

## Georgia Withdraws From Treaty With Russia

Georgia has formally notified Russia that it is withdrawing from a bilateral air defense cooperation treaty, a Georgian Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Monday.

The treaty was signed between the two countries' defense ministries on April 19, 1995.

Tbilisi's move comes after two Georgian reconnaissance planes were allegedly shot down over the unrecognized republic of Abkhazia's airspace on Sunday, according to Ria Novosti.

A Georgian deputy defense minister said his country had seen no practical benefit from the treaty with Russia.

Russia's Embassy in Tbilisi confirmed that it had received formal notice from Georgia.

Embassy press attache Alexander Savinov said the note "has been transferred to Moscow via official channels," but that "no instructions have been received from Moscow yet."

Asked whether the note had set out the reasons for Georgia's decision to withdraw from the agreement, he said: "At this stage we are not in a position to comment."

The CIS unified air defense system includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia,



Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine.

Georgia previously withdrew from the CIS Defense Ministers Council although it formally remained in the CIS unified air defense system.

Abkhazia said earlier on Monday its air defense forces had detected another Georgian reconnaissance plane, but decided not to engage it.

Russia's foreign minister said Moscow is extremely concerned over Georgia's course to resolve its conflicts with breakaway republics by military force.

## New Evidence of Gitmo Torture

British intelligence knew in advance that a former London janitor now awaiting trial by a US military commission in Guantanamo Bay would be tortured in an Arab country to extract evidence, his lawyers allege.

Lawyers for Ethiopian-born Binyam Mohamed, 29, filed a High Court case on Tuesday to try to force the British government to give evidence that would help his defense to expected charges before the tribunal at the US detention camp on Cuba, Reuters reported.

They say a British security official interviewed Mohamed after he was arrested in Pakistan in April 2002, and told him he would be transferred to an Arab country and tortured.

Mohamed says he was flown to Morocco in July 2002 on a CIA plane and held there for 18 months, during which time he says he was repeatedly stripped naked and cut with a scalpel on his chest and penis. He was transferred to Afghanistan in 2004 and finally, later that year, to Guantanamo.

His lawyer Clive Stafford Smith said the British authorities had a duty to reveal what they knew, in order to support his case that terrorism allegations against him are false and based on torture.

Mohamed told Smith that an officer of Britain's Security Service, MI5, told him in the 2002 interview in Pakistan that he would be transferred to a third country.

"They gave me a cup of tea with a lot of sugar in it. I initially only took one. 'No, you need a lot more. Where you're going, you need a lot of sugar,'" Mohamed quoted the officer as saying.

Mohamed's case has been highlighted in investigations by human rights groups and the Council of Europe into alleged "extraordinary renditions" by the US Central Intelligence Agency.

# Hu in Japan To Mend Fences



Chinese President Hu Jintao waves to well-wishers upon his arrival at the Tokyo International Airport on May 6 for the first visit by a Chinese head of state in 10 years.

President Hu Jintao arrived in Japan on Tuesday for the first visit by a Chinese head of state in 10 years, as Asia's two largest economies try to mend fences after decades of friction.

It is Hu's first trip abroad since unrest broke out in Tibet in March. Pro-Tibet groups and other critics of Beijing have called for demonstrations here, leading Japan to deploy thousands of police to guard the Chinese leader, AFP reported.

Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura personally welcomed Hu, who smiled and waved as more than 200 Chinese people chanted "Welcome! Welcome!" and offered him bouquets of flowers.

"Japan and China are both important countries in Asia and the world," Hu said in a statement issued on arrival. "This will enhance friendship and cooperation in both countries."

In a sharp contrast to previous summits between Japan and China, both sides have signaled that emotionally charged rows over history

will be left on the back burner.

"I sincerely hope the people of the two countries can maintain friendship generation after generation and create a brighter future for the Sino-Japan friendship," Hu said in a written message to a Japanese-language magazine.

Sino-Japanese relations now are improving further. The leaders of the two countries have maintained frequent contacts, and cooperation in politics, trade, culture and defense has made remarkable achievements.

The two countries have also conducted close consultations on global issues like climate change and sustainable development.

The political climax of Hu's visit is set to be a summit on Wednesday with Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, when they hope to unveil a joint blueprint for managing ties in coming years.

Japanese media reports said touchy references in the document to Taiwan, human rights, and Japan's hopes for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council were still under

negotiation.

Japan also wants greater transparency about China's surging defense spending, set at \$60 billion for 2008, up 17.6 percent on 2007 and outstripping Japan's defense budget.

For its part, China has pressed Japan to spell out again its stance on Taiwan, the self-ruled island that Beijing says must accept reunification.

Tokyo has said it supports "one China" that includes Taiwan, which was a Japanese colony for fifty years until 1945 and keeps close ties to Japan.

China's second ever state visit to Japan comes as it seeks to calm international tensions over Tibetan unrest, which has threatened to mar Beijing's Olympic Games, a showcase of national pride.

During his visit, the Chinese president is expected to meet with Japan's Emperor Akihito and hold talks with Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda on Sino-Japanese relations and other issues of common concern.

### In Focus



#### Medvedev Era Begins

Dmitry Medvedev will be sworn in as Russian president in a Kremlin ceremony on Wednesday, taking over the job from his mentor Vladimir Putin and becoming the youngest ruler since Tsar Nicholas II.

Following are key sections of Medvedev's life and career as reported by Reuters:

Medvedev went to study law, graduating from the law department of St Petersburg University in 1987. The faculty later became a source of the local and then Kremlin elite.

Putin graduated from the same faculty in 1975 and Anatoly Sobchak, Putin's political mentor and later mayor of St Petersburg, taught there.

"He was one of the bright sparks from civil law," said Nikolai Kropachev, current dean of the law faculty who worked with Medvedev in the 1990s. "If you asked him to find two solutions to a problem, he would find three, or find a solution no one had ever found before."

Medvedev submitted a well-received dissertation and went on to teach civil law at the faculty, where he insisted students have a good grasp of Latin.

He also worked for the external relations committee of the St Petersburg mayor's office where he established a friendship with Putin, who was working for the mayor after returning from a KGB posting to Dresden.

#### > Business

While still teaching and working at the mayor's office, Medvedev moved into Russia's business world.

"He started practicing as a lawyer," law faculty dean Kropachev said. "In the 1990s completely new legislation had appeared and ... there was massive demand for lawyers."

Medvedev worked as a key lawyer for the Ilim Pulp paper firm, even helping to found the firm, though colleagues say he was never treated as an equal by the firm's owners.

#### > Kremlin's Control

After Putin was appointed prime minister in August 1999, he invited Medvedev to Moscow, appointing him deputy head of the government administration in November.

The ailing head of state Boris Yeltsin made Putin acting president on the last day of 1999, and Putin appointed Medvedev as a deputy to his chief-of-staff, Alexander Voloshin.

Medvedev worked as chief of Putin's election campaign in March 2000. He was elected Gazprom board chairman in June 2000 and played a key role in Putin's plan to reassert the Kremlin's control over the gas giant.

When Voloshin resigned in October 2003 over the arrest of Yukos owner Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Medvedev was appointed chief-of-staff, one of Russian politics' most powerful posts.

In 2005, Putin moved Medvedev to the government, making him a first deputy prime minister and giving him responsibility for carrying out national projects to improve healthcare, education, housing and agriculture.

Putin announced Medvedev was his favored candidate for president on Dec. 10 last year, virtually guaranteeing his protegee election victory. The next day Medvedev said he wanted Putin to become his prime minister.

Medvedev won the March 2 presidential election with just over 70 percent of the vote. He pledged that once in office he would continue Putin's policies.