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A Selective Approach to the Application of Democratic Principles

The development of democratic institutions proceeds at different speeds in different countries, employing a variety of approaches. The one constant is that democratic governance is based on the will of the people, which is expressed regularly in free and fair elections.

The participation of States in various international organizations and firmly established international norms promote greater responsibility for observance of international standards in the development of democracy.

The trend toward the adoption of democratic values by individual States, which is considered one of the criteria for global security, is continuing today. Nevertheless, processes initiated in the world over recent years that are related to obvious changes in the latest alignment of the globe also give rise to some concerns, unless many of the countries involved reconsider their attitude toward the application of universal, principled approaches to democratic values.

The year 2008 was a turning point in this connection, with the first step being the recognition of Kosovo, followed by Georgia's aggression against the Republic of South Ossetia and the subsequent recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. At this point, I would like to direct your attention to the role played by various countries, including OSCE participating States, in these processes, albeit with varying levels of activity. In each individual case, the approaches to making the decision as to whether to support one side or another were essentially opposite and they had nothing to do with the will of the people and the development of democratic institutions in the States that were or were not being recognized.

It is probably necessary to remind you that the processes of building and developing democratic institutions in South Ossetia have been going on for the same period of time as those in the CIS countries, for example. Of course, South Ossetia is faced with certain challenges, but this is a State with an established political system, aspirations and hopes, problems and successes. But the world community knows little about the processes that are going on in these States, and what it does know comes from biased sources far removed from us, which gives rise to unjustified doubts regarding the reliability of our countries as responsible participants in the worldwide process of the development of democratic principles.

I think that the time has come to re-examine the current realities and we need to seek ways to move away from South Ossetia's isolation from the processes that are taking place elsewhere in the world and toward participation in building mutually acceptable relations that are capable both of benefitting the people of South Ossetia and strengthening regional and global security.

There is no doubt that the resolution of issues involving stable and sustainable development, including the prerogative of a country's democratic institutions [sic], but it is also important here to have the participation of international bodies for monitoring and offering recommendations regarding the processes that are taking place. We are seeking to increase the transparency of the election process through national and international observation mechanisms.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the first parliamentary elections following the recognition of our country were held in 2009. The elections took place in spite of all of the difficulties that arose in the wake of the events of August 2008, and the predictions that the South Ossetian authorities would not be able to hold proper democratic elections, as well as the efforts by external forces to disrupt the elections. The elections were met with a positive response, including on the part of international observers, who were provided with the conditions necessary for effective monitoring of each stage of the election process.

So the question arises, if we are seeking security and co-operation throughout the world, and we accept universal principles for all people, why doesn't this universality apply to the people of the Republic of South Ossetia?

Processes are taking place in the Republic of South Ossetia that clearly demonstrate its ability to find a way out of challenging situations, but in order to increase the effectiveness of the steps that are being taken, South Ossetia needs the support of international institutions, such as the United Nations, the OSCE, bodies under the Council of Europe, the European Union and so on.

We also need to remember that some representatives of these organizations compromised themselves and undermined the authority of their organizations in the eyes of the South Ossetian public during Georgia's aggression against South Ossetia. Everyone makes mistakes, but now immense efforts need to be made to restore confidence in the declared principles.

The participation of representatives of the Republic of South Ossetia in events of this kind is important from the standpoint of providing information about the processes that are going on in the country to the representatives of such a distinguished assembly. And it is my hope that you have taken my words to heart.