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White House Press Release  
**Office of the Press Secretary**  
Washington, DC  
August 24, 2002

## Russian Bombing of Georgia

The United States is deeply concerned about credible reports that Russian military aircraft indiscriminately bombed villages in northern Georgia on August 23, resulting in the killing of civilians. The Government of Georgia and border monitors of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe have verified that these aerial bombardments occurred. The United States regrets this loss of life and deplors the violation of Georgia's sovereignty.

The United States strongly supports Georgia's independence and territorial integrity, and has welcomed similar statements by the Russian Federation. Yesterday's attacks and their denial by the Russian Government, however, belie such Russian assurances and escalate existing tension between Russia and Georgia, just as cooperative arrangements for resolving regional security problems are emerging. In this context, we call again urgently for a political settlement to the conflict in Chechnya, which would contribute to stability in both Russia and Georgia, and advance our efforts to fight terrorism and establish peace in the Caucasus.

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