



THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL
OF THE UNITED STATES

PRESS RELEASE

For more information, contact Fran Burwell at 202-778-4970

Atlantic Council Launches Initiative on Abkhazia

For immediate release – *Washington DC, April 17, 2008* — The Atlantic Council of the United States (ACUS) announced today a special initiative to assess conflict conditions in Abkhazia, a break-away region of the Republic of Georgia. The initiative will examine the efforts of the United Nations and the international community to resolve this conflict, along with the impact of Russia's recent decision to establish legal connections with Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

"The Atlantic Council's initiative could not be more timely and important," said ACUS President Frederick C. Kempe. "We hope it can inform more effective efforts in Abkhazia by the United Nations, which has lead responsibility."

Kempe continued, "Russia's strong opposition to Georgia's joining NATO and its encouragement of secessionists in Abkhazia and South Ossetia have increased tensions. It is time for a fresh look and a new approach to address the frozen conflict in Abkhazia."

The project director is David L. Phillips, a senior fellow with ACUS and a visiting scholar at the Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University. Phillips has more than 20 years experience working in the field of conflict resolution, including extensive background in the Caucasus.

American and European experts will serve as counselors to the initiative. An ACUS delegation will visit Georgia and Sukhumi in mid-June. Findings and recommendations will be finalized by September 2008.

Contact David Phillips for additional information at dp2366@columbia.edu.