

Chairmanship: Finland**557th PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM**

1. Date: Wednesday, 24 September 2008

Opened: 10 a.m.

Closed: 12.20 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Mr. M. Kangaste

3. Subjects discussed — Statements — Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: GENERAL STATEMENTS

Statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization of 4 September 2008: Armenia (also on behalf of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan) (Annex 1)

Agenda item 2: SECURITY DIALOGUE

(a) *Presentation by Dr. Ronald Dreyer, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, on the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development: Chairperson, Mr. R. Dreyer (FSC.DEL/146/08 OSCE+) (FSC.DEL/147/08 OSCE+), France, Switzerland, United States of America, Germany, Austria*

(b) *Presentation by Georgia on the armed conflict in Georgia: Georgia (Annex 2) (FSC.DEL/150/08 OSCE+) (FSC.DEL/153/08), Russian Federation (Annex 3), United States of America (Annex 4), Chairperson*

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) *Matters of protocol: Greece, Chairperson*

(b) *Report on the activities of the OSCE Communications Group: Representative of the Conflict Prevention Centre*

- (c) *Announcement by the Chairperson of the FSC on further steps to be taken in relation to the Third Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (FSC.DEL/149/08 Restr.): Chairperson*
- (d) *Distribution of a draft decision on the dates and venue of the nineteenth Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (FSC.DD/11/08): Chairperson*
- (e) *Organizational matters: Chairperson*

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 1 October 2008, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

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Annex 1

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557th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 563, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF BELARUS, KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN,
UZBEKISTAN, THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND TAJIKISTAN)**

We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), note the extremely great importance of further active and intensified development of co-operative partnership within the CSTO with a view to strengthening global security and strategic stability and jointly countering any threats to peace that may arise, including international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In that connection, we are guided by the need to preserve and further develop the key agreements that have been reached with regard to strategic offensive weapons and that over the last few decades have served as the basis for maintaining international stability and security.

We regard the implementation by the States Parties of their obligations under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty as major step on the path towards nuclear disarmament and as a genuine contribution to the attainment of the objectives set out in Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We welcome the intention stated in the United States-Russia Strategic Framework Declaration, signed in Sochi on 6 April 2008, of the two countries to reduce their strategic offensive capabilities to the minimum level possible and also to continue drawing up a legally binding agreement to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which will expire on 5 December 2009.

We believe that this kind of agreement could incorporate all the best features of the existing Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and simultaneously set new, lower levels subject to verification both for strategic delivery vehicles (intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and heavy bombers) and for the warheads they carry.

We are convinced that the achievement of this agreement would ensure stability and predictability in the strategic relations between the major nuclear countries and would strengthen confidence in further progress towards the total destruction of nuclear weapons throughout the world.



557th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 563, Agenda item 2(b)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GEORGIA

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

As promised at our last meeting, I would today like to make our presentation on the Russian aggression against Georgia and the subsequent occupation of large parts of our territories.

During the last meeting of the FSC we had an excellent opportunity to observe the Russian side making every effort to distort the truth and represent a victim as an aggressor. Russia has no scruples about employing disgraceful means such as propaganda and misinformation in order to mislead the international community and put events in a favourable light for herself. It is especially typical of Russia to make a statement defending international law while having undermined its core principles and the existing international security system.

On account of the time limit I will restrain myself from making a detailed and lengthy intervention and will focus on the key points to which we deem it necessary to draw the direct attention of the OSCE community.

The purpose of our presentation today is once again to demonstrate clearly to the OSCE community the following undoubted realities:

1. The core substance of both conflicts on Georgian territory has always been, from the beginning of the nineties, the Russian attempts to punish Georgia for its tremendous contribution to the collapse of the Soviet Union, for its decision to build an independent, democratic and pluralistic society and, most importantly, for its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.
2. It is evident, that there is no actual distinction between the separatists and the Russian leadership. The separatist regimes have always been used by Russia as tools for exerting pressure on their sovereign neighbours.
3. The Russian side has planned and attempted to dismember Georgia and bring its statehood to an end, or at least to guarantee its own complete influence on this country.

4. While pretending to be a victim of Georgian aggression and the so-called “protector of small nations’ rights”, the Russian side has taken all possible measures to implement its militant plans against its neighbour and drag it into a full-scale military confrontation.

Dear colleagues,

First of all, I would like to underline the following characteristic elements of Russian policy toward Georgia in the period preceding the aggression:

- Repeated rejection by the Russian side, mostly through the separatists, of Georgian and international peace proposals;
- Gradual introduction of key figures from Russia to the separatist leadership and measures to make the local standard of living increasingly dependent on Russia;
- Efforts to accelerate the creeping annexation of the conflict regions, against the background of a deliberate weakening of existing negotiation formats;
- Increase of the Russian military presence in the conflict regions;
- Continuous armed provocations against Georgian villages, peacekeepers and law enforcers; and
- Escalation of Russian militant rhetoric against its neighbours.

Georgian and international peace proposals repeatedly rejected by the Russian side, mostly through separatists

From 2004 onwards, Russia repeatedly rejected Georgian peace initiatives, notably undermining implementation of the Ljubljana Peace Plan endorsed by the OSCE Ministerial Council in 2005. It is noteworthy that almost immediately after the Ljubljana Ministerial, the Russian side, through the Tskhinvali regime, started to put all sorts of impediments in the way of international efforts for the Plan’s proper implementation. The Draft Memorandum of Understanding on Conflict Resolution proposed by the Georgian side in March 2007, which was based on the Ljubljana Peace Plan, was not even considered by the Russian side, nor were Georgian proposals in 2008 on increasing the effectiveness of the existing negotiation formats. Through its separatist proxies, the Russian side also wrecked the EU- and OSCE-mediated peace talks in late July 2008. The separatists either failed to appear at the negotiations, or rejected the proposals.

The same is true of the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia. The implementation of the so-called “Boden Document” was continuously stalled by Russian side, as were the peace proposals of 2006 offered by the Georgian side in a letter to Sergey Bagapsh and peace proposals made by President Saakashvili on 28 March and 12 April 2008. Again, through the separatists, Russia rejected the “three-pillar” peace plan of 18 July 2008 mediated by Germany.

Dear colleagues, I now wish to respond to the notorious Russian accusations that the Georgians were against the signing of a non-use of force agreement. Let me point out that all the aforementioned peace proposals rejected by the Russian Federation included clauses committing the Georgian side to non-use of force. Maybe there are some delegations who wonder why Russia refused such initiatives. Dear colleagues, the answer is simple — those proposals provided realistic frameworks for the peaceful resolution of the conflicts.

Gradual introduction of key figures from Russia to the separatist leadership and dependence of the local standard of living on Russia

Russian military and civilian officials having no family or personal ties with the region have constantly been seconded from Moscow to govern the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Georgia. On the slides you can see non-exhaustive lists of Russian officials directly appointed by Moscow to serve at the highest positions in the separatist governments.

Let me point out just some of them:

Morozov — so-called “Prime Minister of South Ossetia”;

Mindzaev — so-called “Minister for Internal Affairs of South Ossetia” (In 2004, he headed the special force group “Alpha” during the counter-terrorist operation in Beslan);

Barankevich — so-called “Secretary of the Security Council of South Ossetia”;

Atoev — so-called “Chairman of the State Security Committee (KGB) of South Ossetia”;

Lunev — so-called “Minister for Defence of South Ossetia”.

Dear colleagues, I think there is no need to argue any further about whether or not the separatist regimes could carry out their political role independently from Russia, for there is no distinction between the separatists’ leadership and the Russian Federation. These regimes are simply serving pure Russian interests.

In addition, we would like to underline the important element of the Russification of these parts of Georgian territory. Apart from the fact of all key positions in separatist regimes being held by high-ranking Russian security officers, Russia furthermore introduced a practice followed before World War II, namely, the mass distribution of Russian passports. This took place in both regions for many years from the beginning of Putin’s reign; additionally, the policy of making it necessary for ordinary residents of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region, Georgia, to take Russian citizenship if they wished to receive pensions, jobs and travel opportunities, and to avoid discrimination and prejudice by the local separatist authorities, resulted in almost 90 per cent of local residents forcefully obtaining Russian passports. In this way, Russia created conditions in which they could justify aggression against Georgia through the pretext of defending those so-called “Russian citizens.”

Furthermore, as I'm sure you all will agree, in a civilized world States should use the consular services, and not military forces, to defend the rights of their citizens.

Russian efforts to accelerate the creeping annexation of the conflict regions, against the background of a deliberate weakening of existing negotiation formats

You will recall that on 6 March 2008 Russia unilaterally withdrew from a 1996 CIS decision imposing restrictions and barring the transfer of primarily military hardware and military assistance to Abkhazia.

By the way, the Russian Foreign Ministry justified this decision by, *inter alia*, citing supposed progress in the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to the Abkhazia region of Georgia. In this context we should once again stress a simple truth — no such “progress” has occurred in reality, no safe and dignified return has taken place. Apart from a small minority of IDPs who spontaneously returned to the Gali district soon after the conflict, those who were the victims of ethnic cleansing have never been permitted to return. This was not by our choice — this was and is the separatists’ declared policy. As a result, the current population of Abkhazia is less than one third of what it was prior to the ethnic cleansing.

On 21 March 2008 the Russian State Duma passed a resolution urging the Russian Government to consider recognizing the independence of both separatist regions of Georgia.

On 16 April 2008 a decree was passed by the Russian President on the establishment of direct legal ties between Russia and the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which among other things authorized Russian state agencies to:

- Co-operate with counterpart agencies in Abkhazia and South Ossetia;
- Define a list of the documents issued to individuals by Abkhaz and South Ossetian state agencies that were to be recognized by their Russian counterpart agencies ;
- Recognize legal entities registered by laws of Abkhazia and South Ossetia;
- Provide legal assistance in the field of civil, family and criminal law;
- Perform, if necessary, consular functions.

Increase in Russian military presence in the conflict regions

Without going into details I will just enumerate the facts indicating the massive Russian military build-up in both conflict regions:

- The building of an illegal Russian military base near Tskhinvali (2006);
- Constant military trainings in Abkhazia, in the vicinity of the security zone;
- Increase in Russian troop strengths and the introduction of an airborne battalion into Abkhazia (May/June 2008);

- Deployment of illegal Russian heavy weaponry and offensive forces in Abkhazia (May/June 2008);
- Russian railroad troops sent to Abkhazia to prepare railways for an invasion (26 May 2008);
- Large-scale military exercises in the north Caucasus near the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and Abkhazia (July 2008), following which troops were not redeployed after the completion of training.

On 28 April 2008, Russia unilaterally announced its intention to increase its military presence in the Abkhazia region. Among the troops Russia sent to Abkhazia was an airborne battalion, while the additional equipment consisted of heavy artillery, armoured vehicles, anti-aircraft zenith systems, and about 30 BMD-2 airborne combat vehicles.

Neither the composition of these new troops nor their weaponry accords with the mandate held by the CIS (in fact Russian) peacekeepers in Abkhazia. According to the respective CIS agreements (Annex 2 to the CIS Decision, 26 May 1995), the peacekeeping forces should be composed solely of motorized infantry with their assigned equipment. The decision therefore constitutes an act of open military aggression, designed to change the balance of forces on the ground.

The Russian Defence Ministry announced that it had sent approximately 400 of its own railroad forces into the Abkhazia region — without consulting Georgia, and against Georgia's wishes — to “rehabilitate the region's railway and road infrastructure”. The move eliminates any doubt that Russia was following through on a well-planned scheme calculated to lead up to the full annexation of the Georgian region of Abkhazia.

With respect to the so-called “railway forces”, several aspects of their deployment are worth noting:

- The introduction of these 400 military servicemen into Abkhazia was the first time that Russia overtly overstepped its CIS mandate. Russia justified the entry of these troops by invoking former President Vladimir Putin's 16 April instruction integrating Abkhazia into Russia's legal space;
- The 16 April instruction was now being implemented militarily. This operation was managed by the Russian Ministry of Defence and conducted by armed troops. Its goal was to prepare the region's railways for the transport of military equipment and to extend that network to the central government-controlled Kodori Gorge in Upper Abkhazia. This was a clear, imminent, and unacceptable military threat to Georgia;
- The operation was carried out against the backdrop of the nearly universal condemnation by the international community of Russia's previous provocations, a broad international endorsement of the comprehensive peace plan developed by Georgia, and the developing prospect of a constructive dialogue leading to positive changes in the peace process;

- Finally, it was implemented after the assumption of the Russian Presidency by Dmitry Medvedev, implying that the new President intended to pursue the destabilizing policies of his predecessor.

Escalation of Russian militant rhetoric against its neighbours

- 21 March 2008 — Resolution of the State Duma calls upon the Russian Government to consider reinforcing the Russian military contingents in both regions.
- 8 April 2008 — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov states that Russia “will do everything” to prevent Georgia from joining NATO.
- 11 April 2008 — The Chief of Staff of the Russian Armed Forces states that Russia will undertake both military measures and “other measures” if Georgia enters NATO.
- Not to mention numerous declarations by Putin and other high-level officials that if ever Georgia joined NATO it would be without Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia.

Continuous armed provocations against Georgian villages, peacekeepers, and law enforcers

Since the FSC community is well aware of all these cases, I will do no more than simply enumerate them:

- Missile attack on Upper Abkhazia — October 2006;
- Helicopter attack on municipality building in Upper Abkhazia — 11 March 2007;
- Missile attack at Tsitelubani close to the conflict zone in the Tskhinvali region — 6 August 2007;
- Downing of a Georgian unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) in Abkhazia — 20 April 2008;
 - The fact-finding team (FFT) of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) identified the attacking aircraft as a Russian fighter jet;
- Separatists attempt to assassinate unionist leader of the Tskhinvali region — 3 July 2008;
- Four Russian military aircraft violate Georgian airspace over Tskhinvali region — 9 July 2008;
 - The US Secretary of State’s visit to Georgia was planned for 10 July 2008;

- A delegation of 25 OSCE ambassadors was visiting Tskhinvali region on 9 July;
- Russia defiantly acknowledges violating Georgian airspace.

All the above provocations were well documented and it was proved by various international bodies and the independent experts that they were conducted by the Russian military. Most of those cases were thoroughly discussed here in Vienna. The last provocation was even defiantly acknowledged by the Russian side.

Dear colleagues, I now want to ask you without any touch of rhetoric: Do not all the actions and measures I have been talking about for the last ten minutes clearly constitute a well planned and consistently aggressive pattern of behaviour calculated to lead to a war? What would happen in any of the OSCE participating States, if the Russian Federation will officially violate sovereign airspace with fighter jets dropping bombs?

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear colleagues,

Now allow me to direct your attention to the chain of events during the major Russian aggression against Georgia, which escalated into full-scale war in the period from 28 July to 15 August 2008. Let's go through the chronology of the events, which theoretically can be divided into three stages: Escalation period from 29 July to 7 August; full-scale war from 7 to 10 August, at which point the Georgian side declared resignation and withdrew from Tskhinvali region); and a period in which military action diminished to zero from 10 August onwards.

It is to be noted that even when the war was formally over on 15 August, when the President of Georgia signed a six-point ceasefire agreement, the war atrocities and vandalism by the Russian army on the Georgian territory continued, and that they are still continuing today.

I would like to mention that a lot has already been said about the developments during the war, with information and documentation being distributed by the Georgian side through its diplomatic channels. Even today you will find CDs with updated materials in your pigeonholes. So, not to waste time, I will concentrate on a few elements that are crucial for a proper understanding of the real state of affairs. Another reason why I will limit myself to considering these elements is that our explanations as regards these key turning points also provide our answers to the issues raised by my Russian colleague at the last FSC meeting.

Since 28 July, separatist militia have carried out intensive and continuous shelling of the ethnically mixed villages under Georgian control with large-calibre artillery (greater than 82 mm), that is to say, weapon types prohibited by the existing agreements. The facts of the continuous bombings have been confirmed by numerous spot reports made by OSCE monitors, and also by a report of the commander of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces on the period 28 July to 7 August 2008. Shelling of this magnitude continued on a regular basis until 7 August, in advance of the Russian land invasion into Georgia. Here it is important to note that all this illegal military equipment was brought from the Russian federation, via the Roki

Tunnel, into the conflict zone with one obvious aim: to escalate the situation and to drag Georgia into a war. The OSCE community continuously asked for the monitoring of the Roki Tunnel, which is the only way to South Ossetia, Georgia from the Russian Federation. But Russian side always rejected this without giving any grounds.

On 3 August, the separatist Government started an evacuation of the civilian population from the city of Tskhinvali and villages in the region under separatist control. The evacuation continued for the next two days. This was widely covered by the major Russian and South Ossetian television networks. Other than this they constantly reported on the mobilization of volunteers from Russia. Furthermore, Russian media outlets started a massive propaganda campaign against Georgia, calling for volunteers and militias to support the separatists in South Ossetia. Representatives of major Russian television networks (i.e., NTV, RTR, ORT, Ren TV, TVC, etc.) were on-site in Tskhinvali.

This activity once again clearly indicates that Russian side was consistently preparing for military action on the ground. Against this background, the accusation made by the Russian side that the Georgian troops attacked the city of Tskhinvali when it was full of civilian population is totally groundless.

On 5 August, according to the telephone intercepts, the separatist internal affairs minister M. Mindzaev ordered a massive attack on — and the elimination of — the village of Dvani.

Other than this, there were numerous reports on Russian media of volunteers entering the conflict zone from the territory of the Russian Federation.

In the course of these events the Georgian side three times called for negotiations. On 5 and 7 August 2008, please pay attention to the dates, the State Minister of Georgia on Reintegration visited Tskhinvali, but separatist leaders refused to meet him. The Russian representative to the Joint Control Commission Mr. Popov refused to meet the Georgian minister on 7 August, claiming that he had a flat tyre!

On 7 August President Saakashvili ordered an immediate unilateral ceasefire and once again called for negotiations. The ceasefire was confirmed by the relevant OSCE Mission spot report.

The Russian invasion of Georgia: Full-scale war from 7 to 15 August 2008

Moreover, the materials we have distributed to various international organizations and members of the international community provide irrefutable evidence that in the early morning of 7 August massed Russian forces, including heavy armoured vehicles (main battle tanks, etc.), entered the Roki Tunnel, and that they established control over the tunnel on the same day.

But, after listening to these intercepts from the slides, I would like to draw your attention to some of the key points here.

Georgia provided the intercepts to U.S. and European intelligence agencies and senior American officials have already found them to be credible. The Russian Federation has disputed their importance, but has not denied their authenticity.

The Russian explanation that these calls refer to a routine rotation of their peacekeeping troops is false:

- According to the peace agreement in force at that time, any rotation should have happened during daylight and all relevant parties should have been notified (i.e., the Georgian Government and the OSCE) a month ahead of time;
- The last rotation of Russian forces had taken place in May 2008;
- The Russian side had never mentioned any rotation on 7 August in any of their communications (e.g., their timeline of events, public data or statements) and it insisted that its troops entered the region only at noon on 8 August;
- Western intelligence findings confirm the credibility of these transcripts. According to the *New York Times*, the western intelligence services independently ascertained that two battalions of the 135th Regiment moved through Roki on either the night of 7 August or the early morning of 8 August.

This fact was even confirmed by Russian soldiers in interviews with various Russian media sources.

I would like to draw your attention to one of them. In an interview with the Russian Ministry of Defence's official publication *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star), the Russian armed forces Captain Sedristyi confirmed that his unit was ordered to Tskhinvali on 7 August:

"We were on exercises," Captain Sedristyi starts his story. "It is not so far from the capital of South Ossetia, Lower Zaramakh — a nature reserve in North Ossetia. That's the place where we had our camp after the exercises, but on 7 August we were ordered to move towards Tskhinvali. We were raised on an alarm — and sent on a march. We arrived, we were stationed and on the morning of the eighth it started..."

Krasnaya Zvezda changed the date in its story from 7 August to 8 August following questions from Western media and then these interviews just disappeared from the Russian websites.

This was the turning point. In violation of all its international obligations, Russia now proceeded with the full-scale invasion and subsequent annexation of the Georgian territories.

According to the intercepts and media stories, a significant amount of Russian armed forces, enough to "crowd" the Roki Tunnel, entered the territory of Georgia in South Ossetia on 7 August, many hours before Georgia decided to counterattack at Tskhinvali.

Military necessity dictated the choice of Tskhinvali as the objective for the Georgian counterattack, as any topographical map makes clear — it was the only way the Georgian army could move from its core territory to meet the advancing Russian columns.

The counterattack aimed for military targets and did not significantly damage the town of Tskhinvali itself, as is confirmed by a study by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the UN which uses satellite pictures.

The media stories and analyst reports support the view that the Russian military designed its exercises of July 2008 to prepare Russian troops for an invasion of Georgia.

A leaflet entitled Know Your Enemy, which was distributed to participating soldiers, confirmed this view.

On 8 August the Georgian troops were once again ordered to cease fire for three hours. In spite of the ceasefires, the Russian regular army streamed into South Ossetia, Georgia. This action constitutes a grave violation of the fundamental principle of international law as stipulated in the UN Charter and in Helsinki Final Act, and also of international laws regarding the peaceful settlement of disputes. There is no doubt that the arbitrary introduction of significant additional military force after the ceasefire severely aggravated the situation and led to the large-scale military confrontation.

In violation of the same principle, the Russian armed forces and the separatists' illegal paramilitary groups continued to intrude into the territory of Georgia far beyond the zones of conflict and to occupy significant parts of Georgia's soil even after the Georgian army had ceased fire and retreated towards Tbilisi. In addition, the military actions in Abkhazia, Georgia, aggravated the situation beyond repair.

It is noteworthy that Russian armed forces during their aggression used almost all kinds of weapons except a nuclear one. The list of weapons will be annexed to this statement.

Now I would like to respond on some of Russia's shameful accusations.

1. With regard to the Russian accusations concerning the Georgian army attacking Russian peacekeepers in Tskhinvali, my Russian colleague "just forgot" to mention one important detail, namely, that the Russian peacekeeper checkpoint was continuously used by separatists as a "shield" under cover of which their forces could carry out their heavy artillery attacks on Georgian villages and peacekeepers. The Georgian side repeatedly drew the attention of the Russian peacekeepers to this fact and requested them not to allow such criminal practices to continue. All warnings and requests of Georgian side remained without any response from the Russian peacekeepers. After Georgian villages and peacekeepers had suffered severe damage due to attacks from these positions, leading to several deaths among the civilian population and Georgian peacekeepers, the Georgian side was forced to reciprocate the fire.

Unfortunately, given the positioning of the aggressors close to the Russian peacekeeping checkpoints, it was not possible to avoid collateral damage being inflicted on those peacekeeping forces. We express our deepest concern at the deaths among the Russian

peacekeeping contingent, but this was the consequence of irresponsible inactivity on the part of the Russian peacekeeper commanders who allowed their headquarters to be used as a shield for aggressors attacking Georgian villages. Hence, the whole responsibility for the deaths of their personnel lies with them.

2. With regard to the claim by the Russian side that the movement of Georgian peacekeepers out of the JPKF headquarters on 7 August is proof of Georgian preparations for war, here again my Russian colleague “forgot” to mention, or even worse, deliberately omitted, another important detail: As is clearly indicated in the information documentation provided by the Georgian side, all Georgian villages, police and peacekeeping posts were under repeated heavy artillery fire and at that time — earlier than aforementioned deaths of Russian peacekeepers — the Georgian side had already suffered casualties among its peacekeeping contingent.

Besides, in a morning interview with Russian TV (NTV) and news agencies, South Ossetian separatist leader Eduard Kokoity declared that if the Georgian Government did not withdraw its forces from the region, he would start “to wipe them out.” The Georgian military forces to which he referred were peacekeepers that were actually present in the South Ossetia conflict zone at that time.

So, I wonder why my Russian colleague questions this decision of the Georgian peacekeeper command. Or should they have acted as irresponsibly as their Russian counterparts and have left their contingent under imminent threat of elimination? But the answer is simple again — the Russians apparently wanted to have casualties among their peacekeepers to use this as a pretext for invasion.

3. With regard to the death toll, this is disgraceful manipulation of the numbers of casualties, which can have grave consequences, as was indeed the case with regard to the Georgian villages in the conflict zone: Human Rights Watch, whose representatives visited the war zone even during the hostilities, reported that the deliberate attempts by the Russian government to exaggerate the number of people killed in the South Ossetia conflict provoked revenge attacks on Georgian villagers in the breakaway republic. HRW was the only independent organization able to enter the area at that moment and reported as follows: “By day 5 of a conflict one normally expects that there is some kind of list of the dead and injured, or at least an indication of their age and gender. But here there is no information. Absolutely nothing.” Besides, in such a situation one would normally expect to find lots of new graves in the region, but nothing like this was seen by the international representatives.

4. Now I would like to turn to the UNOSAT pictures showed by the Russian side at our last meeting. First of all I would like to stress that these pictures were taken after continuous Russian bombardment of Tskhinvali itself and surrounding Georgian villages. To illustrate this, let me show on the screen the full set of UNOSAT pictures reflecting the situation in the Didi Liakhvi valley. As you can clearly see even from a first glance at the slide, the damage suffered taken by the Georgian villages around Tskhinvali is considerably higher than that suffered by Tskhinvali itself. Now I hope that my Russian colleague will not declare that the Georgians bombed their own villages as was claimed in connection with the 6 August missile incident last year.

5. With regard to the alleged maps of the Georgian General Staff, which my Russian colleague claimed reflect Georgian plans of military aggression against South Ossetia, it should be noted the Russian side has from time to time displayed similar maps as evidence of Georgian aggressive plans. The last one I saw also looked very nice. It just had one fatal flaw — the inscriptions on the map were in Russian. Well, this time it seems that the Russian side found someone to translate the inscriptions into Georgian, but still failed to find a proper Georgian font.

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear colleagues,

Finally, I would like to direct your attention to the violations of the ceasefire agreement by the Russian side and to the humanitarian situation in Georgia as it has emerged in connection with this war — large-scale atrocities, vandalism, ethnic cleansing and other criminal acts committed by the Russian armed forces.

First of all, it should be noted that Russia continues to violate the ceasefire agreement, which was, as the Russian side claims, proposed and signed by the President of the Russian Federation D. Medvedev together with the French President N. Sarkozy.

In violation of the principle of the agreement to cease hostilities and refrain from further use of force, Russian armed forces are continuing to open fire at Georgian law-enforcers. Even recently, attacks have repeatedly been carried out on Georgian police from the territories currently controlled by the Russian military forces, resulting in casualties among Georgian police officers.

Instead of sparing no efforts to ensure the compliance of the Russian side with its international obligations, Minister Lavrov is preoccupied with his visits in Sokhumi and Tskhinvali and with preparing the agreements with the criminal regimes of the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which aim at having significant amounts of Russian troops (up to 4000 personnel) in the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia, and Abkhazia, Georgia. This is an outright violation of the six-point ceasefire agreement, which provides for the withdrawal of all Russian forces to the positions held prior to the outbreak of the hostilities. Against this background, the ambiguous request by Minister Lavrov for certain additional security guarantees from Georgia is beyond any logic, especially when he is denying the international monitors entrance to the region, and in exchange offering mere oral confirmation of the peaceful intentions of criminals, as he did in his recent interview in Tskhinvali.

We welcome the decision taken by the EU Council on External Relations to send an independent civilian observer mission to Georgia under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), to be deployed by 1 October 2008. Furthermore, we appreciate the appointment of Mr. Pierre Morel as the Special Representative of the European Union for the crisis in Georgia and look forward to fruitful co-operation with him. Georgia values and appreciates the decisiveness and promptness with which the EU is deploying its ESDP mission in Georgia.

Accordingly, together with the EU and the rest of the international community we expect the Russian Federation to start withdrawing all of its military forces from the occupied territories in Georgia by 1 October, to the lines held prior to the outbreak of the hostilities, and to complete the process of withdrawal by 10 October, as agreed between Presidents Sarkozy and Medvedev on 8 September 2008.

Failure by the Russian Federation to comply with this obligation would clearly demonstrate its extreme disrespect for its international commitments and for one of the core principles of international relations — *pacta sunt servanda*. It is our common understanding that compliance of the Russian Federation with its international obligations will be a catalyst through which it can start regaining its international reputation as a more or less reliable international partner.

Mr. Chairperson,

With regard to the humanitarian situation on the ground, all the aforementioned actions have been accompanied by a widespread pattern of abuse, pillage and destruction throughout South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Georgia, especially in ethnic Georgian villages, as has in many cases been confirmed in reports issued by international human rights organizations. They note the vulnerability of ethnic Georgian civilians in the region to serious human rights abuses, including deliberate attacks carried out on the basis of their ethnicity despite the end of large-scale hostilities. This harassment of the Georgian population was reflected in the spot report of the OSCE Mission to Georgia of August 16 and is continuing even now.

The ceasefire agreement envisages that the parties should give free access to humanitarian assistance for those in need. Despite this, the Russian Federation's military checkpoints north of Gori represent an obstacle both to humanitarian relief efforts and to people trying to return to their homes. Several international organizations have complained about this.

Unarmed OSCE Military Monitoring Officers (MMOs), who are supposed to monitor the situation on the ground and report on a number of issues including humanitarian needs, are not allowed into the Georgian villages south of the zone of conflict. Nevertheless, some MMOs have managed to get to the north of the Karaleti, though this is not yet a regular practice.

Once again I have to repeat to my Russian colleagues that the Russian Federation must comply with its obligations under the six-point ceasefire agreement and must give free access to the OSCE MMOs to enter all areas required for the effective monitoring of the situation on the ground.

Mr. Chairperson,

The last but by no means the least serious element of Russia's malevolent foreign policy towards Georgia is the ethnic cleansing being conducted against the Georgian population on the territories occupied by and held under effective control of the Russian forces. It is deplorable that the Russian Federation chooses to perpetrate this type of crime as

a means of pursuing its foreign policy. Ethnic Georgians within the areas under Russia's control have been subjected to brutal physical violence on a systematic basis with the consequence of numerous civilian deaths; please see the latest spot reports.

The mass expulsion of ethnic Georgians clearly has two goals: to ensure an ethnically homogeneous population in the territories under Russian control, and to make return impossible for more than 120,000 internally displaced persons.

The campaign has actually become even more intense since the Russian President's recognition of the independence of the separatist regions, thus providing yet another proof that the persecution of ethnic Georgians on the occupied territories is a deliberate policy aimed at achieving political goals, rather than being made up of isolated cases of violence.

Attacks on ethnic grounds

As noted in the news and/or the press releases of various international human rights organizations and NGOs, and also in information gathered by the Government of Georgia, the forced displacement of the ethnic Georgian population in Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia) of Georgia has been carried out by the representatives of the Russian armed forces, acting together with South Ossetian separatist militia and foreign mercenaries. These forces have engaged in a campaign of ethnic cleansing involving murder and forced displacement of ethnic Georgians, and the pillage and extensive destruction of villages adjacent to South Ossetia, Georgia.

The following is an illustrative list of discriminatory actions against Georgian citizens in and around Tskhinvali region, Georgia:

- Russian forces and separatist militia have summarily executed Georgian civilians and persons *hors de combat* after verifying their ethnicity in the villages of Nikosi, Kurta, Tamarasheni, Zemo Achabeti, and Kvemo Achabeti. Those villages have been burnt to ground;
- Russian forces and separatist militia have engaged in widespread pillage and burning of homes in the villages of Karbi, Mereti, Disevi, Ksuisi, Kitsnisi, Beloti, Vanati, Satskheneti, Tkviavi, Karalatei, Avnevi and other villages inhabited by ethnic Georgians. They have executed elderly civilians;
- Russian forces have forcibly transferred the remaining ethnic Georgians from villages to Tskhinvali, where they were kept in harsh conditions and subjected to torture and inhuman and degrading treatment.

A Human Rights Watch report dated 13 August 2008 and based on first-hand accounts of HRW staff and interviews of the civilians confirms this widespread pattern of abuse, pillage and destruction throughout South Ossetia, Georgia, and especially in ethnic Georgian villages.

In and around Abkhazia, Georgia, ethnic Georgian villages in Upper Abkhazia (Kodori Gorge) have been destroyed by Russian forces and the entire population of 3,000 has been displaced.

In its report of 14 August 2008, Amnesty International noted that “civilians in Georgia remain vulnerable to serious human rights abuses, including attacks on the basis of their ethnicity, despite the end of large-scale hostilities.” It further notes the deliberate “ethnic targeting” and violence against the Georgian population.

Expulsion of the ethnically Georgian population

The ethnically Georgian population fled *en masse* from their villages in Tskhinvali region after Russian troops massively occupied Georgian territories and conducted the brutal discriminatory attacks described above.

This information is confirmed by the objective reports of international human rights organizations (such as HRW) that have interviewed the remaining population of the region.

As a result of the conflict, more than 120,000 internally displaced persons have been officially registered according to officially available data in Georgia.

However, this data may be subject to verification. If all the unregistered persons are counted, the total will increase to 200,000.

Quite apart from the violation of the international norms prohibiting ethnic cleansing, the acts of the armed forces of the Russian Federation constitute massive violations of the laws of war. The violations include targeted attacks on civilian population and civilian objects, indiscriminate attacks, attacks on medical establishments and personnel, massive pillage, the use of prohibited weapons, the taking of hostages, etc. The facts described below demonstrate that the heinous acts committed by the forces of the Russian Federation in most cases amount to war crimes under international humanitarian law (IHL).

Acts against the ethnic Georgian population living in the territories occupied by the Russian Federation are still taking place. Russian soldiers have been threatening the Georgian population, forcing them to flee their homes and later on looting and then burning down their property.

Numerous houses in the villages of Kekhvi, Nizhnie Achaveti, Verkhnie Achaveti and Tamarasheni and in the city of Gori were looted and burned down in the course of two weeks. Representatives of the Russian armed forces took household items — furniture, television sets, heaters, suitcases, carpets and blankets — out of houses in the village of Nizhnie Achaveti and loaded them into their trucks. Detention camps have been instituted in Tskhinvali region by the Russian armed forces. According to the available information two such detention camps for ethnic Georgian detainees have been functioning in the region. The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 determines in detail the legal framework regarding detention, internment or assigned residence of civilians and the relevant procedural guarantees that shall be granted to them. The existing situation violates the principles of international humanitarian law and, as argued above, is indicative of a war crime.

Ecological catastrophe and the use of incendiary weapons

On 15 August 2008, Russian military helicopters started to drop fire-generating bombs (incendiary weapons) on forests and protected areas belonging to the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park and the Tsagveri, Daba, Kvibisi, Sadgeri, Ardagani, and Tsemi settlements in the surrounding area. This clearly represents a violation by the Russian Federation of its obligations stemming from Protocol III on Restriction or Prohibition of the Use of Incendiary Weapons of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons of 1980.

Georgian authorities officially approached the Governments of Ukraine and Turkey to assist in dealing with this catastrophe; however, the Russian Federation denied those States an opportunity to enter Georgian airspace. Only on 18 August 2008 did the Russian generals allow Turkish airplanes to enter Georgian territory and assist the ongoing activities aimed at extinguishing the fire in the forests.

According to the preliminary calculations, approximately 500 hectares of timberland have been burned.

Mr. Chairperson,

This concludes our presentation. The text and accompanying materials will be distributed as soon as possible to all OSCE delegations. I thank you and all of my colleagues for your attention.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/563
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Annex 3

ENGLISH
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557th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 563, Agenda item 2(b)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The presentation given by the delegation of Georgia provides a fairly complete picture of Tbilisi's propaganda efforts to whitewash its own criminal actions by shifting the responsibility from the aggressor to the victim of the aggression. The Georgian political spin doctors are making every conceivable effort to deflect attention from the incontrovertible fact that the deaths and suffering of people on both sides was the result of a military adventure undertaken by the Saakashvili regime. In one of his interviews as long ago as 2006 the Georgian president stated that he would never begin a war since he was well aware that in the Caucasus the memory of spilt blood lives on for a very long time. This means that when unleashing the attack on Tskhinvali, he must have understood that if that operation failed it would inevitably be the Georgian population as well who would suffer. But this consideration did not stop him. Totally aware of what he was doing, he placed his own fellow citizens at risk, which means that he bears the full responsibility for these actions before his own people.

The Georgian side is attempting to claim that the Russian side did not limit itself to defeating the Georgian forces on the territory of South Ossetia but also struck at targets on Georgian territory itself. It seems that in Tbilisi they do not altogether correctly understand the situation. The fact is that during the night of 7 to 8 August what occurred was not a fist fight between schoolboys but a full-scale bloody aggression, about which we spoke at the meeting on 17 September. And the aggressor must have been aware of the inevitable consequences. The Russian armed forces responded in an absolutely proper and proportional manner. Their mission was to repel the aggressor and to reliably prevent any resumption of aggressive actions. This meant it was necessary to strike a number of military and military-industrial targets on Georgian territory, all the more since many of them were being directly used in the attack on South Ossetia. We have proposed to our colleagues that they compare satellite images of Tskhinvali and Gori, which graphically confirm that the Georgian forces were waging war to bring about the total destruction of the South Ossetian capital, while the Russian forces were carrying out selective strikes on military targets. You have the opportunity, should you wish to again convince yourselves of this, to familiarize yourselves in addition with satellite images of other populated settlements in Georgia said to have suffered, in particular with the pictures of the city of Poti, whose name has so often come up in Georgian propaganda material in August and September.

In a number of cases, peaceful Georgian citizens did in fact suffer, something that can only be regretted, but the responsibility for this, we repeat, lies entirely with those who unleashed the war.

For altogether understandable reasons, the Georgian side is focusing on the heavily damaged Georgian villages on the territory of South Ossetia. In many of these villages abandoned homes were in fact totally destroyed by fire. The Russian army had nothing to do with this. The only incident involving combat occurred in the Georgian village of Zemo-Nikozi, when a Georgian special forces unit ambushed in the village a column of Russian troops that was passing through and destroyed several Russian tanks and armoured vehicles. The Georgian special forces unit was in turn destroyed. There were no other incidents of armed clashes involving Russian units in Georgian settlements, for the reason, among others, that the Georgian military and local authorities simply fled those places. The fires in the Georgian villages occurred when South Ossetian formations were clearing these villages of Georgian military units. Of course, incidents of this kind are a cause of great sadness, but it has to be noted that there were virtually no victims from among the peaceful Georgian population as a result of them, since the residents had been evacuated earlier. When assessing these facts, one must not forget that a few days prior to these events officers of the South Ossetian police had witnessed with their own eyes how Georgian troops were destroying homes in Tskhinvali and in Ossetian villages, together with the people who were peacefully living there, and how they were using tanks to crush to death women and children.

In that same context, it is well to recall that over all the years of the conflict there has been virtually no change in the percentage ratio of the Georgian and Ossetian population in South Ossetia. What this means is that the authorities in Tskhinvali had been pursuing an altogether tolerant policy with regard to the Georgians. And if now a sizeable portion of the Georgian population has left South Ossetia, the responsibility for this also rests on the conscience of the Saakashvili regime, whose actions inflamed inter-ethnic discord.

The Georgian authorities, in their attempts to justify their military adventure in South Ossetia in the eyes of the international community, are trying to create the impression that they were compelled as it were to take the action they did in response, they say, to “aggression” by Russia. Three documents circulated within the OSCE by the Georgian delegation on 8 August and also on 10 and 22 September of this year are largely devoted to this subject. However, if one carefully studies these documents, the picture that emerges of the events that took place at the beginning of the assault on South Ossetia obviously does not become any clearer, but merely raises additional questions.

The first thing that strikes the reader has to do with the chronology discrepancies in the Georgian account of the events. One document contains the assertion that the Russian forces with up to 150 units of heavy equipment transited the Roki tunnel to Tskhinvali at 5.30 a.m. on 8 August, while another document claims that this happened at 11.30 p.m. on 7 August. Currently an attempt is being made to push these times back by another full day — to 3.41 a.m. on 7 August. As “proof” reference is made to certain interceptions of mobile phone conversations. This is absolutely unsubstantiated and not to be taken seriously. One fails to understand why information regarding these intercepted calls was not released until a month after the events. The explanation contained in the Georgian document of 22 September (according to which the recordings were lost in the heat of battle and restored only a month

later) sounds simply laughable. If we take the Georgian version on faith, it turns out that for a day and a half Russian armour was hiding in the bushes on the territory of South Ossetia and was in no hurry to come to the aid of Tskhinvali, where the Georgian troops were firing from tanks at nearly point-blank range at peaceful civilians and Russian peacekeepers.

I would say to my distinguished Georgian colleagues: You have to think up something more convincing.

The Georgian side has on occasion raised the subject of looting. In fact, certain incidents of this kind did take place on the second and third day of the war on the part of individual representatives of the South Ossetian side. In response, the South Ossetian leadership introduced a curfew and ordered the detention of anyone committing illegal actions. Subsequently, all such incidents were rigorously put down, including, and above all, by Russian servicemen. I might mention that when Russian reconnaissance teams entered the Georgian city of Gori, they witnessed many attempts to hijack motor vehicles. The Russian troops were under strict orders to detain all pillagers and looters and to turn them over to the local authorities to face justice.

We note that Georgian propaganda is often based on a crude manipulation of the facts. For example, television screens have on more than one occasion shown houses with their roofs ablaze. It has been claimed that this was the result of Russian air strikes. Those responsible for this kind of falsification were evidently not aware that the Russian air force uses delayed-action bombs. These bombs penetrate to the foundation and explode under the building in order to destroy entrenched fortification structures. The fact is that the pictures shown by the Georgian side show an ordinary fire of a kind that might arise from flying fragments from some ammunition warehouse or some other kind of fire, but not the kind that would result from an aerial bombardment.

The Georgian side is attempting to accuse Russia of every conceivable sin, including even the destruction of ancient forests in the "Borzhomi" national park. We might just as easily accuse certain Georgian saboteurs of setting fire to forests on Russian territory near Gelendzhik during the August heatwave.

In its propaganda warfare Tbilisi is resorting to accusations to the effect that Russia made use of ballistic missiles and the "Iskander" system. This is a lie. The "Iskander" is not deployed in the North Caucasus Military District. The missions entrusted to the Russian forces as part of the operation to force Georgia to accept peace were successfully carried out using traditional kinds of weaponry.

Also contrary to fact is the assertion that "Tochka U" systems were employed. There was no need to use them. On the other hand, the use of cluster ammunition by the Georgian forces has been established beyond doubt.

Much has been said of the actions of the Russian military units in the Gori district. Here, the Georgian authorities "forget" to mention that that city was the location of a major command post, a command and control centre. Located in the outskirts of Gori was an anti-aircraft missile division using the BUK M-1 system, which shot down four Russian aircraft. Also located there were radar reconnaissance forces and systems. In addition, the

outskirts of Gori were also the site of the bases of an artillery brigade and a detached tank battalion, weapons depots and fuel and ammunition storage facilities. We might further add that in Gori there was discovered an enormous arsenal of weapons and equipment that had been abandoned and was not being guarded by anyone. One of the tasks of the Russian military was to ensure that that arsenal remained intact and to prevent the uncontrolled dissemination of weapons.

In their propaganda salvos the Georgian side has made claims regarding the bombing by the Russian air force of the “Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan” oil pipeline. In actual fact, no such bombings occurred. Had that task been on the agenda, the target would have been destroyed.

As a way of stoking up emotions, Georgian propaganda frequently refers to the involvement in combat actions of volunteers and also of some Cossack formations or other. In fact, there were people who on their own initiative travelled to South Ossetia in order to protect and assist their relatives. Some of these volunteers organized field hospitals in Dzhava and also helped to maintain order in extraordinary circumstances. They were not directly involved in any combat activities.



557th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 563, Agenda item 2(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Thank you, Mr Chairperson,

We thank Georgia for its careful and thorough presentation.

We followed with great interest Georgia's compelling presentation of the events that culminated in the open conflict with Russia in early August. We note Russia's response to the Georgian presentation and thank both delegations. We will, of course, share the Georgian presentation and Russian reactions with our capital.

My delegation would like to offer some observations from a United States perspective. The conflict in Georgia has long antecedents and both sides have made mistakes. Georgia's attack on Tskhinvali and adjacent areas on 7 August, after repeated violations of the ceasefire in South Ossetia including the shelling of Georgian villages, is troubling.

But Russia greatly exacerbated the situation when it violated Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity by launching a full-scale invasion across an internationally recognized border.

Thousands of innocent civilians were displaced from their homes while Russia established a military occupation that stretched deep into Georgian territory and continues to this day.

Other recent Russian actions that continue to disconcert the U.S. and the international community are:

- Its alarmist allegations of "genocide" by Georgian forces;
- Its baseless statements about U.S. actions during the conflict;
- Its attempt to dismember a sovereign country by recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia; and

— Its refusal to allow international monitors and NGOs into Abkhazia and South Ossetia despite reports of ongoing militia violence and retribution against innocent Georgians right under the nose of the Russian forces. We strongly agree with the statement by the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities in which he reminded us all

“that international norms and standards require that any authority exercising jurisdiction over population and territory, even if not recognized by the international community, must respect the human rights of everyone, including those of persons belonging to national minorities. Whoever controls South Ossetia and Abkhazia must respect the rights of ethnic Georgians resident there and must allow those who had been forced to leave the two regions to return to their former places of residence.”

Russia attempts to place the blame for its behaviour on, among others, Georgia. It is true that Georgia's leaders could have responded better to the events last month in South Ossetia. We warned our Georgian friends that Russia was baiting them, and that taking the bait would play into Russia's hands.

But Russia then used Georgia's actions as a pretext to launch an apparently premeditated invasion of its independent neighbour under the transparent justification of self-defence. Russia had laid the groundwork for this invasion months earlier by distributing Russian passports to Georgian separatists, by improving infrastructure inside the territories to help support the Russian military action, and by training and arming the separatist militias.

Russia's actions in Georgia are even more disturbing because they are part of an increasingly aggressive pattern of behaviour by Russia abroad.

Russia is not abiding by the 12 August ceasefire agreement negotiated by President Sarkozy of France. Russia has failed to withdraw all its forces to their positions prior to the start of the conflict, has blocked delivery of humanitarian assistance, and refuses to allow international observers access to areas under Russian military control so that they can verify adherence to other provisions of that agreement.

Russia's unilateral recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent countries is unacceptable. These territories have been confirmed repeatedly by the OSCE and the UN as integral parts of the territory of a sovereign Georgia. We cannot allow an OSCE participating State to unilaterally seek to redraw the borders of Europe to suit its geostrategic purposes.

Finally, we call on Russia to support the OSCE's and other international efforts to restore peace and good order to the region damaged by the conflict in Georgia.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.