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## Conflict Between Russia and the US in the Caucasus

Upon his arrival to Vladikavkaz from Beijing on August 9, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said that Georgia had committed a crime against its own people, dealt a blow to its own territorial integrity, and caused a tremendous damage to its statehood. He also said that under the circumstances it was hard to imagine how South Ossetia would now be convinced to become a part of Georgia as the Georgian aggression, which was a crime against the Ossetian people, had led to numerous fatalities among the civilian population and to a humanitarian catastrophe. Subsequently V. Putin described the drama in South Ossetia as genocide while visiting a refugee camp in the Alagir district.

Thus, V. Putin has thoroughly assessed the recent developments from the political and legal standpoints. Russia will provide the entire necessary assistance to South Ossetia at the initial phase of the crisis relief. V. Putin pledged that the refugees would be able to return to their homeland and declared that Russia would contribute 10 bn rubles to rebuild Tskhinvali as the first step.

Russian President D. Medvedev said he would instruct the military prosecutor to document the crimes against civilians in South Ossetia.

The clear and definite statements made by the two Russian leaders contrast sharply with those of the Georgian leader who obviously expected the situation to evolve not the way it actually did. Overwhelmed by fury, he keeps ordering new devastating attacks on Tskhinvali and South Ossetia's villages and begs his Western patrons for help. Georgian Minister for Reintegration Temur Yakobashvili indicated that the West would surely exert pressure on Moscow and then Georgia would emerge from the conflict as the winner. For some unknown reason, Mr. Saakashvili and his team concluded that the aggression and genocide for which they are responsible would remain unpunished.

Russia's reaction to the tragedy in South Ossetia has shown that the Medvedev-Putin tandem functions with high efficiency and synchronism. Clearly, the attempts of external forces to destabilize the domestic political situation in Russia by instilling divisions in its leadership have failed.

Western media said that the Georgian President (already called a war criminal by a number of politicians) had offered a ceasefire directly to Russian President D. Medvedev. The reports were refuted and branded disinformation by the Kremlin. No doubt, there can be no truce with Mr. Saakashvili until all the Georgian guerillas are expelled from South Ossetia and the infrastructure of the Georgian state terrorism including army bases, military installations, air force bases, and the networks of their economic support are maximally destroyed.

It transpired that the news about the withdrawal of the Georgian army from South Ossetia had been another lie. In all likelihood, the disinformation is spread by the representatives of Georgia in order to win time to regroup its forces. They must be routed completely in order to ensure peace and stability for the Caucasus. Russian Prime Minister V. Putin said: "For centuries Russia has played a highly positive stabilizing role in the region, being a guarantor of cooperation and progress. Things have always been and are going to remain that way – nobody should have any doubts about this."

V. Putin was absolutely right when he said that Russians will continue to regard the Georgian people as friends. The severity of the fighting in which the Russian army, peacekeepers, and the Ossetian self-defense forces are currently engaged shows that Russia is facing a serious and ferocious enemy who recognizes no moral limitations on the way to its criminal objectives. Certainly, this does not apply to the Georgian nation – dragged into bloody adventures for which it will certainly have to pay, it is yet to draw conclusions from the experience. One item from the timeline preceding the aggression deserves particular attention – the Georgian-US Immediate Response 2008 military exercise, during which the US instructors trained the Georgian forces to carry out "anti-terrorist cleansings" in residential areas was completed on July 31. The exercise included such activities as cleansing terrorists from villages (allegedly in the framework of the preparation of the Georgian military for the operations in Iraq) and ensuring the security of the civilian population. The atrocities perpetrated by the Georgian guerillas in Tskhinvali had been taught by the Western instructors under the cynical disguise of "the struggle against terrorism". The actual objectives are of course completely different. Former Georgian Foreign Minister Salomé Zourabichvili, who is certainly a very well-informed person, said the US presence in Georgia comprises a broad range of activities including the training of the Georgian armed forces and the monitoring of the strategically important corridor passing across the Caucasus. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline is a part of the latter. Zourabichvili opined that the main purpose of the current conflict with Russia is to strengthen the loyalty of Georgia to the US and Great Britain and to guarantee that they will have control over the country and, consequently, over the South Caucasus.

It should be noted that **the escalation at Russia's border coincided in time with tensions in China's**

**Xinjiang autonomous region**, where a terrorist act has taken place during the Olympics. A few days earlier, an arms depot was found in Bishkek, the capital of Kirghizstan, attended by 10 US military servicemen and several diplomats from the US Embassy in the country. Georgia's aggression against South Ossetia is a war in the interests of other players, a war in which Georgians are to play the role of cannon fodder. Unless the aggression is suppressed immediately in the tiny region of the Caucasus, new and much more extensive regional conflicts will be imminent.

Now, as during WWII, the Russian army is fighting heroically to protect not only the Caucasus but the entire post-Soviet space from the fascist plague.