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Dear Constituent,

While much of the world's attention has been focused on the friendly competition of the Olympics, the Russian invasion of [Georgia](#) reminds us that the world remains a dangerous place and that competition from some countries is anything but friendly.

After a fitful beginning as a post-Soviet independent country, Georgia was just emerging as a vibrant democracy and free market economy. It had recently applied for NATO membership and had made it clear that its foreign policy was pro-American - even sending some 2,000 troops to support the rebuilding of Iraq. Despite our commitment to NATO as a strictly defensive alliance, the Russians have seen the growth of NATO eastward as a threat.

While it would be much more dangerous and difficult for the Russians to directly attack a NATO member, such as Poland, they have been fomenting trouble in two of Georgia's border provinces, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, for several years. In this way they have been able to limit Georgian control of the strategically important Caucasus Mountain areas of the country, bleed the Georgian government of resources that could be put toward economic development, and reduce Georgia's access to the economically important Black Sea. They prefer to have a weak Russian-oriented neighbor as opposed to an economically strong western-oriented one.

Like many of today's international problems the situation in Georgia is also influenced to some extent by the competition for energy; several significant energy pipelines cross or are proposed to cross Georgia to bring oil and gas from the Caspian region to western consumers. By crossing Georgia these pipelines by-pass Russia and reduce Russia's ability to use oil as a weapon to influence what happens in Western and Central Europe.

It is too early to tell where all of this will lead, but I am reminded of a commercial that President Ronald Reagan ran during his 1984 re-election campaign. It said in part, "There's a bear in the woods, some people say the bear is tame, isn't it smart to be as strong as the bear, if there is a bear?" [Check out the Reagan video on You Tube.](#)

Following this article are some links and resources to help you learn more about Georgia and what our government is doing to support the Georgian government and to peacefully resolve the crisis.

- [Small Web Resolution Map of Georgia](#)
- [University of Texas directory of maps related to the crisis in Georgia](#)

- [Caspian Region Oil Facilities](#)
- [NATO Statement In Support Of Georgia](#)

Energy Prices Ease, No Thanks To Washington

Thursday, August 21, I took another turn on the House Floor to talk about energy and to ask Speaker Nancy Pelosi for a vote on a bill to allow for more domestic energy production, such as the bill I introduced, H.R. 3089, "[The No More Excuses Energy Act of 2007](#)."

Those of us who believe there should be more domestic production of ALL forms of energy have been fighting to at least be allowed a vote on a bill since before Speaker Pelosi sent Congress out on a five week vacation back the beginning of August. We have now been on the House floor every weekday for the past three weeks to try to generate publicity to bring public pressure on the Speaker to at least allow us a vote on this important issue.

If you would like to learn more about the efforts to force a vote on a plan for more domestic production of ALL forms of energy please go to the [House Republican Conference Energy Update](#) site.

There Is Still Time To Take The Energy and Immigration Survey

If you did not take my [2008 Issues Survey](#) when I sent it in the August 1 newsletter there is still time, just click the link and let me know what you think about energy, immigration and other important topics. To sign-up for the newsletter and receive special e-mail updates throughout the year simply [follow this link](#). If you don't want to sign-up for the newsletter or take the survey you may still e-mail me your ideas or comments [through this link](#). As always, I can do a better job of representing you if I know your views.

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Respectfully,



Mac Thornberry
Member of Congress (TX-13)

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