



THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL
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PRESS RELEASE

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Atlantic Council Report Seeks “Smart Support” for Georgia

For immediate release – Washington DC, October 3, 2008 — A new report by the Atlantic Council, “[Post-Conflict Georgia](#),” details the international support required to address the humanitarian plight of war victims, help rebuild Georgia's economy, and restore investor confidence.

Yet while underscoring the urgency of such action, it at the same time argues Georgians will be best served if the flow of aid is transparent and closely monitored as well as linked to democracy benchmarks, argues David L. Phillips, director of the Atlantic Council’s Forum on Georgia and the Caucasus, who was the report’s author. “The need to assist Georgia meaningfully is urgent,” said Frederick Kempe, President and CEO of the Atlantic Council. “But this must be ‘smart support,’ with the sorts of strings attached that will increase its effectiveness.”

To assist Georgia and the Georgian people, the report calls on the United States and the EU to both adopt a free trade arrangement with Georgia. It also proposes that the EU implement a visa facilitation regime to strengthen links between the country and the West.

The report supports the establishment of an International Commission to investigate the causes and conduct of the war. In addition, it proposes that a competent international body investigate both Russian and Georgian claims of atrocities.

The report highlights the need for presidential leadership so that the Georgian government can more effectively address the needs of internally displaced persons. Efforts would initially focus on winterization, as well as durable solutions for Georgians whose homes have been destroyed. To strengthen Georgia's democracy, the report calls on the Georgian government to implement Mikheil Saakashvili’s reform agenda that includes limitations on presidential power, a more independent judiciary, and assistance to opposition political parties including access to more independent media. The proposed “patriot act” for Georgia is a bad idea and should be abandoned.

The report concludes that while Georgia's chances of restoring control in Abkhazia or South Ossetia are remote, Georgia should not abandon the Abkhaz and South Ossetians to Russia. It endorses track-two activities and commercial ties. To show its support for Georgia's sovereignty, however, the report urges the United States and Europe to launch a coordinated international effort sanctioning individuals and corporations illegally visiting, trading, or investing in Abkhazia or South Ossetia.

According to Phillips, who has worked in conflict zones for twenty years as a senior adviser to the U.S. State Department and the United Nations, and as president of the Congressional Human Rights Foundation, the Georgian government should direct its post-conflict efforts toward making Georgia a genuine European state, which will be a positive model to Georgians, as well as future generations of Abkhaz and South Ossetians. “Post-Conflict Georgia,” is available online at:

<http://www.acus.org/publication/post-conflict-georgia>

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