



Georgia Conflict - Open Thread #2

Posted by [Gail the Actuary](#) on August 11, 2008 - 10:10am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

Tags: [cease-fire](#), [georgia](#), [russia](#) [[list all tags](#)]

Georgia has asked for a cease-fire, but Russia continues its air raids. Bombing originally began in the breakaway province of South Ossetia. Russia is now demanding that Georgian forces disarm in another breakaway province, Abkhazia, or Russian troops will move in. This would be a major escalation of the war.

A few stories below the fold:

[Russian Jets Bomb Georgian Targets; Georgia Signs Cease-Fire Pledge](#)

Georgia said a Russian general in Abkhazia, the other breakaway province, issued an ultimatum on Monday to Georgian forces nearby to disarm or face Russian troops moving into Georgian-controlled territory.

That would be a major escalation in the Russian-Georgian conflict. With most Georgian forces concentrated near South Ossetia, it could be hard for Georgia to repel the Abkhazian offensive.

International envoys flew into the region late Sunday in an effort to end the conflict before it spreads throughout the Caucasus. Mr. Kouchner, representing the EU, said he met with Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili and found him "determined to make peace."

[Georgia: America admits it has few options for dealing with Russia-Georgia war"](#)

American diplomats have conceded that there are few options for dealing what President George W Bush has branded a 'dangerous escalation' by Russia and ruled out military intervention on behalf of Georgia.

Jim Jeffrey, President Bush's deputy national security adviser, said that White House had told Russia: "If the disproportionate and dangerous escalation on the Russian side continues...this will have a significant long-term impact on U.S.-Russian relations."

[This is no pipeline war but an assault on Russian influence](#)

The sudden crisis has put the United States on the spot. While supporting Georgia's Nato ambitions, the White House was leery of military action, knowing it could do little in the face of a powerful Russian response. Visiting the former Soviet republic in 2005, President Bush urged Saakashvili to keep cool. "Georgia's leaders know that the peaceful resolution of conflict is essential to your integration into the transatlantic community," he told a huge rally in Tbilisi.

[In Georgia Clash, a Lesson on U.S. Need for Russia](#)

"Strategically, the Russians have been sending signals that they really wanted to flex their muscles, and they're upset about Kosovo," the diplomat said. He was alluding to Russia's anger at the West for recognizing Kosovo's independence from Serbia. . . .

For the Bush administration, the choice now becomes whether backing Georgia — which, more than any other former Soviet republic has allied with the United States — on the South Ossetia issue is worth alienating Russia at a time when getting Russia's help to rein in Iran's nuclear ambitions is at the top of the United States' foreign policy agenda.

[Georgia Conflict Tests Candidates on Foreign Policy](#)

The candidates' responses to the crisis were initially very different in tone. Sen. McCain forcefully blamed Russia, a country he has taken a hard stand on in the past. He has called for ejecting Russia from the Group of Eight leading nations and has mocked President George W. Bush's statement that he saw goodness in former Russian President Vladimir Putin. Sen. McCain said that when he looked into Mr. Putin's eyes, he "saw three letters: K-G-B." . . .

Sen. Obama's initial response was more measured, not blaming either side. "Now is the time for Georgia and Russia to show restraint, and to avoid an escalation to full-scale war," he said.

[Oil up as Georgia conflict disrupts shipments](#)

The conflict over South Ossetia has prompted the suspension of shipments of Azeri crude oil and refined fuel from two of Georgia's ports, Azerbaijan's state energy firm SOCAR said on Saturday.

Kazakhstan also stopped shipments of its crude from Georgia's Batumi. Neither Azerbaijan nor Kazakhstan rely on Georgian ports for their exports as both also use crude pipelines.

A major oil pipeline exporting Azeri crude passes through Georgia but was disabled last week on Turkish territory before the conflict erupted.

[Georgia: Russia 'conducting cyber war'](#)

Several Georgian state computer servers have been under external control since shortly before Russia's armed intervention into the state commenced on Friday, leaving its online presence in disarray.

While the official website of Mikheil Saakashvili, the Georgian President, has become available again, the central government site, as well as the homepages for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, remain down. Some commercial websites have also been hijacked.

Also: [Previous Open Thread](#)

[August 8 Drumbeat Thread](#)



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