

# The Army and Society in Georgia

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## EXPORT CONTROL IN GEORGIA

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National security interests of Georgia require to carry out its export policy in accordance with international norms and standards. Today a structurally complete and efficiently functioning export control system is especially important. Increased interest of the West towards the Caucasus is reflected in the development of the Europe-Asia transport corridor - its part - 600 km - passes through the Caucasus, including 400 km of the Georgian territory. Georgia is going to become a transit country for energy carriers and telecommunications.

Apart from the east-west direction, Georgia's transit functions also include the north-south one. However, there are some tensions between political interests of the countries located along these two axis. Georgia's role and importance in the internal or regional security systems, its relations with developed states and, consequently, its economic prospects will be largely determined by how efficiently Georgia is able to control its territory and borders, and by how its actions conform with international norms or agreements signed by the country. Thus it is vitally important for Georgia to maintain effective and strict export and transit control, to promote legal business and trade, and to become, on this basis, an important trade, financial and telecommunication centre.

It must be mentioned that besides expected positive results, the new functional weight of Georgia poses additional threats.

1. Illegal trade with weapons and forbidden materials is a rather lucrative business in the modern world. Weak state institutions and the central government's inability to control the whole territory of the country make Georgia quite attractive for the criminal world.

2. If there will be a possibility to transit internationally forbidden military technologies, weapons and radioactive materials quite legally, without bypassing the licence system, it may become one of the serious threats to the Georgian national security.

3. Georgia does not fall into the category of countries producing high-tech armaments or materials usable for mass destruction weapons. On the other hand, the current world practice shows that small countries bear the same responsibility for creating efficient export control structures as the countries possessing mass destruction weapons and missile technologies. As a transit country, Georgia is facing a danger that the illegal business may be placed into the legal framework. This may happen if intermediary companies to export imported goods will be founded in Georgia. Such prospects demand the Georgian government to impose strict import control as well.

An efficient import/export control system requires four basic preconditions:

- 1) legislation base;
- 2) license system - bureaucratic apparatus;
- 3) enforcement regime of import/export control;
- 4) international co-operation - to secure the country's involvement in the international control system.

Export control of a country consists of international regimes and the national export control system. The national export control system is a certain precondition for fulfilling the country's international commitments. It will function efficiently only if the preconditions are complete: a respective legislation base, an effective license system and an enforcement regime of import/export control. Export control can be considered successful if all the regional countries pursue strong export policy. "Blank spots" weaken the international export control system. International co-operation is extremely important in this respect. It may be assumed that the development of the Georgian export control system can serve as a good example of international co-operation. When creating its legislation base, Georgia took into account the experience of former Soviet republics which began to set up their export control systems before Georgia. It must be mentioned, however, that Georgia's peculiarity as a small and economically weak country was also taken into account.

### **1. Legislation base**

In 1992 all the Transcaucasian republics became signatories to the accord on the CIS Export Control Co-ordination. From 1995 national export control on the Georgian territory was implemented on the basis of resolutions of the Council of Ministers. The "Law on Control over Exports of Armaments, Military Hardware and Dual-Use Production" came into force in Georgia on September 1, 1998, in accordance with interests of the Georgian national security and to strengthen the regime of non-proliferation of mass destruction weapons. It defines regulations and control procedures for exports of armaments, military hardware, raw materials, materials (listed below), equipment, technologies, scientific-technical information and services connected with production/exploitation of the above articles.

According to the law, every production that is subject to export control shall be exported, re-exported and transited in accordance with the Georgian legislation, and international conventions and agreements on non-proliferation of mass destruction or other weapons, and technologies of their production.

The law stipulates that the following list of production is subject to export control:

- a) conventional armaments and military hardware, raw materials, special equipment and technologies, and services connected with their production;
- b) radioactive materials and technologies, tools/devices, dual-use production, special non-radioactive materials, sources of radiation and isotope production which are subject to the international non-proliferation regime;
- c) dual-use chemicals and technologies usable for production of chemical weapons, according to the classification of the international non-proliferation regime;
- d) materials usable for production of biological weapons, according to the classification of the international non-proliferation regime;

- e) equipment, materials and technologies usable for production of missile weapons, according to the classification of the international non-proliferation regime;
- g) military scientific-technical information, services and the outcome of intellectual property;
- f) any other kind of production banned by the presidential order.

The state shall supervise exports, re-exports and transits of the production subject to export control through entitled bodies; examine applications for export operations; check illegal traffic of the production subject to export control through the Georgian customs.

The Law on Nuclear and Radioactive Security came into force in Georgia on January 1, 1999. It bans exports, re-exports, imports and transits of nuclear weapons and explosives, radioactive wastes, as well as their examination, tests and ownership; prohibits functioning of enterprises that produce enriched materials and use more than 5 Mwatt of energy, and research using the same amount of energy; forbids imports of radioactive materials for their further usage, storage or other purposes. According to this law, the state denies that nuclear energy may be used for peaceful purposes in the near future.

## **2. The licensing system of export control**

On October 15, 1997, the Georgian president decreed to set up a Standing Interagency Military-Technical Commission of the National Security Council of Georgia. It is empowered to decide what kind of military production and services may be exported/imported, and to define their export/import conditions together with the country's ministries. The commission has to work out recommendations for exports/imports of military production and services (including strategic), and their temporary transportation from/to the country.

According to the same decree, the Ministry of Justice is entitled to license exports/imports of military production, technical documents and services on the basis of recommendations of the interdepartmental military-technical commission of the National Security Council.

The Georgian president supervises activities of the governmental agencies responsible for export control. He can, if necessary, limit exports of production subject to export control. He also has a right to permit transits of special cargoes, if the interagency military-technical commission of the National Security Council recommends to do so.

The Interagency Military-Technical Commission of the National Security Council:

The state minister (the chairman of the commission);

The defence minister (deputy chairman of the commission);

The head of the defence industry department of the NSC apparatus (secretary of the commission);

The chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee;

The minister for industry;

The minister for state security;

The interior minister;

The director of the Tbilisi Aircraft Works;

The director of the scientific research institute "Delta" and the constructor general of armaments, materials and equipment;

Deputy chairman of the Council for Problems of Application of the Academy of Science;

The chairman of the State Department of Frontier Defence;

The finance minister.

To maintain nuclear and radioactive security, the licensing system requires additional security guarantees. In accordance with the Law on Nuclear and Radioactive Security, those agencies or individuals which are responsible for this field and are connected with transits of nuclear/radioactive materials and ionisation sources or with production of forbidden materials shall meet

requirements of the Ministry of Environmental Security and Natural Resources, of the state technical supervision inspectorate and of the Ministry of Health Care, while their activities must be under constant monitoring for the whole term of their office.

The Ministry of Environmental Security and Natural Resources has a right to impose special conditions on the licensing rule. In case of nuclear or radioactive emergency it can issue/cancel licences. The ministry includes a radioactive security service. The ministry has to issue decrees on "licensing radioactive materials and connected activities" and on the "state inventory of nuclear materials and radioactive wastes".

### **3. Enforcement regimes of export control**

The following executive bodies of Georgia share responsibility for maintaining regimes of export control:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs controls fulfilment of international military-technical co-operation agreements on the part of the country's executive bodies, and maintains foreign political and economic interests of Georgia.

The Ministry of Industry co-ordinates scientific research and production of export-oriented military hardware and armaments; takes part in developing the nomenclature of exports/imports of military hardware and armaments; participates in determining directions of international partnership and co-operation and puts them into practice.

The Ministry of Defence takes part in proposing directions of military-technical co-operation and provides informational maintenance of international co-operation; repairs military hardware and armaments deployed in foreign countries by its own repairing facilities; supervises all stages of production of military hardware and armaments, as well as scientific research and test/construction procedures; carries out functions of the chief buyer of general military hardware. The Ministry of State Security and the MoD are responsible for defence of essential objects in case of unexpected nuclear or radioactive threat.

The Ministry of State Security assists implementation of military-technical co-operation by analysing its political, international-legal and economic directions; collects/processes information about these issues; takes part in checking reliability of foreign partners.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs instructs the population in case of emergency; controls preventive means; approves the plan of emergency actions and defends nuclear and radioactive objects.

The Ministry of Environmental Security and Natural Resources is responsible for environmental defence from radioactive or ecological threats. It maintains direct contacts with the International Atomic Energy Agency (together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and regulates transportation of nuclear/radioactive materials and ionisation sources.

The State Department of Frontier Defence establishes relations with foreign scientific-industrial agencies on border defence/control in the framework of international agreements.

The Customs Department controls transportation of production subject to export control through the customs check-points.

### **4. International co-operation**

The internal state control system bears the main responsibility for non-proliferation of nuclear materials, weapons and technologies, though from the viewpoint of international interests, international co-operation, either bilateral or multilateral, is also important. Georgia has expressed readiness to co-operate with neighbouring countries in order to strengthen non-proliferation regime for nuclear and other mass destruction weapons, to prevent supplies of armaments to conflict zones, and to check illegal weapons trade between the regional countries (the April 29, 1999, declaration of the GUUAM (Georgia-Ukraine-Uzbekistan-Azerbaijan-Moldova) presidents in Washington).

Previous experience shows that international and regional co-operation can be effective if it includes co-ordination of legislative activities between countries in order to improve export/import control throughout the whole region. It is important for the state to be able to carry out adequate quantitative and political evaluation of supply and demand for armaments and forbidden materials in the region. Monitoring of the above issues may help governmental agencies reveal and check illegal traffic of weapons, technologies and forbidden materials. There also has to be free exchange of information, co-operation between security services of the regional countries and transparency of borders between neighbouring states. Georgia must make great efforts to become a full member of the international export control system and use co-operation for creating efficient national export control.

## **5. Problems, prospects...**

The system of export control with means of maintenance was created in Georgia an year ago. But only creation of legislative and executive bodies is not enough to build an efficient control system. Since control institutions lack experience in this field, there are few professionals among state officials. At the same time, the state is facing hard economic problems and, therefore, guarantees of efficient export control seem doubtful. The Georgian leadership has many times officially announced its political will and readiness to introduce export control. Georgian politicians are aware of the fact that failure to fulfil commitments deriving from international agreements and conventions may damage the country's international image and spoil its relations with supporting countries. However, bureaucratic opposition and corruption in the governmental agencies may negatively affect the efficiency of export control anyway. Furthermore, considering interests of neighbouring countries in transits of military hardware and radioactive wastes (Armenian-Russian military co-operation and joint activities in connection with the Armenian nuclear plant; Russian-Iranian co-operation in construction of nuclear power plants, nuclear reactors using 20-percent enriched fuel and exploitation of uranium deposits), Georgia runs the risk of being involved in new political tensions in the near future.

According to some officials of the SDFD, the north-south direction (Russia-Armenia-Iran) is the most dangerous one for the Georgian national security. Increasing Russian-Iranian and Russian-Armenian military co-operation arouses suspicions that it may pose certain threats in the future. Nuclear materials, radioactive wastes, missile technologies and other goods forbidden by the international law might be transferred through this root. It is noteworthy that geographic conditions of Georgia demand the country's frontier troops to apply mobile equipment since there are a lot of bypassing uncontrolled roots across Georgia's borders with neighbouring states in the north and south.

The USA greatly assists Georgia in this respect. This assistance became possible after the Georgian and the American presidents signed the agreement on the Co-operative Threat Reduction (Nunn-Lugar) Program on July 17, 1997. The agreement was put in action in November 10, 1997. There are three programs under which CTR assistance for export control of Georgia has been implemented:

1. DOD-Custom Service Counterproliferation Program
2. DOD-FBI Counterproliferation Program
3. Military-to-Military Counterproliferation Program

These programs aim to assist the development of legal bases and export control regulations in Georgia; to improve professional skills of servicemen; support institutionalisation of respective state structures. Technical assistance includes special training programs for personnel of the SDFD, MoD, MIA, MSS, Ministry of Justice, MFA, Customs Department and Parliament. The training is being implemented in the International Academy in Budapest (Hungary) and Marshall Centre (Garmish). In the framework of the program law-enforcement bodies are getting special equipment necessary both for training/exercises and for checking mass destruction weapons and connected materials.

The U.S. Department of Energy has already supplied the Georgian border check-points with two stationary and several individual radiation control detectors. The data base system is permanently updated with the help of the U.S. state agencies as well. This data base includes a list of suspicious private companies, threats from transportation of dual-use technologies and materials, possible roots for illicit transits of forbidden materials or military equipment and technologies. However, due to the lack of respective equipment and computers at the border check-points, the system has not been used to the full so far.

## **NON-MILITARY ALTERNATIVE SERVICE AND ITS PROBLEMS IN GEORGIA**

*by Teimuraz Chachanidze  
Ministry of Defence*

Nowadays, the Georgian youth views the military service as less and less attractive and interesting. This may be explained by difficulties of the army life, the low prestige of a military career, hazing, the too long term of the service (24 months), insufficient supplies, etc. Sometimes conscripts refuse to serve in the army on the basis of conscientious objection.

During Zviad Gamsakhurdia's presidency, the Supreme Council of Georgia passed a law on non-military alternative labour service on June 14, 1991. However, due to then political situation and some other reasons, it did not come into force. Adoption of a new, more thoroughly developed law was greatly facilitated by the new Georgian constitution which declares (Article 19) that "every citizen has a freedom of speech, thought, conscious and warship". On October 28, 1997, the Georgian parliament passed the Law on Non-military Alternative Labour Service. After presidential approval it came into force on January 1, 1998. In reality, however, it is still not implemented and there are incessantly amassing problems with regard the alternative service.

In 1996 two Jehovah Witnesses refused to serve in the Georgian army and were imprisoned for 1,5 years. At that time the 1991 law was still valid. In the spring 1998 one of the conscripts applied for the alternative service. The case was examined in court. Although the conscript managed to prove his position, he was not drafted into the alternative service. In the autumn 1998 already more than 1,800 conscripts applied for the alternative service but none of them achieved the goal. Their number is expected to rise during the spring 1999 call-up. Several reasons account for poor enforcement of the law.

### **1. The law is incomplete**

Implementation of laws in Georgia is rather unsatisfactory. Therefore, a law should be as much detailed as possible. It must be clear and raise few questions. The fact that the alternative non-military labour service, as a civil service, is not strictly separated from the general military service is one of the shortages of the given law.

Chapter 2, Article 3. "Servicemen of the alternative non-military labour service and their families enjoy the same privileges that are stipulated by the legislation for servicemen of the general military service".

Alternative service is a civil service and, therefore, families of its servicemen have nothing to do with the privileges of the general military service.

Chapter 3, Article 18. "After demobilisation from the alternative non-military labour service citizens are enlisted in the reserve until 50 years of age". Enlistment of citizens in the reserve for their possible mobilisation after completing the alternative non-military labour service contradicts the principle of alternative service.

The law says nothing whether servicemen of the general military service have a right to shift to the alternative service for the rest of their service term. On the other hand, the law provides for a possibility to shift from the alternative service to the general military service.

Chapter 3, Article 17. "Servicemen of the alternative non-military labour service can be demobilised before the term of service expires for the same reasons as the servicemen of the general military service in accordance with the legislation".

Such formulation is wrong. Servicemen of the alternative non-military labour service and those of the general military service cannot be demobilised ahead of the service deadline for the same reasons because these two services differ in nature.

Chapter 1, Article 2. "The nature of the alternative non-military labour service must conform with the difficulties of the general military service. The term of the alternative non-military labour service must exceed the term of the general military service stipulated by the legislation".

If the alternative service must conform with the difficulties of the general military service, it remains unclear why servicemen of the alternative service should serve 36 months. European countries are reducing the term of military service. Meanwhile, the general military service in Georgia lasts 24 months. Consequently, the term of the alternative non-military labour service is increased.

There are also some other unclear articles in the law which make it difficult to implement. This uncertainty is caused by the failure to take into account the experience of other countries in this field.

## **2. Employment problems**

The alternative non-military labour service is a civil service. Its servicemen are required to do unpopular, hard job which provides for a small salary at that. As to the working regime, vacations, weekends, etc., they must be regulated by the labour legislation. At present, the employment situation of Georgia is rather difficult. Even psychiatric clinics have no vacancies of a cleaner or attendant. Many youth with high education have to do unskilled work. According to various press reports, there are from 600 thousand to 1 mln unemployed in the country. Under such circumstances, the government should develop a special program with participation not only state enterprises but private companies interested in a cheap labour force.

It must be taken into account that on the way towards a market economy Georgian enterprises and organisations are being privatised, some of them transform into joint-stock companies, some cease to operate at all. This dynamic may pose certain problems as there will be a need to shift the youth from one organisation to another. To regulate these problems, the law stipulates creation of a special state commission for alternative non-military labour service. Collection of information about vacancies for alternative non-military labour service in ministries, governmental agencies, enterprises and organisations is one of its main functions. However, neither the regulations of the commission nor its composition have been approved so far. That is why it actually does not function and there are no ways to call up conscripts to the alternative service.

## **3. Criteria to identify belief, conscious and worship**

Taking into account tendencies of the alternative service in foreign countries, the number of conscientious objectors in Georgia is expected to grow. The low prestige of the army will greatly contribute to such development. Under the circumstances, it will be extremely important to distinguish true conscientious objectors from draft-dodgers. According to the law, this distinction is up to the state commission which is made up of high ranking officials from the ministries and governmental agencies. However, the commission should represent various religious confessions, pacifist, human rights and other non-governmental

organisations. Only with such a broad representation the commission will be able to judge correctly conscripts' conscious and political beliefs. To make a right decision, it is necessary to work out respective criteria.

#### **4. Possible solutions to the problem**

Amendments to the current legislation, considering analogous laws of foreign countries

Creation of a state structure to co-ordinate conscription procedures of the alternative service and to seek vacancies for its servicemen

Reduction of the term of the general military service to 10-12 months, while that of the alternative service to 12-15 months

## **Military Chronicle**

### **SPECIAL**

Georgian law-enforcement authorities arrested a group of suspects for alleged anti-government conspiracy on May 22. One of them is reported to be General Gudjar Qurashvili, the head of the MoD training centres and former commander of the ground troops of the Georgian army.

#### *General Gudjar Qurashvili*

Birthdate: June 1, 1951

Education: Riyazan military college, Russia (graduated in 1971)  
Frunze military academy, Russia (1982)

In the Soviet army he held positions from a platoon commander, Lieutenant, (1971-72) to the commander of a brigade, Colonel, (1989-91). After demobilisation from the Soviet army in 1992, he commanded a regiment of the Internal Troops of Georgia for some time. In August 1992 he was appointed commander of the 23rd Cavalry (mechanised) Brigade of the MoD, while in January 1993 commander of the 1st Operational Brigade of the Internal Troops. On July 12, 1993, he was awarded the rank of general. He held also offices of the commander of the ground troops of the MoD, the head of the Main Military Inspectorate and deputy defence minister. He has founded Telavi Paratroop Battalion and supervised Senaki Battalion (which rebelled last October) for some time. General Qurashvili fought the war in Abkhazia and was wounded there. He also commanded and co-ordinated Georgian forces during the last year's fighting in the Gali district of Abkhazia on May 21-26.

### **Conflict zones**

The office of the Gali district administration was bombed right when Konstantin Ozgan, the head of the Abkhaz state commission for repatriation of refugees and rehabilitation of the district, was about to leave the building for a meeting with Georgian refugees. Three people were wounded. Sukhumi blamed the incident on Georgian terrorists, while Tbilisi claimed the explosion to be organised by those forces that were not interested in a dialogue between the Georgians and the Abkhaz.

"Resonance" No. 90, April 5, p. 2

The Abkhaz naval forces detained a Georgian fishing ship "Alioni" with ten mariners on April 3. According to Revaz Gabunia, the authorised representative of the SDFD chairman, the ship had been entitled to fish only in the Kobuleti coastal area but for unknown reasons she entered the Ochamchire zone. According to Astamur Tarba, the Abkhaz security minister, Sukhumi may exchange the Georgian mariners for four Abkhaz citizens taken hostage in the Gali district of Abkhazia several months ago. However, Archil Chkhartishvili, the head of the SID press centre, said Sukhumi's proposal could be hardly fulfilled as the Abkhaz hostages were kept by Georgian guerrillas not controlled by Tbilisi.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 73, 75; April 5, 7; pp. 1, 2  
"Resonance" No. 91, April 6, p. 2

According to Tamaz Nadareishvili, the chairman of the Tbilisi-based Supreme Council of Abkhazia, Russian security services are carrying out intense intelligence-gathering in Georgia, in the Samegrelo region in particular. In his words, they act under coverage of the RPF.

"Alia" No. 53, April 5, pp. 1, 3  
"Droni" No. 35, April 6-8, p. 1

Regular rotation of the RPF personnel took place in Abkhazia on April 9-23. Most of the peacekeepers were replaced with paratroopers from Russia-deployed units.  
"Dilis Gazeti" No. 78, April 10, p. 5

Vice-colonel David Tskhvedadze, the commander of the Georgian peacekeeping battalion in the Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia) was killed on April 18. The police arrested and indicted Ramaz Dzabunidze, 20, the commander of a company of the same battalion who reportedly committed the murder while drunk.  
"Resonance" No. 114, April 20, p. 3

According to Azat Hanmamedov, the head of the RPF press centre, three unidentified gunmen made an unsuccessful attempt to stole weapons from an RPF check-point near the Khurcha village, Zugdidi district, on April 30. After short gunfire they managed to hide.  
"Dilis Gazeti" No. 95, May 1, p. 2

## **Army building**

Due to hard financial conditions (the army officers have not been paid their salaries for seven months) about 50 officers of an air defence unit in Tbilisi went on strike on April 20 and picketed the military site so that the country's air defence system was paralysed for the whole day. The incident was over by the end of the day, after the commander of the Air Force and Air Defence Troops General Nagopia held negotiations with the strikers. Commenting on the fact, General Johnny Pirtskhalaishvili, the Chief of the General Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces, said the MoD had worked out a special schedule for paying salaries. He denied any connection between the incident and the defence minister's visit to the USA (on occasion of the 50th anniversary of the NATO). For his part, Gogi Gogashvili, the head of the MoD military inspectorate, said the incident was hardly caused only by financial problems. In his words, a lot of officers are dissatisfied with their possible dismissal after the Air Defence Troops and Air Force have been merged into a single service.  
"Alia" No. 62, April 22-23, p. 12  
"Resonance" No. 106, April 22, p. 2  
"Meridiani 44" No. 46, April 23-26, p. 4

According to Givi Lekishvili, director general of the state military-scientific centre "Delta", the centre has developed about 15 types of military production (grenade and mine launchers, detonators, optic sights, anti-tank grenades, etc.) so far. Some of them - 120mm and 82mm grenade launchers - are already procured for the army. Besides, several tanks have been equipped with the centre-designed armour. It also produced an original flack-jacket which was successfully tested in France and Germany. However, because of insufficient financing only 200-300 such jackets are produced every year. The Delta and the French company "Thompson" are currently negotiating prospects of joint production of these jackets. At present, the centre is designing a Georgian submachine gun "Gorda" and a pistol "Armazi" but due to the lack of finance there are few prospects of their serial production in the near future. The Delta is also focused on several electronic and radio projects. It actively co-operates with Ukrainian, Russian, Bulgarian, Czech and other countries' similar centres. At the same time, unless the government works out a special program to improve financial situation in the centre, its activities may be called into question. Personnel of the centre have not received their salaries for the last eight months and a part of them was, therefore, laid off. In Lekishvili's words, several million outdated shells and

aviation bombs are currently stored under open air in Vartsikhe - former Soviet military depot. The centre is authorised to utilise them but it lacks finance to this end too.

"7 Dge" No. 39, April 1999, p. 2

"Akhali Taoba" No. 92, 130; April 5, May 14; pp. 2, 8

In accordance with the Law on Public Service, the state service bureau of the State Chancellery announced a tender to occupy the vacancy of the head of the MoD budget-treasury department (Avtandil Davitadze, the former head of the department, was dismissed in March). All Georgian citizens, provided they speak the state language and meet the following requirements, can apply for the office: the five year experience of public service and economic (or financial) high education. Candidates also have to satisfy requirements of the Law on General Military Service. The monthly salary of the office amounts to 130 GEL per month.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 88-89, April 4-5, p. 3

According to Gogi Gogashvili, the head of the MoD military inspectorate, Avtandil Davitadze, former head of the MoD budget-treasury department, was dismissed after the January 12 sitting of the MoD Board chaired by the defence minister did not approve his financial report for rather suspicious figures. Tevzadze ordered the inspectorate to examine activities of the department. As a result, a lot of violations were revealed and Davitadze was removed from office. In addition, the Audit Chamber also revealed some breaches in accountancy and bookkeeping of the department. The current debit debt of the MoD totals 7 mln GEL and only 2.6 mln of them relate to the Army Support Society (more detailed information was given in the previous issue of the "Army and Society in Georgia"). The case is now being examined by an ad hoc joint investigation commission of the Audit Chamber, Ministry of Finance and MoD.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 97, 99; April 10, 13; pp. 3, 4, 5

By the time Tevzadze took office 658 officers and contract servicemen of the army were over the retirement age. By now 200 officers and 114 contract servicemen have already retired. According to the current legislation, retirement ages in the army range as follows: generals - 60 years, colonels - 55 years, vice-colonels and majors 50 years, other officers - 45 years. As the Supreme Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces the president may prolong the term of service of generals and colonels for five years. The main point is that the retirement is a rather expensive procedure for the army. Retired officers must get an immediate remuneration - 6-12 monthly salaries - and then a monthly pension (provided they served more than 10 years - if not, they will get no pension). The 1999 meagre defence budget makes the task extremely difficult, if not impossible. That is why already retired officers still have not been paid their remuneration while pensions are usually late. At the same time, the army suffers from the lack of professional junior officers, first of all platoon commanders (350 vacancies at present). The MoD plans to bridge the gap by recruiting Georgian cadets who are now learning abroad - 800 altogether (including 600 studying in Russia). Cadets of last courses may be ordered to get back to Georgia without completing the whole course and, after being tested, assigned to their positions.

"Droni" No. 36, April 8-10, p. 3

"Meridiani 44" No. 46, April 23-26, p. 4

Ilija Pavnenko, a 60-year-old former deputy commander of the Ukrainian Navy, was appointed advisor of the commander of the Georgian Navy.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 81, April 15, p. 15

The MoD made a statement in protest against an anti-MoD campaign launched by "certain forces". According to the statement, some newspapers deliberately publish slanderous information. For instance, not long ago the daily "Alia" newspaper reported that a former officer of the SDFD who had been fired for spying was later appointed a high position in the MoD. This publication is a clear slander aimed to discredit the MoD leadership and provoke a confrontation between various power agencies, the statement says adding that the "fifth

column" seems to have launched a large-scale information war against Georgia. It is also noteworthy that these facts took place on the eve of the April 16 first multi-national (Georgia-Ukraine-Azerbaijan) military exercise in Georgia and April 17 inauguration of the Supsa oil terminal, the statement points out. "Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 98, April 16, pp. 1, 2

The defence minister ordered a spring call-up to the army on April 15 on the basis of the Georgian president's April 14 decree. The call-up will last from May 1 till June 30. Able-bodied male Georgian citizens between the ages of 18 and 27 years, provided they are not deferred from the military service by law, are liable to conscription.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 99, April 17, p. 2

Nowadays, the conscription system actually does not work in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, the Akhalkalaki and Ninotzminda districts (southern Georgia). Adjarian conscripts are drafted only into the local law-enforcement bodies and the 25th MRB of the MoD (deployed in Batumi). According to the 1997 law, a lot of conscripts are deferred from the army. As a result, in the words of General Tengiz Razmadze, former head of the MoD mobilisation department, 91% of all the conscript-age citizens do not serve the army, while recruits come predominantly from poor families. During the last call-up the drafting offices were forced to enlist even "partly unfit" conscripts in order to secure the planned number of recruits. The General Staff which is in charge of conscription procedures developed amendments to the current legislation which stipulated abolishment of some privileges. The term of service was proposed to reduce by six months. Besides, functions of district drafting offices were to be carried out by local administrations. However, at the April 20 hearings in the parliamentary defence and security committee the amendments were disapproved.

"Kavkasioni" No. 15, April 21-27, pp. 1, 7

## **Army life**

Six privates got poisoned (one of them died later), allegedly by poor-quality foods, in the Vaziani training centre of the Joint Military Academy on April 4. According to Koba Kobiashvili, Tbilisi military procurator, there is no respective laboratory in Georgia and foods from the unit will be examined in Armenia or Azerbaijan. Rusudan Dondoladze of the main military hospital said she had never witnessed such intoxication before. In her opinion, the case may be connected with radiation. On the whole, for the last two years servicemen often complained to physicians about their health. Changes found in their blood often look as if caused by radiation.

"Droni" No. 36, April 8-10, p. 3

"Akhali Taoba" No. 96, April 9, p. 4

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 101, May 8, p. 3

## **Visits, negotiations, co-operation**

On April 25 in Washington (at the NATO 50th anniversary) presidents of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova signed a joint declaration (the so-called "Washington Declaration") to create a new military-political alliance - GUUAM (Georgia-Ukraine-Uzbekistan-Azerbaijan-Moldova).

"Kavkasioni" No. 16, April 28-May 4, p. 5

Valeri Chkheidze, the SDFD chairman, visited Ukraine at the end of March for talks on the prospects of the Georgian-Ukrainian 1999 co-operation in the field of frontier defence. While in Kiev, he visited Bogdan Khmelntitsky Academy of Frontier Troops where some 50 Georgian cadets are learning at present. One of them was dismissed for poor knowledge right during Chkheidze's visit.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 90, April 3, p. 6

General Venger, head of the foreign relations department of the Ukrainian MoD, visited Tbilisi for talks on the 1999 plan of the Georgian-Ukrainian co-operation. The plan provides for 16 joint exercises - eight in Georgia and eight

in Ukraine. Georgia will also take part in two PFP exercises which are traditionally held in Ukraine - "See Breeze" and "Peace Shield". Problems of the Caspian oil transits were also on the table. The MoD and the SDFD plan to create special units to defend the Poti sea port from air and sea. The USA will finance the whole project. Ukraine may provide Georgia with useful consultations and assistance in this respect since it has got great experience in defence of pipelines. It must be mentioned that an Azeri military delegation visited Tbilisi right at the time of Venger's visit. The closed-door Georgian-Azerbaijani talks were reportedly focused on the prospects of creating a multi-national peacekeeping force in the framework of GUUAM.

"Droni" No. 35, April 6-8, p. 7

At the April 2 CIS summit in Moscow, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan refused to prolong the 1992 CIS collective security treaty (the so-called "Tashkent Treaty"). As to the RPF mandate, the conflicting parties should negotiate and develop joint measures for safe repatriation of refugees to the Gali district and create joint district administrations in a month - till May 2. Otherwise the mandate will not be prolonged.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 90, April 3, p. 2

On April 2 the Russian government approved the Russian MoD's proposal to cede to Georgia former Soviet military objects currently not used by the Russian Troops in Transcaucasus.

"Resonance" No. 93, April 8, p. 2

On April 12 the defence ministers of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia held confidential talks in Tzinandali (eastern Georgia). Some days later, on April 14-16, a joint Georgian-Ukrainian-Azerbaijani military exercise took place in the Yaghludja firing ground under General Johnny Pirtskhalaishvili. Levan Mamaladze, state commissioner of the Kvemo Kartli region, David Onoprishvili, the finance minister, Revaz Adamia, the chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee, Vladimir Andreev, commander of the Russian troops in Georgia, foreign military attaches and some other officials attended the exercise as guests. The exercise cost about 70 thousand GEL and aimed to perfect defence of the Caspian oil pipeline. It consisted of two stages: during two days - April 14-15 - Ukrainian instructors trained Georgian and Azerbaijani servicemen, while on April 16 joint forces checked a simulated terrorist attack and restored the "damaged" pipeline by creating a temporary bypassing pipeline. On the very next day, April 17, the Supsa oil terminal was officially inaugurated. The MoD has created a special anti-terrorism unit manned with graduates of the Kodjori-based commando training centre. It will be trained by Ukrainian instructors and assigned the mission of checking terrorist attacks against the pipeline and the terminal.

"Kavkasioni" No. 14, April 14-20, p. 5

"Droni" No. 39, April 17-20, pp. 3, 5

Zaza Pataridze, deputy chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee, disapproved of the joint air defence exercise that was held in the 102nd Russian base (Armenia) on April 22 by Russia, Armenia, Byelorussia, Kazakhstan and Kirgizstan in the framework of the CIS collective security system (it must be mentioned that according to the "Zakavkazskie Voennye Vedomosti", a newspaper of the Russian MoD, Georgian air defence troops participated in the exercise as well). He said the exercise threatened air space of Georgia.

"Droni" No. 41, April 24-27, p. 4

"Zakavkazskie Voennye Vedomosti" No. 46, April 27, p. 3

Four Turkish warships paid unofficial visit to Georgian sea ports on April 29-May 1. Two warships - TCG "ADATEPE" (F-251) and TCG "GIRESUN" (F-491) visited Poti, while TCG "EGE" (F-256) and TCG "GEMILIK" (F-492) visited Batumi. Guests met with Aslan Smirba, mayor of Batumi.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 93, April 29, p. 5

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 84, April 29, p. 3

Grigol Katamadze, deputy defence minister, visited Great Britain for negotiations with the British defence secretary, foreign secretary and some other top officials. The UK is developing a large assistance program for the Georgian armed forces. In the framework of the program, more Georgian cadets will have an opportunity to study in British military colleges (at present, there are only six of them). Besides, Georgia will get some military hardware - patrol craft, military vehicles, air navigation equipment, etc. - and consultative services. During the visit, Georgia and UK signed a joint declaration, denouncing ethnic purges in Kosovo and approving of the NATO policy towards Yugoslavia. The Georgian defence minister will visit UK this October. "Droni" No. 43, April 29-May 1, p. 5

According to Revaz Adamia, the chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee, despite Tbilisi's protests, Russian top military officers continue to visit Abkhazia. For instance, General Voszhayev of the Russian NSC, has recently visited Sukhumi and Batumi. "I don't know what he spoke about with the Abkhaz and Adjarian leaders but such visits must be co-ordinated with the centre", he said. Besides, Russia has deployed additional forces - 400 paratroopers of the 31st Airborne Brigade - in the Gali district. He pointed to the fact that simultaneously with recent rumours about possible assassination attempt against Shevardnadze in the near future, Russia announced its plan to launch large-scale manoeuvres in the North Caucasus, near the Georgian borders, in April.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 90, April 3, p. 2

"Droni" No. 34, April 3-6, p. 3

## **State security**

Akaki Eliava, the leader of the last year's October 19 mutiny in western Georgia (who is now hiding in forests) threatened to attack the Supsa oil terminal and the Caspian oil pipeline by April 17 (inauguration ceremony of the terminal) unless the authorities released his imprisoned supporters (participants of the mutiny). Levan Kentchadze, deputy security minister and the head of the MSS anti-terrorism bureau, is authorised for negotiations with Eliava. According to MP Irakli Batiashvili, former chief of the information analytical bureau (currently MSS), the authorities will hardly arrest Eliava as he is under patronage of some Georgian high ranking officials.

"Resonance" No. 97, 99; April 13, 14; pp. 1, 2

Gela Aladashvili, a Georgian businessman, was arrested by Armenian law-enforcement authorities for spying in favour of Azerbaijan. Armenian officials claimed that he was recruited by the Azeri security service in 1998 when he visited Baku to settle some his commercial problems (however, Aladashvili was released in May. According to the MSS, Armenian investigators failed to find any evidence against him).

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 88, April 23, p. 1

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 137, May 25, p. 1

## **Georgian military establishment and the Kosovo crisis**

One of the Georgian MoD officials told journalists on condition of anonymity that some members of the Afghans Union of Georgia (veterans of the war in Afghanistan) led by General Zurab Meparishvili, former chief of the Georgian general staff, and George Kvinikadze, former commander of the air defence troops, were trained at one of the secret bases in Yugoslavia - near Novi-Sad city. After training, they will join the Serb air defence troops against NATO air strikes.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 90, April 3, p. 2

According to Panteleimon Giorgadze, the leader of the United Communist Party, 100-150 Georgian volunteers were ready to join the Yugoslav army against NATO forces. Most of them, in his words, have never served in the army and, therefore, it is still unclear whether they will be able to get to Yugoslavia.

Commenting on the statement, Gela Suladze of the MSS said the ministry would not prevent the volunteers from leaving for Yugoslavia.

"7 Dge" No. 40, April 7-8, p. 1

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 76, April 8, p. 5

## Miscellany

Two containers with caesium 137 were revealed in an abandoned building in the Kvemo Keda-deployed military base. The MoD took over this object in 1992. During the ceding procedure Russian officials said nothing about such containers. Georgian experts claim that radiation there is low and pose no threats to human health. According to the radiation security centre of the Ministry of Environmental Security and Natural Resources, almost all the MoD units have been examined by now. As a result, experts found 12 low and 26 dangerous sources of radiation.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 109, April 23, p. 6

According to Michael Kaviladze, a Georgian professor of physics, radioactive wastes from the Armenian nuclear power plant are exported to Russia through Georgia. As a result, in his words, radioactive situation in some Georgian regions has deteriorated. The parliament commissioned the Ministry of Environmental Security and Natural Resources to examine the case in depth.

"7 Dge" No. 43, April 16-18, p. 2

Vakhtang Rcheulishvili, the leader of the Socialist Party, a number of MPs, representatives of the Popular party and the Union of Georgian Traditionalists visited the village of Meria, Ozurgeti district (western Georgia). Local residents call their village "death zone". The village is adjacent to a former Soviet air force base (which occupies 700 hectares) where, among other things, are several half-rusty tanks with missile fuel (the so-called "Melanzh" and "Samin"). The current situation in the village is alarming: the number of deaths, congenital diseases and sickness has increased remarkably, while the number of births dropped. Locals demand the authorities to take prompt measures. Although the 1998 state budget allocated 200 thousand GEL for utilisation of the fuel, no actions were made in practice.

"7 Dge" No. 46, April 23-25, pp. 1, 2

## Press Digest

In accordance with Moscow's recent decision, from now onward the Russian peacekeeping battalion in the Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia) will be manned with servicemen of the 58th Army (deployed in Dagestan), the Droni (No. 35) reports. Previously, the battalion was traditionally manned with servicemen of the Leningrad MD as there is a special training centre for peacekeeping operations. However, Russia has changed this rule and the fact, in the newspaper's opinion, is rather meaningful. It is noteworthy that just the 58th Army fought the entire war in Chechnya. Afterwards it was deployed in Dagestan (North Caucasus) and is now engaged in incessant clashes with various groups of gunmen. At first sight, Russia's decision might be explained by the need to reduce transportation costs (a way from Dagestan to South Ossetia is shorter than from Leningrad MD) but such a logic suggests that it would be much cheaper to deploy Georgia-based Russian troops there, the newspaper argues. Russia's decision in fact means that peace in South Ossetia will be maintained by the servicemen who have been in war since 1994 and whose normal condition is permanent readiness for a combat. The result seems obvious: situation in Georgian and Ossetian villages of the region may become more tensed in the future, the Droni concludes.

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According to the Droni (No. 43), the ISAB (International Security Advisory Board) has completed its recommendations on the military reform in Georgia. It suggests that the Georgian ground forces should be reduced to two brigades -

about 2-3 thousand servicemen altogether - plus some 3,000 servicemen of the Navy and Air Force/Air Defence Troops. The army command should consist of 1,000 officers maximum. The National Guards and Internal Troops should be abolished, while the Frontier Troops must be structurally reorganised and subordinated to the MIA. Functions of the MoD and the General Staff should be clearly divided from each other and volunteer contract service must be introduced in the army. Most importantly, the government should work out a national security concept. These reforms, in the Droni's opinion, are surely revolutionary, though they are conditioned, above all, by the current defence budget. However, there is the other side of the coin. Such a small army - 5-6 thousand servicemen - will be hardly able to defend territorial integrity of the country, the newspaper argues. For the Kavkasioni (No. 17) such reduction of the Georgian army will be welcomed only by the Abkhaz separatists. According to the Droni, by any standards about one third of an army is usually lost during first days of combat. This means that in case of a war about 1-1,5 thousand servicemen of the Georgian army will be killed at the very beginning. Meanwhile, the Abkhaz army - the most real adversary, in the newspaper's opinion, of the Georgian armed forces - is twice as large at present as the proposed Georgian one. On the other hand, if Georgia fulfils these recommendations, it may get significant assistance from Great Britain and Germany. It is unclear, however, whether the country will be assisted if it fulfils only some of them, for instance if the size of the army remains unchanged. The proposed scheme, the Droni points out, hardly takes into account the money that must be paid to those 4,000 officers who must be dismissed during the reforms - each of them should get an immediate retirement payment that amounts to their six monthly salaries. The defence budget surely has no such money.

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Although Tevzadze's appointment raised a lot of hopes, no improvements have occurred in the army for one year of his being in office, the Droni (No. 44) claims. Despite some changes (for instance, replacement of almost all the heads of departments and their deputies), the army in fact remains the same. In the newspaper's opinion, Tevzadze made his first mistake when he agreed to appoint top officers by nomination of the country's political leadership. It is obvious that most of the high ranking officers of the MoD were not selected by the minister himself. Almost all of them have one common feature: they used to serve in the Soviet KGB or in the current Georgian NSC. According to the Droni, one of their main tasks is reading newspapers and looking for enemies among journalists. Being military dilettantes, they are mostly occupied with a "witch-hunt" in the MoD. Consequently, the MoD and the General Staff look like KGB offices at present. There is in fact the only "positive" result - the minister has got a lot of alternative information sources about the situation in the army, the newspaper remarks. Tevzadze's many actions may be explained by his non-confidence in professionalism and honesty of the MoD top officers. For instance, he was hesitating to appoint a new commander of the Navy (the former is currently prosecuted) for almost an year and finally resorted to a rather unique method: the chief of the General Staff temporarily took the office but in reality the Navy is commanded by an advisor of the commander of the Georgian Navy and former deputy commander of the Ukrainian Navy, Ilija Pavnenko. Looking for honest men, Tevzadze made yet another unusual step - he launched a tender (for the first time in the modern Georgian army's history) for the office of the head of the MoD budget-treasury department (Avtandil Davitadze, the former head of the department was dismissed for financial violations). A lot of countries assist at present the army-building in Georgia. Azerbaijan and Ukraine help re-organise the Air Defence Troops (by the way, this re-organisation somehow threatens the capital - new deployment of air defence units makes it possible that downed aircraft may fall right in Tbilisi); Turkey is going to train Georgian marines, build a military hotel, sport complex, etc.; US instructors may soon train Georgian rangers. Not long ago, a delegation of American experts examined the Georgian defence management system and worked out some recommendations. But unfortunately, all western recommendations, as well as the declared goal of building a western-style army, in the Droni's opinion, remain on paper and this threatens to ruin the "pro-western" mood which emerged after

Tevzadze's appointment and, on the whole, discredit the very notion of "western values".

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Not by chance, the Meridiani 44 (No. 40) emphasises, the recent anti-Tevzadze campaign began right after the situation in the armed forces somewhat improved: the new minister reduced the number of his deputies, merged the Air Force and Air Defence Troops into a single service, created the General Staff and several directions (territorial commands), abolished the Main Military Commissariat and, most importantly, introduced civilian elements in the MoD and improved military relations with foreign countries. However, the newspaper argues, David Tevzadze does not conform with a Russian scenario. Russia has been always anxious that former Soviet military functionaries should be appointed defence ministers in CIS countries. With regard to Georgia, it was satisfied as long as Vardiko Nadibaidze, a former general of the Soviet army, held the office. At present, Tevzadze is the only CIS defence minister who does not match this scheme. According to the Meridiani 44, Moscow was apparently shocked by Nadibaidze's dismissal and Tevzadze's appointment and, therefore, one cannot rule out that just the Kremlin instigated anti-Tevzadze campaign. The main target, however, is not the defence minister but the Georgian army on the whole. In the newspaper's opinion, the army building problem is one of the most important ones of Georgia since if the Georgian army grows strong enough it may become a decisive geopolitical factor in the region.

#### **ABBREVIATIONS:**

AGM - air-to-ground missile  
AIFV - armoured infantry fighting vehicle  
APC - armoured personnel carrier  
ATGW - anti-tank guided weapon  
EDT - Eastern Direction Troops (MoD)  
FGA - fighter, ground-attack  
MBT - main battle tank  
MD - military district  
MG - machine gun  
MoD - Ministry of Defence  
PFC - fast patrol craft, coastal  
PfP - Partnership for Peace program  
SAM - surface-to-air missile  
SID - State Intelligence Department  
SLM - sea-launched missile  
SSM - surface-to-surface missile  
CINC - Commander-In-Chief  
CIS - Commonwealth of Independent States  
MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
MIA - Ministry of Internal Affairs  
MRB - motor rifle brigade  
MSS - Ministry of State Security  
NSC - National Security Council  
RPF - Russian Peacekeeping Force  
SDFD - State Department of Frontier Defence  
SSS - State Safeguard Service