# The Russian-Georgian armed Conflict

### **Background information**



http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/cis\_europe\_pol\_2003.jpg

### Background information: breakaway regions

Abkhazia • 216 ,000

Ajaria

• 376,000



South Ossetia • 70,000 Background information: history of conflict

- Late 18<sup>th</sup> century Ossetia was incorporated into the Russian Empire and divided into northern and southern regions
- 1918-1921 Georgian independence from Russian Empire
- 1921 Georgia was annexed by the Soviet Union
- 1922 South Ossetia was established as an autonomous region of the Soviet Republic of Georgia

#### Background information: history of conflict

- 1989-1990 South Ossetia tried to gain independence from Georgia
- April 1991 Georgia received independence
- 1991-1992 brutal clashes between South Ossetians and Georgians, 1,000 dead\*
- 1992 Ceasefire agreement brokered by Russia

#### Background information: history of conflict

- 2003 "Rose Revolution" in Georgia
- 2004 fighting broke out in South Ossetia
- 2007 Georgia calls for internationalization of peacekeeping force in the region
- August 2008 Georgia attacks Tskhinvali followed by a Russian counter-offensive

# South Ossetia





- In July 2005, President Saakashvili announced a new peace plan for South Ossetia that offered substantial autonomy and a three-stage settlement, consisting of demilitarization, economic rehabilitation, and a political settlement.
- South Ossetian "president" Eduard Kokoiti rejected the plan.

# South Ossetia

- In March 2007, President Saakashvili proposed another peace plan for South Ossetia that involved creating "transitional" administrative districts throughout the region.
- In July 2007, President Saakashvili decreed the establishment of a commission to work out South Ossetia's "status" as a part of Georgia.
- The JCC finally held a meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia, in October 2007, but the Russian Foreign Ministry claimed that the Georgian emissaries made unacceptable demands in order to deliberately sabotage the results of the meeting. No further meetings were held.

#### Roki Tunnel – Only road passage from Russia to South Ossetia

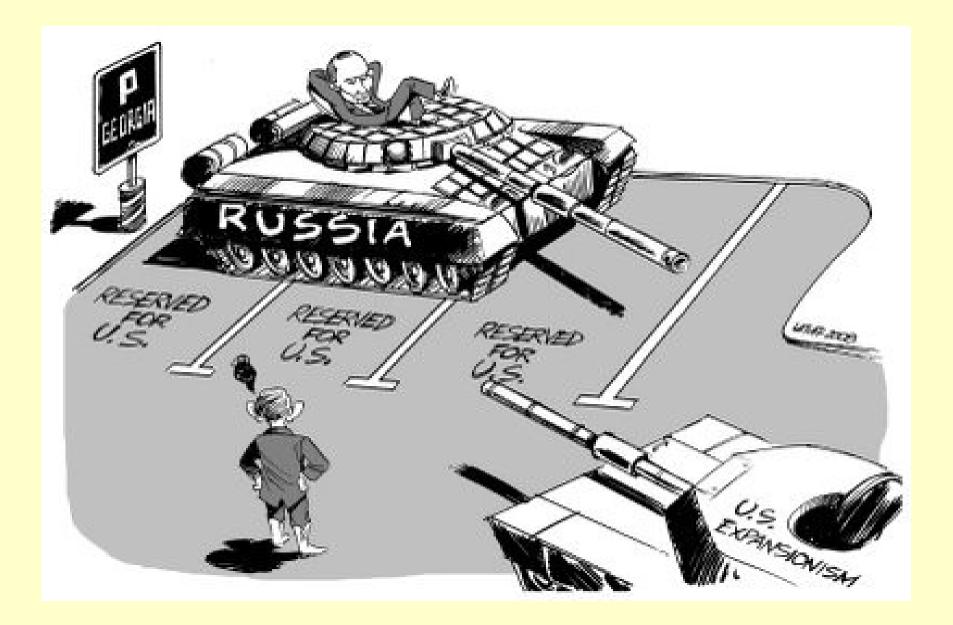


http://graphics8.nytimes.com/images/2008/09/16/world/16georgia\_600.jpg

#### Convoy of Russian soldiers by the Caucasus mountains



http://cache.boston.com/universal/site\_graphics/blogs/bigpicture/georgia\_08\_11/georgia1.jpg



# **Russian forces in Goergia**







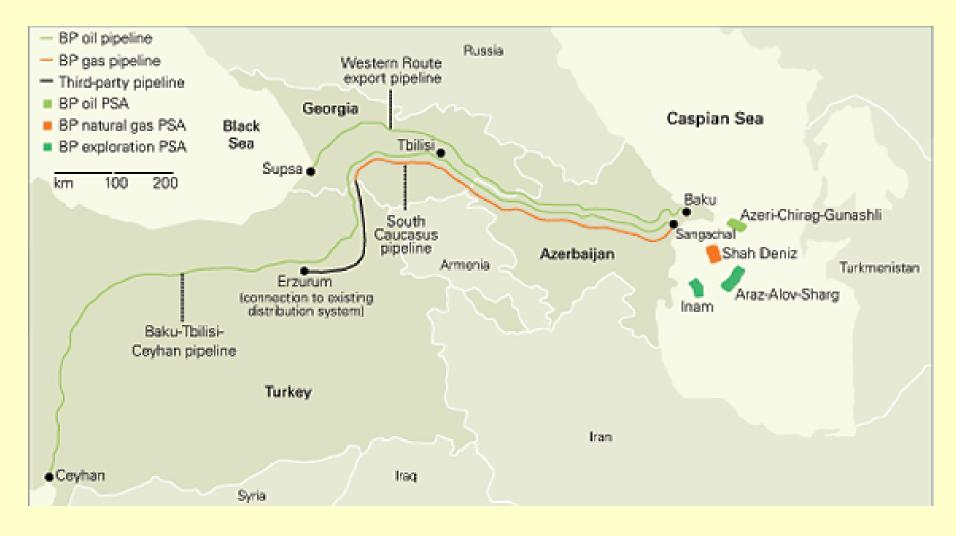
### **Conflict Analysis: Interests**

Stakeholder	Interests
Georgia	Return breakaway regions
	Display that territorial integrity is under threat
	Promote NATO membership
	•Demonstrate Russia's aggressiveness
South Ossetia	Demonstrate violation of human rights
	Show that Georgia is aggressive state
	•Get international recognition of their plight
	• Desire for independence or incorporation into Russian Federation
Russia	•Undermine Georgia's territorial integrity
	•Prevent Georgia from joining NATO
	Send strong message to Ukraine
	Protect its sphere of influence
	•Control of the Caucasus and its energy resources
	•Promote "regime change" in Georgia? West's recognition of
	Kosovo? U.S. Missile Defense Shield?

# **Conflict Analysis: Interests**

Stakeholder	Interests
EU	Human rights protection
	Observance of international law
	Access to energy resources
NATO/US	<ul> <li>Security and stability in the region</li> </ul>
	Observance of international law
	• Energy security
	Commitment to idea of democracy
	•NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP)

#### Oil and Gas pipeline that pass through Georgia



http://www.bp.com/popupimage.do?img\_path=liveassets/bp\_internet/globalbp/STAGING/global\_assets/other\_graphics/graphs/financial/IC\_ump\_azerb aijan\_map\_570xvar.gif &alt\_tag=Diagram of Azeri project comprising four platforms in the Azeri field

### **Conflict Analysis: Actions**

Stakeholder	Actions
Georgia	<ul> <li>Accusing Russia of supporting separatist movements</li> <li>Military attack on Tskhinvali, capital of South Ossetia</li> <li>Accusation of violation of human rights and ethnic cleansing</li> <li>Attack South Ossetian-populated villages in S.O.</li> </ul>
South Ossetia	<ul> <li>Encouraged support from Russia</li> <li>Militias attack and loot Georgian-populated villages in S.O.</li> </ul>
Russia	<ul> <li>Disproportionate counter-offensive attack</li> <li>Invasion of Georgian cities and ports</li> <li>Accusation of violation of human rights and ethnic cleansing</li> <li>Recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states</li> </ul>
EU	<ul> <li>Shuttle diplomacy between Russia and Georgia</li> <li>Signing ceasefire agreement, ambiguity</li> <li>Accusing Russia of disproportionate response</li> <li>Appeal of use of diplomatic means to resolve conflict</li> <li>Suspension of EU-Russia Partnership talks</li> </ul>
NATO/US	<ul> <li>Accusing Russia of disproportionate response</li> <li>Suspension of NATO-Russia Council</li> </ul>

### **Conflict Analysis: Stages**

- 1992-2008 Frozen Conflict (Summer 2004 – Active)
- 2008 Re-activation of Conflict

• 2009 – Conflict Unresolved

#### Conflict Analysis: Consequences

- Deterioration of peace, stability and security in Europe and beyond
- Dramatic shift in Russian-Western relations
- Energy security
- Disregard for and enforcement of international law
- 158,000 displaced people (according to UNHCR)
- Reconstruction and Reconciliation

#### Georgian soldiers in Gori



http://static.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Guardian/Pix/pictures/2008/08/09/gori10a.jpg

### **Conflict Analysis: Concerns**

- How can EU security policy be improved in order to prevent, respond, and resolve regional ethnic conflicts?
- Can Russia be a partner in ensuring peace and security in Europe?
- What is the status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia?
- How to ensure Georgia's territorial integrity?

#### Tskhinvali: the Aftermath



http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/44920000/jpg/\_44920204\_01\_ap.jpg&imgrefurl=http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7559270.stm&usg=\_\_ysJudalH L6N7Bj8K9Np-

gwFy92E=&h=300&w=466&sz=40&hl=en&start=4&sig2=K1A5s04k5Jq31E9eG7G2PA&um=1&tbnid=uBm0Nj3JYMtQLM:&tbnh=82&tbnw=128&ei=vRmLSbKFD4naMLfQodoH&prev=/imag es%3Fq%3Dtskhinvali%2Bcivilian%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-US:official%26sa%3DG

# Six-Point Ceasefire Plan

- 1. Not to resort to force;
- 2. To end hostilities definitively;
- 3. To provide free access for humanitarian aid;
- 4. Georgian military forces will have to withdraw to their usual bases;
- 5. Russian military forces will have to withdraw to the lines held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Pending an international mechanism, Russian peace-keeping forces will implement additional security measures;
- 6. Opening of international talks on the security and stability arrangements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

### Geneva talks

 In the aftermath of the Georgian-Russian war in August 2008, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) called for the establishment of a mediation forum aimed at security and stability in the South Caucasus. The initiative goes back to the "Six-Point Ceasefire Plan" reached by French (and then EU) President Nikolas Sarkozy and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev, which brought to an end themilitary confrontation between Moscow and Tbilisi.

## Geneva talks





### Geneva talks

- Initially Georgia urged the forum to include also the replacement of Russian military forces with international peacekeepers, EU monitoring within the separatist entities (i.e. an extension of EUMM); and the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity.
- By contrast, Russia insisted on modifyingthe mandates of the OSCE and UN missions in the region. The parties failed to reach an agreement and the OSCE as well as the UN were forced to leave.

### Recommendations

 Establish an international peace mediation and monitoring process

Encourage dialogue and reconciliation

• Aid the return of displaced persons

 Reconstruct areas damaged or destroyed by the conflict

### **Challenge for the International Community**

How to establish a mechanism or process to hold Georgia, Russia and South Ossetia accountable for their actions, but without isolating them from the international community in order to prevent such aggressive actions from happening in the future?

# A LITTLE WAR THAT SHOOK THE WORLD



GEORGIA, RUSSIA, AND THE FUTURE OF THE WEST RONALD D. ASMUS

PREFACE BY STROBE TALBOTT

### Consequences



 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4P4nePpB HKc

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