



**33rd (SPECIAL) JOINT MEETING OF THE
FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION
AND THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

1. Date: Wednesday, 11 June 2008

Opened: 9.30 a.m.
Closed: 10.05 a.m.

2. Chairperson: Ms. T. Parts (FSC) (Estonia)
Mr. A. Turunen (PC) (Finland)

3. Subjects discussed — Statements — Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: OPENING REMARKS BY THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS

Chairperson of the PC, Chairperson of the FSC

Agenda item 2: INTRODUCTION BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION OF
ITS REQUEST OF 9 JUNE 2008 (FSC-PC.DEL/27/08) FOR
A JOINT FSC-PC MEETING, IN ACCORDANCE WITH
PARAGRAPH 16.3 AND 16.3.1.1, CHAPTER III OF THE
VIENNA DOCUMENT 1999, AND WITH REFERENCE TO
ITS NOTE VERBALE No. 24, DATED 30 MAY 2008

Russian Federation (Annex)

Agenda item 3: COMMENTS BY GEORGIA

Georgia

* Includes a correction to the title of the journal.

Agenda item 4: GENERAL STATEMENTS

Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro; the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, in alignment) (FSC-PC.DEL/29/08), Moldova (FSC-PC.DEL/32/08), Ukraine (FSC-PC.DEL/30/08), Chairperson of the PC

Agenda item 5: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 11 June 2008, following the 33rd Joint FSC-PC Meeting



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation
Permanent Council**

FSC-PC.JOUR/20/Corr.1
11 June 2008
Annex

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

33rd Joint Meeting of the FSC and the PC
FSC-PC Journal No. 20, Agenda item 2

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Madam Chairperson,
Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished colleagues,

The Russian delegation requested the holding of this joint meeting in view of the fact that the reply by Georgia to the Russian note verbale of 30 May has not completely removed the existing concerns.

I recall that in this note verbale we raised serious questions in accordance with the procedures set forth in Chapter III of the Vienna Document regarding numerous flights by Georgian unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) over Abkhazia, which may be regarded without any doubt as unusual military activities in violation of the 1994 Moscow Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces and also the appeal by the United Nations Security Council in paragraph 6 of resolution 1808.

For those who are unaware, we should like to point out that the question of UAVs already arose when the observer functions of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) were being studied. The Mission Head believed that the use of UAVs could significantly enhance the observers' capacities without posing a risk to their lives or the security of the personnel. The Abkhaz side objected to this, however, citing the danger that the information obtained by the UAVs might not reach the right hands because of leaks. The United Nations appreciated these concerns and set about elaborating procedures to eliminate them.

A very different and by no means responsible approach was shown by whoever took the decision to finance, purchase and use the Georgian UAVs. In essence they have consciously created a new and serious irritant in the relations between Tbilisi and Sukhumi. It is no coincidence that no sooner had the provocative flights started than the Abkhaz side gave warning that it would be forced to destroy the UAVs, a warning that proved not to be without substance.

The first Georgian UAV was shot down by the Abkhaz air defence system in the Ochamchira district on 18 March this year. The second incident took place on 20 April and in subsequent days the Abkhaz side destroyed a further five Georgian UAVs. For some reason, however, Tbilisi categorically denied these losses. Only after the Abkhaz side produced evidence from the UN mission regarding three UAVs did Georgia stop denying the obvious facts and admitted three losses but hastened immediately to shift the blame on Russia. For some reason Tbilisi refuses to believe in the capacity of the Abkhaz air defence system; evidently this suits it better from a political point of view. Meanwhile we understand that the Abkhaz side has evidence and can present fragments of other UAVs that it has destroyed.

As mentioned in the commentary by the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs on 27 May this year, it is important for UNOMIG to continue to study the underlying causes of the problems, which are to be found in the massive and gross violations by Georgia of its obligations. And although Tbilisi is doing its utmost today to distract attention from this circumstance, focusing artificially on one episode, the fact remains that if the provocative flights in violation of the Moscow Agreement and United Nations Security Council resolution 1808 had not taken place, there would not have been the various incidents with UAVs, including the one on 20 April, nor would there have been the added factor of increased tension in the zone of conflict. And indeed we in the OSCE would not have had to concern ourselves for the last one and a half months with problems caused exclusively by irresponsible acts by Tbilisi.

On the evening of 30 May the media reported the reassuring news that Georgia had discontinued the UAV flights. However, this undoubtedly positive step is devalued to a large extent by the content of the note verbale by the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the OSCE of 1 June this year in which Georgia continued to insist on the “legitimacy” of the flights and “reserved” the right resume them.

A reply of this nature to the concerns expressed in the Russian note verbale cannot be regarded as satisfactory. It means that the likelihood of new provocative flights resulting in increased tension will remain, as will the likelihood of new incidents that the United Nations Security Council and the OSCE will again have to deal with.

We should like to recall that the UNOMIG report of 26 May stated unequivocally that reconnaissance missions by unmanned aircraft constituted military action in contravention of the Moscow Agreement.

This being the case, we urge our Georgian partners to be consistent and, in the interests of defusing tension, normalizing the situation and creating more favourable conditions for seeking a political settlement, to take the positive step of reaffirming — this time without any reservations — their renunciation of UAV flights over Abkhazia.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the meeting.