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Cable title: **WAY FORWARD ON THE SEPARATIST REGIONS OF GEORGIA**

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SUBJECT: WAY FORWARD ON THE SEPARATIST REGIONS OF GEORGIA

REF: STATE 134559

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Taylor.  
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Ambassador delivered ref tel demarche to First Deputy Foreign Minister Vladymir Khandogiy on December 29. Khandogiy thanked the Ambassador for the consultation. He noted that Ukraine's position on Abkhazia and South Ossetian "independence" has been clear: Ukraine categorically opposes recognition. Khandogiy underlined that Ukraine had been very critical of the events of August 2008 and regards Russia's actions in Georgia as illegal.

2. (C) Khandogiy observed that sanctions are one way, and perhaps the only way, to make an impact in situations like this. While providing a disclaimer that his government must review our proposal, he speculated that Ukraine would likely support the U.S. strategy. He asked how the U.S. would see Ukrainian participation, particularly in economic sanctions.

3. (C) Khandogiy mused that it would be important to have the EU on "our" side in any sanctions against the two separatist regimes, noting that the EU played a central role in ending open hostilities in Georgia. He observed that for Ukraine, South Ossetia and Abkhazia are "non-existent entities." As a result, the question of a visa ban directed against bearers of South Ossetian or Abkhaz passports would likely not be an issue.

TAYLOR

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