Statement by H.E. Ambassador Revaz Adamia
Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations
At the General Debate of the First Committee
At the Fifty Seventh Session of the UN General Assembly
10 October, 2002

Mr. Chairman,
Since this is the first time I am taking the floor in this Committee let me congratulate you and the members of the bureau on your election. My delegation is confident that under your skillful stewardship we could successfully accomplish all objectives set for the work of this Committee.

Mr. Chairman,
Last decade the global security landscape has been undergoing dramatic changes. Unprecedented level of interdependence and globalization has transformed the meaning of international peace and security itself to integrate, in a broad sense, interstate and inter-societal relations and human security. The new international security architecture is increasingly called to respond to the challenges of arms proliferation, drugs smuggling, that are nowadays inextricably linked with extremism and aggressive separatisms to sustain conflicts, violence and terrorism.

In this respect Georgia supports full implementation of the Program of Action adopted at the Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects that entails wide range of measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, in dealing with the problem of illicit arms we have to utilize already agreed legal instruments, in particular Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms. Their Parts and Components.

We also welcome the proposal of the Under-Secretary General Mr. Dhanapala to establish International Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction to examine problems relating to the production, stockpiling, proliferation, and terrorist use of such weapons. In close partnership with the Counter-Terrorist Committee the Commission could address the issues of countering terrorist threats. Here I have to underscore the value of the recommendations of the Policy Working Group on the United Nations and Terrorism (A/52/273) on the establishment of a mechanism under the Department for Disarmament Affairs to make use of existing UN resources and specialized databases, as well as information received from Member States, to assist the Counter Terrorism Committee, by providing analysis and advice on appropriate cooperation between the Security Council (or the Committee) and the relevant operational agencies in response to the terrorist threats. Likewise, we welcome the recommendation on strengthening of capabilities of the UN peacekeeping missions to identify and counter terrorist threats.

Mr. Chairman,
We are noting with satisfaction on numerous positive developments that contribute to the consolidation of international peace and security. In this respect we commend the decisions of
Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to declare the Central Asia as a nuclear-free zone.

We are confident that the Moscow Treaty concluded between the United States and Russia to reduce their deployments of strategic nuclear weapons is an important element of a new global security architecture and serves as a basis for implementation of joint commitments as set out in the US-Russia Joint Declaration on New Strategic Relationship.

Mr. Chairman,

Speaking of disarmament and security I would take the risk again in drawing your attention to aggressive separatism and extremism as to main threats to international peace and security. Metastasizing of the so-called "white spots", i.e. zones of conflicts that are beyond reach of national and international legal order brought us on the verge of fragmentation of international system with all its consequences manifested in spreading violence, drug trafficking and creating heavens for breeding terrorism.

The question is whether we again decide to abscond and distance ourselves from this danger just to follow established pattern. This threat although not still visible in this chamber is felt in many communities all around the globe. Therefore I am afraid we do not have the luxury of further remaining indifferent. We have to respond.

I could assure you Mr. Chairman, that what lies in the heart of the problem of the "white spots" is not in intrinsic nature of some people to resort to violence or be receptive to extremism and terrorism. It is about broken commitments, ill-defined national interests and residual cold war era mentality.

Each word I have said is true for two separatist regions of my country - Abkhazia and former South Ossetia. Both regions effectively developed into ethnocratic and terrorist enclaves with increasingly aggressive process of militarization. As a result, the huge amount of armaments, mines and ammunition have accumulated on the these territories. Just three days ago former South Ossetia’s separatist regime received yet another shipment from Russia, through the border checkpoint controlled solely by the Russian borderguards. I have to add that these kind of shipments never stopped crossing the Russian-Georgian border into Abkhazia as well. These shipments what in Russia’s terms would be called humanitarian aid, are in reality a clear case of unabated proliferation of firearms and ammunition.

These actions are clear cases of divergence between the goals declared and the means employed. On the one hand we have a commitment by Russia to prevent the illicit arms smuggling, as well as proliferation of nuclear and other dangerous materials. On the other, it deliberately creates conditions prone to these dangers.

Mr. Chairman,

The situation in these particular enclaves of instability, pose threats of nuclear terrorism. The Institute of Physics and Technology in Sokhumi, Abkhazia, Georgia, is our primary concern, where the conditions for the storage of radioactive materials, according to the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) assessment, are deplorable. At least on one occasion, the uranium that disappeared from the Institute, could have fallen in the hands of terrorists.

The Institute still falls under actual control of Russia’s authorities, who, against all odds, still insist on the construction of a nuclear waste storage in the orderless and lawless, unpredictable separatist region with all stemming out of it consequences. Noteworthy, smuggling of radioactive materials can not be excluded through the same porous Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia sections of the Georgian-Russian border.
As a part of the larger problem I would like to state that since 1995 more than 197 unaccounted sources of radiation have been found in Georgia, left deliberately by the Russian Army. Among them Uranium (U), Strontium (Sr), Cesium (Cs). Death toll of victims of radiation is on the rise put aside the danger to which the Georgian population is unknowingly exposed on a daily basis.

Mr. Chairman,
In general, the situation in Abkhazia has important security and disarmament dimension due to the illegal presence of the Russian military base in Gudauta. Apart of directly participating in the conflict in Abkhazia, it was providing arms to the separatist regime. It is in the premises of this base that a number of Chechen terrorists were trained as far as they kept fighting against Georgia: among them now infamous Shamil Basayev. Reportedly, Russian Special Services still maintain the terrorist training camps in Abkhazia.

The illegal operation of the Gudauta base itself constitutes good example of Russia's selectivity in honoring commitments in the field of disarmament. Interestingly enough Russia has not only flagrantly floated the 1999 Istanbul agreement on the withdrawal of Russian Military Bases, within the framework of CFE Treaty (Conventional Forces in Europe), but now demands 11 years for withdrawal of 3000 servicemen from Georgia! It has even declared the Gudauta base closed, however denied all requests for its international verification.

Mr. Chairman,
It is suffice to say that for the last 3 years, since the resumption of the war in Chechnya, Russian air forces have 115 times violated Georgia’s airspace, out of which it resulted in bombings causing death of one civilian and multiple injuries. Having exported the Chechen fighters in Georgia Russia now itself levels accusations against us in supporting of terrorism and continuously threatens with aggression. Moreover, unprecedented hysterical campaign unleashed in Russia’s media is aimed at creating enemy’s image of Georgia. This cynically mounted propaganda sponsored by the Russian Government in the wake of the 21st century is especially alarming.

Mr. Chairman,
Still there is a hope. During the meeting of the Presidents of Georgia and Russia a few days ago in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, understanding has been reached on the need to normalize the relations between the two states, in particular to continue negotiations on the Main Frame Agreement between Georgia and Russia, and on the removal of Russian Military Bases. The joint patrolling of the border has also been agreed upon, as well as the appointment of special envoys to facilitate the joint efforts of fighting terrorism.

Having said this I would not take another risk of being overly optimistic as the violations of my country’s airspace continue till this moment, occasional threats against Georgia are still voiced in Moscow. Most importantly the support to the separatists in Georgia remain Russia’s unwavering commitment.

Mr. Chairman,
Despite the best efforts of the members of this committee and the entire world community, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and its materials, aggressive separatism and extremism will be a defining security challenge of this new century. The problem of proliferation is not confined to nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. Illegal transfers of small arms and light weapons are a significant problem as well. Until every state is held accountable for its action, we will continue to face the same daunting challenges we have today. Not till then will we manage to preserve the global peace and security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman