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### **Congressional Leaders Condemn Russian Invasion of Georgia, Call for Removal of Troops**

WASHINGTON, DC – Speaker Nancy Pelosi, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, House Republican Leader John Boehner, and House Republican Whip Roy Blunt released the following joint statement today on Russia's invasion of Georgia:

"The bipartisan leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives stands united in condemning – in the strongest possible terms – the recent Russian invasion of the sovereign state of Georgia. The United States is committed to Georgia's absolute sovereignty, and we reject the Russian Foreign Minister's reported assertion that democratically-elected President Mikheil Saakashvili 'must go.' This morning Russian President Dmitri Medvedev stated that Russia will cease military action in Georgia, and now Moscow has a responsibility to follow through and remove Russian troops from the country. In the meantime, the international community must remain vigilant in ensuring that the nation's territorial integrity is restored. This deplorable outbreak of violence should serve as an opportunity for the world community to re-engage in negotiations to end the conflict and restore stability in this region. We also need to strengthen our efforts to ensure that the needs of Georgia and the Georgian people are met."

"Russian military action in Georgia should be recognized for what it is – an effort to intimidate Georgia's freely-elected government and the governments of other democratic states on Russia's borders as well," said Pelosi. "It must be made clear to Russian leaders that this kind of conduct is unacceptable."

"As the former Chairman and a long-time member of the Helsinki Commission, I have spoken out for decades in support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, a crucial ally of the United States," said Hoyer. "Russia's actions violate Georgian sovereignty and should be vigorously condemned by the international community. Russia must halt all military operations and withdraw their troops immediately."

"The United States Congress stands strongly with our Georgian allies and their democratically-elected government," said Boehner. "Russia's aggression marks an important moment for the international community. For the sake of democracy in the region and free nations across the world, the international community must speak with one voice in condemning the actions of Moscow and calling for the removal of Russian troops from Georgia. Furthermore, we must remain committed to ongoing dialogue to promote peace, stability, and democracy in the former Soviet republics."

"Over the past week, Georgia's long-term stability and territorial integrity

have been challenged by Moscow. While I am encouraged that President Medvedev announced a halt in operations, his government must immediately remove its troops from Georgian soil and reassure the international community that his nation will respect its borders," said Blunt. "Furthermore, I want to make it abundantly clear that the U.S. Congress stands ready to assist the people of Georgia and protect our nations' strategic alliance."

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