

GEORGIA UPDATE

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President Saakashvili met privately with President Obama during the NATO Summit in Lisbon last week. Saakashvili said Obama had expressed support for Georgia’s territorial integrity and for its aspirations to join NATO. “We did not expect to get any concrete timeline at this time but I think President Obama was supportive of our NATO aspirations,” he said. The President also said he told the US President that Georgia supports the US “reset” with Russia. “I told him that we supported it and we hoped that NATO one day would also result in Russia being more civilized towards its neighbors.”

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

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QUOTES OF THE WEEK

“We take today the unilateral initiative to declare that Georgia will never use force to restore its territorial integrity and sovereignty, that it will only resort to peaceful means in its quest for de-occupation and reunification.”

“I am, ladies and gentlemen, ready for a deep and comprehensive dialogue with my Russian counterpart.”

“We all want—I personally want—Russia as a partner and not as an enemy.”

“Georgian citizens have stopped thinking of their country as a post-Soviet state. They see it, judge it, and often criticize it as a European democracy.”

—President Saakashvili speaking Nov. 23 at the plenary session of the European Parliament

“Two years after that conflict started, it is time for Russia to abide by the ceasefire agreement and withdraw its troops from Georgian territory.”

—British PM David Cameron

“At the 2008 Bucharest Summit we agreed that Georgia will become a member of NATO and we reaffirm all elements of that decision, as well as subsequent decisions.”

—NATO Summit Communiqué

UPCOMING MILESTONES

- Nov. 28-3: Parliament Speaker Bakradze in Paris
- Dec. 1-2: OSCE summit in Astana
- Dec. 7-8: Parliament Speaker Bakradze in Slovakia
- Dec. 16: FM Vashadze visits Croatia
- Dec. 16: Next round of Geneva talks

TOP STORIES



Georgia “Will Never Use Force” to Restore Territorial Integrity, President Declares at European Parliament

President Mikheil Saakashvili made a unilateral pledge Tuesday that Georgia will “never use force” to reclaim the Russian-occupied Georgian territories of Abkhazia and S. Ossetia. Addressing the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg—by special invitation on the 7th anniversary of the Rose Revolution—the President also declared that he was “ready for a deep and comprehensive dialogue” with Russia.

“In order to prove that Georgia is definitively committed to a peaceful resolution of its conflict with the Russian Federation, we take today the unilateral initiative to declare that Georgia will never use force to restore its territorial integrity and sovereignty, that it will only resort to peaceful means in its quest for de-occupation and reunification,” the President said. Georgia will deliver the relevant legally binding letters to the UN Secretary General and the OSCE, among others.

EU monitors have found Georgia in full, consistent compliance with the ceasefire agreement that ended the 2008 war. Georgia always has understood the ceasefire clearly prohibits the use of force, the President noted, but the pledge adds another layer of commitment. The President said Georgia “will only retain the right to self-defense in the case of new attacks and invasion of the 80% of the Georgian territory that remains under control of the Georgian government.”

In calling on Russia to resolve the conflict via dialogue, the President said: “We all want—I personally want—Russia as a partner and not as an enemy.” He also invoked regional peace. “It is time to say that we must never again see people expelled from their homes or deported on the basis of their nationality, their faith, or their origin,” he said. “I am ready to work with the Russian leadership so that this does not happen ever again, so that the consequences of war are reversed and the conditions for peace are established.”

The President underscored the vital role the EU can play in bringing about peace. He said they should clearly acknowledge the reality on the ground. “This is why we are asking that the Russian military buildup within the international borders of Georgia be qualified as an illegal occupation of a sovereign territory,” the President said. “Many European nations, as well as the United States, already have done so.” He added: “Equally, the brutal campaigns that have expelled hundreds of thousands of Georgian citizens from the occupied territories should be qualified as illegal acts of ethnic cleansing.”

[AFP: Georgia eyes 'peaceful solution' to Russia dispute](#)

Georgia to Send Instructors to Afghanistan, Joining

Troops Georgia, which has a 950-strong combat unit in Afghanistan, has offered to send 20 instructors to help train Afghan forces. The proposal was made by the President in Lisbon, according to Defense Minister Akhalaia, who added: “We offered to send Georgian military instructors who will provide training for the Afghan military in various professions; it might be infantry component, or aviation.”

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Georgia Offers 20 Instructors for Afghan Army](#)

President Saakashvili Meets President Obama, Who Commends Reforms, Thanks Georgians for Sacrifices

President Saakashvili of Georgia and US President Obama held an official meeting Friday on the sidelines of the NATO Summit in Lisbon. “I told him that we supported it and we hoped that NATO one day would also result in Russia being more civilized towards its neighbors,”

President Saakashvili told Agence France Presse, referring to the US reset with Russia, after his first one-on-one meeting with Obama. “On the other hand, the way to resolve it is through peaceful dialogue. This peaceful dialogue can also be part of the dialogue that Russia has with NATO and the United States. There is no other option for us. We don't want to turn our country into a battlefield.”

Saakashvili said Obama had expressed support for Georgia's territorial integrity and for its aspirations to join NATO. “We did not expect to get any concrete timeline at this time but I think President Obama was supportive of our NATO aspirations,” he said.

The leaders focused on the strong and growing partnership between their two countries, based on their shared democratic values and strategic goals. They discussed regional security, stressing the importance of dialogue and cooperation. Both leaders underscored that they look forward to deepening their cooperation under the auspices of the US-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, which covers four areas: democratic reform; defense and security cooperation; economic cooperation; and people-to-people contacts.

Obama praised Georgia's contributions to NATO's mission in Afghanistan, where almost 1,000 Georgian troops serve, and expressed his sincere appreciation for the sacrifices made by the Georgian people. He also commended Georgia's reforms and urged the Georgian leadership to continue them. President Obama said the United States supports Georgia's Euro-Atlantic and NATO aspirations. President Saakashvili thanked President Obama and his Administration for their steadfast support of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and for affirming Georgia's path toward eventual NATO membership.

The President also met with the prime ministers of the UK, Canada, Australia, the Czech Republic, and the Netherlands, as well as the presidents of Turkey, Poland, and Romania.

[WHITE HOUSE: Read-out of Meeting with President Saakashvili](#)
[CIVIL GEORGIA: Saakashvili 'Satisfied' with Talks with Obama](#)

Georgia “Will Become a Member of NATO,” Declares NATO As Lisbon Summit Concludes

The Government welcomed the clear, unambiguous commitment made by NATO leaders to Georgia's path towards membership during their Summit in Lisbon this past weekend. “At the 2008 Bucharest Summit we agreed that Georgia will become a member of NATO and we reaffirm all elements of that decision, as well as subsequent decisions,” NATO leaders said.

NATO, while pursuing improved ties with Russia, refused to compromise on Georgia. “We reiterate our continued support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders,” the Alliance said in the Summit communiqué. This message also was delivered unambiguously by United States President Barack Obama during his meeting with President Obama. NATO also issued a clarion call for Russia to finally implement the 2008 ceasefire agreements. “On this firm basis, we urge Russia to meet its commitments with respect to Georgia, as mediated by the European Union on 12 August and 8 September 2008,” the Communiqué states, adding. “We continue to call on Russia to reverse its recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia as independent states.”

[AFP: Georgia backs NATO engagement with Russia](#)

Strong Pace of Economic Growth Continues, Aims for 6.3% in 2010

Georgia's economy may grow as much as 6.3 percent in 2010, exceeding the government's forecast of a 5.5 percent to 6 percent expansion, the central bank chief said. Georgia's economy expanded 12.3 percent in 2007. Growth slowed to 2.3 percent in 2008 because of the war. The economy contracted 3.9 percent last year to \$10.7 billion.

[BLOOMBERG: Georgian Economy May Expand 6.3% in 2010](#)

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

CNN: President Saakashvili, exclusive interview

In an exclusive interview with CNN's Chris Lawrence, President Saakashvili said he hoped Russia's deepening partnership with NATO would cause Moscow to take a "more civilized approach" in dealing with its neighbors. Russian troops have occupied Georgian territory since its invasion in 2008. Saakashvili said he hoped the alliance's involvement would prompt Russia to withdraw its troops from Georgia. "Once Russia becomes less paranoid, more cooperative, more self-confident in a nicer way—because I think lots of things have emerged from their almost paranoid sense of insecurity—hopefully, the small neighbors of Russia hopefully will feel themselves more safe," said Saakashvili, who met with Obama on Friday.

<http://edition.cnn.com>

LA CROIX: Georgia, an issue at the heart of Russian-Western relations

It is, however, necessary to insist on the gap between the Western-Russian "grand story" about the success of the "reset" with Moscow, and entire chunks of reality on the other. In Georgia, the Medvedev-Sarkozy agreements of August-September 2008 are far from being implemented. Annexed de facto, the separatist regions have been transformed into advanced outposts that reinforce the Russian Empire in the South Caucasus, thereby endangering free access to the Caspian Sea's resources. One can already sense the consequences in Ukraine, where bad habits are menacing to take over.

www.la-croix.com

FINANCIAL TIMES: Georgia holds four over dirty bomb fears

Georgia arrested four people last week and seized radioactive material it said could be used to make a dirty bomb. Shota Utiashvili, a spokesman for Georgia's interior ministry, said police had seized Cesium-137 in Tbilisi and arrested four people suspected of trying to sell the material. Utiashvili said Cesium-137, which was used to make telecommunications batteries in Georgia during the Soviet era, was "widely available" in the country and frequently seized by police from thieves.

www.ft.com

THE AUSTRALIAN: Georgia uses "strategic patience"

Two years after its war with Russia, Georgia is still defying the odds and the Russians. Deputy FM Nalbandov says that in trying to restore sovereignty over S. Ossetia and Abkhazia, Georgia is using the concept of "strategic patience." In the short term, Georgia wants international monitoring and peacekeeping forces from the OSCE and the UN in the occupied territories, but Russia continues to reject this. When you have an enemy as large as Russia not just on your doorstep but inside your house, then you need all the friends you can get, however far-flung.

www.theaustralian.com.au

THE ECONOMIST: Georgia's economy

Georgian officials are used to praise for their management of the economy: the World Bank's "Ease of Doing Business" league table puts Georgia in 12th place. The way in which Georgia turned its economy around since 2004 has been remarkable. But consolidating that position will require much more work, including improving protection of property rights and of minority shareholders' interests, and boosting the higher education and training of the Georgian workforce.

www.economist.com

**MICHELLE OBAMA THANKS GEORGIAN SOLDIERS**

US First Lady Michelle Obama earlier this month met wounded Georgian soldier Moris Sabashvili when she visited the Ramstein military base in Germany. She thanked Georgian soldiers for their contribution to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

<http://www.newsaz.com>

RADIO FREE EUROPE: Russia's Silicon Valley dreams may threaten cybersecurity

Some believe the Kremlin's motives for attracting cooperation from hundreds of foreign technology companies aren't entirely benign. Among those who would benefit from the "huge honey pot" for the Russian tech industry would be the security services who monitor every byte of Internet traffic. "If you're wiring a facility," says one analyst, "the best time to do it is while it's being built." Silicon Valley companies could be indirectly helping a state many believe is leading the development of the newest global security threat: cyberwarfare.

www.rferl.org

GLOBAL POST: Mafia-like protection coming to end in Georgia?

Last month, Georgia put its new criminal code into action, complete with jury trials. Since establishing its re-independence in 1991 after 70 years of Soviet rule, the Georgian parliament has been actively working to mend its citizens' broken trust in its legal system. The slow decline of the Soviet-era "vory v zhone" system throughout Georgian society and the passage of new legislation reveals both a strengthening of government and a growing trust in the government's ability to protect its citizens.

www.globalpost.com

HUFFINGTON POST: (Republic of) Georgia Fashion Week

As Georgia is exploring its fashion identity, the simmer of young Georgian designers has come to a boil. Their visions bubbled up and out with the nation's second Fashion Week, held last month in the Tbilisi. It was a whirlwind of Georgian feasts, tours of the beautiful and textured city, museums with historic icons covered in jewels, parties galore, and show after show of hungry young designers who wanted to impress with their visions of what Georgian fashion could be.

www.huffingtonpost.com

DEUTSCHLANDRADIO: A good wine from Georgia

The Tsinandali Winery in Georgia, built by the famous Georgian poet Prince Alexander Chavchavadze, represents the country's long tradition of winegrowing. The Georgian wine industry is adapting and overcoming challenges due to Russia's 2006 trade embargo. In response to the embargo, Georgian wine-growers started a quality initiative in order to be able to compete with Spanish or French wine on the international market.

www.dradio.de