



Situation in Georgia

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Stakeout at the White House
Washington, DC
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1:21 P.M. EDT

SECRETARY RICE: Good afternoon. I have just finished a meeting with the President at which I was able to brief him on the ongoing diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis in Georgia.

I was earlier on the phone this morning with the Foreign Ministers of the G7, and on that phone call, Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner of France briefed us on the ongoing discussions between the French and the Russians, as well as the French and the Georgians. I believe that they believe that they have made some progress, and we welcome that, and we certainly welcome the EU mediation.

It is very important now that all parties cease fire. The Georgians have agreed to a cease-fire. The Russians need to stop their military operations, as they have apparently said that they will, but those military operations really do now need to stop, because calm needs to be restored. There then will be international efforts to facilitate the withdrawal of forces from the zone of conflict. We can then look to the issue of how to resolve the longstanding frozen conflicts of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

I want to make very clear that the United States stands for the territorial integrity of Georgia, for the sovereignty of Georgia, that we support its democratically elected government and its people. We are reviewing our options for humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Georgia. But the most important thing right now is that these military operations need to stop.

We will continue to work diplomatically on this matter and will continue our discussions with all the parties involved.

Thank you very, very much.

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