



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the Passing of Former Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 10, 2014

I offer my deepest condolences on the passing of former Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze.

As foreign minister of the Soviet Union in the 1980s, Shevardnadze played an instrumental role with President Gorbachev, President Reagan, and Secretary Shultz in bringing the Cold War to an end. He reduced the risk of nuclear confrontation by giving new life to arms control negotiations. He opposed the hardliners and refused to use force against Central and Eastern European countries when they began political and economic reforms, and he advocated reform within the Soviet Union as well.

As Georgia's second president following the restoration of independence, Shevardnadze helped ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that fragile state during the 1990s, and put Georgia on its irreversible trajectory toward Euro-Atlantic integration.

As Georgia pauses to reflect on the life of one of its great statesmen, we urge all Georgians to remain committed to a united, democratic Georgia.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.