicly praised his own wisdom in maintaining Belarus's formal independence from Moscow and has delayed recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia until next month at the earliest.
- Moscow is clearly disappointed that none of the other CIS member states have recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and that even Venezuela has only supported the Russian decision without copying it.
- On the other hand, Russia is working hard to improve relations with Armenia and has made much of the large-scale joint military exercises it is now holding with Kazakhstan.
- Both China and Iran have remained relatively quiet about the Georgia crisis, which has also likely displeased Moscow. Cuba, on the other hand, is ostentatiously moving closer to Moscow offering support and asking for money and help against America (but not yet for military assistance).
- It is not yet clear whether these strains will cause Putin/Medvedev to recalculate.

Developments in the Black Sea and Ukraine

- Tensions within the Ukrainian government are soaring and Moscow prefers to allow those internal dynamics to function now without adding more fuel to the fire. Putin has downplayed the likelihood of a Russian move in the Crimea, and Russian media is focusing on the imminent collapse of the government in Kiev more than the iniquities of the Ukrainians, as had been the previous focus. Moscow continues to be very displeased with the intensified NATO presence in the Black Sea, but continues to see no regional response. The deployment of strategic bombers to Venezuela and the overflight by those bombers of the Caribbean Basin was probably meant as an indirect response to the increase of NATO naval presence off Russia's shores.

Developments in Georgia

On 4 September, Rossiiskaya Gazeta interviewed General Staff spokesman Anatolii Nogovitsyn. The portion of the transcript posted on the General Staff website is as follows:

- *R[ossiiskaya Gazeta]: Anatolii Alekseevich, please explain this strange contradiction. The leadership of our country says that it has completed military operations in South Ossetia and the withdrawal of troops from the territory of this republic. At the same time in the West they are loudly demanding that Russia withdrawal its forces from there. What is the real situation?*
- *Novogitsyn: The stumbling block lies in the different interpretations of administrative boundaries and security zones. That is, we are talking about the conceptual framework. As is known, North and South Ossetia are joined by the Roki Tunnel. Military personnel built this unique lifeline. After Georgia's aggression elements of the 58th Army moved through it to Tskhinvali.*
- *When resolutions were agreed to in a quadrilateral format after the conflict of 1992 about the introduction into the region of peacekeeping forces, a basing agreement was concluded. This document was signed by representatives of Russia, South Ossetia, Georgia, and North Ossetia.*
- *Why is this complex? We held that the same people live in South and North Ossetia, divided only by a border. The peacekeeping contingent included representatives of North Ossetia. For each side a zone of responsibility was designated more or less as they desired. In some places it coincided with the administrative boundaries of the republic, in*

other places not. Peacekeeping posts were also permitted on the territory of Georgia according to this agreement.

- *It so happened that several posts from the Georgian side appeared on the territory of the compact areas of residence of Georgians in South Ossetia. Tbilisi provided additional financing and development to these enclaves. And they distanced themselves actually on the social plane from the Ossetians.*
- *Precisely that configuration of the zone of responsibility of the peacekeepers—somewhat different from the administrative boundaries—is generating certain problems today. We established a post in the Mosabruni population center. But Georgia had already tried to send its police forces there, after all the military actions and declaration of South Ossetia’s independences. Our paratroopers had to drive the Georgian police from this peacekeeping post. And this is not the only disputed territory. The West is attempting to speculate on these “points.”*
- *At the same time, Russia is fulfilling the Medvedev-Sarkozy plan in a manner that is above reproach. In the first stage, we were supposed to withdraw our units to the boundaries of the zone of responsibility of the peacekeeping contingent. This was done. In the second phase, we were to withdraw the troops that had been sent to reinforce the “blue helmets.” Remember that the 58th Army entered South Ossetia by order of the Supreme Command. This occurred after there had already been the first injuries among the peacekeepers and it had become clear that this was a large-scale aggression and the insignificant task force of our “blue helmets”—588 personnel without heavy equipment—had to be saved.*
- *RG: And what kind of equipment are our peacekeepers in South Ossetia permitted?*
- *Nogovitsyn: Armored personnel carriers, trucks, other vehicles necessary to patrol and fulfill the various tasks at stationary posts and control points.*
- *We have nevertheless withdrawn our troops from the region?*
- *When the president of Russia gave the order to end the operation to force Georgia to peace, our troops were already withdrawing to the boundary of the zone of responsibility of the peacekeepers and were on the outskirts of Gori. We did not enter the town itself. But in several directions, in particular the direction Gori-Tbilisi, Georgian troops appeared right behind our units. And there the Western media started to disseminate outright lies. For example, it was reported that a group of Russian armored vehicles, as many as 50 tanks, were marching on Tbilisi.*
- *In reality, Georgian tanks are the same type as Russian tanks. They are T-72s, which are distinguished from ours only by their markings. At the approach of our troops they turned around and moved toward Tbilisi. Thus were provoked rumors that Russian armored vehicles were moving on the Georgian capital.*
- *Now the units of the 58th Army have left the territory of South Ossetia—precisely at the time designated by the president. Now only our peacekeepers remain there.¹*

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- Russian special services have reported on 4 September that international terrorists are trying to get into South Ossetia and Abkhazia to commit terrorist acts. Though he had previously named Al Qaeda, FSB director Alexander Bortnikov is refusing to specify which international terrorists, but cautions that they will go after infrastructure. The FSB claims to have recently broken up the “bulgarii jamaat” in Bashkirstan. The FSB also claims to have stopped potential attacks by an Al Qaeda affiliated group against the northern Caucasus, including in Karbardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, and Stavropol. In an fight against insurgents in Dagestan, a passer-by was killed.² Foreign Minister Lavrov confirmed and expanded on these statements on 6 September.³
 - 5 September: OSCE military observers have returned to Georgia and had the opportunity to patrol the road leading

from Tskhinvali to the Georgia village of Karaleti. The OSCE declared access to this zone a priority and reiterated an earlier announcement to send 100 observers to this zone soon. Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister announced that Georgia not only welcomes international observers, but demands their presence and that all such forces, including from the EU and the OSCE, have access to the entirety of disputed zones. The Russian Foreign Ministry announced that in addition to the OSCE observers, Russia offers to include in the security zone around South Ossetia an international police force with the possibility of support from the EU. This idea of a civil police force, suggested to the OSCE on September 4th, “goes in the direction of the realization of the Medvedev-Sarkozy plan in the aspect of the creation of international mechanisms barring the repetition of Georgian aggression and maintaining the solid security of South Ossetia.” (“идет в русле реализации плана Медведева-Саркози в части создания международных механизмов по недопущению повторения агрессии Грузии и обеспечению прочной безопасности Южной Осетии”.) Russia continues to differ with the EU on where the international police forces should be active, with Russia maintaining they should be in the security zones around South Ossetia and Abkhazia, while the EU thinks they should be on the territory of those two regions (which the EU regards as part of Georgia) as well. Lavrov declared that a question for Tskhinvali and Sukhumi, and pointed out that the legitimate version of the peace plan, signed by Medvedev and Sarkozy, allows an international discussion about the security and stability of the two regions, not in the regions. The South Ossetia Foreign Minister, Murat Dzhioev, has declared that they will only allow Russian peacekeepers and no international forces, as they do not trust them.⁴

- On 9 September, Medvedev met with Defense Minister Anatolii Serdiukov, and told him that the 8 September meeting with Sarkozy had produced some additions to the 12 August agreement, in particular, the withdrawal of Russian forces from the security zone and the deployment of international observers from the OSCE and the EU there. Medvedev said that Russian military presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia was in the capacity of peace support operations, and that he expected to establish diplomatic relations with the republics very soon. Serdiukov in turn reported that he had negotiated with the governments of Abkhazia and South Ossetia to maintain 3,800 Russian troops in each republic, to be deployed in the Ossetian towns of Java and Tskhinvali and in the current locations of Russian forces in Abkhazia.⁵

On 9 September, the Russians made a number of announcements about the August conflict with Georgia:

- *Georgian forces outnumbered Russian peacekeepers, according to the Russians, by 14 to 1 (i.e. 7,000 Georgian troops against 500 Russians).*⁶
- *Georgian headquarters for the operation was at Gori, where the radar and anti-aircraft Bug-M1 system that destroyed four Russian aircraft was based.*⁷
- *The General Staff does not have information about the continuation of Israeli assistance to Georgia, but it reminded listeners that Israel had helped Georgia in the past.*⁸
- *“In providing assistance to Georgia, the US has established the precedent of participating in armed conflict on its side.” The word is simply “assistance” and there is no implication of military assistance.*⁹
- On September 10, Lavrov declared that the mandates for OSCE and UN observers in Abkhazia and South Ossetia should be coordinated with the authorities of those republics. The OSCE and UN presence in the republics will be as it was up to August 7th. They will be joined by at least 200 EU and OSCE observers. Meanwhile, Abkhaz president Sergei Bagapsh announced that the employees of the “UN Mission in Georgia” in Abkhazia should either change the organization’s name or leave Abkhazia. He has asked this to be brought up with the UN. However, Bagapsh stressed that the Abkhaz government has normal relations with the UN mission, which has 165 employees. He also announced that Abkhazia will coordinate its foreign policy with Russia. He re-affirmed Abkhazia’s desire for Russian troops to be stationed in Abkhazia, especially in the Kodori Gorge, and Lavrov clarified that the 7600 troops to be stationed in the republics (3800 in each) will not be “peacemakers” (Никакого отношения к миротворчеству они не имеют), but rather active divisions of the RF armed forces. He announced that the Russian posts along the Senaki-

Poti line will be drawn back within 7 days from Sept. 8th because of the guarantee of no force that the Sarkozy convinced Saakashvili to sign. Russian troops in the security zones will only be pulled back after international observers come in. It should take them 10 days and they will do it by the Oct. 10th deadline they agreed to. However, Lavrov said that the agreement signed on Sept. 8th in Tbilisi, to which Sarkozy and Barroso were party, that declares EU observers will also be on South Ossetian and Abkhazian territory is invalid. "First, it is a lie. Second, it is an absolutely unfair attempt to not honestly explain to Mr. Saakashvili what obligations the European Union has taken on itself and what obligations Russia has taken on itself, and be under the thumb of Mr. Saakashvili" (Во-первых, это неправда. Во-вторых, это абсолютно недобросовестная попытка не объяснять по-честному господину Саакашвили, какие обязательства взял на себя Евросоюз и какие обязательства взяла на себя Россия, а идти на поводу у господина Саакашвили). Russia will not recognize that agreement.¹⁰

- On 2 September, Pravda reported that the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia has resulted in a renewed interest in autonomy and independence by several nationalities in Georgia, all of whom have suffered repression under the current government in Tbilisi. The main strongholds are in the following regions: Adjara, Javakheti, Mingrelia, Svanetia and the "Azerbaijani" Marmoul'ski region. There are calls for the return of Aslan Abashidze in Adjara because Tbilisi has not dealt honestly with the issues of Adjara's autonomy. There are laws on the book, but they allow the Georgian president to revoke it easily, and Adjara citizens don't trust the Georgian government. Mingrelia's situation is analogous to Adjara's; Georgia special forces "fix" suspicious activity. The Mingrelian intelligentsia is preparing to demand an easing of Tbilisi's pressures. Ossetia is also not yet resolved; Eduard Kokoity recently declared that they intend to "restore not only the territorial integrity of South Ossetia, but even further. We have very serious questions about the land that earlier belonged to Ossetia. I intend to return them." (Мы не только восстановим территориальную целостность Южной Осетии, но и пойдем дальше. У нас очень серьезные вопросы по тем землям, которые раньше принадлежали Осетии. Я намерен их вернуть.) In mountain Svanetia, on the border with Abkhazia, there are also insurgents who fought off the Georgian mass cleaning (массовые зачистки) last year and though the insurgency was officially put down, it is not over. In southeastern Georgia, the Azeris and Armenians would also like to escape the oppression of Tbilisi. Armenia is prepared to support its diaspora in Georgia because Georgia has recently harmed its economy by making transport of Russian gas harder. Georgia companies are stealing land from Armenian and Azerbaijani peasants in Georgia, while all political positions go to ethnic Georgians and Azeri and Armenian youth are kept from high schools. If the Armenians and Azeris within Georgia would join together to fight against Tbilisi's oppression, they would succeed. Tbilisi's problems are so bad that "today no one may give the guarantee that Georgia will not collapse tomorrow. At least, [only] with outside help it might become a reality. And for this Georgians should be grateful solely to Mikheil Saakashvili and the Americans who trained him on the Caucasian people." (И сегодня никто не может дать гарантии, что завтра Грузия не развалится. По крайней мере, при помощи извне это может стать реальностью. И этим грузины должны быть благодарны исключительно Михаилу Саакашвили и натаскивавшим его на кавказские народы американцам.)¹¹
- On 13 September, Russian forces announced that they were starting to withdraw from positions in the security zone outside of Abkhazia, with Georgian media stating that they had left Poti and were pulling out of the Khobi and Senaki areas of Western Georgia.¹²
- On 13 September, Georgian Minister of Internal Affairs announced that Georgian police along the Abkhazian and Ossetian borders would be replaced by Georgian special forces troops after the killing of two policemen on patrol (including one the Georgians say was killed in Zugdidi by Abkhazians, which the Abkhaz deny).
- Medvedev said on September 6 that South Ossetia and Abkhazia are examples of democracy and civil order.¹³
- South Ossetian President Kokoity said on 11 September, "Yes, clearly, we will become part of Russia and we do not want to make some sort of independent Ossetia because historically it was very difficult when our predecessors made such a choice."¹⁴ Later he said, "I was obviously misunderstood. We do not want to abandon our independence, which we have gained at the price of colossal suffering, and South Ossetia will not become part of Russia. Yes, many in South Ossetia talk about unifying with North Ossetia within the Russian Federation, and no one can

forbid the expression of such thoughts. But South Ossetia does not intend to become part of Russia and aims to develop civilized interstate relations within the framework of international law with all states.”¹⁵ He added, “We plan to establish closer relations with Russia as a way of bringing South Ossetia into the Russo-Belarusian alliance.”¹⁶ Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov later emphasized that South Ossetia did not intend to become part of Russia.¹⁷

- On 1 September Saakashvili asked the US to impose sanctions on investors in Abkhazia.¹⁸
- On 1 September, Georgia formally requested the CIS to withdraw its peacekeeping forces from Abkhazia on the grounds that “Russia, by its actions against Georgia, has destroyed the previously existing peacekeeping arrangement foreseen in the agreement” between Georgia, Russia, and Abkhazia.¹⁹
- Medvedev said that Russia’s recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia would not lead to separatist problems in Russia, specifically in Dagestan and Ingushetia, unless foreign forces involve themselves in those areas.²⁰
- Retired Russian General Boris Gromov, now Governor of the Moscow Region, said that even the provision of advanced American weapons to Georgia would not increase Georgia’s fighting abilities, because “The armed forces of Georgia have never been able to fight well.” Gromov was the last commander of the Soviet forces in Afghanistan who oversaw their withdrawal in 1989.²¹
- Russian MoFA spokesman said on 8 September that America’s refusal to recognize the security zone around South Ossetia, and also to place an embargo on the provision of weapons to Tbilisi, was “unconstructive.” “If Georgia is rearmed without limits then we can foresee the consequences such activities might have in the explosive Caucasus region, particularly in light of recent experience.”²²
- Lavrov said on 9 September that the EU had taken responsibility for ensuring that Georgia does not use force with regard to Ossetia and Abkhazia.²³
- Russia established diplomatic relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia on 9 September.²⁴ Russia also agreed on texts of treaties of friendship with Abkhazia and South Ossetia.²⁵ These treaties permit the establishment of Russian military bases in the two republics.²⁶
- On 10 September, Abkhazia announced that “Georgian partisans” had made an attempt on the life of a regional Abkhazian commander.²⁷ Abkhazia is also bringing to trial a resident of Sukhumi accused of spying for Tbilisi.²⁸
- President Bagapsh of Abkhazia said on 11 September that there was no question of Abkhazia applying for associate status in the Russian Federation: “The question is about the independent republic of Abkhazia.”²⁹ He did, however, say that Abkhazia would apply to join the Russo-Belarusian Union, and possibly also the CIS and the OSCE.³⁰

Russian Military Developments

- Smolensk Railroad troops conducted a mobilization exercise on 2 September.³¹ Railroad troops also exercised in the Ural district.³²
- 2,000 Russian and Kazakh troops exercised together in Chelyabinsk (Russia) as part of the Center-2008 exercises. The exercises included 70 T-72 tanks, 30 armored fighting vehicles, Grad rocket launchers, Nona and Gvozdik self-propelled artillery, anti-aircraft and engineer troops. Units involved included the tank regiment (239th guards tank regiment) of 34th Motorized Rifle Division and the 4th Mechanized Brigade of Kazakhstan.³³ Exercises involved expending a full combat load of ammunition and a jump by a company of the 31st Separate Air Assault Brigade (Ul’yanovsk air assault company) out of two Il-76 aircraft.³⁴ Elements of the ballistic missile regiment of the Ural district participated in the Center 2008 exercises as well, conducting anti-aircraft exercises.³⁵ The exercises also involve tactical training for the 15th Peacekeeping Brigade and exercises at the army, division, and regimental levels.³⁶ The exercise includes air maneuvers with Il-76MD transports, Su-24 ground-attack aircraft, Mi-24 assault helicopters and

Mi-8 transport helicopters, modernized Su-27 and MiG-31 fighters—60 aircraft in all.³⁷ The exercises also involved force-on-force maneuvers, pitting an aggressor force trying to seize an “energy-rich” area 60 km deep against a defender.³⁸ Su-24 and Su-27 aircraft conducted ground-attacks guided by forward air controllers deployed with the ground forces with accuracy of 10-15 meters.³⁹

- The Strategic Rocket Forces planned a command-and-control exercise for 2-5 September to “work out questions of controlling the conduct of military operations using conventional means of destruction and nuclear weapons.”⁴⁰
- Marines of the Black Sea Fleet began a two-week exercise on 3 September, particularly the “black berets” of the Air Assault Battalion commanded by LTC Vladimir Karpushenko. A life-like artificial village was built to facilitate the exercise.⁴¹
- The Pacific Ocean Fleet and Far Eastern military districts have also been conducting complex sea-air-land maneuvers, including the live-fire of anti-ship cruise missiles.⁴²
- The 15th Separate Motor Rifle (Peacekeeping) Brigade conducted a tactical exercise on 12 September, incorporating the lessons of Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia. The exercise involved the brigade, Army aviation including Su-24 aircraft and Mi-8 and Mi-24 helicopters, and units of the internal forces. Lieutenant General Valerii Evnevich, Deputy Commander of the Ground Forces of the Russian Federation, said, “I want to emphasize that in accord with the planned training of the Ground Forces this exercise was planned last year. However, obviously, the concept of the exercise takes into account the experience of the use of peacekeeping forces fulfilling tasks in South Ossetia involved in forcing Georgia to peace....You yourselves saw, he said, turning to the journalists, that in the final phase of the exercise attack and army aviation conducted missions together with the peacekeeping troops, as well as artillery. The organization of effective combined arms operations permits a qualitatively new level of performing peacekeeping tasks.”⁴³
- Russian troops killed a Chechen insurgent on 12 September.⁴⁴
- A September poll shows that only 7.8% of Lithuanians believe that their government can protect them against cyber-attacks.⁴⁵

NATO—Russia Activities

- On 5 September, Bundeswehr Inspector General Wolfgang Schneiderhan and German Ambassador to Russia Walter Schmidt attended an opening of a German military ceremony in Krasnodar region (between Georgia and the Crimea).⁴⁶ Belgian Frigate Louisa-Maria made a port call in St. Petersburg, and her captain exchanged formal visits with the commander of the Leningrad naval base.⁴⁷
- Russian and Norwegian naval forces conducted an already-planned exercise, “Barents-2008” aimed at practicing techniques for sea rescues.⁴⁸
- Moscow significantly reduced oil supplies to the Czech Republic in July.⁴⁹
- NATO General Secretary said on 11 September that Russia’s unilateral recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia was unacceptable.⁵⁰

Russian Bilateral Military Activities

Syria

- On September 9, the Russian Military announced that an auxiliary vessel had returned from the Syrian port of Tartus where its crew had been working on the repair of floating docks and supply points, that had been unused for a long

time.⁵¹ On 29 August, the Russian embassy in Damascus had said that there were no plans afoot to increase Russia's naval presence in the Mediterranean.⁵²

Venezuela

- On August 15, Russian military firms said that the contract for providing Su-30MK2 multi-role fighters to Venezuela would be fulfilled, but was not yet concluded.⁵³ On 7 September, the BBC revealed that Venezuela and Russia plan to hold joint naval exercises from 10-14 November, involving four Russian ships.⁵⁴ The Russian Foreign Ministry confirmed this announcement on 8 September, noting that the Russian vessels would include the nuclear-powered heavy guided-missile cruiser Petr Velikii, and the large anti-submarine vessel Admiral Chabenenko. The Russian MoFA added that Russian anti-submarine aircraft would be temporarily stationed in Venezuela.⁵⁵ The Russian Ministry of Defense announced on 10 September that two Russian Tu-160 strategic bombers had landed in Venezuela. The aircraft belong to the Guards Donbass Red Banner Heavy Bomber Aviation Group (Engels garrison).⁵⁶ The Russian Air Force announced that the bombers would return to Russia on 15 September after completing a number of missions over neutral waters in the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean.⁵⁷ The exercise showed, according to the commander of Russia's Long-range Aviation, that Russia is "able to fly in any region of the world."⁵⁸ Chavez expelled the U.S. Ambassador, nominally in sympathy with Bolivia which had already done so, on 12 September.⁵⁹

Iran

Controversy over S-300 anti-missile and anti-aircraft system sale

- *Fars News Agency announced that Russia and Iran had agreed on the sale of S-300 systems to Iran on 26 December 2007.*⁶⁰
- *On 28 December 2007, Russia denied the deal.*⁶¹
- *In July 2008, Israel asserted that the Iranians would start receiving parts of the S-300 system before the end of the year.*⁶² *The editor of Janes Air-Launched Weapons said that the deal would be completed through Belarus to provide the Russians deniability. "Belarus is the proxy route whenever Russia wants to deny it is doing the sale," he said.*
- *On 1 September 2008, Iran denied that it was purchasing the system from Russia.*⁶³ *In response, the director of Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies in Moscow said that Russia was likely to move forward with the sale.*⁶⁴
- *On 9 September, the Jerusalem Post reported that Croatia had already sold Iran several S-300 complexes left over from the collapse of Yugoslavia, and that Israeli satellite imagery analysts had detected modifications in anti-aircraft emplacements around Natanz (at least 26 batteries by September 2006, according to this source). The Israeli military declined to confirm or deny the report.*⁶⁵
- *The S-300 was first fielded in 1979 and has been modified several times. According to Russian sources, it can target two rockets each against 24 targets simultaneously using one launch system, or four rockets each using two. It can shoot down both aircraft and ballistic missiles, and has a range of 150 km. Israeli sources say that it can track 100 targets simultaneously and engage 12 at a time with a range of 200 km and a maximum altitude of 27,000 meters.*⁶⁶

Diplomatic Developments Among Russia's Allies

- Sergei Lavrov, Russia's Foreign Minister, said there is no parallel between Abkhazia and South Ossetia, on the one hand, and Nagorno-Karabakh (the enclave under dispute by Armenia and Azerbaijan), on the other. Whereas in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Mikhail Saakashvili undermined negotiations and settlements worked out in the 1990s, the presidents of both Armenia and Azerbaijan continue to work within the frameworks set up by the Minsk group, OSCE, CSTO and CIS. Meanwhile, Armenia has said it cannot recognize Abkhazia or South Ossetia for the same reason it has not recognized Kosovo: Nagorno-Karabakh is still not recognized. Azerbaijan has reiterated its commitment

to working with Armenia and the Minsk group to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. The self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh has interpreted Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as a positive sign and a step forward toward their own recognition. "There are not any kind of parallels between the situation around South Ossetia and Abkhazia, on the one hand, and the Nagorno-Karabakh Settlement, on the other"- Sergei Lavrov (Нет никаких параллелей между ситуацией вокруг Южной Осетии и Абхазии, с одной стороны, и нагорно-карабахским урегулированием, с другой).⁶⁷

- The heads of state in the CSTO have agreed Friday on a declaration that expresses concern at Georgia's use of force to attempt to resolve its conflict with South Ossetia. "The member states of the CSTO are deeply concerned by Georgia undertaking an attempt to use force to resolve the conflict in South Ossetia, which has led to numerous victims amongst the peaceful population and peacekeepers" ("Государства - члены ОДКБ глубоко озабочены предпринятой Грузией попыткой силового решения конфликта в Южной Осетии, которая привела к многочисленным жертвам среди мирного населения и миротворцев"). Medvedev again accused Georgia of causing serious humanitarian consequences. The CSTO also expressed concern about the potential for escalation and intensification of conflict in the Caucasus and asked all states to objectively assess the situation, without double standards (без двойных стандартов), and prevent further problems. This was a compromise declaration after three separate texts were offered by Russia, Kazakhstan and Armenia. In the Kazakh and Armenian variants, Georgia was not directly mentioned, while the Russian variant was the strictest. This was noticeable when Medvedev declared the consolidated position a the summit's main output and claimed that CSTO made a unequivocally negative judgment of Georgia's aggression against South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The member states also approved the Medvedev-Sarkozy pact and called for strict performance with the view of preventing new attempts of force in the resolution of the conflict. (призывают стороны к их неукоснительному выполнению (принципов) в целях недопущения новых попыток силового решения конфликтов, обеспечение стабильности в данном регионе). The member states supported Russia's role in the security of South Ossetia and encouraged a greater involvement of the OSCE and a strengthening of the role of the UN.⁶⁸
- Belarus has released the last of its political prisoners, and the US responded by lifting some (but by no means all) sanctions on Belarus.⁶⁹
- Medvedev has invited Azerbaijani President Aliyev to visit Moscow on 16 September, which he will do.⁷⁰
- Hugo Chavez supported Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia on 1 September. "We support Russia. Russia is defending her interests and acting properly."⁷¹
- Armenian president met with Medvedev in Sochi early in September. Medvedev was to explain the situation in Georgia to him and discuss efforts to expand ties between Russia and Armenia, particularly in the energy sector. Sources said before the meeting there would be "intensive work on the preparation of an intermediate agreement about the supply of Russian gas to Armenia in 2009-2011."⁷²
- Nicaragua recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia on 3 September.⁷³
- Lukashenko said on 8 September that the Belarussian parliament might take up the question of recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia after the elections coming up at the end of September.⁷⁴ He also said that the "events in the Caucasus confirmed the correctness of his position with regard to preserving Belarus's sovereignty from the standpoint of its alliance relations with Russia. 'In the context of the events in the Caucasus it is apparent why Belarus could not have become part of Russia...[If it had], Russia would have lost an ally and a subject of international law [by which he presumably means a sovereign state supporting Russia in international law]...The events in the Caucasus have emphasized this and many politicians quietly are saying that I was right."⁷⁵
- The new Cuban ambassador to Moscow asked for Russian investment of \$2 billion in Cuba's economy. He declined to say if Cuba would recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia, but did say, "We supported Russia against injustices in

South Ossetia and Abkhazia. We kept solidarity with you,” while asking for Russian support for Cubans held in American prisons.⁷⁶

Developments in the Black Sea and Ukraine

- The USS Mount Whitney has arrived in Poti on 5 September with 17 tons of humanitarian aid, according to US officials. It’s arrival will be celebrated after the ship is unloaded (from the “spot check”, because it is too big for the port). The ship, which holds the staff of the 6th Fleet, will then coordinate the activities of NATO in the Black Sea. Russian officials question whether the USS Mount Whitney meets the Convention of 1936, which regulates the maximum tonnage of ships entering the Black Sea. They also doubt the humanitarian aspect of the ship’s arrival and pointed out that it is the fourth US ship to arrive in the past few weeks. In addition, there is a US ship in Sevastopol for a joint project with Ukraine and 3 other NATO ships, from Spain, Poland and Germany.⁷⁷
- On 13 September, representative of President Viktor Yushchenko says that he was excluded from a meeting of the Ukrainian Cabinet (part of the rising tensions between Yushchenko and Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko). Issues in dispute include Yushchenko’s desire to pay off Ukraine’s \$1 billion debt to Russia and to increase funding for the Ukrainian military dramatically; the Cabinet’s budget, according to Yushchenko’s representative, does not address the issue of debt to Russia and proposes a defense spending increase only 1/5 of what Yushchenko wants for the “re-equipping of the army and its transition to voluntary service [as opposed to conscription].”⁷⁸ Part of the issue on the Russian debt relates to Yushchenko’s desire to increase Russian payments for their Black Sea Fleet basing to “market rates.”⁷⁹
- On 13 September Interfax reported that a Deputy of the Russian Duma, the Ataman of the Union of Cossack Troops of Russia and Abroad, was prevented from entering Ukraine by the Ukrainian MVD.⁸⁰
- On 2 September, Ukrainian deputy foreign minister spoke out against imposing sanctions on Russia.⁸¹
- Abkhazian President Sergei Bagapsh said on 2 September that Abkhazia would not become the base for the Russian Black Sea Fleet: “As you well know, the Russian Black Sea Fleet is based in Sevastopol. We will have [Russian] land forces here.”⁸²
- On 5 September, Yushchenko said that the basing of the Russian Black Sea Fleet on Ukrainian territory was a threat to Ukrainian national security, and that Russia’s recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was unacceptable.⁸³
- Putin said on 11 September that discussions about joining Crimea and Russia were provocations. “We agreed on the borders after the collapse of the USSR long ago, and we recognize these borders,” he said, noting that there was no comparing the situation in Crimea with the situation between Georgia and Abkhazia and South Ossetia.⁸⁴

¹ Генштаб ВС РФ уполномочен заявить, 4 September 2008, www.mil.ru.

² <http://interfax.ru/politics/txt.asp?id=30849>, Террористы рвутся в Россию, Sept. 4, 2008, “Terrorists are straining to get into Russia.”

³ Лавров заявляет о важности поддержки со стороны народов Северного Кавказа решений РФ по Абхазии и Южной Осетии, 6 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁴ <http://interfax.ru/politics/txt.asp?id=31030>, Военные наблюдатели ОБСЕ вернулись в Грузию September 5, 2008, “Military observers from the OSCE return to Georgia.”

⁵ Президент Российской Федерации Дмитрий Медведев провёл рабочую встречу с Министром обороны Анатолием Сердюковым, 9 September 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁶ Перед вторжением в Южную Осетию грузинская группировка в 14 раз превосходила силы российских миротворцев, 9 September 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁷ Центр управления грузинской военной акцией в Южной Осетии находился в Гори, 9 September 2008, www.mil.ru.

- ⁸ У Генерального штаба ВС РФ нет информации о возобновлении военно-технического сотрудничества Грузии и Израиля, 9 September 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ⁹ США, оказав помощь Грузии, создали прецедент соучастия в вооруженном конфликте на ее стороне, 9 September 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ¹⁰ "The OSCE and UN have to make arrangements," ОБСЕ и ООН придется договариваться, Sept. 10, 2008 <http://interfax.ru/politics/txt.asp?id=31933>.
- ¹¹ "Several states may emerge in Georgia," <http://pravda.ru/world/former-ussr/georgia/281575-4/>. Pravda, 2 September 2008.
- ¹² Вывод войск, 13 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ¹³ Южная Осетия и Абхазия должны стать примером национального согласия и демократии – президент РФ, 6 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ¹⁴ Южная Осетия намерена стать частью России, 11 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ¹⁵ Южная Осетия не собирается входить в состав России, 11 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ¹⁶ Южная Осетия планирует войти в союз Белоруссии и России, 11 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ¹⁷ Лавров подтвердил, что Южная Осетия не намерена входить в состав России, 11 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ¹⁸ Саакашвили просит США ввести санкции для инвесторов, работающих в Абхазии, 1 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ¹⁹ Грузия требует вывода миротворческих сил СНГ из Абхазии, 2 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ²⁰ Без поддержки из-за рубежа сепаратизм не опасен для России, заявляет Медведев, 2 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ²¹ Никакое оружие не сможет повысить боеспособность армии Грузии, считает Громов, 6 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ²² Москва предупреждает об опасности отказа Вашингтона ввести эмбарго на поставки вооружений Грузии, 8 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ²³ Лавров: ЕС гарантирует неприменение Грузией силы, 9 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ²⁴ Москва обменялась с Абхазией и Южной Осетией нотами об установлении дипотношений, 9 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ²⁵ МИД России подписал договоры о дружбе с абхазскими и югоосетинскими коллегами, 9 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ²⁶ Договоры о дружбе с Абхазией и РЮО допускают создание в республиках российских военных баз, 9 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ²⁷ В Абхазии совершено покушение на сотрудника военкомата, в нем подозревают грузинских диверсантов, 10 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ²⁸ В Абхазии возбуждено уголовное дело в отношении жительницы Сухуми, шпионившей в пользу Тбилиси, 11 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ²⁹ Сухуми не рассматривает вариант ассоциированного членства в РФ, 11 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ³⁰ Абхазия подаст заявку на присоединение к Союзу Белоруссии и России, 11 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.
- ³¹ Под руководством командира смоленского соединения Железнодорожных войск генерал-лейтенанта Геннадия Погуляева, прошло командно-штабное мобилизационное учение, 2 September 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ³² Совместные учения военных железнодорожников Урала и ОАО "РЖД" по Уральскому Федеральному округу, 2 September 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ³³ В тренировке на полигоне в Челябинской области были задействованы десятки танков, бронемашин и почти 2 тыс. военнослужащих России и Казахстана, 2 September 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ³⁴ Совместная тренировка подразделений вооруженных сил России и Казахстана, 2 September 2008, www.mil.ru. Части и подразделения Вооруженных сил России и Казахстана готовы к проведению основного этапа учений "Центр-2008", 3 September 2008.
- ³⁵ Зенитно-ракетный полк Уральского соединения ПУрВО занимается боевой подготовкой на полевым выходе, 3 September 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ³⁶ В ходе оперативно-стратегических учений "Центр-2008", которые начались 1 сентября, будут проведены оперативные учения со второй армией, три дивизионных и пять полковых тактических учений с боевой стрельбой, а также тактические учения с 15-й миротворческой бригадой, 3 September 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ³⁷ ВВС проведут КШУ в рамках учения "Центр-2008", 3 September 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ³⁸ Боевые стрельбы под Челябинском, 4 September 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ³⁹ Самолеты Военно-воздушных сил успешно выполнили задачи, 4 September 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ⁴⁰ В РВСН началась командно-штабная тренировка, 2 September 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ⁴¹ В части морской пехоты Черноморского флота начался очередной полевой выход, 3 September 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ⁴² Береговые комплексы поразили цель первой же ракетой на максимальной дальности, 5 September 2008, www.mil.ru (and

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numerous other articles not directly referenced here).

⁴³ На полигоне Сафакулево (Курганская область) прошла активная фаза бригадного тактического учения с боевой стрельбой по специальной тематике (проведение миротворческой операции в зоне вооруженного конфликта) с 15 отдельной мотострелковой (миротворческой) бригадой, 12 September 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁴⁴ В Чечне ликвидирован боевик, проходит спецоперация, 13 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁴⁵ Жители Литвы не верят в способность государства защитить себя от кибератак, 13 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁴⁶ В Краснодарском крае состоится церемония открытия сборного немецкого военного кладбища в городе, 5 September 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁴⁷ Бельгийские военные моряки посетят северную столицу России, 5 September 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁴⁸ Северный флот принял участие в совместном российско-норвежском учении по спасанию на море “Баренц-2008”, 12 September 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁴⁹ MOSCOW FORCING CZECH REPUBLIC TO GUESS AS TO REASONS BEHIND OIL SUPPLY CUT, Vladimir Socor Monday, July 28, 2008, Jamestown Foundation Report.

⁵⁰ Генсек НАТО считает неприемлемым признание Россией независимости Южной Осетии и Абхазии, 11 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁵¹ Судно Черноморского флота “КИЛ-158” выполнило работы по восстановлению плавпричалов в сирийском пункте материально-технического обеспечения Тартус, 9 September 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁵² Россия в ближайшее время не будет увеличивать военно-морское присутствие в Средиземноморье, 29 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁵³ Контракт на поставку в Венесуэлу истребителей Су-30МК2 находится в стадии выполнения, 15 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁵⁴ Россия и Венесуэла проведут совместные морские военные учения, 7 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁵⁵ Россия планирует временно разместить в Венесуэле свои противолодочные самолеты, 8 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁵⁶ Два стратегических бомбардировщика ВВС России приземлились в Венесуэле - Минобороны РФ, 10 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁵⁷ Российские стратегические бомбардировщики вернутся из Венесуэлы 15 сентября, 11 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁵⁸ Авиация РФ доказала, что достанет врага в любой точке мира, 11 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁵⁹ Чавес высылает из Венесуэлы американского посла, 12 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁶⁰ Ирану достаются российские С-300, 26 December 2007, www.rosbalt.ru.

⁶¹ Иран не получит российские С-300, 28 December 2007, www.rosbalt.ru.

⁶² Обострение комплекса С-300, 24 July 2008, www.gazeta.ru.; also Iran to get new Russian air defences by '09 –Israel, 23 July 2008, www.reuters.com.

⁶³ Иран не собирается покупать российские зенитные установки С-300, 1 September 2008, www.gezeta.ru.

⁶⁴ Russia May Push Forward With S-300 Sales To Iran, 4 September 2008, (http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Russia_May_Push_Forward_With_S_300_Sales_To_Iran_999.html); Поставки ЗРС Ирану зависят от принятия Грузии и Украины в НАТО – Пухов, 1 September 2008, rian.ru.

⁶⁵ Website: Croatia has sold S300 to Iran, www.jpost.com, 9 September 2008.

⁶⁶ Ирану достаются российские С-300, 26 December 2007, www.rosbalt.ru. Website: Croatia has sold S300 to Iran, 9 September 2008, www.jpost.com.

⁶⁷ <http://interfax.ru/politics/txt.asp?id=30855>, Москва не меняет позицию по Карабаху

⁶⁸ “Moscow has not changed its position on Karabakh.” <http://interfax.ru/politics/txt.asp?id=31196>, Итоговая декларация, September 5, 2008, “Concluding Declaration.”

⁶⁹ US lifts some Belarus sanctions, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7601181.stm>, 5 September 2008.

⁷⁰ Президент Азербайджана по приглашению Медведева посетит 16 сентября Россию, 12 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁷¹ Уго Чавес поддерживает действия России в отношении Абхазии и Южной Осетии, и называет Саакашвили “марионеткой Вашингтона”, 1 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁷² Президент Армении обсудит с Медведевым вопросы газового сотрудничества и ситуацию на Кавказе, 2 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁷³ Никарагуа признает независимость Абхазии и Южной Осетии, 3 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁷⁴ Белорусский парламент после выборов может обратиться к теме признания Абхазии и Южной Осетии, 8 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁷⁵ Лукашенко видит в кавказских событиях подтверждение идеи суверенитета Белоруссии, 8 September 2008, www.interfax.ru. (The Russian is complex, periphrastic, and obscure.)

⁷⁶ Посол Кубы в Москве: Россия и Куба должны укреплять политические отношения, наращивать объем инвестиций и товарооборот, 12 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁷⁷ <http://interfax.ru/politics/txt.asp?id=31154>, Загадка натовских трюмов September 5, 2008, “The riddle of NATO’s hold (as in a ship).”

⁷⁸ В секретариате Ющенко заявляют, что представителя президента Украины не пустили на заседание правительства, 13 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁷⁹ Украина собирается досрочно погасить долг перед Россией для пересмотра арендной платы ЧФ, 13 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁸⁰ Депутата Госдумы РФ не пустили в Украину, 13 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁸¹ Украина выступает против введения санкций в отношении РФ, 2 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁸² Багапш заявляет, что Абхазия не станет местом базирования Черноморского флота РФ, 2 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁸³ Ющенко считает, что базирование ЧФ в Крыму угрожает нацбезопасности Украины, 5 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁸⁴ Разговоры вокруг возможности присоединения Крыма к РФ являются провокацией, 11 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

Update #17 (current as of 10:00 p.m., Monday, September 1, 2008)

Analysis

- The European Council met on 1 September, and developed a strategy of engaging both Russia and Georgia while attempting to freeze the current conflict without resolving it. The EC proposed to send an increased European force, under the rubric of the OSCE, on which Russia sits and can therefore neuter, to monitor the Sarkozy-Medvedev agreement. It notes that the Russians have not yet carried out the terms of that agreement, but proposes no meaningful penalties in response. It condemns the Russian recognition of the two republics and proposes increased economic engagement with Georgia and with the two republics. The English text of the EC press release is appended at the end of this document. It summarizes the formal declaration (in French) accurately.
- Medvedev pre-empted the EC session with an interview Sunday outlining the five principles of Russian foreign policy, including a declaration of Russia’s sphere of influence, of Russia’s right to defend the “lives and dignity” of its citizens wherever they may be, and of its repudiation of the concept of unipolarity, as well as its devotion to the pre-eminence of international law and the search for friendly relations with all states.
- The EC declaration in no way responded to Medvedev’s declaration, and does not adequately respond to the situation on the ground in Georgia. The confluence of these two statements appears to indicate de facto European acceptance of the idea of a Russian sphere of influence and Russia’s right to protect the lives and dignity of its citizens abroad. If the EU continues in this direction, the Russians will have established a series of imperialistic precedents and declaratory statements unaddressed by any formal international body. Note that any parallel statements by the US at this time would have been greeted with universal condemnation.
- The EC preference for operating through the OSCE virtually ensures that any additional peacekeepers in Georgia will not fulfill their necessary purposes, as Moscow is confident that it can control the activities of the OSCE.
- The Russian General Staff has stopped reporting on the situation in South Ossetia and Georgia generally, and the North Caucasus Military District has been absent in toto from General Staff announcements for the last three days—a dramatic departure from the previous three weeks. It has instead resumed normal reporting of routine military activities, giving great play to ongoing exercises in central Russia and accentuating the participation of “Russia’s strategic ally,” Kazakhstan, in these exercises. *Red Star* explicitly noted that these exercises were a timely response to the threats of some Western politicians, “divorced from reality,” to apply sanctions to Russia. As described, these exercises must have been planned long before the South Ossetian conflict turned hot. They are now prominently featured as part of a series of new steps designed to accelerate the transition of the

Russian military to an all-volunteer, expeditionary force capable of seizing territory and suppressing any resulting insurgency.

- Pressure on Georgia continues with genocide complaints at the ICC and claims of a Georgian terrorist campaign underway in Abkhazia. Rumors are circulating that South Ossetia will ask for Russian military bases in its territory. South Ossetia is definitely negotiating a military alliance with Russia that it expects to be signed soon. South Ossetia's president declared that he would not recognize Kosovo, an "artificial state."
- *Bottom line: Russia has now created the conditions on the ground in Georgia that it desires, including pressure points aimed at driving Saakashvili from power without the further use of Russian force in Georgian territory. The EU rhetoric suggests (to me and, I'm sure, to Moscow) that the EU will tolerate Russia's absorption of the republics over time and the "peaceful" removal of Saakashvili—i.e., all of Russia's aims in this conflict. Russian rhetoric continues to suggest, without too much angst, that Moscow simply does not believe that Europe will undertake any meaningful opposition to its aggressions, and that it can quickly escalate to a level that will force Europe to fold. But for the moment, Russian military trends suggest that Georgia is not the end-game. More to follow...*

Upcoming Events Timeline

- 5 September 2008: OSCE Council on Collective Security meeting
- 9 September: EU-Ukraine Summit
- 15 September: Submission date for proposal by EU exploratory mission on dealing with the Georgia situation
- 18-19 September 2008: Informal meeting of NATO defense ministers in London
- 9-10 October 2008: Informal meeting of NATO defense ministers in Budapest
- 14 November: EU Summit in Nice
- December 2008: NATO Foreign Ministerial

Overview

- The Russian General Staff made no announcements regarding Georgia on its website between 29 August and 1 September—the first such period since the outbreak of hostilities.
- On September 1, the Russian General Staff announced a large-scale "operational-strategic" exercise called "Center 2008" in the vicinity of the Privolga and Ural federal regions. The exercise is said to involve around 12,000 servicemembers and has the objective of "evaluating the readiness of the military's command and control organs for joint operations to localize armed conflicts, liquidate illegal armed formations and terrorist groups, and also the consequences of natural disasters and technological catastrophes." Among other things, the exercise will showcase Russian abilities to command-and-control forces from multiple locations and to change the command-and-control center as needed, including from front-to-rear and rear-to-front as well as among various different main efforts. Some of the troops involved will execute marches (mounted) of more than 1,000 km. The Kazakh armed forces (currently conducting combined exercises in the vicinity of Chelyabinsk) will participate in part of the exercise. The exercise will include reserve call-ups and the reservists will take part actively in the exercise.² *Krasnaya Zvezda* commented: "At a time when a few politicians from various western states, divorced from reality, are calling for the imposition of sanctions on Russia (it is true that it is hard to understand what Western sanctions on our country could really be), the military cooperation of the Russian Federation with its strategic

partners is successfully developing.”³

- On August 29, the Russian Permanent Representative to the EU said that the EU would not send peacekeepers to Georgia. “The EU is still not ready to send peacekeeping forces.” He added that “if relations between Russia and the EU worsen because of the disagreement about South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Europe will suffer more from that.”⁴
- Georgia recalled all of its diplomats from Russia as of 30 August.⁵ The Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it would stop granting visas for Russian citizens to visit Georgia on 30 August 2008.⁶
- On 30 August, Abkhazia accused Georgia of “undertaking terrorist activities in the Gali region of the republic.” This region borders the Zugdidi region of Georgia, which Russian troops have been occupying since shortly after hostilities began. The main road from Georgia to Abkhazia in this area runs directly from Zugdidi to Gali. The Abkhazians accused Georgia of conducting three terrorist attacks in the past week, and therefore of conducting a terrorist campaign. The one incident described was a remote-detonated IED attack against Abkhazian law enforcement forces that caused no casualties.⁷ On 30 August, South Ossetian president Edward Kokoiti called on other South Ossetian officials to cease public speculation about the possibility of Russian military bases in South Ossetia in the future. “There are individual leaders who can make personal statements, but serious statements can only be made by the president of the republic, and I have not yet made any such statements.”⁸
- The Russian Federation minister of education and social development reported to Dmitrii Medvedev that 49 of the 55 schools in South Ossetia would be able to receive students on 1 September. Medvedev said, “See to it most carefully that the children of South Ossetia do not suffer any [bad] consequences, that they can study normally both at home in the republic and in other areas.”⁹
- A member of the committee on CIS affairs of the Russian Federation Council (upper house of parliament) invited the South Ossetian parliament to enter into negotiations for inter-parliamentary cooperation.¹⁰ A delegation of South Ossetian parliamentarians was due to arrive in Russia on Monday, 1 September.¹¹
- On 1 September, South Ossetian President Kokoiti said that South Ossetia planned to sign an agreement on military cooperation with Russia very soon.¹²
- Russian MoFA spokesman said that Russia was agreeable to an increase in OSCE observers in South Ossetia.¹³
- Kokoiti said on 1 September that he would not recognize Kosovo, which he called an “artificial state.”¹⁴
- South Ossetian citizens submitted more than 300 complaints about genocide against the Georgian leadership to the ICC. Individuals make their claims and the Organization of South Ossetians against Genocide helps them formalize those claims. Hundreds more are on the way.¹⁵
- From Dmitrii Medvedev’s 31 August interview:
 - “I will base the execution of the Russian Federation’s foreign policy on five principles.
 - “First basis: Russia recognizes the preeminence of the principles of international law as they define the relations among civilized peoples. And within the framework of these principles, this concept of international law, we will develop our relations with other states.
 - “Second, the world must be multipolar. Unipolarity is unacceptable. Domination is impermissible. We cannot accept a world order in which decisions are made by one country, even one so serious and authoritative as the United States of America. Such a world is unstable and threatens conflict.

- “Third, Russia does not seek confrontation with any country. Russia does not wish to be isolated. We will develop our friendly relations with Europe, with the United States of America, and with other states of the world insofar as it is possible.
- “Fourth, an unquestionable priority for us is the defense of the lives and dignity of our citizens, wherever they are located. We will proceed from this basis in executing our foreign policy. We will also defend the interests of our business community abroad. And everyone must understand that whoever launches aggressive actions will receive a response.
- “And, finally, fifth. Russia, like other states of the world, has regions in which it has privileged interests. In these regions there are countries with which we traditionally maintain friendly, good-neighborly relations, historically particular relations. We will work very attentively in these regions to develop such friendly relations with these states, with our near neighbors...”
- Asked if these “priority regions are the territories bordering Russia,” Medvedev answered, “Yes, of course, the border regions. But not only those.”¹⁶

EU Press Release of 1 September

- Meeting in an extraordinary session on 1 September following the conflict that broke out in Georgia, the European Council unanimously expressed its concern at the consequences, particularly in human terms, of this situation and its condemnation of Russia’s unilateral decision to recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.
- It reiterated the unacceptable nature of this decision and called on other States not to recognise this proclaimed independence, emphasising once more that a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Georgia must be based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity recognised by international law and United Nations Security Council resolutions.
- The Heads of State and Government are pleased that the agreement achieved on the basis of the French Presidency’s mediation efforts on behalf of the European Union has led to a ceasefire, improved delivery of humanitarian aid to the victims, and a substantial withdrawal of Russian military forces. The 27 Member States reiterate that the implementation of that plan has to be complete and call on the parties to continue the full implementation in good faith of the agreement they have signed. They emphasised the urgency of finalising the international monitoring mechanism, in which the EU is prepared to participate, and which is provided for in point 5 of the agreement, and to begin the international talks concerning the security and stability arrangements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia provided for in point 6. The EU is ready to commit itself, including through a presence on the ground, and has decided in particular to send a fact-finding mission charged with defining the modalities for an increased commitment.
- In addition to the emergency aid it is supplying, the EU is prepared to supply aid for reconstruction in Georgia, including in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and to examine the enhancement of its relations with Georgia. It is more necessary than ever to support regional cooperation and the EU’s relations with its neighbours. The European Council called for the intensification of efforts to ensure the security of energy supplies and the diversification of energy sources and supply routes.
- The European Council has decided to appoint a European Union Special Representative for the crisis in Georgia. It considers that this crisis has placed the relationship between the EU and Russia at a crossroads and that it is in Russia’s own interest not to isolate itself from Europe. For its part, the EU has shown itself willing to engage in partnership and cooperation, in keeping with the values on which it is based, and expects Russia to behave in

a reasonable manner, honouring all its international commitments. The EU will remain vigilant and examine the various aspects of its relations with Russia, in particular in the run-up to the next summit scheduled to take place on 14 November in Nice.

- The European Council has given a mandate to its President to continue discussions with a view to the full application of the six-point agreement. To that end, the President of the European Council, Nicolas Sarkozy, will go to Moscow on 8 September, accompanied by the President of the Commission and the High Representative. Until troops have withdrawn to the positions held prior to 7 August, meetings on the negotiation of the Partnership Agreement will be postponed.¹⁷

¹ В период с 1 по 27 сентября 2008 года будет проведено оперативно-стратегическое учение «Центр-2008», 1 September 2008, www.mil.ru.

² В рамках учения «Центр-2008» будут проведены сборы с военнослужащими, призванными из запаса, 1 September 2008, www.mil.ru.

³ «Центр-2008»: стратегический эффект, Юрий БЕЛОУСОВ, «Красная звезда». *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 2 September 2008, www.redstar.ru ⁴ Постпред РФ при ЕС сомневается, что европейские миротворцы отправятся в Абхазию и ПНОО, 29 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁵ Грузия отзывает из России всех своих дипломатов, 29 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁶ Граждане России теперь смогут въехать в Грузию только через третьи страны, 30 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁷ В Сухуми заявляют, что Грузия совершила очередной теракт в Гальском районе, 30 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁸ Кокойты призвал политиков в республике воздерживаться от непродуманных заявлений, 30 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁹ Почти 50 школ в Южной Осетии примут учеников 1 сентября, 30 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

¹⁰ РФ пригласила Южную Осетию на переговоры об установлении межпарламентских отношений, 31 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

¹¹ Делегация югоосетинских парламентариев прибывает в понедельник в Россию, 31 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

¹² Цхинвали планирует подписать соглашение о военном сотрудничестве с Москвой, 1 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

¹³ Россия готова к увеличению числа военных наблюдателей ОБСЕ в Южной Осетии, 1 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

¹⁴ Президент Южной Осетии назвал Косово «искусственным государством», 1 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

¹⁵ Жители Южной Осетии направили в международные суды триста исков к грузинскому руководству, 1 September 2008, www.interfax.ru.

¹⁶ Интервью Дмитрия Медведева телеканалам «Россия», Первому, НТВ, 31 August 2008, president.kremlin.ru.

¹⁷ Extraordinary European Council meeting on the situation in Georgia, 1 September 2008, www.ue2008.fr.

Update #16 (current as of 12:00 a.m., Friday, August 29, 2008)

Analysis

- The tensions between Russia and both Georgia and Ukraine are increasing. The Georgian parliament has voted to break diplomatic relations with Russia. Russian newspapers are laying out the legal basis for Russia's re-acquisition of Crimea. The Russian Investigative Commission claims it has demonstrable evidence of Georgian genocide in South Ossetia and is proceeding with the preparation of its case. Human Rights Watch, on the other hand, has produced clear evidence of ethnic cleansing by Ossetians against Georgians in areas under Russian control. Georgia is demanding the removal of all Russian forces from its territory, including Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The Russian Black Sea Fleet has announced that it is increasing security around its facilities in Ukraine due to threats from Ukrainian local courts and civilian groups.
- Russia's neighbors are coalescing into a bloc that not only opposes Russia's actions so far, but speaks of rolling

them back in some way. Ukraine has indicated its willingness to participate in efforts to restore the territorial integrity of Georgia. Latvia has called for an increased international presence in the conflict zone. The Baltic States will make an appeal along those lines at the upcoming European Council meeting.

- Russian leaders dismiss with scorn the notion that the West can punish Russia in any way. Putin denigrated the importance of the G-8; he and others scorn WTO; and Russian business newspapers explain that the world cannot afford to do Russia any harm.
- Russia is now in open violation of two key principles of the Sarkozy agreement: It has not withdrawn all of its forces into Ossetia and Abkhazia despite the fact that the Georgians have returned to their permanent garrison stations, and it has unilaterally decided the territorial disputes with Abkhazia and South Ossetia rather than engaging in international discussions as required in that agreement. Unless Russia not only withdraws its remaining troops but also repudiates its unilateral recognition of those two republics, it will continue to be in violation of the agreement.

Upcoming Events Timeline

- 1 September 2008: Extraordinary Session of the European Council
- 5 September 2008: OSCE Council on Collective Security meeting
- 18-19 September 2008: Informal meeting of NATO defense ministers in London
- 9-10 October 2008: Informal meeting of NATO defense ministers in Budapest
- December 2008: NATO Foreign Ministerial
- April 2009: Expiration of Russo-Ukrainian Friendship and Cooperation Agreement

Overview

- Medvedev said that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization concluded that the aggressor who started the South Ossetian war was responsible for its consequences, and that he was “completely satisfied” with the conversation.¹ He added that the SCO was growing in strength and significance, that it is not a military bloc and is not designed to oppose NATO, but that “it does not just make proposals, but it also makes decisions.” Many states are now asking to join the SCO, he said, but the organization has placed a moratorium on new accessions and established a working group to consider further expansion.²
- On August 28, Russia announced that Georgian military forces had attempted to block off the Akhagori [the Russians are calling it by its former name, Leningori] region in South Ossetia and force out the Ossetians. The Russian spokesman also noted that a company of Georgian infantry had redeployed to its permanent garrison in Gori and an engineer unit was moving back to its permanent garrison in Senaki.³ The Russians also announced that the Black Sea Fleet was continuing to patrol the Abkhazian coast to protect it from the actions of the foreign warships that had entered the region.⁴ In addition, Russian forces announced that they had built 21 peacekeeping posts in South Ossetia.⁵
- The Russians also announced that they had recovered the passport of an American citizen from Texas in an area used by Georgian special forces to prepare for an attack.⁶
- Human Rights Watch presents definitive evidence from satellite imagery, local photography, and interviews, of widespread looting and the systematic burning of houses in ethnic Georgian villages around Tskhinvali by Osse-

tian militias in the days following the Russian recapture of Tskhinvali.⁷ “All of this adds up to compelling evidence of war crimes and grave human rights abuses. This should persuade the Russian government it needs to prosecute those responsible for these crimes,” said Rachel Denber, deputy director of the Europe and Central Asia division of Human Rights Watch.

- On August 28, Human Rights Watch said, “The European Union should act to protect Georgian civilians from continued attacks by Ossetian militias and opportunistic violence.” It called for the immediate deployment of an ESDP mission and the establishment of an international peacekeeping mission.⁸ Confirming details were provided by the UN High Commission on Refugees, which also reported that 128,000 people have been displaced within Georgia and 30,000 fled to Russia. UNHCR had already been assisting 220,000 IDPs in Georgia before the conflict.⁹
- Human Rights Watch has also described a pattern of “indiscriminate use of force” by Georgian troops during their movement through Tskhinvali, particularly the use of Grad missiles and a protracted and indiscriminate artillery barrage. Details of the report also indicate that militias took refuge in occupied civilian dwellings, and that some civilian casualties at least were caused by Georgian forces firing on legitimate military targets but without adequately weighing the danger to civilians against the military advantage (a key element in the legitimacy of collateral damage). It does not appear that Georgian forces engaged in war crimes, and certainly not in genocide.¹⁰
- The Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement on 27 August, noting “For the time being the ethnic cleansing of Georgians on the Russian occupied territories, both in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and beyond is still under way. Moreover, after the Russian President’s recognition of independence of the separatist regions, the ethnic cleansing of the Georgian population has become even more intense. It provides yet another proof that persecution of ethnic Georgians on the occupied territories is a deliberate policy aimed at achieving political goals rather than being isolated cases of violence.” There is sufficient independent confirmation of this assertion to substantiate it.¹¹
- Kuwait has announced its intention to provide Georgia with \$2 million in humanitarian aid.¹²
- The President of Abkhazia will make his first “official visit” to Russia in September.¹³
- Medvedev announced that he will visit Afghanistan at Karzai’s invitation.¹⁴
- Putin denigrated the importance of the G-8, noting that India and China were not members.¹⁵
- On 28 August, Ukrainian President Yushchenko “informed Javier Solana that Ukraine condemns Russia’s decision to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia and expects international community to join efforts in restoration of Georgia’s territorial integrity.”¹⁶ In the Ukrainian version, this text ends “and expressed his readiness to take active part in that process.”¹⁷ The Russian press picked it up in that form: “Ukraine is not against taking part in “reestablishing the territorial integrity of Georgia.”¹⁸
- The Georgian Parliament voted to break diplomatic relations with Russia following Moscow’s recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It also voted to order the government to repudiate all agreements permitting Russian forces on Georgian soil, including peacekeepers in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and to demand the immediate withdrawal of those forces.¹⁹
- The Russian Black Sea Fleet announced that it was taking measures to increase security of its facilities in Ukraine “after receiving information about intended provocations by [Ukrainian] judicial instances and an array of Ukrainian social organizations.”²⁰
- The leadership of the Russian Federation Counternarcotics Service said that the “ineffective actions of NATO in

the war on narcotics in Afghanistan have led to ‘explosive growth’ in the production of heroin in that country... [and] that narcotics from Afghanistan are a major threat for Russia and Central Asia.”²¹

- Abkhazia and Russia expect to complete preparations for diplomatic relations within a month, “and an array of documents about military cooperation will also be prepared.”²²
- The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation Prosecutor-General announced that “as of 28 August, we have information about 1,692 people who died and 1,500 who were injured as a result of Georgian aggression.” It claimed that “the investigators interviewed 15 Georgian servicemembers, who were taken prisoner, who said that they had received military orders to ‘enter the territory of South Ossetia and free it of foreigners.’” *NB: International law prohibits the interrogation of prisoners of war. Also note that these figures are likely to prove very difficult to reconcile with the reports of Human Rights Watch, the UNHCR, and other NGOs on the ground.*²³ On August 26, the Investigative Committee had announced that “the facts of genocide against the Ossetian people in South Ossetia are fully confirmed. ‘It is established that in the period from 7 to 12 August the armed forces of Georgia, pursuing the goal of the complete annihilation of the Ossetian national group living in the territory of South Ossetia, invaded the territory of the unrecognized republic. They spared no one. We found a woman killed with a shot to the head. The was eight months pregnant. The unborn child also died....Not only in Tskhinvali, but also in many villages hundreds of houses were destroyed—the aggressors wiped them from the face of the earth in order to leave no traces of the presence of Ossetians on the earth.’” The preparation of a criminal case in the Russian Federation continues.²⁴ *NB: The reports of HRW make it very likely that hundreds of houses were destroyed deliberately, but in Georgian villages by Ossetian militias.*
- On 29 August, a long signed article appeared in *Izvestia* laying out the path toward Russian re-acquisition of the Crimea—and possibly of the “nine” other “Russian-speaking” areas of Eastern Ukraine. The gist is that the Russo-Ukrainian Agreement about Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1999 is due for renewal in April 2009. That agreement, according to the article, is the one in which Russia guarantees Ukrainian territorial integrity. It also requires both sides to maintain cordial relations with one another. Ukraine has not met its commitments, the author argues, noting the “oppression of the Russian-speaking population, the honoring of Fascist veterans, and the intention of joining NATO.” There follows a convoluted legal argument to prove that a Soviet decree of 1948 giving the Crimea to Russia has not been repealed and is still in force, apart from the friendship and cooperation agreement of 1999. If that agreement is not renewed, then Russia has every right to insist upon the return of the Crimea. All of this, the author claims, is the fault of Yushchenko, who is a “clone of Saakashvili.” An internet poll appended at the end of the article asks “Does Russia Need Crimea?” The answers: “45%: Yes, we fought for it for centuries; 25%: Russians and Ukrainians are brothers; it doesn’t matter where Crimea is; 16%: Obviously, this is a strategic base for our fleet; 10%: It’s gone, now it belongs to another state; 4%: No, Crimea is not worth the problems it would cause.”²⁵ Another article, headlined “A ‘fifth column’ is discovered in Crimea” describes the support of local Crimeans for Russia (visible in the [probably staged] welcoming home of the Black Sea Fleet), which Yushchenko has given orders to suppress.²⁶
- A Russian business journal reported (linked-to by *Izvestia*): “America is powerless to punish Russia: Attempts of any variety to isolate and punish Russia for its military activities in Georgia will have the opposite effect. As Russia’s economic power grows, its role in world politics will grow.”²⁷
- Poland, the Baltic States, and Ukraine harshly condemned and rejected Russian recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Latvia called for an increase in the international presence in the conflict zones.

¹ Страны ШОС считают, что организаторы агрессии против Южной Осетии должны отвечать за ее последствия, 28 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

² Президент РФ рассказал участникам саммита ШОС о событиях в Цхинвали, 28 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

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³ Грузинские военные пытаются заблокировать Ленингорский район и вытеснить из него осетин, 28 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁴ Российские военные корабли продолжают находиться у берегов Абхазии, 28 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁵ Для обеспечения безопасности населения Южной Осетии там выставлен 21 миротворческий пост, 28 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁶ На позициях разбитого грузинского спецназа найден паспорт американца, 28 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁷ Georgia: Satellite Images Show Destruction, Ethnic Attacks: Russia Should Investigate, Prosecute Crimes, www.hrw.org/english/docs/2008/08/28/georgi19712.htm, 29 August 2008.

⁸ EU: Protect Civilians in Gori District: Security of Civilians Should Be Central to Summit Discussions on Russia, 28 August 2008, www.hrw.org/english/docs/2008/08/27/georgi19704.htm,

⁹ Displaced meet in Gori as they flee new violence or try to head home, 27 August 2008, www.unhcr.org/news/NEWS/48b56d214.html.

¹⁰ Georgia: International Groups Should Send Missions Investigate Violations and Protect Civilians, www.hrw.org/enligsh/docs/2008/08/17/georgi19633.htm, 18 August 2008.

¹¹ Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, 27 August 2008, www.mfa.gov.ge

¹² Information for the Press, 27 August 2008, www.mfa.gov.ge

¹³ В начале сентября президент Абхазии посетит Россию уже в новом качестве, 28 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

¹⁴ Медведев посетит Афганистан по приглашению президента этой страны, 28 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

^[xv] Путин заявляет о неполноценности клуба «Большой восьмерки», в котором нет глав Индии и Китая, 28 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

¹⁵ Victor Yushchenko talks to Javier Solana, 28 August 2008, www.president.gov.ua.

¹⁶ Президент також зазначив, що Україна розраховує на об'єднання зусиль міжнародної спільноти щодо відновлення територіальної цілісності Грузії та заявляє про свою готовність брати активну участь у цьому процесі. Президент провів телефонну розмову з Генеральним Секретарем Ради Міністрів ЄС Х.Соланою, 28 August 2008, www.president.gov.ua.

¹⁷ Украина не против принять участие в «восстановлении территориальной целостности Грузии», 28 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

¹⁹ Парламент Грузии проголосовал за разрыв дипотношений с Россией, 28 August 2008, www.izvestia.ru.

²⁰ Руководство ЧФ усиливает охрану своих объектов, опасаясь провокаций с украинской стороны, 28 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

²¹ ФСКН: операция НАТО в Афганистане вызвала рост наркопроизводства в этой стране, 28 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

²² В Сухуми рассчитывают за месяц подготовить дипломатические и военные соглашения с Москвой, 28 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

²³ Прокуратура уточнила число жертв грузинской агрессии в Южной Осетии, 28 August 2008, www.pravda.ru.

²⁴ Найдены доказательства геноцида осетинского народа, 26 August 2008, www.pravda.ru.

²⁵ Вторая Крымская: Готова ли Россия вернуть полуостров? Ксения Фокина, *Izvestia*, 29 August 2008, www.izvestia.ru.

²⁶ В Крыму выявляют «пятую колонну», 27 August 2008, www.izvestia.ru.

²⁷ Америка бессильна покарать Россию, 25 August 2008, dpmoney.ru.

Update #15 (current as of 12:30 a.m., Thursday, August 28, 2008)

Analysis

- The deployment of NATO warships to the Black Sea has definitely gotten Moscow's attention, drawing a combination of bravado, threats, and shrugs from the Russian military. The key issue is most likely that Russia cannot match the naval buildup it sees coming in the Black Sea with its own vessels, at least not in a timely fashion. Moscow is reacting as though it has confidence that NATO ships will not do anything but sail around for a few weeks and leave, but it is manifesting its discomfort at the demonstration that it does not control the Black Sea.
- Russia continues to accuse Georgia of planning to re-attack South Ossetia, and has served notice that any American attempt to rearm Georgia to pre-war levels will be seen as American encouragement for such an attack.

- Russia is expanding its peacekeeping perimeter, but refuses to define its “security zone” with any precision. It acknowledges the presence of Russian forces in Poti, but obfuscates the basis and nature of that presence. Russian forces are cleansing South Ossetia of Georgians, but the evidence in the MoD releases is naturally oblique, and I will return to this issue in subsequent updates.
- Moscow is exerting a combination of pressures and promises on Ukraine, holding out the possibility of continued military-industrial collaboration but denouncing Ukrainian haggling over the Black Sea Fleet’s presence in Sevastopol. In general terms, the tenor of Moscow’s messages to Ukraine appears to be calming from its initial flurry of indignation. On the other hand, the Russians ostentatiously sortied the Black Sea Fleet flagship from Sevastopol, giving the Ukrainians no notice and initially offering a false explanation of its destination and the purpose of its mission. Moscow has thereby served notice that it will not respect President Yushchenko’s demands for notification of planned sorties, their destinations, and their purposes.
- Armenia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, China, and the Czech Republic have all been singled out in MoD releases for supporting Russia either by offering humanitarian aid to South Ossetia or by considering sending military advisors there under the auspices of the OSCE.
- The General Staff also announced that it is reviewing the experience of this conflict for lessons for Russian military modernization, particularly in the areas of suppressing enemy air defenses and in information operations.
- Strong evidence suggests that Moscow still aims to encourage the Georgians to remove Saakashvili from power and will continue to exert various forms of leverage, including the occupation of Georgian territory, to that end.

Overview

- On August 22, the Russian General Staff announced that it would not provide a depth for the security zone in South Ossetia because the demarcation line is too broken, but that it would be from 6 to 18 kilometers. There were 18 Russian peacekeeping posts, 8 in the “first line” manned by 272 Russian peacekeepers, and 10 in the second line with 180 peacekeepers.¹
- Russian General Staff denounced on August 22 Ukrainian statements suggesting that terrorist actions were being prepared against ships of the Black Sea Fleet as “an attempt to disrupt the cooperation of Russia and Ukraine within the framework of the basing agreement for the Black Sea Fleet.”²
- On August 22, the Russian General Staff said that it was considering a Ukrainian proposal to renew work on a joint project to build a medium-range military transport aircraft, An-70.³
- The Russian General Staff announced joint military exercises with Kazakhstan to be held from 1-5 September in Russia (Chebarkul’skii training area, Chelyabinsk oblast’).⁴
- China and the Czech Republic offered to send humanitarian assistance to South Ossetia. Russian spokesman made much of the Chinese offer on 23 August; noted the Czech offer⁵
- On August 23, the Russian General Staff noted that the frigate *Mirage* returned to Sevastopol. “We did not notice any effort by the Ukrainian powers to oppose this.”⁶
- On August 23, the Russian General Staff announced that all of its peacekeeping forces had been withdrawn to the “first line” of peacekeeping posts, including 8 posts on the south bank of the Inguri River and 10 on the north bank.⁷
- The Russians complained on 22 and 23 August that the increase of NATO naval forces in the Black Sea was not

conducive to stabilizing the region.⁸

- On August 23, the Russian General Staff warned that the Georgian “military-political leadership is continuing to seek ways of reversing the consequences of its armed action in the zone of the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict. Units and sub-units are concentrating in the central part of the republic [presumably South Ossetia, but not entirely clear from context] and undertaking preparations for further actions... Georgian special forces are establishing caches with reserves of material in order to prepare for armed action in the zone of conflict through collaborators, including undertaking diversionary operations on the territory of South Ossetia and in neighboring areas.”⁹
- “Head of the Government of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin” visited a military hospital on August 23.¹⁰
- Flagship of the Black Sea Fleet, the guided-missile cruiser *Moskva* returned to Sevastopol on 23 August.¹¹
- The Russian General Staff has announced that it will study the lessons of “the information war that accompanied the events around South Ossetia.” “The media is one of the most powerful organs for forming public opinion on a global scale. We will study our experiences and draw conclusions about this question....This informational globalism is the future. And counteraction in this sphere will only develop more. It is difficult to predict how it will develop, but this is a very serious question and we will study it.”¹²
- On August 25, the General Staff spokesman repeated the accusation the Georgia was preparing to renew the conflict. “The potential of the Georgian armed forces is growing only for a repeated aggression. No one threatens Georgia in this region. However in the effort at any price to resolve the territorial problem preparations for a third conflict have appeared—two was no enough for them.”¹³
- On 25 August, the General Staff announced that Russia might increase the number of its peacekeepers in both South Ossetia and Abkhazia if the US “decides to rearm the Georgian army.” “We are constantly studying the situation, drawing conclusions about whether the Pentagon will act on its promise, about which the Georgian ministry of defense asked, rapidly to rebuild it [the Georgian military] to the level it had before the aggression. This is not our choice, it is thrust upon us. But military professionals must draw conclusions from these indications, and, most important, these actions. And we are doing that.”¹⁴
- On August 25, the Federation Council unanimously approved the deployment to South Ossetia and Abkhazia of additional Russian peacekeepers. “The question about how many will be sent and precisely where is the prerogative of the Commander in Chief, and he alone decides how many and where.”¹⁵
- The Russian General Staff also reiterated that it will never agree to the replacement of Russian peacekeepers with OSCE forces.”¹⁶
- On August 25, the General Staff said that the increase in NATO ships in the Black Sea was increasing tension in the region. The spokesman said that there were now “9 foreign ships” in the Black Sea, including two American, one Spanish, one German, one Polish, and four Turkish. *It is rather odd to define Turkish ships as “foreign” in the Black Sea.*¹⁷
- On 25 August the Russian General Staff declared that “Russian peacekeepers are patrolling the port of Poti in strict accord with...the decisions established in the six principles of the presidents of Russia and France Dmitrii Medvedev and Nicolas Sarkozy. ‘Our peacekeepers are maintaining control of the situation in that region, including the port of Poti, in the nature of patrolling, which does not contradict our peacekeeping obligations.’ Responding to questions of journalists, A. Nogovitsyn said that the functions of Russian peacekeepers do not include inspections of ships entering the Georgian port.”¹⁸
- Effectively suppressing the Georgian air defense system was hindered by its reliance on passive location. “The

fact that pieces of equipment were not discovered locationally while in ambush we explain in part by the fact that we are talking about elements of passive location which have no signature.” These systems “are difficult to observe and this is a problem for reconnaissance and the suppression of enemy air defense systems. We are working on this issue.” *Apologies for bad translation—Russian was pretty bad: «То, что локационно не были вскрыты образцы вооружений при действии из засад, отчасти мы относим к тому, что речь идет об элементах пассивной локации, которые не заявляют о себе», - сообщил заместитель начальника Генштаба ВС РФ генерал-полковник Анатолий Ноговицын. По его словам, эти средства «трудно обнаружить, и это является проблемой для разведки и подавления систем ПВО». «Мы над этим вопросом работаем», - сказал А.Ноговицын.*¹⁹

- Russia recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent republics on August 26. The final paragraph of that recognition reads: “Russia, earnestly feel friendship and sympathy for the Georgian people, is certain that sooner or later it will turn to worthy leaders who can take care of their country as before and develop mutually-respectful, equal, and good-neighborly relations with all of the peoples of the Caucasus. Russia will always be ready to assist with that.”²⁰
- Russia established a new peacekeeping post in the Kodori Gorge on 26 August 2008.²¹
- On 26 August, the guided-missile cruiser *Moskva* sortied from Sevastopol for refitting.²²
- The Russian General Staff is seriously concerned about the concentration of NATO warships in the Black Sea, saying that the number will rise to 18 ships and that they carry “strategic weapons with a range of more than 2,500 km.”²³ The Russians expressed doubt that the ships were carrying humanitarian aid to Georgia, noting that they had over 100 cruise missiles. “The Americans have the experience of conducting operation “Desert Storm,” when they chartered merchant ships and transported military supplies on them.” *It’s hard to follow the logic here, even for the Russians—if the claim is that we are sending military aid on military ships, that’s one thing, but it’s hard to see how the Desert Storm analogy fits in.*²⁴
- On 27 August the Russian General Staff called attention to provisions of the Montreux Convention of 1936 governing the passage of warships through the Turkish Straits and their permissible time-on-station in the Black Sea. It did not at this time suggest that NATO ships were in violation of the convention.²⁵
- On 27 August the Russian General Staff announced that the guided missile cruiser *Moskva* had entered the port of Sukhumi at the invitation of the president of Abkhazia.²⁶ This announcement contradicts the statement given on 26 August about the planned-nature and purpose of the *Moskva*’s sortie. In any case, it violates the demand of Ukrainian President Yushchenko for 10 days’ notification of Russian sorties from Sevastopol with explanations of the purpose of the sortie. On 27 August, the General Staff added that Russia intends to abide strictly by its agreements with Ukraine regarding Sevastopol, including the date of departure of the Russian fleet—meaning that Russia would not consider accepting an earlier date. The Russians also called attention to the fact that “many Ukrainian deputies criticized the decree of the Ukrainian president that ships of the Russian Black Sea Fleet had to inform Ukraine about their sorties.”²⁷
- Russia announced on 27 August that it was establishing an additional peacekeeping post in the village of Mosa-bruni in South Ossetia. Georgian forces, according to the Russian General Staff, had been performing police functions in the village “in order to re-establish Georgian administration on the territory of South Ossetia.” “An assault company advanced and a peacekeeping post was organized and in that way the situation was brought under control.”²⁸ Russia also announced that a Georgian UAV had overflown South Ossetia on the 26th conducting reconnaissance in violation of the six-point agreement. In addition, the General Staff reported that Georgia “is undertaking measures to regroup its army units from the east and central parts of the country and to reestablish the combat-capability of its troops.”²⁹ Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia have expressed an interest in participating under the umbrella of the OSCE in serving as military observers in South Ossetia.³⁰

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- ¹ Зона безопасности в Южной Осетии имеет ломанную линию, составляя глубину на разных участках от 6 до 18 км, 22 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ² У Генштаба РФ нет данных о возможных диверсиях против кораблей Черноморского флота в Крыму, 22 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ³ Россия не утратила интереса к проекту российско-украинского военно-транспортного самолета Ан-70, 22 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ⁴ В период с 1 по 5 сентября с.г. на Чебаркульском полигоне ПУРВО (Челябинская область) пройдут совместные российско-казахстанские учения, 22 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ⁵ Оказать гуманитарную помощь Южной Осетии готовы Китай и Чехия, 23 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ⁶ ЧФ РФ продолжает обеспечивать благоприятный оперативный режим в восточной части Черного моря, 23 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ⁷ Российские войска вышли за первую линию миротворческих наблюдательных постов вовремя, 23 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ⁸ Нарастивание группировки НАТО в Черном море не способствует стабилизации, 23 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ⁹ Грузия готовит новые силовые акции в Южной Осетии и приграничных регионах, 23 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ¹⁰ Председатель Правительства РФ Владимир Путин посетил военные госпитали, 23 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ¹¹ Флагман Черноморского флота РФ ракетный крейсер “Москва” возвратился в Севастополь, 23 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ¹² В российском Генштабе учитывают опыт информационной войны, сопровождающей события вокруг Южной Осетии, 25 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ¹³ В российском Генштабе полагают, что Тбилиси готов вновь развязать войну, 25 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ¹⁴ Россия может нарастить группировку миротворцев в зоне конфликта, если США решат перевооружить грузинскую армию, 25 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ¹⁵ Сенаторы поддержали обращение Медведева о направлении в зону грузино-осетинского конфликта дополнительных сил миротворцев, 25 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ¹⁶ Москва никогда не давала согласия на замену российских миротворцев в Южной Осетии на силы ОБСЕ, 25 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ¹⁷ Нарастивание группировки кораблей НАТО в Черном море усиливает напряженность в регионе, 25 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ¹⁸ Российские миротворцы выполняют патрулирование у порта Поты в строгом соответствии с принятыми договоренностями, 25 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ¹⁹ Эффективно подавлять грузинские средства ПВО в ходе конфликта в Южной Осетии мешало то, что они работали на принципах пассивной локации, 25 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ²⁰ Заявление МИД России, 26 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ²¹ В Кодорском ущелье выставлен пост российских миротворцев, 26 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ²² Ракетный крейсер “Москва” совершает плановый выход, 26 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ²³ Группировку боевых кораблей стран НАТО в Черном море планируется довести до 18 единиц, 26 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ²⁴ О применении двойных стандартов НАТО, 26 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ²⁵ НАТО не может постоянно наращивать группировку кораблей в Черном море, 27 August 2008, www.mil.ru. A summary of the convention is at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/naval-arms-control-1936.htm> and http://www.ntip.navy.mil/mon-treux_convention.shtml.
- ²⁶ Корабли Черноморского флота прибыли в Сухуми, 27 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ²⁷ Россия строго соблюдает договоренность с Украиной о сроках базирования Черноморского флота, 27 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ²⁸ Российские миротворцы выставили дополнительный пост у села Мосабруни в Южной Осетии, 27 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ²⁹ 26 августа грузинский БЛА вел разведку российских войск в Южной Осетии, 27 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
- ³⁰ В состав военных наблюдателей ОБСЕ в зоне грузино-югоосетинского конфликта войдут представители ОДКБ, 27 August 2008, www.mil.ru.
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Update 14 (Current as of 10:40 p.m., Friday, August 22, 2008.)

Analysis

- The Russians claim to be withdrawing their troops from Georgia, and reducing their presence in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia to the levels set according to the 1992 agreement ending the first Georgian-Ossetian conflict (a translation of that agreement is below). But they have also announced that Russian troops continue to patrol Zugdidi (which is in Georgia proper) and did not indicate any time frame for the withdrawal of those troops. They announced that Russian aircraft were being “withdrawn,” but that some would remain on the Georgian border. They did not specifically address the presence of Russian forces in Gori.
- Political tension within Ukraine continues to run high, with opposition leader Viktor Yanukovich attacking the support of President Victor Yushchenko for Georgia as serving his personal interest rather than the interest of the state.
- The Russians continue to produce “evidence” that Georgia is an aggressive state that has been “leading the world” in the rate of increase of its defense expenditures. Moscow, meanwhile, has announced that it is revising its 2010-2020 defense program.
- Russian troops are establishing outposts along the “northern bank of the Inguri River,” which will probably consolidate a recent land-grab by Abkhazian forces seizing Georgian territory.
- South Ossetia released its formal Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), requesting immediate Russian and international recognition. Russia has indicated that it is likely to accommodate this request. I can provide a translation if anyone is interested--the key assertion is that South Ossetia was never legally a part of the territory of the independent state of Georgia and that this UDI is, therefore, not an attack on Georgia’s territorial integrity.
- The Russians will probably withdraw most of their forces from strictly Georgian territory, although they may continue to delay on a variety of pretexts, primarily to show that they can, since it seems likely that they have accomplished all of their major goals.
- The Russians will react to any effort to rearm Georgia as a provocation and as direct support for Georgian plans to commit offensive operations against Ossetia and Abkhazia, and Russia.
- The exhortation by jihadist groups to mujahideen in Chechnya, Georgia, and Russia to undertake terrorist attacks against Russia will be conflated by the Russians with supposed operations by Georgian special forces. If the jihadists manage to conduct a terror attack within the Russian Federation, Russia may choose to regard that as an act of war by Georgia, despite all the evidence to the contrary.

Overview

- The Russians claim to be withdrawing all of their forces to within the peacekeeping zones in South Ossetia and Abkhazia; the withdrawal should have started today. They say they will leave only 500 peacekeepers in 8 outposts in South Ossetia. They have also begun to lay the basis for a return to their definition of normalcy in the region, which includes Russian but no other peacekeepers in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. They deny that Georgia has the right to abrogate the 1992 peacekeeping agreement unilaterally, and they claim that their continued presence is based upon that agreement.¹
- In Ukraine, opposition leader Victor Yanukovich attacked President Victor Yushchenko for his support of Georgia.²

- Russia announces that it is revising its armaments plan for 2010-2020.³
- On August 22, the Russian MoD announced that the Russian General Staff is “extremely disturbed by the rise of the offensive potential of the Georgian Army.” “Between 2005 and 2008 the purchase of weapons rose sharply with an accent on offensive types. And the balance of its offensive and defensive potentials was such that at the start of the aggression in South Ossetia, 40% of the equipment was in the first [offensive] category,” according to General Staff spokesman Nogovitsyn. “He emphasized that in recent times Georgia has moved into first place in the world in the speed of the growth of its military expenditures: if in 2002 the military budget of this republic was \$18 million, then by 2008 it had grown 50 times. During the period of Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili’s rule the process of the militarization of Georgia took on a scale inappropriate to its defensive needs and encompassed almost all spheres of military expansion. . . . Expansion of the numerical size of the Georgian army occurred, a widespread improvement in weaponry occurred, a system of preparing mobilized reserves was established.’ In the period 2006-2007, the number of personnel in the Georgian army doubled.’ . . . From 1 January 2005 to 1 January 2008 the number of tanks in the Georgian army’s parks grew almost double, from 98 to 183; armored personnel carriers more than one and a half times, from 83 to 134; artillery with a caliber of more than 100mm, three times; attack helicopters, three times, from three to nine; and military aircraft from seven to nine. . . .He emphasized that Russia ‘has shown in detail that a methodical unilateral arming of Georgia, in spite of existing agreements, is taking place and this is aimed at open military conflict that might encompass the entire region.’”⁴
- On August 22, the Russian MoD announced that because the aviation task forces operating in support of Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia had accomplished their mission, they were returning to their permanent bases. The General Staff identified 25 ground-attack aircraft and 3 fighters as the planes that were being redeployed. The spokesman also said that “part of the aviation structure would remain near the border with Georgia. . . . The aviation task force is at the airfield in readiness to perform tasks that might arise suddenly.”⁵
- The Russian General Staff also explained on 22 August that its peacekeepers were protecting administrative buildings in the Georgian city of Zugdid [which is in Georgia proper and not in Abkhazia or South Ossetia]. The spokesman did not indicate how long it was expected that Russian troops would remain in Zugdidi.⁶
- Translation of the Agreement on the Principles of Regulating the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict, signed in Sochi on June 24, 1992, which the Russian Federation now cites as the legal basis for its activities in Georgia:
 - Striving for the rapid ending of bloodletting and the multilateral regulation of the conflict between the Ossetians and the Georgians;
 - Guided by the desire to reestablish peace and stability in the region;
 - Confirming the commitment to the principles of the Charter of the UN and the Helsinki Final Act;
 - Acting in the spirit of the respect of human rights and liberty, but also of the rights of national minorities;
 - Taking into account the agreements reached in Kazbegi on 10 June of this year;
Agreed to the following:
- Article 1
 - 1. From the moment of the signing of this Agreement, the warring parties are obliged to take all measure to end military conflict and complete ceasefire by 28 June 1992.
 - 2. From the moment of the ceasefire of 28 June 1992 the opposing sides will withdraw their military formations

with the aim of establishing a corridor coinciding with the line of ceasefire. The withdrawal of forces will be completed within three days;

- The extent of the ceasefire line, the corridor, and its width will be determined by joint groups of observers.

- Article 2

- With the aim of demilitarizing the region of conflict and eliminating the possibility of the involvement of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in the conflict, the Russian Side will withdraw its forces deployed in the region of Tskhinvali, the 37th Sapper Regiment and the 292 Separate Military Helicopter Regiment with all attached support and security units within 20 days from the ceasefire and the separation of the warring sides.

- Article 3

- 1. With the aim of securing control over the ceasefire, the withdrawal of armed formations, the disposition of self-defense forces and implementing a security regime in the designated zone a Joint Control Commission will be established composed of the sides involved in the conflict, which will perform its functions in cooperation with the group of armed observers established in accord with the agreements in Kazbegi.
- 2. Each side, participating in the work of the commission, will designate its own representatives. The location of the Control Commission will be Tskhinvali.
- 3. For the execution of the designated tasks, combined forces are established under the Control Commission as agreed by the sides to establish peace and maintain civil order. A combined group of observers, distributed along the perimeter of the security zone, will be established under the Commission.
- 4. The Control Commission and the forces under it will immediately undertake the execution of the tasks laid upon it in the current Agreement.
- 5. In the event of a violation of the conditions of this Agreement, the Control Commission will investigate the circumstances and will take timely measures to reestablish peace and civil order, and also to prevent further violations.
- 6. Financing of the activity of the Control Commission and its subordinate forces will be provided by the Sides on an equal basis.

- Article 4

- The sides will immediately enter into negotiations about the economic reconstruction of the regions located in the zone of conflict and the establishment of conditions for the return of refugees.
- The sides consider impermissible undertakings of economic sanctions and blockades, or any other interference in the free movement of goods, services, and people and undertake to secure the conditions for the provision of humanitarian aid to the population.

- Article 5

- The sides will work toward the objective and timely provision of information about the process of regulating the conflict to the media. To this end, a special multilateral press-center is established under the Control Commission.

- Article 6

- The present Agreement enters into force from the moment of its signature. Completed in Sochi, 24 June 1992 in Georgian, Russian, and Ossetian, and all texts have the same force.
- Signed for the Republic of Georgia by E. Shevardnadze
- For the Russian Federation by B. Yeltsin⁷

According to a translation provided by the SITE Intelligence Group (which I cannot forward), a jihadist group has exhorted the Chechen mujahideen to undertake terrorist attacks against Russian troops in Chechnya, Georgia, and Russia. It condemns equally accepting aid from the West while calling for jihad against the Russians.⁸

¹ Various reports from www.mil.ru on 21 and 22 August 2008.

² Янукович осуждает Ющенко за поддержку грузинского руководства, 22 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

³ В России разрабатывается новая программа вооружений, 22 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁴ Российский Генштаб крайне обеспокоен ростом наступательного потенциала грузинской армии, 22 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁵ Российская авиация, выполнив задачи в Южной Осетии, возвращается в места постоянной дислокации, 22 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁶ Российские миротворцы охраняют административные здания в грузинском городе Зугдиди, 22 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁷ Источник: Дипломатический вестник МИД РФ. 1992. №13-14. С.31.

⁸ Chechen Mujahideen Encouraged to Prolong Russo-Georgian War, SITE Intel Group, 21 August 2008.

Update 13 (Current as of 10:40 p.m., Wednesday, August 20, 2008.)

Analysis

- The Russian aim appears to be permanently neutralizing the Georgian military, annexing Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and retaining the ability to intervene unilaterally in Georgia to any extent Moscow desires—including deposing the Georgian government. Nothing the U.S. or NATO has done or has threatened to do appears to have weakened Russian determination in this regard. Russia has matched every NATO/US move with a counter-move or a counter-threat of its own. We are de facto in an escalation game with the Russians that they appear to be winning. Worse still, Moscow does not appear to believe that the West has the will to escalate enough to win in the end. Russia still hopes that it can split Europe from the U.S., and believes that it can do so. It does not believe that even the annexation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia will lead to meaningful long-term pain because Moscow believes that Russia has become an indispensable nation that the West cannot survive without. We will therefore have to come to terms, ultimately, with whatever the Russians decide they want, according to this view. There do not appear at this point to be any significant trends within the Russian government's statements or behavior to suggest that the current Western approach is anything like adequate to prevent further escalation of this crisis.
- Russia has claimed that the U.S.-Poland agreement on BMD sites is aimed at Russia and threatens retaliation. See below for details and links about this assertion.
- NATO has promised to reconsider Georgian membership in December and offered a variety of immediate assistance, but not military assistance. The Russians have made it plain that they would regard any sort of military assistance to Georgia as an attempt to "rearm" Georgia to encourage Tbilisi to undertake a new "blitzkrieg" in South Ossetia.

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- Abkhazia and South Ossetia have requested Russian recognition of their independence; the Russian Federation Council will hold an extraordinary session on August 25 to consider these requests. A Russian parliamentarian stated that Russia was quite willing to allow both republics, once independent, to join the Russian Federation.
- The Russian military appears to have declared most of Georgia to be a no-fly zone, at least for Georgian military aircraft, enforcing this declaration by shooting down a Georgian UAV over the airbase at Vaziani, southeast of Tbilisi and well outside not only the boundaries of South Ossetia, but even the boundaries of any expanded “security zone” the Russians might wish to establish.
- Russia claims that its forces will be withdrawn in 3-4 days, but that withdrawal is “conditions-based”--Russia will withdraw from Georgia to the extent that the Georgian military moves back to its permanent bases. The Russian military has made clear that it views the concentration of Georgian force around Georgia’s capital to be a violation of that agreement and a provocation.
- The Cold War filings are lining up, independent of what the U.S. or Russia does: Belarussian President Lukashenko visited Abkhazia and South Ossetia; Latvian parliamentarians visited Tbilisi.
- The Russian press, at least, is using the occasion of Bashar al Assad’s visit to Moscow to claim that Russia should expand its ties and military bases in Syria in retaliation for Israel’s support to Georgia.
- Russia intends to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia soon, and subsequently to incorporate them into the Russian Federation.
- Russia intends to deter or prevent the U.S. or NATO from re-arming Georgia even to the pre-war level.
- Russia has generated enough pretexts for continued violations of Georgian sovereignty (beyond Abkhazia and South Ossetia) that it will be able to re-invade or attack from the air at any time for many months to come.

Overview (Georgia)

- Russian Foreign Ministry Lavrov said on August 19 that Russian troops would withdraw from Georgia in accordance with the six principles, including, “above all, the return of Georgian troops to the locations of their permanent deployment--to their garrisons. That has still not happened. Every day we hear that our



servicemembers in one or another part of the security zone have detailed Georgian detachments that have not yet returned to their garrisons. Nevertheless, the withdrawal has begun. This withdrawal will take place at the same rate that Georgia fulfills its obligations to return its forces to the locations of the permanent deployments and that posts for the deployment of peacekeeping forces in the security zone are built. I think that this will take literally three-four days.”¹

- On August 20, the Russian General Staff announced that its peacekeeping forces had full control over the northern Kodori gorge, the area allocated by agreement to Georgian peacekeepers. The Russians charge that the Georgians

had violated the agreement by establishing a “government in exile” in that area, and by organizing illegal armed groups there.²

- On August 20, the Russian General Staff announced that it had shot down a Georgian UAV in the vicinity of Vaziani (location at right, southeast of Tbilisi and one of Georgia’s two main military airfields). Spokesman Nogovitsyn said, “this shows that official Tbilisi has not abandoned its aggressive plans.” He repeated the accusation already made many times that “elements of the Georgian special forces are conducting deliberate preparations for the conduct of diversionary-terrorist actions on the territory of South Ossetia and the regions neighboring it. . . . [I]t is possible that attempts will be made to take measures aimed at discrediting the Russian military contingent in the eyes of the local population and world public opinion with the aim of establishing the necessity for the replacement of Russian peace-keeping forces with international” peacekeepers.³
- The Russian spokesman added that Russian stands by the rights of its “peacekeeping contingent to conduct reconnaissance and, obviously, to ban [Georgian flights, indicated in headline]--once this zone is brought under control, then there must be only peacekeepers there, and no one else must fly there.” It is not clear if the Russian General Staff means by this statement that it has the right to ban Georgian aircraft from flying in Georgian airspace not over South Ossetia.⁴
- The Russian General Staff justified its actions in Gori and Senaki and elsewhere in Georgia by noting that elements of the Georgian 4th Brigade based around Tbilisi had participated in the attack on Tskhinvali, and that long-range rocket artillery systems had engaged targets in Tskhinvali from within Georgian territory. It also noted that the headquarters of the Georgian forces operating in South Ossetia were in Gori, and that aircraft that bombed Tskhinvali had taken off from Senaki. All of these facts are true and confirmable by independent sources. Their significance comes from the Russian assertion that the attack on Tskhinvali was a “genocide” and a war crime that justifies punishment for the units and headquarters that participated.⁵
- Nogovitsyn also noted that “the support shown to Georgia by NATO might encourage Tbilisi to undertake new aggression. ‘We think that such peacemaking, when the aggressor is reestablished--and it is no accident that [the Georgians] were provided with various types of weapons systems--this is the main factor provoking an attempt at another blitzkrieg [Russian: блицкриг].’ . . . [General Nogovitsyn said] that Russian forces will attentively follow this situation and propose to the political leadership concrete and adequate measures to neutralize any such threat if it arises.”⁶
- Russia on August 20 refused to return U.S. military hardware seized in Georgia to the United States.⁷
- On August 20, Interfax news agency announced that the governments of South Ossetia and Abkhazia had both sent formal requests to Moscow asking that the Russian Federation recognize their independence from Georgia. The head of the upper chamber of the Russian parliament announced that the Federation Council of the Russian Federation would hold an extraordinary meeting on August 25, and would consider these requests at that meeting. He also noted that there had been discussion of the incorporation of both South Ossetia and Abkhazia into the Russian Federation, and he said that this was a possibility if the peoples of those areas desired and requested it, but only after the recognition of the republics’ independence.⁸
- On August 19, the FSB (successor to the KGB) announced that it had information that Georgian special forces were preparing to conduct terrorist attacks on the territory of the Russian Federation.⁹
- *Pravda* headline: “Russia may strengthen its position in the Near East through Syria.” Lede: “Syrian President Bashar al Asad is visiting Russia. The center of attention will be the broadening of a Russian military base in Tartus and the provision of Russian weapons. Inasmuch as Israel actively armed Georgia, Moscow has every right to move closer to Syria and together strengthen their position in the Near East.”¹⁰

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- President Aleksandr Lukashenko of Belarus met with the presidents of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, expressing Belarus's support to those republics. President Kokoiti of South Ossetia also lifted the state of emergency in that republic today.¹¹
- Members of the Latvian Saeima met with Georgian officials in Tbilisi.¹²
- The NATO meeting of 19 August produced a statement (full text appended at the end of this document) that identified a variety of forms of immediate assistance to Georgia, but not military assistance, and noted that NATO would take up Georgia's request for a Membership Action Plan in December.¹³

Overview (Poland)

- The Russian MoFA released a statement on August 20 reiterating Medvedev's claim that the Ballistic Missile Defense system that the U.S. and Poland have agreed to deploy is aimed at Russia, not Iran. The statement added that Russia would "be forced to respond, and not just with through diplomatic demarches."¹⁴
- The Patriot surface-to-air-missile system has a maximum range of 160 km against aircraft (in the PAC II variant) and 15 km against missiles (in the PAC III variant).[15] Apart from the isolated Russian territory of Kaliningrad (the only border Russia has with Poland), Russian territory is everywhere more than 400 km from the easternmost Polish border. Patriot SAMs cannot reach Russian aircraft flying over Russian airspace except for Kaliningrad--and even Kaliningrad would not be in range of SAMs located around Warsaw.

Details of the missile defense system, including proposed deployment locations and the number and type of interceptors at each, are publicly available at www.mda.mil/mdalink/html/thirdsite.html.



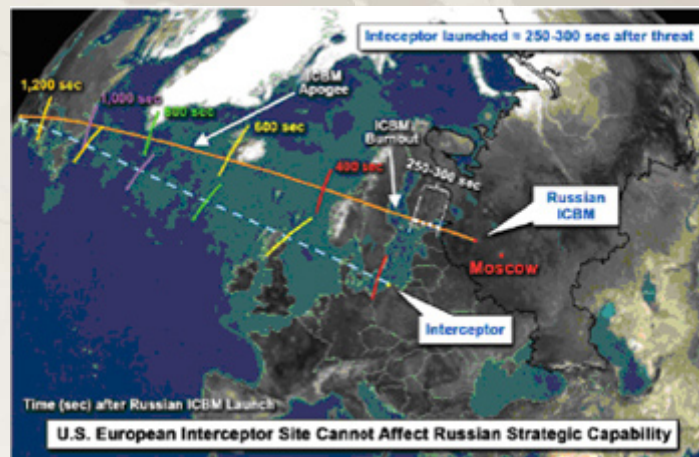
The map above, taken from the document at that site describing the proposed US missile defense system in Europe, shows the increasing threats from Iranian ballistic missiles. The document notes that Iran's current missiles already have the range to hit Israel, Saudi Arabia, and almost all of Turkey. The Shahab-3 missile that Iran has been testing would have a range of 2,000 km, allowing Iran to target areas in southeastern Europe. Iran is also working on multi-stage missiles that could target all of Europe and, ultimately, provide intercontinental capability.

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These maps show the ballistic geometry that makes interceptor sites in northern Poland ideal for hitting Iranian ballistic missiles, but useless for hitting Russian ICBMs:



Appendix

Meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Foreign Ministers held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, on 19 August 2008

- The North Atlantic Council met in special Ministerial session on 19 August 2008, expressed its grave concern over the situation in Georgia and discussed its wider implications for Euro-Atlantic stability and security. A peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Georgia must be based on full respect for the principles of Georgia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity recognised by international law and UN Security Council resolutions. We deplore all loss of life, civilian casualties, and damage to civilian infrastructure that has resulted from the conflict. We are assisting humanitarian relief efforts. We met with the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Alexander Stubb, to discuss the key issues which he believed needed to be addressed.
- We welcome the agreement reached and signed by Georgia and Russia, through the diplomatic efforts of the European Union, the OSCE and the US, to end the hostilities and to bring about a political solution to the conflict. We stand fully behind these efforts. We stress the urgency of swift, complete, and good faith implementation of the agreement, including a new international mechanism to monitor respect for these engagements. Military action

must cease definitively and military forces must return to their positions held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Fully international discussions must begin on the modalities for security and stability in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Economic activity in Georgia, including international aviation and shipping, must not be hindered.

- We are gravely concerned by the humanitarian situation. Allied governments are working together, and in concert with international organisations and others in the international community, to ensure that the civilian populations affected by the conflict have the assistance they need to meet immediate and ongoing humanitarian needs. We call on all parties, in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law, to ensure access for international humanitarian relief efforts to all affected populations.
- We have also agreed today to support Georgia, upon its request, in a number of areas. In addition, we have agreed to task the North Atlantic Council in Permanent Session to develop with Georgia rapidly the modalities for a NATO-Georgia Commission. This Commission will supervise the process set in hand at Bucharest, including the measures of support agreed at today's meeting. These measures are intended to assist Georgia, a valued and long-standing Partner of NATO, to assess the damage caused by the military action and to help restore critical services necessary for normal public life and economic activity. Georgia's recovery, security and stability are important to the Alliance. NATO will continue to cooperate with Georgia in the framework of the Partnership for Peace and Georgia's Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO, and will review any additional Georgian requests for assistance. We also welcomed the fact that a number of our governments have indicated that they will actively support measures to help the economic reconstruction of Georgia.
- The conflict between Georgia and Russia has compromised regional stability and security. We deeply deplore the use of force in the conflict between Georgia and Russia. We reiterate that there is no military solution to the unresolved conflicts. We remind all parties that peaceful conflict resolution is a key principle of the Partnership for Peace Framework Document.
- We remain concerned by Russia's actions during this crisis and remind Russia of its responsibility for maintaining security and order in the areas where it exercises control, especially in light of continuing reports of Russia's deliberate destruction of civilian infrastructure. Russian military action has been disproportionate and inconsistent with its peacekeeping role, as well as incompatible with the principles of peaceful conflict resolution set out in the Helsinki Final Act, the NATO-Russia Founding Act and the Rome Declaration. We call on Russia to take immediate action to withdraw its troops from the areas it is supposed to leave under the six-principle agreement signed by President Saakashvili and President Medvedev¹. The Alliance is considering seriously the implications of Russia's actions for the NATO-Russia relationship. In 2002, we established the NATO-Russia Council, a framework for discussions with Russia, including on issues that divide the Alliance and Russia. We have determined that we cannot continue with business as usual. We call on Moscow to demonstrate--both in word and deed--its continued commitment to the principles upon which we agreed to base our relationship.
- We reaffirmed our commitment to the decisions taken by Heads of State and Government at the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, including those regarding Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations, and we will continue our intensive engagement with Georgia to address in December the questions pertaining to its Membership Action Plan application, taking into account developments until that time.

¹ Стенограмма выступления и ответов на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова, Москва, 19 августа 2008 года, 19 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

² Миротворческие силы контролируют ситуацию в Кодорском ущелье, 20 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

³ Грузинский беспилотник сбит 19 августа в районе Вазиани, 20 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁴ К вопросу о запрете полетов грузинской авиации в зоне грузино-осетинского конфликта, 20 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁵ Про Гори и Сенаки, 20 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁶ Поддержка со стороны НАТО может спровоцировать Грузию на новый блицкриг, 20 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁷ Россия отказалась возвращать США захваченные в Грузии трофеи, *Izvestia*, 20 August 2008, www.izvestia.ru.

⁸ Желание независимости, Interfax, 20 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁹ ФСБ обвинила Грузию в подготовке терактов, 19 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

¹⁰ Россия может укрепиться на Ближнем Востоке через Сирию, *Pravda*, 20 August 2008, www.pravda.ru

¹¹ Состоялась встреча президентов Республики Южная Осетия Эдуарда Кокойты и Республики Абхазия Сергея Багапш с президентом Республики Беларусь Александром Лукашенко, 20 August 2008, www.cominf.org.

¹² Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Grigol Vashadze received members of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia Sandra Kalniete and Karlis Sadurskis, August 20, 2008. www.mfa.gov.ge.

¹³ Meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Foreign Ministers held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, on 19 August 2008. www.nato.int

¹⁴ Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России в связи с договоренностью о развертывании элементов стратегической ПРО США в Польше, 20 August 2008, www.mid.ru.

¹⁵ www.globalsecurity.org/space/systems/patriot-specs.htm

Update 12 (Current as of 8:40 p.m., Tuesday, August 19, 2008.)

Analysis

- Russia has publicly established the principle that Georgia is in violation of the armistice agreement, and that Russian withdrawals proceed only because of Russian goodwill, but that further withdrawals will be dictated by circumstances on the ground.
- Russian forces have increased the number of “peacekeeping” posts, and publicly acknowledged the presence of one in Poti.
- Russia has announced increased air training exercises near North America of strategic and general purpose aircraft.
- Russia views the attempts to reconstitute the Georgian army in the vicinity of Tbilisi as the precursors of Georgian attacks and, therefore, a violation of the armistice terms.
- Russian citizens, supported by the Russian MoFA and the Supreme Court of the North Ossetian Republic (which is part of the Russian Federation), have submitted complaints against Georgian leaders to the International Criminal Court.

Overview

- Russian MoFA says that Saakashvili has violated the terms of the armistice by continuing to use bellicose language, and reasserts the accusation that Georgia abrogated an agreement about exchanging prisoners. It declared again that Russia does not see Saakashvili as an acceptable interlocutor, although it is willing to work through the Georgian ministries of foreign affairs and defense.¹
- Russian MoFA claims that Saakashvili signed the armistice agreement only with changes and reservations, and that Georgia has not abided by the terms of the agreement, in particular because it has not returned its forces to their original deployment stations. It notes that Russia has nevertheless begun to fulfill its obligations under the “Mos-

cow agreement,” which, it claims, Medvedev signed along with Sarkozy as a “mediator” rather than a party to the conflict. But it warns that “The tempo of our future steps will depend on how faithfully Tbilisi fulfills its own obligations.”² The Russian MoD repeated the accusation that Georgia has not fulfilled its obligations under the agreement on 19 August: “Despite the fact that Mikheil Saakashvili publicly undertook to withdraw his forces to the area of their permanent garrisons, today we know that this undertaken has not been fulfilled. . . . Such actions and the lack of any control over various groups of servicemembers of the Georgian armed forces--armed to the teeth--makes the general situation more difficult and interferes with the process of the pulling back of Russian forces according to plan.”³

- Russian MoD announced on 19 August that it was increasing the number of peacekeeping posts “as an additional security measure” to address the problem that the Russians “are daily identifying, discovering, and disarming indistinct groups of armed servicemembers, acting without any sort of control or subordination to the Georgian side.”⁴ It also announced that Russian forces have seized more than five million rounds of ammunition and 242 rifles near Abkhazia. General Staff spokesman Nogovitsyn said that “the reinforced peacekeeping contingent in Abkhazia will undertake measures aimed at “prohibiting aggression from the Georgian side.”⁵
- Russian MoD announced that the US, Canada, and Poland are expected to send naval forces into the Black Sea. It noted that the Black Sea Fleet would continue to provide security to the coast of Abkhazia, and added that “aviation task forces are ready to fly sorties to conduct aerial reconnaissance and also to provide air support to the troops as well as air cover.” The day before, air cover had been provided by shifts of Tu-95MS strategic bombers, but “the planes have returned to their permanent bases. This is not muscle flexing, we have been doing it for a long time.”⁶
- On 19 August, the Russian General Staff said that Russia would fulfill its obligations to withdraw forces from Georgian territory. “We will do it at a tempo dictated by conditions.” The situation now is complex, however: “Only Russian peacekeepers are capable of securing peace and order in the region since other forms of legitimate power today on both sides are paralyzed.”⁷
- Prisoner exchanges started and stopped again on August 19.⁸
- “The armed forces of Georgia are continuing to undertake measures to restore the combat-capability of their units, concentrating them initially around Tbilisi. Preparations are underway for the conduct of diversionary attacks against Russian troops and civilians living in the region,” said A. Nogovitsyn, Russian General Staff spokesman on August 19.⁹
- Russian General Staff demanded on August 19 that the 2,000 Georgian troops “mobilized and well prepared” that were flown back from Iraq at the start of the conflict must return to Iraq as part of the resolution of the conflict.¹⁰
- The Russian General Staff also announced that Israel helped arm Georgia with advanced weapons--and that Russian troops captured three “Arabs” in Georgian uniforms near the port of Poti. This is not RPT not a joke, although it should be.¹¹
- Russian General Staff announced that it would “continue” training missions of strategic aircraft and general-purpose aircraft in the vicinity of North America. “Strategic aviation can no longer be idle. It must fulfill its tasks. Both strategic forces and general purpose forces must train.”¹²
- The Russian General Staff also announced that it had established a peacekeeping post at Poti. “It will remain there until the representatives of the local administration and government return to take up the life support functions of the city and port.”¹³
- The Russian MoFA announced on August 18 that it would transmit “numerous” complaints of Russian citizens against the Georgian leadership to the International Criminal Court.¹⁴

¹ Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России в связи с заявлениями грузинской стороны, 18 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

² Заявление МИД России, 18 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

³ Грузинская сторона не выполняет свои обязательства, 19 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁴ В зоне конфликта в качестве дополнительных мер безопасности выставляются дополнительные посты миротворцев, 19 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁵ Российские миротворцы изъяли свыше 5 млн. единиц различных боеприпасов, 19 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁶ До конца августа планируется вход в акваторию Черного моря кораблей США, Канады и Польши, 19 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁷ Россия выполнит обязательства по выводу войск из Грузии в соответствии с шестью принципами урегулирования, 19 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁸ После выдачи России пяти пленных, Грузия заявила, что у нее больше нет захваченных российских военнослужащих, 19 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁹ В Генштабе ВС РФ не исключают вероятности диверсий с грузинской стороны против российских военнослужащих, 19 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

¹⁰ тыс. грузинских военных должны вернуться в Ирак, 19 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

¹¹ Среди задержанных грузинских военнослужащих - три араба, 19 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

¹² Российская стратегическая авиация продолжит тренировочные полеты, 19 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

¹³ Дополнительный пост российских миротворцев размещен в Потти, 19 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

¹⁴ Об обращениях российских граждан, пострадавших во время вооруженного конфликта в Южной Осетии, в Международный уголовный суд, www.mid.ru, 18 August 2008.

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Update 11 (Current as of 10:00 p.m., Monday, August 18, 2008.)

Map 1: Georgian Land Forces Positions and Military Airfields before August 8, 2008



Map 2: Russian Airstrikes through August 18, 2008



Map 3: Russian Ground Forces Positions as of August 18, 2008



Russian forces in Abkhazia--around 9,000 strong--are not shown. Most of these positions are checkpoints or outposts, and some are occupied on a rotational basis. Not all positions claimed by the Georgian MoD are shown, only those that are confirmed by independent news reporting and/or Russian announcements.

Update 10 (Current as of 6:40 p.m., Monday, August 18, 2008.)

Analysis

- Russia has been systematically destroying the Georgian military from the air and on the ground despite the ceasefire, and is delaying the departure of its troops from Georgia proper to accomplish this goal. It appears unlikely that the Georgian military remains combat-capable or could be made so in any short period of time.
 - Evidence suggests that Russian forces have occupied the bases of 2 of Georgia's 5 infantry brigades, Georgia's only tank battalion, and Georgia's only artillery battalion, have seized the greater part of the equipment of those units, and are systematically demolishing barracks and other fixed structures before withdrawing. Different Russian units repeatedly entered and left Georgian bases at Senaki and Gori by truck and by helicopter over the past several days to accomplish these missions. This information is confirmed by multiple media sources, Georgian official statements, and Russian official statements.
 - Russia and its proxies in South Ossetia and Abkhazia have established the basis for indefinitely delaying Russian withdrawal and for permitting repeated incursions beyond the breakaway republics' borders.
 - Russia, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia claim that Georgian "terrorists" and "diversionaries" have been

planning and conducting attacks in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and that Russian continued operations beyond the borders of those territories reflects the need to defeat such attempts.

- Russia has also repeatedly referred to the lawlessness in Gori and elsewhere (created by Russian attacks) as justification for keeping Russian troops in the area.
- Russia has announced its intention to augment its “peacekeeping” forces, and its clients have declared that they will not accept any peacekeepers other than Russians.
- Abkhazia and South Ossetia believe that their international recognition is imminent. They believe that OSCE statements support this notion.
- Abkhazian separatists have expanded the borders of their territory, seizing the ground up to the Inguri River. Russian troops have occupied the Inguri Hydroelectric Station near the town of Dzvari, in Georgian territory (the dam provides much of Georgia’s electricity, almost all of Abkhazia’s, and some for Russia as well).
- South Ossetian separatists have been operating beyond their frontiers, particularly in Gori. Russian troops are spreading out their positions in South Ossetia beyond Tskhinvali.
- Russia has brought charges against the Georgian government for war crimes at the Hague, where the case will be heard in September.
- Russia, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia loudly blame the U.S. and Ukraine for Saakashvili’s “genocide.”

Overview

- Russian MoD announced that it has seized 1,728 weapons from the Georgian military base of Senaki. Although that base is in Georgian territory and was not used in fighting against the Russians, the MoD offered no explanation about the basis on which it seized those weapons.¹
- Russian MoD states that the situation surrounding the Black Sea Fleet cannot remain as it is, and must be handled through bilateral negotiations with Ukraine. The Russian position remains unchanged--only the Ukrainians have changed their position, said the MoD representative.²
- Russian MoD announced that Russian troops in Georgia took many Ukrainian diplomatic license plates as trophies (which is a crime in the U.S. military). A spokesman said that “Time will tell why there were such excessive caches of these license plates and where they were destined for.”³
- Russian MoD declares that looting in the zone of conflict must be harshly punished.⁴
- Russian MoD announced that it had found large arsenals on the military bases at Gori, including 15 tanks.⁵
- On 16 August, Russian MoD said that Russian reconnaissance forces had entered Gori and Poti “in the course of active military operations,” but that they had been recalled. “Our units are now in the outskirts of Gori, where large arsenals of Georgian weapons have been discovered.”⁶
- Russian MoD says that local order must be restored by local authorities, but that Russian troops are ready to help. Spokesman said “When all current leadership loses legitimacy, direction on the governmental level is lost. . . .” Because of the large numbers of weapons and equipment around Gori, the Russians say that it is urgent that order be

restored there as looters have already been trying to steal material.⁷

- On 16 August, the Russian MoD announced that it was possible now to discuss the withdrawal of Russian forces from Georgian territory on the basis of the six principles, but that there would be no discussion of withdrawing Russian “peacekeepers” from Abkhazia or South Ossetia.⁸
- On 16 August the Russian MoD announced that “Georgian terrorist groups” had attempted to attack the Roki Tunnel with car bombs.⁹
- On August 16, the Russian MoD announced that it had “neutralized” more than 100 pieces of Georgian armored equipment, including “Osa” anti-aircraft complexes, BMP-2s, D-30 cannons, and self-propelled artillery, as well as American APCs.¹⁰
- Russian MoD announced on 16 August that “Additional security measures are foreseen for our peacekeepers. We will make this happen, and the Russian President has given the necessary instructions.”¹¹
- On 17 August the Russian MoD announced that it was still working on plans and preparations for the withdrawal of “peacekeepers and elements of the 58th Army.” “We’re talking about a plan for the gradual return of Russian units to their permanent garrisons in the territory of the Russian Federation.”¹²
- 17 August 2008, Russian MoD announced that its peacekeepers were guarding the Ingur River hydroelectric station. “We know very well that the electricity of the Ingur River hydroelectric station supplies the houses of tens of thousands of Georgians and Abkhazians, and we recognize that such strategically important objectives might become the target of provocations and even terrorist actions. In order to secure the continuous operation of the hydroelectric station and to create conditions for the normal work of its personnel, our peacekeepers have undertaken the patrolling and defense of this station. Both Georgians and Abkhazians can be calm--there will be light in their homes.”¹³
- Medvedev told Sarkozy that Russia would begin to withdraw the reinforcements it had sent to help its peacekeepers tomorrow (19 August, presumably).¹⁴
- Angela Merkel, meeting with Medvedev on 15 August, said in the joint presser that followed: “even taking into consideration the danger of Russia’s situation, I nevertheless said that I consider Russia’s reaction to be disproportionate and the movement of military forces onto the so-called core territories of Georgia I regard as incorrect.” In response to a question, Medvedev said, “No one would deny that the principle of territorial integrity is one of the fundamental principles of international law. The question concerns a concrete situation in a concrete country. And here things start to become very difficult. Unfortunately, after what has happened, the Ossetians and Abkhaz can hardly live in one state with the Georgians.” Merkel responded, “not every people in the world that wants to leave some state entity (and Russia is also familiar with this problem) is able to become a separate independent state.” In response to another question: “We [at Bucharest] said that Georgia and Ukraine would become members of NATO. We said that preparation for membership is the next step. We talked about the fact that they would become members of NATO if they wanted it. And this postulate remains active.” Medvedev, answering another question, said that Russia is not opposed to any sort of international peacekeepers, “But the issue is not in our position. . . . The problem is in the fact that the Ossetians and Abkhaz themselves do not trust anyone other than Russian peacekeepers because throughout all of their previous history, the history of 15 years, it has been shown that the only troops that are able to defend their interests, and, unfortunately, sometimes even simply their lives, is Russian forces. And for precisely this reason they think that Russian forces are the only guarantee of their security, and this must be taken into consideration. I can remind you, by the way, of a recent example from an equally difficult story, connected with the recognition of Kosovo, when the Kosovars refused the participation of a peacekeeping establishment based on a UN mandate and asked that the peacekeeping units be established on the basis of a special mandate of the EU.”¹⁵

- According to Interfax, MoD spokesman Nogovitsyn explained that Russian forces were “pulling back” from South Ossetia, but not “withdrawing” [отвод vs. вывод]. This pull-back includes Russian forces in Gori, since “this region no longer poses any sort of threat.” He added that Russian forces had found evidence that the Georgian invasion was long-planned and practiced and had been trained-for. He claimed that Georgian peacekeepers had planned to destroy the Roki Tunnel and had established arms caches for that purpose. He also claimed that at this moment Georgian forces are undertaking “diversionary-terrorist actions against Russian peacekeepers.” He added that Tbilisi might use mercenaries of “Slavic appearance, dressed in the uniforms of Russian servicemembers.”¹⁶
- On August 18, the office of Ukrainian President Yushchenko announced that it was handing over to the law enforcement officials of Ukraine evidence that Prime Minister Iulia Timoshenko had remained passive in the Georgia crisis in return for a promise of substantial Russian support in the upcoming Ukrainian presidential elections. Yushchenko’s office described plans for Russian support to Timoshenko including \$1 billion and assistance with planning. Timoshenko is now on vacation in Sardinia. Yushchenko’s office announced that she had been visited by former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, and called on her to return from vacation at once. The spokesman said “In the last week we announced that we had information about the systematic efforts of Iu. Timoshenko in the interests of the Russians. Unfortunately, this information has been confirmed. More than that, Timoshenko has crossed her Rubicon and there is obviously no return. Her position regarding the war in Georgia was connected precisely with that--she was deprived of the ability to maneuver politically.” The Prosecutor General of Ukraine reports that they have not yet received any information regarding this matter.¹⁷
- Russia’s permrep to the OSCE announced that Russia would bring evidence before the Hague Tribunal or the European Human Rights Court “to ensure that aggression and criminal acts toward the Georgian people do not go unpunished.” He added that “Russia will not any longer hold talks with Saakashvili.”¹⁸
- An article in *Red Star* from 19 August quotes South Ossetian leader Kokoiti as saying that “The American government bears the responsibility for the genocide of the South Ossetian people no less than Georgia, and must answer for it.” The article goes on to support this assertion with reference to other examples in recent American history, notably Panama and Yugoslavia as well as Afghanistan and Iraq.¹⁹
- *Izvestia* cited reports in German and French media that Russian troops were only “pretending” to withdraw from Georgia but were, instead, moving from town to town. German media reported that elements of the 17th Motor-Rifle Division were fortifying positions near the bridge over the Kura river 30 km from Tbilisi [possibly between Mtskheta and Kaspi]. French media quoted Georgian Interior Ministry rep that the Russians were destroying the Georgian military base at Senaki before withdrawing.²⁰
- Dmitrii Rogozin declared in advance of Tuesday’s meeting of NATO foreign ministers that “If NATO continues to act as a pro bono lawyer for Saakashvili, we will retain our rights to review all levels, formats, and methods of our relations with the alliance. . . . Some hotheads in the West who have expressed support for Saakashvili are ready to do serious damage to international security. If we return to a “Cold War” situation, the responsibility for that will lie entirely on the American administration.”²¹
- Russian MoD has said that it will keep all of the 150 armored vehicles it seized from Georgia, apart from those it has destroyed. These include 65 tanks (of which 21 were destroyed). The remaining 44 tanks have already been transported to North Ossetia and will be put into the ranks of the Russian army. The Russians say that all of these vehicles were modernized in Ukraine, and included four ballistic-missile complexes of the “Osa” type, some “Dana” type artillery systems from Czech, a “large number of Turkish armored personnel carriers,” 15 BMP-2s, and many rounds of ammunition.²²
- Medvedev has announced that the lessons of the Ossetian conflict show the need to rearm the Russian armed

forces: “The lessons of the peacekeeping operation in South Ossetia will serve as the basis for the renovation of our armed forces,” he said. The “negative directions of the 1990s have been overcome. . . . Unfortunately, this peacekeeping operation showed that we must address the problem that the Georgian army was reequipped by foreign advisors, including Americans. Our equipment must not be worse, and we will work on this.”²³ Kokoiti has asked that Russia establish military bases in South Ossetia and refuses to accept international observers.²⁴

- On August 18, Georgia formally informed the CIS of its withdrawal from that body, recognizing, however, that all agreements already in effect will remain valid.²⁵
- Georgian military sitrep as of 18 August 2008, www.mfa.gov.ge:
 - Russian military aircraft overflew Stefantsminda, overflew Jinali dam, then returned to Russia
 - Russian armored vehicles moved from Igoeti toward Akhagorii, crushing Georgian police cars on the way
 - Russian military forces are blowing up buildings on Senaki military base
 - Russian forces reconnoitering toward Sachkere and Borjomi
 - Russian troops block roads around Kaspi
 - Russian armored vehicle approaches Supsa oil terminal
 - Russians reportedly mining roads
 - Russian military helicopters land at Senaki
 - South Ossetian troops enter Akhagori
- South Ossetian Republic declares a state of emergency, including limitations on travel, entry, and exit, curfews, and other measures.²⁶
- South Ossetian President Kokoiti dissolves the South Ossetian government on August 18.²⁷
- Abkhazian presidential advisor for foreign affairs said that Abkhazia has never been closer to recognition than it is now, citing the statement of OSCE chairman Mark de Brichambault that “the political fate of South Ossetia must be decided by the population of that unrecognized republic.” (Brichambault also said that the OSCE operated on the basis of a mandate that “includes respect for Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders. . . .”²⁸) The advisor added, “It is apparent that the protégé of the U.S., Mikheil Saakashvili, suffered a crushing defeat and that despite the fact that the Georgian army was very well armed. Georgian military infrastructure has been destroyed, and the money of American taxpayers has been spent for nothing.”²⁹

¹ На грузинской базе в Сенаки было изъято 1728 единиц оружия, 15 August 2008, www.mil.ru

² Ситуация вокруг Черноморского флота должна быть разрешена на двусторонней основе, 15 August 2008, www.mil.ru

³ Россия выяснит, откуда в зоне югоосетинского конфликта взялся большой запас автомобильных украинских дипломатических номеров, 15 August 2008, www.mil.ru

⁴ Мародерство в зоне конфликтов должно жестко пресекаться, 15 August 2008, www.mil.ru

⁵ В грузинских арсеналах под Гори обнаружено 15 танков и огромное количество вооружения, 16 August 2008, www.mil.ru

⁶ Российских подразделений в Поти и Гори нет, 16 August 2008, www.mil.ru

⁷ Российские войска в Южной Осетии готовы оказать помощь по пресечению мародерства, 16 August 2008, www.mil.ru

- ⁸ Вопрос о выводе российских войск из Грузии должен решаться на основе принципов урегулирования, 16 August 2008, www.mil.ru
- ⁹ Грузинская диверсионная группа намеревалась устроить теракт в Рокском тоннеле, 16 August 2008, www.mil.ru
- ¹⁰ Свыше ста единиц грузинской бронетехники нейтрализовано в зоне грузино-осетинского конфликта, 16 August 2008, www.mil.ru
- ¹¹ Россия обеспечит дополнительные меры безопасности для своих миротворцев, 16 August 2008, www.mil.ru
- ¹² Россия продолжает работу по подготовке вывода воинских подразделений из зоны грузино-югоосетинского конфликта, 17 August 2008, www.mil.ru
- ¹³ Российские миротворцы взяли под охрану объекты Ингурской ГЭС, 17 August 2008. www.mil.ru
- ¹⁴ Об обсуждении Президентом России Д.А.Медведевым и Президентом Франции Николя Саркози в телефонном разговоре вопросов практической реализации шести принципов урегулирования грузино-южноосетинского конфликта, www.mid.ru, 18 August 2008.
- ¹⁵ Совместная пресс-конференция по итогам переговоров с Федеральным канцлером Германии Ангелой Меркель, 15 August 2008, www.mid.ru (18 August 2008 release).
- ¹⁶ Отвод, не вывод, 18 August 2008, www.interfax.ru
- ¹⁷ “Свой Рубикон Тимошенко уже перешла”, 18 August 2008, www.interfax.ru
- ¹⁸ Россия готова к диалогу с ОБСЕ по Южной Осетии, 17 August 2008, www.interfax.ru
- ¹⁹ Марианна ГРИШИНА, А судьи кто?, *Red Star*, 19 August 2008, www.redstar.ru
- ²⁰ Российские танки “прошлись” по грузинской полиции, *Izvestia*, 18 August 2008, www.izvestia.ru.
- ²¹ Москва пригрозила “забыть” о существовании НАТО, *Izvestia*, 18 August 2008, www.izvestia.ru.
- ²² Минобороны РФ решило оставить себе все трофейные грузинские танки, *Izvestia*, 18 August 2008, www.izvestia.ru.
- ²³ Война с Грузией показала необходимость перевооружения армии РФ, *Izvestia*, 18 August 2008, www.izvestia.ru.
- ²⁴ Южная Осетия хочет, чтобы Россия разместила военную базу в регионе, 18 August 2008, www.pravda.ru
- ²⁵ Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on Georgia’s withdrawal from CIS, 18 August 2008, www.mfa.gov.ge
- ²⁶ В РЮО введено чрезвычайное положение, 18 August 2008, www.cominf.org.
- ²⁷ Президент РЮО Эдуард Кокойты подписал ряд указов, 18 August 2008, www.cominf.org.
- ²⁸ OSCE Secretary General visits Russia’s North Ossetia, 18 August 2008, www.osce.org
- ²⁹ АБХАЗИЯ КАК НИКОГДА БЛИЗКА К ПРИЗНАНИЮ, - СЧИТАЕТ СОВЕТНИК ПРЕЗИДЕНТА АБХАЗИИ ПО ВНЕШНЕЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ ВЯЧЕСЛАВА ЧИРИКБА., 18 August 2008, www.apsynpress.com

Update 9 (Current as of 4:15 p.m., Thursday, August 14, 2008.)

Analysis

- South Ossetia and Abkhazia are on a path to declare independence and be recognized by Russia.
- Russia has warned the U.S. to take no steps in Georgia that might “directly or indirectly” encourage Saakashvili to try to retake these areas, but says that it neither objects to nor will interfere with the U.S. provision of humanitarian assistance to Georgia. Russia is matching that humanitarian effort with one of its own in South Ossetia.
- Russian declarations have left a lot of room for the Russians to delay the departure of their forces from Georgia, to increase the number and quality of the “peacekeepers” left behind, and to demand the movement of several critical Georgian garrisons, including the one protecting the vital road junction at Gori, 30 km from Tskhinvali.
- Russian criminal prosecutors continue to prepare legal cases against Georgian leaders under the laws of the Russian Federation.
- All Georgian forces have left South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which the Russians now confirm.

- Russia acknowledges having occupied Gori on a variety of pretexts, but says it expects to leave Gori within a couple of days.
- Russia has indicated that it intends to review the “security zone” around South Ossetia in such a way that it might lead to the demand that Gori the key military depot for the Georgian military be disarmed.
- Medvedev has announced that the peacekeeping forces in South Ossetia will be maintained at highest alert, and Russian military officials suggest that their number may be increased (although, they claim, not with Russians). There are no indications that the Russians intend to honor Saakashvili’s request not to upgrade the quality of the Russian forces in South Ossetia and Abkhazia or their equipment.
- Medvedev has also announced the intention to strengthen and modernize the Russian armed forces and to make volunteer military service more attractive. The Russian military has identified a number of areas in which it intends to make improvements following this conflict.

Overview

- Russians deny that there are any tanks in Gori.¹
- Russians announced that their forces have seized 700 weapons from Georgian peacekeepers in Abkhazia (who were driven out by a joint Russian Abkhazian attack) that were in violation of the 1992 agreement under which they were present in the Kodori Valley. The Russian spokesman added, “For the most part [the weapons] are of foreign production.”²
- Russian military spokesman announced on 13 August: “According to the situation as of 9:00 on August 13 the Armed Forces of Georgia in the South Ossetian area began their withdrawal in the direction of Tbilisi. Nevertheless, concern has arisen about a large concentration of Georgian forces close to the security zone.”³ NB: Gori, which is home to a significant portion of the Georgian military establishment, is around 30 km from Tskhinvali, and the Russians have previously indicated that they regard a “security zone” as being 25-30 km.
- Russian General Staff announced on August 13 that it was preparing plans for the withdrawal of Russian forces to their normal bases.⁴
- Russian General Staff announced on August 13 that it would cease active military operations as of 3:00 p.m. Moscow time, having received orders to withdraw to their positions before the operation began. “A portion of the forces and resources will provide protection to lines of communications, particularly the Zar Road along which humanitarian assistance is flowing. A separate medical battalion has started work in Tskhinvali.”⁵
- The Russian General Staff announced that it had encountered problems with the performance of Russian aviation leading to “serious losses” and was drawing appropriate lessons.⁶
- The Russian General Staff denied that Russian forces had participated in clearing Georgian troops from the Kodori Gorge in Abkhazia (“which were illegally supplied with heavy weapons and other forces and resources not permitted in such circumstances, but they (the Russian troops) were ready” to intervene if necessary).⁷
- On August 14, the Russian MoD announced that its forces had taken casualties in South Ossetia “as the result of actions by diversionary groups and also in the course of mine clearing operations.” It also announced the peacekeepers were assisting with the arrival of humanitarian aid missions by air, and that combat aviation was standing by “in readiness to neutralize threats that might arise in the event that the armistice terms were violated.” The Black Sea Fleet flotilla was also assisting with humanitarian aid missions and security of the peacekeepers, and will complete

its movement to Novorossiisk.”⁸

- The Russian MoD announced on 14 August that Russian forces will remain in South Ossetia to perform peacekeeping functions. “It is very important to leave in South Ossetia forces that will be capable of fulfilling their peacekeeping functions in the event of a sudden intensification of the conflict. . . . The necessary dispositions for the withdrawal of forces have been given by the Supreme Command of the Russian Federation Armed Forces, the Ministry of Defense has also been given instructions, and planning is now going on. I simply cannot give a date when we will begin the withdrawal since the plan has not yet been approved.” The spokesman added that “the reinforcement of forces has been stopped: troops that were preparing to deploy to the region have returned to their garrisons.”⁹
- On August 14, President Dmitrii Medvedev said in a speech to military personnel that the South Ossetian people had undergone a genocide, that it might take years, even decades for them to recover; “that Russian peace enforcement operations were legal, necessary, and absolutely justified, leaving aside the fact that the defense of our people, of our citizens is the direct responsibility of Russia as a state. . . . On 12 August we announced the completion of our operation to force Georgian powers to peace. On that day a Declaration of Principles regulating the conflict was accepted, that is to say that the bases for an agreement were worked out that still remains to be signed as well as the principles to which the South Ossetian and Abkhazian sides have only just agreed. This agreement will be guaranteed by Russia, the EU, and the OSCE. I would like particularly to emphasize what you as defenders of the country know, that no declaration can replace the binding document, and we will stand on that point. . . . You know very well that the situation in South Ossetia remains very difficult. In this connection, we are obliged to keep our peacekeeping contingent in a condition of constant readiness. This is obviously a deterrent for the Georgians and, besides that, is the necessary most important condition for overcoming the consequent humanitarian catastrophe and the consequences that remain today. All who are working in the region . . . need reliable security. At the same time, we will naturally use the entire arsenal of diplomatic means necessary for further resolution [of the conflict]. And, of course, the state will do everything it can to strengthen the army and fleet, to modernize the Armed Forces, to provide social guarantees to military servicemembers. . . . Russia was really in this situation, even perhaps for the first time in recent years, of defending the interests of its citizens who suffered an external attack [an attack from the outside].”¹⁰
- On August 14, the Russian MoD announced that the “Georgians mistook several BTRs [Russian armored personnel carriers] with reconnaissance forces for a column of Russian troops. There were no tanks in the Georgian city of Gori, but armored personnel carriers that were performing reconnaissance missions. . . . ‘What has been given out about 50 tanks, that was only armored personnel carriers with special complements of servicemen who had the tasks of performing reconnaissance and establishing contact with the local administration,’” according to the Russian military spokesman. “In his words, then the decision of the High Command of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to cease fire came into force, reconnaissance information groups were dispatched in the direction of Gori, because ‘it was significant from many perspectives.’ “ The spokesman “noted that in this town ‘were located command elements of the [Georgian] forces that had invaded the territory of South Ossetia, besides which this region held a huge arsenal of various types of armaments.’ He also noted that, after the proclamation of the six principles resolving [the conflict], ‘it was necessary for us to establish some sort of contacts with the local administration.’ . . . [he noted] in the Gori region ‘was discovered a huge arsenal of armaments and equipment abandoned by Georgian armed forces that were not being guarded by anyone. It did not appear possible to resolve the problem with anyone because we could not find representatives of the [Georgian] administration in Gori, and the local population there was also preparing to abandon the city.’ . . . [The spokesman] confirmed that at this moment representatives of the [Georgian] administration have returned to their workplaces and ‘now we are trying to make contact to fulfill the obligations that both sides of the conflict have undertaken.’”¹¹
- The South Ossetian “president,” Edward Kokoiti, announced that Georgia used mercenaries from several countries. “Especially many came from Ukraine, the Baltic States, and there were even corpses of African Americans.”¹²

- The “presidents” of Abkhazia and South Ossetia have stated that they expect the recognition of the independence of their republics soon.¹³
- The Russian Foreign Ministry has called on the US to avoid taking any steps that might encourage the Georgian government to repeat its recent undertaking. “It is especially important [for the U.S.] to refrain from any steps that might either directly or indirectly be seen by the current Georgian leadership as encouragement for its revanchist ambitions and that might lead to a repetition of a tragic scenario. . . .”¹⁴
- Russia announced that “two criminal actions undertaken [by Russian prosecutors] in connection with the investigation of Georgian aggressions against South Ossetia under part 2 of article 105 of the Russian Federation Criminal Code (the murder of two or more people) and under article 357 (genocide), have been joined into one proceeding.” Russia announced that “We have been given by the South Ossetian KGB a list of more than 60 Russian citizens of Ossetian nationality who died. That is only what has been documented so far.”¹⁵
- South Ossetian President Kokoiti “considers it necessary to review the security zone of the South Ossetian conflict and refuses to permit Georgian peacekeepers on the republic’s territory.” Kokoiti discussed this issue with Medvedev. “Speaking about the peacekeeping process, I [Kokoiti] want to say that no Georgian peacekeepers . . . will remain on South Ossetian land any more. . . . On the land of South Ossetia and Abkhazia there will remain only Russian peacekeepers.”¹⁶
- Russian General Staff spokesman said “Let’s ask the Americans if they are sure that it is humanitarian cargo that is on board their transport aircraft. . . . Why not lift the veil on what is being brought there. This disturbs us, Russia, on principle.”¹⁷
- Lavrov said on 14 August that Russia was thinking that “the number of international observers [in the South Ossetian conflict zone], by which I do not mean Russian observers, might grow.”¹⁸ He also said that “De facto, the territorial integrity of Georgia after the conflict has been constrained, and this question can be resolved only through mutual discussions. . . .”¹⁹
- “An informed source in the Russian capital said that Russia does not intend to hinder the movement of humanitarian cargo from the U.S. to Georgia. ‘The question about the provision of American help is a matter of bilateral relations between Georgia and the U.S., and we cannot interfere in that. . . .’ Answering a question about whether Russia was concerned by the fact that the humanitarian aid was arriving in Georgia on two American C-17 military aircraft, he said, ‘As far as we understand, the cargo of these military transport airplanes is exclusively medical and humanitarian supplies. We are not disturbed so much by the arrival in Georgia of these two aircraft as by the irresponsible policy of the U.S. with regard to Georgian aggression against South Ossetia as a whole.’”²⁰
- The Russian MoD announced on 14 August that it was returning control over Gori to the city police. “It is likely that Russian forces will remain in the region for two more days in order to see establish the designated procedures for transferring control functions to the Georgian law enforcement organs, after which our forces will leave.”

¹ В Гори нет российских танков, 13 August 2008, www.mil.ru

² Миротворцы приняли более 700 единиц запрещенного оружия в Кодорском ущелье, 13 August 2008, www.mil.ru

³ Значительное количество грузинских формирований продолжают находиться вблизи зо ны грузино осетинского конфликта, 13 August 2008, www.mil.ru

⁴ Генеральный штаб приступил к планированию отвода войск в места постоянной дислокации, 13 August 2008, www.mil.ru

⁵ Российская армия с 15:00 вторника не ведет активных боевых действий, 13 August 2008, www.mil.ru

⁶ Российское военное командование сделает серьезные выводы из операции в Южной Осетии, в частности серьезных потерь в авиации, 13 August 2008, www.mil.ru

- ⁷ Участие российских войск в операции по принуждению к миру грузинских подразделений в Кодори не потребовалось, 13 August 2008, www.mil.ru
- ⁸ Среди миротворцев в Южной Осетии за последние сутки есть раненые, 14 August 2008, www.mil.ru
- ⁹ В Южной Осетии останется российская группировка для выполнения миротворческой функции, 14 August 2008, www.mil.ru
- ¹⁰ Президент РФ Д.Медведев: Встреча с военнослужащими Вооруженных Сил России, August 14, 2008, www.mil.ru
- ¹¹ Грузины приняли несколько БТР с разведчиками за танковую колонну российских войск, 14 August 2008, www.mil.ru
- ¹² Кокойты: на стороне Грузии воевали наемники из Прибалтики, Украины, а также афроамериканцы, 14 August 2008 www.interfax.ru
- ¹³ Багапш и Кокойты считают реальными шансы на признание независимости Абхазии и Южной Осетии, 14 August 2008, www.interfax.ru
- ¹⁴ МИД РФ призывает США воздержаться от шагов, поощряющих Грузию на повторение югоосетинских событий, www.interfax.ru, 14 August 2008. СКП РФ: уголовные дела по фактам убийства и геноцида в Южной Осетии объединены в одно производство, 14 August 2008, www.interfax.ru
- ¹⁵ Кокойты: грузинских миротворцев в Южной Осетии больше не будет, 14 August 2008, www.interfax.ru
- ¹⁶ В российском Генштабе обеспокоены американскими поставками Грузии, 14 August 2008, www.interfax.ru
- ¹⁷ РФ готова обсудить возможность расширения миссии международных наблюдателей в зоне конфликта, 14 August 2008, www.interfax.ru
- ¹⁸ Лавров: территориальная целостность Грузии де факто ограничена, 14 August 2008, www.interfax.ru
- ¹⁹ Россия не собирается препятствовать доставке гуманитарных грузов из США в Грузию, 14 August 2008, www.interfax.ru
- ²⁰ Российские войска передали контроль над Гори грузинским полицейским, 14 August 2008, www.interfax.ru

Update #8 (current as of 9:30 p.m., Tuesday, August 12, 2008)

Analysis

- It appears that Saakashvili has signed without significant change the document Sarkozy presented him. If true, it has the following consequences:
 - Georgia has been compelled to agree to an international treaty (on the non-use of force regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia) that it had been refusing to sign, effectively coerced by the presence of Russian forces on Georgian soil and continued aerial attacks.¹
 - The military situation is NOT a return to the status quo ante:
 - Russian air attacks and ground fighting have severely degraded the Georgian military, so that it is not in any way comparable to the force Georgia had before the fighting began; Russian losses have been trivial in comparison with Russia's military power
 - The agreement does not appear to contain provisions for the presence of Georgian peacekeepers in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, even though the 1992 agreement by which Russian forces are there stipulated a tripartite peacekeeping force.
 - Saakashvili has apparently requested that Russia leave in place only the same kinds of troops that had been present in Georgia previously (i.e., not armored forces or crack troops), but it is not clear that that demand is reflected in the actual agreement.
 - The political/diplomatic situation is also not a return to the status quo ante:

- Although the agreement requires both sides to enter negotiations about the future status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the Russian leadership has repeatedly declared that it will not negotiate with Saakashvili, that Saakashvili is no longer a “partner,” and so on, so the terms of the negotiation will be very different from those that existed before this conflict
- The Russian Attorney General has declared that Russia can charge Saakashvili or any other Georgian official with crimes under Russian law, and an investigative commission has been set up in Vladikavkaz to make the case
- The Russian leadership has repeatedly declared that it cannot see any circumstance in which Abkhazia and South Ossetia would “return” to Georgian state control
- The international agreement on the non-use of force the Russians just compelled Saakashvili to sign now also has the imprimatur of the European Union, since it was presented by Sarkozy in his capacity as EU president—previously it had been a document under negotiation between Georgia and Russia without external participation
- In sum, there has been no compromise. Russia has imposed its demands upon Georgia by force, under coercion and in the midst of partial military occupation, under the auspices of the European Union.
- The Russians have also established several principles and precedents:
 - That Russia has the right to respond to conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia by strategic attack against Georgia
 - That Russia has the right to use its military force to bomb and invade the undisputed sovereign territory of a neighbor *for the purpose of defending the “dignity and lives of Russian citizens,”* which was the basis that Medvedev has repeatedly advanced for the operation
 - That Russian Federation law extends to cover all Russian citizens, wherever they might be located
 - That Russian Federation law can be used to bring charges against non-Russian citizens who are not resident in Russia for crimes not committed on Russian territory, if their actions are “against the interests of the Russian Federation.”
 - That Russian military forces can take pre-emptive action, including ground occupation, to protect themselves from the possibility of danger posed by foreign forces on foreign soil.
 - This is a little tricky, but it is important. Russian troops may or may not have occupied Gori, although they certainly bombed it. But the Russian Ministry of Defense officially announced that the Russian command in Abkhazia had issued an ultimatum to Georgian forces in Zugdidi, in Georgian territory outside of the Abkhazian border, and then attacked and occupied Zugdidi, all under the pretext of establishing a “security zone” to prevent any possible “repetition” in Abkhazia of what had happened in South Ossetia. The Georgians have made no hostile move in Abkhazia throughout this crisis—on the contrary, the Abkhazians, with Russian support, launched an unprovoked offensive against Georgian peacekeepers in Abkhazia and drove them out. The Russians clearly courted an opportunity to establish the principle that they can occupy Georgian territory preemptively, even when the Georgians have made no hostile move in the area.

Overview

- Initial reports indicate that Saakashvili accepted the Sarkozy draft with only minor changes; the draft will be presented to the European Union on Wednesday, for a vote by the EU members, giving it the force of an EU resolution. The EU will then present it to the UNSC.²

¹There are good reasons for the Georgians to be nervous about signing such an agreement, considering that Russia has readily available proxies in the Abkhazian and South Ossetian separatists who can stage provocations in the future as they have done in the past.

²Саакашвили в целом принял шесть принципов урегулирования грузино- осетинского конфликта; документ в среду рассмотрят в ЕС – Саркози, 13 August 2008, www.interfax.ru

Update #7 (current as of 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, August 12, 2008)

Analysis

- Russia has announced a unilateral ceasefire because its operations have achieved their aims.
- Medvedev and Sarkozy have drafted a document that encapsulates all of Russia's demands in return for a ceasefire—but not a final settlement, which must still be negotiated. Sarkozy is discussing that deal with Saakashvili right now.
- So the situation on the ground now legally is that there are two unilateral ceasefires, although the Georgians claim that Russian forces continue their attacks, and the Russian military has laid the predicate for those and further attacks in public statements today. The Russian military has also made plain that if a formal ceasefire agreement is not reached, then Russian forces will not withdraw from Ossetia or Abkhazia.
- The Russian military has clearly stated that the objective of its operations was to reduce Georgia's overall military capability so that Georgia could not again conduct an operation similar to the one it launched in South Ossetia, and for that reason has been attacking targets throughout Georgia.
- Russian leaders repeatedly say that they will not deal with Saakashvili.
- The Russian Attorney General has announced that Russian law permits the trial of Saakashvili for crimes under the Russian Federation Criminal Code.
- The Russian Foreign Minister has called for an investigation of Georgian war crimes and the punishment of those ultimately responsible by international tribunals, and has said that Russian citizens victimized by Georgians will be bringing individual actions in appropriate European human rights courts.
- The Russian aim is to force Saakashvili from power, preferably using international legal maneuvers (a la Milosevic), but possibly using Russian law instead or in addition.
- The Russians are maintaining their excessive forces in South Ossetia, and continuing to control Georgia's airspace and conduct periodic attacks in a flagrant effort to compel an immediate Georgian agreement to their armistice terms, conveyed by Sarkozy.
- Russia will not permit South Ossetia and Abkhazia to return to Georgian control, and will move one way or the other to have their independence recognized, and probably soon.

Overview

- On August 12, President Medvedev told Defense Minister Anatolii Serdiukov and Chief of the General Staff Nikolai Makarov, “On the basis of your report I have decided to terminate the operation compelling the Georgian forces to peace. The aim of the operation has been accomplished. The security of our peacekeeping forces and civilian population has been established. The aggressor has been punished and has suffered very significant losses. His armed forces are disorganized. Nevertheless, at the first signs of opposition or any aggressive intentions, you are to decide on annihilation [lit.: *примайте решение об уничтожении*].”¹ The Deputy Chief of the Russian General Staff said: “If the Georgians break the armistice, then the Russians will be obliged to respond adequately. At this time, our forces have been ordered to remain in their current locations.”²
- Medvedev told Sarkozy that “the final resolution of the situation is possible on two conditions: the return of Georgian forces to their starting positions and the signature of a legally binding document about the non-use of force.”³
- Sarkozy and Medvedev have apparently agreed on a plan including six points: “1) the parties “must not have recourse to force; 2) they will immediately stop all military action; 3) humanitarian aid must have free access; 4) the Georgian armed forces must return to their permanent bases; 5) the Russian armed forces will return to their positions before the conflict; 6) the start of international negotiations on the future status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.”⁴
- Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said, “Without Georgia signing a legally binding document about the non-use of force, there is no prospect of the resolution of the Georgian-Ossetian and Georgian-Abkhazian conflicts... ‘Our foreign partners have done nothing to use their influence on Tbilisi to sign such a legally binding document. Now I am convinced that without this it will simply not be possible to get around it...’ Lavrov also added that Georgia must remove its troops from South Ossetia and also from those regions from which it might threaten the unrecognized republic. He explained that determining which regions must be demilitarized is the task of military personnel. After the Georgian aggression against South Ossetia it would be inappropriate to conduct negotiations with Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, confirmed S. Lavrov. ‘I do not think that Russia has the inclination to conduct negotiations or even to talk with M. Saakashvili. He has committed criminal actions against our citizens... We conclude from this that MR. Saakashvili cannot any longer be our partner, and that it would be best for everyone if he left. As the minister explained, Mr. Saakashvili “has not even thought to repent and constantly repeats that he was right, killing our citizens and peaceful population, ordering women and children to be crushed by tanks... He does all this not only with a background of European flags, but he even declares that he represents American values,’ said S. Lavrov. In his words, precisely for this reason the minister told his American colleague Condoleezza Rice that Russia was not giving M. Saakashvili a way out through the necessary conditions of the ending of the current stage of military operations. “Lavrov rejected the notion that Russia intends to bring Saakashvili down: “We have no plans to depose anyone, this is in general not in our political culture and not in the arsenal of our foreign policy. We do not depose, and we do not bring to the throne. Others do such things—as we know... With regard to Georgia, we have and will always deal with the Georgian people with deep respect...’ He also added that Georgia and its territorial integrity belongs exclusively in the hands of the Georgian government. In the words of S. Lavrov, “with his barbaric actions in South Ossetia M. Saakashvili has damaged the legitimacy of the Georgian state, once more proving to the Ossetian and Abkhazian people that they cannot be secure together with Georgia—this is an absolute fact.’... The crimes committed by Georgian military structures on the territory of South Ossetia must be reviewed by an international judicial body, said S. Lavrov. ‘In connection with the question of war crimes it is important to establish the facts, above all, about who precisely in Georgia gave the criminal orders. This will be a very important question,’ he said. He said that Russian citizens who were victimized in South Ossetia because of the actions of the Georgian forces will appeal to European human rights courts. ‘According to the information I have, citizens of the Russian Federation who suffered from Georgian aggression plan to appeal to one of these judicial bodies... We think that the deeds of the Tbilisi regime in South Ossetia deserve that these crimes be examined by an international tribunal.”⁵

- Russia's Justice Department announced that "Article 12 of the Russian Criminal Code allows the possibility of bringing criminal action against individuals who have committed crimes outside the boundaries of the Russian Federation." "In this way, [the Prosecutor General] offered the possibility of a trial of Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili in the event that his responsibility for the deaths of thousands of peaceful citizens in South Ossetia and tens of Russian peacekeepers is proven." The Prosecutor General "explained, in particular, that the given statute of the Russian Federation Criminal Code allows 'foreign citizens and individuals without citizenship, not currently living in the Russian Federation, who have committed crimes outside the boundaries of the Russian Federation, to have criminal actions brought against them in the event that the crimes are directed against the interests of the Russian Federation and in circumstances foreseen by international agreements of the Russian Federation, if they are not tried in foreign states and are answerable for criminal actions on the territory of the Russian Federation.'"⁶
- Russia's Deputy Chief of Staff said on August 12 that the elements of the 58th Army that had reinforced Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia would be withdrawn after the completion of an armistice. He added "that the withdrawal of the units of the 58th Army would require 'serious protocol measures that would have to be fulfilled with a specified sequence.'"⁷ NB: Not all of the Russian reinforcements belong to the 58th Army. Airborne and Spetznaz units from three other formations also participated. Those units may have been under the operational control of the 58th Army and therefore may be included in this comment, but it is unclear.
- The Russian Deputy Chief of Staff said on August 12, "As a result of the peace-enforcement operations, Georgia's military potential must be seriously weakened... 'The most important of these measures, which is now achieved, is to weaken the military potential of the aggressor to the point where they cannot even think about repeating their attempt on this or any other territory.'... In his words, this is precisely how one acted with the aggressors after the First and Second World Wars. 'This is global practice. Certainly it is necessary in the current situation with regard to Georgia. This is my opinion as a military man, he noted.'" He also called journalists' attention to the fact that the operation that the Georgian armed forces had conducted in South Ossetia had a symbolic name: 'The operation was called 'clear field.' As they say, no further comment is needed. It might also have been called 'scorched earth.' said the general. In his words, the invasion of South Ossetia [by the Georgians] was precisely planned and rehearsed by the Georgian side, including in joint military exercises with the U.S."⁸
- On August 12, the Deputy Chief of the Russian General Staff said that although "the armed forces of Georgia after the entry into South Ossetian territory of the Russian task forces and the reinforcement of the peacekeeping forces have gone over to the defensive, and in several areas are continuing the withdrawal of their forces to their own territory...During the night of 12 August harassing fire was directed on the positions of the Russian peacekeepers and also on their [lines of communications]. In all, as many as three Georgian infantry brigades, an artillery brigade, a separate tank brigade, and three anti-tank brigades are operating in the area of Tskhinvali... The posture of Georgia's armed forces proves that official Tbilisi has not abandoned its attempt at a forceful resolution of the South Ossetian question."⁹ He added that the "decision to cease fire at Georgian military objectives does not mean that Russian armed forces will not conduct other activities of a military character on Georgian territory, including reconnaissance."¹⁰
- He also denied that Russian forces had struck Gori and stated that the "peacekeepers will not leave 'the boundaries of their peacekeeping status which was defined by the agreement of 1992.'"¹¹ He also denied that Russia had attempted to bomb oil infrastructure or pipelines.¹²
- Russian military confirmed on August 11 that it destroyed a Georgian Mi-8 and Mi-24 helicopter with air strikes on the ground at Senaki. "The Georgian helicopters were destroyed by the fire of Russian flying devices conducting aerial reconnaissance of the area in the interests of the Russian group of forces."¹³
- The Estonian Parliament met in special session on 12 August to vote for a resolution on "immediate ending of military activities and securing the territorial integrity of Georgia." It also proposed that Georgia be admitted to NATO on an accelerated timetable, and the international peacekeepers replace Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia and South

Ossetia.¹⁴

- The Russian military also confirmed that it had sent two companies of the “Vostok” and “Zapad” Spetsnaz battalions to South Ossetia. These formations had been used in Groznyy. The Russians had previously denied that they were deployed to South Ossetia.¹⁵
- The Russian Deputy Chief of Staff noted that “the armed forces of the Russian Federation used precision munitions during the conduct of operations in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. He added that Russia ‘has in its inventory equipment that allows us not to fight with bloody bombardments, but to destroy only those objects that threaten our armed forces.’”¹⁶

Saakashvili announced on August 12 that Georgia will withdraw from the Commonwealth of Independent States and called on other CIS members to withdraw as well.¹⁷

- Georgia continues to report on Russian, Abkhazian, and South Ossetian military attacks on its territory as late as 1910 local time on August 12.¹⁸
- Armenia immediately rejected the idea of withdrawing from the CIS.¹⁹
- Sarkozy was still meeting with Saakashvili in Tbilisi as of this writing.
- Ukraine announced that it viewed Georgia’s withdrawal from the CIS “calmly,” noting that Ukraine had not ratified the CIS statute and therefore this was not an issue of discussion for Ukraine.²⁰

¹ Встреча Президента России с Министром обороны Анатолием Сердюковым и начальником Генерального штаба ВС РФ Николаем Макаровым, 12 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

² Российские войска адекватно ответят на нарушение перемирия грузинской стороной, 12 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

³ Президент России Д.Медведев встретился с Президентом Франции Н.Саркози, 12 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁴ Le conflit en Géorgie, jour après jour, *Le Monde*, 12 August 2008, www.lemonde.fr

⁵ Информация по итогам пресс-конференции министра иностранных дел России С.Лаврова, 12 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁶ Законы РФ позволяют привлечь Саакашвили к уголовной ответственности – Генпрокуратура, 12 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

⁷ Части 58-й армии будут выведены из Южной Осетии после достижения примирения, 12 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁸ Военный потенциал Грузии необходимо ослабить до уровня, не позволяющего повторить агрессию, 12 August 2008, www.mil.ru. ие войска перешли к обороне, а на некоторых рубежах приступили к отводу войск на свои территории, 12 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

¹⁰ Российские военнослужащие после прекращения огня продолжают разведку на территории Грузии, 12 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

¹¹ Российские войска не ведут прицельного огня по населенным пунктам за пределами зоны ответственности миротворцев, 12 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

¹² Российские войска никогда не наносили удары по нефтепроводам, 12 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

¹³ В зоне грузино-абхазского конфликта на земле уничтожены два грузинских вертолета, 11 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

¹⁴ Парламент Эстонии предлагает ускорить прием Грузии в НАТО, 12 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

¹⁵ В помощь российским миротворцам в Южной Осетии приданы две роты батальонов «Восток» и «Запад», 12 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

¹⁶ В ходе операции в зоне грузино-осетинского конфликта ВС РФ применяли высокоточное оружие, 12 August 2008 www.mil.ru.

¹⁷ Georgia MoFA, 12 August 2008, www.mfa.gov.ge.

¹⁸ Timeline by 12th of August 20:30, Georgian MoFA, www.mfa.gov.ge.

¹⁹ В Ереване заявляют, что о выходе Армении из состава СНГ не может быть и речи, 12 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

²⁰ Украина спокойно отнеслась к заявлению Саакашвили о выходе Грузии из СНГ, 12 August 2008, www.interfax.ru.

Update #6 (current as of 4:00 p.m., Monday, August 11, 2008)

Analysis

- Numerous reports suggest that Russian forces have moved beyond the boundaries of Abkhazia and South Ossetia into Georgia proper. The Russians have de facto confirmed that they have occupied Zugdidi, a town on the Georgian side of the Abkhazian border. They deny that they have occupied Gori, a key transportation node west of Tbilisi and south of Tskhinvali, but Georgian and press reportage suggests that they have.
- It is known that Russian aircraft have bombed all of these and other areas, including the port of Poti, which some Russian sources claim has been destroyed. The Russians also acknowledge that they issued an ultimatum to Georgian forces in Zugdidi to disarm.
- Russia has also announced a significant reinforcement of its forces in Abkhazia, and it has announced plans to increase its forces in the region generally in response to the return of Georgian troops from Iraq.
- The Investigative Committee convened by Dmitrii Medvedev on Putin's "suggestion" has reported that it will investigate crimes committed by Georgian troops under the articles for mass murder in the Russian Federation law code
- If, as reports suggest, Russian forces have occupied Zugdidi, Senaki, and Gori, then they have not only invaded Georgia in violation of any possible international legal justification, but have also taken possession of Georgia's only means of communication with the Western World. If the Russians hold Gori, then Georgia's only land-sea lines of communication run through Azerbaijan to the Caspian Sea or along secondary, mountain roads to Batumi and/or Turkey.
- If the Investigative Committee proceeds as seems likely, it will most probably indict Saakashvili and other members of the Georgian government for crimes committed under Russian law, and Russian can then presumably demand their extradition in exchange for opening the Tbilisi-Poti road.
- Alternatively, Russian forces are in an excellent position to take Georgia if they chose to do so.
- The likeliest outcome at this stage is that Moscow insists on the departure of Saakashvili and other high members of the Georgian government from power and from the country, and then returns to its positions in South Ossetia and Abkhazia with significantly increased force presence. In that scenario, Georgia will be helplessly under Russian domination.

Overview

- Russians continue to claim that Georgians are still attacking, or at least firing into Tskhinvali.¹ They also say that the major part of the operation to pacify South Ossetia has been completed and that Tskhinvali is under the control of "the reinforced Russian peacekeeping contingent."²
- Russians promise to increase their force presence in the "zone of conflict" in response to the redeployment of Georgian troops from Iraq by the U.S.³
- The Investigative Committee for North Ossetia has begun a criminal action and will investigate under part 2, article 105 of the Russian criminal code ("the murder of two or more persons").⁴

- Russia announced that it had sent additional airborne forces to Abkhazia “in addition to the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the CIS” in order to “prevent a repetition of the situation with the peacekeepers in South Ossetia, deter Georgian military aggression against Abkhazia, prevent humanitarian catastrophe, and prevent provocations against the peacekeeping forces.”⁵
- According to Russian sources, these reinforcements include four airborne battalion task forces with more than 9,000 soldiers and 350 armored vehicles. They are all contract (rather than conscript) forces with experience in Chechnya and other mountain regions.⁶
- In addition, the Russians announced that they had issued an ultimatum to Georgian military forces in Zugdidi to lay down their arms. “This was done with the aim of preventing the escalation of the conflict in the region.”⁷
- The Russians have also announced that they have captured small “diversionary groups” in South Ossetia, including one “African-American” who has been taken to Vladikavkaz for questioning.⁸
- Saakashvili and CNN report that Russian troops have occupied the towns of Gori⁹, Zugdidi, Khurcha,¹⁰ and Senaki.¹¹
- Georgia reports that Russian aircraft have bombed the Senaki airfield; a tank battalion at Gori; the Shirak airfield in the Dedoplistskaro region; a radar installation in Tbilisi; three villages in the Ajaria region; a radar in the village of Shavshvebi in the Gori region; and Upper Abkhazia.¹²

¹ Грузия готовится к атаке: на границу с Осетией стянуто 80 танков, 11 August 2008, spb.rbc.ru; Минобороны РФ подтверждает, что Грузия вновь ведет обстрел Южной Осетии, www.mil.ru, 11 August 2008

² Российские миротворцы взяли под контроль Цхинвали, значительная часть операции по принуждению Грузии к миру завершена, 11 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

³ Соотношение сил в зоне грузино-осетинского конфликта после усиление миротворческих сил примерно равные, Russian MoD, www.mil.ru 11 August 2008.

⁴ Управление СКП РФ по Северной Осетии возбудило уголовное дело по факту вооруженного нападения грузинских формирований на Южную Осетию, 11 August 2008, www.mil.ru

⁵ В зону грузино-абхазского конфликта введены российские десантники, чтобы избежать повторения югоосетинского сценария, 11 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁶ От Цхинвали до Кодор, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 12 August 2008, www.redstar.ru.

⁷ Ультиматум о разоружении бригады спецназа МВД Грузии в Зугдидском районе предъявлен с целью не допустить эскалации вооруженного конфликта, 11 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁸ Цхинвали до Кодор, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 12 August 2008, www.redstar.ru.

⁹ Russia Occupies Georgia, *Georgia Today*, 11 August 2008, www.georgiatoday.ge;

¹⁰ Russian Forces in Zugdidi, *Georgia Today*, 11 August 2008, www.georgiatoday.ge.

¹¹ Григол Вашадзе подтвердил информацию о вступлении на военную базу Сенаки российских вооруженных сил, 11 August 2008, *Svobodnaia Gruzia*, www.svobodnaya-gruzia.com.

¹² Грузинская сторона опубликовала официальные данные об осуществленных сегодня бомбардировках, *Svobodnaia Gruzia*, 11 August 2008, www.svobodnaya-gruzia.com.

Update #5 (current as of 10:40 p.m., Sunday, August 10, 2008)

Analysis

- The Russians are deliberately continuing and prolonging the fight even after the Georgians have retired from South Ossetia, and are denying the Georgian withdrawal as a pretext for this continuation
- Russia has concentrated more than enough force to hold South Ossetia and Abkhazia against anything the Georgians might bring to bear. Russia may have enough force to initiate offensive operations beyond the Ossetian and Abkhazian borders, although that is less clear.
- Russia is intensifying its efforts to document Georgian war crimes, and President Medvedev is promising to pursue criminal prosecutions and possibly international legal efforts against those responsible for committing atrocities against Russian citizens (i.e., South Ossetians).
- This last point is starting to sound like the Austro-Hungarian rhetoric before World War I. Will the “investigative committee” find senior officials of the Georgian government “responsible” for these war crimes and demand they be turned over? Stay tuned...

Overview

- Russian forces in the operation¹
 - Russia had maintained around 500 peacekeepers in South Ossetia and around 2,500 peacekeepers in Abkhazia before 8 August
 - Following the Georgian movement into South Ossetia, which the Russians say cut off their peacekeeping detachment in Tskhinvali, the Russians sent elements of the 503rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (one of three Motorized Rifle Regiments in the 19th Motor Rifle Division based at Vladikavkaz). The likelihood is that the entire regiment deployed. Elements of that formation relieved the peacekeepers in Tskhinvali. It is unclear whether any other formations of the 19th MR Division or of the 58th Army of which it is a part deployed, but the commander of the 58th Army, Lieutenant General Anatolii Khrulev, was personally in South Ossetia and was wounded in an attack on his convoy.
 - The Russians reinforced with elements of two airborne divisions, the 76th Air Assault Division based in Pskov (St. Petersburg Military District), and the 98th Airborne Division based in Ivanovo (Moscow Military District). It is not clear how large these deployments were, but it is very likely that multiple battalions at least, and most likely one regiment from each formation were deployed.
 - Spetznaz elements of the 45th Special Reconnaissance Regiment, based in Moscow, also deployed. This formation had previously participated in the second assault on Grozny.
 - The Russian Army concentrated attack aviation (fixed-wing) in bases near South Ossetia, but the scale of that concentration is unclear.
 - Border forces under the control of the FSB were mobilized and formed into operational groups along the northern border of South Ossetia.
 - *In all, there is probably the equivalent of a small combined-arms Russian division (perhaps 5-7,000 soldiers) in South Ossetia backed up by considerable rotary-wing and fixed-wing air support stationed at*

bases very close to the conflict zone.

- The Black Sea Fleet has deployed a flotilla off the Abkhazian coast (although Pravda reports that its mission is to “blockade Georgia,” the Russian Fleet denies that it has such an aim).² The Black Sea Fleet has announced that it has established a “security zone” around its flotilla, and that it fired on four small ships that approached from the Georgian coast, destroying one and sending the other three fleeing back in the direction of the Georgian port of Poti (which is not in Abkhazia). The Black Sea Fleet also reports firing on land targets.
- The Georgian government claims that all of its combat forces have withdrawn from South Ossetia following its declaration of a unilateral cease-fire. The Russian Ministry of Defense reports that Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke with Georgian Foreign Minister Tkeshelashvili at the latter’s request, that Tkeshelashvili informed Lavrov that all Georgian forces were out of Ossetia, and that Lavrov denied it, claiming that Georgian troops, supported by artillery and snipers, were still operating in parts of Tskhinvali.³ *Red Star* also reported that the assistant commander of Russian peacekeeping forces in South Ossetia also denied that the Georgians had withdrawn: “They are still in the zone of conflict. That is, personnel, armaments, and military equipment of the Georgian army is still located in the zone of conflict.”⁴
- On August 10, 2008, the Russian MoD posted a transcript of a conversation between Russian President Dmitrii Medvedev and the chairman of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation Prosecutor-General, A. Bastrykin. Medvedev repeated that the Georgians had committed genocide and ordered Bastrykin to “use every effort to collect and document evidence of these crimes so that we will in the future have the necessary basis both for the criminal prosecution of people guilty of committing these crimes and for the international evaluation of their actions. With that, naturally, the operation to pacify Georgia will be prolonged, but the guilty will be punished.” Bastrykin reported that he was heading to Vladikavkaz with a team of 150 experts to supplement those already at work with videocameras speaking with the refugees (the Russians estimate the 30,000 people fled South Ossetia, around half of the territory’s population), documenting their stories, photographing and examining corpses, and so on. Medvedev demanded and Bastrykin promised a rapid initial report on the situation. This effort is in addition to widely-publicized Russian humanitarian relief efforts.⁵

¹ From Хроника принуждения к миру and Цена мира in *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 10 August 2008 (www.redstar.ru).

² Российские боевые корабли и самолеты начинают блокаду Грузии, *Pravda*, 10 August 2008 (www.pravda.ru).

³ Russian MoD, Состоялся телефонный разговор Министра иностранных дел России С. В. Лаврова с Министром иностранных дел Грузии Э. Ткешелашвили, 10 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

⁴ Хроника принуждения к миру, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 10 August 2008, www.redstar.ru.

⁵ Президент Российской Федерации встретился с председателем Следственного комитета при прокуратуре РФ, 10 August 2008, www.mil.ru.

Update #4 (current as of 4:40 p.m., Sunday, August 10, 2008)

Analysis

- The Ossetian crisis is already generating regional effects, dramatically increasing Russo-Ukrainian tension as well as tension between Russia and the Baltic States and Poland
- Other regional states are closely monitoring, particularly Azerbaijan which clearly feels menaced by Russian aggressiveness and Western passivity

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- Russo-Ukrainian tension is moving toward dangerous levels, although the Russians appear so far to be attempting to avoid military escalation with Kiiv. This conflict could expand to put Ukrainian equities on the line very quickly, however, and we must consider how what we do vis-à-vis Georgia signals Ukraine
- Conditions on the ground in Georgia are being established for the destruction of the Georgian state, **although it is VERY PREMATURE to conclude that the Russians have such an *intention***:
 1. There is at least a brigade-sized (3,000 soldiers or so) Russian formation in South Ossetia which includes infantry, armor, mechanized infantry, intelligence units, and headquarters elements (more details on the Russian order of battle will follow)
 2. The Russians had already stationed more than 2,500 soldiers in Abkhazia in accordance with the peace-keeping mandate; reports suggest that they have augmented those forces
 3. The Abkhazians have mobilized their own forces, which are not insubstantial, and moved them toward the Georgian border
 4. Reports indicate that “hundreds” of “volunteers” from among the Cossack populations just north of Georgia have been flowing into South Ossetia
 5. The Georgian ground forces consist of around 20,000 soldiers organized into (I believe) three brigades, of which one is deployed in Iraq at this moment; Georgia has perhaps 200 tanks and 200 armored personnel carriers and fewer than 10 combat-capable aircraft (at least according to Russian sources reporting before the battle of Tskhinvali, which has cost the Georgians a number of armored vehicles)¹
 6. A Russian flotilla consisting of one guided-missile cruiser and two destroyers has taken up station at Novorossiisk and reports indicate that it has sealed the Abkhazian coast; it is also well-positioned to isolate Georgia from the sea
 7. Russian aircraft have been attacking discrete targets throughout Georgia, but there is not enough resolution in the open-sources to evaluate the purpose—reports indicate that they have been hitting key port facilities and taking other actions that would have the effect of isolating Georgia from the rest of the world
 8. Cyber-attacks continue to keep Georgian government websites offline

Overview

- Ukraine announced that elements of the Russian Black Sea Fleet sortied from Sevastopol on August 9, and were participating in an operation called “Caucasus 2008” near Novorossiisk. It warned that Ukraine reserved the right to prevent the Black Sea Fleet from using Sevastopol as a base from which to conduct military operations.²
- Russia has been making much of Ukrainian assistance to Georgia and highlighting previous tensions with Ukraine³
- The following states have declared support for Georgia or condemned Russia: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Denmark, Norway, Romania, Sweden⁴
- Only Kazakhstan has openly supported Russia; Iran, Armenia, and Turkey have all adopted formally neutral positions, although Iranian media leans against Georgia and Turkish media leans against Russia.
- Iranian and Russian media have been highlighting Israel’s support for Georgia⁵

- South Ossetian, Russian, and other regional media highlight America's support for Georgia
- There are unconfirmed reports that Russian aircraft have been targeting the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, although I'm skeptical
- Russian media reports a bombing at a beach near Sochi over the weekend, with some making the case for a larger regional struggle⁶
- It's fairly certain that the Abkhazians have mobilized and deployed to the border with Georgia; reports indicate that the Russians have increased their forces in Abkhazia, although some of those reports are a bit hysterical
- Russian Ministry of Defense statement from 10 August: "The Russian army is not at war with Georgia, but Russia is ready to send the necessary amount of force and resources into the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict that is under the responsibility of the peacekeepers.... 'As many forces and means as the situation demands the Russian Federation will send to fulfill its mission in this region,' added Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces" Colonel General Anatolii Nogovitsyn.⁷

¹ Танковый набег: Какими военными силами располагают Грузия и Южная Осетия, Rossiiskaia Gazeta, 9 August 2008, www.rg.ru/2008/08/09/arsenal.html.

² Ukraine, MoFA, Заява Міністерства закордонних справ України щодо ситуації у Південній Осетії (Грузія), www.mfa.gov.ua/mfa/ua/publication/content/19519.htm.

³ Сергей БОГДАНОВ, "Цена мира," Krasnaya Zvezda, 11 August 2008, www.redstar.ru/2008/08/11_08/1_01.html.

⁴ A good roll-up (with proper citations) is at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_reaction_to_the_2008_south_ossetia_war; See also "CIS Leaders' Reactions Mixed To South Ossetia Fighting," Turkish Weekly, 9 August 2008, www.turkishweekly.net/news.php?id=58431.

⁵ Сергей БОГДАНОВ, "Цена мира," Krasnaya Zvezda, 11 August 2008, www.redstar.ru/2008/08/11_08/1_01.html. Reporting an interview with the Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces.

⁶ Осада Цхинвали и взрыв в Сочи – части единого плана?, 8 August 2008, www.rosbaltsouth.ru/2008/08/10/511254.html.

⁷ Россия направит в Южную Осетию столько сил и средств, сколько потребуется для миротворческой миссии, 10 August 2008, www.mil.ru/info/1069/details/index.shtml?id=49344.

Update #3 (current as of 2:10 p.m., Sunday, August 10, 2008)

Analysis

- Russia may be laying the groundwork not only for the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states (possibly followed by annexation), but also for the removal of the Saakashvili government

Overview

- Russian military forces have driven the Georgians out of South Ossetia¹
- Russian and Abkhazian forces have driven the Georgians out of Abkhazia and are now poised on the Abkhaz-Georgian border

- Elements of the Black Sea Fleet are now based in Novorossiisk and are searching vessels approaching the Abkhazian coast
- Russian aircraft continue to attack targets throughout Georgia, claiming that Georgian forces are continuing to fight in South Ossetia in despite of Saakashvili's ceasefire

Possible Russian Targeting of Georgian Government

- Putin and Medvedev, echoing claims posted on the South Ossetia "government" website, claim that Georgia has conducted a "genocide" campaign in South Ossetia²
- Putin publicly instructed Medvedev to order the military prosecutor to document all accusations of war crimes committed by the Georgian military against the Ossetian population. Medvedev responded, "Naturally, I will give such an order.... We are talking about our citizens, and we are responsible for all of them. It is appropriate that all of the crimes committed there be documented in the most precise way and that in future they must be subjected to the most careful analysis right down to the crimes of the primary responsibility of the particular individuals who committed them."³
- Vladimir Lukin called for the establishment of an international tribunal about South Ossetia "before which must appear those individuals who gave the order for the destruction of Tskhinvali...Those who gave the orders must be examined, and this must be clarified and pursued in the most precise manner...The person who gave the order for the nighttime destruction of Tskhinvali, that person naturally bears the main responsibility...Everyone understands 'who is responsible for the massive destruction of cities and villages, who gave the corresponding orders and who executed them,' as a result of which 'hundreds, and possibly more, peaceful, innocent people, children, and women perished,' said Lukin, 'There are always people who gave the order, and there are always people who mercilessly, cynically executed these orders...'"⁴
- Whatever the reality in South Ossetia (and it is quite possible that Georgian troops did commit war crimes, of course), Russian troops and a South Ossetian de facto government bitterly hostile to Tbilisi will certainly generate "documented evidence" of massive war crimes and will certainly "find" documentation to "prove" the involvement of any Georgian government officials they choose—most probably Saakashvili himself. It is very difficult to imagine how the Georgian government can protect itself in this circumstance.
- The Russians have already insisted as a precondition of accepting the cease-fire the Saakashvili offered that all Georgian forces withdraw from South Ossetia. It appears that Russian attacks on Georgia are continuing despite the fact that the Georgians have withdrawn (and it is possible that the Russians and South Ossetians are deliberately manufacturing reports of continued Georgian resistance within South Ossetia in order to justify continued operations).
- The continued inaccessibility of Georgian governmental websites greatly hinders Tbilisi's ability to get its story out
- It is generally clear that all Georgian troops are already out of South Ossetia, and the Russians are now talking about reinforcing their troops there and establishing a 15-30 kilometer "buffer zone" along the entire South Ossetian border, particularly including the heights around Tskhinvali from which the Georgians bombarded Russian and South Ossetian positions in the city.⁵ A 30 kilometer buffer zone would encompass the entirety of South Ossetia. 30 kilometers is also about the distance from the southeastern tip of South Ossetia to Tbilisi.
- What happens if the Russian "investigation" turns up "proof" that Saakashvili was directly complicit in the war crimes in Tskhinvali, and if the Russians then demand that he be turned over either to them or to some international body for judgment and punishment, and if they threaten to continue "reconnaissance flights" over Georgia and attacks against "military targets" in Georgia that are "threatening" their forces and/or civilians ("Russian citizens") in South Ossetia?

- The aim here may be not only to seize Ossetia and Abkhazia, but also to destroy Saakashvili and the current Georgian government. Alternatively, it is possible that the Russians might hold out the prospect of not annexing the two territories in return for the elimination of Saakashvili and the current government. Russian actions are raising the stakes considerably.

¹ Russian Federation, MoD, “Сегодня большая часть Цхинвали контролируется миротворческими силами,” 10 August 2008 www.mil.ru/info/1069/details/index.shtml?id=49337; Кокойты заявил об освобождении Цхинвали от грузинских военных, *Izvestia*, 10 August 2008, www.izvestia.ru/news/news185345.

² Медведев считает действия Грузии в Южной Осетии – геноцидом, *Izvestia*, 10 August 2008, www.izvestia.ru/news/news185350; South Ossetian “government” website is at www.cominf.org/news.

³ Russian Federation, MoD, “Президент Российской Федерации провел рабочую встречу с Председателем Правительства,” 10 August 2008, (www.mil.ru/info/1069/details/index.shtml?id=49336).

⁴ Медведев считает действия Грузии в Южной Осетии – геноцидом, *Izvestia*, 10 August 2008 (www.izvestia.ru/news/news185350).

⁵ Цхинвали больше не обстреливают, на границе Южной Осетии создают буферную зону, 10 August 2008, www.rosbalt.ru/2008/8/10/512119.html.

Update #2 (current as of 9:30 p.m., Saturday, August 09, 2008)

Putin’s Speech Suggests Possible Recognition of Independent South Ossetia¹

- Putin spoke at Vladikavkaz, saying “The actions of the Georgian powers in South Ossetia are, of course, criminal. And above all, they are a crime against their own people. Therefore a mortal blow has been struck against the territorial integrity of Georgia itself, which has done great damage to its sovereignty. It is hard to imagine how, after all that has happened and what is yet to come, one could convince South Ossetia to become part of the Georgian state.” He referred to the “criminal policy of the current rulers” of Georgia and added, “There will come a time when the Georgian people itself offers an objective evaluation of the activities of its present leadership. I think that in Georgia, in Russia, yes and throughout the world it has become completely obvious that the attempts of the Georgian leadership to join the North Atlantic Alliance, NATO, were based not on the desire to become part of the global system of international security and to add its significant influence to the strengthening of international peace. The attempt to join NATO was based on entirely different considerations—an attempt to entangle other states and other peoples in its own bloody adventures.”
- He called Russia’s actions “absolutely well-founded and legitimate. More than that, they were necessary. In accord with current international agreements, including the agreement of 1999, Russia is performing not only its function in a peacekeeping capacity, but is also obliged in the event of the violation by one side of the cease-fire agreement to defend the other side. That we have done, in full accord with this agreement...”
- “That is, as I have already said, the legal side of things. But there is, of course, also a political side. That consists in the fact that Russia has played a positive, stabilizing role in this region of the world for years, especially in the Caucasus. It was a guarantee of security, cooperation, and progress in this region. That’s how it was in the past, so it will be in the future. Let no know doubt that anymore.”

¹ Russian Federation, MoD, “Председатель Правительства Российской Федерации В.В.Путин, изменив график своей поездки после участия в открытии Олимпиады в Китае, прибыл во Владикавказ,” 9 August 2008 (<http://www.mil.ru/info/1069/details/>)

index.shtml?id=49335). Translation from the Russian is rough but accurate; check with me or another text before quoting.

Update #1 (current as of 6:00 p.m., Saturday, August 09, 2008)

Analysis

- Russian forces will drive Georgian troops completely out of South Ossetia
- Abkhazian forces, possibly with Russian assistance, will drive Georgian peacekeepers out of Abkhazia
- Russia will move to secure the land, air, and sea borders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia with a combination of its own forces and local troops
- The Russian movement into S. Ossetia was a counter-offensive in response to the Georgian offensive of August 8
- Although Russian forces were prepared for such an eventuality, the fact that the Russian MoD had to deploy paratroopers from Pskov and Moscow by air to Beslan and then road-march them into battle suggests that Moscow had not intended to launch such an operation at this time
- Although Russian aircraft have been attacking targets throughout Georgia, and not limiting their operations to South Ossetia, they do not appear to have undertaken to destroy Georgia's air defense system, communications systems, or military or governmental command-and-control systems—and they have apparently been willing to accept losses in order to keep their air operations limited, since the Russian Air Force has confirmed the downing of two of its aircraft
- Saakashvili was probably reacting to local escalations in tensions, possibly counting on political considerations to deter Moscow from escalating—but he chose his moment very poorly, with 2,000 Georgian troops preparing to leave Iraq and he clearly had not prepared in advance for a significant fight with Russia
- Georgia is incapable of preventing Russian troops from securing South Ossetia and Abkhazia
- Russia does not appear (at least from open-source information) to have prepared the necessary resources for a full-scale operation to take Georgia down and does not appear to be doing so
- Russia's likeliest aim at this time is to drive Georgian forces out of the two contested territories and force Saakashvili to accept that fait accompli and sign an agreement renouncing the use of force in either region henceforth
- If Saakashvili surrendered in this manner, the Russians would likely accept a cease-fire and withdraw some, but not all, of the additional forces they sent into South Ossetia; Moscow would probably not generate unilateral declarations of independence (UDIs) in either region and would probably not change its formal relationship (just short of recognition) with either
- If Saakashvili continues to fight and Georgian forces attempt a counter-offensive of their own, then possible escalation scenarios exist, but are difficult to predict
- The most complex scenario would probably result if Russian forces drove Georgian troops entirely out of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, held at the borders, and Saakashvili refused to meet Moscow's terms formally recognizing the new reality.
- At this moment, it is difficult to see any reasonable Western military response other than upgrading Georgia's military equipment, particularly its air defense capabilities; attempts to intervene by air from the Black Sea would risk

engagements with Russian naval forces along Georgia's coast, so the only secure route would be via Turkey, requiring Ankara to risk appearing to be a co-belligerent against Russia

Overview

- Russian forces have occupied Tskhinvali and have brought airborne infantry and intelligence reinforcements to supplement the mechanized forces that entered South Ossetia on August 8.
- Russian forces are now pushing Georgian troops south of Tskhinvali with the objective of driving them from South Ossetia completely
- Russian aircraft have attacked sites throughout Georgia, not confined to South Ossetia or Abkhazia (the Georgians claim that these attacks, including one on the port of Poti on the Black Sea, are targeting Georgia's economic infrastructure)
- Reports indicate that the Russian Black Sea Fleet is concentrating units off the Georgian coast, and that Russian warships fired warning shots to prevent Georgian warships from approaching the Abkhazian coast
- Abkhazian forces (or possibly Russian forces already in Abkhazia) have attacked the Georgian peacekeeping contingent in Abkhazia in the critical Kodori valley with the aim of driving them out of Abkhazia
- The Georgian Parliament has passed a measure putting Georgia into a state of war, but stopping short of declaring martial law, the state to continue for 15 days
- Georgia has recalled some or all of the 2,000 troops deployed in Iraq and requested US assistance to return them quickly (although Georgia's contingent was the third largest in the Coalition after the US and the UK, its departure was already underway with a target date in September and its more rapid departure is unlikely to have serious effects on Coalition operations in Iraq)
- Reports indicate that hundreds of "volunteers" have been flooding into South Ossetia from the neighboring Cossack lands in Russia
- Georgia claims to have downed 10 Russian aircraft; Russia has confirmed the loss of 2
- Discussions have occurred in various fora, including the UN and the OSCE, but with no results
- The Russian position, declared by Sergei Lavrov on August 9, is that Georgia must withdraw all the forces from South Ossetia it sent in on August 8 and sign a commitment not to use force in South Ossetia that the Russians have been pressing on Tbilisi for some time
- Georgian government websites are unavailable, possibly because of cyber-attacks of unknown origin

Regional Reaction

- Armenia tries to maintain official impartiality; rejects claims that Russian bombers flew missions against Georgian troops from Armenian airbases
- Azerbaijan declared that "Georgia's actions comply with international law," and the Azerbaijani press picked up and pushed the story about Russian planes flying from Armenian bases
- Turkey agreed to provide Georgia with 30-40MW of electricity, but has adopted a formally neutral position calling for

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a diplomatic resolution to the conflict

- Iran has maintained a fairly low profile, but press coverage heavily favors Russia and condemns Georgia
- Ukraine issued a statement that Russia had ceased being an intermediary and had become a party to the conflict, and calling on Russia to withdraw its forces from Georgia, accept an immediate ceasefire (as offered by Saakashvili) and “to exert the necessary influence upon the separatist regime of Tskhinvali in order to return to the bargaining table.”
- Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland issued a joint declaration: “We strongly condemn the actions by the Russian military forces against the sovereign and independent country of Georgia. Following the unilateral military actions of the Russian military forces, we will use all means available to us as Presidents to ensure that aggression against a small country in Europe will not be passed over in silence or with meaningless statements equating the victims with the victimizers.”

Reference Graphic



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Sources

The Wikipedia article on the current conflict is remarkably accurate and well-documented: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008_south_ossetia_war.

The NYT Magazine piece at www.nytimes.com/2008/08/10/weekinreview/10traub.html?ref-europe offers a reasonable overview of the background of the conflict, although it focuses heavily on Abkhazia because it was written before the South Ossetia conflagration began

Excellent running telegraphic coverage (in Russian) is available at www.interfax.ru

The analysis above was drawn from these sources as well as official government websites of Russia, Armenia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Azerbaijan, South Ossetia, and others, and numerous English and Russian-language media. As noted above, all Georgian government websites appear to be non-functional at this time, possibly because of a cyber-attack of unknown origin.