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U.S.'s Pompeo Condemns 'Russia's Occupation on Georgian Soil,' Pledges Support for NATO Membership

By Reuters

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Mike Pompeo (Gage Skidmore / Flickr / CC BY-SA 2.0)

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday pledged deeper security and economic support for Georgia and called on Russia to withdraw its forces from the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia under a 2008 ceasefire agreement.

Russia still has troops stationed in Georgia after a 2008 war over the breakaway region of South Ossetia, backing Georgia's Abkhazia, which is also controlled by pro-Russian separatists.

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"The United States unequivocally condemns Russia's occupation on Georgian soil," Pompeo

said in opening remarks to the annual U.S.-Georgian Strategic Partnership in Washington. "Russia's forcible invasion of Georgia is a clear violation of international peace and security."

Pompeo repeated U.S. policy that the United States would support Georgia's eventual membership of the NATO military alliance.

Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili said American support for a peaceful resolution to Russia's presence in Georgia "is of highest importance to our country and regional stability."

Georgia's membership of the military alliance would be a "clear added value for the Euro-Atlantic security," Kvirikashvili said.

NATO promised Georgia membership in 2008, and three ex-Soviet Baltic nations - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - are already members.

Kvirikashvili urged closer economic and trade ties, saying U.S. involvement in infrastructure projects, like the Anaklia deep sea port on Georgia's Black Sea coast, would help attract interest in the region.

The Anaklia Development Consortium is a joint venture of Georgia’s TBC Holding LLC and Conti International LLC, a U.S.-based developer of infrastructure and capital projects.

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