

# The Army and Society in Georgia

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## THE MILITARY REFORM WITH A FIVE-YEAR INTERVAL

*By Koba Liklikadze  
Head of the MoD press centre*

After almost two years of work, the International Security Advisory Board (ISAB), a group of western security experts created at the request of the Georgian government, concluded that the current security system of Georgia is potentially dangerous. Recommendations of the ISAB on gradual reforms in the Georgian armed forces have been already examined and unanimously approved by the National Security Council, though a few years ago any talks about military reforms were prohibited and cost several officers their career.

According to Sr. Gary Johnson, the ISAB chairman, the Georgian government's attitude towards the ISAB recommendations is very positive. However, the military reforms, in his words, are not an easy task to carry out quickly and they may last, as well as reformation in any other field, 5-10 years.

Among main impediments to the reforms, the ISAB points to retrograde thinking, a legacy of the Soviet past, and the current severe financial crisis. According to available information, officers who have not been paid their salary for the last five months earn their living by offering themselves as blood donors or day-labourers. As a result, a lot of young officers preferred to give up the military service. The lack of finance may make military personnel training and other programs impossible to implement.

The ISAB strongly suggests that the MoD should begin with publishing "white papers" which must contain clear definitions of the reform and motivation of the military service. According to the ISAB recommendations, officers and privates must be motivated, disciplined, organised, well trained and equipped, as these are necessary pre-conditions for high combat efficiency. Good service conditions, equipment and personnel training play a vital role in the motivation of officers and privates. Every serviceman, regardless of ranks, has a right to demand that salary, uniform, food and accommodation be provided in time.

By and large, without strong social guarantees, any reform is utopian. That is why, financial management of the defence budget takes especial part in the ISAB recommendations. The ISAB proposes that the MoD should be able to raise additional money from "inner resources", for instance, by selling or renting

lands and extra equipment. To this end, the government has to develop substantial financial incentives in the financial system of the country and the MoD must be entitled to use a big part of these incomes. Obviously, such financial operations require the government's approval and strict control.

The recommendations specify in detail how to remove the hierarchical national security system of Georgia inherited from the Soviet Union. In the ISAB's opinion, all units with military functions (the armed forces, National Guards, a special task brigade of the MIA) must be subordinated to the MoD and re-organised in order to conform with NATO standards. The defence minister as a civil political authority must be responsible only for the development and management of defence policy, while operational command of the armed forces is up to the chief of the General Staff. As to the internal and frontier troops, and special state safeguard service - i.e. the units with "civil functions and policy" - the ISAB suggests that they should be under the MIA and their re-organisation in accordance with the practice and standards of the Council of Europe may be delayed till 2004. Just this point of the "velvet" recommendations, which have already passed all the required channels, may lead to serious confrontation in the future. Integration into the MIA will reduce the prestige of the Frontier Troops and may result in incessant backstage intrigues. One should also take into account the factor of Valeri Chkheidze, the SDFD chairman, who will hardly put up with inferior position after long and skilful chairmanship in a self-sufficient organisation.

Recommendations of the foreign experts include also such a problem as collecting/processing of information and information sources. Services responsible for the analysis of intelligence information, contingency planning, crisis management and control have a pivotal position in the notion of national security. Public information sources allow to carry out a good deal of these tasks. Inadequate contingency and crisis management of the Georgian respective structures illustrates the current situation in these "pivotal" bodies.

Maybe the most important issue at the beginning of the military reform is the question whether the military service should be based on universal conscription, though it actually remains in paper, or some kind of mixed (conscription/contract) system - the latter may allow to draft enough resources to match requirements of "active and mobilised forces". The answer to this question is clear for the authors of the recommendations. In Sr. Gary Johnson's words, there is no longer need for universal conscription in Georgia. An important question is how quickly the government will realise the necessity to abolish the conscription system which has become an arena of bargaining. It will precisely indicate the government's readiness to meet challenges of the time and develop such a model of the army which is suitable for Georgia's national security.

## **TBILISI AIRCRAFT WORKS**

*By Teimuraz Chachanidze*

The TAW is affiliated to the scientific-industrial concern "Sukhoi Fighters" (Russia). The affiliation does not require any financial liabilities and is conditioned by the complexity of the modern aircraft production which involves various types of factories. In addition, technical progress, acquisition of new technologies and details of construction are impossible without maintaining former links. Next year the TAW is going to transform into a joint-stock company. The process is preceded by some preliminary actions: payment of debts, development of an optimal new structure and future plans, etc. The TAW employs 3,000 personnel: 1,000 of them are workers, while the others are engineers and technicians. Only 1,500 of the personnel have permanent work at present with an average monthly salary 200-250 GEL (about \$110-135). The others are paid a minimal salary. The TAW has quite a wide range of production capabilities. Along with aircraft, it produces 200Kwt turbines and other equipment for small

hydroelectric plants, car trailers, and household items. Its military production includes 82mm grenade launchers and the RPG-7 anti-tank portable grenade gun for the Georgian MoD. The TAW has also an automobile road, railway and a concrete landing-strip (L=2,500m, W=80m) for test flights.

The TAW is able to develop and install new technological processes, design and produce technological equipment, non-standard tools and devices, and software for automatic machine-tools. It uses constructive and stainless steel, alloy aluminium, magnesium, cast iron. The technical means of production include stamping/punching and thermal sections; galvanisation equipment to produce cadmium-, zinc-, chromium-, nickel-, copper-plated details; anodisation of alloy aluminium; the equipment to produce rubber and plastic details, to weld aluminium and titanium details together; mechanical processing of details; assembling aircraft parts; laboratory and flight tests of aircraft; etc.

The TAW began with the production of LaGG-3 fighters in 1941. Some time later it produced Yak-3 fighter production of which lasted till the end of World War II. In the spring 1946 the TAW manufactured the first Soviet jet fighter Yak-15 and mastered its serial production for the Soviet air force. In the following years it produced Yak-17, Yak-23, MiG-15 and MiG-17 fighters, and La-17 radio-guided target. The 1958-67 production included also K-10 air-to-surface missile. In the period 1961-85 the TAW produced more than 1,500 combat-training aircraft MiG-21U, MiG-21UC, MiG-21UM. At the same time, it constructed short-range air-to-air missiles R-60 and R-73. Since 1977 the TAW has been focused on the production of Su-25 ground-attack fighter and its two modifications - Su-25UB and Su-25T.

Su-25 - Ground-attack fighter, capable of destroying small visible stable targets in daytime and night-time; mission - fire support for ground troops; carrying capacity - 4,400kg; maximum range - 750km; maximum speed - 970km/hour

Su-25UB - Combat-training two-seat aircraft, capable of destroying visual targets; mission - daytime and night-time training flights in favourable and hard weather

Su-25T - Ground-attack fighter with high-accuracy weapons, capable of destroying small mobile armoured targets - tanks, boats, helicopters - at 10km distance; carrying capacity - 5,000kg; maximum range - 1,350km; maximum speed - 950km/hour

From June 1981 these fighters participated in the war in Afghanistan. With its unique capabilities Su-25 fighter played a major role in the war. It is a simple and reliable aircraft. Its cockpit is armoured with titanium, vitally important systems are duplicated, and its maintenance can be implemented in field conditions. All these characteristics made Su-25 indispensable. It was successfully used to mine inaccessible regions. During the war in Afghanistan the Soviet air force suffered the loss of 118 aircraft, including 23 Su-25 none of which was lost for production or construction defects. These fighters were widely applied by the Iraqi air force in the war against Iran. Sometimes, 80 Iraqi Su-25 made 1,400 operational flights a day. During the war in Chechnya the Russian air force relied also mainly on Su-25. At times the Russian airpower in Chechnya totalled 140 combat aircraft, mainly Su-25. For the two years of the Chechen war Russia lost two Su-25. At present, Russia again uses Su-25 against Vahhabist gunmen. According to the latest information, Vahhabists managed to down one Su-25. Just Su-25 fighters dropped about 4,000 landmines near the Zemo Omalo village in the Akhmeta district of Georgia this August. During the 1992-93 war in Abkhazia the Georgian air force used only Su-25 fighters.

For its entire history the TAW has produced more than 1,000 various modifications of Su-25. At present, there are 24 Su-25, Su-25UB and Su-25T in the TAW for sale. Their price averages \$3-4mln for each.

According to the Military Balance, air forces of about 13 countries have Su-25 fighters: Russia - 280; Byelorussia - 99; Turkmenistan - 46; Ukraine - 34; Czech republic - 24; Peru - 18; Slovakia - 12; etc.

The construction of Su-25 has enough reserves for further development. It may be equipped with night-vision devices and air-to-air missiles, and thus transform into an all-weather fighter. This year the TAW signed a contract with Turkmenistan on repairs of Su-25 fighters - about \$1 mln is required to repair each. The first six of them have been already repaired and Turkmen officials seem satisfied with the quality of the work. Financial aspects of the contract are quite interesting. Georgia owes Turkmenistan for natural gas supplies. To pay off the debt, Georgia allocates \$25 mln every year. In accordance with the contract, after this \$25 mln are transferred to Turkmenistan, the money is paid back right away into the TAW bank account. Ashgabad is also interested in purchasing combat-training aircraft. The Czech republic, too, seems interested. This country has become a NATO member and its air force, therefore, has to be compatible with NATO standards, while aircraft exploitation terms must be prolonged till 2004. The TAW is quite capable of completing the task. Some other countries also have co-operation proposals.

The TAW has acquired production of 6-seat Yak-58 aircraft. The first five of them have been already manufactured, while other 15 are still under production. At the same time, the aircraft are being tested. By preliminary calculation, each of them may cost \$250-290 thousand. The French company "THOMSON-GSF" installs its equipment in the aircraft.

The TAW has its own construction bureau which is now designing 4- and 6-seat aircraft. To advertise its production, the TAW takes part in international aviation exhibitions. At the Le Bourget 97 exhibition the TAW participated independently for the first time and presented Yak-58. Beginning next year such participation will become regular - the TAW is making ready respective advertising booklets to this end. In the future, the TAW plans to begin modernisation of ex-Soviet Yak-40 aircraft - its non-economical engine makes exploitation of the aircraft unprofitable. On the whole, there about 700 Yak-40 altogether in various countries. One of the Canadian companies is going to participate in the project.

Pantiko Tordia, the director general of the TAW who has worked for 23 years there (12 years as the director), is viewed as a main guarantee of successful work. He has also worked as deputy minister for industry, and held an office in the president's apparatus. Last July he was re-appointed the TAW director.

## **RUSSIAN MINES MEANT FOR VAHHABISTS DROPPED IN GEORGIA**

*By Irakli Aladashvili*

The recent escalation of conflict in the North Caucasus has affected neighbouring countries, first of all Georgia. On August 9, 1999, two Russian Su-25 ground-attack fighters dropped hundreds of PFM-1C landmines around the Zemo Omalo village situated in a mountainous region of Georgia near the border with Dagestan and Chechnya. As a result, three Georgian citizens were wounded (two local civilians and one serviceman). The incident caused serious repercussions in Georgia. The Georgian government officially protested to Moscow. At first, Russia denied involvement of its air force in the bombing. Some time later, however, the Russian foreign ministry acknowledged the fault, officially apologised and promised to compensate the damage (so far Russia has done nothing to fulfil the promise).

At the time when Russia was denying its involvement, independent military experts managed to get enough evidence to prove that just the Russian air force,

particularly the Mozdok-deployed unit of the 4th Air Force Army, was responsible for the incident. During fighting in the Botlikh district of Dagestan the Russian MoD decided to block mountainous passes to prevent Chechen Vahhabists from penetrating into Dagestan. The goal might have been achieved successfully and rapidly only by mining the passes with the use of airpower. The Zemo Omalo village became the target of this operation. Two Su-25 fighters deployed in the Mozdok airfield (North Ossetia) flew at a low altitude over Vladikavkaz and entered the Georgian air space. Then they turned to the left and dropped PFM-1C mines around the Zemo Omalo village. Considering that each Su-25 is capable of carrying 1,248 such mines, one may conclude that about 2-3 thousand mines must have been dropped there. It is noteworthy that PFM-1C is prohibited by international law as this plastic mine is almost impossible to reveal by minesweeping devices.

PFM-1C mine

- length - 12sm
- width - 7 sm
- height - 2 sm
- weight - 80gr (including 40gr explosives)

Looking into the reasons of the incident, one should assume that it was either the pilots' fault or a deliberate action. If the latter is true (this is quite real since the Russian military command was eager to block every route to/from Dagestan by distant mining), it means that Moscow neither recognises nor respects state sovereignty of its neighbouring countries. By another version the Russian pilots were afraid of Vahhabists' anti-aircraft Stingers or Iglas and preferred to drop mines in mountains, far from the Vahhabist positions.

By the way, the August 9 bombing of the Georgian territory was not the first one. During the war in Chechnya Russian fighters fired at least six air-to-surface missiles at a Georgian village near the border. By sheer chance there was no casualties. As Tbilisi did not protest, the incident was hushed up.

Georgian minesweepers say the mines around Zemo Omalo continue to explode, even though a month has passed since they were dropped. As the PFM-1C mine is equipped with the mechanism of self-elimination within 48 hours, the continuing explosions may indicate that the Russian fighters dropped some PFM-1 mines as well (the letter "C" in the title means "self-elimination").

## **Military Chronicle**

*Georgian press reports*

### **State security**

On August 9, at about 2:45 p.m. two Russian Su-25 fighters entered the Georgian air space and dropped several hundred anti-personnel mines around the Zemo Omalo village, Akhmeta district of Georgia. Three people were reportedly wounded. According to informal sources, Russian security services had been tipped off about Chechen Vahhabists hiding in the place. Eduard Shevardnadze (who was on vacation at that time) expressed his deep concern and appealed to the Russian president Boris Yeltsin for investigation of the incident. The Georgian foreign ministry made an official protest statement, while the ruling party, Citizens' Union of Georgia, launched a protest rally in front of the Russian embassy in Tbilisi. The Georgian security ministry instituted legal proceedings in connection with the incident. At first the HQ of the Russian Air Force denied its responsibility for the Zemo Omalo bombing. After the Russian and Georgian defence ministers agreed to set up a joint ad hoc investigation commission, a delegation of Russian experts led by Colonel Boris Masiakin visited the village on August 12 for on-spot examination. The Russian delegation acknowledged that the village was bombed by anti-personnel Soviet-made mines. On August 19 other two Su-25 again flew over the Zemo Omalo village and then got back to Russia.

On August 18 the Russian foreign ministry officially apologised, having acknowledged that Russian fighters bombed the Zemo Omalo village on August 9 by mistake (according to the Russian MFA, they were carrying out a mission in neighbouring Dagestan). The ministry said Russia was ready to compensate the damage and would make its best to prevent such incidents in the future. Zurab Zhvania claimed the apology to be an unprecedented event in the Russian-Georgia relations which may mark a new stage in the two countries' relations. However, Vakhtang Kutateladze, the security minister, said the MSS would continue investigation of the incident to find out whether it was an accident or a deliberate action.

"Droni" No. 91, August 19, p. 1

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 181-182, August 10, p. 1

"Resonance" No. 216, 217, 225, 227; August 10, 11, 19, 21; pp. 1, 2

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 213, 214, 216, 218-219, 223; August 10, 11, 13, 15-16, 20; p. 1

"7 Dge" No. 95, August 16-17, p. 3

Revaz Adamia, the chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee, claimed the August 9 bombing to be a brutal and barbarous attack against peaceful population, adding, however, that "I think it was a mistake of the Russian air force". In his opinion, the frontier troops must be equipped with special equipment to strengthen control at the border and check such flights in the future.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 219, August 11, p. 2

According to Valeri Chkheidze, the SDFD chairman, due to the escalation of conflict in Dagestan, the Georgian frontier troops have taken some "special measures" at the Chechen and Dagestani sectors of the Georgian-Russian border, including deployment of additional forces, in order to strengthen control there. In his words, if Dagestani refugees attempt to enter the Georgian territory, they will be allowed into the Akhmeta district, provided they have no weapons. In his opinion, Georgian air defence units should down every hostile aircraft which trespassed the border.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 213, 215; August 10, 12, p. 1

"Akhali Taoba" No. 222, August 14, p. 4

According to Kakha Chitaia, the chairman of the parliamentary foreign relations committee, in 1992-93 Russia withdrew from Georgia all former Soviet air defence units and armaments. Some time later, however, Russia changed its mind and attempted to restore the former Soviet air defence system in Georgia but this time Tbilisi rejected the Russian proposal. In his words, Russia cannot be considered a reliable partner (especially in the light of the Zemo Omalo bombing) and it would be much more useful to shift to a western system of air defence, although it is rather expensive. Georgia, he said, had already reached a respective agreement with some western countries and such a system would be soon installed in Georgia.

"Resonance" No. 218, August 12, pp. 1, 3

According to Vakha Arsanov, Chechnya's official representative in Georgia, Chechen volunteers are being recruited to Adjara. In his words, Russia wants to break stability in Adjara and take control of the Batumi sea port. Commenting on the statement, Levan Kentchadze, the head of the anti-terrorism centre of the MSS, said Georgian security services were carrying out serious measures to check the information and prevent such attempts. The issue was also discussed at the September 2 closed-door meeting between Vakha Arsanov, Vazha Lortkipanidze, the state minister, and Avtandil Ioseliani, the head of the State Intelligence Department, in Tzkhneti (near Tbilisi).

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 196, 200; August 30, September 3; pp. 1, 2

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 232, August 31, p. 1

## **Conflict zones**

General George Shervashidze, commander of the Internal Troops, denied accusations of some sources which had blamed the units of the Georgian Internal

Troops deployed along the Enguri river for involvement in the hazel-nut business. In Shervashidze's words, the Internal Troops have been deployed in the region since the last year with the only mission to defend Georgian villages neighbouring to Abkhazia, and they have nothing to do with the hazel-nuts business.

"Resonance" No. 212, August 6, p. 3

Colonel Igor Kochenin was appointed chief of staff of the Joint Peacekeeping Force in the Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia). His predecessor, Anatoly Lyubochkin, had expired his terms of service in the peacekeeping force. A new patrol regime was enforced at the peacekeeping check-points in the region on August 5 - along with the peacekeepers, Georgian and Ossetian law-enforcement officers are now deployed there. This measure is expected to increase efficiency of the patrol regime.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 178, August 6, p. 3

Revaz Adamia, the chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee, suggested that Tbilisi should prolong the mandate of the Russian peacekeeping force in Abkhazia till the end of the year. Otherwise, in his opinion, tensions between Russia and Georgia that arose after Tbilisi demanded to withdraw Russian military bases from Georgia may aggravate. Besides, he said it was "principally important" to maintain stability in the country during the coming parliamentary elections. He claimed that to some extent Moscow was interested in the withdrawal of the peacekeepers from Abkhazia as it might have provided perfect grounds for destabilisation. In his opinion, if the peacekeeping troops were really withdrawn, consequences would be very grave for Georgia. Adamia disagreed with Igor Sergeev, the Russian defence minister, who said recently that it would be irrelevant to carry out a peacemaking operation in Abkhazia like that in Kosovo. In his words, at present making peace by force is the only real mechanism to stop ethnic cleansing.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 192, 193; August 25, 26; p. 2

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 197, August 26, p. 1

"Droni" No. 96, August 31, p. 2

At its August 29 sitting the NSC resolved to prolong the mandate of the Russian peacekeeping force in Abkhazia. Explaining the NSC's decision, Vakhtang Abashidze, the president's press-secretary, said the NSC had got confidential information that "some forces" were going to destabilise the situation in Georgia.

"Droni" No. 96, August 31, p. 2

"Meridiani 44" No. 99, August 30-September 1, p. 2

## **Army building**

The Kutaisi joint-stock company "Imereti" won a tender among five Georgian companies for supply of uniforms to the Georgian Frontier Troops - 1,500 summer and 1,800 winter camouflage uniforms. The tender was organised by the Ministry of Economics in accordance with the respective presidential decree. The company employs 400 personnel and uses entirely local raw materials. Another winner of the tender - Kutaisi shoemaking factory - will supply boots to the Internal Troops and Frontier Troops, while Tbilisi enterprises "Shoki" and "Didubis Rdze" will supply macaroons and butter respectively to the Internal Troops.

"Resonance" No. 217, August 11, p. 5

David Tevzadze inspected the MoD units deployed in the Kodori Gorge (a part of Abkhazia still under the Georgian government's control) on August 14-15.

"Resonance" No. 223, August 17, p. 2

Qualification flights of the air force faculty of the JMA took place on August 17. Along with cadets, David Tevzadze, the defence minister, also made a training flight together with Vice-Colonel Gogiashvili at L-29 training aircraft.

"Kavkasioni" No. 31, August 18-24, p. 7

Several MoD units - about 650 servicemen altogether - carried out a military exercise, including artillery tests, at the Orpolo firing ground near Akhaltsikhe on August 18-27.

"Kavkasioni" No. 31, August 18-24, p. 7

The Rustavi City Hall presented the Krtzanisi training centre of the MoD (some 15 km from Rustavi) with about 300 kg of various foods and 240 packs of cigarettes. Such aid would be regular, Merab Tqeshelashvili, the mayor of Rustavi, said.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 187, August 19, p. 2

Colonel Vakhtang Kapanadze was appointed commander of the 11th MRB of the MoD. He was born in Ozurgeti on August 17, 1960, and has graduated Tbilisi State University, Ukraine military academy (with gold medal) and G. Marshall College (Germany). He is married and has two children.

"Kavkasioni" No. 31, August 18-24, p. 8

The financial situation of the army remains rather hard. The MoD has accumulated a lot of debts for some last years. As a result, 35 enterprises which had supplied foods and uniforms to the army brought an action against the MoD demanding altogether 14 mln GEL (about \$7.5 mln) in payment for their services. Experts say if all these claims are satisfied, the MoD may run insolvent. In May-June the National Bank already excised 2.2 mln GEL (about \$1.2 mln) from the MoD budget in payment for past debts. In an attempt to improve the situation, the MoD is now drastically reducing its spending, first of all on trips, fuel, guard service, etc.

"Kavkasioni" No. 32, August 25-31, p. 6

According to the SDFD, local civilian residents will be contracted to patrol the Dagestani sector of the Russian-Georgian border together with enlisted frontier guards beginning on September 1. The SDFD has already selected 30 locals to this end. This practice will be applied in other mountainous regions of Georgia too.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 193, August 26, p. 5

In August 16 cadets completed a six-week training course in the Lilo training centre of the SDFD. The graduation ceremony took place there on August 27, while on August 30 the graduates left for Turkey for a two-week training in Trabson and Artvin. The training program is based on the 1998 Georgian-Turkish agreement. It provides for eight-week training of Georgian frontier guards (six-week theoretical course in Georgia and two-week practical training in Turkey) and will last till 2001. The first graduation took place on June 25: 22 cadets completed the course at that time.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 195, August 28, p. 5

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

William Cohen, U.S. Secretary of Defence, visited Georgia on August 1 for talks with the Georgian leadership. According to Eduard Shevardnadze, his meeting with Mr Cohen was constructive and focused on the situation in South Caucasus, including the conflict in Abkhazia, the prospects and security problems of the Silk Road project, such as non-proliferation of nuclear and other materials, prospects of American assistance to Georgia in personnel training and "some other specific problems". He emphasised that only thanks to "huge material and financial aid of the great country, our friend", Georgia was able to control its state borders independently. For his part Mr Cohen told journalists that Georgia's active participation in the PfP program and Council of Euroatlantic partnership illustrated the country's adherence to the idea of peace and stability in Europe. In his words, the USA is going to launch a joint military exercise with Georgia and help train Georgian military personnel. Besides, by the end of the year Georgia will get six American helicopters and four more of them in kind of spare parts. As to the deployment of Russian military bases in Georgia, in Mr Cohen's opinion, it was up to the Georgian government and the Georgian people to decide the issue of deployment of foreign military bases in the country, adding that "...military co-operation between the USA and Georgia

...is under constant consideration and may be adapted in accordance with further development of events".

"Resonance" No. 208, August 2, pp. 1, 2

"Akhali Taoba" No. 210, August 2, p. 2

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 174, August 3, pp. 1, 2

On August 2 a part of the Russian troops was withdrawn from the 62nd Russian military base (Akhalkalaki). The base, however, continues to operate.

"Kavkasioni" No. 30, August 4-10, p. 7

A Georgian platoon took place in the PfP exercise "Peace Shield - 99" in Ukraine on August 1-15.

"Kavkasioni" No. 30, August 4-10, p. 7

"Droni" No. 89, August 14, p. 4

Georgia and the Bulgarian military-industrial complex "Armex" (consists of 23 companies) signed a protocol on joint experimental military production which is supposed to be sold in the world market.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 178, August 6, p. 2

Prospects of the Russian-Georgian military co-operation, among other things, were examined at the August 2-4 sitting of the Russian-Georgian intergovernmental economic commission in Moscow. As a result, Russia is expected to cede 6 its military objects to Georgia. However, the decision has yet to be approved by the Russian Duma.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 178, August 6, p. 2

The SDFD began to install special control equipment at the Supsa oil terminal. The project is financed by the USA and costs \$12.5 mln. It aims to surround the terminal by underwater sensors and thermal cameras, and must be completed by November.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 178, August 6, p. 2

U.S. Coast Guard scutler WHEG 716 "Dallas" visited Poti on August 11-14. In the framework of the visit, American servicemen and the Georgian Coast Guard launched a joint exercise simulating a rescue operation at sea.

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 184, August 12, p. 3

"Kviris Palitra" No. 33, August 16-22, p. 9

Alexander Manilov, deputy director of the Russian frontier federal service, visited Georgia on August 12 for talks with Valeri Chkheidze. The problem of ceding the property of Russian frontier troops to Georgia; the situation at the Chechen and Dagestani sectors of the Russian-Georgian border; prospects of training Georgian cadets in Russian frontier colleges; joint measures against illegal migration, drugs trafficking and weapon smuggling were on the table. Mr Manilov also visited Batumi and Sukhumi to inspect the ongoing withdrawal of Russian frontier troops from Adjara and Abkhazia. According to Ruslan Khashig, the Abkhaz president's press-secretary, Manilov's talks with Vladislav Ardzinba, the president of the self-proclaimed Abkhaz republic, were focused on technical aspects of the withdrawal. In particular, Sukhumi claims real property of the Russian frontier troops.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 216, August 13, p. 1

"Resonance" No. 223, August 17, p. 2

"Meridiani 44" No. 96, August 18-25, pp. 1, 2

According to the PfP Co-ordination Staff of the General Staff, a Georgian peacekeeping platoon of the Kodjori training centre will take part in the peacekeeping operation in Kosovo together with Turkish and Azerbaijani units. Turkey will provide the Georgian servicemen with foods, ammunition and medicines, and pay a part of their salary. Georgian and Azeri peacekeepers will begin joint training in Turkey on September 1.

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 189, August 18, p. 3

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 189, August 21, p. 2

In his August 20 interview with the Georgian TV Eduard Shevardnadze said the problem of the Russian military bases in Georgia requires to take into account the CFE agreement (Conventional Forces in Europe). After the coming summit of the CFE signatories in October in Istanbul, Georgia may demand to withdraw the bases, he said.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 189, August 21, p. 3

Prospects of the Russian-Georgian military co-operation were discussed at the August 23 talks between the two defence ministers, David Tevzadze and Igor Sergeev, in Moscow. According to Malkhaz Kakabadze, Georgian ambassador to Russia, the parties reached mutual understanding in all the discussed issues, including the Russian military bases in Georgia, Russian peacekeeping force in Abkhazia, the problem of former Soviet military property, etc. Russia is ready to assist the army-building in Georgia, particularly, in personnel training. Concerning the withdrawal of Russian bases from Gudauta (Abkhazia) and Vaziani (near Tbilisi), the ministers agreed that the issue would be examined by experts. When discussing aspects of the CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) agreement, Tevzadze said Georgia may temporarily cede to Russia not more than one third of its CFE quotas. The Russian defence minister is expected to visit Georgia in September to continue discussions of these issues.

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 195-196, August 25, p. 1

David Tevzadze visited China on August 23-September 1. The two defence ministers signed a protocol on military-technical co-operation. According to some informal sources, China is interested in production of Tbilisi Aircraft Works, while the Georgian army may get Chinese textile for uniforms and some computer equipment. Besides, according to the MoD press centre, Georgia and the Chinese company "Norinko" are going to found a joint venture on production of ammunition.

"Kavkasioni" No. 32, August 25-31, p. 6

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 200, September 3, p. 5

"Kviris Palitra" No. 36, September 6-12, p. 9

Due to the lack of finance, Georgia refused to participate in a joint CIS exercise of air defence units in Astrakhan (Russia). About 1,000 servicemen from Russia, Byelorussia, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kirgizstan participated there.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 191, August 24, p. 5

## **Miscellany**

Two Turkish citizens were detained by Georgian frontier guards on August 25 when trespassing the Georgian-Turkish border. Both were conveyed to the Adjarian ministry of state security.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 236, August 28, p. 2

According to Avtandil Dolidze, the director of the Institute of Physical and Organic Chemistry, for the lack of finance the Institute suspended the process of neutralisation of missile fuel "Samin" stored in the former Soviet air force base in the village of Meria, Ozurgeti district. The process started in April and must be completed in six months. To date, 76 out of 150 tons of Samin have been transported to the Institute in Tbilisi for decomposition (36 tons have yet to be decomposed), while the other 74 tons still remain in Meria.

"7 Dge" No. 101, August 30-31, p. 1

The SDFD press service denounced the August 27 statement of General Konstantin Totsky, the director of the Russian federal frontier service who had told journalists that Russian governmental agencies were going to abolish economic embargo on Abkhazia. The issue, in his words, does not need co-ordinating with the Georgian government and Tbilisi might be merely informed. The SDFD considered the statement a violation of Georgia's state sovereignty and territorial integrity, and warned that if such statements continued the SDFD would consider a possibility to withdraw from the CIS frontier co-operation, the press service said. Some time later, however, General Alexander Manilov, deputy director of the Russian federal frontier service, claimed the incident to be caused by "frivolous comments" on Totsky's statement by some Russian mass media.

In reality, in his words, Totsky did not mean economic embargo on Abkhazia imposed by the January 19, 1996, resolution of the CIS summit but spoke about another document - Resolution 1394 of the Russian government (December 19, 1994) which temporarily restricted railway and automobile cross-border traffic on the Russian-Georgian and Russian-Azerbaijani borders due to the war in Chechnya. At present, he said, the war in Chechnya is over and there is no longer need for such restrictions.

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 201, August 31, p. 4

"Nezavisimaya Gazeta" No. 163, September 3, p. 5

## Press Digest

The Zemo Omalo bombing once again vindicated that the Georgian-Russian border is defended inefficiently, the Resonance (No. 216) argues. According to the newspaper, the Chechen sector of the Russian-Georgian border is controlled only by a small unit of the Georgian frontier troops. Although Tbilisi now plans to deploy additional forces there, similar incidents may repeat in the future. In the newspaper's opinion, in case of a large-scale war in the North Caucasus, Chechen and Dagestani gunmen may attempt to hide on the Georgian territory and the Russian army may again use air strikes to defeat them. For the 7 Dge (No. 93), the Georgian diplomacy must use the August 9 incident pragmatically and even cynically. In the newspaper's opinion, as Russia uses mainly air force and artillery against the Chechen and Dagestani rebels, Georgia's policy must aim to curb Russia's ability to use airpower. To this end, the Georgian leadership must repeatedly protest against the use of the Georgian air space by Russian fighters and appeal to the UN, OSCE, and other international organisations, including NATO, for support. Such measures, the newspaper argues, may make the Russian MoD reluctant to use its air force in neighbouring areas. As a result, the Russian ability to suppress rebels in Dagestan will substantially diminish and Moscow will finally understand that its problems in the North Caucasus cannot be solved without improvement of relations with Georgia which itself requires settlement in Abkhazia, the 7 Dge concludes.

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According to informal sources, the Dilis Gazeti (No. 174) reports, the U.S. secretary of defence William Cohen's visit to Georgia first of all aimed to learn Tbilisi's attitude towards the CFE agreement. The Georgian public pays little attention to the issue, though it is of vital importance for Russia. Moscow is deeply concerned with prospects of its military presence in the Caucasus, especially in the South Caucasus. In the newspaper's opinion, the Russian military bases may remain in Georgia only if Tbilisi cedes a part of the Georgian CFE quotas to Russia. Otherwise, even if Tbilisi keeps neutral position, Russia will have to withdraw its bases from Georgia anyway, being pressed by the West to do so as western countries will hardly allow anyone, even Russia, to violate the CFE agreement. So Russia has in fact the only way to achieve the goal - to support such Georgian political forces which, if in power, may change the current foreign policy of Georgia in favour of Russia. Not by chance, the Russian security services show great interest towards the coming parliamentary elections in Georgia, the Dilis Gazeti deems.

## ABBREVIATIONS

MRB - motorifle brigade  
NSC - National Security Council  
MoD - Ministry of Defence  
SDFD - State Department of Frontier Defence  
JMA - Joint Military Academy  
SAM - surface-to-air missile  
MRL - multiple rocket launcher

