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our best to be good allies, and last year we tried to help with aid and we will do so again this year.

We want to talk a little about what can be done to help with peacekeeping efforts there and about other matters that affect their destiny in Georgia, including, obviously, events in Russia and other countries in the region. So I've really looked forward to this meeting for a long time. And I have many questions; I'm going to be listening hard today.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—U.N. troops there? U.N. troops to Georgia?

The President. Well, we want to talk about that today. We're going to have a visit about that.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:05 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With Chairman Eduard Shevardnadze of the Republic of Georgia

March 7, 1994

The President. It's a real pleasure and an honor for me to welcome Chairman Eduard Shevardnadze to the White House today. Few leaders in our time have earned the degree of international respect that Chairman Shevardnadze enjoys. He's a statesman whose vision and diplomacy have played an immeasurably important role in bringing a peaceful end to the cold war.

This was our first personal meeting, although we've talked by phone on other occasions. It was a productive one. We discussed the great political and economic challenges facing Georgia. We discussed the steps the United States can take to help Georgia to meet those challenges.

I reaffirmed in very strong terms America's support for the independence, the sovereignty, and the territorial integrity of Georgia. And I expressed support for the efforts sponsored by the United Nations to find a lasting political settlement to the conflict in the Abkhaz region of Georgia. I'm hopeful that the parties to that conflict can achieve in their negotiations and maintain an effective cease-fire. If they can, the United States would be inclined to support a U.N. peacekeeping operation in Georgia, an operation that would not involve U.S. military units. We've already begun consultations on this issue with the Congress, whose views and support will be important. And Chairman Shevardnadze will have the opportunity to discuss this and other matters with Members of Congress during his stay here with us.

In our meeting today, we also discussed Georgia's efforts to expand cooperation with other nations in the Caucasus region. We agreed that both our nations have a tremendous stake in the success of reform in Russia, that a democratic and market-oriented Russia at peace with its neighbors is in the interests of Georgia and the United States.

I made it clear in our talks that the U.S. is committed to encouraging greater political freedom and economic renewal in Georgia. That commitment is outlined by the joint declaration and bilateral investment treaty we've signed today.

Our commitment is also underscored by the $70 million in assistance the U.S. has allocated to Georgia so far this year. Most of these funds are dedicated to humanitarian efforts. As Georgia moves toward peace and proceeds with reform, we're prepared to increase our technical and economic assistance as well.

This is clearly a difficult time of transition for Georgia. But throughout its rich history, Georgia many times has met and overcome adversity. I'm hopeful that the renowned resilience of the Georgian people will serve them well as they build a more stable and prosperous future. As they face that work, the Georgian people are indeed fortunate to have a leader with a vision, the stature, the leadership, and the courage of Chairman Shevardnadze. And I look forward to working with him in the days ahead.

Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Shevardnadze. Dear Mr. President—President Clinton, ladies and gentlemen. Each of my sessions and meetings with the press is connected to one or another event. For instance, I appeared here before you when the INF agreement was signed and when the Soviet troops were brought out of Afghanistan. There were very many interesting historical events, *perestroika* and democratization. We had a root change in the relations between our superpowers. This meeting with you, Mr. President, is also tied to a very significant event.

It's possible that I and my country in this first, my official visit to the United States, could be one of the largest. President Clinton has just signed, and I have just signed, a declaration on the principles of relations between the United States of America and Georgia. As leaders of our governments, we have affixed our signatures and say that Georgia will adhere to the NPT.

We have made a very large, at least for Georgia, a very large step. In a series of discussions, have been talking about a whole series of important events, important for Georgia. Georgia is a very small country, but it is large in its attitude toward big political issues related to all of the other countries that now exist and that came out of the former Soviet Union when the Soviet Union passed. And I think what we now are seeing are very important events regarding the future of all of us countries in this region. As many of the other independent and sovereign countries of that region, Georgia, too, needs a lot of assistance.

The integration within the CIS calls upon us to overcome many, many problems and obstacles. But I am convinced that assistance from the West is also very important to help us go the way. No one country will be able to make it to democracy and to market economy without assistance from the outside.

One of the many conflicts on the territory of the former Soviet Union and in Georgia as well—these are horrible conflicts, but we can say that this conflict on our territory is yet only one of a whole arc, a great arc of conflicts that is taking place in our region. This is a big threat to international peace. And we should do like you said, Mr. President, today in all of our discussions, we should be very careful of our actions and our attitudes.

We have touched upon a whole series of issues related to our Partnership For Peace, the initiator of which is Mr. President Clinton. I say that Georgia actively supports you and hopes to be just as active in the implementation of the partnership of peace. That's the most important thing.

I informed President Clinton of our approach in the political settlement of the Abkhazian conflict. On the 9th of March, I'm going to appear at the Security Council session of the United Nations, and there I'm going to attempt to explain my views on this issue.

Within the visit also that's planned, where I plan to meet the heads of a variety of international financial institutions, we're going to set forth some of the greater priorities for Georgia, the investment of funds into Georgia to a stabilization fund, a democratization fund, if necessary, to help us move toward reforms.

We discussed also with President Clinton the events in Russia. As usual, I am always coming out in favor of supporting President Yeltsin and the policy that he has set forth. And I have spoken with President Clinton about some of the trends that we are seeing taking place in Russia. We are very much interested in seeing that Russian democracy flourishes, also, in other countries around Russia, and I think all of us will be working toward that success. Otherwise, the events in Russia should be viewed very closely, in very close relationship to what happens in other states and other countries.

I'm very appreciative to President Clinton for all of his support which he has shown and continues to show to Georgia, now experiencing a very, very tough time. Right now, Mr. President has just announced the necessary funds of humanitarian assistance to Georgia. I must say that if it were not for the assistance of the American people and your support, Mr. President, our people, our Georgian people, in the fullest sense of the word would be starving. Thank you. Thank you so very much.

And to the press that's here, I would like to, in your presence, to invite President Clinton to come to Georgia at any time that is convenient to you, Mr. President. Thank you so much.

The President. Let me say what I would like to do now. I'll recognize Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press], and then we will try to alternate to give the Georgian press a chance to ask questions. We'll recognize the American press, the Georgian press in the alternate.

Go ahead, Terry.

Whitewater Investigation

Q. Mr. President, there were at least three occasions where White House officials were briefed by Federal regulators about the status of the Whitewater investigation. Were you and Mrs. Clinton aware of those contacts, and what were you told about the content of those discussions?

The President. Well, there were no briefings, and I didn't know about, for example, Roger Altman's meeting until he testified to it on the Hill. And one of the other contacts, I think, was a press contact of some kind. I was unaware of that one.

Sometime in October, I was—I became aware of—I don't know when, but sometime in October, I became aware of the RTC finding with regard to the question—the referral, I think it's called, on the question of whether my campaign benefited improperly from checks which allegedly came from the S&L, and I knew about that. That was—I don't remember when I knew about it or who told me about it, but it was just sort of presented as a fact, a decision that had been made by the Government. And I didn't think much about it at the time. It was just something that I absorbed. It was told to me just as something that the Government had decided to do. Otherwise, I was not aware of any of these things.

Now, let me remind you of what we have done in the last few days. First, to avoid any question arising in the future of the propriety of any of these actions, we have literally erected a firewall between the White House and other regulatory agencies so that any contact, in or out, relating to any of these matters would have to be cleared by and approved by the Counsel's office, so that all of these matters will be clear and proper.

Secondly, we have committed to fully support and cooperate with the Special Counsel's subpoenas to look into this. On Friday night, as soon as the subpoenas were received, the White House Deputy Counsel, Joel Klein, sent a memo to all the White House staff describing the documents called for and a procedure to fully comply. This morning, the Chief of Staff, Mr. McLarty, has sent a detailed compliance memo from Mr. Klein to all the staff setting forth the procedures that the staff must follow to make sure that compliance is full and complete.

Second, we have begun in earnest—I have, personally—a process to select a new White House Counsel. And I want to make it just exactly clear what I'm looking for. Number one, I want someone of unquestioned integrity and a lot of experience in dealing with the kinds of issues that have to come into the White House, someone who can establish processes that everyone will acknowledge are appropriate to deal with all the legal matters that the White House deals with. And finally, someone who will inspire confidence in me and in you, the press, and most importantly, in the American people that we are going the extra mile not only in this case but in all cases to deal with all matters in the appropriate way. So I think that we're doing everything we can. We certainly intend to do that. And we'll be aggressive in pursuit of it.

Yes, anyone over here? Yes.

Republic of Georgia

Q. Mr. President, I want to ask you about your feeling. What do you feel when you hear such words, "Thank you very much for your helping because your helping helped us not suffer." What do you feel when you hear such words?

The President. I didn't have my earphones on, excuse me.

Q. Mr. President, she says what do you feel when people tell you that you have saved our people from hunger and starvation?

The President. She asked: What do I feel when people say that the United States has saved many people in Georgia from hunger and starvation?

I feel a sense of gratitude that we had the opportunity to do it. Most of the people in our country understand that we are very fortunate to live here, to have the system that we have, to have the economy that we have, and that we have responsibilities and opportunities around the world that we discharge as well as we can. The people of Georgia have carried on an historic and courageous struggle. Chairman Shevardnadze has become the embodiment of that struggle for us here in America and for people all over the world. And I'm glad that, last year on a couple of occasions, the United States was able to move rapidly and to be helpful. We long for the day when you will not need it anymore. And we know that you do, too.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International.]

Hillary Clinton

Q. Mr. President, how do you feel now that your wife is becoming the focal point of the Whitewater investigation, and the Washington Times quotes three couriers as testifying that she ordered the shredding of documents? I know this is all very painful, but I wonder how it affected you in your household and——

The President. Well, let me say that the only thing that I want to say on behalf of both of us is that we want to support the Special Counsel's work and we want to ask the American people to let the process work.

Law firms dispose of their documents all the time. And I did not read the article, but I understand the article didn't purport to say what the contents of any of the files were. I can tell you this: I believe I'm a better authority than anybody else in America on my wife; I have never known a person with a stronger sense of right and wrong in my life. Ever. I could cite you chapter and verse over 20 years-plus now that I have known her when it would have been very easy for her to take a shortcut, to take an easy way out, to do something else, when she has unfailingly done the right thing. And I do not believe for a moment that she has done anything wrong. I have—I just—If the rest of the people in this country, if everybody in this country had a character as strong as hers, we wouldn't have half the problems we've got today. Now people can ask whatever questions they want, and we will do our best to comply. But I'm just telling you, the American people can worry about something else. Her moral compass is as strong as anybody's in this country, and they will see that.

Abkhazia

Q. Mr. President, the most painful problem for Georgia today is the Abkhazian issue. How do you see a specific role of the United States in the settlement of this issue, specifically? Thank you.

The President. Well, that's what Chairman Shevardnadze and I talked about, mostly, at our first meeting. The United States should support Georgia's efforts to secure a United Nations peacekeeping effort and to have the kinds of conditions that will permit the peacekeeping to succeed, for example, a clear strategy for returning the refugees to their home. The United States would not be called upon to provide troops but would want to see that the troop force was a good, balanced U.N. troop force mix, and I think we should be prepared to contribute some of the cost of operating the peacekeeping mission.

I have already opened conversations with the Congress about that. And as I said, the Chairman is going to talk to Members of Congress, and because of his long and distinguished relationship with the United States, going back to his days as foreign minister of the former Soviet Union, he has a lot of friends in the Congress, and he might well be able to have a very positive impact. He might be able to get more money out of them than I can. [*Laughter*] But together we're going to do our best to get the support.

Chairman Shevardnadze. Maybe I'll convince them to give me some money for other purposes, too.

The President. Maybe you can lobby for my health care plan. [*Laughter*]

Whitewater Investigation

Q. Mr. President, your Chief of Staff, Mack McLarty, said that he knew about one of the meetings with the Treasury officials. Can you tell us why he didn't seem to understand that that kind of meeting would give the appearance of impropriety? And does the fact that he didn't, diminish your confidence in him?

The President. No, because I didn't know until yesterday, I guess, that the ethics counsel for the Treasury Department had apparently approved the Altman meeting.

Let me tell you what I've told him to do. Let me just tell you what—I have instructed the staff not only to fully comply with this subpoena but to examine the records and the memories of everyone for any conceivable contact during this time period, so that any facts that need to be disclosed can be fully disclosed and completely evaluated. I think the evidence that we have certainly makes it clear that no one tried to influence any governmental procedure or do anything improper. But as I said before, last week, it would have been better if at least some of these meetings had not occurred. And we now have the firewall established which will guarantee that it won't happen in the future.

I do ask you for some sense of balance about what's going on here. I did not see it, but I understand Sam Dash was last night on television and pointed out that, unlike some previous administrations, we were fully cooperating. We were giving the records, we were giving whatever we were asked to give not only to Special Counsel. We weren't resisting, we were supporting subpoenas. This administration is determined to have a standard by which anybody else in the future will be judged in how we deal with this sort of inquiry. I just want the inquiry to proceed. I want it to have a chance to succeed. I have no reason to believe at this time that anybody did anything to influence a Government process they should not have done. But if you look at it going from here forward, I think we have procedures in place, and I will pick a White House Counsel that will assure that there's a high level of confidence about how we're operating this.

Looking backward, we are fully complying with all of these subpoenas, and we're going to find any other facts that need to be found and need to be disclosed, and we will do that, too.

Russia

Q. [*Inaudible*]—cases of democratization of Russia where they're having difficulties and where democracy is not really moving along as fast. How is some of that affecting relations between United States and Russia and maybe other countries within the CIS?

The President. Well, as you know, the United States has worked with and supported President Yeltsin because we believe that he followed policies supporting democracy, supporting reform, and supporting respect for the territorial integrity of Russia's neighbors, all three things. That is still our policy; we are interested in supporting those things. And we believe that there are ways for Russia to continue to manifest its leadership in the world and in the region and still acknowledge the importance of democracy, market reform, and respect for neighbors.

I'm very hopeful, just to take one example, of what happened in Bosnia recently, where the Russians played a very key role in helping us to create the safe zone around Sarajevo, getting the Serbs to support it. Now that we have the outline of an agreement between the Croats and the Muslims, we hope the Russians will continue to be active with us to push right through to a solution to the crisis in Bosnia.

So, am I concerned about some developments in Russia and some of the things that some of the people say in Russia that reflect ultranationalism and an extremist view and would make more difficult our future relationships with them? Of course I am. But I knew when this started that it would not be an easy course. Democracy is a difficult system to develop and to keep going. But I think basically our interests are clear, and we'll just continue to pursue our interests and our values and hope that our policy works.

Peter [Peter Maer, NBC Mutual Radio].

Republican Criticism

Q. Mr. President, I'm wondering what goes through your mind when you hear critics—I guess, especially Republican critics—compare this current controversy to Watergate, and what goes through your mind when you hear someone like Senator Gramm formulate a statement by starting with the statement that "If the President wants to finish up his term . . ."?

The President. Well, I wonder why you let him get away with it. I mean, frankly, when they say things, it doesn't really bother me. They have been, on the whole, blatantly partisan, and it's obvious that they want to do something that I don't think the American people ought to let them get away with, which is to deter this administration and the entire Federal Government from meeting its responsibilities to the people. I mean, it's a good excuse for why you don't have a health care plan. Go down and have a health care retreat; you can't agree on a plan; come back and jump on this issue. And the American people will be outraged if anybody uses this as an excuse not to keep going and doing the people's business, first of all.

Secondly, the Speaker of the House was very eloquent about this last weekend. There is a huge difference here. Number one, we're not covering up or anything, we are opening up. We are disclosing. We are giving you information. Number two, no one has accused me of any abuse of authority in office. That's what Watergate was about. Number three, there is no credible evidence and no credible charge that I violated any criminal or civil Federal law 8 or 9 years ago when most of these facts that are being bandied around are discussed. I mean, this is really about a real estate investment I

made almost 16 years ago now that lost money and sputtered to a not successful conclusion several years ago. So there is no analogy except any hysteria that they can gin up around it. That's why I say I have been forthcoming; I will continue to be forthcoming. You're going to be confident in the way we handle this. There will not be a coverup. There will not be an abuse of power in this office. And there is no credible charge that I violated any law, even way back in the dark ages or years ago when this happened.

And I would just remind you, I was Governor of my State for 12 years; there was never a hint of scandal in my administration. So this is going to be a very different thing. And I think that what they do today as Republicans, as a party, may look good today. It may not look very good when the independent counsel finishes his work. And I think, you know, they ought to think long and hard about whether this sort of partisan clamor and careless use of language and careless use of the facts is really not only in the best interest of the American people but in the best interest of their party. All of us got hired here to work for the American people, not to throw off on each other. I know a lot of people in this town like to do it, but it's a very unproductive use of time.

If I did something wrong, it will come out in the Special Counsel. That's what the Republicans said they wanted. That's what most of your media outlets said you wanted. I am fully cooperating with the Special Counsel. They will find the truth. Let them do it. And let the rest of us go on with our business. That's what we got the Special Counsel for.

Russia

Q. To you and Mr. Shevardnadze, how do you feel vis-a-vis the latest events in Moscow? Is there a possibility of a rebirth of the period of the cold war?

The President. I'll give him the hard question on the theory that he hasn't talked since I have.

Chairman Shevardnadze. I've had a lot of occasions to get out and speak about this. I don't want to create an impression that we are discussing Russia's future here. It's very important to be very tactful, maximally tactful here, and let the Russians themselves figure out what they want to do in the processes in their own country.

Now, as far as the alarm, well, naturally, every honest citizen of the planet has that fear, has that alarm relative to all the events that have taken place there recently. But I very much hope that the Russian people and everyone else there in Russia will figure this out. Is there a danger? Yes. If the forces that you have in mind come to power, this is a great threat not only for Russia but also for the whole planet at large. That's what I would say.

The President. Let me answer the question and make two points, one positive, the other not so positive.

You ask, is it possible that we will recreate the cold war. In one respect, it is unlikely for sure, and that is the nuclear respect. That is, you know, yesterday the first nuclear warheads went across the border from Ukraine into Russia, as Ukraine continues its commitment to become a nonnuclear state. Kazakhstan has done the same. Belarus has done the same. We and the Russians have negotiated two major nuclear reduction treaties, and we are not pointing our weapons at one another. I think it is unlikely that that will be reversed. You never can say "never," but I think it is unlikely. So the prospect of total destruction of two great civilizations arising out of a conflict which triggers nuclear war I think is very remote now, thanks in no small measure to this man and what he did.

Now, the second thing is, how likely is it that out of frustration with the pace and the pain of economic and political reform in Russia, the Russian people will turn to leaders who will say the best way to go for the future is to find greatness the way we found it in the past, by the reimposition of some sort of empire, that if we had an empire we would be viewed as a greater nation and we would be a richer nation, and your life would be better? Anyone would have to say that given how many people are saying that in Russia, that is somewhat more likely. All I can say is that we have to—as Chairman Shevardnadze said, that is a question the Russian people will have to answer for themselves.

My job is to try to do what I can to demonstrate that it is in the interests of the Russian people to define themselves as a nation and to define their greatness in terms that will be appropriate to the 21st century, not to the 19th century and the early 20th century. And that is the best I can do, in my great hope.

Mark [Mark Halperin, ABC News].

Whitewater Investigation

Q. Mr. President, as part of your commitment to fully cooperate with the Special Counsel, will you instruct your staff that you don't wish to invoke attorney-client privilege or executive privilege, and will you ask them not to, in preparing for a grand jury, invoke the fifth amendment? And if you ask them to do that, do you see any conflict between their individual rights and your attempt, your commitment to get all of the information out?

The President. Well, I can't answer any of those questions because I haven't even thought about it. I mean, I'm telling you, no one I know, no one I have talked to believes anything violative of any law has occurred by anybody. I mean, a lot of these hypothetical questions which have been raised have been literally bewildering to me based on my understanding of the facts. And again, I will say I refer you to what Sam Dash said last night: This administration is cooperating with the Special Counsel.

When I finally realized it was—the only way to continue the work of the administration would be to have one, I was happy to have one. Even though arguably on the evidence, the criteria for having one weren't met, I was still glad to do it so that we could go on with our work. And the only thing I ask you to do is, if you can become satisfied that we are fully cooperating and that we now have procedures in place which will prohibit any improper contact of any kind and there is no evidence that any improper influence was sought to be exercised by me or anybody else over any official decision, then let the Special Counsel do its job so that we can go forward with the work of the American people. That is the important thing we have to do.

Has anybody not had a question, any of the Ukraine press not had a question—I mean, Georgian press. I'm sorry. He told me to mention something about Ukraine; I forgot. Maybe I'll remember in a minute.

Abkhazia

Q. I represent the Voice of America but Georgian service, broadcasting in Georgian language. And I would like to ask both the question. After the agreement that you reached about Abkhazia, you know that there are more than 250,000 refugees from Abkhazia from the atrocities and genocide there by Abkhaz separatists? And would you please answer me, do you think that it is enough, U.N. peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia to deploy to ensure, to guarantee the safety of Georgians in Abkhazia when they return back?

Chairman Shevardnadze. We discussed this with Mr. President Clinton in very, very great detail, all the aspects of the settlement of the Abkhazian conflict. I would even say that most of the time we dedicated to this issue. It seems to me that right now there is no other than a political way of solving this. There is just no other way. I am very appreciative to the President for the fact that he, in principle, gave his agreement to looking into this issue at the Security Council of the U.N., to have the U.N. send troops to that. This has a tremendously important meaning to Abkhazians, to Georgians, to the whole region.

I told you that I intend to come out and speak at the Security Council and explain to everyone there about my own views and my positions. Peacekeeping troops should have a certain mission. What I mean is, the safe return of refugees, guarantees of safety. Otherwise, there is no sense in sending peacekeeping forces, because new conflicts will start, new clashes.

So I think here we have a full mutual understanding with the President. It seems to me that tomorrow in my meetings with the Congressmen and Senators and other interested parties, I will be able to convince them of the way that this should be resolved. Everything else really depends on the Security Council.

Q. Because we are broadcasting today and I think the Georgian audience will be very thankful to you, to listen to your words in Georgia.

Singapore Caning of Michael Fay

The President. Thank you very much.

I don't see Gene Gibbons [Reuters] here, but the last time we had a press conference here last week, he asked me about the young man in Singapore that was sentenced to a caning, and I told you that I did not know about it. I went back and immediately read the press report in, I think maybe it was the Los Angeles Times, one of the newspapers. And then I got a report from our national security staff. We have since filed a strong protest with the Government of Singapore. We recognize that they have a certain right to enforce their own crimi-

nal laws, but we believe that, based on the facts and the treatment of other cases, similar cases, that this punishment is extreme, and we hope very much that somehow it will be reconsidered.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 52d news conference began at 2:33 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Samuel Dash, professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center and former chief counsel and staff director for the Senate Watergate Committee. Chairman Shevardnadze spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Declaration on Relations Between the United States and the Republic of Georgia

March 7, 1994

At their meeting at the White House, President of the United States Bill Clinton and Georgian Parliament Chairman Eduard Shevardnadze agreed on the need to accelerate the building of close and mutually beneficial relations on all levels between the United States of America and the Republic of Georgia.

The United States was the first country in which a Georgian Embassy was established after independence. This official visit by Chairman Shevardnadze marks an important further step demonstrating the significance which the United States and the Republic of Georgia attach to broadening and deepening their relationship.

The United States recognizes that the Republic of Georgia faces new challenges in ensuring its national security and is ready to work closely with Georgia to assist it in finding ways to meet these challenges. The United States and the Republic of Georgia further expressed their desire to facilitate contact between appropriate government officials with a view to broadening defense cooperation and expanding their dialogue on security issues of mutual interest.

The United States reaffirmed its full support for the territorial integrity of Georgia and pledged its continued backing for United Nations efforts to facilitate a peaceful settlement to the conflict in the Abkhaz region of Georgia.

International security can no longer be achieved through the efforts of individual states by acquiring ever increasing amounts of weaponry. Rather, security must be based on reduced levels of armaments among all nations, and on a multilateral commitment to uphold shared values, especially democracy, the inviolability of borders, territorial integrity, and peaceful resolution of disputes. The United States and the Republic of Georgia agreed that working together in multilateral institutions like CSCE and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council is an important means of promoting these goals and values.

The United States welcomes the announcement that the Republic of Georgia has decided to move forward on participation in NATO's Partnership For Peace. The Partnership provides a framework for enhanced political and operational military cooperation, including joint planning, training and exercises for multilateral crisis management activities.

The Republic of Georgia and the United States reaffirm their commitment to comply fully with the obligations of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The United States stands ready to provide technical assistance, advice, and expertise to assist the Republic of Georgia as it continues to meet these obligations. President Clinton and Chairman Shevardnadze agreed that the two governments should continue to work together—and with other concerned governments—to explore ways to minimize the cost of meeting these commitments.

President Clinton and Chairman Shevardnadze agreed that the independence of the Republic of Georgia and its commitment to democracy and market economic reform could make an important contribution to stability in a region of Europe that has known great tragedy and upheaval. The United States and the Republic of Georgia underscored their intention to cooperate actively to achieve this goal. The President and the Chairman agreed to protect and promote the values that bind together