I just met with my national security team

to discuss the situation in Georgia.

I am deeply concerned by reports that

Russian troops have moved beyond the zone

of conflict, attacked the Georgian town of

Gori, and are threatening Georgia’s capital

of Tbilisi. There’s evidence that Russian

forces may soon begin bombing the civilian

airport in the capital city.

If these reports are accurate, these Russian

actions would represent a dramatic and brutal

escalation of the conflict in Georgia. And

these actions would be inconsistent with assurances

we have received from Russia that

its objectives were limited to restoring the

status quo in South Ossetia that existed before

fighting began on August the 6th.

It now appears that an effort may be underway

to depose Russia’s [Georgia’s] \* duly

elected Government. Russia has invaded a

sovereign neighboring state and threatens a

democratic government elected by its people.

Such an action is unacceptable in the

21st century.

The Georgian Government has accepted

the elements of a peace agreement that the

Russian Government previously said it would

be willing to accept: an immediate cease-fire;

the withdrawal of forces from the zone of

conflict; a return to the military status quo

as of August 6th; and a commitment to refrain

from using force. There are representatives

of the European Union and the Organization

for Security and Cooperation in Europe

currently in Moscow seeking Russia’s

agreement to this peace plan.

Russia’s Government must respect Georgia’s

territorial integrity and sovereignty. The

Russian Government must reverse the

course it appears to be on and accept this

peace agreement as a first step toward resolving

this conflict.

Russia’s actions this week have raised serious

questions about its intentions in Georgia

and the region. These actions have substantially

damaged Russia’s standing in the world,

and these actions jeopardize Russians’ relations—

Russia’s relations with the United

States and Europe. It is time for Russia to

be true to its word and to act to end this

crisis.

Thank you.