

# The Army and Society in Georgia

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## Georgian Security in the Regional Context

*By Ghia Nodia*

Regional is not the only dimension of Georgian security. I would single out five major levels: internal-institutional; internal-territorial; sub-regional; regional; global. Naturally, the former two can be technically defined as matters of internal, while the latter three - of the foreign policy.

Under internal-institutional I consider the problem of building state institutions capable of maintaining security for citizens. This is the most basic level, but it has also been the most problematic, because those very institutions supposed to guarantee the security of citizens may become security threats in themselves - like Georgian National Guards or Rescue Corps used to be in a not very distant past. Today we appear to have overcome this condition, but it is still fair to ask: how much are the police protectors of citizens and how much are they a threat for them? If they are as corrupt as they are usually alleged, than they may pose a considerable threat to the society, for instance, to the development of small business, which often becomes the target for extortion on the part of state organisations. How much does our army protect us from external threats (if, as we know, it hardly can fight) and how much does its current condition threatens the society and particular citizens? Ask those soldiers who were abused in the Georgian army or parents and loved ones of those who were driven to suicide. Apart from abusing particular citizens, however, an underfed and underfinanced army endangers stability of the country as a whole, since its behaviour under critical (or even not very critical) conditions becomes unpredictable. Such problems as organised crime, drug-trafficking etc. (so-called non-traditional security threats) also belong here.

Under internal-territorial issues I mean how much does the operation of state institutions cover the territory of the state. In this respect, Georgia is an obvious failure. It does not have any control over about 15% of its territory (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), and its effective control is questionable in some other provinces, such as Adjara. And this is not only that the central government is challenged by separatists or local autocrats: the issue of territorial arrangement of state power is missed out in the constitution, which means that there is no consensus within the political elite how the country should be territorially governed.

However important these internal aspects of the Georgian security politics may be, here we shall focus on its foreign-political aspect which, as I said, has sub-regional, regional and global dimensions. The sub-regional level comprises the Caucasian region, both its Northern and Southern parts. The regional level implies relations with powers neighbouring to this sub-region - such as Russia, Turkey, Iran, and probably also more distant countries which are becoming increasingly important for us - Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, and Central Asian states, in particular Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Global level primarily represents Georgia's relations to "the West", which effectively means major western powers such as USA, Germany, Great Britain, France, and such international organisations as UN, OSCE, NATO, IMF, World Bank, etc.

While initially Georgian foreign-political outlook was effectively reduced to a simple dilemma - Russia or the West, now it has become duly more complicated: Georgia puts increasingly great weight on developing its relations on regional and subregional levels. However, "Russia or the West" continues to be the major choice, the Georgian security thinking still moves in the space defined by these reference points. I understand that both western and Russian attitudes to the Caucasus are not simple and cannot be reduced to simple formulae. But what matters here is symbolic meaning attached to the West and Russia, how they are perceived by policy actors. From this perspective, the West symbolises progress, modernity, democracy, independence, market economy, and - last but not least - protection from Russia. Russia, on the other hand, represents lack of political independence and economic self-sustainability, nostalgia for centralised order - but also security on national and personal level. In short, the West may be a metaphor for the future, while Russia - that for the past. I want to make sure that this only implies symbolic meaning and this image is not necessarily fair to Russia, which also moves towards democracy, market economy etc. Neither do I mean that co-operation and close relations with Russia would imply returning to the Communist past. But as much as Russia represents an alternative to the West, it can only represent those things which I have described above. If Russia is the alternative to the West, it is personified not by Gaidar or Chubais, but by people like Zyuganov.

Therefore, for Georgia the problem of Russia is not only about foreign politics, but also about internal choice. It is an internal problem, because the memory of being dependent but secure is still vivid and tantalising; this memory hardly provides any viable alternative in a practical sense, but it creates an illusion of an alternative which may be a considerable impediment on the way to the development of the country. Part of the political elite that fell prey to this illusion does not currently define the course of the Georgian politics, but this option always looms on the horizon as a possibility, as a "Lukashenko alternative", if you wish.

Another way to say it is that the "Russian factor" is written into the issue of defining the Georgian national interests. One cannot speak about national security without defining national interests, and you cannot formulate national interests of a country without defining fundamental choices, fundamental values which are shared by the nation. Georgia has not formulated these choices and values as clearly as many of us would like. But we would not be able to proceed without formulating them somehow. I will deduce from our major trends of development, policy choices and policy statements that our major aim is to become a unified country based on liberal-democratic values (and in this sense becoming part of the West) and creating a milieu where its citizens can be economically prosperous and secure. I will assume that this is what constitutes national interests of Georgia. I understand that there exist alternative understandings as well; but if they were predominant, Georgia would be a different country and would have different interests - hence different perceptions of what are security threats, risks, etc.

What are major external threats which may impede Georgia's movement in the above direction? Whether or not Georgian politicians choose to say this openly, they invariably see Russia as the major threat to Georgia's security, and all other threats, including internal ones, are usually seen in conjunction with it. This

conjunction usually takes the shape of conspiracy theories, sometimes hardly grounded, sometimes having certain justification. Namely, Russia is seen as a country which has not reconciled itself to true, not just formal independence of Georgia, and whose policy in the region is primarily aimed at not allowing Georgia to become independent or consolidate its independence (the choice of term in the last phrase depends on whether or not one considers Georgia a truly independent country at the moment). Separatist movements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, neo-Communist opposition, even radical nationalists who tried to assassinate president Shevardnadze this February are seen as Russia's accomplices in carrying out this plan. To be sure, all this is closely linked to pipeline politics: the definition of the route through which the oil is going to flow from the Caspian has acquired portentous dimensions - it is not just about the future of oil-related projects and revenues from its transportation, but it is about the fate of nations, like Georgian, Azerbaijani, or even maybe Russian.

Relations with Russia are thus central for the national security of Georgia. It is not easy to define, how much complications in these relations are caused by the clash of "real" interests (the concept of "real interests" is problematic in its own right) and how much are existing tensions engendered by psychological factors. I tend to think that relations between Georgia and Russia, the two still not fully consolidated political actors, are largely determined by psychological problems stemming from difficulties to accommodate to new realities created after the break-up of the Soviet Union, and to their new status in these realities. In particular, it is difficult not only for Russia, but for Georgia as well to accept the fact of the latter's independence. Independence of a country implies first and foremost that it has to take care of itself on its own. The trend of the Georgian political elite to see the "Russian hand" behind almost all misfortunes faced by the country may be labelled as a paranoia and an expression of political immaturity (however real this "Russian hand" may be in many circumstances). As it is the case on the personal level, these paranoid visions may also be unconscious attempts to bloat one's importance ("the adversary - Russia in this case - has nothing else to do but caring about undermining me"), at the same time avoiding responsibility for finding solutions to problems.

In reality, Russia is mostly preoccupied with its relations with the West, while its policies towards Georgia and the Caucasus may be considered a footnote to this predominant problem. Since Peter the Great, Russia is obsessed with the project of catching up with the West and being recognised by the latter as equal. Russian involvement in the Caucasus constituted part and parcel of this project: Russia was modernising the space of Eurasia, that is, introducing the western-type civilisation there, thus showing that in the global dimension it was the West's partner. Nevertheless, neither Russia could feel itself an "organic" part of the West nor did the latter perceive the Russian "bear" as really one of its own kind. The Communist Russia found a new way to tackle the issue: having adapted an idea borrowed from the latter (Communism), it built on it a superpower representing the major alternative to western civilisation. This gained it respect - if not a genuine one, than at least that based on fear. After the demise of Communism, however, there is neither respect nor fear any more.

Today, the question central for Russia's security politics is NATO enlargement. This is quite paradoxical, as this enlargement does not imply any threat to Russia. But it implies its fundamental symbolic defeat: it shows, that Russia is no longer taken into account. Despite all attempts of Kozyrev-time Russian foreign policy to make itself likeable to the West, the latter still does not consider it equal. Since this is the case, Russia decided to turn the policy of partnership into a that of competition.

Some scholars of Russia believe that its political elite resents the prospect of "losing" Caucasus even more than it does that of NATO enlargement. This is something difficult to measure up, but both issues are two sides of the same coin anyway. If NATO expands despite Russian protests, the latter feels entitled to at least keep the Caucasus within its zone of influence. In this sense,

"losing" it would indeed be even a more severe blow to its self-esteem, than NATO enlargement. In both cases it's all about symbols, though: it is highly questionable, that "losing" the Caucasus, that is the increase of the Western influence there, could pose any threat to Russian economic interests or its security.

Many Georgian "geopoliticians" are also excited by the imagined participation in the great game and are looking forward to a new era to be started after Azerbaijani International Oil Consortium announces its decision on the big pipeline route. Schemes are being drafted following horizontal-pro-Western (Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey-Ukraine) and vertical anti-Western (Russia-Armenia-Iran) co-ordinates.

I do not think, however, that Georgia has much to gain from the security situation in the Caucasus region becoming hostage to the global geopolitical competition. This is rather a recipe for long-term instability and uncertainty. Provided its size, geographical location and internal problems, it is crucial for Georgia to have good relations with all the neighbouring countries. Russia is always going to be Georgia's largest and especially influential neighbour. So tensions in mutual relations cannot be good for Georgia. The logic of global co-operation prevents Georgia from having fully trustful relations with Armenia, which is hardly beneficial for the both countries. Neither it is advantageous for Armenia that countries of the region consider it the outpost of the Russian power. The competition of real or pseudo- superpowers in the Caucasus is an important factor for postponing the solution of the problems of Abkhazia or Mountainous Karabakh for undefined future.

If the competition at issue was real, one could still hope that eventually one of the sides will win and enforce its own order in the region. The problem, however is that it mostly exists in the imagination of Russia (and the regional countries). USA do not compete with Russia, which is no longer a serious rival, though they do take the Russian factor into account when defining their policies. As the only remaining superpower, the United States lead the coalition of advanced Western countries towards maintaining basic stability in the world, being at the same time reluctant to overstretch themselves and take too many responsibilities. Their major aim is not to shatter or decapitate Russia (as the latter tends to believe sometimes) but to keep it on the surface, because a shattered Russia would be completely unpredictable and pose a grave danger to the world stability (that's why the West gives - and will continue giving - to Russia hopeless credits doomed for embezzlement). It is another matter that the West would not encourage its neo-imperial ambitions too much as this endangers regional stability and objectively undermines prospects of recovery for Russia itself.

The problem of Russia is not that the West (primarily, the United States) tries to take the South Caucasus away from it: never, at least in the short or medium-term perspective, will the West "come" to the region to the same extent as Russia is present there now. Fantasies about NATO troops coming to enforce peace in Abkhazia are not going to be realised any time soon. The real problem is, that Russia itself has not enough resources to "take care" of the Caucasus, and is not going to have them for the long time. When, however, a country fails to find a proper balance between its resources and its ambitions, its policy cannot be successful and beneficial for the region where it is applied. The more does it chase geopolitical chimeras, the more it contradicts the "real" interests of Russia, if its political stability and economic development are to be understood under them.

I am not going to say at all, that Russia's real political behaviour is exclusively and consistently dominated by motives of geopolitical competition. Russian policies towards the same issue of the Caspian oil shows that they may be influenced by actors who mainly follow the logic of the economic interest (for instance, the former prime minister Victor Chernomyrdin). Hopefully, it will not be a groundless optimism to say that in the future Russian policies may become more rational and realistic. I believe that it would be preferable for

the South Caucasus and for Georgia in particular if Russia focuses more on economic (rather than military-strategic) expansion to the region and succeeds in it: this would make Russian approach to the region more balanced and foster stability locally.

To sum up, I will say that the major options for the regional security policy are whether it will be determined by the logic of geopolitical competition or that of partnership. Today it is the former that dominates, which is extremely detrimental for the regional stability. Opportunities and resources should be sought to give greater weight to the logic of partnership.

## **Georgian Armed And Security Forces: 1995-98**

*by Vakhtang Maisaia*  
*State Chancellery*  
*25.11.1998*

The article addresses organisational and staff changes in the Georgian power structures during several last years.

Only three parties - Citizen's Union of Georgia, National-Democratic Party and Union for Democratic Revival (the Adjarian leader Aslan Abashidze's party) - cleared the 5%-vote barrier and got appropriate seats in the Parliament in the 1995 parliamentary elections, while E. Shevardnadze won the same year's presidential elections. The Citizen's Union (CUG), Shevardnadze's party, got a narrow majority of the seats. The negative experience of the 1991-92 coup d'etat in Georgia made President Shevardnadze initiate some changes in the power system. For instance, the government's structure was re-organised into a sort of mix of American and Soviet-type administrative models.

The elections led to several political changes in Public Administration of Georgia. The most important of them was connected with relations between State Security Service (nowadays Ministry of State Security) and Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA). By that time the MIA unofficially "gained an advantage" over the State Security Service of Georgia, several members of which (including the former Soviet KGB Colonel and then Major-General of Georgian Security Service, Igor Giorgadze, and his deputy, Teimuraz Khachishvili) had participated in an assassination attempt against President Shevardnadze. The investigation of the attempt was carried out by the "Police Ministry". Therefore, the "winner" of the gamble for "balance of power", Lieutenant-General Shota Kviraia, was assigned as the minister for state security (by the way, before becoming the minister for internal affairs, Shota Kviraia had served in position of deputy chairman of the Information-Analytical Bureau; the latter was soon transformed into the State Security Service), while the "hero" of the investigation, the head of 6th Special Department of Internal Affairs Major-General Kakha Targamadze, succeeded him as the minister for internal affairs. Hence, it seemed reasonable that "Police Forces" would be strengthened in the nearest future.

All the army-type units of the former State Security Service were subordinated to the so-called "Police Forces". Particularly, Special Airborne Strike Brigade (deployed in the Mukhrovani village; at that time it was made up of 250-270 men, armed with various, mainly Soviet-made, weapons; a small amount of their armaments was provided by the USA; the Brigade had also some T-72 tanks and lately produced BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers, modern anti-tank missile systems, special communication equipment, etc.; the "godfather" of the brigade, Igor Giorgadze, fled to Moscow after the failure of the 1995 August 29 assassination attempt against Shevardnadze). Anti-terrorism commando unit "Omega" (officially it was subordinated to President) and the Soviet type battalion "Alfa" were actually dismissed.

Along with the security and interior ministries, the third influential power structure - State Safeguard Service (SSS) - was (and still is) very loyal to President (the service was created by a presidential decree in 1994 and its legislative basis has been only recently approved by Parliament). Therefore, the SSS completed the following rectangular structure of the "Armed Forces":

- Ministry Of State Security
- Ministry Of Defence
- Ministry Of Internal Affairs
- SSS

At that time internal "balance of power" was nominally presented in the above mentioned frame. The SSS was quite a large organisation, with nearly 2500-3000 personnel (at present it is made up of 6000 men in average), in charge of controlling all strategic state objects, including the President's Office and the Parliament. So, analysing the situation (the close co-operation and connection between the two ministries: MIA and MSS) one may assume that there were mainly three branches of Armed Forces (another vital actor, State Department of Frontier Defence, was neglected, being in the process of creation and thus unable to play any serious role in the internal security affairs):

- Ministry Of Defence
- SSS
- so-called "POLICE FORCES" (taken as one MSS and MIA)

Some time later, due to the failure in the fight against subversive activities (for instance, the 1998 February 9 assassination attempt against President, terrorist actions in the Djikhashkari village and Zugdidi in western Georgia in July-August, and a latest series of anonymous telephone calls about bombs - mostly "false" - in various buildings of Tbilisi), President Shevardnadze took steps in the same vein to reinforce "security forces" (SSS, MSS and SDFD) by appointing General-Lieutenant Vakhtang Kutateladze minister for state security (his predecessor, General-Lieutenant Djemal Gakhokidze, assigned for the post after Shota Kviraia's dismissal in 1997, stepped down). A trend to counterbalance strengthened "Internal Troops" (totally 70-75 000 servicemen, including 500-600 fighters of the special brigade) was given priority in domestic policy. Consequently, the pattern was replaced with the following one:

- Ministry Of Internal Affairs (internal troops+special airborne strike brigade)
- Ministry Of Defence
- so called "SECURITY FORCES" (SSS+MSS+SDFD)

The SDFD is step by step building up its potential and strength to play a more active role in the national security. Supported by western countries the SDFD is going to control the country's borders independently, without external (Russian) assistance, beginning in 1999. Thus, Russia's military presence in Georgia seems steadily declining.

In 1994-97, the MOD was seen as less "loyal" to the political leadership. Although the defence minister, Lieutenant-General Vardiko Nadibaidze, remained in office, people had rather little confidence in his ability to build a modern Georgian army. He was even regarded as a Russia-controlled person. And therefore, in an effort to somehow get round the situation, Revaz Adamia, a CUG member and biologist by profession, was appointed chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee. It was President's attempt to solve the problem.

It was an interesting factor that the first small disagreement between the president and the minister for defence appeared shortly after Vardiko Nadibaidze had agreed with then Russian defence minister Pavel Grachev's proposal to set up a military union to counterbalance "NATO Enlargement". Symptoms of this union could be seen in the following events: in 1993 Georgia joined the CIS Collective Security Agreement; in 1995 Georgia signed an agreement on Russian military bases; Russia repaired 90% of the whole Air Defence System of Georgia according to the Agreement on the CIS Common Air Defence System. Several documents on this issue were endorsed at the CIS April 1995 summit. In accordance with the

agreement, a co-ordination committee for the CIS Air Defence was created under Colonel-General Prudnikov of the Russian Air Defence Staff. The committee aimed to establish direct contacts between air defence systems of the CIS countries.

Not rejecting the Russian military presence and co-operation in the field of Air Defence, the president, however, completely denied the proposal of a "military union", being astonished by the Georgian defence minister's position on the issue.

A bit later, pro-western General-Lieutenant David Tevzadze took over the office of defence minister on May 12, 1998. The current situation tends to be changing. The former defence minister, General-Lieutenant Vardiko Nadibaidze was dismissed due his inability to defend the president's safety during the latter's flight to Turkey. Later on, some new reforms, aimed at a western-type army, have been being carried out in Georgia.

Frequent replacements of defence ministers, as well as a wide variety of power structures and the permanent re-organisation, was caused by domestic and foreign aspects of national security. Changes in the relationship with Russia have played a certain role in the process. It must be mentioned also that the CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) agreement has introduced quotas on military forces. However, they do not extend over the police, frontier guards and other paramilitary troops. Such a situation urges some countries, including Georgia, to strengthen just these structures.

The government's motivation for checking and balancing security and military forces plays no less important role in the creation of parallel power structures. Simultaneous existence of the internal troops, the frontier guards, the MSS special task forces, the SSS and the army is viewed as a mechanism of their inter-control and an anti-coup tool. To date, none of the above mentioned agencies has proceeded ahead of the others and become omnipotent.

## **October 19 In The Georgian Civil-Military Relations**

*By David Darchiashvili*

Early in the morning on October 19, 1998, more than hundred servicemen of the Senaki-based 2nd Motorifle Brigade of the MOD with several tanks and armoured personnel carriers unexpectedly set off for Kutaisi. The column was led by Akaki Eliava of the MSS (Ministry of State Security). Soon it became clear that it was an attempt at mutiny. Near Kutaisi the mutineers encountered troops that remained loyal to the government. After a short stay followed by gunfire, the tanks and carriers and most of the rebelled servicemen retired to Senaki, while organisers of the action managed to hide.

The same evening governmental officials congratulated themselves and the people on having successfully put down the mutiny, though with reserve that full peace could not be achieved unless all the organisers were arrested.

Local analysts and governmental officials do not rule out such incidents in the future - a rather thought-provoking fact. Speaking about causes of the mutiny, they point to external forces eager to provoke and support destabilisation, neo-imperial ambitions of some Russian influential figures and rivalry between regional forces for a pipeline to transit Caspian oil. Among domestic political factors, they specify financial and economic crisis, a great number of angered refugees, people's disappointment with prospects of the settlement in Abkhazia and opposition to the government of ex-president Zviad Gamsakhurdia's (killed in the civil war) supporters. All this provides enough grounds for future mutinies.

There is, however, another spectrum of problems which also may threaten the country's stability against the background of aforementioned events. These are

flaws of crisis management and civil-military relations. The October 19 incident revealed a lack of co-ordination between structures responsible for these fields, a legal vacuum or breaches of the current legislation, favouritism/clientelism planted in the security system.

David Tevzadze, the defence minister, himself commanded the operation to suppress the mutiny. As it appeared, he had been authorised by the president for this mission. While he was rather relentless, some top officials responsible for security (the security minister, the commander of the MOD Western Direction) began negotiations with the mutineers without co-ordination with Tevzadze and were actually taken hostage.

It has also become clear that the State Intelligence Department (SID) had been tipped off about the coming mutiny. However, this advance information did not result in effective preventive actions of other law-enforcement bodies. Commenting on the fact after the mutiny, the security minister (now resigned) suggested that SID and MSS should merge into one body.

In the end, Shota Kviraia, the president's advisor for security issues, also joined the anti-mutiny operation. Revaz Adamia, the chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee and a member of the National Security Council, publicly called Kviraia's role and mission into question. A bit later, Kviraia claimed that he, too, had got the president's authorisation.

According to later information, Akaki Eliava, the mutineers' leader, had been promoted to MSS just by Kviraia, then security minister, as his prot@g@. After Kviraia resigned, Eliava faced some problems. So protectionism, rather than professionalism, and the practice of constraining employees by personal motives appears to have been one more cause of the October 19 mutiny.

The Internal Troops did not take part in the anti-mutiny operation, though just these troops are responsible for suppressing inner disorder.

Today the parliamentary opposition demands to find out why the president ordered the army against the mutiny without declaring emergency law, while the ruling party's logic is simple - "the victor shall not be tried".

All this shows that the president is in fact the only co-ordinator between numerous Georgian power structures; that there is no crisis management scheme, while the respective legislation is violated.

Now the Senaki-based 2nd Motorifle Brigade (totalled 2,237 servicemen as by 1997) which was viewed as the main combat unit in the first echelon of north-western direction is under surveillance of the Military Procurator's Office. The Brigade is made up of three motorifle and one tank battalions, one artillery division and several other detachments. A lot of the officers are refugees from Abkhazia, most of them being non-professionals. For instance, in the 8th battalion they account for 80 percent of the total. During the war in Abkhazia they served in the Sukhumi 23rd and Ochamchire 24th Brigades. The Senaki brigade was created in 1993 on the basis just of these two.

Today there are some talks that the Brigade may be dissolved. Its personnel is already being re-assigned to other units. Maybe such measures are really necessary in the light of the October 19 events. It is also necessary to improve social and economic situation of the officers and soldiers of the Brigade. But if there is another mutiny in the army, more efficient and organised actions should be taken to quell it. This is not only the matter of efficiency. The government must be able to give a clear answer to the question of who bears responsibility for the death of a young soldier on October 19.

## **A Mutiny Against The Future Of Georgia**

*By Irakli Aladashvili*

On October 19 Georgia escaped new bloodshed - an outbreak of a civil war. It has been for the first time in Georgia's modern history that the regular army units attempted a mutiny. Georgia's neighbour, Azerbaijan, has experienced several similar actions (for instance, Suret Husseinov's march on Baku), while just recently the Tadjik government has quelled a rebellion led by Colonel Hudoiberdiyev.

The October 19 mutiny led by colonels Akaki Eliava and Revaz Esmava hardly came about spontaneously, though errors that marked the last stage of its preparation suggest that decisions were made in a hurry.

It was not by chance that the mutiny started in the Senaki-based 2nd Motorifle Brigade of the MOD. Today it is already known that just this Brigade must have taken the lead in case of a new war in the western direction (Abkhazia). By the way, artillery units of just this Brigade made it possible to safely evacuate Georgian civilians from the Gali district of Abkhazia during the May 21-26 fighting. That is why, unlike other MOD units (save the 11th Brigade), the 2nd Brigade used to be better supplied with ammunition and armaments. Colonel Revaz Esmava held the office of deputy commander of the brigade, while Colonel Akaki Eliava comes from Senaki and, therefore, well knows the situation there.

The mutineers first conquered the tank battalion of the Brigade which is deployed near the airfield. Colonel Esmava had many times ordered an exercise alarm in this unit earlier. Therefore, few were surprised when he did it at 2:00 a.m. on October 19. The mutineers seized 17 tanks and armoured personnel carriers (including nine T-55 tanks) in this battalion.

First suspicions arouse after these tanks aimed their guns at the barracks of the Internal Troops battalion deployed at the entrance of Senaki. Although some servicemen of the battalion attempted to render some resistance, there, too, the mutineers seized three combat infantry carriers (BMP), three military vehicles (MTLB) and one armoured personnel carrier (BTR). As a result, they substantially built up their strength and set off for Kutaisi. Having passed Samtredia they turned to Khoni in the hope that servicemen of two battalions of the 2nd Brigade deployed there (400 servicemen altogether) would join them. At about 16:00 p.m. the same day they were engaged by governmental forces near the Gubistzqali river. Although two rebelled tanks managed to cross the river and entered the vicinity of Kutaisi, they were soon destroyed by governmental troops. Later in the evening the mutineers retired and returned all their armaments to Senaki. A lot of them hid in forests and homes.

This is a brief account of the one-day attempt at a mutiny. It left lots of questions without answers. It is still unclear what the mutineers wanted. Independent military experts have their own opinion about this strange rebellion.

Not by chance Eliava began the mutiny right on October 19. Just that day Djemal Gakhokidze, then security minister, Kakha Targamadze, the interior minister, and Djamlet Babilashvili, the procurator general, were going to visit Senaki. Their decision had been caused by confidential information about Colonel Eliava plotting a conspiracy (it must be mentioned that Eliava, ex-president Zviad Gamsakhurdia's adherent, actively fought against Shevardnadze's government. Only in 1995 then interior minister Shota Kviraia managed to reconcile him. Eliava retained his military rank and was appointed deputy commander of the Senaki battalion of the Internal Troops. Some time later, after Kviraia was assigned as security minister, Eliava was appointed chief of staff of the "Saturn" commando unit of the Tbilisi-based security ministry of Abkhazia).

After Kviraia resigned, Eliava encountered a lot of problems in relations with law-enforcement authorities. According to available intelligence, Eliava had been engaged in preparation of unlawful actions. That was the reason for the

three high ranking officials' decision to visit Senaki. It cannot be ruled out that they were going to arrest Eliava.

However, Eliava was quick to act as (according to informal sources) he had got some information from the State Chancellery or, worse still, the MSS. In other words, he was tipped off by one of the top officials. This explains some spontaneity of the mutineers' actions (though they had been really getting ready for the mutiny in advance).

There is one delicate aspect not known to the broad public. There were some suspicious activities in the Zugdidi battalion of the Internal Troops at the beginning of the year. The command of the Troops took prompt actions - the commander of the battalion and several officers were dismissed, while a large group of soldiers was dispersed among other units. Independent military experts feel sure that the Zugdidi battalion of the Internal Troops was about to start just the same mutiny that happened in the Senaki brigade of the MOD in October.

By the way, the mutineers made one, clear tactical error. Having passed Samtredia they got to Khoni instead of moving directly to Kutaisi through the main highway. By that time, governmental forces had not yet blocked this highway. They failed to take control of all the roads. Loyal artillery units of the Kutaisi-based 21st Brigade blocked only two bridges over the Gubistqali river - at Kopitnari and Maghlaki (engagement took place just at the latter), while the road towards Zemo Tzqaltubo remained open. Had the mutineers taken the way from Khoni towards Tzqaltubo instead of Maghlaki, they would have easily entered Kutaisi.

The president ordered David Tevzadze, the defence minister, to check the mutineers. Firstly, he did it because a clash between Internal Troops and rebelled servicemen of the MOD Senaki Brigade could have caused a confrontation between two power structures in the future (besides, a good deal of the Kutaisi-based 2nd Brigade of the Internal Troops was deployed at the Enguri river defending Georgian villages on its right bank; they could not be withdrawn as Abkhaz leaders had many times warned that they would "launch a march on Tbilisi"). Secondly, the defence minister disgraced for the fact that so many armaments were seized from one of the MOD units had to rehabilitate himself.

Governmental forces were the first to open gunfire near the Gubistqali river, being ordered to do so by the defence minister. A bit earlier, Shevardnadze phoned Tevzadze to find out whether there was a possibility to avoid bloodshed. "No, I've already ordered to fire and I'm ready to prove the rightness of my decision in a court", the minister replied.

It worth mentioning that then security minister Djemal Gakhokidze, the governor of Imereti region Teimuraz Shashiasvili and the commander of the MOD Western Direction General Zaur Uchadze attempted at negotiations with the mutineers but were actually taken hostage. It seems a bit strange that so many high ranking officials were involved in negotiations, especially General Uchadze who had to command the anti-mutiny operation. He was the last to be freed by the mutineers and it was Shota Kviriaia, the former security minister, who persuaded them to release the general. Maybe, just these reasons can explain Uchadze's later dismissal (though he may yet greatly contribute to the army-building in Georgia).

One must note how the government deployed additional forces from eastern to western Georgia. Tanks (T-72) and combat infantry carriers (BMP) of the Koda-based 11th Brigade were transported by the railroad, while tanks of the Gori training centre were carried to Kutaisi on trailers. However, all this armaments were not used in the combat as they were late to get to Kutaisi. Only about 300 servicemen of the newly created MOD centre for limited intensity military conflicts were deployed in time, being transported to the Kopitnari airport by civil aircraft.

The mutineers obviously aimed to drag out the matters in order to gather as many supporters (mainly refugees) as possible and then launch trench warfare. As a result, all transit ways through Georgia would have been blocked. It would have made impossible to lay a pipeline for Caspian oil, let alone the "Silk Road" project.

Although the mutineers lost, there are little grounds for calm. In the opinion of independent military experts, the October 19 incident was none but a try-out by enemies of Georgia. Unfortunately, this unrest seems to be not the last one.

## **Military Chronicle**

*Georgian press reports*

### **Mutiny near Kutaisi**

On October 19 at about 2:00 a.m. Colonel Akaki Eliava, the chief of staff of the MSS "Saturn" commando unit and a group of his supporters joined by 130-150 servicemen (most of the soldiers were local residents, while the majority of the officers came from the former Sukhumi and Ochamchire brigades) of the Senaki-based 2nd motorifle brigade of the MOD led by Revaz Esmava, deputy commander of the brigade, seized a lot of weapons and heavy armaments and set off for Kutaisi, the country's second largest city. In the neighbourhoods of Samtredia in western Georgia they were met by Temur Shashiashvili, the governor of the Imereti region, who attempted at negotiations but was actually taken hostage. The mutineers took positions at the Gubistzqali bridge several kilometres from Kutaisi. Their forces totalled 17 tanks and armoured personnel carriers, and 300-500 people (by that time they were joined by some civilians). Governmental forces blocked the way at the next side of the bridge. A bit later, by some media reports, a group of governmental soldiers crossed the bridge and joined the rebels being ordered to do so by an officer. The mutineers demanded Shevardnadze to resign and restore the "legitimate" government (meaning that of ex-president Zviad Gamsakhurdia). "We are backed by half Georgia and even Abkhazia", Eliava said.

David Tevzadze, the defence minister who was assigned as the chief of anti-mutiny staff, and Djemal Gakhokidze, then security minister, arrived in Kutaisi. When trying to enter into negotiations with the mutineers, Gakhokidze and General Zaur Uchadze, commander of the MOD Western Direction, were also taken hostage. However, Eliava himself denied this fact and said that the officials merely were granted a "privilege" to accompany the rebels on their way to Tbilisi. By that time Eduard Shevardnadze launched a press-conference in Tbilisi and called upon the rebel leaders to lay down arms. He said he was ready to declare emergency law in the country. For their part, the mutineers made an ultimatum: either the governmental troops allowed them to move to Tbilisi or they would fire. Some time later one rebel tank voluntarily succumbed to the governmental forces. Gunfire burst out in a while and the mutineers were forced to retire. At least one serviceman of the governmental troops was reported killed and three more wounded.

The mutineers got back to Senaki late in the evening the same day (on their way back one of their tanks run into a wall of the traffic police station killing two rebel soldiers). According to the president's press service, on October 20 all the rebel soldiers were disarmed and got back to their military unit in Senaki. Active participants were arrested, though Eliava and some of his supporters managed to flee. Military Procurator's Office instituted legal proceedings against Eliava and other rebel leaders who are charged with high treason (Art. 65 of the Criminal Code). Gakhokidze told journalists that he was tipped off about coming disorder a month before. The information was checked out and, in his words, appeared incorrect. The mutiny occurred spontaneously, he said.

Akaki Eliava was born in 1956 in Senaki; in 1992 he enlisted the National Guards and created the Senaki battalion, being assigned its commander and awarded the rank of colonel; in 1993 he commanded the operation in the Senaki airport to secure ex-president Gamsakhurdia's safe return to Georgia; afterwards he was appointed commandant of Senaki; after Gamsakhurdia's death he and his battalion hid in forests; some time later he was reconciled with the authorities and enlisted the Internal Troops but after a conflict with the command - he had not been paid for almost an year - he left the Internal Troops and enlisted the MSS; he is married and has two daughters

A mutiny in western Georgia

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 130, October 20, pp. 1, 2, 3

"Akhali Taoba" No. 289, October 20, pp. 2, 4

"7 Dge" No. 123, October 21-22, pp. 1, 2

"Akhali 7 Dge" No. 39, October 23-30, pp. 4, 5

On October 19, two hours after the mutiny started, seven still unidentified gunmen raided the Zestaponi chemical battalion of the MOD and stole 15 submachine guns and one pistol. No casualties were reported. According to Oleg Natsvlishvili, the chief of the Zestaponi police station, the whole operation took about 15 minutes. The gunmen cut off telephone lines and escaped. The incident is being investigated jointly by the military counter-intelligence, Military Procurator's Office and the regional procurator's office.

"Resonance" No. 290, October 23, p. 5

The October 23 sitting of the MOD Board in Tzqaltubo examined the October 19 mutiny. David Tevzadze praised servicemen of the Kutaisi-based 21st brigade, the Koda-based 11th brigade, several Poti-based units, the Kodjori-based commando unit, the Gori training centre and Tqibuli-based internal troops for successful operation. The Board dismissed General Zaur Uchadze, commander of the MOD Western Direction, and General David Sokhadze, the head of the MOD department for personnel breeding. The fate of Avtandil Kvaratskhelia, the commander of the Senaki-based 2nd Brigade, remains unclear (he was absent on the day of the mutiny). At the October 26 sitting of the National Security Council (NSC) Djemal Gakhokidze, the security minister, declared his resignation.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 293, October 24, pp. 2, 3

At his October 20 press-conference the president announced that the mutiny had been successfully put down and there no longer was a need for emergency law. He praised David Tevzadze for success and Shota Kviraia, the former security minister, for efficient mediation during the October 19 events. Kviraia, currently a NSC member, told journalists that he was authorised to negotiate with the mutineers by Nugzar Sadjaia, the NSC secretary general, and the president himself. "But for me General Uchadze would have been shot to death", he said. However, in the opinion of Revaz Adamia, the chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee, Kviraia had no rights to talk with mutineers. The president, arguably, had mistrusted Gakhokidze and that was why he ordered just the MOD, not other power structures, to put down the mutiny. In Shevardnadze's words, if other power structures were involved in the operation it might have resulted in a rivalry between them. By some reports, however, the president authorised the MOD to put down the mutiny because the biggest part of the Internal Troops deployed in western Georgia were engaged in defending Georgian villages at the right bank of the Enguri river from assaults of Abkhaz gunmen.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 136, October 27, p. 1

"Resonance" No. 294, October 27, pp. 1, 4

In his interview with the newspaper, Revaz Adamia, the chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee, highly appreciated David Tevzadze and Johnny Pirtskhalaishvili, the Chief of the General Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces, for their performance in putting down the mutiny. Almost all the structures, in his words, functioned quite professionally. Adamia believes that the government has already grown able to manage such crisis situations. At the same time, there are still some deficiencies that must be corrected. Military counter-intelligence obviously failed to head off the incident. So responsible

officials should be called to account, while the country's security system must be re-organised, Adamia said.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 272, October 21, p. 2

Due to the October 19 mutiny, the government has strengthened the defence of the Supsa oil terminal and deployed 50 servicemen of the 25th motorifle brigade of the MOD led by General Roman Dumbadze there, in addition to a unit of the Internal Troops that used to protect the object before.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 131, October 21, p. 1

## **Conflict zones**

Gunfire with the use of machine guns and grenade launchers burst out late at night on October 3 between Abkhaz forces and the Georgian Internal Troops deployed in the villages of Khurcha and Ganmukhuri of the Zugdidi district. The incident lasted about an hour. No casualties were reported.

"Meridiani 44" No. 115, October 5-7, p. 3

Abkhaz gunmen and Russian peacekeepers have reportedly clashed in the Gali district. As a result, several Abkhaz gunmen were wounded. The reason of the incident is still unknown. The RPF (Russian Peacekeeping Force) command abstains from any comments.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 121, October 9, p. 1

Georgian and Abkhaz delegations held Russia-mediated talks in the village of Khurcha on October 16. Sukhumi demanded to withdraw the Georgian Internal Troops from the village, while Tbilisi said it was possible only after Abkhaz authorities guaranteed safety of the local Georgian population. The parties failed to reach an agreement. The talks are supposed to continue.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 128, October 17, p. 2

After Georgian law-enforcement authorities banned guerrillas to operate in Abkhazia, the refugees from the Gali district sojourning in Zugdidi have created a NGO "Galeli" (Gali-dweller). Its leadership claims that the organisation aims to help the refugees get back to their homes.

"Droni" No. 119, October 17-20, p. 2

General Evgeny Churayev has been appointed new chief of the RPF Staff. Earlier, he used to serve as chief of an army staff in the Far East Military District of Russia.

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 306, October 30, p. 1

## **The army building**

According to Col. Avtandil Davitadze, the head of the MOD financial department, the Finance Ministry will soon owe the MOD more than 22 mln GEL (about \$14.5 mln). The situation in the army was catastrophic, he said. The stockpile of foods is gradually exhausting, there are no money to purchase new uniforms for recruits, while officers have not received their salaries for the last four months.

"Resonance" No. 272, October 5, pp. 1, 2

A lot of Georgian majors and vice-colonels who approached the age of 50 may be soon fired, Col. Dimitri Lezhava, the head of the MOD staff department, said. The law on general military service sets the age of retirement in the army as follows:

- 50 years of age - majors and vice-colonels;
- 55 years - colonels;
- 60 years - generals.

The president, however, may prolong the terms of service of generals and colonels for 5 years. Hamlet Gegenava, first deputy chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee, claims that if these people are

really dismissed it will bring about negative consequences for the army as there are not enough young officers to replace them.

"Resonance" No. 272, October 5, p. 2

On October 2 the Shavnabada-based battalion of the MOD 11th brigade completed a two-month military exercise in the Jagludzha training centre with the use of all kinds of weapons, artillery and air defence systems. The command of the battalion is manned mainly with graduates of the St. Petersburg military college (Russia). Zviad Chaduneli, the commander of the battalion, said the exercise was quite successful.

"Resonance" No. 270, October 3, p. 2

"Kviris Palitra" No. 40, October 5-11, p. 9

American experts have held a seminar in Krtzanisi (nearby Tbilisi) for the MOD officials on the management of defence resources. According to General Johnny Pirtskhalaishvili, the size of the Georgian army is expected to reduce from 30,000 to 25,000 next year, while the MOD is going to apply American model of defence spending and shift to a professional army. To improve the combat efficiency of the army the MOD needs 115 mln GEL (about \$76 mln). However, the 1999 draft state budget allocates only 55 mln GEL (about \$36 mln) to defence. Staff cuts in the MOD, therefore, seem inevitable. For instance, in Pirtskhalaishvili's words, the number of drafting offices may be reduced by 10 percent.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 118, 121; October 6, 9; p. 1

The servicemen have not been paid for the last four months. This March two officers of the MOD committed a suicide for financial hardships and inability to maintain their families. Last year, too, salaries were paid with two-three month delays. As it appeared later, the money was used in the "black" alcohol business.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 278, October 9, pp. 6, 7

The 1997 defence budget of Georgia totalled 79 mln GEL (about \$52.7 mln), in 1998 it reduced to 74 mln GEL (about \$50.0 mln), while in 1999, according to the draft state budget, it may shrink to 65 mln GEL (about \$43.0 mln). As 10 mln GEL (about \$6.7 mln) of them are for pensions and social security programs, direct defence spending in 1999 will total only 55 mln GEL (about \$36.7 mln). It means that officer salaries will not rise, the army will be unable to purchase new armaments and weapons, fuel supply will be meagre, the number of military exercises and training will reduce. Generally speaking, there will be little possibility to improve combat efficiency of the army.

"7 Dge" No. 120, October 14-15, p. 5

Although the total 1999 draft state budget has increased by 200 mln GEL (about \$133 mln) in comparison with the previous year, the MOD budget reduced by 19 mln GEL (about \$12.5 mln). All the other power structures will enjoy substantial increase of their budgets: the SDFD by 83.8 percent (its personnel will enlarge by 12 percent), the MIA by 8.1 percent, the MSS by 11 percent or by 15.2 mln GEL (about \$10 mln), the State Safeguard Service by 37 percent or by 8.8 mln GEL (about \$5.8 mln), the State Intelligence Department by 38.5 percent. With its 25 mln GEL (about \$16.5 mln) budget the SDFD holds the record among the power structures (save the MOD). It will become the only one to increase spending on education, health care and research programs. All the others will see these articles curtailed.

"Droni" No. 123, October 27-29, pp. 1, 3

The autumn call-up to the army postponed for a month due to financial problems resumed on October 26. In western Georgia it is carried out by territorial principle. According to Hamlet Gegenava, deputy chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee, such principle contradicts the military doctrine, which stipulates ex-territorial conscription, approved by the parliament last year. For his part, Colonel Rodam Murusidze, deputy military commissar, denied this "accusation". The president's respective order, in his words, says nothing about ex-territorial principle.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 133, 139; October 24, 30; p. 2, 3

According to Valery Chkheidze, the chairman of the SDFD (State Department of Frontier Defence of Georgia), the Georgian Coast Guard lacks technical resources to take the total control of the country's marine border. Such a control, in his words, can become possible only with proper state fiscal policy in the field of frontier defence. Germany and the USA are expected to grant the Coast Guard a patrol boat each in November. Besides, a special navigation radar system must be installed next year. There will be also some joint projects with Germany and Ukraine. Last year the SDFD was not paid 4 mln GEL (about \$2.7 mln) out of the budgetary funds for frontier defence, while due to inefficient frontier control the country lost \$47-50 mln. For the first eight months of the year, the SDFD has got only 41 percent of the planned finance. As a result, frontier guards have not been paid since August. By and large, frontier control over the whole length of the country's borders requires, in Chkheidze's words, 120 thousand GEL (about \$80 thousand) per month. As to Abkhazia, Tbilisi and Sukhumi continue negotiations on the problem of frontier defence. Georgia's position is based on the 1982 international convention on marine border, the law on state border of Georgia and the constitution. "I'm not going to break into the Sukhumi sea port and coastal areas. We have another scheme", Chkheidze said.

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 305, October 29, p. 1

Vakhtang Kutateladze was born in Daba Abastumani on October 8, 1955. In 1977 he graduated the Georgian Polytechnic Institute (currently the Georgian Technical University) as a civil engineer. In 1980, after one-year study, he graduated the counter-intelligence college of the KGB in Minsk (Byelorussia). His track record includes various positions from an ordinary officer to deputy security minister. Since 1994 he has commanded the state safeguard service of Georgia. He is married and has three children. On October 30 the parliament approved the president's nomination of General Vakhtang Kutateladze, the former chief of the state safeguard service, for the post of security minister by 143 votes to 3. After the parliamentary session, the new minister told journalists that he would give priority to fighting economic crimes, tax evasion and corruption. Budgetary problems, in his opinion, also fall into the sphere of state security. Kutateladze considers it necessary to improve activities of the counter-intelligence as soon as possible. He is ready to unveil old archives of the former KGB.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 282, 283-284; October 31, November 1-2; pp. 1, 3

The president appointed Sul Khan Papashvili chief of the state safeguard service. He was born on February 14, 1966; in 1988 he graduated Law Faculty of the Tbilisi State University; in 1988-95 he worked in Procurator's Office and then in the apparatus of the head of state; since 1996 he has worked in the National Security Council apparatus. "From now onward nothing will ever threaten the president's safety", he told journalists.

"Meridiani 44" No. 127, November 2-4, p. 2

Zaza Mazmishvili, the chief of the president's bodyguards, has been appointed head of the MSS anti-terrorism centre. He has been in office since Shevardnadze's coming back to Georgia in 1992. Gia Tsatsanashvili, deputy chief of the president's bodyguards, has been appointed acting chief of the bodyguards. To date, the MSS anti-terrorism centre has been led by Gogi Aleksidze, deputy security minister. Some days later, G. Aleksidze resigned. According to his father, Levan Aleksidze (the president's advisor for international law), he could not but step down.

"Droni" No. 126, November 3-5, p. 1

"Akhali Taoba" No. 305, November 5, p. 2

David Tevzadze appointed General Dula Abashidze head of the MOD department for personnel breeding and psychological training, while Colonel Tengiz Oshkhereli was assigned as deputy chief of the General Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 142, November 3, p. 1

## Visits. Negotiations. Co-operation

In the framework of the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, the MOD and MFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) organised, in co-operation with the NATO directorate for ground arms, a seminar on mine cleaning and classification of bridges in Gudauri on October 6-9. Georgian specialists presented their inventions: a pontoon-bridge - it is not limited in length and stands 40 tons of weight - and special equipment for mine cleaners which weighs 28 kilograms and is better than Russian analogues. The NATO has allocated \$5.5 mln to the purpose of creating military firing grounds in Georgia - on the basis of the Qulevi, Simoneti and Gori training centres. In 2001 the NATO plans to launch a PfP exercise in Georgia.

"Resonance" No. 270, October 3, p. 2

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 122, October 10, p. 2

Valery Chkheidze, the chairman of the SDFD, visited Germany on October 3. The two countries signed an agreement to grant the Georgian Coast Guard a German patrol boat which is expected to get to Georgia at the end of October/beginning of November. With 490 tons of displacement it will become the largest one not only of the Coast Guard but of the Navy as well. Although its speed is not very high (12-16 knots per hour), the boat is able to carry quite huge artillery systems. Its crew of 35 have passed two-month training in Germany.

"Resonance" No. 270, October 3, p. 2

A delegation of the British defence ministry visited Tbilisi on October 12 to learn the army-building problems and security situation in Georgia. The delegation met Grigol Katamadze, deputy defence minister, Revaz Adamia, the chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee, and gave a lecture in the Joint Military Academy.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 265, October 13, p. 1

At their October 14 meeting with Revaz Adamia experts of the International Security Advisory Board (ISAB) led by General Gary Johnson presented the first package of their recommendations on military reforms in Georgia. The same day they held talks with the MOD leadership, and met the president and the foreign minister on October 15. The recommendations must help improve the command and management of the Georgian armed forces, develop proper military strategy and security policy. The country's defence system must be built not only by the military, General Johnson said. The broad public and politicians, in his words, should participate in the process as well. It is up to Georgia to decide whether it needs a professional or conscription army. Anyway, in his opinion, it does not need a large one.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 125, October 14, p. 2

David Tevzadze, the defence minister, visited Turkey on October 13-16 for talks with the Turkish military leadership. According to Grigol Katamadze, deputy defence minister, Turkey will help Georgia train its military personnel (50 Georgian officers will be sent to Turkish military colleges), while a Georgian platoon will participate in a military exercise to be held in Turkey at the end of October. The Georgian Navy will be granted one more Turkish patrol boat. The Turkish MOD will also provide its specialists for reconstructing the Gori training centre and creating a military firing ground of the Joint Military Academy. The whole Turkish assistance program totals \$5.5 mln. Besides, Turkey is ready to build a military hotel in Tbilisi. Zaza Pataridze, deputy chairman of the defence and security committee, views the Georgian-Turkish military co-operation in the light of contacts with NATO. In his words, one of the ways towards closer integration with the civilised world passes Turkey.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 126, October 15, p. 2

A group of 32 Georgian marines and a patrol boat participated in the PfP multi-national exercise "Sea Breeze 98" in Odessa, Ukraine, on October 25-November 4. According to Irakli Batkuashvili, the head of the MOD staff for PfP, America covered half (\$35 thousand) of the expenses of Georgia's participation (\$70 thousand altogether). The other half - \$35 thousand - was paid by the MOD.

Reportedly, the Georgian servicemen performed rather well. However, there were some problems. On its way to Odessa the Georgian boat - the flagship of the Navy (the so-called project 205P) - was damaged and towed to the Balaklava port (Ukraine). The USA provided \$15 thousand to repair the Georgian boat.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 127, October 16, p. 2

"Resonance" No. 290, October 23, p. 2

"Droni" No. 127, November 5-7, p. 5

The USA is going to grant the MOD \$5.2 mln in the framework of the foreign military finance program. According to some informal sources, Georgia is going to spend this money on the purchase of helicopters. The first three of them may be delivered to Georgia already next year. If so, the MOD will face the necessity to create a respective infrastructure. Besides, the program provides for personnel training.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 133, October 23, p. 1

Valery Chkheidze has met a delegation of the US State Department. The talks were focused on the problems of the Georgian Coast Guard. The delegation also visited Kutaisi and met Temur Shashiashvili, the president's authorised representative in the Imereti region, and Badri Melkadze, the city mayor. The two parties signed an agreement on serial production of a Mercury aircraft at the Kutaisi aircraft works. This plane will be purchased by the SDFD. The delegation also visited the Poti base of the Coast Guard.

"Meridiani 44" No. 126, October 30-November 2, p. 2

## Miscellany

Arguably, the future of the Tbilisi Aircraft Works (TAW) may depend on improved modifications of Su-25 and Mig-21 aircraft. To date, the TAW has manufactured 1,200 Su-25 fighters: 229 of them are in the Russian Air Force, three regiments remain in Byelorussia, Armenia has 6 planes, Georgia - 7 ones. Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan also have some Su-25 fighters. Most importantly, however, the biggest part of the TAW's production has been exported into foreign countries. For instance, there are 78 such fighters in Iraq, 36 in Bulgaria, 24 in the Czech republic, 12 in Slovakia, 12 in Angola and 30 in North Korea. All these planes already need repairing and only the TAW - the main producer of the aircraft for almost 20 years - is able to carry out the task. Some countries have already expressed their interest in co-operation with the TAW. Besides, some foreign countries still have in their air forces about 5,000 out-of-date Mig-21 fighters. Most of these countries are not strong enough economically to replace them with modern planes and prefer to modernise the existing ones. The TAW also can benefit from such a situation as it was manufacturing Mig-21 fighters for 28 years.

"Kviris Palitra" No. 40, October 5-11, p. 9

According to Dimitri Tskitishvili, the TAW chief engineer, the TAW is going to renew the serial production of R-60 and R-73 air-to-air anti-aircraft missiles. These missiles, in his words, fit all kinds of aircraft and, therefore, can be supplied not only to the Georgian Air Force. He hopes that other countries, including those of CIS, will be interested in purchasing them.

"Resonance" No. 284, October 17, p. 3

About 100 workers of the TAW launched a protest rally on October 28, demanding to pay their salaries (not paid for the last seven months), stop dismissing TAW personnel and give up embezzling TAW property. Organisers of the rally claim that non-ferrous metals are illegally exported from the TAW to Turkey. In their opinion, the TAW will work efficiently only if its administration is replaced. For his part, Vazha Tordia, the TAW director general, denied all these accusations. He said the personnel got their salaries regularly. He admitted, however, that there still was eight-month arrears of previous salary which would be paid off gradually. As to embezzlement, he said the administration was exporting the surplus of materials to raise money for salaries. These materials, in his words, have been stored in the TAW for 15-20 years and can no longer be

used for aviation production. According to Mr. Tordia, although there are currently 4,000 personnel on the TAW pay-roll, in practice only some hundreds of them work at present. So the TAW is going to preserve its main technological line, while all the others will be abolished.  
"Resonance" No. 295, October 28, pp. 1, 2

The Ministry of Mail and Communications of Georgia has re-established telephone lines of the Georgia-based Russian frontier troops (switched off earlier for huge debts). However, according to Evgeny Bashmakov, the head of the communications department of the Russian frontier troops, Russian frontier guards still owe the ministry more than 100 thousand GEL (about \$67 thousand). The telephone lines enable the Russian frontier guards to communicate with their bases in Stavropol, Erevan, Sukhumi, Akhaltsikhe, Batumi.  
"Resonance" No. 273, October 6, p. 2

Levan Mamaladze, the president's representative in the Kvemo Kartli region, has appealed to the National Security Council, demanding to transfer the MOD agricultural farms located in the region into possession of the regional administration. In Mr. Mamaladze's words, these farms do not pay taxes into the local budget and employ no local residents which results in high unemployment. On the other hand, the MOD claims them to be quite profitable and able to satisfy, at least partly, the army's need for foods. In 1992 the Georgian MOD had 74 agricultural farms. Some time later, however, the former defence minister, Vardiko Nadibaidze, banned the military to run commercial activities and in 1995 all the farms were ceded to a newly created material-technical bureau led by then vice-premier Avtandil Margiani. Later on, however, Nadibaidze changed his mind and appealed to the president. Eduard Shevardnadze decreed to return only ten of these farms to the MOD. All the others were subordinated to the Ministry of Foods and Agriculture.  
"Kavkasioni" No. 80, October 19-25, p. 4

Missile fuel (about 250 tons) - known as "melanzh" and "samin" - stored in half rusty tanks under the open sky was revealed at a military airfield near the village of Meria, Ozurgeti district, in 1997. Although the last year's presidential Decree 401 ordered to improve storage conditions there, nothing has changed so far. According to Avtandil Dolidze of the Institute of Organic Chemistry (authorised to develop respective measures), the institute has worked out special technology which requires 600 thousand GEL (about \$400 thousand) to solve the problem. To date, the finance ministry has allocated only 35 thousand (about \$23 thousand). In his words, there are 800 tons of such fuel altogether throughout Georgia.  
"Alia" No. 178, October 20-21, p. 5

## **Press Digest**

The October 19 attempt at a mutiny in western Georgia and financial problems of the army were given the most press coverage in October

From the viewpoint of its international image, the October 19 mutiny drove Georgia back to the year 1993, the Meridiani 44 (No. 122) argues. When the government fails to control the situation, while the military so easily rebel against the authorities, it means that Georgia still cannot be regarded as a full-fledged state. In the newspaper's opinion, it has become a copy of such African states where local tribes clash with each other for years and although these countries have their own parliaments, presidents, etc., in essence they remain wild and primitive. The West usually limits its contacts with such countries to only humanitarian aid. It seems that Georgia, too, has grown to become such a state. In the light of the October 19 incident one may get sick of reading pompous articles about Georgia's almost 5000-year tradition of state sovereignty, while talks about "Georgian democracy" may only raise a laugh. Recent developments have clearly shown what kind of traditions Georgia really has. All the last evens manifested terrible foolishness that makes it impossible

for Georgia to learn even elementary political rules. People must perceive once and for all: one must never raise arms against a legally elected government. As to the October 19 mutiny, restoration of the status-quo, as if nothing has happened (the army gets back to barracks, all officials remain in office), would be its worst outcome, the Meridiani 44 concludes.

For the Resonance (No. 288) the mutiny was obviously controlled by Russian security services. According to the newspaper, Georgian law-enforcement authorities have already got information about the organisers and sponsors of the mutiny but they abstain from revealing concrete names for the time being. Some informal sources claim that the Georgian Communists might have been also involved in the incident.

It would be stupid to believe that the October 19 mutiny really aimed to overthrow Shevardnadze's government, the Akhali 7 Dge (No. 39) suggests. Its goal, in the newspaper's opinion, was more particular - to indicate a deep political crisis in the country. From this viewpoint, the mutiny proved quite successful, having made western investors doubtful about prospects of the TRACECA project and Caspian oil transits in Georgia. It also revealed impotence of the Georgian law-enforcement bodies. In more or less stable countries security ministers are not so easily taken hostage by a handful of mutineers, the newspaper concludes.

Small wonder that the MSS fails to perform efficiently, it employs mainly non-professionals, the Meridiani 44 (No. 123) claims. By 1988, the Georgian KGB was one of the strongest local branch of the Soviet KGB. During his 40 years in office, Alexi Inauri, then chief of the Georgian KGB, managed to create such an organisation which appeared invulnerable even to the Georgian corruption. In 1988-92 leaders of the national movement were unwise enough to destroy this powerful system completely. No other former Soviet republic has made such a blunder. They merely replaced the leadership of their security services, while 99 percent of personnel remains the same. They understood that KGB local committees were not but the Kremlin's tools and they may be easily re-organised to serve national interests. As to Georgia, it in fact found itself without security services. After 1992 professionals were expelled from the security service and were replaced with criminals, drug addicts or mere fools. For a country with the situation as Georgia's it is a disaster, the newspaper remarks. Afterwards, the service was manned with former policemen. But it is a common knowledge that no policeman, even a perfect one, can replace a secret agent, the Meridiani 44 argues, as their mentality entirely differ. At the same time, in the newspaper's opinion, it would be wrong to blame the October 19 mutiny only on the MSS. Although Akaki Eliava was a security officer, he organised the mutiny in a MOD brigade not in his unit which belongs to the MSS. It is just the MOD that must control situation in its units and prevent such rebellions. The world experience has shown that security services cannot control the army. Such a control requires special services within the armed forces (in Soviet Union it was the so-called "5th Department" of the MOD), the newspaper concludes.

There are several power structures to check such attempts as the October 19 incident, Droni (No. 120) reports. First of all, this is the MSS Military Counter-Intelligence Department which has local branches in all the military units. Besides, the MSS embodies extraordinary inspectorate which is also responsible for controlling the situation in the armed forces. However, both failed to detect preparations for the mutiny. As to motivation of the mutineers, it seems understandable: officers of the army have not been paid for almost five months but this is not the main reason. Most important of all, people have realised that, despite the government's solemn promises, nothing has changed in reality: they still live in poverty, while the government does not seem to care much about the Abkhazian problem or, say, the army building problems. This is perfect ground for any rebellion, the newspaper argues. In the Droni's opinion, it is even surprising that so few civilian supporters joined the rebel servicemen. The possibility of a Russian provocation should be also taken into account but the main reason, however, must be found in the hard economic situation in the army, the newspaper concludes.

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The reduction of the 1999 defence budget means that the government urges the army look for additional financial sources or quietly die, the Droni (No. 123) remarks. By Georgian tradition, those who lack governmental subsidies usually appeal to Aslan Abashidze, the Adjarian leader, for sponsorship. One should wonder, the newspaper deems, whether the government is really interested to see David Tevzadze and other Georgian generals playing Abashidze's tune. Besides, such reduction suggests that the government has no longer hopes to re-gain Abkhazia, as well as check possible invaders, in the future. The 1999 defence budget, in the newspaper's opinion, in fact makes it impossible to carry out any military reform. In a year, the army will have to dispose of 20 percent of its out-of-date armaments (a standard average figure). But the budget provides no money to purchase new weaponry, to say nothing of meagre food rations. Under such circumstances, the government should not be surprised to see new mutineers in every military unit, the newspaper concludes.

For the 7 Dge (No. 120), given ongoing processes in the neighbouring countries - Azerbaijan, Turkey and Armenia are enlarging their armed forces - the Georgian government's approach towards defence spending problems looks strange. Official and unofficial North Caucasian military units deployed along the Russian-Georgian border should be, in the newspaper's opinion, also taken into account as they threaten with possible provocations. Besides, the Georgian jurisdiction has yet to be restored in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It would be hardly relevant to expect that the task can be achieved only by frontier guards and internal troops, the newspaper argues. Inflation is another aspect of the problem - while prices for electricity, fuel, foodstuffs are gradually increasing, officer salaries remain unchanged. Many countries of the world are curtailing their defence spending but they do it only after thorough analysis of the issue, the newspaper claims.

The current financial crisis should urge the government to change its approach towards the development of the country's power structures, the Meridiani 44 (No. 125) argues. First of all, in the newspaper's opinion, it would be an error to give priority to strengthening the MOD. A country needs the army to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Georgia has already lost the last one and it is unlikely that the Georgian jurisdiction in Abkhazia and South Ossetia may be restored by force. As to external aggression, fortunately, no neighbouring country seems going to invade Georgia. But if there appears such, Georgia will be hardly able to render significant resistance. The question is, therefore, whether Georgia needs its current army: permanently inefficient, hungry and unpaid 25-30,000 servicemen. The newspaper suggests that the army's mission may be carried out by 8 or 10 thousand well trained and armed servicemen, partly professionals (at least NCOs). As to priorities, the government should pay attention to the following two: frontier troops and security service. After strengthening its frontier troops, in the newspaper's opinion, Georgia will get immediate positive results. Strict frontier control over export/import operations will better defend political and economic interests of Georgia and benefit the country much more than a large army. The government should purchase more patrol boats rather than "incumbent and useless" tanks. It must be mentioned also that the frontier troops are better disciplined than the army. Given Georgia's specific, the frontier troops can be reinforced stronger than it is required by only frontier defence and assigned much broader functions. As to the second priority, in the newspaper's opinion, Georgia must develop an efficient security service, including special commando units, manned with well trained professionals - both Georgian citizens or mercenaries - rather than former policemen. Let's not forget that Georgian security service is the only thing Abkhaz separatists still fear, the Meridiani 44 concludes.

The Kavkasioni (No. 80) describes the current situation in the army by a single word - a disaster. According to the newspaper, Georgian officers consider their current financial problems even worse than in the time of hyperinflation several years ago. The only things that still deter them from radical actions are, in

the newspaper's opinion, the respect for uniform and the prestige of the new defence minister. But their patience cannot last for long. If nothing changes, the military may well join teachers and other employees in protest rallies. As to the defence minister's plans - shifting to a half-professional army, shorter terms of military service, alternative non-military conscription - they seem doomed to fail. The government's such policy cannot be considered but treacherous, the Kavkasioni remarks.