

**The Statement by Colonel David Nairashvili, the Georgian Air Force
Commander, on the August 6, 2007 Missile Attack against Georgia**

Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to the FSC Chairmanship for giving me the opportunity to brief you on the details of the missile attack that took place on August 6, 2007, near village Tsitelubani, 60 kms west of capital city Tbilisi.

Before getting to the details, let me inform you that from the January 2007, the Georgian Air Force started to operate an integrated Air Defense Command and Control System, which provides the capability of Recognized Air Picture based on information received from the primary and secondary radars of both, the civil air traffic authority and the Georgian Air Force. This system is NATO compatible and successfully passed a live test carried out by NATO experts to determine its readiness to be connected to the NATO Integrated Air Defense System within a framework of Air Situation Data Exchange program.

Now let me give you the details of the missile attack as we know them.

On August 6, 2007, the Georgian Northern border with Russia was violated three times by an aircraft entering Georgian airspace from the territory of the Russian Federation.

The first intrusion took place at 14:12 GMT and lasted for one minute. It should be underlined that after the civil air traffic duty operator tracked the first violation of Georgian airspace, he contacted Russia's civil traffic air controller and the record of their conversation has been provided to all interested experts.

The second incursion was - at 14:15 GMT. The aircraft entered Georgian airspace, penetrating to 52 kms inside Georgian territory; it then turned through 180 degrees and at 14:24 GMT left Georgian airspace into Russian territory.

A third incursion by the aircraft took place at 14:31 GMT and penetrated into Georgian territory as deeply as 72 kms.

During the first and second passes, the aircraft was tracked by Georgian civil air traffic primary 2D radar ASR-12, while the military 3D radar 36D6 was under maintenance. The third violation was tracked by both radars simultaneously. On the screen you can see the record of the multi-radar track of the third airspace violation.

There were also 10 different commercial aircrafts overflying Georgian territory during the intrusion.

During the third incursion, at 14:35 GMT, the aircraft was visually observed by the crew of the military radar. It was later identified as an SU-24 type aircraft. At 14:36 GMT, the aircraft launched an air-to-surface anti-radar missile KH-58 at a range of approximately 10 kms from the military radar site. The time at which the missile detached can be seen clearly on the screen when the track shifts for a moment. After the missile was launched the military radar was immediately turned off for self-defense purposes in accordance with standing operating procedures.

The radar was turned on again after approximately one minute, as soon as the missile impacted the ground and the intruding aircraft changed its course by 180 degrees.

The intruder aircraft left Georgian territory at 14:42 GMT, and disappeared from Georgian radar at 14:45 GMT, at an altitude of 7.000 m, a speed of 860 km/h and 46 km inside Russian territory.

The launch of the missile was both tracked by the military radar and observed visually by the military radar crew. The account given by the radar crew was that the missile was launched from the right-wing pylon, it was flying straight ahead for several seconds, and then started moving chaotically which was obvious from the trail, and it impacted the ground near Tselubani village, Gori region, a few kilometers away from the radar. Upon impact the missile did not explode, and made 6 meter deep crater. Some parts of the missile guidance system were scattered in and around the crater. Those pictures were taken immediately after the impact site was discovered.

The impact site was fenced with ribbon by representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Extraction of the missile, the type of which was unknown at that time, was started at night with participation by the experts of the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. Various pieces and parts of the missile, which were separated from the main body upon impact on the ground, were gathered in the vicinity of the crater. The extracted pieces were periodically photographed.

After several hours of excavation work the missile engine emerged in the crater and work was suspended due to the possible presence of explosive material in the missile. To avoid accidental explosion during the excavation process, the decision was made to detonate a small explosive charge in the crater. However, the explosion of mentioned charge was not followed by further detonation. Then the decision was made to suspend all works until the morning.

In the morning of August 7, Col. Steve Young, Chief Military Observer of the OSCE Mission to Georgia visited the site, followed by the Joint Monitoring Group consisting of JPKF representatives from the Russian Federation, Ossetian side, Georgia and OSCE Mission. Later on, the Commander of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces Gen. M. Kulakhmetov examined the site. The Joint Monitoring Group inspected and pictured the impact site, the crater and the extracted parts and the body of the missile stuck in the crater. Those photos are also available.

Afterwards, the Joint Monitoring Group together with General M. Kurashvili – Commander of Georgian Peacekeeping Forces, visited the Joint Peacekeeping Forces’ Observation Posts of “Tsinagori” and “Gromi”. The duty officers, including the Russian side, confirmed that the military aircraft came from the North-East direction. This coincides with the Georgian radar data and was confirmed in a report of Joint Monitoring Group signed by all parties; the information from this report was included in OSCE Spot Report of August 8, 2007.

After the visit of the above mentioned experts, the excavation continued and the main body of the missile together with explosive charge was extracted.

The extracted missile body and its separate parts once again were presented to the OSCE Mission to Georgia, Commander of Joint Peacekeeping Forces and media representatives. On the afternoon of August 7, the missile impact site was visited by the President of Georgia and members of the diplomatic corps.

Later on that day, the warhead loaded with explosive substance was safely detonated at Gori military polygon, as there are no other technologies in Georgia for harmless disposal of TNT/RDX explosives. Other parts and details of the missile have been inventoried, pictured and stored by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Ministry also possesses missile attack related video recordings and photos, which have been shown and provided to all interested sides.

As a result of the investigation, the missile was identified as a missile KH-58 of Russian production, manufactured in October 1992.

Several groups of experts have conducted independent investigations on the missile attack, namely, OSCE Monitoring Team and two International groups of experts (in total, 13 experts from 7 countries) during August 14-16 and August 18-19.

They were provided with all the existing evidence materials to the largest extent possible. Experts studied the impact site and the remnants of the missile. They were provided with radar data and relevant video, audio and photo materials. The experts were given the opportunity to interview the eyewitnesses. International groups of experts had the opportunity to inspect the fixed wing aircraft fleet of the Georgian Air Force and to visit the Georgian Air Operations Center. As a result of their investigations, these independent expert groups have issued two reports, with which you are familiar.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, let me underline that based on radar track records, eyewitnesses accounts and all other factual material, we came to the conclusion that Georgian airspace has been violated on August 6, 2007, by Russian military aircraft three times. During the third intrusion, the Russian intruder aircraft penetrated into Georgian territory as deeply as 70 kms, launched an anti-radar missile KH-58 in a clear attempt to neutralize Georgian military radar 36D6. However, the missile failed to reach the target and didn't explode upon the impact on the ground near the village of Tsitelubani, 60 kms west of capital city Tbilisi.

With this let me end my presentation, thank you for your attention and I am ready to answer all your questions.