

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

Expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to ongoing violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia and the importance of a peaceful and just resolution to the conflict within Georgia's internationally recognized borders.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. GRAHAM) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to ongoing violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia and the importance of a peaceful and just resolution to the conflict within Georgia's internationally recognized borders.

Whereas, since 1993, the territorial integrity of Georgia has been reaffirmed by the international community and 36 United Nations Security Council resolutions;

Whereas the United States-Georgia Strategic Charter, signed on January 9, 2009, underscores that "support for each other's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders constitutes the foundation of our bilateral relations";

Whereas, in October 2010, at the meeting of the United States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated, “The United States will not waiver in its support for Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.”;

Whereas the White House released a fact sheet on July 24, 2010, calling for “Russia to end its occupation of the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia” and for “a return of international observers to the two occupied regions of Georgia”;

Whereas Vice President Joseph Biden stated in Tbilisi in July 2009 that the United States “will not recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states”;

Whereas, according to the Government of Georgia’s “State Strategy on Occupied Territories,” the Government of Georgia has committed itself to a policy of peaceful engagement, the protection of economic and human rights, freedom of movement, and the preservation of cultural heritage, language, and identity for the people of Abkhazia and South Ossetia;

Whereas the August 2008 conflict between the Governments of Russia and Georgia resulted in civilian and military casualties, the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, and large numbers of internally-displaced persons;

Whereas large numbers of persons remain displaced as a result of the August 2008 conflict as well as the earlier conflicts of the 1990s;

Whereas the August 12, 2008, ceasefire agreement, agreed to by the Governments of Russia and Georgia provides that

all troops of the Russian Federation shall be withdrawn to pre-conflict positions;

Whereas the August 12, 2008, ceasefire agreement provides that free access shall be granted to organizations providing humanitarian assistance in regions affected by violence in August 2008;

Whereas the recognition by the Government of Russia of Abkhazia and South Ossetia on August 26, 2008, was in violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia;

Whereas Human Rights Watch concluded in its World Report 2011 that “Russia continued to occupy Georgia’s break-away regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and strengthened its military presence in the region by establishing a military base and placing an advanced surface-to-air missile system in Abkhazia”;

Whereas the parties have taken some constructive steps in recent months, including the resumption of direct flights between Russia and Georgia, Russian troop withdrawal from the Georgian village of Perevi, and regular participation in the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism;

Whereas these positive steps neither adequately address the humanitarian situation on the ground nor constitute full compliance with the terms of the August 2008 ceasefire agreement;

Whereas, on November 23, 2010, before the European Parliament, Georgian President Saakashvili declared that “Georgia will never use force to restore its territorial integrity and sovereignty”;

Whereas Secretary of State Clinton stated in Tbilisi on July 5, 2010, “We continue to call for Russia to abide by the August 2008 cease-fire commitment . . . including ending the occupation and withdrawing Russian troops from South Ossetia and Abkhazia to their pre-conflict positions.”;

Whereas the Russian Federation blocked the extension of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Georgia and the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, forcing the missions to withdraw from South Ossetia and Abkhazia;

Whereas troops of the Russian Federation stationed in Abkhazia and South Ossetia continue to be present without the consent of the Government of Georgia or a mandate from the United Nations or other multilateral organizations;

Whereas, at the April 15, 2011, meeting in Berlin between the foreign ministers of Georgia and NATO, Secretary of State Clinton stated, “U.S. support for Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity remains steadfast. . . We share Georgian concerns regarding recent Russian activities that can negatively affect regional stability.”;

Whereas, on April 25-26, 2011, Foreign Minister of Russia Sergei Lavrov made a high-profile visit to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which was immediately criticized by the Department of State as “inconsistent with the principle of territorial integrity and Georgia’s internationally recognized borders”;

Whereas the Senate supports United States efforts to develop a productive relationship with the Russian Federation in

areas of mutual interest, including non-proliferation and arms control, cooperation concerning the failure of the Government of Iran to meet its international obligations with regard to its nuclear programs, counter-terrorism, Afghanistan, anti-piracy, and economics and trade; and

Whereas the Senate agrees that these efforts must not compromise longstanding United States policy or United States support for its allies and partners worldwide: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) affirms that it is the policy of the United
3 States to support the sovereignty, independence, and
4 territorial integrity of Georgia and the inviolability
5 of its borders, and to recognize Abkhazia and South
6 Ossetia as regions of Georgia occupied by the Rus-
7 sian Federation;

8 (2) calls upon the Government of Russia to
9 take steps to fulfill all the terms and conditions of
10 the 2008 ceasefire agreements between Georgia and
11 Russia, including returning military forces to pre-
12 war positions and ensuring access to international
13 humanitarian aid to all those affected by the con-
14 flict;

15 (3) urges the Government of Russia and the au-
16 thorities in control in the regions of South Ossetia
17 and Abkhazia to allow for the full and dignified re-
18 turn of internally-displaced persons and inter-

1 national missions to the territories of Abkhazia and
2 South Ossetia;

3 (4) supports peaceful, constructive engagement
4 and confidence-building measures between the Gov-
5 ernment of Georgia and the authorities in control in
6 South Ossetia and Abkhazia and encourages addi-
7 tional people-to-people contacts; and

8 (5) affirms that finding a peaceful resolution to
9 the conflict is a key priority for the United States
10 in the Caucasus region and that lasting regional sta-
11 bility can only be achieved through peaceful means
12 and long-term diplomatic and political dialogue be-
13 tween all parties.