

REMARKS

On the Occasion of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly

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INTRODUCTION

- **Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen...**
- **...It is my pleasure and honor to represent Georgia today at the 59th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.**
- **Let me begin by expressing my deep appreciation to Mr. Julian Hunte for the leadership and vision with which he conducted the last Session, and by congratulating Mr. Jean Ping on the assumption of the Presidency of this Session.**
- **I would also like to take this opportunity to salute the tremendous leadership of the Secretary General, who has worked so hard to make the UN a more responsive and effective body.**
- **The Government of Georgia reaffirms its deep support for the important work carried out around the world by this great institution, and to all who serve it.**
- **The beginning of the New Millennium marks a time of great opportunity for the global community of nations that make up the UN...**
- **...A community whose collective responsibility is to help strengthen those institutions that promote and protect the principles enshrined in the UN Charter...**
- **...So they can more effectively tackle the challenges and issues facing our world today.**
- **And so that together, we might enhance our shared ability to promote peace, alleviate suffering, expand liberty, and advance human development with renewed wisdom and courage.**

- **The belief that we must be able adapt to great change, while remaining faithful to a set of core ideals and values, is one that has special resonance in Georgia today.**
- **For few countries have witnessed so much transformation in the last year – and fewer still have done so with a more clear sense of purpose.**
- **In some respects, Georgia's revolution has made our small nation – willingly or unwillingly, a test case for the modern challenges of democratic transition...**
- **...And perhaps, for a revised formula of international relations in our increasingly inter-connected and complex world.**

PASSING THE FIRST TEST — GEORGIA'S DEMOCRATIC REVIV

- **Nearly a year has passed since our dramatic Rose Revolution graced the covers of newspapers and television broadcasts around the world...**
- **...A Revolution that had at its core one simple demand – the creation of a stable, equitable, and functional democracy.**
- **It gives me great pride Mr. President, to inform you that we have accomplished that demand, in ways that few abroad or at home ever imagined possible.**
- **And I am enormously proud of the Georgian people – whose courage, unity, and steadfast belief in a better future made our Revolution possible.**
- **It is because of the Georgian people that our experiment in democracy is a success – and because of their sacrifice and determination that we have achieved such impressive results today.**
- **In less than one year, we have proven the depth and breadth of our commitment to democracy by successfully holding three sets of elections (Presidential; Parliamentary; and Regional) – judged throughout the international community as free and fair expressions of the public's will.**
- **And we have proven that we can take care of our people...like the teachers of our country who for more than a decade were abandoned by the State.**
- **I am reminded of one woman in particular, in Western Georgia, who just last week received 12 years of back-pay from our government!**

- **Until now, that brave woman's pay was spent on the estates of corrupt officials and government Ministers...**
- **The dedication of this brave woman – who sacrificed for so many years so that the younger generation could simply receive an education – a chance at a better life - is an inspiration for all Georgians.**
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- **And where rules and laws firmly and clearly govern the actions of men.**
- **To make these changes permanent and sustainable, we have raised salaries by 6, 8 and even 10 times for public servants so that incentives are aligned...so that a fair system can flourish...and so that people can serve the State with dignity and honor.**
- **That is why we created a new tax system that clarifies and simplifies both the payment AND administration of taxes – creating the lowest rates in the entire region while eliminating institutional sources of cheating and corruption.**
- **To hesitate or move cautiously at this critical stage would mean turning our backs on the promises we have made – and returning to business as usual in this part of the world...**
- **I believe you cannot hesitate at such moments, if you truly want to build a better future, and forever change the rules of the game.**
- **...But Georgia today is a visibly different State than one year ago, with less games...and new rules...**
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- **And one thing is clear...democracy can and democracy is thriving in our part of the world...**
- **...Because the principles embraced by democratic governance are themselves reflections of Georgia's national identity, and universal desire to be free.**

BUILDING RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE...

- **Part of creating a successful State depends on the ability of its institutions to act maturely and responsibly in the face of shared or joint challenges.**
- **And in this New Millennium, it is clear for all responsible nations that one issue above others unites us in common cause – as we seek to promote lasting peace, security and prosperity.**
- **This is the common war on terrorism.**
- **As a member of the global coalition that seeks to eliminate the threat of terrorism, Georgia has and Georgia will continue to make contributions wherever possible...and wherever necessary.**
- **Our willingness to act responsibly and contribute is on display today in Kosovo – in Afghanistan – and in Iraq...**
- **...All places where we have sent our forces to serve alongside others, in the pursuit of peace and freedom.**
- **For terrorism knows no greater enemy, and no greater force, than the one embodied in a free society.**
- **Today Mr. President, I am proud to announce Georgia's newest contribution to freedom - our offer to send fresh troops to Iraq to serve in the special protection force for the UN Mission in Iraq...**
- **...In offering our services to the UN Mission – we are hopeful that our presence will foster lasting stability, prosperity and freedom for the Iraqi people – a freedom worthy of all those who live in the region at large.**
- **In the context of our cooperation with international anti-terrorist efforts, we especially value the work of the Antiterrorist Committee of the Security Council...**

- **The threats that emerge from violent separatism affect the security not just of Georgia – but the security of the entire Caucasus.**
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- **...Where those who are not yet sure if they want to remain outside Georgia will be given real incentives and chances to benefit from a prosperous, tolerant and successful Georgian state.**
- **A place where they and their children will be able to find jobs, earn stable incomes, and access new opportunities and investments...**
- **...By strengthening Georgia's economy, all inhabitants will know that they**

- **Building confidence means restoring and guaranteeing the right of internally displaced peoples to return to their native homes – so that never again will Georgians find themselves homeless in their own country.**
- **We can and we must build confidence between peoples, as the first pre-condition to peace...**
- **We can and we must do more to protect human rights by activating the international police force in places like Gall – through the auspices of an OSCE Human Rights office.**
- **Together, we can and we must have the courage to reach out – and the necessary faith to believe...**
- **Step Two focuses on specific measures to be enacted...elements of which can be conducted in parallel with some of the confidence building measures.**
- **These begin with removing the instruments of war through demilitarization...**
- **...And eliminating the climate of fear through decriminalization.**
- **So that the people's of these regions can live without fear of uncontrolled military forces, militias or violent gangs, that hold all of us hostage to the status quo.**
- **We must improve the local security of all who live in the zones of unresolved conflict.**
- **These steps will require monitoring, verification and transparency, so that our collective march towardsng.tith0 0ith0 0ach**

- **Because the advancement of peace and elimination of instability is incompatible with permeable and uncontrolled borders.**
- **Step Three envisions a global solution with global guarantees that lead to the establishment of the fullest and broadest form of autonomy...**
- **...One that protects culture and language, guarantee self governance, fiscal control and meaningful representation in national government...**
- **...And most importantly, an autonomy that empowers average people, so that isolated elites no longer act as the sole decision makers over people's future.**
- **Georgia greatly appreciates the support to date rendered by the Group of Friends and the Geneva process...and the concepts and principles contained within the Boden document which should be transmitted to the Abkhaz side.**
- **Now is the time to enhance those commitments and for the international community to do more.**
- **Because, simply put - the international community can no longer afford to look the other way at the gross violations of human rights that take place in separatist enclaves...**
- **...Just as they can no longer afford to ignore the security risks that emanate from these Black Holes and smugglers' safe havens.**
- **...The relevance of this point was brought home to all of us in the most tragic manner only recently, when barbarian terrorists seized a school of innocents in Beslan, shocking the world with their brutality.**
- **The people of Georgia condemn this brutal act and express their deep sympathy to the victims of this awful tragedy.**
- **And as we know, the terrorists that seized that school are common enemies of Russia and Georgia alike...**
- **...Notorious for their destruction, violence and killing – we have seen these individuals before...when they unleashed the same type of bloodshed in the name of Abkhaz separatism a handful of years back.**

- **These awful events once again prove that we cannot afford to ignore the dangerous linkages that exist between separatism on one side of the Caucasus mountains and the other.**
- **All separatists sow the seeds of great instability – all lawless zones can be sanctuaries for criminals that conduct acts of terror.**
- **It is our moral obligation to put an end to the unilateral practice of reaching out to separatists without the consent or knowledge of the authorities in Tbilisi.**
- **And to defeat that evil, we must not allow double standards to persist - where assistance is rendered to separatists in Georgia without concern for the effect on the region as a whole.**
- **The time has come for Georgia and Russia to enter a new stage of cooperation that will have as its goal the defeat of this common enemy.**
- **It is our moral obligation and profound responsibility to more robustly join forces in this cause.**
- **And here I firmly agree with President Putin, you can never negotiate with terrorists, or cut deals with killers.**
- **While we may and we should, work with moderate elements who seek peace without violence...**
- **...We must forever do away with the Basayev's of the world...no matter what side of the border they terrorize.**
- **Today more than ever before, I want to underscore Georgia's readiness to work more closely with President Putin and the Russian Federation to combat and remove this common threat.**
- **Because all forms of violent separatism – be they in Tskinali, Grozny or Sokhumi, represent destabilizing factors for Russia and Georgia alike.**
- **By working together more robustly, I am confident we can make great progress in reducing this shared risk.**

THE MECHANICS OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP

- **I believe there are a number of concrete initiatives we can start today that will bring immediate results....**

- **...Initiatives that again confirm Georgia's status as a "test case" for the promotion of a foreign policy that leads us away from the outdated politics of domination, advancing instead our shared interests and great potential for regional cooperation.**
- **The means finally coming to grips with the need and necessity to close outdated Russian military bases, left over from a period that no longer exists.**
- **And here let me be clear about one point, Georgia does not plan to have any new foreign military bases on its territory...**
- **...And we would appreciate any help in strengthening our security situation in order to be more responsible contributors.**
- **Today, Georgia need bridges not bases...roads and not rockets....and we need cooperation, not competition when it comes to eliminating sources of instability and terror.**
- **The mechanics of a new relationship with Russia means pooling our resources and efforts to create a joint anti-terrorism center so that Georgia and Russia can enjoy the same level of cooperation that Georgia and the US share in the fight against terror.**
- **It means expanding joint border patrols to the entire Russian/Georgian frontier, so that no holes are left exposed.**
- **So that the era of zero-sum thinking can be replaced with policies that lead to win-win.**
- **These efforts will require greater sharing of information, intelligence, and a greater degree of trust – all of which Georgia stands ready to conduct.**
- **Why? Because these actions serve the cause of peace...**
- **Why? Because these actions serve to defeat the threat of terrorism and strengthen the safety and security of our populations...**
- **Why? Because these actions are part of what it means to remain a responsible member of the international community of nations...**
- **And finally, because we have no reasonable alternative, failure is not an option.**

- **In order to replace mistrust and misperceptions that sometimes derail our progress, Georgia today proposes establishing a new, Russian-Georgian joint body, where bilateral issues and misgivings could be regularly discussed and considered.**
- **So that our relations may never again suffer from misunderstandings or misinterpretations.**
- **This Council could consider issues like visa policy, concerns about over-flight or border violations...**
- **It could even consider issues such as protection of the rights of Russian citizens now living in Georgia...so that no inhabitant of Georgia will ever feel forgotten or unprotected.**
- **...All this and more are necessary because there is nothing more important than serving the cause of peace.**
- **And I confident and I am optimistic that my colleague, President Putin – desires the very same for his people.**

MOVING INTO THE 21ST CENTURY...

- **I believe Georgia will remain a "test case" in our part of the world for the nearest period to come – as we build our democratic institutions and further advance cooperation.**
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- **By following this path, I am sure we can unlock the great potential for peace, prosperity and stability of this great region.**
- **A task I look forward to pursuing with all Georgia's friends and neighbors.**
- **Mr. President, I thank you for your attention and support.**