

Check Against Delivery

**Current Military and Security Trends in the Occupied
Territories of Georgia**

Presentation by H.E. Mr. Nikoloz Vashakidze, First Deputy Minister of
Foreign Affairs of Georgia

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Thank you Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Colleagues,

It is a pleasure for me to be at the meeting of the Forum for Security and Cooperation today. I am indeed grateful to the Iceland Chairmanship of the Forum for giving me the opportunity to address you this morning.

Today I would like to draw your attention to the ongoing military occupation of the two regions of my country - Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. Since 2008 an unprecedented military buildup of the Russian armed forces has been carried out in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region. Let me be very clear – this military buildup threatens the national security of my country and the already fragile security situation in the wider region.

It is our strong belief that this Forum, the whole OSCE as well as wider international community have to be informed about the overall situation and the ongoing militarization of the occupied Georgian regions. We also believe that, as my President stated in his speech at the Munich Security Conference, “international involvement is essential in Georgia and beyond our borders, to bring those who believe in military supremacy back to the table of negotiations”.

At the outset, let me start by saying that the military buildup in Georgia's occupied regions has started before the August 2008 Russian aggression. Two of the military compounds were built in 2007 in Java district and in the north-western part of the city of Tskhinvali. In April 2008 Russia began renovating the military infrastructure in Abkhazia including the Gudauta Military Base, which should have been closed under the well-known Istanbul Joint Statement of 1999. In 2008 Russia also introduced the railway troops as well as the paratroopers, heavy armament and artillery as part of their so-called "peacekeeping" forces. All these facts have been well documented in the “Tagliavini Report”.

Without going to the detailed chronology of the August 2008 war, let me only mention few facts from the armed conflict:

- More than 40 000 servicemen from Russia were involved in the military operation;
- Georgia's sovereign territory was subjected to aerial bombardment on 42 times;
- The bombs and missiles were delivered during more than 150 illegal incursions into Georgia's airspace;
- At least 165 bombs and missiles were used, including the banned cluster bombs;
- 2 500 military trucks and more than 3 000 fighting units including tanks, artillery, rocket launching pads etc were used;
- As a result 224 civilians, 161 military and 11 law enforcers were killed during Russia's aggression. 2231 persons were wounded;
- Russia's aggression displaced more than 130.000 persons, out of which more than 30.000 are still unable to return to their homes.

After the end of the active phase of the armed conflict on August 12, 2008 and the conclusion of the cease-fire agreement, the Russian Federation started establishing military bases in the Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia. In full contradiction with the EU brokered six-point ceasefire agreement of August 12, 2008, Russia reinforced its illegal military bases with additional personnel and heavy armaments and equipment.

Dear Colleagues,

Now, allow me to present more detailed information on illegal military presence of Russia in both occupied regions.

According to the Russian official sources there are 1700 military personnel deployed in each occupied region. This is not true.

In reality the figure stands around 4200 soldiers in the Tskhinvali region and around 4500 soldiers in Abkhazia. Furthermore, at present there are 1025 Russian FSB (Federal Security Bureau) border guards in the Tskhinvali region and 1300 FSB border guards in Abkhazia. This means that 11 025 Russian military and security personnel and border guards are stationed in the occupied territories of Georgia without host nation consent.

Russia has illegally introduced the so called 4th military base in the Tskhinvali region. The infrastructure of this military base is established in the Java District, in and around the city of Tskhinvali and the village of Kanchaveti in the Akhgori district.

In the Java district, the base is equipped with:

- 1 helicopter landing area;
- 2 motorized infantry battalions - 1000 servicemen;
- 1 non-complete jet fighter artillery battalion with 12 units of BM-21 "Grad", Soviet truck-mounted 122 mm multiple rocket launcher with a range of 20 km;

- 1 self-propelled artillery battalion with 18 units of 2S3 “Akatsiya”;
- 1 surface-to-air missile battalion with 4 units of 9K79 “Tochka/Tochka-U”, with a range of 120 km;
- 2 multiple launch rocket artillery battalion with 12 units of 9K58 “Smerch”, with a range of 70-80 km;
- 1 surface-to-air missile complex “9K330 Tor” with an operational range of 500 km;
- 1 surface-to-air missile battery with 2 units of 9K37 “BUK-M1-2”.

You were able to see some of the aforementioned on the screen.

In the city of Tskhinvali, the base is equipped with:

- 1 motorized infantry battalion - 500 servicemen and 40 units of BMP – Heavy Armored Vehicles;
- 1 non-complete tank battalion with 165 servicemen and 38 units of T-72 with an operational range of 700 km;
- 1 self-propelled artillery battalion with 196 servicemen and 18 units of 2S3 “Akatsiya”;
- 1 multiple launch rocket artillery battery with 52 servicemen and 6 units of BM-21 “Grad”;
- 1 non-complete surface-to-air artillery battalion with 141 servicemen, 6 units of 2S6 “Tunguska” with an operational range of 500 km and 6 units of 9A35 “Strela-10” with an operational range of 500 km;
- 1 surface-to-air missile battalion with 178 servicemen and 12 units of BM-9A33 “Osa-AKM” with an operational range of 500 km;
- 1 surface-to-air missile complex 9K330 Tor, with one launcher and 5 servicemen.

Some of these armaments have been demonstrated to you on the screen.

In the village of Kanchaveti, which is located in the Akhalkgori region, the base is equipped with:

- 1 tank platoon with 9 servicemen and 3 units of T-72;
- 2 motorized infantry platoons with 56 servicemen, 1 mortar platoon with 21 servicemen and 4 units of 2S12 “Sani” with effective range of 7 km;
- 1 surface-to-air missile artillery battery with 2 units of 2S6 “Tunguska”.

You can see on this slide the effective ranges of some of the weapons located in the Tskhinvali region. It is very obvious that these weapons pose serious threat to the capital Tbilisi.

Having described Russia's military presence in the occupied Tskhinvali region, allow me to draw your attention to some numbers. Total population of the Tskhinvali region, according to most optimistic data, is close to 15 thousand. This means that there is one Russian military per 3.5 civilians in the Tskhinvali region. I think these figures speak themselves - heavy militarization indeed.

Now let me turn to the situation in another occupied region - Abkhazia.

In Abkhazia Russia has deployed the so called 7th military base, which consists of several sites.

Bombora strategic military airfield in Gudauta includes:

- 3 motorized infantry battalions with about 1500 servicemen, 85 armored personnel carriers BTR-80 with an operational range of 600 km;
- 3 companies of a tank battalion, with 31 tanks;
- reconnaissance battalion;
- snipers platoon;
- 2 self-propelled artillery battalions with 30 units of self-propelled artillery 2S3 "Akatsiya";
- multiple launch rocket artillery battalion with 18 units of "Grad";
- anti-tank artillery battalion;
- surface-to-air missile battalion with 2 batteries of surface-to-air missile system "OSA", 8 launchers;
- surface-to-air missile artillery battalion with 6 units of surface-to-air missile complex "Strela 10" and 6 units of surface-to-air gun and missile complex 2S6 "Tunguska";
- engineers battalion, repair-recovery battalion, logistical battalion, radiation, chemical and biological protection company, radio-electronic warfare company, commandant company, medical company, artillery reconnaissance and command battery, radiolocation reconnaissance and command platoon, intelligence Chief's command platoon.

Nagvalu shooting-range in the Ochamchire region includes 1 motorized infantry battalion (around 500 servicemen, 40 armored personnel carriers BTR-80), 1 tank company (10 tanks, 32 soldiers), 1 self-propelled artillery battery (50 soldiers and 6 units of 2S3 "Akatsiya"), 1 battery of surface-to-air missile complex "OSA" (33 servicemen and 4 units of launching facilities).

In the Gulripshi region and in the Gudauta region there is 1st "S-300" type anti-aircraft missile battalion (8 launchers) and there is 2nd "S-300" type anti-aircraft missile battalion (8 launchers) in the Gudauta region. You can see on the map the effective range for the missiles. Needless to say about a threat these types of missiles represent to the security of Georgia and beyond.

Also, according to our information there are at least 2 units of MIG-29 type jet fighter aircraft in the Babushera airfield. Allow me to remind you that this type of aircraft was responsible for shooting down the Georgian UAV in April 2008.

Moreover, together with the military servicemen the FSB border guards are present in the occupied territories since May 2009. They have established headquarters in Tskhinvali and Gali, as well as numerous forward military checkpoints across the occupation lines, namely in 21 villages of the Tskhinvali region and 12 villages in Abkhazia, including Upper Abkhazia. Russian border guards are also responsible for the illegal detentions of the local population for allegedly crossing the "state border". Currently there are ten detainees in the Tskhinvali prison,

who are held there without any due process, for simply crossing the administrative boundary line. Among these persons there is a brother of the member of the Geneva International Discussions, as well as the elderly person and a person that requires urgent medical assistance.

In order to be capable to move their forces and hardware more rapidly than in August 2008, together with the illegal establishment of the military bases, Russian armed forces also started to develop transport infrastructure in the occupied Georgian territories. Among such infrastructure projects are the following:

- The highway connecting Tskhinvali with Vladikavkaz, Russia is being widened and 4 more tunnels and few bridges are being constructed;
- By spring 2011, the road connecting Tskhinvali with Akhalkgori may be finished. This road has a strategic location in case Russian forces decide to attack Georgia's capital Tbilisi;
- Russian forces are renovating and enhancing railway lines and airfields in Abkhazia.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

Having said this, allow me to once again reiterate that the Russian Federation is obliged to withdraw all its troops in accordance with the point 5 of the 6-point cease-fire agreement of August 12, 2008. Georgia had a similar obligation according to the point 4 of the agreement. On our part we religiously observed all our commitments. Moreover, Georgia signed the agreements with the EU Monitoring Mission, giving the mission full power to monitor the movement of the Georgian armed forces and security personnel in the vicinity of the occupied regions. Russia has failed to sign similar agreements with the EUMM and has defied to calls from international community to reciprocate up-to-date. The head of the EUMM, Hansjorg Haber, defined Georgia's policy as a "constructive unilateralism".

This "constructive unilateralism" has led the President of Georgia to solemnly pledge last November the non use of force - that Georgia will never use force in order to restore its territorial integrity, neither against the occupation forces nor against their proxies. This pledge - a legal obligation for Georgia - was also accompanied by a call for dialogue with Russia at all levels to resolve outstanding issues, including here in the OSCE.

Russia, on its part, not only refused to reciprocate the non-use of force, to cooperate with the EUMM, to accept a call for dialogue, it responded by further fueling the security situation by introducing large numbers of offensive military equipment, including offensive missiles 50 miles from the capital of Georgia.

Excellencies,

Military presence of a state on the territory of another state without the explicit consent of the host state is an essential component to name the situation as illegal occupation. Another essential component is effective control of the territory and the proxy regimes established in these regions by the foreign forces. I have already showcased the illegal military presence of the Russian forces within the internationally recognized territory of Georgia. Now let me turn to

the second point, which is the effective control by Russia of the occupied Georgian regions. Let me demonstrate it by just drawing your attention to the composition of the proxy regimes in those regions.

These regimes are staffed directly from Russia. These seconded officials usually have either Russian security or military background and most of them have neither been born in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region, nor had any connection with these regions until their appointments, or secondments.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Colleagues,

Following conclusions can be drawn from the situation on the ground, which I attempted to depict in this presentation:

First, Russia is an occupant state due to its illegal military presence on the internationally recognized territory of Georgia and the effective control, including military, it exercises over the Georgian regions of Tskhinvali and Abkhazia;

Second, Ongoing reinforcement of illegally deployed Russian military bases in the occupied Georgian regions, hostile rhetoric from Moscow, Russia's unwillingness to pledge the non-use of force, Russia's refusal to cooperate with the European Union Monitoring Mission and its continued blatant violation of 12 August cease-fire agreement as well as Russia's refusal to enter in the dialogue with Georgia, represent serious threat to the security of my country. All these make us to conclude that further military aggression against Georgia cannot be excluded.

Therefore, it is essential that the international community takes active and effective steps in helping Russia to undertake the international legal commitment of the non-use of force against Georgia and engage in the dialogue with Tbilisi.

Thank You.