

ENGLISH only

**REMARKS**

**H.E. Zurab Nogaideli, Prime Minister of Georgia  
OSCE Permanent Council, Vienna**

*March 27, 2006*

- 
- **MR. CHAIRMAN, MR. SECRETARY GENERAL, AMBASSADORS, LET ME BEGIN BY THANKING ALL OF YOU FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS YOU TODAY IN THIS SPECIAL PC.**
  - **SOME FIVE MONTHS AGO, I HAD THE PLEASURE OF SHARING WITH THIS DISTINGUISHED GATHERING OUR COMPREHENSIVE PEACE PLAN DESIGNED TO CREATE A LASTING SETTLEMENT IN SOUTH OSSETIA/THE TSKHINVALI REGION.**
  - **AND THAT PLAN THAT WAS WARMLY RECEIVED AND LATER UNIVERSALLY ENDORSED (LAST DECEMBER) IN LJUBJANA, AS THE BASIS FOR PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT.**
  - **I WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL MEMBER STATES OF THE OSCE FOR YOUR CONTINUED AND VIGOROUS SUPPORT TO THE PEACE PROCESS.**
  - **AND TO PLEDGE OUR CONTINUED COOPERATION WITH THIS IMPORTANT INSTITUTION.**
  - **THE PURPOSE OF MY REMARKS TODAY ARE TWO-FOLD:**
    - **TO DISCUSS WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED SINCE MY LAST VISIT IN OCTOBER 2005.**
    - **AND TO SHARE WHAT I BELIEVE ARE THE NEXT NECESSARY STEPS, TO ENSURE THAT PEACE WILL PREVAIL AND THE MUCH NEEDED PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION AND RECONSTRUCTION CAN BEGIN IN EARNEST.**
  - **STANDING IN FRONT OF YOU TODAY, IT IS CLEAR TO ALL OF US THAT WAGING PEACE IS NOT AN EASY BUSINESS.**

- **AND THAT UNFORTUNATELY, THERE ARE MANY PARTIES WHO REMAIN SATISFIED WITH THE CURRENT STATUS QUO.**
- **CONTENT TO SEE OUR COMMUNITIES DIVIDED, OUR PEOPLES IMPOVERISHED, OUR DIALOGUE STALLED, AND OUR REGION WEAKENED INSTITUTIONALLY.**
- **YET TODAY IS NOT ABOUT FINGER-POINTING OR ASSIGNING BLAME OR LISTING EXCUSES.**
- **RATHER, IT IS ABOUT MARSHALLING THE POLITICAL WILL TO MOVE FORWARD.**
- **TO HEAL THE WOUNDS OF THE PAST AND CREATE A NEW FUTURE FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS.**
- **I BELIEVE WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS, PERHAPS MORE SLOWLY THAT WE WOULD LIKE OR INITIALLY THOUGHT.**
- **PERHAPS WITHOUT THE DEGREE OF URGENCY OR COOPERATION THAT WE BELIEVE IS NECESSARY.**
- **BUT NEVERTHELESS, WE WILL NOT BE DETERRED FROM OUR CHOSEN PATH OF PEACE.**
- **ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA, LET ME REITERATE FOR ALL OF YOU ONCE AGAIN.**
- **THAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO SOLVING THE CONFLICTS ON OUR TERRITORY PEACEFULLY.**
- **SIMPLY PUT, THERE IS NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE.**
- **IN THE SOUTH OSSETIA/TSKHINVALI REGION, AND IN ABKHAZIA.**
- **WE IN GEORGIA UNDERSTAND FULLY THAT CREATING A LASTING PEACE IN SOUTH OSSETIA WILL TAKE GREAT**

**PATIENCE, GENUINE COMPROMISE, AND THE EFFORTS OF MANY.**

- **YET GEORGIA TODAY IS A STRONG AND DEMOCRATIC STATE – AND WE ARE READY, WILLING AND ABLE TO WIN THE PEACE.**
- **TOGETHER WITH YOUR SUPPORT, AND THROUGH THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.**
- **AND WITH DIRECT AND ENHANCED NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH OSSETIA.**
- **PEACE IS POSSIBLE – AND PEACE IS ACHIEVABLE.**
- **OVER THE PAST FIVE MONTHS, GEORGIA HAS CONTINUED TO DEVELOP AND PROGRES AT A VERY RAPID PACE, CONSISTENT WITH OUR LASTING COMMITMENT TO REFORM AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION.**
- **AS A RESULT, OUR ECONOMY HAS GROWN ROBUSTLY, OUR STATE INSITUTIONS HAVE BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL.**
- **AND OUR ABILITY TO PRODUCE RESULTS THAT CHANGE THE WAY GEOEGIA FUNCTIONS IS STRONGER THAN EVER BEFORE.**
- **THE PATH OF EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION THAT WE HAVE CHOSEN IS A PATH WE WILL CONTINUE TO TRAVEL DOWN, WITH DILIGENCE AND WITH RESULTS.**
- **AND WE WILL NOT STEP BACK FROM THIS APPROACH.**
- **BECAUSE OUR GOVERNMENT IS DEMOCRATIC, IT CAN AND IS DELIVERING RESULTS.**
- **ALLOW ME TO MAKE A FEW BRIEF POINTS ON THE STATE OF GEORGIA’S DEMOCRACY TODAY.**

- **FIRST, LET ME BEGIN WITH THE TREMENDOUS ECONOMIC GROWTH NOW UNDERWAY.**
- **GROWTH THAT IS LEADING TO NEW PROSPERITY AND NEW HOPE FOR ALL OF GEORGIA'S CITIZENS.**
- **THE LATEST STATISTICS CONFIRMED BY THE IMF ARE TRULY OUTSTANDING – AS GEORGIA'S GDP IN 2005 GREW AT AN AMAZING 9.3%.**
- **AND I MIGHT ADD THAT OUR GROWTH IS HIGHLY DIVERSIFIED AND NO LONGER DEPENDENT ON SINGLE LARGE INVESTMENTS.**
- **ON THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION, THE STATISTICS ARE ALSO VERY ENCOURAGING.**
- **GIVING FURTHER CREDENCE TO THE SUSTAINABILITY AND CREDIBILITY OF OUR EFFORTS.**
- **ACCORDING TO A RECENT STUDY CONDUCTED BY THE EBRD THAT SURVEYED CORRUPTION AS MEASURED THROUGH THE AMOUNT OF TAX BRIBES, IN 2005 GEORGIA WAS RANKED THE FOURTH LEAST CORRUPT COUNTRY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, AND THE CIS.**
- **THIS, AFTER BEING LISTED THIRD FROM THE BOTTOM IN THE LAST SUCH EBRD STUDY IN 2002.**
- **YET MORE THAN STATISTICS AND STUDIES, OR THE RETURN TO MACRO-ECONOMIC FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY THAT IS NOW COMMONPLACE IN GEORGIA.**
- **OUR COMMITMENT TO REFORM AND THE CREATION OF A EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY IS BEST UNDERSTOOD BY THE MULTITUDE OF ON-GOING RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS THAT ARE CHANGING THE DAILY LIVES OF AVERAGE CITIZENS OF GEORGIA.**

- **TODAY WE ARE BUILDING HUNDREDS OF NEW SCHOOLS, RE-PAVING ROADS AND HIGHWAYS, AND ERECTING HOSPITALS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.**
- **MORE IN FACT THAN WAS ACCOMPLISHED IN GEORGIA IN THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS.**
- **ONE NOTABLE AREA THAT DESERVES MENTION IS THE UNINTERRUPTED SUPPLY OF POWER – A FIRST FOR GEORGIA SINCE INDEPENDENCE, DESPITE RATHER DRAMATIC INTERRUPTIONS IN SUPPLY THAT TOOK PLACE OVER THE WINTER.**
- **CLEARLY, NONE OF THESE ADVANCEMENTS WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE IF THE GEORGIAN BUDGET HAD NOT GROWN BY FIVE TIMES, AND IF CORRUPTION HAD NOT BE STAMPED OUT SO THOROUGHLY.**
- **FACTS LIKE THESE SPEAK VOLUMES ABOUT GEORGIA’S RETURN TO EFFECTIVE, CAPABLE, AND STABLE GOVERNANCE.**
- **ON THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL, WE HAVE MADE IT EASIER FOR AVERAGE CITIZENS TO START NEW BUSINESSES BY SIMPLIFYING PROCESSES.**
- **IF IN THE PAST IT TOOKS WEEKS OR EVEN MONTHS TO BUILD NEW JOBS, TODAY IN GEORGIA ANY CITIZEN, DOMESTIC OR FOREIGN CAN REGISTER THEIR BUSINESS IN ONLY THREE DAYS.**
- **IN FACT, IT IS OUR GOAL TO MAKE GEORGIA THE MOST BUSINESS-FRIENDLY COUNTRY IN ALL OF EUROPE.**
- **IN PARALLEL WITH THESE ADVANCES, WE HAVE KEPT OUR PROMISES TO THE MOST VULNERABLE PORTIONS OF OUR SOCIETY, BY ONCE AGAIN RAISING STATE PENSIONS AND PROVIDING TARGETED BENEFITS TO THE NEEDY.**

- **THESE ARE A BUT A FEW OF OUR RESULTS, AND I DO NOT WANT TO OVERWHELM YOU WITH A LIST OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS.**
- **AS IT IS CLEAR THAT MUCH ALSO REMAINS TO BE DONE.**
- **MORE NEEDS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED IN ORDER TO REFORM OUR JUDICIARY, COMPLETE THE JOB OF RE-BUILDING OUR PRISONS, AND STAMP OUT ANY OLD PRACTICES THAT MIGHT LEAD TO HUMAN RIGHTS INFRACTIONS.**
- **IN ALL THESE AREAS, WE ARE MOVING FORWARD SWIFTLY AND WITH RESOLVE, THROUGH CONSULTATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY, GREATER OPENNESS AND A COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY THAT IS YIELDING RESULTS.**
- **SO THAT OUR COURTS WILL BE TRULY INDEPENDENT AND FAIR, AND OUR PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE FREEDOM THAT COMES WHEN RULE OF LAW IS UPHELD.**
- **IN THE FIELD OF JUDICIAL REFORM, I WOULD LIKE TO ILLUSTRATE A FEW OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR CURRENT REFORM PROGRAM.**
- **GEORGIA, LIKE MANY COUNTRIES IN EASTERN EUROPE, INHERITED A LEGACY OF CORRUPTION THAT POISONED A GENERATION OF JUDGES AND LEGAL PROFESSIONALS, CALLING INTO QUESTION THEIR ABILITY TO RULE FAIRLY.**
- **TO ENHANCE JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE, PROFESSIONALISM AND ACCOUNTABILITY, WE ARE WORKING TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HIGH COUNCIL OF JUSTICE THAT OVERSEES AND DISCIPLINES JUDGES.**
- **SPECIFICALLY, WE ARE CHANGING THE COMPOSTION OF THIS COUNCIL, INTRODUCING MORE JUDGES AND REDUCING THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT.**

- **WE ARE ALSO WORKING TO ESTABLISH NEW RULES ON *EX PARTE* COMMUNICATION – TO ELIMINATE THE SOVIET PRACTICE OF COLLUSION BETWEEN JUDGES AND PROSECUTORS.**
- **OTHER IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE REFORM INCLUDE INTRODUCTION OF A JURY TRIAL SYSTEM, THE PASSAGE OF A NEW CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE AND REFORM OF LEGAL EDUCATION.**
- **AND THESE ARE JUST THE FIRST STEPS.**
- **CLEARLY WE WILL NEED TIME TO ADAPT, AND IT WILL TAKE TIME TO IMPLEMENT.**
- **BUT LIKE OUR OTHER REFORM EFFORTS, THIS TOO WILL SUCCEED, BECAUSE WE ARE SQUARELY ADDRESSING ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT REFORM PRIORITIES.**
- **STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE JUDICIARY IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.**
- **AND WE WILL NOT LEAVE THE JOB OF REFORM HALF DONE.**
- **BEING A SUCCESSFUL DEMOCRACY MEANS MUCH MORE THAN HOLDING ELECTIONS.**
- **AND YET, ELECTIONS ARE IMPORTANT AND THE DECENTRALIZATION OF DEMOCRACY AND STRENGTHENING OF LOCAL SELF GOVERNANCE IS ESSENTIAL.**
- **THIS FALL, WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO GEORGIA’S FIRST REAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS.**
- **WHERE FOR THE FIRST TIME LOCAL TOP EXECUTIVES WILL BE ELECTED BY LOCALLY ELECTED COUNCILS.**
- **THIS IS A TREMENDOUSLY IMPORTANT STEP THAT WILL DEEPEN AND BROADEN OUR DEMOCRATIC TRADITION.**

- **INDEED IT WILL BE LIKE A SECOND REVOLUTION.**
- **AS A RESULT OF OUR LASTING COMMITMENT TO REFORM, PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN GEORGIA'S INSTITUTIONS HAS GROWN DRAMATICALLY.**
- **AND IT IS THE VERY SUSTAINABILITY OF THAT CONFIDENCE OVER THE PAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS THAT GIVES US OUR GREATEST HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.**
- **LAST FALL, THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA MADE A PLEDGE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH A SERIES OF STEPS DESIGNED TO BUILD TRUST AND ENHANCE THE PEACE PROCESS.**
- **AND WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO THAT PROCESS – EVEN IN THE FACE OF OBSTACLES AND NON RECIPROCATATION.**
- **TODAY, IT IS CLEAR THAT GEORGIA HAS KEPT ITS PROMISES, THAT WE HAVE MAINTAINED A STEADY AND CLEAR APPROACH - AND THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO BEHAVE IN A RESPONSIBLE, AND PREDICTABLE MANNER IN THE FUTURE.**
- **WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN A SERIES OF NINE UNILATERAL DEMILITARIZATION MOVES.**
- **MOVES DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE OUR SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE AND COMMITMENT TO PEACE.**
- **WHILE NONE OF THESE STEPS HAVE BEEN MATCHED BY THE OTHER SIDE DESPITE PRIOR AGREEMENT, WE HAVE NOT WAVERED.**
- **EVEN WHEN THE AUTHORITIES IN SOUTH OSSETIA RECENTLY BLOCKED AN INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION TEAM COMPOSED OF LOCAL OSCE AMBASSADORS AND OUR MINISTER OF DEFENSE FROM OBSERVING THE FILLING IN OF TRENCHES.**



- **WE HAVE CONTINUED TO FULFILL OUR COMMITMENTS ON THE GROUND.**
- **WHY? BECAUSE WE ARE COMMITTED TO DEMILITARIZATION – AND WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT REMOVING THE HARMFUL THREATS THAT STILL EXIST.**
- **LAST TIME I WAS HERE I SPOKE ABOUT OUR COMMITMENT TO PASS A LAW ON RESTITUTION, SO THAT ALL VICTIMS OF THE CONFLICT WOULD BE ALLOWED THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF RETURN.**
- **IT GIVES ME PLEASURE TODAY TO REPORT THAT THIS LAW IS NOW IN ITS FINAL STAGES – AS WE HAVE CURRENTLY PARTNERED WITH THE VENICE COMMISSION AND THE UNHCR – IN ORDER TO ENSURE SMOOTH AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION.**
- **ON THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL, WE HAVE ALSO FOR THE FIRST TIME SET ASIDE DIRECT FUNDS FROM THE GEORGIAN BUDGET, TO REPAIR AND RE-CONSTRUCT ALL THE SCHOOLS IN THE TSKHINVALI REGION.**
- **SO THAT NEVER AGAIN WILL CHILDREN THERE GO WITHOUT HEAT, BOOKS OR THE BASIS FOR A PROMISING FUTURE.**
- **UNFORTUNATELY, CIRCUMSTANCES TO DATE HAVE BLOCKED US FROM UTILIZING THESE FUNDS IN MANNER THAT ENSURES THAT SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS WILL BENEFIT.**
- **THESE ARE BUT A FEW OF THE UNILATERAL MEASURES THAT WE HAVE TAKEN – AND WE STAND READY TO DO MUCH MORE.**
- **MUCH HOWEVER STILL REMAINS TO BE DONE, AND IT IS OUR COMMON CHALLENGE TO DO MORE - IN ORDER TO SATISFY THE DEMANDS OF PEACE.**

- **THE INHABITANTS OF SOUTH OSSETIA CONTINUE TO LIVE IN UNACCEPTABLE CONDITIONS OF POVERTY AND DEPRAVATION AMID A CLIMATE OF EVERYDAY FEAR.**
- **UNABLE TO ENJOY THE BENEFITS ACCRUED TO THE REST OF GEORGIA'S CITIZENS.**
- **FOR THIS REASON, I AND THE REST OF MY GOVERNMENT ARE LOOKING FORWARD GREATLY TO THE OSCE-SPONSORED DONOR'S CONFERENCE, SCHEDULED FOR MAY OF THIS YEAR.**
- **AS A RESULT OF THE OSCE'S ASSESSMENT, WE ARE NOW IN A POSITION TO FINALLY ADDRESS THE CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOCIAL REHABILITATION NEEDS OF THE REGION.**
- **I WOULD LIKE TO INFORM ALL OF YOU ABOUT OUR SOLEMN AND STEADFAST COMMITMENT TO THIS UNDERTAKING.**
- **BY STATING FOR THE RECORD THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA HEREBY COMMITS TO MATCH, EURO FOR EURO EVERY PLEDGE THAT WILL BE MADE IN SUPPORT OF THIS EFFORT.**
- **THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLES OF SOUTH OSSETIA ARE GREAT – AND THE TIME HAS COME FOR ACTION, AND CREATION OF LASTING CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES.**
- **WE WELCOME THE SUGGESTION OF THE OSCE TO ESTABLISH A CHECKPOINT NOW AT GUPTA, A REGION THAT IS DIRECTLY UNDER THE MANDATE OF THE JOINT PEACEKEEPING FORCES ZONE OF RESPONSIBILITY.**
- **THE OSCE IS RIGHT TO SUGGEST THAT THIS AREA BE MONITORED AND BROUGHT UNDER JOINT CONTROL, AND WE SUPPORT AND ARE READY TO COOPERATE WITH THIS INITIATIVE.**

- **INDEED, IN FEBRUARY ALONE, THE OSCE RECORDED A SERIES OF SERIOUS VIOLATIONS, INCLUDING THE REGULAR MOVEMENT OF HEAVY WEAPONS, MATERIEL, AND THE DIGGING OF UNAUTHORIZED TRENCHES.**
- **SPECIFICALLY, THE OSCE HAS RECORDED THE PRESENCE OF UNAUTHORIZED ROCKET LAUNCHERS, ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONRY, AND THE MOVEMENT OF UNAUTHORIZED ARMORED VEHICLES.**
- **MOST TROUBLING IS THE FACT THAT OSCE MONITORS ARE REGULARLY DENIED ACCESS TO CRITICAL INSPECTION AREAS BY THE PEACEKEEPERS.**
- **ALLOWING THE VIOLATIONS TO GO UNCHALLENGED.**
- **THESE MOVES AGAINST PEACE MUST STOP – AND THE OSCE MUST BE ALLOWED FULL ACCESS IN ORDER TO MONITOR EVENTS, AND IMPROVE THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT.**
- **FOR THE BENEFIT OF US ALL.**
- **THE ISSUE IS IN FACT RATHER SIMPLE – AND THE STAKES ARE HIGH.**
- **OVER THE PAST MONTHS, IN ADDITION TO WHAT I HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED, WE HAVE WITNESSED AN ALARMING GROWTH IN SMUGGLING AND CRIMINALITY, INCLUDING COUNTERFEITING OF US DOLLARS, ILLEGAL ARMS FLOWS AND THE INTERDICTION OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM.**
- **IT IS NOW OBVIOUS THAT THE THREATS POSED TO GEORGIA’S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY ARE NO LONGER SIMPLY THREATS TO GEORGIA’S NATIONAL SECURITY.**
- **RATHER, THESE THREATS CREATE REAL SOURCES OF INSTABILITY FOR THE ENTIRE OSCE COMMUNITY.**
- **AND THEY CAN NO LONGER BE IGNORED, OR WISHED AWAY.**

- **PUT OTHERWISE, THREATS TO GEORGIA'S STATEHOOD AND DEMOCRACY REPRESENT THREATS TO US ALL.**
- **AND THEY MUST BE ADDRESSED IN A MEANINGFUL, COOPERATIVE AND COORDINATED MANNER.**
- **ON THIS PARTICULAR POINT, I'D LIKE TO ONCE AGAIN EMPHASIZE THAT GEORGIA STANDS READY TO WORK WITH OUR COUNTERPARTS IN RUSSIA TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES.**
- **BE THEY THE SHARED THREAT OF SEPARATISM, OR UNCONTROLLED CRIMINALITY.**
- **THE TIME HAS COME TO ENHANCE OUR COOPERATION AND CONFRONT OUR COMMON SECURITY CHALLENGES.**
- **ON FEBRUARY 15<sup>TH</sup> OUR PARLIAMENT PASSED A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A MORE EFFECTIVE JOINT PEACE KEEPING MISSION.**
- **AND AGAIN, I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY SUPPORT FOR THE OSCE'S INITIATIVE TO ESTABLISH A JOINT POLICING PRESENCE.**
- **ENHANCING JOINT POLICING WILL LEAD TO A DIRECT IMPROVEMENT IN THE SECURITY SITUATION IN SOUTH OSSETIA/THE TSKHINVALI REGION.**
- **LEADING TO A REDUCTION IN CRIMINALITY, GREATER COOPERATION BETWEEN AGENCIES, AND INCREASED LOCAL CAPACITY.**
- **GEORGIA SUPPORTS THE IDEA OF ESTABLISHING AN INTERNATIONAL JOINT POLICING PROGRAM, AS IT REPRESENTS A CONCRETE STEP ON THE PATH OF PEACE.**

- **OTHER STEPS TOWARDS PEACE MUST BE ENCOURAGED – AND HERE I AM REFERRING TO THE NEED TO ENHANCE THE LEVEL OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN TBILISI AND TSKHINVALI.**
- **ONCE AGAIN, I'D LIKE TO STATE FOR THE RECORD THAT DESPITE PAST REFUSALS, I REMAIN READY AND WILLING TO MEET WITH MR. KOKOITY, SO THAT AN ATMOSPHERE OF GREATER TRUST AND COOPERATION CAN BE ESTABLISHED.**
- **JUST TODAY, OUR REPRESENTATIVES ARE MEETING IN VLADIKAVKAZ.**
- **AND IT IS MY HOPE THAT OUT OF THIS JCC WE WILL FINALLY START THE PROCESS OF DEMILITARIZATION, LEADING TO THE REDUCTION OF FEAR OF BOTH OSSETIANS AND GEORGIANS LIVING IN THE REGION.**
- **IN ADDITION, I HOPE THEY WILL ESTABLISH A CLEAR BASIS TO HARMONIZE PEACE INITIATIVES.**
- **IN EVALUATING THE PROGRESS OF THE PAST FIVE MONTHS, IT IS CLEAR THAT COOPERATION WITH THE OSCE HAS BEEN FIRST RATE AND DESERVES SPECIAL MENTION.**
- **I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO MAKE NOTE OF THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, AS SEEN THROUGH THEIR FEBRUARY STATEMENT.**
- **EFFORTS LIKE THESE SERVE TO FURTHER UNITE THE EURO-ATLANTIC COMMUNITY – AND HELP RID THE ENTIRE REGION OF OUR COMMON THREATS, GIVING MOMENTUM AND NEW ENERGY WHEN IT IS NEEDED MOST.**
- **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, I AM CONVINCED THAT THE CONFLICT IN SOUTH OSSETIA WILL BE RESOLVED PEACEFULLY – AND IN A TIMELY FASHION.**
- **WHY THIS NOTE OF CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM?**

- **BECAUSE GEORGIA IS A VIBRANT AND FUNCTIONAL DEMOCRACY, WHERE THE HEALTH AND LIVELIHOOD OF EACH CITIZEN, NO MATTER THEIR ETHNIC ORIGIN OR BACKGROUND, COUNTS.**
- **AND LIKE ALL DEMOCRACY'S, WE WILL NOT STRAY FROM THE PATH OF PEACE, AS LONG AS INJUSTICE, FEAR AND SUFFERING REMAIN.**