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From: Eric Rudenshiold <ericandabby@compuserve.com>

Subject: Lament Report Part 1

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THE FINAL REPORT
OF MR. WOJCIECH LAMENTOWICZ,
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR
ON GEORGIA AND ABKHAZIA

4 JULY 1997

[It is understood that the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE supports the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia. For clarity and brevity, this report uses the term "Abkhazia" to describe that part of Georgia which was formerly designated as the Abkhaz Autonomous Socialist Republic. = Correspondingly, "Georgia" is used to describe the region that is under the control of the internationally recognized government of Georgia. This report, and the references contained within it, in no way should be considered a recognition of Abkhazia as a sovereign state. Although territorial and institutional references are made in this report concerning Abkhazia, these are done strictly to describe the de facto situation in that region. It should be noted, however, that such references describe institutions which currently have no international legitimacy.]

Special Rapporteur Mission on Georgia and Abkhazia:
OVERVIEW

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Vice President Wojciech Lamentowicz traveled to Georgia and the internationally blockaded conflict region of Abkhazia on 15-22 March as a Special Rapporteur for the Assembly on the regional conflict. On 6-10 June he traveled to Russia in the same capacity, and then on 25 June-July 1 the Assembly Vice President returned to Georgia and Abkhazia. On his first visit to the Caucasus Dr. Lamentowicz conducted an extensive program of meetings and discussions with regional leaders on both sides of the conflict as well as other key figures from international and

local organizations. The subsequent visit to Russia included a number of high-level meetings with governmental and parliamentary leaders. The second visit to the Caucasus was for consultations on recent developments with the top leadership on both sides of the conflict and to discuss the Mission's observations and recommendations. =

The Special Rapporteur, who was selected by Parliamentary Assembly President Javier Ruperez, presented a preliminary report on his findings regarding the regional situation to the Assembly President on 10 April and will present the Final Report to the Annual Session in Warsaw on 5 July. =

Dr. Lamentowicz, a recognized expert in international law, was appointed upon a request for a rapporteur from the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, supported by the Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze and the OSCE Mission in Tbilisi. The decision to send a rapporteur was based=

upon the many positive signs of development in Georgia and the recent, OSCE

Lisbon Summit declaration which condemned the sustained conflict in the region and termed the current situation a result of ethnic cleansing. The

Assembly's Vice President was accompanied and assisted on both visits to the Caucasus by OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Director of Programmes Eric Rudenshiold. He was also accompanied to meetings in Georgia and Abkhazia=

by representatives of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. =

During his first visit to the Caucasus, the Parliamentary Assembly's Special Rapporteur met in Tbilisi with President Shevardnadze, Chairman = of

the Parliament Zurab Zhvania, and a number of leading parliamentary and governmental leaders. The Georgian leaders discussed the history of the conflict, their perspectives on relations with Abkhazia, and their concerns

for the future. Dr. Lamentowicz also met with the OSCE Head of Mission Ambassador Michael Libal, OSCE Mission staff, and a number of representatives from international organizations involved in the region. =

Among other issues, Ambassador Libal discussed the currently limited involvement of the OSCE in matters pertaining to the Abkhazian region, and

he also described the highly active and successful role that the organization has played in Georgia's other secessionist-conflict zone, Southern Ossetia. =

While in Georgia on his first visit, the Special Rapporteur also met with= hunger-striking Members of the Georgian Parliament who represent the region

of Abkhazia, the Abkhazian Government-in-exile, and refugees from the region. These diverse expatriate factions expressed a relatively unified=

expectation that they will return to Abkhazia in the near future, that they

are prepared to live peacefully with Abkhazians, but that they also are concerned about past and present human rights violations in the region. =

In

addition, Dr. Lamentowicz discussed the problems confronting Georgia and Abkhazia with the Ambassadors composing the "Friends of Georgia" group (France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) who have been key figures in efforts to provide assistance to the region and in seeking a settlement to the conflict. The OSCE-member-state Ambassadors shared their perspectives on current relations between the parties in the conflict and on reasons for escalating tensions in the region. The group also discussed with the Special Rapporteur some causes for optimism, based upon contemporary events and developments. =

In another series of meetings during his March visit in Tbilisi, Dr. Lamentowicz met with representatives from Georgian political parties. =

X Opposition leaders expressed a number of concerns over the government's current policies towards Abkhazia. While some believed that the President had been too conciliatory to Abkhazian secessionists, others felt that certain aspects of the negotiation should be left to international organizations. Many political leaders in Georgia expressed a desire to see the creation of an international tribunal to investigate human rights violations. =

Ambassador Liviu Bota, Head of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), also met with Dr. Lamentowicz in Tbilisi to discuss the UN's mandate in the region and to provide insight into the difficulties encountered by international organizations in seeking to find avenues for discussion and cooperation. The UN Ambassador then arranged for the Parliamentary Assembly's Special Rapporteur delegation to travel to Abkhazia in a relief convoy with UNOMIG military observers. =

While in Sukhumi, Abkhazia, Dr. Lamentowicz met with the putative "President" of the secessionist government, the "Prime Minister" and other high-ranking officials. The Abkhazian leaders discussed their perspectives on the conflict, stressed concerns over the prolonged blockade to the region, and highlighted current roadblocks to a solution. Across a number of prolonged talks during the March visit, the secessionist region's highest leaders outlined possible areas of cooperation with the Georgians and their expectations on the role that should be played by other international actors. In other talks in Abkhazia, though, the "Speaker of the Parliament" and a number of the region's "legislators" complained to the Special Rapporteur about numerous alleged human rights violations and expressed serious lingering concerns regarding the prospect of any shared governing system with Georgia. =

Dr. Lamentowicz also discussed the regional situation with representative s

of local NGO's, UNOMIG observers and representatives of a joint, UN-OSCE, human rights initiative in the region. All of these groups stressed the difficulty of returning internally displaced peoples currently residing in Georgia back to their former homes in Abkhazia given the current level of security in the region. UNOMIG personnel described numerous, recent attacks on the local population by unknown armed groups, as well as an active land-mining campaign in the region which began last year and has since been posing serious problems for observers, peacekeepers and residents. A subsequent meeting with the commander of the CIS Peacekeeping Force underscored the escalating regional tensions and the unique circumstances of this particular, international confidence-building effort.

As the Parliamentary Assembly's Special Rapporteur delegation returned to Tbilisi at the end of the March visit, Dr. Lamentowicz traveled again by UN convoy through the Security and Restricted-Weapons Zones in southern Abkhazia bordering Georgia. In meetings with regional and local officials on both sides of the conflict border, a number of issues related to humanitarian aid were discussed along with the current conditions facing people living on the edges of the conflict zone. It was during these meetings, and based upon information provided by humanitarian relief organizations, that the Assembly's Vice President and Special Rapporteur learned of an impending aid shortage to the region and that funds for a number of humanitarian aid projects would soon be running out.

Upon his return to Warsaw in March, Dr. Lamentowicz issued a special appeal for the continuation of funding to relief organizations. "I call on all OSCE-member states to take note of this impending crisis, and ask them to continue regional assistance for these important relief efforts," he said during a meeting with parliamentary leaders in Warsaw. In this meeting, Dr. Lamentowicz explained that the cessation of food and medical supplies to tens of thousands of victims on both sides of the conflict border will only increase tensions in the region. During his visit to the Caucasus, the Special Rapporteur was told of increased terrorist and criminal activities that have occurred in the area surrounding the conflict in the past year. "Victims of this civil war are becoming increasingly frustrated at the lack of progress in mediation efforts," said Dr. Lamentowicz. =

"Humanitarian relief organizations are providing a necessary and vital supply of foods and medicines which has helped in keeping the region stable. We must see that this assistance is continued." =

Based upon issues raised during his March visit to the Caucasus, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Vice President scheduled a visit to Moscow on 5-8 June to meet with Russian foreign policy leaders and to discuss the regional situation. Due to Russia's sustained interest and involvement with both sides in the conflict, the Assembly Special Rapporteur discussed

possible avenues for addressing each side's concerns. In meetings with Mr. Ivan Rybkin, Secretary of the Russian National Security Council, Dr. Lamentowicz raised a number of possible recommendations. During this discussion, he also sought to gauge the level of commitment of Russian participation in the conflict region's future politics. These same issues were also raised with Deputy Foreign Minister Boris Pastukov who is in charge of handling Russia's foreign policy in the region. Possible roles for international organizations and other countries were also discussed. =

x In all of the Moscow meetings a continued Russian commitment to stay involved in all aspects of the current situation was evident.

A final visit to Abkhazia and Georgia was scheduled for late June, after a number of pivotal events had taken place relating to the conflict. The Special Rapporteur met with the new, Abkhaz, foreign affairs spokesman, Sergei Shamba, to learn of recent regional developments and of the progress made in the most recent round of bi-lateral talks held with Russian mediators. Possible methods for the return of refugees to the Gali region were discussed, as well as the difficulty that has plagued both sides of the conflict in reaching and then implementing any agreement.

The current negotiations were also discussed with Konstantine Ozgan, a key Abkhaz political figure. In this discussion Dr. Lamentowicz inquired about possible extensions or amendments to the mandates of international organizations and forces in the region. The Abkhaz leader highlighted possible areas of mutual Abkhaz-Georgian interest and cooperation: energy development, including the Inguri Power Station, which would supply both sides of the conflict with badly needed energy; the reestablishment of transportation and communication systems, including rail lines to Tbilisi; the re-opening of the regional airport, and the establishment of an oil pipeline through the region; and the reestablishment of agricultural ties and trade. =

In a second round of meetings with the "Speaker of the Parliament" and a number of the region's "legislators," the Special Rapporteur listened to a number of additional complaints regarding the lack of international aid to Abkhazia and the continued lack of international recognition of the region. A possible expanded UN mandate was discussed in order to provide security for the return of Gali refugees, however, it was believed by most that the mandate already existed. =

To end his program in Sukhumi, Dr. Lamentowicz met again with Abkhazia's "President" to discuss the recent round of negotiations and other recent developments. While not disclosing specifics, the secessionist region's leader expressed his belief that the Abkhaz side had made significant concessions in an effort to reach a compromise with the Georgians. He al=

so assured the Special Rapporteur that he hoped the agreement would be signed by the Georgian side, but that Abkhazia would also be able to survive without the agreement.

After his meetings in Sukhumi, Dr. Lamentowicz traveled to northern regions of Abkhazia to investigate living conditions in Gagra, Pitsunda and the northern sections of Abkhazia. He then traveled again through the Gali district, noting the de-populated situation in the region, before going on to Tbilisi.

On his second visit to the Georgian capitol, the OSCE PA's Special Rapporteur met with Mr. Tamaz Gamkrelidze and Mr. Vakhtang Kolbaia, Co-Chairmen of the Georgian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly=2E =

The Special Rapporteur then met with the Chairman of the Georgian Parliament, Zurab Zhvania. The parliamentary leaders discussed recent political developments and their expectations regarding the current round of negotiations. The legislators also discussed plans for the forthcoming OSCE Parliamentary Annual Session to be held in Warsaw.

Dr. Lamentowicz also met with Mr. Liviu Bota, the newly appointed Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General. In his new position, Mr. Bota explained that the United Nations was expecting to play a more central role in the on-going round of negotiations. Following that meeting, the Assembly's Special Rapporteur discussed recent developments with the Ambassadors of the Friends of Georgia group (FOG) and OSCE Head of Mission Ambassador Michael Libal. After relating the details of his meetings in Abkhazia and asking about the ramifications of recent political developments, the Special Rapporteur discussed with the FOG Ambassadors the possibility for economic and other assistance incentives to be ready in order to facilitate the implementation of any accord that might be signed=2E

On his last day in Georgia, Dr. Lamentowicz met again with Georgian Foreign Minister Irakli Menagarishvili and Mr. Kakha Chitaia, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament. Both foreign policy leaders expressed a firm hope that the current round of negotiations would produce an agreement. A number of provisions of the agreement were discussed, as well as the areas of concern to both sides.

The final meeting of the Special Rapporteur visit to the region was with President Eduard Shevardnadze. The President stressed his concerns over the current negotiations process and his desire not to see another initiative fail. To this end, the Georgian leader stated his belief that the negotiations process should be reformatted to include international

organizations and other interested parties to the conflict. =

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Subject: Part 4, Lament

To: Henry Wooster <wooster@osce.org.ge>

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Conclusions and recommendations

One obvious conclusion is that the existing international forces and efforts at resolving this conflict will need to be bolstered by extended and expanded mandates. No individual force or component to the conflict settlement process has the resources to do the job independently. =

Increased cooperation and coordination of existing organizations and their personnel is necessary. =

The newly appointed Special Representative from the United Nations should be given a revived mandate that should stress the building of confidence on both sides of the conflict. This initiative should be augmented by an enhanced component of forces to assist in the facilitation of the return of refugees to the Gali District. Such a return will first require extensive de-mining and then must be followed by a serious policing action. =

Specially trained and armed police, equipment and funding for intelligence will all be needed to combat the significantly entrenched groups that operate in these sectors. An international force of peacekeepers is also necessary to provide an initial and credible stabilization force. If a significantly enhanced UN force can not be supplied instead, it would seem appropriate that UN and CISPKEF forces work jointly in this and other tasks. =

Current and past objections to the CISPKEF cannot be disregarded, but UNOMIG does not currently have the capacity to replace the CISPKEF. The CISPKEF, however, should be augmented with a significant number of troops from other CIS countries. The contingent of international police should, however, be provided under a United Nations or even OSCE mandate.

In the past Russia has played a number of roles in the conflict and efforts for its resolution. Given current concerns raised by both sides to Russian domination of the conflict-resolution process, as well as objections to a number of other single-state actors, international organizations must play the leading role in the process and individual and groups of states should work toward facilitating a solution to various aspects of the conflict. =

The UN's proposed Geneva conference in July seems the logical venue to broaden the current process. An integrated effort of international organizations and countries providing resources, each according to their abilities, would produce a more unified and effective effort. =

Whereas the UN and potentially OSCE could play one set of roles relating to brokering and implementing settlement accords, and UNOMIG and CISPKE could work toward providing security (primarily through policing and security activities) for the return of refugees and all residents of the region, Russia and other nations (particularly the FOG) could provide assistance: =

(1) for the creation of economic solutions that would help to rebuild the region, (2) to create incentives and to engage and integrate the region's local economies, and (3) to provide resettlement assistance and aid to victims on both sides of the conflict. The HALO Trust de-mining program in place in Georgia, and ready to begin work in Gali, should be utilized immediately as part of an integrated effort. A commitment for increased development funding will also be necessary to make this overall scheme work, particularly to assist in repatriation and for rebuilding. The current commitment of EBRD funds should be one part of a larger economic incentive package. =

Whereas Abkhazians have stridently sought the lifting of all sanctions before any settlement can be reached, this all-or-nothing type of proposal would pose an imbalance of hardships and would require Georgia to bare the brunt of the civil war's aftermath by continuing to house many tens of thousands of refugees. If sanctions are to be lifted in Abkhazia, they should be accompanied by a return of refugees from Georgia. Such a quid pro quo balance appears a practical way to begin building an equitable settlement for all parties to the conflict. It is believed that Gali would be a feasible area for confidence building and cooperation and provide the initial basis for such a gradual, step-by-step settlement. The region's primarily Georgian ethnic balance from before the war should not pose a serious threat to the Abkhaz, particularly if the region is at first kept under an international police administration. This latter provision could be used to combat the lawless elements in the region, and to provide security for all returnees during a transition period. =

A return of Georgian refugees to Gali and a corresponding reduction of some sanctions against the Abkhaz should be determined by international mediators. These linked measures could provide a first step in breaking the deadlock between both sides in the conflict. Before any resettlement agreement is signed, however, a clear and internationally monitored system of accrediting repatriates needs to be established. Currently, there is no sufficient mechanism to handle the large number of would-be returnees. This function may also need to be internationally administered.

However, for any future negotiations to continue there needs to be a public commitment from both sides to state a willingness to negotiate in good faith, under international mediation, all the way through to an implementable set of commitments. Both sides also need a public agreement to pursue only peaceful means for resolving the conflict. =

Whereas one, all-embracing document is desirable, several smaller agreements that can work on smaller areas of the problems of the conflict would probably be more practical. A number of points of agreement have long been in agreement by both sides of the conflict and should be the bases for any initial agreement(s). Existing bi-lateral talks between the Georgians and Abkhazians with Russian facilitation should be enhanced by international guidance, and should be directed to focus on concrete issues that will benefit both sides and which will promote peace. Some definitions, details and issues may need to be postponed until after a period of partial integration and confidence building has been achieved. =

One mutually beneficial example would be the refurbishment of the Inguri River Hydro-Electric Dam to provide electricity to both sides of the conflict and which requires both sides to work together to maintain the facility. The re-establishment of transportation and communications links provide similar benefits.

A vital element in any set of future negotiations is the necessity of consulting both sides of the conflict and then the building of confidence between them. Increased and more regular communication between both sides is essential. They need to be challenged to be able to abide by agreements and to engage in their implementation with international guidance. The responsibility for negotiation belongs to the highest officials on both sides of the conflict, with the assistance of international mediators. The responsibility for negotiation or implementation should not be the responsibility of international organizations, but, rather, the responsibility of both sides in the conflict. Compliance with agreements should be rewarded by the aforementioned set of step-by-step economic and development incentives set in place by the international community. A similar set of sanctions and penalties should be imposed for

non-compliance, once both parties have entered into the negotiation process, as determined by the international negotiators. =

Insofar as the populations of Abkhazia, Georgia and the refugee communities are concerned, social education programs need to be provided by the international community to facilitate the repatriation of peoples after a prolonged conflict. Confidence building can be enhanced through the sharing of information on news of all kinds from Abkhazia and Georgia by exchanges of journalists, including print and broadcast media coverage. =

Mediation and conflict-resolution techniques need to be taught to the general population, and police and security units should be trained in techniques to handle the possible tensions and incidents concomitant with the repatriation and reintegration of long-separated communities. In addition to these programs, confidence-building measures need to be implemented at the community level to enable people to live together again.

In addition, repatriation assistance funding needs to be augmented with safety-net assistance for those who may not feel capable of returning to their homes initially. Lawless elements operating throughout the demilitarized sectors need to be stopped, incarcerated and punished. A stable environment in this region can be achieved, as it was in Georgia when lawless, mafia and paramilitary elements were rounded up and prosecuted.

One aspect of reintegration that also appears necessary for Abkhazia is a series of democracy training programs for journalists and political parties to learn how to peacefully participate in a democratic political system. =

Programs are needed that teach how representational, multi-idea, multi-faceted democratic systems work, as well as basic human rights. =

These same efforts can work to train journalists, students and citizens basic civic education.

Another possible area of confidence building would be to establish a council or possibly an ombudsman function within the Georgian political system to listen to concerns or grievances of ethnic groups in the country.

Such a body could represent all ethnic groups and have real power to speak to the press; to petition the government, President, and Parliament; to present draft legislation; to appeal to the courts; and to act as a clearing house for grievances of minorities. =

As for the future role of the OSCE in the Abkhazian conflict, both sides of the conflict seem interested in an expanded mandate for OSCE. Although Abkhazia is a far different situation than Ossetia, there is still no reason why some of the lessons OSCE learned in Ossetia could not be applied to the situation in Abkhazia. The UN also appears in favor of some enhanced role for OSCE. In fact, the cooperative agreement that exists between the UN and OSCE, already appears to allow for OSCE's supportive role to expand as the UN mandate expands. However, any enlargement of the OSCE role must be preceded by a formal request for a change of mandate from

om
Georgia (and Abkhazia) to the Chairman-in-Office and the Permanent Council
of the OSCE. A further commitment would also be necessary from the FOG a= and other countries that have expressed an interest in the region and which could provide the necessary aid and assistance funding. =

Certainly the jointly operated UN/OSCE Human Rights Office in Abkhazia is= a starting point for burden sharing, for future cooperation between the two= international organizations, and to provide a basis for the aforementione= d democracy and human rights educational programming. The work of this office should doubtless be given a clear funding and manpower priority. =

However, an expanded OSCE mandate or an increased international commitmen= t is by itself meaningless. There is no simple or clear solution to the problems of this region. An internationalization of the mediation proces= s better coordination, more efficient use of resources, step-by-step confidence-building measures and developed implementation schemes will al= l be necessary in order to break through the current impasse and to take a first step in the final solution to this conflict. Regardless of whether= the current negotiations lead to a comprehensive agreement that is actual= ly signed, it seems obvious to this Mission that implementation will be a major task in need of intense international assistance. There needs to b= e an immediate broadening of input into the current negotiations process to= involve international organizations and actors. The OSCE, the UN, and a number of other international resources will all be needed to accomplish any of the first and subsequent steps along this lengthy path, but the ultimate responsibility for success or failure in solving this conflict depends upon the commitment of the Georgian and Abkhaz leaders and their peoples.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It should be recognized that the heart of a political solutio= n lies in the question of providing a government for the region of Abkhazia= which will guarantee the rights and privileges of all the various peoples= who live in the region, including both the refugees, the Abkhaz and membe= rs of other minority groups.
2. It must be recognized that these various peoples have been ab= le to live together in peace in the past, so it should be possible to create= some balance again.
3. Any settlement of this conflict will require both sides to

negotiate, to bargain, to compromise, and to give up some of their current, hard-held positions. Both sides need to commit publicly to negotiate in good faith with an intensive effort all the way through to an agreement. =

Both sides need to negotiate at the highest levels and to commit the political goodwill of those offices to the resulting agreement.

4. Current and future negotiations should be broadened to include international mediation and expertise on the conflict-resolution process, = in providing clear and mutually acceptable language, and in establishing a schedule of implementation goals. (An agreement is only part of a solution, implementation is the equally important.) Given that each side = has claimed the other has obstructed the negotiations process, it would appear to make sense to fully involve international organizations, as opposed to individual countries, in the conflict-resolution process. The = United Nations Conference on Abkhazia, proposed to be held in late July in Geneva, would appear the logical venue for such a broadening of the current negotiations process. The OSCE, as a regional international organization = and the FOG, representing a major group of interested donor states, should play substantive roles in this enhanced negotiations process.

5. It would also seem logical to first negotiate an agreement based upon those points which have been agreed to in the past by both sides, then to move on to other issues in subsequent negotiations. A gradual process of agreement and implementation will allow for confidence = building and enable a normalization process to be engaged.

6. The return of refugees to their homes in the Gali region appears a logical and practical initial step in an integrated solution to = the conflict both as a means of breaking the current deadlock and establishing credibility in the overall process. The reciprocal pressure = each side places on the other through sanctions and controlling refugee return should be the basis for political negotiation and should allow for = the gradual lifting of restrictions on each side during the process of negotiating a complete solution. The return and sanction balance should = be determined by international mediators. =

7. Long-range economic incentives should also be made available = by the international community to reward a continued normalization process. =

8. A number of steps also need to be taken before refugees can return: large-scale de-mining activities will have to be conducted first = international assistance will need to be organized for rebuilding local housing, police functions will need to be established (probably by an

international force) to deter and combat terrorist attacks on returnees to the region, and an internationally monitored system for processing and repatriating people will need to be established. The HALO Trust funding and manpower should be utilized immediately for de-mining the Gali region=
=2E

9. A deployment of 200-300 international, trained and armed police is necessary to establish order, to provide training for local forces, and to assist in the phasing in of civilian police functions. = X

10. It would seem logical that credible policing and security functions could be carried out by an expanded UNOMIG in conjunction with CISPKE units in a more cooperative and coordinated effort. This Mission recommends a more multi-national CISPKE, or even the addition of peacekeeping forces from other countries outside of the CIS region. A truly international security force should be established to provide sufficient credibility to the process, stability in the region, and practical functions such as policing and de-mining to thereby allow the return of refugees. Such a force could initially include CISPKE forces currently in place, but should be augmented with additional forces from other countries, such as Ukraine and/or Uzbekistan. (Proposals for other Caucasian regions to supply armed forces is not viable, primarily because of the need for a credible, international force.) Eventually the international forces should work to include local forces, as implemented by the OSCE in Ossetia. =

11. Although it is not currently a sufficient force by itself, the current mandate of the CISPKE may need to be extended past the 31 July deadline, until a more international and effective force can replace it. =

12. Regular ties between UNOMIG, CISPKE and relief agencies are necessary to provide a more transparent and coordinated effort that would result in more efficient assistance to the region and a stronger appearance of international unity. =

13. Both sides of the conflict must use all possible means to control rogue criminal and terrorist groups operating in the conflict region during the conflict-resolution process.

14. The exchange of news and information in and out of Abkhazia would be a useful step in acclimatizing the populations of Abkhazia and Georgia to events and developments at large, but also towards defining their own future goals more clearly. Existing efforts for the exchange of journalists and information should be enhanced. Likewise, exchanges of ideas and the proliferation of fora for other areas of discussion should also be encouraged through the provision of international assistance and the facilitation of NGO programs. Initiatives for facilitating the meeting of like groups from both sides of the conflict and reciprocal visits, should be encouraged.

15. Both sides in the conflict need to demonstrate a greater

willingness to develop new ideas and creativity in the development of a solution.

16. Increased and more regular communication between both sides = of the conflict is essential; and they need to be challenged to abide by agreements and to engage in the implementation process with international guidance.

17. The UN/OSCE Human Rights Office in Abkhazia is an important first step in burden sharing and further cooperation between two, key international organizations. This office should be enhanced with a clear funding and man-power priority.

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OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this Mission and these observations is not to assess blame= nor to find fault with the parties involved in this conflict or its resolution. Rather, these comments are designed to highlight areas of concern and confusion which may impinge upon movement in the process of solving the complex dynamics of this conflict. This report also takes a fresh look at the overall situation and pinpoints possible areas that may enhance cooperation and lead to an eventual solution.

Defining the major components of the conflict:

GENERAL ISSUES

The aftermath of any war, civil or international, leaves residual social,= political and economic problems. The conflict in the region of Abkhazia has been no exception. A logical and immediate observation in this conte= xt is that a major factor which began this war and which guides the current stalemate between parties to the conflict is the heritage of seven decade= s of Soviet dominion in the region. Social upheavals, migrations in and ou= t of the area, economic development of the region, the political indoctrination process and many other factors from the Soviet era have al= l left their mark on the region, on the conflict and on its aftermath. The=

expectations of ethnic groups in this conflict, of regional and national groups have all been influenced by the Soviet school of thought resulting in a lack of cooperation and a general inability to compromise. In some instances the Soviet legacy has proven beneficial, but in others it has left the conflict mired in confusion.

The ethnic balance of the region before and after this conflict is a central factor behind the conflict and its resolution. The ethnic Abkhaz have experienced a decreasing share of the population of the region throughout this century. There is even a long historical debate over whether or not the current people known as "Abkhazians" were in fact the original settlers of the region. Nevertheless, the Abkhaz have not enjoyed a majority share of the population in the region for many decades. After the civil conflict, though, a large, non-ethnic-Abkhazian population was displaced from homes in the region of conflict (and are now primarily settled throughout Georgia). These refugees and displaced people are primarily ethnic Georgians. In the period prior to the conflict, ethnic Georgians composed the primary ethnic group in Abkhazia, according to any and all sources of statistics. The ethnic-Abkhaz were less than 20% of the population, but now comprise the majority ethnic group in the region. The ethnic-Georgian population permanently residing in the region had been more than 2.5 times the size of the Abkhazian population and has now been decreased by approximately 200,000 people, or 80%.

Although various, conflicting population statistics were cited to this Mission, certain factors appeared obvious. The population of the region in 1992, before the conflict began, was just over .5 million people. Of these peoples, nearly half were Georgian, and there were also substantial populations of ethnic-Russians and Armenians. Despite some statistics presented by Abkhazian authorities to the contrary, it is plain to any observer that the region is currently de-populated. It should be noted that statistics supplied by different international organizations and the

Government of Georgia also differ to some degree. The large numbers of displaced peoples and refugees living in camps outside of the region of Abkhazia appear to bear out the belief of international observers that approximately 3/4 of the region's population from before the conflict has either been killed, displaced or no longer resides there permanently. It was quite obvious that cities and villages particularly in the south have been virtually deserted with generally only some of the elderly left behind. Many houses and communities throughout the region have been destroyed and are uninhabitable. =

In terms of demographics, it is also obvious that a political solution is linked to a social solution. Both sides to the conflict agree to the fact that there are large numbers of peoples who once lived in the region that

are currently displaced. Although a large number of Abkhaz have left the region as well, a major factor which inhibits the return of most refugees however, is when political decisions on the future of the region can be made--before or after the return of these peoples. A return of less than half of the ethnic-Georgian refugee population would shift the regional ethnic balance. In such an eventuality, the majority ethnic group in the region would shift from ethnic-Abkhaz to ethnic-Georgian. It is widely believed that any referendum held before the return of the refugees could favor the interests of one group over another. Likewise, the converse is believed of any referendum held after the return of refugees. In this way, social and political issues are inextricably linked.

The question of the territorial integrity of Georgia versus recognizing a sovereign state of Abkhazia clouds any political settlement as well. There are many layers to this issue in terms of international politics, regional actors, historical antecedents, etc. At the heart of this issue locally, however, lies the basic question of providing a government for the region of Abkhazia which will guarantee the rights and privileges of all the various peoples of the region. A final settlement will determine governments and accommodations over the fate of repatriated Georgians potentially living under an Abkhaz administration, of the Abkhaz who risk becoming a minority in their own homeland, and of members of other minority communities living in the region that have been caught between opposing factions.

The observations in this report do not make any pretense at being able to provide a comprehensive report on the differences between the ethnic groups of the region, nor is this necessary. It should be noted that religious, linguistic and cultural differences all contribute to the fears, concerns and expectations of the different groups that populate (and have populated) the region. Family ties and traditions have kept these groups relatively distinct and fiercely proud of their differences for centuries. It seems very important to observe that these distinctions of blood and culture will pose a difficult responsibility for any political solution or resulting government to balance the interests of. The results of war, history and declining birth rates among the Abkhaz people have produced a developed fear of ethnic Georgians, and of the loss of their majority numbers, of their culture, and of their future identity as a distinct group. But it is also worth noting that these various peoples have been able to live together in peace in the past, so it should be possible to create some balance again.

Although ethnic groups have been discussed as major factors in the conflict, other kinds of groups also have a stake in the outcome of the conflict: exiles and displaced peoples, regional militias, mafia groups, soldiers of fortune, etc. Some of these groups can only function or profit in times of war or instability. Likewise, some factions on both sides of the conflict appear to have at times acted independently of their leaders.

The large number of interests and actors in this conflict and its settlement also tends to preclude a simple resolution. As a result, the current "stability" in the region appears tenuous at best. In fact, many interests appear bent either on prolonging the status quo or reigniting the conflict. A campaign of mining roads and living areas and other terrorist activities have claimed many lives and created widespread fear among residents and potential returnees to the region. Illegal activities thrive in the region which is devoid of any stable policing functions.

Although Mr. Ardzinba, the Abkhaz leader, and President Schevardnadze each espoused the desire to find a peaceful solution, there appears to be a very real danger of tensions escalating further. Officials on both sides of the conflict when queried were well aware of the danger posed by the independent interests and actions of these various groups. At times it seemed that officials on both sides felt unable to control these radical factions and events. It must be observed that there can be no defensible excuse for not using all possible means to control rogue groups during the search for a solution to this conflict. It should be noted that Georgia's success in quelling a number of lawless elements and para-military organizations, which threatened their government in the past, should be a model for combating this particular problem.

In the several years since the cease-fire, a large number of agreements and efforts to mediate the dispute have taken place under different auspices.

Although many agreements were never signed, another major problem in resolving this conflict appears to be not so much one of reaching agreements, but of implementation. In discussions with both sides, it was readily apparent that each side has interpreted provisions of various agreements differently. This appears to be a direct result of the conflicting expectations of the parties, nebulous wording that enabled provisions to be construed differently, too much time between an agreement being reached and any effort to implement its accords, and often conflicting or contradictory signals sent by international mediators or actors in the conflict. The result is that now both sides point to various

can basically agree to. However, the return should be conducted on a gradual basis, perhaps by villages, and it should be linked to a gradual removal of restrictions placed upon the Abkhaz side of the conflict, as determined by mediators. Repatriation should also be carried out through-

an internationally monitored mechanism and without prejudice to individuals or their past associations. All repatriates would be required to abide by the law and subject to the authority of the police in the region which should provide a guarantee against transgressions or reprisals. =

Long-range economic incentives should also be made available from the international community to reward the continuation of such a normalization process. But, a number of steps also need to be taken before refugees can return: large-scale de-mining activities will have to be conducted first; international assistance will need to be provided for rebuilding local housing, police functions will need to be established (probably from an international force) to deter and combat terrorist attacks on returnees in the region, and a repatriation mechanism will need to be developed. =

International funding and manpower for de-mining by the HALO Trust already exist and are already in the region ready to be implemented. These resources should be utilized immediately. =

As long as criminal and paramilitary groups continue to profit from the chaos and instability in the region, there will remain a tremendous obstacle to the creation of any stable solution. International assistance seems the only logical possibility to provide initially credible relief from the rampant lawlessness in the demilitarized regions. Ideally, a domestic, civilian police force would be used. However, in the absence of any such reliable organization currently, a deployment of international, armed gendarmes of 200-300 trained police is necessary to establish order, to provide training for local forces, and to assist in the eventual phasing in of civilian police functions. (Similar international police assistance was employed in Bosnia-Herzegovina with considerable success.) Although the CIS Peacekeeping Force (CISPKF) theoretically now has a mandate to provide policing functions, specially trained troops are needed to carry out these provisions. The CISPKF units visited by the Mission did not have the necessary training, forces or funding sufficient to cover policing contingencies. In this case, manpower cannot be confused with function and purpose; soldiers are not policemen. =

On the other hand, UNOMIG has the infrastructure and experience in the region necessary to accommodate such an international police force, and some expanded elements under UNOMIG could be assigned and tasked to assist in these functions, potentially using the existing mandate. It would see=

logical that credible policing and security functions could be carried out by an expanded UNOMIG, possibly in conjunction with CISPKE units in a more cooperative and coordinated effort. A sufficient force to establish basic law and order in the security and restricted weapons zones of the conflict is vital, along with a thorough de-mining effort (something the Russian military forces have tremendous expertise in), prior and during the return of refugees and displaced peoples. Installing a credible, international force, however, could have repercussions for both sides in the conflict, particularly as there appears to be some evidence that lawless and rogue forces can be attributed to independent factions from both Georgia and Abkhazia. Further delay at the political level to forestall the creation of such a force is dangerous as the region could further destabilize.

Although the CISPKE mandate was theoretically expanded at a CIS Summit subsequent to the first visit of this Mission to the region, the possibility of such a contingency had already been foreseen by the Mission.

It seemed apparent that the size and capacity of the CISPKE force was already insufficient to cover some aspects and interpretations of its existing mandate. Hampered by a lack of funding (troops often had no pay or food), of stable leadership (the command of the force has repeatedly been changed), of a protracted mandate of duration (the mandate has traditionally been short and repeatedly expired), the CISPKE has not been able to provide a stable environment for the return of refugees or for policing the region, although it has successfully served as an apparent buffer against a return to armed hostilities. With insufficient funding, equipment or training, it seems fruitless to expand the existing CISPKE mandate, particularly given its loss of credibility by many in the region.

This appears only a recipe for future dissatisfaction and prolonged instability. However, the withdrawal of the CISPKE would doubtless lead to instability and the probable resumption of hostilities, and the likely withdrawal of the unarmed UNOMIG contingent. Although it is not currently a sufficient force by itself, the current mandate of the CISPKE needs to be extended past the 31 July deadline, until a more international and effective force can replace it.

In general, the peacekeeping mission to the region now suffers from a lack of credibility for a number of similar reasons. The CISPKE arrived in July 1994 (after the signing of a November 1993 cease-fire agreement) with a mandate that included facilitation of the return of refugees to their homes. This effort has been frustrated, as previously discussed, and has suffered from funding and equipment problems, insufficient numbers, troops improperly trained for the required tasks, and a continually changing command structure in the region. The lack of continuity and the constant

expiring mandates appear to have left troops and their commanders frustrated. More than 40 CISPKEF members have been killed in the region due to terrorist incidents, proof that the peacekeepers have been unable to deter hostile acts against themselves, let alone the repatriated civilian population of the region. Despite these inadequacies, the CISPKEF had its territorial responsibilities nearly doubled at the CIS summit when its mandate was expanded in theory, but immediately rejected by the Abkhaz. =

The new mandate includes mine clearing and police functions, however, since the units assigned to the region have no training for this and an insufficient number of men, these do not appear to be achievable or realistic tasks. =

Both sides of the conflict discussed with the Rapporteur Mission lingering concerns behind the CISPKEF deployment and its largely Russian make-up. If a truly international security force could be established, it appears probable that sufficient credibility and stability could be established in the region to allow for the return of the refugees. Such a force could initially include CISPKEF forces currently in place, but needs to be augmented with additional forces from other countries, such as Ukraine and/or Uzbekistan. In order for the CISPKEF to complete its objectives, it must be more acceptable locally than the current force. Proposals for other Caucasian regions to supply armed forces do not appear viable primarily because of the need for a credible force from other countries. =

Eventually, the international forces should work to include local forces, as implemented by OSCE in Ossetia. Whereas some Abkhaz officials expressed concern over an extension of the security zone and a return of people and resources to the region, an extended security zone should, however, actually provide a stable, demilitarized zone that will be a benefit to all parties concerned. =

THE GEORGIAN POINT OF VIEW

Georgian authorities were very anxious to present the Mission with voluminous detail over all aspects of the conflict. The delegation was impressed by the degree of openness presented by the Georgian officials, and the delegation also had access to both government and opposition viewpoints on the conflict. Many of the Georgian proposals are already well known, documented and publicized. However, a number of different people who met with the delegation described the possibility of events degenerating into armed conflict again. Although there appears to be an official commitment to finding peaceful solutions, many in Tbilisi are worried that a lack of any progress in returning the refugees and resolving the conflict will encourage extremist forces to take matters into their own hands. Several years of relatively fruitless talks have yielded only increased domestic pressure on the Government and calls from refugees to seek an armed solution. The scheduling of military exercises on the eve of

the deadline of the CISPKF mandate is provocative in this context, particularly given the increased lawless and terrorist activities of unknown elements in Abkhazia.

In large part, these concerns are based upon the pressures faced by Georgia from the large numbers of refugees housed throughout the country. Although the Georgian economy has begun to stabilize in some ways, the refugees represent an economic, social and political drag on the existing leadership and the country's meager resources. Many officials were also forthright in admitting that economic stabilization and any appreciable international investment in the country also depends to a large degree upon a resolution to the conflict in Abkhazia. Some Georgians proposed the idea of constructing a gas or oil pipeline through Abkhazia in order to build economic stability for both parties to the conflict. In fact, a number of proposals were made to the delegation (from both sides to the conflict) for ways of providing economic, social and political stability to Abkhazia, including the reestablishment of rail transport, communications, electricity, energy, etc. International assistance is necessary for providing timely funding for such kinds of reconstruction and stabilization efforts.

The Georgians expressed the hope that more international attention and involvement could be used to expand the mediation efforts, potentially including OSCE in the existing United Nations effort. The Georgians particularly expressed interest in an increased involvement of the so-called "Friends of Georgia" group of countries (France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) in any future negotiating process.

Message 145:

From sasco!ericandabby@compuserve.com Mon Jul 14 16:58:07 1997
Received: by osce.org.ge (UUPC/@ v5.00, 25Nov92);
Mon, 14 Jul 1997 16:58:06 +0500

Received: from hil-img-10.compuserve.com (hil-img-10.compuserve.com [149.174.1

Received: (from mailgate@localhost)
by hil-img-10.compuserve.com (8.8.6/8.8.6/2.1) id GAA20977
for wooster@osce.org.ge; Mon, 14 Jul 1997 06:23:24 -0400 (EDT)

Date: Mon, 14 Jul 1997 06:20:38 -0400

From: Eric Rudenshiold <ericandabby@compuserve.com>

Subject: Part 3, Lament Report

To: Henry Wooster <wooster@osce.org.ge>

Message-ID: <199707140623_MC2-1AD0-FAA5@compuserve.com>

MIME-Version: 1.0

Content-Transfer-Encoding: quoted-printable

Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1

Content-Disposition: inline

Lines: 416

Status: R

ABKHAZIAN POINT OF VIEW

It was quite apparent that the Abkhaz authorities were interested in proposing serious concerns and arguments to this Mission. They were generally frank and outspoken over their expectations and concerns, and the

delegation was granted high-level access to a number of officials. It was apparent that recent events in Chechnya have held tremendous significance for the Abkhaz. Not only have Chechen efforts to secure independence from Russia been significant for the Abkhaz, but a number of officials expressed curiosity over the role that OSCE as an international organization has played in Chechnya. Although they knew the OSCE rationale, it seemed apparent that some Abkhazians persist in the belief that OSCE treated Chechnya as an independent entity. And despite the OSCE's statements condemning ethnic-cleansing in Abkhazia, Abkhaz leaders expressed a willingness to have the organization play a more prominent role in resolving the conflict. =

The Abkhaz at times condemned the involvement of international organizations, but also expressed a willingness to continue mediation dialogue with the United Nations, and perhaps with the OSCE. However, the Abkhaz rejected any notion of involving other states such as Turkey, Ukraine, or even France in future negotiations, since each of these countries have their own internal ethnic problems. In terms of negotiating with Georgia, the Abkhaz had many criticisms of Georgian policies. The international blockade of Abkhazia was regarded by many Abkhaz to be a Georgian policy to starve the region. Abkhaz leaders also criticized the amount of international aid that Georgia and that refugees each receive. =

Many also claimed that the desire to move refugees back to Gali is a Georgian effort to move the line of confrontation north. =

The Mission listened to numerous Abkhaz complaints and demands, ranging from claims that Stalinist terror in Abkhazia was an aspect of Georgian nationalism to demanding monetary reparations for physical and moral damage to the region before any negotiation is undertaken. Nonetheless, during the Mission's first visit to the region, there were definite indications that the Abkhaz leadership was interested in pursuing negotiations under the auspices of international organizations. Mr. Ardzinba said that he needs guarantees for his people and a clear plan of how a lasting settlement will be implemented. He explained that international organizations, as opposed to individual countries, would be the best guarantors for the process and even for the return of the refugees. Given these shared sentiments, it was somewhat surprising for both sides to have actively engaged in negotiations with only Russian mediation, in the highly active period between the visits of the Special Rapporteur delegation. =

However, this may be an indication of the eagerness both sides share in seeking a solution to the conflict. =

Regardless of whether or not an agreement is reached and signed in the current round of negotiations, it would seem appropriate for international assistance to be provided in the conflict-resolution process, to provide technical expertise in providing clear and mutually acceptable language, and to assist both sides in establishing a schedule of implementation

goals. Given that each side has claimed the other has obstructed the negotiations process, it would appear to make sense to fully involve international organizations, as opposed to individual countries, in the conflict-resolution process. The United Nations Conference on Abkhazia proposed to be held in late July in Geneva would appear the logical venue for such a broadening of the current negotiations process. It should be noted, though, that the Abkhazians have agreed to the return of refugees on numerous past occasions, but have stymied the repatriation process. At 2= 00 refugees per month, the maximum figure the Abkhaz currently allow, it will take many decades to repatriate refugees. It would also seem logical to first negotiate an agreement on those points which have already been agreed to by both sides, then to move on in future negotiations to other issues. =

This would enable some progress to be made and the current deadlock to be broken.

Despite what appeared to be a strong willingness on the part of the Abkhaz leadership to begin serious negotiations for a way out of the conflict, the few seemingly positive proposals that were presented by the Abkhaz during the Mission's first visit were always tempered by caveats, limitations and ultimatums. Before any negotiations could begin, some Abkhaz leaders demanded that all economic sanctions and the blockade would have to be lifted. Some leaders demanded that all political questions and issues would have to be decided before any refugees could be returned. Although perhaps acceptable for pre-negotiation posturing, such absolute or hard-line approaches to negotiation will doom any process to failure. =

These pre-conditions may be the result of a lack of negotiating experience on the part of some Abkhaz officials, however, they also point to the difficulty that will be faced by any Abkhaz negotiator on justifying any compromise domestically. Both sides of the conflict will have to step back from their existing positions and compromise. And both sides will need to have only their highest-level officials engage in the negotiating process in order to provide the domestic credibility and political leverage necessary for an agreement to be accepted and implemented. The Abkhazians have often opted to maintain the status quo on many issues in the past, however, they intimated to this delegation during its first and second visits that they are now more open to some form of internationally mediated negotiation than in the past.

Whereas the international blockade appeared to the Mission to have only been partially enforced, the travel restrictions and closed borders have been, if nothing else, an effective blockade to any comprehensive information reaching Abkhazia. Specifically, this region has been cut off from the rest of the former Soviet Union since the civil war, and many of =

the hardships and complaints expressed by residents of Abkhazia are similar to those expressed by residents in most former Soviet states. Abkhazians in their restricted capacity do not appear to have much of a sense of these developments in other former-Soviet regions, and prefer to lay all of the blame for the current state of affairs upon the Georgians. The provision of news and information to this region, as well as the dissemination of information out of it, would seem to be a useful step in acclimatizing the population of Abkhazia to events and developments at large, but also towards defining their own future goals more clearly. These kinds of exchanges would also be beneficial to Georgians and refugees on the actual state of conditions in Abkhazia. Existing efforts for the exchange of journalists and information should be enhanced. Likewise, exchanges of ideas and the proliferation of fora for other areas of discussion should also be encouraged through the provision of international assistance and the facilitation of NGO programs. Initiatives for facilitating the meeting of like groups from both sides of the conflict, and reciprocal visits, should be encouraged.

SOME NOTABLE AGREEMENT BETWEEN GEORGIANS AND ABKHAZIANS

Several high-ranking Georgians and Abkhazians suggested the creation of a war crimes tribunal to investigate the conflict and its aftermath. Both sides appeared ready to provide information and details of atrocities that occurred during and after the hostilities had ceased. Although this may assist in punishing those guilty of violating international laws and covenants from both sides of the conflict, the process of such tribunals will take years to complete and could in many ways prolong suffering by dredging up painful memories of the past. It is also doubtful that such tribunals will serve to build any peace between peoples or to show them how to live and work together. Perhaps an international legal tribunal of shorter duration might be considered, but not as an initial step in promoting a settlement that brings people together.

As previously mentioned, a number of Abkhazians and Georgians spoke to the Mission of concern over a prolonged presence of Russian troops in the conflict zone and in Georgia. It was argued that the presence of these forces and Russian influence have added to the confusion in the past. =

However, it should be noted that without the willingness of other countries to provide any form of peacekeeping troops or resources, some form of Russian forces appears to be a temporary necessity. For this reason, this Mission again recommends a more multi-national CISPKEF, or even the addition of peacekeeping forces from other countries outside of the CIS region.

Some authorities on both sides expressed concern over the results of past mediation efforts. Although Russia and the UN have played a key role in past negotiations, officials from both sides stated that more reliance on=

international bodies should be sought in the future, including a more prominent role for the OSCE. Both sides were also in agreement that tensions in the region are mounting and that armed conflict could break out in the near future. Although the current round of Russian-sponsored negotiations has once-again raised the hopes of officials on both sides of the conflict, past experience indicates that clear, uncontestable language must be used in any agreement. It is highly advisable that international assistance and expertise (provided by the UN, OSCE or EU) be used to assist the agreement and implementation phases of the existing effort. Again, the planned conference in Geneva could be a useful opportunity to challenge donors and to coordinate assistance efforts. The OSCE, as a regional international organization, and the EOG, representing a major group of interested donor states, should play substantive roles in this enhanced negotiations process.

Both the Abkhaz and the Georgians proposed different models of a federal system for a future regional government. What seems apparent to this Mission is that, while other examples may provide useful language and templates, no single model is going to fit this particular situation, and any government that is created will need to be specific to this region and its individual characteristics. Both parties independently discussed with the Mission the idea of a United States federal system where a state like California and Rhode Island are equal, however, the Abkhazians did not propose any over-arching federal government. The Georgians proposed the concept of "maximum autonomy" within a federal Georgia, but the Abkhaz insisted upon equal status in a confederation. Although the Abkhazians spoke with many different voices and ideas, the possibility of an agreement with Georgia on some measures regarding a political system might not be too distant, provided that both parties are serious about negotiating to a conclusion. There are definite differences between Georgian and Abkhazian positions, but if both sides were willing to commit to intensive negotiation processes and to see them through to a conclusion, it appears to this Mission that these differences could be overcome. The experience of international organizations in this process would be invaluable. Some issues regarding common structures (economic and political) have been agreed to by both sides in the current round of negotiations. These should be implemented as the first part of an effort to normalize relations and create conditions for an eventual solution.

Both sides are in a position to apply pressure on the other as the status quo is now established. By not allowing the refugees to return, the Abkhaz are placing the Government of Georgia and regional authorities under tremendous financial and political pressure to come up with a solution to

the conflict, particularly as these refugees become restless. On the other hand, the Government of Georgia is applying pressure on Abkhazia through the application of the partially implemented blockade, economic sanctions and travel restrictions, creating corresponding economic, social and political pressure in that region. This should be a basis for political negotiation and should allow for some form of gradual lifting of restrictions on each side of the conflict during the process of negotiating a complete solution. Phased implementation will enable confidence building on both sides, but needs to be directed and monitored by the international mediators.

A final observation that appears to be held in common by both sides is a highly emotional perspective on the conflict and its outcome. Part of this is natural after a civil war, but this particular situation seems somewhat more estranged. One reason is that both sides suffered terrible losses in the war, but neither side gained an absolute victory and the imposition of its will upon the other. Thus, both sides remain relatively unchanged in their points of view as from before the war. In some way, wounds have remained open in this conflict and intense emotions are still very much at the surface of life, particularly in Abkhazia itself. Another factor relates to the region of Abkhazia and what it represented in the Soviet era--a holiday paradise. Although it is now bombed, its economy destroyed and its people shattered, both sides of the conflict look upon the region as what it once was and draw upon their memories. Whereas the region cannot be rebuilt, it also must be recognized for what it now is. This type of bias is another reason for the use of impartial, international mediators.

For Georgians, information from the region, including filmed reports and documentaries would provide a more accurate picture of what the region now is and what the people in the region think and believe.

INTERNATIONAL FACTORS

The process of deadlock in this conflict has gone on so long that all mediating sides have developed entrenched positions. A number of actors have assisted both sides at one time or another, which has added some confusion to this process. Some of these mediators have at times played overlapping, conflicting and contradictory roles. International assistance to this conflict needs to be provided with a unified voice, impartial to the interests of one side or another. Further, assistance needs to be provided in a concrete way with a reasonable allowance for time to resolve the conflict. Funding mandates for international humanitarian relief efforts are continually running out. The emergency relief crises that result from suspension of funding demoralizes aid workers, creates havoc in the aid recipient communities, and becomes an increasingly inappropriate

example of a sustained international commitment to the region. An extended mandate for international assistance should be provided as part of an incentive package for both sides to negotiate and implement a solution to the conflict.

Although meetings do exist and there has apparently been a recent increase in cooperation between the CISPKF and other international organizations, one observation of this Mission is that there are few regular ties between UNOMIG, CISPKF and relief agencies. More transparency and coordination of activities between all international organizations could bring about more efficient assistance to the region and a stronger appearance of international unity. This having been said, it should be noted that all international organizations, including UNOMIG and the CISPKF, are operating under severe hardships and under dangerous and difficult conditions. All of these organizations, including UNOMIG and the relief organizations, are under-funded and need more consistent support and extended mandates to provide credible relief efforts. Relief organizations have generally performed remarkably, with little support and few resources. =

The United Nations Mission and its efforts in the region have been conducted under difficult and trying circumstances. A number of significant negotiations have been held with UN and Russian mediation and agreements have been signed. The UN's Special Envoy to the region was criticized by representatives from both sides of the conflict for not having been in the region a sufficient amount of time. However, the newly appointed representative of the UN Secretary General, the UN Mission and its military observer component are currently held in very high regard by both sides to the conflict and considered an essential component to any future solution. The current initiative to broaden the on-going peace initiative to include international mediators should be encouraged.

Events since the first Mission to the region:
A March 28 CIS Summit extended the CISPKF mandate until 31 July and added policing and de-mining functions to the existing mandate. The Abkhazian leadership rejected the mandate and threatened to suspend talks with Georgia until Moscow lifted its sanctions. =

Russian Foreign Ministry officials offered to chair a new round of talks between the Abkhaz and the Georgians to discuss the expanded mandate. =

The UN Security Council has approved a proposal for the UN, together with Russia, to expand its role in mediating a settlement to the conflict in Abkhazia. At one point in May, Mr. Ardzinba told Interfax that further talks with the Georgians were not possible given the current circumstances. =

Georgian troops held unannounced military exercises in a region bordering Abkhazia in May and scheduled more exercises for July.

President Schevardnadze in late May called on the United Nations to play a firmer role in the current situation, and he stated that the CISPKF is not an obstacle to the peace process. The President said the removal of this force would not lead to hostilities. The Georgian Parliament shortly thereafter adopted a resolution calling for the withdrawal of the CISPKF unless it was able to fulfill its mandate of covering the entire Gali region (the old administrative boundary) by the end of July. A Russian governmental spokesman termed this "political blackmail." The Abkhaz foreign policy spokesman Shamba called for an extension of the CISPKF mandate, a reversal of the Abkhaz position from two months earlier.

In early June, Mr. Ardzinba traveled to Moscow to discuss the signing of an agreement on the conflict, proposing a settlement similar to the Russia-Chechnya accord. This was rejected by the Georgian side, but President Schevardnadze proposed an international conference to discuss the crisis. Throughout June, a series of talks between the Georgians and Abkhaz were held in order to develop an acceptable settlement.

Message 146:

From sasco!ericandabby@compuserve.com Mon Jul 14 16:58:07 1997
 Received: by osce.org.ge (UUPC/@ v5.00, 25Nov92);
 Mon, 14 Jul 1997 16:58:07 +0500
 Received: from arl-img-4.compuserve.com (arl-img-4.compuserve.com [149.174.217])
 Received: (from mailgate@localhost)
 by arl-img-4.compuserve.com (8.8.6/8.8.6/2.1) id GAA18641
 for wooster@osce.org.ge; Mon, 14 Jul 1997 06:23:39 -0400 (EDT)
 Date: Mon, 14 Jul 1997 06:21:07 -0400
 From: Eric Rudenshiold <ericandabby@compuserve.com>
 Subject: Part 5, Lament
 To: Henry Wooster <wooster@osce.org.ge>
 Message-ID: <199707140623_MC2-1AD0-FAAE@compuserve.com>
 MIME-Version: 1.0
 Content-Transfer-Encoding: quoted-printable
 Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1
 Content-Disposition: inline
 Lines: 224
 Status: R

DELEGATION PROGRAMME 15-22 MARCH

Saturday, 15 March

-Arrival at Tbilisi Airport

-Depart for the Governmental Residence "Krtsanisi"

Sunday, 16 March

-Meeting at the OSCE Mission in Tbilisi with Head of Mission Ambassador Michael Libal and Mission staff

-Meeting with the "Friends of Georgia" group: Ambassador Bernard Fassier=

(France), Ambassador Feliks Stanyevskii (Russia), Ambassador William Courtney (US), Ambassador Norbert Baas (Germany), UNOMIG Head of Mission Liviu Bota

-Meeting with Mr. Levan Alexidze, State Adviser on International Law

- Meeting with opposition leader Ms. Irina Sarishvili Chanturia
- Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Irakli Menagharishvili
- Meeting with the representatives of the Citizens' Union parliamentary faction, Ms. Lana Gogoberidze, Giorghi Baramidze, Michael Machavariani, = et al.
- Meeting with Mikheil Saakashvili, Chairman of the Committee for Law and Constitutional Affairs
- Meeting with Chairman of the Parliament, Zurab Zhvania
- Meeting with the People's National Democrats parliamentary faction, Faction Chairman Iyane Ghiorgadze, Deputy Chairman of the Parliament Ghiroghi Kobakhidze, et al.
- Meeting with Mr. Kakha Chitaia, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee = on Foreign Relations
- Meeting with Revaz Adamia, Chairman of the Committee on Security and Defense

Saturday, 22 March

Departure from Tbilisi Airport

DELEGATION PROGRAMME 5-8 June

- Meeting with Ivan Rybkin, Secretary of the Russian National Security Council
- Meeting with staff members of the Russian National Security Council
- Meeting with Boris Pastukov, Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia for Caucasian Relations

DELEGATION PROGRAMME 25 June-1 July

Wednesday, 25 June

Travel to Senaki Airport by UN flight

Travel by UN convoy from Senaki to Sukhumi, Abkhazia

- Meeting with Elizabeth Stam, Head of the UN-OSCE Human Rights Office

Thursday, 26 June

- Meeting with Sergei Shamba, "Minister of Foreign Affairs" of Abkhazia
- Meeting with Konstantin Ozgan, "First Vice Premiere" of Abkhazia
- Meeting with the "Speaker of the Parliament", Mr. Sokrat Jinjolia
- Meeting with "Deputies of the Parliament"
- Meeting with the "President," Mr. Vladislav Ardzinba

Friday, 27 June

Travel through Gali and Zugdidi Districts

Travel to Tbilisi by UN Flight

- Meeting with Mr. Liviu Bota, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations
- Meeting with Professor Tamaz Gamkrelidze, Co-Chair of the Georgian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Saturday, 28 June

- Meeting at the OSCE Mission in Tbilisi
- Meeting with the "Friends of Georgia" group of Ambassadors
- Meeting with Ambassador Michael Libal, Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia
- Meeting with Mr. Zurab Zhvania, Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia

Monday, 30 June

- Meeting with Mr. Vakhtang Kolbaia, Deputy Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia and Head of the Georgian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
- Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Irakli Menagharishvili
- Meeting with Mr. Kakha Chitaia, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee =

-Meeting with representatives of the protesting parliamentary faction "Abkhazeti". =

-Meeting with Messrs. Tamaz Nadareishvili, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Abkhazeti and Zurab Erkvania, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Abkhazeti. =

-Meeting with Georgian NGO representatives and TACIS program officials
-Meeting with the Georgian national Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Monday, 17 March

-Meeting with the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia Mr. Zurab Zhvania=

-Meeting with the representatives of the Peoples' faction (National-Democrats)

-Meeting with the Georgian National Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

-Meeting with Mr. Konstantine Kokoev, Chairman of the Committee for Human Rights Defense =

-Meeting with the First Deputy Minister of State Security Mr. Avtandil Ioseliani and Deputy Minister of Security for Abkhazia Mr. Temur Khevsuriani

-Meeting with the President of Georgia Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze

-Meeting with the Deputy Prosecutor-General Mr. Anzor Baluashvili

-Meeting with Representatives of Committees of Parliament

Tuesday, Wednesday, 18-19 March

Travel to Senaki Airport by UN flight

Travel by UN convoy from Senaki to Sukhumi, Abkhazia

-Meeting with the UNOMIG Head of Mission, Ambassador Liviu Bota

-Meeting with the UNOMIG Chief Military Observer, Major General Per Kallstrom, Senior Political Adviser for UNOMIG Marian Staszewski and Head

of the UN Human Rights Office, Elisabeth Stam

-Meeting with the Director of the Center for Human Rights and Support for=

Democracy in Abkhazia, Mrs. Natella Akaba, and the Chairman of the Culture

Fund, Mr. Sergei Shamba

-Meeting with the CIS-PKF Commander, Major General Doria Babenkov

-Meeting with the "Minister of Foreign Affairs" Mr. Konstantin Ozgan

-Meeting with the UNOMIG Observers

Wednesday, 19 March

-Meeting with the "General Prosecutor", Mr. Anri Jergenia

-Meeting with the "Prime Minister", Mr. Gennadi Gagulia =

-Meeting with the "Speaker of the Parliament", Mr. Sokrat Jinjolia

-Meeting with "Deputies of the Parliament"

-Meeting with the "President", Mr. Vladislav Ardzinba

Thursday, 20 March

-Meeting with the Head of the Gali Administration, Mr. Valeri Lomia

-Briefing at the UNOMIG Gali Sector Headquarters

Travel to Zugdidi District in Georgia

-Meeting with Zugdidi authorities

-Meeting with refugees

Travel to Tbilisi

Friday, 21 March

on
Foreign Relations
-Meeting with the President of Georgia Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze

Tuesday, 1 July
Depart from Tbilisi Airport

ANNEX: PRESS RELEASE

"Urgent Appeal for Continuation of Humanitarian Aid to =
Conflict Regions of Georgia and Abkhazia"

Upon returning from a mission to war-torn regions of western Georgia and Abkhazia in the former Soviet Union, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Vice President Wojciech Lamentowicz (Member of Parliament, Poland) discovered that a number of international relief agencies are running short of funding and planning to cease their activities. "This is a human tragedy in the making," announced Lamentowicz who traveled to the region as a Special Rapporteur on the situation in Abkhazia for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. "I call on all OSCE-member states to take note of this impending crisis, and ask them to continue regional assistance for these important relief efforts," he said during a meeting with parliamentary leaders in Warsaw.

Abkhazia has been cut off from trade and commerce by an international blockade, but marginal humanitarian assistance has been provided to the region by a small number of relief organizations. =

Lamentowicz pointed out that, although southern regions of Abkhazia have been depopulated in what was termed "ethnic-cleansing" by the 1996 OSCE Lisbon Summit Declaration, most of those who remained were elderly and incapable of leaving at the time. Now, he explained, they are unable to provide for themselves. Similar relief efforts have also been provided for tens of thousands of refugees from the region, housed in "temporary camps" in areas of Georgia surrounding Abkhazia. "Although international aid is generally directed and limited to resettling people back to their original homes," Lamentowicz added, "these refugees have been held hostage by stalled peace talks for several years now. Local resources are simply inadequate to provide for their needs." =

After meeting with President Eduard Shevardnadze and many other Georgian governmental leaders, as well as traveling through mine fields in a United Nations convoy to meet with the Abkhazian leadership, OSCE Vice President Lamentowicz was cautiously optimistic that some initiatives for reconciling aspects of the conflict may be possible. However, the Polish MP stressed that the cessation of food and medical supplies to tens of thousands of victims on both sides of the conflict border will only increase tensions in the region. In the past year, an increasing number of terrorist and criminal activities have occurred in the area surrounding t=

he conflict. "The victims of this civil war are becoming increasingly frustrated at the lack of progress in mediation efforts," said Lamentowicz.

"Humanitarian relief organizations are providing a necessary and vital supply of food and medicines which has helped in keeping the region stable."

We must see that this assistance is continued."

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Vice President and Special Rapporteur traveled to Georgia and Abkhazia from 15-22 March and is preparing for a visit to meet with Russian governmental officials in Moscow regarding their opinions on the regional situation. Lamentowicz will issue a report on his findings later in April.

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