

# The August 6 Bombing Incident in Georgia: Implications for the Euro-Atlantic Region

Svante E. Cornell  
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## Introduction

On August 6, 2007, an unidentified aircraft dropped a large air-to-surface missile near a newly upgraded Georgian military radar station, in the vicinity of the South Ossetian conflict zone. The bomb failed to detonate.

Subsequently, two groups of independent experts commissioned by European and American governments confirmed the Georgian government's allegation that the military aircraft and explosive device, both of types not possessed by Georgia, entered Georgian airspace from the Russian Federation, fired rather than jettisoned the device, and then returned back to Russian airspace. A separate group of experts, convened by the Russian government and consisting only of Russians, nevertheless disputed these conclusions, finding no evidence of Russian involvement.

Why does this incident merit the publication of a *Silk Road Paper*? Several reasons make this relevant. First, the incident was not an isolated event, but rather part and parcel of an increasingly aggressive effort by Russia's foreign policy establishment to undermine Georgia's western orientation.<sup>1</sup> Second, the broader context of the incident has important implications for Euro-Atlantic security interests. Third, the international reaction to the incident – particularly on the part of multilateral organizations such as the OSCE and EU – remained grossly inadequate. Fourth, it is imperative that the Euro-Atlantic community draw the right conclusions from this incident, for at least two reasons: to be better prepared for similar incidents in the future; and to avoid the adoption of policies that may inadvertently encourage this type of actions.

The incident constitutes a flagrant violation of Georgia's sovereignty and is difficult to interpret as anything other than an act of war. In spite of this, European policy-makers, and particularly multilateral institutions, refrained from identifying, let alone condemning the aggressor. In so doing, they

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<sup>1</sup> For background, see Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr, *The Caucasus: A Challenge for Europe*, Washington/Uppsala: CACI & SRSP Silk Road Paper, June 2006; Svante E. Cornell, *Post-Revolutionary Georgia: Geopolitical Predicament and Implications for U.S. Policy*, Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, March 2007. [<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/publications/2007/0703USAWC.pdf>]

implicitly gave credence to Moscow's seemingly outrageous assertion that for the second time in six months, Georgia bombed itself with aircraft and weaponry it does not possess, and for the sole purpose of blaming Russia for it. That assertion is eerily reminiscent of an incident that took place in 1993, during the war in Georgia's breakaway republic of Abkhazia, when unmarked aircraft regularly pounded Georgian positions. Russia's then-defense minister asserted that Georgia attacked its own positions in order to put the blame for its military weakness and territorial losses on Russia. When Georgian forces succeeded in downing a plane, they dragged out of its cockpit a Russian air force pilot in full uniform, with detailed instructions in his uniform pocket that unequivocally indicated his point of departure – an air base in southern Russia – and mission, to pound Georgian forces along the frontline.

As in 1993, Moscow's assertion this August was intended not so much to be believed, but to sow confusion and permit anyone so inclined to conclude that the situation was not crystal clear; that there were two sides to the story, ostensibly with equal value; and that consequently, there was no requirement for external forces to identify the perpetrator and respond to the incident with concrete measures. And undoubtedly, Moscow's bold choice to stick to a line that flew in the face of all available evidence was bolstered by the almost non-existent international reaction to a similar incident six months earlier, when unidentified (but in all likelihood Russian) attack helicopters attacked Georgian-controlled areas of the conflict zone in upper Abkhazia.

The Georgian government, to its credit, responded to the August attack not by in turn raising tensions and engaging in provocative acts, but by focusing on mustering a western diplomatic response to the incident. This being the case, the Georgian reaction to further incidents of this type is likely to be affected by the response that western governments and organizations provided.

The record for such responses is mixed. On the one hand, individual European states reacted swiftly to the incident, sending out teams of experts to the site, which provided much of the information and analysis that enabled a clear-cut understanding of the event and identification of the aggressor. This was achieved in spite of the incident occurring, probably not coincidentally, during European vacation season. While the states taking this decision deserve praise, the same cannot be said for Western multilateral institutions. Both the European Union and the OSCE – under Portuguese



and Spanish leadership, respectively – did their utmost to avoid handling the matter in a forthright and authoritative way. Indeed, they contented themselves with expressing their concern and appealing to all parties involved to reduce tension and to exercise restraint. They did not identify the perpetrator, and failed – at least publicly – to raise this issue with Russian authorities in a manner that would be likely to constitute a deterrent to future acts of the same kind.

This weak reaction on the part of European officialdom is all the more notable since intelligence information available to all Western governments, elements of which have been made available to the authors of this paper as well as been presented in a wide variety of media outlets, provide overwhelming evidence beyond reasonable doubt that a Russian military aircraft was responsible for the attack. Clearly, OSCE and EU representatives had access to superior information that enabled them to acquire a solid picture of the incident. Their course of action was therefore not constrained by questions as to what actually transpired, but by political decisions not to offend or challenge Moscow.

This may have seemed a prudent move in the short term, given Russia's current assertiveness and the domestic uncertainties in Russia linked with the looming succession to President Vladimir Putin. But it is in fact a short-sighted policy, which is likely to worsen the situation in the Caucasus and beyond. As is often the case with appeasement policies, failing to respond convincingly to provocations of this type sends the message to Russia that it can intimidate its neighbors and seek to undermine their stability without being called to account for it. The forces in Moscow that stood behind this incident may conclude that further escalation in its confrontation with Georgia may elicit little international response while continuing to divert the Georgian government's attention from its processes of internal reform. Even worse, the same forces may conclude that through acts of aggression of this type, Moscow can continue to forestall Georgia's integration with Euro-Atlantic institutions.

But Georgia, and the Caucasus more broadly, which forms the Eastern element of the emerging Wider Black Sea region, is an important asset in European security. First, the Wider Black Sea Region effectively transcends the EU's and NATO's southeastern boundaries, and the South Caucasus is a link between this region on the one hand and Central Asia and the Middle East on the other. Second, the South Caucasus air corridor is a crucial link

between Europe and Afghanistan, where NATO's major military mission is concentrated. Third, the South Caucasus is also an increasingly important source of energy for Europe, and has a great potential to serve as a transit route for Central Asian energy supplies, as well as a trade corridor for the growing overland continental trade between Europe and Asia. Finally, and most importantly, the South Caucasus is a region forming part of European institutions. All three South Caucasian states are members of the Council of Europe; all have partnership agreements with NATO and are members of the European Neighborhood Policy; and Georgia has an Intensified Dialogue with NATO. What happens in Georgia, and the South Caucasus more broadly, is hence directly relevant to European security as a whole, since the region is increasingly part and parcel of Europe's security architecture.

This report consists of three major parts. The first section is a narrative chronology of the August 6 incident and the subsequent related developments. The second section constitutes an analysis of the implications of the event and the various reactions to it. The third and final section consists of a series of eleven appendices, consisting of Georgian, Russian and international documents relevant to the incident, including not least the two sets of expert reports from the site as well as the press release of the Russian investigation team.

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## A Chronology of the Tsitelubani Events

The following chronology is based on all available authoritative information. All claims regarding the chain of events are noted but there is no effort in this document to resolve discrepancies between the various parties except when reliable independent collateral evidence directly proves or disproves them. All times are given in Georgian Standard time.

*March 11, 2007*

**2110-2300:** The Upper Abkhazia villages of Adjara, Chkhalta and Zima came under ground-to-ground rocket fire, likely from territory controlled by the Russian-backed *de facto* authorities that control most of Abkhazia. In a coordinated attack, Russian military helicopters, described by eyewitnesses as Mi-24s (HIND-E) snaked through the Caucasus Mountain passes that lead from Russia to Georgia. More than one probable Mi-24 helicopter was in the area throughout the attack. The assault culminated at 2247 when one of the helicopters launched an AT-6 *Shturm* or AT-9 *Ataka* ATGM into a building in Chkhalta.<sup>2</sup>

*July 12, 2007*

The United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) issued a report which, while drawing no conclusions, presents solid evidence that Russia perpetrated the March 11 attack on Upper Abkhazia.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> David J. Smith, "Under the Radar!", *24 Saati*, April 16, 2007 available at [http://www.potomacinate.org/media/mediaclips/2007/Smith\\_24Saat\\_041607.pdf](http://www.potomacinate.org/media/mediaclips/2007/Smith_24Saat_041607.pdf); and "Russian Attack on Georgia: Time to Speak Out", *24 Saati*, July 11, 2007 available at [http://www.potomacinate.org/media/mediaclips/2007/Smith\\_24Saati\\_071107.pdf](http://www.potomacinate.org/media/mediaclips/2007/Smith_24Saati_071107.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, "Joint Fact-finding Group Report on the Rocket Firing Incident in the Upper Kodori Valley on 11 March 2007", Sukhumi Headquarters, undated, released July 12, 2007, available at [http://www.unomig.org/data/other/JFFG\\_report\\_final\\_110707\\_English.pdf](http://www.unomig.org/data/other/JFFG_report_final_110707_English.pdf). See also David J. Smith, "Russia's Attack on Georgia: The UN Report", *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, July 11, 2007 available at <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4655>.

Monday, August 6, 2007<sup>4</sup>

**About 1800:** A series of three violations of Georgian airspace began. Each incursion into Georgian airspace was made by a single aircraft that departed from Russia, although there may have been two aircraft involved in the successive flights. The first incursion, which was detected by a Georgian military radar near the Shida Kartli village of Tsitelubani that has recently been upgraded to NATO standards, lasted less than a minute. At that moment, the radar was not fully operational because it was undergoing maintenance. The brief incident was not reported to the Georgian Central Command Post.

**1813-1824:** The second violation of Georgian airspace that evening was detected by the military radar near Tsitelubani, as well as by an International Civil Aviation Organization-approved air traffic control radar. The Tsitelubani radar became fully operational before the end of this incursion. At 1816, the Tbilisi air traffic controller on duty radioed his Russian counterpart in Rostov-on-Don to inquire whether the Russian Air Force was flying in the region. The Russian air traffic controller was unable to offer any information. At 1824, the Tbilisi controller tried again, this time detailing that the aircraft he saw on his screen was traveling at about 810 kilometers/hour on a northeasterly course (30°-35°). [He was accurately observing the intruding aircraft's reentry into Russia after the second flight.] Again, the Rostov controller denied having any information.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The events of August 6, 2007 are synthesized from the two international reports on the attack: "Report from the International Group of Experts Investigating the Possible Violations of Georgian Airspace and the Recovered Missile near Tsitelubani, Georgia, 6 August, 2007", August 14, 2007. Hereafter cited as IEG Report, available in Appendix A. Also, "Second Independent Inter-governmental Expert Group (IIEG-2) Report Investigating Possible Violations of Georgian Airspace and the Recovered Missile Near Tsitelubani, Georgia, 6 August 2007", August 20, 2007. Hereafter cited as IIEG-2 Report, available in Appendix B. See also David J. Smith, "Time to Stop Russia's Guided Missile Diplomacy", 24 *Saati*, August 14, 2007 available at [http://www.potomac institute.org/media/medioclips/2007/Smith\\_24Saati\\_081407.pdf](http://www.potomac institute.org/media/medioclips/2007/Smith_24Saati_081407.pdf); and Smith, "Another Russian Attack on Georgia: Unmistakable Evidence", *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, August 21, 2007 available at <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4677>.

<sup>5</sup> Sakaeronavigatsia, Ltd. (Georgian air traffic control), Flight Safety and Quality Control Department, "Excerpt from Radio Communication, date 6.08.07, time 14.06.14--", August 8, 2007, certified by the Observer, Kharatov, and the Head of Flying, Bichinashvili. Note that air traffic control times are GMT.

**1831-1842:** A probable Russian Su-24M fighter aircraft penetrated Georgian airspace above the town of Khazbegi. It traveled southwest, tracked by three radars – military and civilian – to Tsitelubani, where it turned, released a Kh-58U anti-radar missile and headed northeast, crossing back into Russia. The missile fell, undetonated into a vegetable field meters away from houses in the village. The missile had burn marks on the nozzle, indicating that it had been fired, not jettisoned.

**1900:** The Joint Peacekeeping Force (JPKF) Joint Staff duty officer and the North Ossetian peacekeeping contingent duty officer reported an “unknown aircraft’s flight over the settled area ‘Tsinagari’ at 18:40...It is a version that this aircraft dropped ammo and broke in the areas of settled territories ‘Tsinagari’ and ‘Kvemo Zakhari.’”<sup>6</sup>

*Tuesday, August 7, 2007*

**0400:** Georgian authorities informed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chief Monitoring Officer (CMO) of the incident.<sup>7</sup>

**0700:** The OSCE CMO arrived at the missile impact site near Tsitelubani.<sup>8</sup> Georgian officials were already on the scene.

**0830<sup>9</sup>/0855<sup>10</sup> (reports differ):** The Joint Peacekeeping Force (JPKF) patrol arrived at the missile impact site near Tsitelubani. [The JPKF that morning consisted of representatives of Russia, Georgia and North Ossetia-Alania. Together, the JPKF plus the OSCE CMO, comprise the Joint Monitoring Group (JMG).] The JMG observed, “In the hole was seen only unexploded part of ammo at 3-3.5 depth. The diameter of the hole was about 110-120 cm. Based on parts extracted from the ground, such as the missile engine, stabilizer wings, electro-schemes and internal equipment, it was established

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<sup>6</sup> Joint Monitoring Group, “The Report of the Joint Monitoring Group”, August 7, 2007. The report is signed by The Military Observers: Russian Federation—LTC. V. Nikulin; Georgia—LTC. K. Stepnadze; Republic of North Ossetia-Alania—Major S. Pukhaev; OSCE Monitoring Officer—LTC. F. Khalaz. Hereafter cited as JMG Report.

<sup>7</sup> Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE Mission to Georgia, “Spot Report: Tsitelubani Missile Incident”, August 8, 2007. Hereafter cited as OSCE Spot Report.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> JMG Report. Although the OSCE and JMG reports differ on the exact time of the JPKF’s arrival at the missile impact site, they do not differ on the substance reported.

that this [was] an air-to-surface guided missile which did not explode after launch. The diameter of the engine's nozzle was about 37.5 cm. At 13:00 Georgian experts extracted with the help of an evacuator the combat part of the AS guided missile with [its] unexploded charge. The three remaining stabilizers were on the section of the rocketed body" [sic.]. At the site, Georgian officials showed the JMG a radar print-out that traced the flight path of the intruding aircraft.<sup>11</sup>

**Before 1300:** Russian General Marat Kulakhmetov, JPKF Commander gave a press interview. "The aircraft came into the [South Ossetia] Conflict Zone from the east," the General explained. "Then it turned in a southwest direction. Over the village of Gromi, it came under fire from the South Ossetian side. This, it seems, scared the pilot and caused him to fire a rocket, and then it went to the northeast."<sup>12</sup> The notion that for the second time this year Georgia had bombed itself with weapons and aircraft it does not possess was to be the Moscow line over the next 48 hours.

**About 1300:** The JMG departed the missile impact site to visit JPKF Observation Posts at Tsinagari and Didi Gromi, both manned by North Ossetian forces. The JMG also visited the village of Zvemo Zakhari. The team interviewed eyewitnesses among the North Ossetian forces and the villagers who all corroborated the flight information generated by the radars; some of whom saw an object separate from the aircraft and fall to earth.

**1900:** The JMG returned to its base in Tskhinvali and drafted its report.<sup>13</sup>

Also on August 7, The Georgian Foreign Ministry summoned the Russian Ambassador to deliver to him "a firm protest over the violation of the Georgian-Russian state border...the bombing of Georgian territory by Russian military aircraft." Georgia "assessed this act as undisguised aggression and gross violation of sovereignty." The Georgian Foreign Ministry also hosted a briefing for the diplomatic corps.

Russia denied any involvement. Asked about the incident, Russian Ambassador Vyacheslav Kovalenko replied, "I do not know what has happened...Ask those who have organized it...By the way, Su type aircraft are

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<sup>11</sup> JMG Report and OSCE Spot Report. See also "Trajectory of Russian Jet Planes Locations of Bombing" (radar tracks plotted on local area map).

<sup>12</sup> Civil.ge, "Russian Chief Peacekeeper Comments on Air Raid", August 7, 2007. Available at <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=15556>.

<sup>13</sup> JMG Report.

available to the Georgian Air Force. Russian Air Force Spokesman Colonel Alexander Drobyshesky said, "Russia's air force neither on Monday nor Tuesday flew flights over Georgia."<sup>14</sup>

August 8, 2007

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, said, "While I am thankful that no one was injured, I am deeply concerned about the incident. We are looking at information about the circumstances very carefully and due to its importance, we request the most accurate and urgent report on the facts. Meanwhile, I appeal to all parties to address this serious issue with restraint."<sup>15</sup>

Moratinos discussed the matter by telephone with Georgian Foreign Minister Gela Bezhuashvili.

Later, Bezhuashvili said, "We invite all our partner countries to send their experts—military, aviation or experts in other fields—to this group in order to properly study all the evidence gathered by the Georgian side."<sup>16</sup>

August 9, 2007

*De facto* South Ossetian President Eduard Kokoity said, "We have asked the Russian Federation to provide its peacekeeping battalion in the conflict zone with an air defense system so that it could down intruder aircraft."<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, Russian officials were backing away from the notion of a Georgian aircraft, preparing to spin a story that there was no aircraft at all; just suspect bits of a missile. Kulakhmetov signaled the switch: "When a group of peacekeepers arrived at the site early on August 7, the Georgians had already moved all major parts of the missile and transported them to an unidentified location...For some reason; Georgia hurried to destroy the warhead before our arrival." For some reason, these assertions were not

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<sup>14</sup> OSCE Spot Report; Civil.ge, "Russian Officials Comment on Reported Attack". Available at <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=15553>; BBC.co.uk, "Georgia in Russian Attack Claim", August 7, 2007. Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6934354.stm>.

<sup>15</sup> Civil.ge, "OSCE Chair 'Seriously Concerned' Over Raid", August 8, 2007. Available at <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=15561>.

<sup>16</sup> Civil.ge, "OSCE Chair for 'Thorough Investigation' into Missile Incident", August 9, 2007. Available at <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=15575>

<sup>17</sup> Civil.ge, "Tskhinvali Wants Air Defense System for Russian Peacekeepers", August 9, 2007. Available at <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=15580>.

mentioned in the JMG Report, indeed that report contains considerable detail on the missile parts observed by the team, including the unearthing of the unexploded warhead.<sup>18</sup>

*August 12-14, 2007*

The first international group of experts—from Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and the U.S. – worked in Georgia. They issued their report on August 14.<sup>19</sup> See the full report in Appendix C. The main findings of the group can be summarized as follows:

- An unidentified aircraft flew from Russian airspace into Georgian airspace and back again into Russian airspace three times.
- A missile impacted in a field close to the village of Tsitelubani.
- Several eye witnesses saw an aircraft in the area of the impact; Radar information of the last pass into Georgian airspace (around 14.36) indicates that an object separated from the unidentified aircraft.
- The Georgian Air Force (GAF) does not possess aircraft equipped with or able to launch Kh-58 missiles. The GAF does not operate aircraft able to fly the profile flown by the unidentified aircraft.

*August 16-17, 2007*

A Russian team – led by Air Force Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Igor Khvorov and Special Envoy for the CIS Valery Kenyaikin – worked in Georgia. While no report was released, the findings of the Russian team were presented at an August 17 press conference at the Russian Embassy in Tbilisi. The press conference is reprinted in Appendix D. "There was no border crossing by any airplane," Khvorov told the August 17 press conference. "We have the impression that the missile was destroyed somewhere else, and its pieces were later delivered here [to a village of Tsitelubani] and spread around the alleged explosion site."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> RIA-Novosti, "Top peacekeeper says Georgia hurried to destroy missile evidence", August 9, 2007. Available at <http://en.rian.ru/world/20070809/70679764.html>.

<sup>19</sup> IEG Report.

<sup>20</sup> UPI, "Report: Missile came from Russian Airspace", August 17, 2007. Available at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/upi/?feed=TopNews&article=UPI-1-20070817-12311300-bc-russia-missile.xml>; and RIA-Novosti, "Russian experts say evidence in Georgia incident fabricated", August 18, 20. Available at <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20070817/72099235.html>.



Then Kenyaikin delivered the political bottom line: “If Georgia continues trying to worsen its relations with Russia on other major issues – Euro-Atlantic integration, its special relationship with the west – then Georgia will continue to invent these incidents in the future. If Georgia reaches the conclusion that it needs to have a balanced relationship with Russia, then the situation will change.”<sup>21</sup>

*August 17, 2007*

The United States Embassy in Tbilisi issued a statement calling “attention to the important and credible report of the International Experts Group.” The Embassy Statement recalled the UNOMIG recommendations made in the wake of the March 11 attack on Upper Abkhazia and urged further confidence building measures for South Ossetia, “including international monitoring of the Roki Tunnel.” The Statement continued, “The United States reasserts its full support for Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.”<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, Georgian Defense Minister Batu Kutelia evaluated the Russian visit: “Unfortunately, the Russian side has not been constructive and has, in effect, turned its back on cooperating in the investigation.”<sup>23</sup>

*August 18, 2007*

Russia blocked a U.S. attempt at a United Nations Security Council statement on the incident. “The Georgian side has gone out of its way to create all sorts of noise around it, and as a result of it all there is a lot of conflicting information, a lot of conflicting evidence and assertions surrounding this incident,” said Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin. U.S. Deputy Representative Jackie Sanders retorted, “Any of us in the U.N., if we had a missile coming over our borders and planes from unknown places coming over our borders, we would surely hope that the Security Council,

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<sup>21</sup> Reuters, “Russia, Georgia Talks Fail to Ease Missile Row”, August 17, 2007. Available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSL1730069720070817>. Hereafter cited as Missile Row.

<sup>22</sup> Embassy of the United States in Georgia, “US Embassy Statement on the Independent Experts Group Report”, August 17, 2007. Available at <http://georgia.usembassy.gov/events/2007/event200700817missile.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Missile Row.

which has a responsibility for international peace and security, would address it.”<sup>24</sup>

*August 18-20, 2007*

The second international group of experts – from Estonia, Poland and the United Kingdom – worked in Georgia. They issued their report on August 20.<sup>25</sup> See Appendix E for the full report. The main findings can be summarized as follows:

- The Group agreed with the findings of the first group of experts.
- Georgian airspace was violated three times on 6 Aug 07 from/by aircraft flying to/from Russian airspace.
- The missile was launched towards the Gori radar site at a range of approximately 10 km from the radar site. Immediately after missile launch the radar crew acted defensively and using combat procedures turned the radar transmitter off.
- The missile impacted on Georgian territory about 5 km short of the radar site without exploding. The missile was a Russian built Kh-58U anti-radiation, air to surface missile.
- Examination of Georgian aircraft proved no Georgian capability to operate this missile.
- Georgian authorities destroyed the warhead for safety reasons. All the recovered debris were on display at the Interior Ministry. Georgian authorities made a video of the missile recovery operation and of the warhead removal and destruction. The serial numbers of parts recovered have been seen at the Interior Ministry and indicate a manufacturing date of the warhead of Oct 1992.

*August 20-24, 2007*

During this period, former Croatian Foreign Minister Miomir Zuzul, Moratinos’ Personal Representative, visited Moscow and Tbilisi.

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<sup>24</sup> Edith M. Lederer, “Russia Blocks U.N. Statement on Georgia”, *Associated Press*, August 17, 2007. Available at [http://www.usatoday.com/news/topstories/2007-08-16-1162834822\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/topstories/2007-08-16-1162834822_x.htm).

<sup>25</sup> IIEG-2 Report.

August 23, 2007

The Georgian Ministry of Defense announced that Georgia would join the NATO Air Situation Data Exchange (ASDE) system. ASDE will provide bi-directional exchange of a Recognized Air Picture between Georgia and NATO nations. In conjunction with radar and other hardware and software upgrades, one of ASDE's benefits would be to provide NATO nations with real-time information about violations of Georgian airspace.

August 29, 2007

Moratinos visited Moscow, meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Later, OSCE Spokesman Martin Nesirky said, "The [OSCE] report is not going to point the finger at one side or another. The report is forward-looking with the aim of building confidence between both sides and avoiding similar incidents in the future. We hope to find not just dialogue but a mechanism between these two countries."<sup>26</sup>

September 4, 2007

Moratinos proceeded to Tbilisi, where he met with Bezhuashvili and Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili. "What I think should be good ...for security and stability in the region isn't to repeat the incident similar to what happened on Aug. 6," Moratinos told reporters after meeting with Georgian officials in Tbilisi.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Javno.org, "OSCE Will not Take Sides in Russia-Georgia Row", August 30, 2007. Available at <http://www.javno.com/en/world/clanak.php?id=76113>.

<sup>27</sup> "OSCE chief warns against further incursions in Georgia", *International Herald Tribune*, September 4, 2007. Available at <http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2007/09/04/europe/EU-GEN-Georgia-OSCE.php>.

*September 6, 2007*<sup>28</sup>

Zuzul presented his report to the OSCE Permanent Council. "I can say," Zuzul told a press conference after the meeting, "that there was an incident on August 6 and that that incident created a very dangerous situation and certainly influenced relations between Russia and Georgia." He added that the mission of the OSCE was not that of a "prosecutor" or "judge." Anyway, said Zuzul, since the findings of the investigative teams all differed, it was "extremely difficult to have a clear picture" of what happened.

Among Zuzul's recommendations was to appoint a special representative to provide "an immediate presence on the ground" and to collect "objective and reliable information" that would be conveyed to participating states "within the appropriate format." The representative of Portugal, which holds the European Union's rotating presidency, made a cautious statement in which the EU expressed "appreciation for the work of the experts, amongst them experts from a number of EU countries." He continued, "The EU would also like to thank the OSCE Mission to Georgia for their first investigation and immediate Spot Report," referring to the August 8 OSCE report that had provided an immediate presence and conveyed objective information throughout the OSCE network. Zuzul summed up, "Of course we couldn't change the fact that there was an incident and that this incident created a dangerous situation. But we believe that we somehow helped ease the tensions."

*October 3, 2007*

A draft press release, purporting to summarize the views of leading American experts on the Caucasus and Russia, appears at EU offices in Brussels and at EU members' embassies in Tbilisi. The paper claimed that major principal consultants to the U.S. government, assembled at the Central

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<sup>28</sup> For reporting on the September 6 OSCE Permanent Council meeting see Jean-Christophe Peuch, "Georgia: OSCE Confirms Missile Incident, Without Blame", RFE/RL, September 6, 2007, available at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/09/4c5c36c8-2ab8-4e6c-b79e-fb5a670f176f.html>; Civil.ge, "OSCE not to Proceed Further on Missile Incident", September 7, 2007, available at <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=15750>; Jean-Christophe Peuch, "Georgian-Russian Missile Incident Poses Conflict-Resolution Challenge for OSCE" Eurasianet.org, September 10, 2007, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav091007.shtml>.

Asia-Caucasus Institute – the institution issuing the present publication – had recommended that Washington reduce its commitment to Georgia on the grounds that the Saakashvili government acts irrationally and dangerously. It is immediately recognized and denounced by both European and Georgian authorities as a complete fabrication, a classic piece of *dizinformatsiia*. The spelling of certain surnames – as well as the identification of parts of the text with an equally fabricated news story circulated close to a year earlier in the Russian language by the news agency *regnum.ru* – proved beyond doubt that the text had been translated from a Cyrillic original, and that it is likely to have originated with Russian authorities. The document is immediately recognized as a fabrication and the appropriate conclusions drawn. The document is reproduced in Appendix L.

## Conclusions and Implications

The foregoing chronology, and material in the numerous appendices to this text, indicate that a number of conclusions appear warranted. These can be divided into conclusions concerning the event itself; as well as implications for Georgia, Russia, and the Euro-Atlantic Community.

### Conclusions concerning the event itself:

1. On March 11, and again on August 6, 2007, there occurred violations of the air space of Georgia, with the aircraft in question coming from the Russian Armed Forces.
2. The likely purpose of the August 6 incursion was to cripple or destroy the Georgian radar installation at Tsitelubani, but this mission failed when the rocket fired by the aircraft missed its mark. The absence of any other significant target in the immediate region lends strong credibility to this conclusion.
3. The project was likely organized by the Russian General Staff in Moscow rather than by official or rogue elements of the military in the Caucasus. Reports circulating in both European capitals and Washington suggest that the August 6 flight originated in or near Moscow and refueled in the South, probably in Mozdok. The source of these unconfirmed reports is unknown but is likely western intelligence. They are indirectly confirmed by the statement by Russian aviation officials that no air operations were planned from bases in the Caucasus at the indicated time.
4. It is not known to what extent the highest Russian civilian authorities were involved with the planning of this incident. The Russian clumsy shift from the initial claim that the Georgians had fired on themselves to the contradictory claim that the incident did not occur at all, suggests poor planning or differences of approach between the relevant military and civil-diplomatic hierarchies. On the other hand, the Russian version that Georgia bombed itself was being disseminated early on August 7 by both Russian military and

civilian officials, indicating coordination on the official line already at this time, which suggests a ready script had been prepared.

5. The Russian side rejected the possibility of acknowledging the event and dismissing it as an unfortunate instance of pilot error, at the same time insisting that that the rocket had been jettisoned at a moment of peril but not fired. Why did the government not seize on this relatively simple means of defusing the crisis? Available evidence does not permit a firm answer, but the most probable reason is that such a course of action would have amounted to blaming the military for the entire affair, which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not prepared or able to do. Alternatively, if the government was involved in the planning of the action from the start, it may simply have seen no use in defusing the crisis, sticking instead to a barely plausible denial.
6. The OSCE proved fundamentally incapable of addressing this event. Its failure to seriously respond to an air attack against a member state appears derived from the organization's fundamental dilemma: in the words of Vladimir Socor, the OSCE "can either function as a 'community' in consensus with Russia and remain irrelevant, or give up on the consensus with Russia and risk ceasing to function at all"<sup>29</sup>. The OSCE's performance in this crisis was similar to the UN's performance following the March incident, indicating the very limited role that multilateral organizations can effectively play in responding to acts of aggression perpetrated by a large member state.
7. The rotating Presidency of the European Union, held by Portugal, managed to formulate a declaration in response to the event. This declaration went no further than to call for restraint and the maintenance of Georgia's territorial integrity. Even this formulation was accepted only after strong lobbying efforts by Georgia's partners in the organization, the Portuguese presidency being reluctant to engage in the matter at all. The EU's response to an event like this is therefore likely to remain modest at best, and heavily dependent on the country holding the rotating presidency.

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<sup>29</sup> Vladimir Socor, "Moscow Pleased with OSCE's Response to Missile Drop on Georgia", *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 11 September 2007.

Three of the next four countries scheduled to hold the EU presidency – Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and Sweden – are among Georgia’s closest European partners, suggesting a more serious EU reaction in events of this kind in the next two years. The fourth country and the holder of the next rotating Presidency, France, is also moving toward a policy that is less likely to sweep problems of this sort under the rug, although France’s specific reaction to the next such incident is difficult to predict.

8. Where multilateral institutions such as the OSCE, UN and EU failed to effectively respond to this incident, individual European countries and the United States stepped up to the task and sidestepped the constraints of multilateralism. This marked a distinct departure from the weaker response to the March incident and was likely a surprise to Moscow. This factor enabled impartial information and analysis of the event to be rapidly disseminated. Moreover, the strong consensus between the two western groups of experts was instrumental in exposing the biased claims of the Russian group of experts for what they were. Whether this development will form a deterrent to further Russian aggressive acts remains to be determined.

**Conclusions that the EU and US would be warranted to draw from this crisis:**

1. Russia’s incursion into Georgia’s air space was aimed as much against the European Union and NATO as against Georgia.
2. The government of Georgia responded to this instance of military violation of its borders in a sober and responsible manner, immediately engaging international observers and experts and appealing to international bodies rather than taking unilateral action. Much has been written recently, especially in parts of Europe, concerning the Georgian government’s supposed penchant for dramatic and unilateral actions, rather than a more measured and safer, if also more time-consuming, referral of issues to appropriate international bodies. This incident provides no support for the charge that Georgian policy is reckless and



unilateral, while providing solid evidence that Russia's actions fit this description.

3. The cycle of these events echoes developments between Estonia and Russia on the eve of the Baltic states' entry into NATO. The U.S. and EU should acknowledge this reality and address the fact that the recent Georgian events are once more a crude attempt by Russia to intimidate a smaller neighbour. The proper response to such a provocation is not to ignore it but to move up the timetable for considering Georgia's possible entry into NATO. This would include granting Georgia a Membership Action Plan at the April 2008 Bucharest summit of NATO.
4. Existing mechanisms for international responses to incidents of open attack are ineffective, producing contending commissions and reports but leading neither to firm conclusions nor to any concrete actions.
5. In future events of this type, the EU is likely to be sidestepped by its own members unless it swiftly moves to assemble, under the auspices of the organization itself, a group of independent and rigorous experts who will not shy away from drawing appropriate conclusions when warranted.
6. Technologically improved border surveillance must be treated as a priority component of Partnership for Peace activities and part of any NATO accession process as well. In the case of close cooperation partners and *de facto* allies like Georgia, it should be investigated whether such surveillance should not be accompanied by appropriate air defense capabilities.

### **Conclusions to which Russian officials might be drawn:**

1. This test of the responsiveness of the international community to Russia's use of air power to breach borders of "problem" countries elicited no serious response. However, the readiness of European states – if not multilateral organizations – to respond with appropriate vigor is clearly rising, and therefore increasing the political cost to Russia of similar moves in the future.

2. Air power rather than ground operations would be the most effective and least problematic means of disciplining Georgia in the event it moves towards a NATO Membership Action Plan or commits some other geopolitical act that Russia finds unacceptable.

**Geopolitical conclusions that might reasonably be drawn by energy-producing and transiting countries in the immediate region such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan:**

1. Russia is prepared to use armed force to discipline neighboring and regional states whose conduct Moscow finds objectionable.
2. The responses of the European Union and of leading European governments to this incident reflects poorly on their readiness to enter into credible long-term commitment to purchase gas and oil directly from Caspian states. Stated differently, Europe would appear to be seeking a closer relationship in the sphere of energy but without any corresponding relationship or reciprocal obligations in the security sphere.

**Geopolitical conclusions that might reasonably be drawn by the Government of Georgia:**

1. The Tsitelubani incident only confirms the wisdom of the Georgian Government's decision to actively seek NATO membership in two ways. First, it underscores that Russia is willing to have relations with Georgia only on a lord-and-vassal basis, and not on the basis of mutual respect for sovereignty and independence. Second, as was pointed out by Edward Lucas in *The Economist*, it is unlikely that this incident would have happened if Georgia were in NATO.
2. Georgia is presently not a member of any collective security organization. That means that it must walk a fine line between the kind of diplomatic behavior that NATO members demand to consider Georgia's MAP and actual membership, on the one hand, and what it must do to safeguard its own sovereignty, security and dignity, on the other. That means it must never tire of explaining the predicament to its prospective NATO partners while

cautiously doing what it must do to defend itself while NATO debates the issue of its membership prospects.

3. Having upgraded some of its radar capabilities, the Georgian government must continue to improve them and acquire appropriate means of air defense.
4. The Georgian government must explain more clearly to skeptical Westerners that its military force structure and defense budget reflect its requirements during the period before it joins NATO, and that adjustments will be made after membership.
5. While a Russian air attack is no doubt more likely than an assault by land, Georgia must be prepared for more, greater and different forms of intimidation. These include, but are not limited to, special forces actions in the conflict zones, environmental attacks, quest for economic control of strategic assets, or cyber warfare.
6. Whether in its efforts to expose an incident like Tsitelubani; explaining its own military policies; or showcasing the reforms it has made on the path toward NATO, Georgia must recognize the limitations of international organizations, even of national governments, and expand its efforts in seeking to provide western opinion-makers with correct information and analysis.
7. In particular, Georgia should press the international community for implementation of the recommendations for Upper Abkhazia in the July 12, 2007 UNOMIG Report. Georgia has accepted these recommendations; Russia has not. Moreover, Georgia should insist upon further confidence building measures for South Ossetia as indicated in the US Embassy statement of August 17, including more OSCE observers throughout South Ossetia, not just in the Conflict Zone, and international monitoring of the Roki Tunnel. Again, Georgia has accepted these ideas while Russia has rejected them.

# Appendix A: JPKF/OSCE Joint Monitoring Team Spot Report

8 August 2007

**Summary** A guided missile impacted in the area of the Georgian administered village of Tsitelubani in the south eastern part of the zone of conflict without causing casualties or major damage. A joint JPKF/OSCE monitoring team was deployed in the early morning of 7 August to examine the site. The Georgian authorities accused the Russian Federation of violation of the Georgian-Russian state border, intrusion into Georgian airspace and the bombing of Georgian territory by Russian military aircraft. The Russian authorities in turn denied any involvement. **End of Summary**

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## **Narrative**

At around 04:00 in the morning of 7 August, the Mission was informed by the Georgian authorities that a missile impact site was found near the Georgian administered village of Tsitelubani, in the south eastern part of the zone of conflict close to the main east west highway (M27). According to the Georgian authorities, the impact was linked to the alleged violation of Georgian airspace by Russian SU-type aircraft which crossed into Georgian airspace and dropped the missile before returning into Russian airspace again.

It was agreed that a joint JPKF/OSCE monitoring team (JMT) be deployed to the site in early morning. The Mission Chief Monitoring Officer arrived at the spot from Tbilisi at approximately 07:00, and the JMT at around 08:30. The Georgian Interior Minister, the Head of the

Georgian Air Force, the Chief of Shida Kartli Police and many other officials as well as some press officers were already present at the site.

The JMT examined the site and took photographs of the missile parts. The missile was identified as a guided missile approximately 3M in length and 40CM in diameter. It was assessed that the warhead had not detonated on impact. The JMT was shown by Georgian officials a radar print-out that indicated a track entering the area from the north east and then exiting the same way. From the print out the aircraft was assumed to be a single aircraft but there was also an opinion held by some Georgian representatives on the ground that two aircraft might have been involved. The radar print out showed that aircraft entered and exited Georgian airspace in the area close to the town of Stepantsminda (formerly Kazbegi) at 14:31GMT and 14:41GMT respectively (local time is GMT+4), flying at an altitude of approximately 3700M.

The JMT could not definitely identify the missile type at this stage, and neither the type or number of aircraft.

The JMT was then asked to exit the cordoned area as the Georgian engineers wanted to recover more of the missile. The JPKF Commander who was at the site gave a short interview to the press. At approximately 12:35 the Georgian engineers invited the JMT to examine the recovered central section of the missile and more photographs were taken.

In relation to this incident, at the JPKF morning briefing of 7 August, information was passed by the Chief of Staff of the Russian battalion of the JPKF, who chaired the meeting, that two nearby JPKF Observation Posts (OP) manned by personnel of the North Ossetian battalion (at Didi Gromi and Tsinagari) reported over flights. The Didi Gromi OP 12KM north north west of Tselubani reported an aircraft flying from south west to north east and reported seeing a missile launched towards the north. It was also stated that the approximate altitude of the aircraft was 3000M. The Tsinagari OP 4KM north north east of Tselubani reported hearing a missile impact to the north of their OP but nothing else.

At 13:00, the JMT was sent to check these OPs and left the impact site. At Tsinagari OP, the OP commander and other personnel stated that on 6 August at 18:40 – 18:45 local time they observed one aircraft flying from north east to south west at about 3KM altitude. Before the aircraft reached the OP, it reportedly launched a rocket. It then turned and flew

back to north east. The same information was given at Didi Gromi OP. The only difference was that the JPKF personnel there reportedly heard and saw the launch of a rocket right above their OP.

The JMT also went to the Ossetian administered village of Kvemo-Zakhori 4KM northeast of Didi Gromi. Villagers there confirmed the details of the over flight as reported by the two JPKF OPs and also confirmed the rocket launch to the south of the village.

In the early morning of 8 August, the JPKF Commander decided to send another JMT to the area around the impact site to gather more eyewitness accounts related to the incident.

### **Other Developments**

The same day on 7 August, the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Georgia was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where the Georgian side according to a statement posted on the Ministry's website "expressed a firm protest over the violation of the Georgian-Russian state border, intrusion into Georgian airspace and the bombing of the Georgian territory by Russian military aircraft on 6 August 2007 and assessed this act as undisguised aggression and gross violation of sovereignty of the country". The statement continued that at the meeting the Georgian side categorically demanded clear and immediate explanations from the Russian side.

Representatives of the Russian authorities the same day ruled out any involvement in this incident and stated, among other things, that no aircraft from the Russian Air Force made any flights in the area at the time in question, and that no trespassing over the border into Georgia took place. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed extreme concern about the incident and called for a thorough and speedy investigation.

Later in the day, the Mission attended a briefing by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this incident for the diplomatic corps. The Acting Head of Mission went together with other representatives of the diplomatic corps to the impact site at Tsitelubani, where an additional briefing in the presence of President Saakashvili took place. The Georgian President called on the international community to respond adequately to this incident.

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office Miguel Angel Moratinos expressed his deepest concern over the incident in a statement issued on 7 August.

### Map of approximate location of impact point



(Photographs included in original report omitted)

## Appendix B: The Report of the Joint Monitoring Group

On August 7, 2007 from 08:00 till 19:00 the military observers group consisting of the representatives of Russian Federation, Republic of North Ossetia Alania and Georgia jointly with the officer of the OSCE Mission conducted the monitoring on the following route: City Tskinali – settled area “Tsitelubani” – Republic of North Ossetia Alania’s observing point “Gromi” - Republic of North Ossetia Alania’s observing point „Tsinagori”- the settled area “Kvemo Zakhori” – City Tskhinvali. The purpose of the monitoring was to recheck the information received from Georgia concerning the discovery of Air ammunition in the settled area in “Tsitelubani” on August 7, 2007 after flying the not classified aircraft in this region at 18:40 on August 6, 2007.

The Monitoring established the following results:

At 19:00 the active duty officer of the Joint Staff of the Peacekeeping Forces and the active duty officer of Alania Peacekeeping Forces provided information related to the unknown aircraft’s flight over the settled area “Tsinagari” at 18:40 which entered the air space of the conflict zone from the North-East in the direction of East via Kvemo “Zakhari”. It is a version that this aircraft dropped ammo and broke in the areas of settled territories of “Tsinagari” and “Kvemo Zakhari”.

At 08:55 from the South side the Monitoring Group (MG) arrived at the settled area of “Tsitelubani, the place where unknown type of ammo were discovered located from one hundred meter from the plots and settled area. When the MG arrived the Georgian experts were in the working process. The bombed territory was enclosed by the special ribbon. A lot of policemen and civilians attended the ammo searching process. In the hole was seen only unexploded part of ammo on 3 -3,5 depth. Diameter of the hole was about 110-120sm. Based on parts extracted



from the ground like missile engine, stabilizer-wings, electro-schemes and internal equipment was established, that this is an Air - to - Surface guided missile, which did not exploded after launch. The diameter of engine's nozzle was about 37, 5 sm. At 13:00 Georgian experts extracted with the help of evacuator combat part of AS guided missile with unexploded charge. The three remains stabilizers were on were on the section of the rocket body. (The fourth one was torn away). The diametric of the rocket's combat part consisted of 40 sm.

In order to discover the other parts of the rockets the monitoring group continued searching process from the settled territory "Tsitelubani" till the observing point of the Republic North Ossetia Alania "Gromi". After conversation with the team of the duty officers it was found out that on August 6, 2007 at approximately 18:35 the duty officers saw from their workplace the unknown aircraft flying from the North-East to the South-West to the 1, 5 -2 km height. Due to the big distance it was impossible to identify the belonging of the aircrafts. The Aircraft sounded a big noise like exploitation. Smoke appeared from the aircraft. During its short time appearance, from aircraft loud sound have been heard, like the explosion. At that moment some kind of object separated from aircraft, which was followed by the smoke line. After 3-4 seconds the smoke line was not increasing. Object separated from the aircraft has disappeared from the sight of line. Then the aircraft started elevation and after 30-40 seconds left the observing sector. After 5-7 minutes the aircraft appeared again in the observing sector. But at this time it was flying from the South-West in the direction of the North-East higher than the aircraft, which flew in the opposite direction 5-7 minutes ago. The military officials of the Peacekeeping forces of the Republic of North Ossetia did not identify any other aircraft flying along the above -mentioned flight trajectory on August 6, 2007.

After that the Monitoring Group visited Alania, "Tsinagori" observing point of the Peacekeeping Forces of the Republic of North Ossetia. After the conversation with duty officer it was found out that on August 6, 2007 from 18:35 till 18:40 the officers were observing the flight of the unknown aircraft 1, 5 - 2 km height from the North -East direction behind the Mountain (Landmark 1081.0) towards South-West above North-West outskirts of settled area "Tsinagari". It was impossible to identify the belonging of aircraft due to the big distance. During aircraft's overlying the mountain (Landmark 1081,0) from aircraft loud sound,

similar to explosion sound appeared. Behind the aircraft the smoke line appeared. In 3-4 seconds the smoke line stopped to enlarge. Separated object from the aircraft started to elevate with left turn. After completing the back turn aircraft with altitude left towards North-East, but overlying that time South-West side of the village on 4 km altitude.

With the purpose to check the information received from the observation point of Peacekeeping Forces of the Republic of North Ossetia Alania on the explosion in the evening of August 6, in the settled area "Kvemo-Zakahari" which is also in connection with the overflight of the aircraft the monitoring group went to the settled area of the village "Khvemo Zakhari". The representatives of the Monitoring group met with the head of the administration of "Khvemo Zakhari" Mr. V. Kadaloev. According to his information on August 6, 2007 in the evening at about 18:00, or maybe lately (the exact time was not identified, because he did not look at the watch) he observed the flight of the aircraft over the "Kvemo Zakhari" Mountain 1-2 km in the West. The velocity of the aircraft was slightly higher than of usual commercial aircraft. The voice of the aircraft was clearly sounded in the gorge. It was a reason that Kodalaev and other representatives of the local community left buildings. The aircraft flew from the North-East Mountain (speed 1214) and in the direction of South-East to the settled areas of Khvemo Zakhara and Khvemo Tsolda, situated in 3 km in the North-West of Khvemo Zakhara. It was impossible to identify the belonging of the aircraft. During the flight over one of the mountains situated in South-east of the settled area the aircraft produced a loud sound like an explosion. It was seen that the object has separated from the aircraft followed by the smoke-line. After the few minutes the smoke-line was not enlarged. The separated objective disappeared from the line of view.

After 5 minutes the aircraft appeared again over the mountains from the east side of the settled territory. But at this time it was flying from the South-West in the direction of the North-East higher than the aircraft, which flew in the opposite direction 5-7 minutes ago. After that the Monitoring Group visited Alania, "Tsinagori" observing point of the Peacekeeping Forces of the Republic of North Ossetia. After the conversation with duty officer it was found out that on August 6, 2007 from 18:35 till 18:40 the officers were observing the flight of the unknown aircraft in 1,5 - 2 km height from the North -East Mountain (Height 1081.0). The direction of the flinging apparatus was a settled area situated

in the South –West. The second aircraft appeared on the North-West side of “Tsinagori”, from the South-West to the North East, flying higher than the previous one which flew in the opposite direction five minutes ago. After 15-20 minutes from the aircraft’s flight a flying voice of the helicopter was being heard during three minutes, but nobody had seen it. The flight of other flying apparatus was not identified during the above-mentioned period of time.

At 19:00 the monitoring group arrived to its HQ.

The Military Observers:

Russian Federation – LTC. V. Nikulin

Georgia – LTC. K. Stepnadze

Republic of North Ossetia- Alania – Major S. Pukhaev

OSCE Monitoring Officer - LTC. F. Khalaz

## Appendix C: Report of First International Group of Experts

Report from the International Group of Experts investigating the possible violations of Georgian airspace and the recovered missile near Tsitelubani, Georgia, 6 August 2007

The International Group of Experts (IGE) investigating the possible violations of Georgian airspace and the recovered missile near Tsitelubani, Georgia, 6 August 2007, has developed this report. The report has been agreed upon by the IGE participants of all four nations (Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, USA)

### Background

On 6 August 2007, Georgian authorities reported three violations of their airspace. During the last violation, it was reported that the violating aircraft launched a missile that impacted in a field near Tsitelubani, Georgia.

On 7 August 2007, a Joint Monitoring Team (JMT) consisting of military observers representing the Russian Federation, the Republic of North Ossetia Alania and Georgia together with an officer of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mission conducted interviews to verify the information given by Georgian officials. The group visited the missile impact site and two observation posts in the area to interview eye witnesses. The group released a report ("The Report of the Joint Monitoring Group"). Later the OSCE released a report based on the monitoring ("Spot Report: Tsitelubani missile incident").

Georgia called for an independent international investigation and four countries responded by sending eight technical and operational experts to form the International Group of Experts (IGE). The countries were Latvia (1), Lithuania (2), Sweden (2) and the USA (3).

## **The Work**

The IOE worked from 12 to 14 August 2007. The IGE reviewed the JMT report, the OSCE report and the radar information. On 13 August, the IOE visited the missile impact site and the surveillance radar in the vicinity of Gori. The IOE inspected the debris of the missile at the Ministry of Interior. The IGE also visited the Georgian Air Force (GAF) Air Base to inspect the GAF's Su-25 aircraft. Finally, the IGE visited the Joint Forces Command to review recorded radar information of the events.

## **Findings**

Based on the facts found by the IGE and the JMT and OSCE reports, the IGE has made the following findings:

- An unidentified aircraft flew from Russian airspace (close to the city of Stepansminda) into Georgian airspace and back again into Russian airspace three times. Every pass was conducted by a single aircraft. The first pass into Georgian airspace lasted less than a minute. The final two passes into Georgian airspace lasted significantly longer and the unidentified aircraft went deeper into Georgian airspace. These two passes took place at approximately 14.13 to 14.24 and 14.31 to 14.42 on 6 August 2007 (all times are GMT). During the last pass into Georgian airspace, the aircraft penetrated as far south as approximately N 42° 04', E 44° 15'.
- A missile impacted in a field close to the village of Tsitelubani at N 42° 02' 12.25", E 44° 15' 32.40". The warhead did not explode and the missile had burn marks on the rocket motor nozzle. The IGE identified the missile as a Russian designed Kh-58 (AS-II KILTER) anti-radiation missile.
- Several eye witnesses saw an aircraft in the area of the impact around 14.30-15.00 GMT. Some witnesses say they saw an object leaving an aircraft with a trail of smoke. Radar information of the last pass into Georgian airspace (around 14.36) indicates that an object separated from the unidentified aircraft.
- The IGE was unable to identify aircraft type or origin.

- The Georgian Air Force (GAF) does not possess aircraft equipped with or able to launch Kh-58 missiles. The GAF does not operate aircraft able to fly the profile flown by the unidentified aircraft.
- The IGE has not been able to verify statements concerning a second impact.
- The IGE has not been able to verify statements concerning a MANP AD being fired at the unidentified aircraft.

Tbilisi, Georgia, 14 August 2007

## **Appendix D: Press Release of Russian Group of Experts**

### **Ministry Of Foreign Affairs Of The Russian Federation Information And Press Department**

#### **Press Release**

Press Conference by Group of Russian Experts on Investigation of Air Incident That Occurred near Tsitelubani, Georgia, on August 6, 2007, Russian Embassy, Tbilisi, August 17, 2007

**Vyacheslav Kovalenko:** Hello. I welcome you to the Russian Federation Embassy. Today we're holding a press conference on the results of the work of a Russian expert group that stayed here for two days in connection with the air incident which occurred on August 6 on the territory of Georgia.

I want to introduce the members of the Russian expert group to you. It is led by Lieutenant General Igor Ivanovich Khvorov, Air Force Chief of Staff and First Deputy Commander, and consists of Major General Sergey Kuzmich Nuzhin, Air Force Chief Navigator; Colonel Pavel Nikolayevich Akulenok, Air Force Chief Engineer for Air Armament; and Colonel Yuri Anatolyevich Rudenya, Chief of the Defense Ministry's Directorate for State Regulation and Use of Airspace. From the Russian MFA we have Valery Fyodorovich Kenyakin, Special Envoy for Relations with the CIS Countries, and Alexei Viktorovich Pavlovsky, Deputy Director of the 4th CIS Department responsible for Georgia issues.

As you see, the makeup of the delegation is very competent; it comprises representatives of a very high level, considerable knowledge and high qualification on all issues related to air armament and aircraft. Now, allow me to give the floor to Lieutenant General Igor Ivanovich Khvorov.

**I. I. Khvorov:** Dear comrades, ladies and gentlemen. Very serious accusations have been brought against Russia over the August 6 air incident. The leadership of the Russian Air Force and Defense Ministry took them with heightened attention. Specialists were chosen to impartially and objectively assess all that's related to this incident and offer their judgement. Since it was a question of a violation of the state border, the group has an expert in this field included. It also comprises a specialist on weapon use issues – a general who still performs flights and operates missiles, the most knowledgeable and skilled Russian expert in this field. A member of the group is also an engineer who directly prepares missiles and onboard complexes for work. Thus, we picked up specialists who can truly assess everything that's related to the incident in a competent and professional way.

In principle, the picture was clear to us even in Moscow. But we decided to investigate things objectively and impartially, relying upon facts alone and without succumbing to emotions. It was with that mindset, with that work algorithm that we arrived in Georgia. We have presented a part of the materials to the Georgian side. They are the control results; the other part – we simply didn't have time today. When we reported our official findings to the Georgian side, they did not consider it necessary to continue discussion with us. So, I am ready to present to you the document which we offered to our Georgian colleagues. The first document is a daily report on the situation in all sectors, embracing our Far East and Northwest, and the western sector. And the North Caucasus sector among others. This is the zone of responsibility of the air force formation responsible for the security of the air borders of Russia. Here's an official report: the final message from military unit No. \_\_\_\_, Rostov-on-Don command post. "There were 90 air objects in the formation's zone of responsibility on August 6, 2007, in accordance with the combined plan of overflights and the combined plan of army, air force and air defense flights. These aircraft made no flights in the direction of the Russian-Georgian border." I confirm this with our plans. We did not plan any cross-border flight requests; we neither planned nor arranged any such flights. But the border was crossed and this is recorded by our means of active monitoring. Those were declared aircraft and theirs were scheduled flights. The Georgian side carried them out, and upon crossing the border they were handed over to us and we operated these planes. There was no unauthorized border crossing. There was no



beefing up of our air defense, and no air defense fighter planes went into the air – the usual things we always do if the state border is crossed. The air defense forces on duty were operating in the ordinary mode. We presented to the Georgian side the civil air traffic control data received from Rostov-on-Don. In addition, there are the data of the air defense forces, which have their own radar facilities, more powerful than the civil ones. Their data coincide; there was no violation. The Georgian side had presented a document to us alleging violations of the state border. We had studied it very carefully and we had many questions as a result. When we visited the place where the missile fell and studied the results of monitoring, we concluded that the plane had maneuvered. Based on practice, a plane never flies along a straight line, especially so a warplane. It had maneuvered, and it was an intricate maneuver at that. It had performed a turn. We saw nothing of this on the radar data transmitted to us. The first doubt we had was the very distinctly constructed flight track of the plane on the materials presented by the Georgian side. Having thus concluded, we could have finished our work, but our intention was to help the Georgian side in establishing all the facts related to weapon use. We deemed that there was no violation of the border by a Russian plane, and who did fly and use the weapon was an internal matter of Georgia.

Still, we went to the scene of the incident. What we saw does not fit into the logical chain of the development of events suggested by the Georgian side. Firstly, the flight's nature and direction. It does not coincide with the way the parts lay scattered on the ground. Secondly, either specially or because of ignorance all the evidences which could have helped us sort things out were destroyed, including the missile number. We were just asked to believe the photographs and oral testimonies. It is not understandable why the missile fuse did not operate. It was also destroyed. In addition, I report that two-thirds of the parts of the missile and casing are lacking, although they say they collected everything conscientiously. How to square these facts with the use of the weapon? Moreover back in Moscow, as we saw TV footage from the scene and learned that the missile had not exploded, we witnessed a gross violation of safety rules. There were about twenty people at the crater. Can you imagine what would have happened if the 150 kilograms of TNT had exploded? They even brought the president and subjected him to danger.

To sum up, I want to say that, in the course of our investigation, we relied upon facts only. Our conclusion is as follows: there was no violation of the Russian-Georgian border by a Russian plane from the Russian side. I conveyed that conclusion to our Georgian colleagues.

When the missile could have appeared. During Soviet times several air force units were based on Georgian soil. Two of them directly had this type of weapon in service. At these airfields there were depots with air armament, storing more than a hundred of this kind of missiles. In addition, a central depot sat on Georgian soil. There were cargoes and ammunition stored in it, including it's hard to say – more than a thousand such missiles All of this was there until December 1992. Thus, the missile could have been from Soviet stockpiles, or have got into Georgia some other way. As a result of the fact that the missile was exploded and its number destroyed, to establish its origin does not appear possible.

**S. K. Nuzhin:** The document presented by the Georgian side of the processing of the data of the aircraft that crossed the state border of Russia and Georgia is questioned by us in the sense that it does not record any of the other aircraft that were at the moment on the territory of the Russian Federation and on the territory of Georgia, although planes were there within the limits of the permitted zone. This corresponds to the objective monitoring that we had carried out. As to the use of air attack weapons: the pit inspected by us, which was of interest, had been filled up before our arrival. So, you can't draw any specific conclusions. Nevertheless, some parameters can be defined. Using GPS, we took the coordinates of the pit and determined that given the position of the missile that was presented to us in the photographs its course must be 330 degrees of the northwestern direction. This runs counter to the data that were earlier given in the press. Further, in the case of the operation of the missile in ordinary mode, the missile could not have wholly sunken into the earth undamaged, as this supposedly happened according to the assertion of the Georgian side. The plastic base of a nose cone gets destroyed upon touching the earth. Only heavy fragments of the structure could have been extracted from the crater – parts of the engine or elements of the warhead. As to the launch of the missile from a Su-24 aircraft: the missile is so designed that, in principle, there can be no failures. Consequently, if the missile engine was operating, it should have

exploded. There were no explosions, as you know. Therefore, we believe and question the possibility that this missile was launched at all.

**I. A. Rudenya:** I want to once again draw your attention to the fact that, according to data of military aviation sources of the Russian Federation, the Georgian side's theory of a violation of the airspace from the Russian side is unsupportable. We presented the data of active monitoring on parity terms of the same lengths of time. At the same time I want to say that we have not yet established the authenticity of the materials of monitoring by the Georgian side. The reason: when we asked the Georgian side for information about the type of the supposedly attacked radar station and its coordinates, in order to clearly outline the zone of operation of this station and to ascertain the conditions of a possible detection by this station of the hypothetical object, we were refused. We will continue work on the materials presented to us, but we emphasize once again that, according to our data, there was no violation by the Russian side of the state border of Georgia.

**P. N. Akulenok:** The Georgian side has declared that an X-58 missile was launched. Let me specify at once that this "air to radar" missile operates only against radar stations. Upon arriving in Georgia, we immediately asked to be given the characteristics of the Georgian radar station against which a missile had supposedly been launched, in order to compare the possibility of a coincidence of the frequencies on which the radar station and the missile operate. This missile operates in a definite range of frequencies. The leadership of Georgia refused to give us this information. When we arrived at the scene, we discovered that the place where the missile had fallen was covered with earth and leveled off. Thus, we were unable to determine the depth of the crater and its location. But as we studied the photographs submitted by the Georgian side we took notice of the fact that there is no outlining in all the pictures of the crater. It turns out that the Georgian side on the 6th, in order to start work, exploded the upper part of the missile using a TNT charge of 800 grams, which information it does not deny. So, even to speak of what position the missile was in and from where it could have flown in is already becoming unrealistic. After the blast of 800 grams of TNT the position of the missile could have changed. But this is not enough. When we are being told that they can provide full information about the missile, including the year it was made, and offer the photographs to look at – we, having studied the location of the missile and its fragments, drew

the conclusion that 2/3 of the missile are missing. And most importantly, the central section, where the wings, engine and warhead are housed and where the missile numbers are written, is not there. To our question where the central part was after all, the Georgian side declared that it had destroyed it. That is, it was destroyed on the same day the missile was retrieved. It is not understandable why that haste.

The Georgian side asked if that was indeed an X-58 missile. I officially declare that individual fragments of the missile could have belonged to an X-58 missile. They are the fourth section of the missile and two missile vanes of the four, which the Georgian side presented to us. The remaining two – it is unknown whether they have them. Also presented were some short fragments. There is nothing more to support that this is an X-58U missile. After inspecting the fourth section of the missile, I asked but how that section had been separated from the main section of the engine. To which the Georgian side began saying that the separation could have occurred from the blast. But upon closer study of the seam it is clearly and distinctly visible that the section was cut off using mechanisms for cutting metals and did not separate due to the blast. That is this section had earlier, very long ago been separated from an X-58 missile. The more detailed study of this cut showed the presence of much corrosion and rust, which on the high-alloy steels of which these missile parts are made do not arise at once. Too little time had passed. So, it can be concluded that this block is not from the missile which they present. It is a long-lain, old block. A second nuance. The missile body which they had taken out of the crater was destroyed. Just imagine, the main fragment, on which the number of the missile, its year of manufacture and the number of the warhead are inscribed, is destroyed, there is nothing to present. A third point. One of the photographs of the Georgian side shows a fragment of a device the inscription on which is executed in a foreign language. According to the Georgian side's statement, the missile was made in 1991-1992. But, under the legislation of the USSR and the Russian Federation, mounting foreign, imported units on Defense Ministry air attack weapons is prohibited. That is, this block could in no way have appeared either on a Soviet or on a Russian missile. It can thus be concluded that the missile which was taken out of the ground and the one from which the fourth section was presented to us are not one and the same thing.

We also asked the Georgian side where were the remaining missile vanes; they showed us small fragments. But when we wanted to know from what material the vanes were made, we got no answer. For reference: as this is a high-speed missile, its vanes are made from a titanium alloy. The material that was presented to us as the vanes is not titanium unmistakably. To our question whether it was possible to remove some carbon from the fourth control section of the missile and in Moscow to carry out a spectral analysis and ascertain when this carbon formed in time, the Georgian side's answer was "no".

**V. F. Kenaykin:** The work of the Russian experts in Georgia has shown that the Georgian version of the incident has fallen apart. To us the invalidity of the assertion about an imaginary involvement of Russia in the incident was clear from the very beginning. It seems the Georgian enthusiasm has also dampened and is now giving off only dull flares. The situation is clearing up, and so we can close the books on this investigation. We can close the books decidedly on Russia's imaginary involvement in the incident. At the same time, we expressed our readiness to continue joint work towards identifying the forces which are not fully controlled by the central leadership and are capable of planning and carrying out this kind of provocation. But our offer was turned down. Also bewildering is the position of the so called independent group of experts that visited the place. One has the impression that that was not a case of expert work done, but one of political work and far from independent. They issued a politicized statement not predicated on any facts. They used the one-sided Georgian information. If it had been an independent group, then it should have shown interest in contacts with the Russian expert group. Yet the group, according to our information, is in Tbilisi, but did not want to get in touch with us. The question arises, to what extent one can regard this group as independent after this. We close the books on this so far, but if the Georgian side accepts our offer of cooperation, we will proceed further.

## **Appendix E: Report of Second International Group of Experts**

Distributed at the request of Estonia

August 22, 2007

### **Second Independent Inter-governmental Expert Group (IIEG-2)**

**Report investigating possible violations of Georgian airspace and the recovered missile near Tsitelubani, Georgia, 6 August 2007.**

This report results from investigations undertaken by a group of experts from Estonia, Poland and United Kingdom between 18 and 19 August 2007 of the missile incident near Tsitelubani, Georgia.

### **The Expert Group**

#### *Estonia*

Brigadier General Vello LOEMAA – Former Su-24 (24M) Pilot – Estonian MoD

Lt. Märt MÄGI – Radar Expert – Estonian MoD

#### *Poland*

Major Andrzej WITAK – Su-22 pilot – Air Force Command

Capt. Przemysław PULKA – Weapons Engineer – Air Force Academy

#### *United Kingdom*

Mr Kim BAKER – Missile Systems Expert – UK MoD

## **Executive Summary**

- The Group agrees with the findings of the IGE report dated 14 Aug 07 and further information will be presented in this report.
- Georgian airspace was violated three times on 6 Aug 07 from by aircraft flying to from Russian airspace.
- The last two passes were towards the Georgian radar near Gori.
- The missile was launched towards the Gori radar site at a range of approximately 10 km from the radar site.
- If the target was the radar site, the missile was launched at near minimum range.
- Immediately after missile launch the radar crew acted defensively and using combat procedures turned the radar transmitter off.
- The missile impacted on Georgian territory about 5 km short of the radar site without exploding.
- The missile was a Russian built Kh-58U anti-radiation, air to surface missile.
- Examination of Georgian aircraft proved no Georgian capability to operate this missile.

## **Reports Received**

This Group read the following reports of previous investigations of the incident.

1. OSCE Spot Report 'Tsitelubani missile incident' dated 8 Aug 07
2. Report of the Joint Monitoring Group
3. 'Special Investigating Commission Report on the incident near village Tsitelubani on 6 Aug 2007'
4. 'Report from the International Group of Experts (IGE) investigating the possible violations of Georgian airspace and the recovered missile near Tsitelubani Georgia 6 Aug 2007' dated 14 August 2007

## **Scope of IIEG-2 investigation**

The IIEG-2 visited the missile impact and radar sites, the Georgian Maranuli air force base, the Interior Ministry (missile debris examination) and the Georgian Central Command Post (radar plots). In addition, the Group combined their expertise to postulate a likely scenario of the events surrounding the missile launch. At Annex A are a number of comments resulting from previous work which this Group has addressed.

## **Finding of IIEG-2 Site visits**

### *Visit to Georgian Air Force Base at Maranuli*

During the inspection of the Georgian Air Force (AF) Base at Maranuli the Group checked all 10 of the Su-25 aircraft in the Georgian Air Force inventory. The Group's aircrew experts confirmed that these aircraft are not equipped to carry or operate Kh -58 missile.

The Georgian AF has three versions of Su-25. The first two versions (single and two-seat trainer) have cockpit elements easily recognizable by the Group's Sukhoy experts. They confirmed that the cockpits are not equipped with the special displays necessary to operate Kh-58. The third version of Su-25 (the most modern) has a completely modernised cockpit with flat display panels and a head up display. After a thorough check of this aircraft's Storage Management System as well as the check of a technical documentation of the modernisation program, conducted by Elbit from Israel, it was determined that this modernized version of Su-25 is not capable of carrying or operating the Kh-58 either.

Moreover, the weapons storage facilities at the airbase were checked and no evidence of either a Kh-58 missile or additional necessary equipment such as the Kh-58 launch pylon (AKU-58) or target acquisition pod (WJUGA) was found.

### *Missile impact site visit*

On 18 August the Group visited the missile impact site close to the village of Tsitelubani and found small items of missile debris such as circuit boards and pieces of radome. We found that the original impact crater had been cleared and filled in and the recovered missile parts had been taken to the Interior Ministry in Tbilisi some time before. We



confirmed the location of the impact site, using GPS, to be the same as reported in the 14 Aug 2007 IGE report.

#### *Radar Site Visit*

On 18 August the Group visited the 36D6-M radar (NATO name TIN SHIELD) positioned near Gori. Interviews were conducted with the radar site commander and the radar operator who was on duty at the time of the incident. It was found that due to maintenance activity the radar was only fully operational after the aircraft turned away following a second pass; the aircraft made three passes in total. The aircraft turned back towards the radar and was tracked by the radar and also visually observed by one of the radar crew members. The aircraft launched a missile, seen by the crew member and briefly radar-tracked before the radar ceased transmitting. It is estimated that the radar transmissions ceased very soon after missile launch. Radar shut down is a standard procedure when under a missile attack. A smoke trail from the missile was reported by the observer. The missile impact site is not visible from the radar position. As the aircraft turned to leave the area, the radar was turned on again and the aircraft departure tracked.

Interviews with the Radar Commander confirmed that this particular version of 36D6-M radar does not have any simulation capability. That feature, which is software driven, was not included in the purchase of the radar system.

#### *Radar analysis*

Georgia military personnel presented to the Group recordings of the air picture in Georgian Central Command Post and also recording at the military 3D radar site from the time of the incident. From these recordings it is clearly seen that the aircraft involved in the incident were tracked by Georgian Civil Air Traffic Control 2D primary radar and they were also tracked by Georgian military 3D primary radar. Furthermore the recording confirmed that the aircraft did not have its on-board transponder activated, as there were no responses to the interrogations from secondary radars in range. This means that the secondary radars were unable to detect and therefore track the aircraft.

The Georgian air picture was also forwarded to Russia. The Russians, who claimed no involvement in this incident, provided their own air picture. This air picture from the time of the incident and in the same

region only comprised secondary radar information. Thus the information supplied by the Russians cannot support their claim.

*Examination of missile debris at Georgian Interior ministry, Tbilisi*

We visited the Ministry of the Interior on Sunday 19 August and inspected the debris from the missile impact site. The key findings were

1. The motor was fully burnt indicating that the missile was fired or launched. If the missile was jettisoned (released from the aircraft in an emergency situation) the motor would not have fired.
2. The markings on the warhead casing, photographed prior to destruction, indicated a manufacturing date of October 1992. Thus the missile was built for the Russian Federation rather than the Soviet forces.
3. Similar dates were seen on other components along with markings indicating the missile was a 'U' variant (Kh-58U).
4. The missile radome was black with a metallic tip at the end.
5. The recovered 'western components' were two Swiss made DC/DC power converters not processing chips.
6. A section of the missile antenna (guidance seeker) was recovered for further analysis to determine the operational frequency range of the receiver in the missile seeker.
7. A video of the warhead destruction process, conducted away from the impact site, was presented to the Group.

In conclusion, the recovered parts support the claim that the missile fired was an indigenous variant (labelled Kh-58U) of the Kh-58 (AS-11, NATO name KILTER) air to surface, anti-radiation missile and this variant of the missile is not offered for export.

*Possible MANPAD firing*

A representative of the Ministry of the Interior reported that eye witnesses had observed the launch of a MANPAD (shoulder launched, surface to air missile) prior to the launch of the air to surface missile from the aircraft. The MANPAD was fired from the right of the aircraft as it approached the radar site. The Group examined the performance of the typical MANPADs and from the likely firing position along with the

aircraft speed and altitude considered it highly unlikely that the MANPAD would hit the aircraft.

### **Possible Scenario**

The Group combined its expertise to come up with a possible scenario to explain the facts.

The incident started with incursions into Georgian airspace by aircraft flying towards the radar site in Gori. The central command post was aware as several radars (including civilian) were fed into their air picture. Part of the first penetration was seen by the 36D radar but the information was not sent to the central command post in Tbilisi. The radar was only able to partly track the incursion as it was undergoing maintenance.

On the third incursion the aircraft turned towards the radar and the radar tracked the aircraft all the way until the missile launch, when the radar stopped transmitting. Just prior to launch the aircraft weapons system passed information on the position of the radar site to the missile on the pylon. At launch the missile dropped away and after approximately 50 m separation the motor ignited. We were very fortunate that the radar crew member saw the missile launch and the smoke trail. Due to the mountainous terrain in this region the aircraft was only a little higher in elevation than the radar site, perhaps 1-1.5 km. Upon detection of launch the crew quickly stopped the radar transmitting. At this point the aircraft was estimated to be about 10 km from the radar. Thus just after launch the missile was denied a valid radar target to home onto. The Kh-58 had to use the previously estimated position of the radar site derived from the aircraft sensors. It is likely that due to the short range, the missile flew a direct approach to where it believed the radar site was. A miss of 3-5 km is not unusual in these circumstances because of the old estimation of the target position and no opportunity for the seeker to refine that position. The missile requires several operations to arm the warhead correctly and a combination of short range and similar elevation (aircraft and radar site heights) may have interrupted the normal arming sequence.

It was reported that a MANPAD was fired as the aircraft was flying towards the radar during the third incursion. It is unclear if the missile caused any damage to the aircraft or the Kh-58 missile it was carrying. It

is also uncertain if the aircrew reacted to the MANPAD launch or what affect the MANPAD had on the launch of their air to surface missile.

After launch of the Kh-58 the aircraft turned back towards Russian airspace and was tracked on radar into Russian airspace.

### **Recommendations**

To fully answer all the questions regarding the operation of the air to surface missile (Kh-58) it is recommended that help from the Russian manufacturer is sought.

Further investigations are needed with information from pilots who currently fly the Su-24 and operate the Kh-58 missile.

It would be useful to get the radar tracks from neighbouring countries to add to the Georgian and Russian information.

The Group felt that more information about the incident could be determined if Russia supplied the military (primary) radar tracks in addition to the secondary tracks already received.

To prevent future incidents it is recommended that greater control and transparency is achieved over the border region air space.

IIEG-2

20 August 2007

### **Annex A: IIEG-2 responses to issues raised by earlier reports and investigations**

*Was there any Russia involvement?*

The aircraft came from and returned to Russian airspace. The missile was of Russian manufacture. Within the region Russia is the only feasible nation capable of using the weapon correctly.

*Could the attack have been staged by the Georgians?*

The Group examined the all Georgian aircraft at Marnauli and found they were incapable of launching the Kh-58.

*Is the IIEG-2 representative?*

The latest expert group (IIEG-2) comprises representatives from Poland, Estonia and the United Kingdom.

*Why were the Georgians in a hurry to destroy the evidence?*

Only the warhead was destroyed for safety reasons as it contained explosive (150 kg of TNT) and the condition of the fuse was unknown. All the recovered debris is still on display at the Interior Ministry. The Georgians made a video of the missile recovery operation and of the warhead removal and destruction. The serial numbers of parts recovered have been seen at the Interior Ministry and indicate a manufacturing date of the warhead of Oct 1992.

*How many aircraft violated Georgian airspace and what type?*

The radar tracks from both civil and military radars indicate at least one, maybe two, aircraft were involved. A single aircraft was visually observed by a crew member from the radar site at Gori, just prior to missile launch. The crew member was interviewed by the Group and shown pictures of aircraft for him to identify the most likely aircraft. It was clear that the crew member did not possess any aircraft knowledge. He thought the Su-24 was closest match to the aircraft he saw, discounting pictures of the Su-25, MiG-25 and MiG-27.

*Why was the Georgian radar targeted at such close range?*

The Group does not claim that the radar was deliberately attacked. The Group found that a single missile was launched approximately 10 km from the radar site and towards it. The missile was fired, proved by the fully burnt out motor section. The reason why the missile missed the target and the self destruct failed is uncertain at this time but probably related to the lack of radar transmissions when the missile was launched and the short range. The Group is unaware of a second air to surface missile falling in South Ossetia. There are reports of a single MANPAD firing from the South Ossetia region. Additionally the Georgians stated that they had no anti-aircraft units in the region.

## Appendix F: Commentary of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### Commentary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Regarding Incident in the Zone of the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict

August 7, 2007

As it is known, the Russian side is making vigorous efforts to resume the work of the Joint Control Commission (JCC) on the settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. A few days ago Yuri Popov, the Russian Foreign Ministry's Ambassador at Large and the Russian JCC Co-Chairman, flew out to Georgia. But opponents of normalization have carried out a new provocation.

According to David Bakradze, Georgia's Minister for Conflict Resolution and the Georgian Co-Chairman of the JCC, two SU-25 jets "with Russian identification signs" on the evening of August 6 intruded into Georgia's airspace and fired a missile at a Georgian radar station in the area of the town of Gori, which, by the way, did not suffer. The Georgian representative said further that, after "yesterday's incident," holding a JCC meeting was becoming impossible.

Meanwhile, South Ossetian observation posts reported that an unknown plane had indeed intruded at this time into the conflict zone in the mountainous part of South Ossetia from the eastern direction, that is from the Georgian side and made an unaimed missile launch. The missile fell about 5 kilometers from the radar station in the village of Shavshebi. After a maneuver the plane turned around and flew away in the opposite direction. Soon, about 30 minutes later a Georgian helicopter was noticed in the area, which made several circles over the scene.

The leadership of the Russian General Staff categorically denies the fact of any flights of Russian aircraft at that time in the airspace adjacent to the territory of Georgia.

The fact that the Georgian army has SU-25 planes in service (the South Ossetian side has no aircraft at all) allows supposition that certain forces, acting along familiar lines (enough to recall the incident with the March firing in the Kodori valley in Abkhazia), continue to whip up tension around the conflicts in Georgia. As applied to South Ossetia these habits of the opponents of normalization are no surprise: each time when the signs appear of arrival at an agreement under JCC auspices, provocations are organized to prove the ineffectiveness of the previously established negotiation and peacekeeping mechanisms with Russian participation.

We are convinced that the results of an investigation, which we insist must start at once, will reveal the real organizers and participants of these very dangerous games. Ambassador at Large Popov has urgently left Tbilisi for Tskhinvali to familiarize himself with the situation on the ground.

## Appendix G: Statement of the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the OSCE

### Statement of the Permanent Mission of Georgia regarding the Fact of Violation of the Sovereign Georgian Airspace on 6 August 2007

On 6 August 2007, at 18:30 local time, Russian military aircrafts violated Georgian airspace, entered more than 75 kilometres into sovereign Georgian territory and dropped a precision-guided air-to-surface missile near the village of Tsitelubani close to the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia.

A preliminary investigation has revealed that a SU-24M type military aircraft launched the Russian-made Raduga Kh-58 anti-radar tactical guided missile deep into Georgian territory. The aircraft breached Georgian airspace from the territory of the Russian Federation as verified by Georgian Defence Ministry and Civil Aviation radar records. These records include the flight plans, flight times and trajectory of the intruder aircrafts. A joint OSCE/JPKF monitoring team has already confirmed the fact that on 6 August at 18.40-18.45 local time an aircraft flew over the Tskhinvali region from north east to south west, launched a missile and then turned back to the north east. It is highly significant that the August 8, 2007 OSCE Spot Report, concerning the Tsitelubani missile incident which reflects the information acquired by the joint monitoring team, coincides with the above mentioned combined radar data.

The missile, whose NATO classification is AS11 Kilter, has the following specifications: length—4.80m; diameter—0.38m; launch weight—640kg. It was equipped with a 140-kg TNT/RDX warhead.

No casualties took place as the missile failed to explode on impact, nevertheless posing great danger as the impact spot is very close to populated areas and only sixty kilometres away from Tbilisi.

It should be underlined that the Georgian armed forces do not possess SU-24M aircrafts, nor do they possess this model of guided missiles.



On 7 August, the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Georgia was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and was handed a formal note of protest including photographic and radar-based evidence. At the meeting the Georgian side categorically demanded clear and immediate explanations from the Russian side.

The foreign diplomatic corps accredited in Georgia were also invited to the Ministry and given a formal briefing on the incident. After the meeting they paid a site visit to the scene of the missile strike.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Gela Bezhuashvili held conversations with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, and the First Deputy Foreign Minister of Portugal (EU Presidency) Manuel Lobo Antunes as well as with esteemed representatives from other partner countries. Minister Bezhuashvili informed his interlocutors about the violation of the sovereign Georgian airspace and the incontrovertible nature of the evidence amassed to date concerning the incident. The Georgian Foreign Minister stressed that the incident constitutes a threat to the maintenance of international order and the primacy of international law and that adequate reactions from partner states and international organizations is needed in order to prevent this type of dangerous acts in the future.

It should be stressed that so far the Georgian side has not received sound and persuasive response from Russian Federation. We are looking forward for the proper explanations from Russian side about the incident.

Regrettably, acts of gross violation of Georgian airspace and repeated bombings of sovereign Georgian territory are becoming more frequent and represent a dangerous pattern that should be noted. In this context, it is appropriate to again remind the OSCE community of the events of 11 March, 2007, when Upper Abkhazia, Georgia was bombed, again by helicopters intruding into Georgia from the Russian side.

Of note, the events that took place on August 6 do not represent a singular and isolated act. Only one day before the August 6 incident, according to Georgian joint military and civilian radar, SU-24 type military aircraft breached the Georgian-Russian border several times, flying deep into Georgian airspace.

The continuous character of this chain of events leads to the worrisome conclusion that a well-planned military operation might be prepared against Georgia. This may have been aimed to derail the recent positive developments towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia.

These facts indicate the emergence of a clear and present danger to Georgia's internationally recognized sovereignty, and represent cause for serious concerns. The Government of Georgia counts on the OSCE, whose principle focus is to ensure peace and security throughout the European continent and beyond, to express its resolute position on this issue and spare no efforts to prevent a dangerous escalation of events, which would pose a threat to Georgian and wider European security.

Following consultations and coordination with partner countries, the Government of Georgia has invited national governments to designate experts with relevant backgrounds to establish an independent verification Group that will study the facts and supporting evidence surrounding the events that led to the August 6<sup>th</sup> incident. The Government of Georgia invites the EU, OSCE and other international organizations, as well as individual member states to participate in the work of the Group. Number of countries has already expressed their will to send the experts to the Group.

Presently, representatives from the OSCE working jointly with the JPKF are exploring the site where, as some eyewitnesses have stated, a second guided missile was dropped. It is thought that the second missile was dropped on territory controlled by the Tskhinvali regime. We urge all parties concerned to explore thoroughly the site and draw relevant conclusions.

The Government of Georgia reaffirms its readiness to launch immediate bilateral consultations with representatives from the Russian Federation on this as well as other issues and to proceed with an open and constructive dialogue in order to prevent recurrence of such incidents in the future.

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, has expressed serious concern over the incident and called for a thorough investigation into the facts. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office confirmed the OSCE's readiness to co-operate with the investigation.

Georgia stands ready to co-operate with the OSCE within the framework of its mandate on the evaluation of the facts.

We once again urge the OSCE and international community to express their firm position and condemn this act against a sovereign state.

## **Appendix H: Declaration of the EU Presidency**

### **Declaration of the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the missile incident in Georgia**

August 10, 2008

The EU has followed closely the incident involving the crashing of a missile near the village of Tsitelubani in Georgia on August the 6th.

The EU expresses its deep concern and calls upon all parties involved to abstain from any action that could lead to an escalation of the situation. Recalling the principle of respect for the territorial integrity of Georgia, the EU underlines the need for a rapid, thorough and independent investigation in order to clarify and verify all the facts surrounding this incident.

The EU welcomes the statement of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office that the OSCE stands ready to cooperate with the investigation within the framework of its mandate.

## **Appendix I: Talking points by Vitaly Churkin**

### **Talking Points by Vitaly Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, at the press-conference on the air incident in Georgia on August 6, 2007**

21 August 2007

The version advanced by the Georgian side of the air incident on August 6, 2007 in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict looks at least controversial, while conclusions about a “Russian involvement” appear unfounded.

The Georgian version of the August 6 incident began literally to fall apart when a group of experts from the Ministry of Defence of Russia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, comprising leading Russian Air Force experts, were working in Georgia on 16-17 August 2007.

1. Serious doubts exist as to the reliability of the printouts and the digital copy of radar data provided by the Georgian side.

These materials show a clear trace of a “Russian intruder aircraft” crossing the border, but lack a number of other objects, which at that time were in the air space of the region according to the information of Russian objective control (provided to the Georgian experts). Besides, Georgian radars did not reflect manoeuvres of the unidentified aircraft in the vicinity of Tsitelubani village, particularly, the turn it made according to the evidence of the eyewitnesses.

First information regarding a flight of an unidentified aircraft, which dropped some kind of a weapon, was registered by the peacekeepers in the South-Ossetian conflict zone at 6.40 p.m. on August 6, 2007. They reported it at 7 p.m. to Marat Kulakhmetov, a Russian general in command of the Joint Peacekeeping Force (JPKF) in South Ossetia. However, responding to his query, Mamuka Kurashvili, commander of the Georgian battalion within JPKF, informed at 8 p.m., citing the Chief

of General Staff and Commander-in-Chief of the Georgian Air Force, that the Georgian side had no information regarding flights of unidentified aircraft over the country's territory.

In order to eliminate any possibility of tampering with the data using simple computer modelling, the actual reliability of the Georgian radar data can be established with the help of information on the location of the radar that was following the 'intruder'. A request of the Russian experts for this information was denied.

2. The Georgian version of an emergency launch in the vicinity of the Tsitelubani village of a KH-58 missile from a Russian SU-24 aircraft contains a number of major inconsistencies.

Using a GPS navigator, Russian experts took the geographical coordinates of the hole and determined that given the position of the missile shown in images provided by the Georgian side, it was to follow the course of 330 NW. If so, it could not be physically launched or dropped from an aircraft following the course suggested by the Georgian side for the intruder aircraft.

It is known that the charge did not detonate. While the design of the KH-58 missile and the technical procedure of its launch from a SU-24 aircraft, which carries it as a standard weapon, are such that if its engine was started (and that's what happened according to the Georgian side), it just could not fail to detonate. No explosion can only occur in case of an emergency drop when the engine is not started. There is no third option; and Georgian experts had to admit it after a thorough explanation by our experts.

Furthermore, if the missile was operating normally, it could not penetrate the soil at nearly full length without damage, as the Georgian side claims. The plastic cover of the warhead was to have been destroyed on impact against the ground. Only the heavier fragments of the body could remain in the hole, such as engine parts or those of the warhead.

The situation is different if the missile was used in an undue fashion, for example, launched or just dropped from a SU-25 aircraft, which is in service at the Georgian Air Force. Technically it is quite possible after some alteration of the aircraft's weapon hanger system or the missile itself. Notably, during consultations Russian experts heard from one of the Georgian military men that the unidentified aircraft appeared to have

ejected heat flares while manoeuvring. Unlike SU-25 aircraft, SU-24 are not equipped with devices that create decoy targets.

However, it was impossible to check the version related to these facts as Russian experts were not allowed to inspect Georgian SU-25s.

3. What the Georgian side demonstrated to the Russian experts as remaining parts of the unexploded Russia KH-58 missile, is, in fact, a group of separate fragments, of which only three could belong to aerial munitions of this class, and namely section 4 and two rudders out of four. There is nothing else to prove that this was a KH-58 missile. The other fragments belong to different kinds of air weapons, the marking on some of them shows this directly.

Over 2/3 of parts and skin of the alleged missile are missing. The Georgian side gave no explanation why there were no fragments of two rudders out of four. As to the central section with the wings, the engine and the warhead, which carries the missile's serial number and year of manufacture, the Georgian side claims that it was entirely destroyed immediately upon excavation from the ground.

The question arises, what is the reason for such a hasty destruction of this fundamental evidence?

The material of the fragments that were presented by the Georgian side as the remains of the missile's wings have nothing in common with titanium, of which alloys the wings of the high-speed KH-58 are made.

Among the remains of the "missile" there is a small unit with a marking in English. Such a part could not possibly be installed in a Soviet or Russian missile as components produced in foreign countries are banned from being used for them.

Russian experts have established that the preserved section 4 was separated from the central body with the help of a metal sawing device with significant corrosion on the surface of the cut. This makes it obvious that that particular fragment, which is known to be made of heavy-alloyed steel, was separated from the body of the missile not on 6-7 August 2007, but much earlier. Our request to make a spectral analysis of the carbon residue on section 4 to establish when it appeared was not granted by the Georgian side.

Thus, the Georgian assertion that they found a KH-58 missile at the site of the incident does not reflect reality. And the fact that the so-called

“independent international experts” have confirmed this version contradicts the above-mentioned literally glaring facts and raises serious doubts regarding either their expertise or their impartiality.

The question arises how could the separate fragments get to the location to be later “found” by the Georgian side?

Unfortunately, the location where the weapon was allegedly found has been brought to a condition that makes it extremely difficult to establish the truth. For example, the Georgian side was quick to fill in and level the hole, while examination of its edges could have given important data to understand what really happened.

As it was said earlier, the Georgian side very quickly destroyed the only part of the missile that carried its number and date of manufacture, and now offers only photographs.

It is known that during the Soviet period several air force regiments were based in Georgia. This kind of missile was available in two of them. Warehouses with air weapons were built near those airfields storing over a hundred KH-58 missiles. Besides, in the territory of Georgia there was a central warehouse with about a thousand of such missiles among other weapons. All this equipment remained in Georgia until December 1992. Thus the missile could come from the Soviet arsenal or find its way to Georgia through a different channel. It is hardly possible, however, to track reliably this channel due to actions of the Georgian side.

Having analysed all the information given above, it seems logical to draw a conclusion that the KH-58 launch in the vicinity of the Tselubani village did not occur the way the Georgian side is trying to portray it. Fragments of various air weapons were taken into that region and placed in such a way as to simulate dropping that missile.

Doesn't this explain the riddle of a truly incomprehensible carelessness during visits of Georgian officials, including President Mikheil Saakashvili, who in front of video cameras looked into the hole, which was supposed to contain at least several dozens of kilos of TNT.

On the whole, information and facts gathered by the Russian experts during their work in Georgia on 16-17 August 2007 and the behaviour of our Georgian colleagues make it possible to state with full confidence that the incident of August 6 was a deliberate provocation organised and



carried out by those in Georgia who are interested in aggravating the situation.

## Appendix J: Statement of Georgian UN Representative

Statement of H.E. Irakli Alasania, Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations, at the press briefing on the violation of Georgian airspace and bombardment of the territory of Georgia on August 6, 2007.

August 22, 2007

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I appreciate your time, as well as the careful attention you are paying to a matter that is of the utmost importance to Georgia.

You are familiar; I am sure, with what transpired in broad daylight August 6: At least one Russian aircraft violated Georgian airspace three times, the last time reaching within 40 miles of our capital, Tbilisi, and dropping a bomb on the village of Tsitelubani.

Since August 6, Georgia has acted in a restrained and responsible manner. Our government has been guided by the need to maintain stability in the region. And we are doing everything possible to allow the international community to impartially assess the facts of the incident. Experts from seven countries now have confirmed the details of the incident as initially presented by the government of Georgia. I would like to use the chance express our gratitude for their prompt reaction and efforts.

I would like to outline for you the developments of the past two weeks and the measures Georgia is undertaking in light of this gross violation of international law that aimed to destabilize the region of the world.

First, I would like to recall a few of the basic facts: At 18:31 on August 6<sup>th</sup>, an SU-24M aircraft entered Georgian airspace, flying northeast to southwest, heading toward the southeastern corner of the South Ossetia Conflict Zone. The intruding aircraft was tracked by two radars; Georgian military radar that are NATO standard equipment, and civil

air navigation radars that are ICAO approved. Georgia already has published radar-generated maps showing the aircraft trajectory.

After this incident, my government extended an invitation to all countries to participate in an independent evaluation of the data collected during and after the incident. An International Group of Experts, led by Sweden, was established on August 10 to independently verify and evaluate the data that had been gathered. This first wave of experts was designated by Latvia, Lithuania, the United States, and Sweden—the countries that responded most promptly to our call for an independent international evaluation.

In order to ensure that the report of this independent expert group remained impartial, Georgia did not take part. However, my government cooperated in full with the independent expert group, providing its members with all the materials and other information they requested.

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, the government of Sweden released the report of this International Group of Experts (IGE), which confirmed violation of Georgian airspace from Russian Federation and the accuracy of all the data and evidence that had been gathered by the government of Georgia.

Yesterday, a second Independent Inter-governmental Expert Group (IEG-2) completed its work and officially delivered to our Ministry of Foreign Affairs its "Report investigating possible violations of Georgian airspace and the recovered missile near Tselubani, Georgia, 6 August 2007." This group was comprised of experts delegated by the United Kingdom, Estonia, and Poland. Its report confirmed the findings of the first independent group of experts, and concluded:

- Georgian airspace was violated three times on 6 Aug 07 by aircraft flying to and from Russian airspace.
- The last two passes were towards the Georgian radar near Gori.
- The missile was launched towards the Gori radar site at a range of approximately 10 km from the radar site.
- Immediately after missile launch the radar crew acted defensively and using combat procedures that turned the radar transmitter off.
- The missile impacted on Georgian territory about 5 km short of the radar site without exploding.

- The missile was a Russian built Kh-58U anti-radiation, air-to-surface missile.
- Examination of Georgian aircraft proved no Georgian capability to operate this missile.

The conclusions to be drawn from these two reports by independent international experts are incontrovertible: At least one foreign aircraft violated Georgian airspace and penetrated within 40 miles of our capital; this aircraft entered Georgia from Russian airspace; this aircraft fired a precision-guided missile at Georgian radar.

In our efforts to act with the utmost and transparency, and to shed the most possible light on the incident, my government initiated direct bilateral consultations with the Russian Federation. Unfortunately, during these bilateral consultations, the Russian side did not demonstrate any real will for cooperation.

In fact, quite to the contrary, the Russian side even attempted to deny that an aircraft entered Georgia from Russian airspace—a fact that now has been confirmed by two radar systems, numerous eyewitness accounts, reports of the OSCE mission, representatives of the Joint Peacekeeping Force, and two independent Inter-governmental Groups of Experts.

Given the Russian refusal to acknowledge even the most basic facts surrounding the incident, Georgia felt that further consultations with Russia would prove pointless. We wish this were not the case.

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office has sent his special envoy, Ambassador Miomir Zuzul, to further look into the August 6 incident. The ambassador already has held meetings in Georgia, and we hope he will return to Vienna with a clear picture of the events that took place on August 6.

It is now incumbent upon the entire international community to muster all its resolve and ensure that such an incident does not happen again. Preventative diplomacy must come to the fore. We have to take an absolutely resolute and non-negotiable stance in the face of efforts to use military force to destabilize a democratic state, and to attempt to influence its domestic and foreign policy. We cannot hide from the fact that this was the intent of the August 6 incident.

In closing, I would like to elaborate on what was said yesterday in this very room.

The markings on the warhead casing, photographed prior to destruction, indicated a manufacturing date of October 1992. Thus the missile was built for the forces of the Russian Federation rather than for Soviet forces. Therefore, the Russian position that during Soviet times this missile was kept in an airbase on Georgian territory is absolutely groundless.

Georgian military personnel presented to the Independent Intergovernmental Expert Group recordings of the air picture in the Georgian Central Command Post and also recording from the military 3D radar site from the time of the incident. From these recordings it can be clearly seen that the aircraft involved in the incident was tracked by Georgian Civil Air Traffic Control 2D primary radar and that they were also tracked by Georgian military 3D primary radar. Furthermore, the recording confirmed that the aircraft did not have its on-board transponder activated, as there were no responses to the interrogations from secondary radars in range.

This means that the secondary radars were unable to detect and therefore track the aircraft. The Georgian air picture was also forwarded to Russia. The Russian side, which claimed no involvement in this incident, provided its own air picture. This air picture from the time of the incident and in the same region only comprised secondary radar information. Thus the information supplied by the Russian side cannot support its claim.

I would like to underline that Georgia is acting—and will continue to act—as any responsible country should. My government waited for more than 14 hours before bringing this incident to the attention of the international community, and we did so only after the Russian side claimed that no Russian aircraft had been involved in the incident. We gave chance to Russia to resolve this matter in a neighborly and collegial manner.

By contrast to all of our efforts to act with restraint, Russian diplomats have been continually threatening Georgia. For example, high official Amb. Keniakin said if Georgia will follow balanced policy towards Russia everything is going to be fine, if not, such facts are not excluded in the future.

What was the real intent behind this unprovoked foreign military incursion into Georgian airspace? The conclusions that can be drawn are that it was an attempt to:

- Intimidate Georgia and assess Georgian military readiness.
- Demonstrate to the international community who is the major player in the Region and at the same time test how far the international community will go to defend the young Georgian democracy.
- Send a warning message to former Soviet republics and to signal strong support for separatist regimes.

The history of Russian accusations of Georgia bombing its own territory is as long as it is absurd. It started in 1993, when the Russian air force openly backed separatists and bombed Georgian civilians. The pilot of the Su-27 fighter-bomber downed by Georgian fighters on March 19, 1993, was a major in the Russian air force. Let me recall how cynically the ex-Russian Defense Minister announced at the time that Georgians camouflaged their own aircraft with Russian military symbols to use them against Georgian forces.

And the two latest Russian bombing raids—the one on August 6 and another that occurred on March 11 in Upper Abkhazia—were in close proximity to conflict zones.

As I said only few months before, in March 2007 the Upper Abkhazia (Kodori gorge) was attacked by helicopters. Evidently, this act was not properly addressed and evaluated by the international community, thus establishing a breeding ground for the latest act of aggression against Georgia.

A few moments prior to this press briefing I was informed that on 21 August 2007, at 18:46-18:49, the Georgian anti-aircraft defense system tracked twice the violation of the Georgian state border and incursion into Georgian airspace from the Russian Federation, in the vicinity of Omarishara village (Upper Abkhazia), in the north-west direction. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia transmitted a Note of protest to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation demanding immediate and clear explanations on the abovementioned fact.

In conclusion, I would like to once again underscore that two independent groups of international experts representing seven countries

have confirmed the incontrovertible evidence of Russian involvement in the August 6 violation of Georgian airspace and the bombing of my country's territory.

Russia, meanwhile, has been unable to provide any evidence that in any way contradicts the conclusions of the independent international experts. Russia's only defense has been to cast doubt—without any basis whatsoever—on the competence and impartiality of the experts. The reason why the Russian Federation opposes any international involvement or deliberations on this matter, including discussions in the Security Council, is clear: It is simply trying to suppress the truth about what happened on August 6.

Georgia requests that the international community use all the means at its disposal to get to the bottom of this matter and prevent the repetition of any similar acts of aggression in future. Such actions constitute a threat to the international order, to peace and security, by undermining fundamental democratic values and endangering the primacy of international law. This act of aggression was an attempt to halt the development of democracy and the spread of western democratic values—not only in Georgia but throughout the broader region.

Such tactics have been used in the past, and the international community has shown it will not tolerate them; we must not bend now.

Georgia seeks to build a friendly relationship with the Russian Federation, one based on mutual respect and understanding. But recent developments leave us in serious doubt as to whether the Russian Federation seeks such a relationship. If the Russian Federation wishes to recover its credibility, then it must act and behave responsibly.

Nevertheless, we express our readiness to cooperate with Russian side and hope that they will shift to the track of contractive cooperation. We are continuing our work with OSCE, the European Union and other international organizations. To bring clarity into this incident is a principal matter for us not because we want to force someone into a corner but just for prevention reasons, in order to avoid recurrence of such acts of aggression in the future.

## **Appendix K: Visit Of PR CiO Žužul to Georgia and Moscow, 22-24 August 2007**

Distributed at the Request of the Spanish Chairmanship

To all Delegations of OSCE participating States, Partners for Co-operation, Secretariat, Institutions and Field Missions -

30 August 2007

### **1. Appointment of PR CiO on the Missile Incident**

On 16 August 2007, the Spanish OSCE Chairman-in-Office (CiO) appointed Dr. Miomir Žužul, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, to be his Personal Representative (PR CiO) in a mission to Georgia and consultations in Russia on the missile incident of 6 August 2007. The PR CiO, together with the Chargé d'Affaires of the Spanish Permanent Mission to the OSCE, Mr. Arturo Pérez Martinez, visited Georgia on 20 and 21 August and Moscow on 22-24 August 2007.

### **2. Discussions in Tbilisi, 20-21 August 2007**

In Georgia, the PR CiO Žužul met with Prime Minister Zurab Noghaideli, Foreign Minister Gela Bezhuashvili, Interior Minister Ivane Merabishvili, Deputy Defence Minister Batu Kutelia, Deputy State Minister on Conflict Resolution Issues Dimitri Manjavidze. The PR CiO also met with a group of experts from Poland, UK, and Estonia, with the Russian Ambassador to Georgia Viacheslav Kovalenko, and with other Ambassadors of OSCE participating States to Georgia. The PR CiO visited the impact site of the missile.

In Georgia the PR CiO Žužul was presented the results of investigations undertaken by (a) Georgian Defence and Interior Ministries, (b) a first group of international experts (US, Lithuania, Latvia, Sweden), (c) a group of Russian experts, and (d) a second group of international experts (UK, Poland, Estonia). All experts, except the ones from Russian Federation, confirmed that Georgian airspace was violated from the Russian Federation and that Georgian Army is not equipped with the types of plane and missile used.



The experts of the second international group concluded that the missile had been fired and targeted the Georgian radar station near South Ossetia, which it missed after a crew member of the station had seen the missile and switched off the station. As a result, the missile was no longer guided by the frequency of the radar station and lost its way. They could not explain why the missile did not explode.

The conclusion of the Russian experts, presented to the PR CiO by the Russian Ambassador to Georgia, was that the evidences provided by Georgia were fabricated. Among other findings, the Russian experts assessed that the debris recovered on the impact site originated from different types of missiles, that some fragments had been cut mechanically and not as a result of the impact, and that others were attacked by a corrosion far ahead of the date of 6 August 2007.

Georgian interlocutors do not understand fully the motives behind the incident. They mentioned the hypothesis of a military exercise by the Russian Federation aimed at testing their capacity to localize and neutralize radar stations, but did not rule out other possible scenarios.

The Russian Ambassador to Georgia expressed the view that the incident was a provocation aimed at obstructing the normalization of the bilateral Georgian-Russian relations.

Georgian interlocutors stressed that the international response to the incident would be as important as to either prevent or encourage a repetition of such acts in the future and not only in Georgia. They underlined the need to keep the highest possible level of attention on the incident and called for working out preventive diplomacy and measures.

Regarding the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, Georgian Prime Minister confirmed his intention to give an update in an OSCE PC address scheduled at the end of October 2007, especially regarding progress in the elaboration of a status for South Ossetia within Georgia. He also informed about a visit to Moscow by Georgian State Minister on Conflict Resolution Issues David Bakradze scheduled at the end of August 2007.

### 3. Discussions in Moscow, 22-24 August 2007

In connection with his trip to Georgia, 20-22 August 2007, the Personal Representative of the CiO on the Missile Incident of 6 August 2007 Dr. Miomir Žužul visited Moscow on 22-24 August 2007.

In Moscow PR CiO Žužul was received on 23 August by Mr. Dmitri Tarabrin, Deputy Director of the IV Department of the CIS countries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID) of Russian Federation.

The meeting on 23 August took place upon the decision by deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Karasin who was in charge in the absence of Minister Lavrov. The discussions took place in an open and good atmosphere.

PRCiO Žužul explained the purpose of his mission to Moscow which took place immediately after his trip to Georgia (20-22 August). The purpose of the trip was to identify ways how the OSCE could assist Georgia and Russia in settling the issue of the 6 of August missile incident. The purpose of the OSCE is to try and help participating States when and if political disputes arise. PRCiO emphasized the fact that his role was not to make judgements about what had happened on 6 of August, nor to judge who was right and who was wrong, but to merely listen to all sides, including the experts who had visited the site of the missile, and to help in addressing the issue in a proper framework. The CiO had decided to react, since in this case there was a serious reason to do so. The Chairmanship had first approached the parties concerned. The OSCE Mission to Georgia had also verified the incident on 6 August, so it was only natural for the OSCE to react.

Before coming to Moscow the PRCiO had familiarized himself with: (a) the report of the first group of international experts visiting Georgia on 12-14 August, (b) the conclusions of the Russian experts on the missile incident visiting Georgia 16-17 August, (c) listened to Georgian authorities, (d) talked to the second group of international experts visiting Georgia on 18-19 August and (e) met with the Russian Ambassador to Georgia on 20 August.

The second group of international experts visiting Georgia on 18-19 August had expressed their willingness to meet with their Russian counterparts. Such a meeting had not taken place. OSCE stands ready to facilitate organizing such a meeting, should all parties agree. Experts

could establish the facts of the incident after which diplomats would draw appropriate conclusions and make possible suggestions.

PRCiO emphasized the importance of calming down the current tense situation in Russian-Georgian relations, which does not serve the interests of neither side.

Deputy Director Tarabrin explained that the Russian side was unhappy with the current situation in which Russia is accused for being an aggressor. Russia considers this a serious accusation and unacceptable from the very beginning of the incident. Deputy Director Tarabrin reiterated the Russian position that the Russian Federation has nothing to do with the incident of 6 August. Russia had asked for a meeting with the Georgian side and sent a group of 26 experts led by the Chief of Staff of Russian Air Forces General Lieutenant Khvorov to Georgia on 16-17 August. The group comprised of military specialists, two representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including Mr. Kenyaikin, the Special Envoy of the Russian Foreign Ministry to the regional conflicts.

Russia does not consider the findings of the two groups of international experts that had visited the site of the missile incident in Georgia (on 12-14, respectively 18-19 August) reliable. The participants of both groups were chosen unilaterally by Georgia and they had no mandate from any international organization. Therefore the Russian Federation can not consider their findings objective.

Russia was willing to clarify the issue through direct contacts between Russian and Georgian experts and had therefore sent a half military - half diplomatic mission to study the incident and to verify all details in full cooperation with the Georgian side. The findings of the Russian experts were described as very reliable, even though the group had not been shown all necessary details.

Russia sees the August 6 incident as a deliberate provocation orchestrated by forces wanting to deteriorate Russian-Georgian relations.

PRCiO Žužul agreed that the problems need to be solved in mutual understanding and all needs to be done in order to avoid new misunderstandings. This is exactly where the role of the OSCE remains essential.

In order to facilitate a dialogue between the two sides concerned, the PR CiO works on concrete proposals for the consideration of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

## **Appendix L: Fabricated Document of Western Experts' Opinions on Georgia Circulated in Tbilisi and Brussels**

The text below is a copy of the phony document circulated in early October purporting to summarize an event supposedly held at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute in October 2007. No such event was held and, to the knowledge of the authors of this report, the attributions to the individuals involved are false.

### **Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program**

October 2007

The chairman of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Frederick Starr says that they in the US administration expected the new Georgian leaders to revise their priorities and to stop their attempts to forcibly resolve the Abkhazian and South Ossetian problems. However, this did not happen, and the Americans had to look for ways to restrain them: they offered economic and military assistance and alternatives for keeping their rating high.

Director of the same institute Svante Cornell says that those saying that the Georgian leaders are the US' puppets are wrong "although, at the initial stage, Saakashvili and his comrades would be quite happy at such a role." He says that there are serious contradictions between the interests of the US and Georgia and other countries of the region.

The leading US expert on democracy in Eastern Europe, the regional director for Eurasia of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs Nelson Ledsky does not believe the reported ratings of President Saakashvili and his party in Georgia: they contain lots of inaccuracies and often disregard current situations. Saakashvili and his

party still enjoy high popularity and the President is commended for his position of principle on a number of crucial problems. At the same time, their ratings have substantially dropped due to two-three factors: the bellicose rhetoric of the Defense Minister and the President; the lack of progress in the economic and social spheres; the growing intolerance towards the opposition. Ledsky believes that it is time for the Georgian leaders to reconsider their methods and to abandon their war plans. The period of “childhood diseases” in Georgia is lingering but the local leaders refuse to notice that.

Expert of the NDI Peter Komives is of a different opinion. He says that many of the democratic and social achievements in Georgia are illusionary and skin-deep: they are not based on deep reforms and new political methods. The present Georgian authorities continue the practice of political authoritarianism and are idolizing Saakashvili. They are not just mistaken in the sphere of human and ethnic rights – in fact, they are intolerant. Komives says that these problems are like delayed action bombs.

According to President of the Nixon Center Dimitri Simes, Georgia thinks that by cooperating with the US it has staked a lot and has the right to claim any political support it wants. Washington cannot regard this as a normal regime of relations with such a small country.

The regional director for Eastern Europe of the Brookings Institution Fiona Hill says that the US’ security policy is a more or less harmonious system of international relations. Georgia has misconstrued the US’s attitude and has to understand that close partnership with the US is not just receiving support and assistance but also sacrificing certain interests.

The senior research fellow at the New America Foundation Anatol Lieven says that Saakashvili has realized that he has very little room for comfortable relax and simply has to be adventurous. Each year he gives military performances and each time he hopes that the reaction of the international community will be different.

The OSCE representative to the US Congress Michael Ox says that the problems of the region require the involvement of different US departments and each of them shows different interests when, at some point, the Georgian authorities come out with some irresponsible decisions. The Georgians visit Washington and try to hear only profitable views. As a result, they remember only compliments and

forget about other views. Now that not only the leaders but the whole country is hanging in the air, they have simply no time for considering their decisions and can decide anything. "Democratic Georgia in the near future" is a utopia; however, very much money has been invested in the oil pipeline, so, the ordinary post-Soviet swamp will be further advertised as a model of democracy.

Director of the Russia/Eurasian Program at the CSIS Celeste Wallander says that the US' policy on the Caucasian states has a fundamentally Russian orientation. Turkey and Iran also have a place in this policy, but almost all internationally important events in the South Caucasus are linked with Russia. The US' policy in the region is just part of the US' policy on Russia. So, Georgia can hardly act in South Ossetia or Abkhazia irrelatively to the US' interests in Russia. At the same time, Wallander doubts that there might be any specific agreements on these events. Perhaps, there were some consultations with US political circles, for example, in the Pentagon or Senate committees, where you can always find people who would openly advise the Georgian leaders to use force in solving their problems.

Director of the Wilson Center John Sitalides says that for the US Georgia is not a potential NATO member but just a convenient base for carrying out a more effective policy in the Black Sea-Caucasian region. The Georgian problems have proved much harder for the US than they might seem at first glance. They were shocked by the political style of the Georgia leaders and the methods they have recently used in their relations with Russia. Sitalides does not agree with the opinion that Georgia's confrontation with Russia was coordinated with the US – the facts prove otherwise. At the same time, he admits that this confrontation might be the result of the US' wrong policy in Georgia: they have assumed responsibility for the South Caucasus, but have failed, so far, to work out any rules for building their relations in the region. The present situation in Georgian-Russian relations is the result of the incompetence of the US State Department, who has failed to coordinate the initiatives of different departments and to explain to some Senators what the US' interests in the South Caucasus are exactly about.

Most of the experts cannot clearly describe the attitude of the US administration towards the ruling regime in Georgia. Svante Cornell believes that the US administration regards Saakashvili and his team as a

temporary regime but he cannot say why. At the same time, Cornell believes that the US will not escalate political processes in Georgia and will not be very critical of the local regime. They in the US State Department believe that this regime still has political resources and can fulfill certain tasks. At the same time, they are said to be considering a possible alternative to it. They in the Pentagon seem to have no problems with the regime: they are successfully cooperating with Tbilisi on the tasks they have got in the region. They in the Senate can hardly be taken seriously: they all support Georgia but none of them actually knows what is going on there or can offer any effective way to improve this situation.

Director for Eurasia of the Nixon Center Paul Sanders is of a bit different opinion. He is an advocate of the “real politics” – which is quite characteristic of the Nixon Center. He says that the change of regime in Georgia is not an urgent politico-technological task for the US. They are certainly considering it – but just as a concept. In fact, the US administration has changed its hierarchy of factors that may require the change of regime in Georgia. To the traditional factors – no democracy and legal guarantees, high corruption, some social problems – they have added a much more substantial factor – unreasonably radical plans to regain control over the break-away republics. In other words, the Americans will have to look for such ruling regime subjects that will not hurry to resolve this problem at the expense of the regional security system.

Director of Russian Studies at the American Enterprise Institute Leon Aron appears with quite an interesting opinion. He says that Russia was certainly informed of Georgia’s plans and has made the best of the following events. If we consider this situation in terms of democracy and legality, Russia has lost the game, but this game is not about democracy or legality but about force and geo-political advantages. Russia is speaking with the West, US, EU and NATO in the “real politik” language – American “real politik” in Russian style. The US has understood that it has lost the game and France and Germany has got the upper hand. The game had other – undeclared – goals but the Georgian leaders “have overplayed their hand.”

British experts have different views. Director for Turkey and the Caucasus of the Center for European Reform (London) Mark Leonard says that the events in South Ossetia (2004) and Kodori (2006) were



exclusively the initiative of the Georgian authorities and the US, Europe and NATO were simply forced to react. The European community, especially Continental Europe, was shocked by the Georgian-Russian conflict. The UK took it much more calmly. The present Georgian authorities are absolutely inefficient in their relations with Russia — and with the West, likewise. Georgia has got enough from the West and cannot ask for more. It should either show ability to resolve its conflict with Russia or should explain to the US and the EU how it is going to build its foreign policy in the future. The West will not interfere in Georgia's internal affairs as far as the problem of power is concerned but it must watch and consult Georgia on its major social and political problems.

Expert of the Royal Military Academy Christopher Donnelly says that the incompetence of western politicians and the lack of systematic knowledge of international relations in the Georgian government have put Georgia on the verge of political and economic disaster. The present ruling regime is turning from a team ensuring regional security into a factor of instability. Today, as never before, Georgia needs support — and, first of all, in security. The political situation in the South Caucasus is white-hot. At the same time, this situation does not affect the cardinal interests of Georgia and Russia; that's why just one visit of the US assistant secretary of state to Tbilisi, Brussels and Moscow proved enough for the conflict to be resolved and for the American, European and Russian mass media to stop whipping up tensions and getting focused on this conflict.

Director of the Eastern Europe program at the Center for European Studies (Brussels) Michael Emerson offers quite original version of the events. He says that, despite its bent for discretionary decisions, the Georgian ruling regime is still controlled by the West. Even more, the EU and the US have easily coordinated their efforts to resolve the conflict between Georgia and Russia and to show the Georgian leaders their mistakes. Despite their failed obligations, the Georgian leaders still enjoy high popularity and have real resources for improving administration and economy. The US and the EU have spent much to support Georgia and are not thinking about changing the ruling team.

Emerson says that the key problem of the Georgian leaders is their foreign policy. Georgia has solved no single problem with Russia, so far.

And the West cannot help being concerned. The European community is especially worried as it has got in quite a hard situation. Their forced efforts to support Georgia are losing them points in their relations with Russia. Georgia has become a kind of burden for Europe. The US can afford watching different conflicts breaking out around Russia as it is building its energy policy. However, the US too has got in a fix as the Georgian-Russian conflict has gone beyond the limits of security. The European expert community believes that the Georgian authorities have not enough potential for solving the basic problems of democracy, freedoms, elections, social security and, therefore, are interested in escalating tensions in their foreign policy. In fact, the European community has failed to offer Georgia an economic and social prospect that could divert its attention from the problems of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The attitude of European politicians towards Georgia ranges from delight to disdain, which causes mutual disappointment. Presently, the Europeans are ready to make new efforts to support reforms in Georgia, but if, this time too, they fail to explain to the Georgian authorities the real prospects of the Abkhazian and South Ossetian problems, the situation of the summer-autumn 2006 may recur. Not only the EU but also NATO is quite nervous about the situation. They in the US administration are pretending that they are fully controlling the situation, but they are not. In fact, the Americans were taken aback and have decided to tighten their grip on the Georgian leadership.

US Ambassador to Georgia John Tefft has confessed to some diplomats that they were constantly consulting the Georgians, but the latter decided that the support from the west meant their full independence. Emerson believes that the Georgian-Russian conflict was the result of the US incompetence. As far as he knows, during his Oct 2006 visit to Brussels, US Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried was forced to answer very unpleasant questions in the European Commission and to explain to them why such a situation had emerged in the first place. Fried faced similar questions in NATO, where they were extremely displeased with the events in Georgia. While speaking at a closed meeting in the Center for European Policy Studies (Brussels) Fried explained that the US had to raise mutual confidence in the regions of Eastern Europe.

## Authors

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