

The Army and Society in Georgia

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SOUTH CAUCASUS SECURITY: COOPERATION OR RIVALRY

by Tamara Pataraiia

As part of the USSR, the three South Caucasian Republics, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia had no responsibility for their external defence system. Now, since the states had progressed in their political status, become independent, they faced the necessity of formation and strengthening their armed forces, difficulty to develop long term strategy on military and defence issues..

The situation that existed in the South Caucasian region is extremely complex. In the embryonic stages of establishing their statehood, all of the states were involved in wide-scale military conflicts, where the regional rivalries and interests of other great regional countries did not play a less important role. Surrounded by strong military powers: Russia, Turkey and Iran, the three South Caucasian republics still represent the area of historic rivalries. These attitudes have been strengthened recently as the oil and gas resources around the Caspian attracted not only the regional powers but the West as well. Secure access to oil and its exit routes for those resources are now of vital interest of the EU and US as well - a distant and the most strong power.

For the first stage of independence, it was very important to clarify the geopolitical interests of great powers towards the region. The stability in the region greatly depends on the good will of other regional powers, as well as their security imperatives, strategic goals, and intentions. As the tensions are quite strong between the powers with national interests in the region, responses from the side of South Caucasian states on this influence mostly differs from one another; as a result, political dimensions and states' policy in security and defence issues also are taking shape in different ways.

Regional interests are reflected in the sphere of military co-operation between the Caucasus states and major powers in the region. They are developing their own interests in security sphere promoting military and defence strengths of the small states.

Russian policy towards Caucasus was inconsistent and unpredictable from the beginning of the disintegration of the USSR. The declared goals and real politics often contradicted each other. The main directions of Russia's foreign

and regional policy were finally developed in its Security Concept, which was adopted in 1997. There are clarified Russian strategic interests towards Caucasian region.

Russia places the primary priority of its foreign policy in the development of international relations with the leading states of the world and overwhelmingly supports the process of deepening co-operation and integration within the framework of the CIS. One of the most important national interests of Russia is keeping influence and positions in Trans-Caucasus. In Russia's eyes, control of Trans-Caucasus is also a key to stability in the North Caucasian region of Russia.

Russian military interests in Caucasian region are presented in the Security Concept as follows:

Russia seeks to maintain its access and presence in the region. Keeping the contingent of armed forces on the territories of sovereign states; Russia seeks to maintain its border troops in the CIS countries to guard its external borders.

Russia is greatly interested in establishing the system of Collective Security under the framework of the CIS.

However, Russia's military approaches and intentions have not been fully successful. Some of the key states, however, did not support Russia's objectives. Azerbaijanian attempts succeeded in forcing complete withdrawal of the Russian military forces. For now Russia maintains its military bases in Caucasus - one in Armenia and 3 in Georgia. Deployment of Russian border guards in the CIS member states faces strong political opposition from almost all regional states. The Russian military failed in its attempts to pressure Azerbaijan into accepting the introduction of Russian border guards, and Georgia made the first steps in the direction to take under its control frontiers by its own forces. Recently, Georgian frontier troops have taken over the most important Port Poti frontier check-point (hitherto under Russian control), while Russian frontier guards were re-deployed from Poti to Batumi.

In the early stage of establishing newly independent states the Russian factor dominated in the Caucasus region. Being under the great influence of Russian political and military presence in the region, Trans-Caucasian states' armies were created on the bases of Russian armament belonged to the Russian units deployed on the territory of Trans-Caucasus. The arms were transferred to governmental forces according to 1992 CFE Tashkent agreement. Not all of the republics received the equal number of armament. Part of the amount of uncontrolled arms under the responsibility of Russian military was easily transferred (before the disintegration of the USSR and after) into the possession of guerrilla units and militias usually backing opposition forces to the government. These facts encouraged coup attempts several times (sometimes successful, sometimes not) in Georgia and Azerbaijan. The weak control of Russian arms led to the strengthening of separatists' arms acquisition in both republics. It was very difficult for the national governments to defend their own interests from the ethnic separatists at that time.

There is a wide spread belief in the South Caucasus that Russia exacerbates tensions between newly established regional states. Azeri officials believe that Azerbaijan had been forcibly driven into a "full scale war with Armenia, in which a wide range of weapons had been used; occupation of Azeri territory by Armenia was Russia's attempt, that had concluded a military treaty with Armenia, to keep its influence in the region". Recently Prime Minister Arthur Rasi-zade wrote to his Russian counterpart Yevgeny Primakov, to protest alleged continuing shipments of Russian arms to Armenia and to demand that those weapons supplied in 1993-1996 be returned. The trilateral Russian-Azerbaijani-Armenian commission established last year to investigate the charges of illicit Russian arms supplies to Armenia has not met since April 1998. Azeri President Heydar Aliyev, during his meeting with representatives of the North Atlantic

Parliamentary Committee's Committee on NATO Expansion and Assistance to the Newly Independent States in Baku, made remarks that various Russians had told him that Moscow was providing large scale military assistance to Armenia both to help Yerevan in its conflict with Baku over Nagorno-Karabakh and to put pressure on Turkey and NATO's southern flank.

From the point of Armenian officials, the Azeri allegations were totally misleading: "The conflict in question was between the people and Government of Azerbaijan, which had refused to address their demands for self-determination. The fighting was not the result of Armenia's aggression, but of the self-defence of Armenia's population".

However, Armenia and Russia have already exchanged ratification by their parliaments of a comprehensive bilateral treaty "On friendship, co-operation, and mutual assistance" signed in Moscow in August 1997 by President Yeltsin and then Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian. The treaty covers all spheres of the Armenian-Russian co-operation, including a commitment to defend each other in case of a military aggression. The document also provides a legal framework for a continued presence of Russian troops in Armenia, an important element in Yerevan's national security. Russian-Armenian co-operation includes also technical assistance regarding functioning of nuclear power station in Armenia. Currently the both sides discusses problems of avoiding double taxation and supplies of nuclear fuel for Armenia's nuclear power station. Armenia greatly relies on Russian support declaring itself as its main strategic partner in the region. The illegal arms supplies to Armenia, which were carried out without any agreements, irritate other neighbour states, particularly Azerbaijan, Georgia and even Turkey. Especially notorious in this regard was a multimillion-dollar shipment of Russian arms to Armenia. In March 1997, when other Armenian leaders were denying the veracity of Russian media reports of Russia's secret arms supplies to Armenia, Sarkisian, Defence Minister of Armenia blithely admitted that "over the past two years we have doubled our defence capacity at no cost to the budget". If it is true, than Russia faces a danger lacking in proper civil-military relations or is following to more important political goals than the economic revenues. The secret transfers to this country, which is not in a good relationship with some neighbours, and almost at the state of war with the nearest one, cannot be regarded as guarantee for stability and peace. This will probably escalate the arms race between Armenia and Azerbaijan and possibly among others. The rumours have already spread in local regional and Russian press about forthcoming significant purchase of Azeri government, of some F-16 fighters intended for the Azeri army. Turkish officials express warnings that Russian S-300 missiles may be acquired by four of Turkey's neighbours and that missiles able to strike Turkey have been provided by Russia to Armenia as well.

Georgia is also involved in this polarisation, as all these transfers were carried out across the territory of Georgia, the country which is going to give priority to withdrawal of the Russian military bases from its territory" in the nearest future. Currently two conflicts are frozen on the territories of Georgia. As a result of armed conflicts, Georgia has lost its control over the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and has some potential hot spots on other territories as well. Despite numerous attempts of peaceful settlement and continuing negotiations, no real achievements have been reached in these conflicts.

Accusing Russia of support of Abkhazian separatists, and fearing further development of civil war in the country Georgian government decided to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) at the end of 1993. The main state priority was declared as the integrity of the state and the improvement of the relations with Russia. In 1993-1995 some attempts were made to legalise the development of Russian-Georgian military co-operation with the help of bilateral treaties (which have not been ratified by the Parliaments yet). Georgia signed CIS collective documents: "The Concept of Collective Security", The Main Directions For Further Military Cooperation", and "The Treaty On A Common Air Defence System" according to which Georgia would have received military assistance. The treaty on the status of Russian troops in Georgia came into the

force by the personal order of Shevardnadze. But Russia is reluctant to provide military support to build up military capabilities of Georgia. No significant step has been made in this direction within the framework of the CIS co-operation. Even the creation of Georgia's Air defence System has not yet been completed. In his recent interview with the Georgian TV, Valery Naqopia, the commander of the Georgian Air Force and Air Defence Troops, said Abkhaz forces may well bomb Tbilisi as the Georgian air defence system was unable to check their possible air strikes. By 1992 Russia had pulled out of Georgia \$149 mln worth of ground control equipment. As a result, the Air Defence Troops are now able only to monitor flights over Georgia but cannot halt enemy aircraft. In three Caucasian republics there are about 7 separate groups of armed forces (AF): AF of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, Opposition AF deployed in Nagorno Karabakh, Opposition AF deployed in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Group of Russian AF in Transcaucasia combined with Russian peacekeepers. The fact that some of them had been adversaries not so long ago complicates the situation even more. The negotiation process for achieving common nominator has not reached its goal yet. Former foes looked on each other with great suspicion and were preoccupied with the assessments of the arms build up process of neighbours. The attitudes of rivalries might develop and progress in an accumulation of arms destabilising the region. Especially when the arms control mechanism does not work and when verification of arms accumulations in the conflict regions is impossible. Russia has established relations with each side separately and enjoys the role of mediator in conflict resolution process. The governments of Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh have no responsibility from international agreements and are not subjects of international law. Their military acquisition was completely conducted through informal Russian sources, and Russia is the only current controller of their strength. This raises suspicion that Moscow hardly could be considered a neutral arbiter in Caucasus because the deployment their peacekeeping forces and play one of the leading role in conflict negotiation process. Moreover and not less dangerous for South-Caucasian security, seems to be the undeveloped co-ordination between armed units under various command deployed in the same country, which increases the likelihood of conflict occurrence. The lack of co-operation between Georgian governmental bodies and Headquarters of the Russian Troops in Georgia causes significant problems and misunderstandings. Recently, Russian military officials were accused from the side of Georgian government representatives in attempts to provoke armed conflict between Georgian Armed Forces and Armenians living in the southern part of Georgia.

All above mentioned facts have increased negative attitudes surrounding Russian presence in the region among the security community and in public opinion in Georgia and Azerbaijan. Along with the processes of deepening tension and misunderstandings with Russia the economic and political relationships had been developed with other regional powers which helped both of them shape their policy in more balanced way. Azerbaijan and Georgia consider each other as a strategic partners. The economic co-operation and the construction of oil pipeline from Caspian to the Georgia Black Sea port greatly encouraged these attitudes. "Cooperation between the two countries is expanding and becoming one of the key factors of peace and stability in the Caucasus", said President Aliyev. Currently Georgian and Azerbaijanian foreign political imperatives shifted towards the West including reasonable hopes on military assistance. Close military co-operation has been developed with other regional powers, specifically Turkey, Ukraine, the US and EU. Russian armed units deployed on the Territories of Georgia and Armenia, cause a lot of suspicion among neighbouring countries, especially Turkey. Turkey and Russia have been rivals for influence in the Caucasus for centuries and are currently engaged in a competition over an export route for Caspian oil. Because of the increasing importance of Caspian oil export issues, Turkey is extremely interested in maintaining peace and stability in the Caucasus. On the other hand with the help of the pipeline Turkey hopes to enhance the political status of the country in the region. However relations with Turkey are not the same in each of Trans-Caucasian republics. While the economic and political ties with Azerbaijan and Georgia are getting stronger, Turkey and Armenia have not established formal diplomatic relations yet. The two countries are involved in

an array of disagreements, which worsened with the recent changes in Armenian government several months ago: "The fact that Turkish-Armenian boarder remind closed was not the preference of the Turkish government. The Armenian government was invited to pursue peaceful policies, which would certainly help the prospects of its own people, as well as of the region as a whole" - is the opinion of Ankara officials. The Nagorno-Karabakh crises played a vital role in polarisation of Armenian-Turkish relations.

Turkey is interested in developing bilateral relations with Georgia and Azerbaijan in the military sphere to enhance its confidence and security in the region. The negotiations on the expert level have already begun in developing agreement on mutual trust and security building measures between Turkey and Georgia. It is anticipated that Azerbaijan will be involved in this process as well.

According to a recently signed Georgian-Turkish military co-operation agreement, Turkey will grant Georgian MOD almost 5.5 million this year. The money will be spent on two programs: personnel training and technical assistance. Additionally, some of the money will be spent to buy navigation equipment for the Navy. Ankara also offers to train 50 Georgian officers in Turkish military colleges. Georgia has become the first country to get this type of Turkish assistance. MOD of Georgia is going to reconstruct the Gori training centre with the help of Turkey's financial assistance, which will be used to train the first Georgian peacekeepers in the near future, and also to purchase equipment and communication devices for its would-be peacekeeping troops. Azerbaijan actively supports Turkey's initiative on creating special peacekeeping forces for the Caucasus region.

Turkey and Georgia started negotiations on establishing a bilateral regime aiming to defend their common boarder from land mines and to prevent their usage along the boarder lines. The technical implementation of this project has already started.

Iranian policy towards South Caucasian states has not achieved a great success except for on an economic level. Iran was active in Azerbaijan from the first days of the latter's independence, and made several attempts in peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. But Azerbaijan has a special problem in its relationship with Iran; the Northwest part of Iran is mostly populated with ethnic Azeris. The possibility of Azerbaijan territorial claims was used in populist declarations by various Azeri politicians, which did not help deepening relationships with Iran. Iran's relations with Armenia also complicate the situation. Iran is now Armenia's second biggest trading partner behind Russia. Georgia is maintaining good relationship with Iran and is trying to develop economic co-operation. However, Iranian role in regional security remains confined. One of the reasons that Iran's role in regional events occurred in shadow is that Washington keeps Iran isolated .

The US does not hide its regional interests. It seeks to strengthen the positions of Turkey in the Caucasus, and encourages Trans-Caucasian states to pull away from the Russian sphere of influence toward the West. The US interests in the Caucasus were clearly defined in the Ankara Declaration, October 29, 1998, "Transporting Caspian Sea Region Oil", signed by the US Secretary of Energy B. Richardson, and the Presidents of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan.

Along the economic, commerce and environmental interests the United States has several key points of political and military character:
".diversity - encouraging diverse suppliers of oil for the U.S. and other Western consuming nations and preventing any one nation from monopolising these vast new Caspian Sea region reserves;
security - ensuring that oil flows along secure routes, with minimal risk of disruption, and then comes under the control of countries that are allied with NATO and the Western defence network".

Military co-operation between the US and Georgia was made possible after International Traffic and Arms Regulations - ITAR allowed the country to be eligible to receive US assistance in the sphere of security. In 1997 a Presidential Determination was signed according to which eight NIS countries - Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Kyrgistan, Moldova, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - became eligible for the first time for Foreign Military Financing. The program is carried out by the US State Department and Defence Security Assistance Agency and provides for the acquisition of US defence articles, services and training, which along with DOD support exercises, conferences and other events, facilitates participation in PFP activities and enhances interpretability with the United States and NATO allies. In 1997 FMF funds have been used to conduct communication equipment surveys in eight countries - to enhance basic communication capabilities by assisting them in finalising their communication equipment requirements.

FMF funds are being used to purchase English language training equipment and publications, medical equipment, night vision devices, computers and specialised training to include medical, English and NCO development programs. Georgia is the only state from Caucasus which has the right fully exercise all these possibilities.

On July 17 1997 the umbrella agreement was signed by the Presidents of the US and Georgia under the auspices of the Co-operative Threat Reduction (Nunn-Lugar) program. The agreement was put in action in November 10 1997. According to the first agreement signed under the mentioned umbrella ceded Georgia two coastal boats thus enhancing the mechanisms for export control. The US supports Georgia's plan to protect Black Sea Boarders by their own forces replacing the Russian frontier guard. The conditions under which Georgia might receive third coastal boat are on its way to be agreed. Within the framework of the mentioned umbrella agreement the US government will provide other kind of technical assistance to Georgia, military training programs, consultative support etc. For example Evgeny Zimbalkin from the U.S. Coast Guard has been appointed advisor to Valeri Chkheidze, the chairman of the State Department of the frontier Defence of Georgia. The plan to grant Georgia 14 military transport helicopters through Pentagon channels is well advertised in Georgian mass media.

In 1997 the US government offered Georgia to take part in Central European Regional Airspace Initiative. This is the bilateral co-operative program between the DOD of America (supported by the US Aviation Federal Administration) and governments of some states of the western and central Europe. The US provides assistance in development of airspace management system within the framework of this initiative, which means to change airspace management system from Soviet to Western/American one. The most important characteristic of this initiative is that it includes the development of airspace management system as for civilian as well as for military purposes. These kind of activities support the strengthening sovereignty of the state engaged in. This initiative involves exchange of information between the parties involved from civilian and military sources, which greatly contributes to the regional stability and co-operation. The preliminary negotiations and bilateral consultations on this question have already begun. All these efforts will help Georgia to strengthen its security system. It should be mentioned that other Caucasian states have no right to be engaged in this process so far.

All NIS are engaged in the program of International Military Education and Training (IMET). One of the aims of the State Department's IMET program is to foster greater respect for and understanding of the principle of civilian control of the military, contribute to responsible defence resource management, improve military justice systems and procedures in accordance with internationally recognised human rights. The IMET program, which is administered through DOD, compliments other PFP activities by providing a wide range of specialised training in the United States for military officials and select civilian officials. One of its most important elements is English language training for the military officers of each NIS state.

Another opportunity for the Caucasian states to develop defence related co-operation with the US is to participate in Warsaw Initiative/Partnership of Peace program. In 1994 a new initiative was launched by President Clinton. The Warsaw initiative aims to "help partners with the US to advance the PFP goals". Both the DOD and the Department of State provide support under the Warsaw initiative to facilitate participation in PFP exercises, conferences, seminars and other events, as well as to provide partners with equipment and training to improve interoperability with NATO and its allies.

The Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act prohibited US government certain assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan from the beginning of Karabakh crisis, in 1992, but a portion of the US sanctions were lifted against Azerbaijan in fall 1998. The US continues to work with Azerbaijan as well as with other Caucasus states and trying to help Caucasus states strengthen their ties to Europe and the Trans-Atlantic Community.

The US and EU agreed to strengthen their co-operation on a range of shared objectives of vital importance to their security and well being. These included and underlined the interests of the both powers among other points in stability and strong security structures in Caucasus:
"Non-proliferation and counter terrorism, particularly regarding Iran;
More effective co-ordination on multilateral strategies to deal with states that violate international norms;

Caspian energy development, including the desirability of multiple pipelines to ensure reliable access to world markets.."

The US policy encourages the EU to enlarge and embrace central Europe and Turkey. At the same time, South Caucasus is an area of vital importance for the EU both because of the Caspian energy reserves and because it is a key cross-roads for trade between Europe and Asia. The activities of the EU in the region is remarkable because of its involvement in the conflict resolution process. The European Union strongly supports countries of the South Caucasus to cooperate closely in order to achieve their full potential: solve the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute peacefully in the framework of OSCE process and support the efforts to resolve peacefully the disputes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The EU program supports the region through its TACIS program revival of so called "Silk Route" - a multimodal transport corridor from Asia via Trans-Caucasus to Europe (Initially only central Asian countries were considered, lately Mongolia and China also joint the project). This corridor is considered as a vital means of access of EU countries to riches of Caucasus and Asia. The Silk Route project intends to develop regional co-operation and secure political stability between the participant states by supporting harmonised legislation and building relevant institutions. Such co-operation would encourage badly needed foreign investments in transport and other infrastructures. TACIS has launched two important inter-state programs: TRACECA, the Europe Caucasus Central Asia Transport Corridor and INOGATE, Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe. The former can play an important role in encouraging mutual co-operation, the latest will help countries of Caucasus and Central Asia to modernise energy infrastructure and will reinforce the independence of the countries in the region by enabling them to develop multiple routes for energy exports.

In general one can mention mutual understanding and common interests towards the Caucasian region from the side of the US and EU. Both welcome the development of security, peace and stability in the region, and promote economic growth and prosperity based on the values of liberal democracy and human rights. At the same time the areas of involvement under the strategic umbrella are not exactly overlapping. For example while the EU is mostly involved in the process of conflict resolutions, establishing regional co-operation mechanisms, the US is promoting strengthening security institutions on the base of bilateral co-operation. Formally there are no contradiction between the strategies of the US and EU, but one can mention some kind of rivalry between them. As an example one can quote the vice-president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of

Europe [PACE], a Swiss MP and retired general, Ernst Muehleemann, who visited Azerbaijan in June 1998: "There are no more Russian military bases in Azerbaijan and this is a great achievement. But your country has gained a new 'big brother' in the person of the USA and that is apprehended with caution in Europe". It must be also mentioned that since 1997 some European NATO members have been increasing their assistance to the South Caucasian states in the security field on bilateral level. German support to the Georgian naval defence can be considered the most clear evidence of it.

As mentioned above, the South Caucasian countries are facing a lot of problems nowadays. Common economic hardships only add to ethno-political conflicts. Besides, despite a rhetoric about regional co-operation, local players try to solve their problems mainly separately and at the expense of each other. There is also evidently biased interference of some external forces in the regional affairs. Confrontation between local forces is accompanied and aggravated by a competition between great powers.

Due to the lack of effective security co-operation and arms control mechanisms in the region, it remains to be seen whether foreign assistance and involvement of great or regional powers will facilitate the peace process and bring prosperity and multilateral benefits or contribute to further alienation and confrontation. One thing is clear - any step towards regional stability must be directed against military-political domination of a single internal or external force.

GEORGIA SHOULD NOT RELY ONLY ON ARMAMENT IMPORTS

By Irakli Aladashvili

Two years have already passed since local ethnic conflicts burst out in Georgia. Quite logically, both fighting in the Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia) and the war in Abkhazia required heavy supplies of armaments and ammunition.

Georgia, which did not produce armaments and ammunition on its own (save production of the Su-25 FGA), had nothing for it but to look for alternative ways. There were in fact the following two: purchase of armaments in the former Soviet, then Russian, military bases or in foreign countries.

According to official information of the Russian MOD, for the last ten years Russia ceded to the Georgian military forces the following Russian armaments: 147 MBT (about 35 of them T-72 and the rest T-55 models); 169 AIFV (BMP-1 and BMP-2); 92 APC (BTR-60P, BTR-70 and BTR-80); 40 ARFV (BRDM); 263 guns, howitzers and grenade launchers; 26 MRL 122 mm (BM-21); 210 ATGW; 436 AAA; and more than thousand vans of ammunition. No doubt, this data is not quite accurate as most of the ceded armaments appeared out-of-order, while ammunition did not match combat requirements.

The first piece of non-Russian armaments was imported into Georgia at the beginning of 1992 and in a curious way at that. As early as in 1991, having realised that an armed confrontation with the opposition was inevitable, then president Zviad Gamsakhurdia's government ordered automatic guns in Romania. However, Gamsakhurdia had been already ousted by the time the order was filled. After 1991-92 war in Tbilisi Zviad Gamsakhurdia fled to Armenia and then to Chechnya. Two special containers with some hundreds of Romania-made 7.62-mm Kalashnikov submachine guns were unloaded from an unidentified vessel in the Adjarian coastal waters. A part of these armaments appeared in the hands of armed formations of then Military Council of Georgia, while the rest of them were seized by the population. These Romania-made submachine guns were obviously deficient. First of all, their barrels were made of low-quality steel so that after firing one magazine (30 bullets), the guns began to shoot off a target.

However, although such kind of armaments did not excited soldiers very much, the Georgian government again imported a large amount (allegedly several thousands) of Kalashnikov submachine guns - this time of 5.45 mm calibre - from Romania in the spring 1993. These guns also were not perfect - during the war in Abkhazia, due to high humidity of the sea zone, they easily rusted. Imports of such low-quality weapons may be explained by their rather low price - \$120-150 for each. The author, however, believes that it was a suspiciously high price for Romania-made submachine guns - so the deal might have been a case of corruption.

Except Romania, Georgia has tried to purchase submachine guns in the Czech republic. At the beginning of 1993 then deputy defence minister Nikusha Kekelidze took the charge of the deal. Under his direct management, various weapons were imported into Georgia - mainly Czech-made 7.62-mm Kalashnikov submachine guns (AKM). These guns, imported in small quantity, and Czech-made pistols "Cz" were basically distributed among elite military units.

Kekelidze had great chances of importing other kinds of Czech-made armaments and ammunition which were much better than Romanian analogues but he was unexpectedly assassinated in his own apartments - a magnetic bomb was placed at the wall of his house. According to one of the versions, Igor Giorgadze, then security minister of Georgia, and the Russian military-industrial complex behind him, were connected with this terrorist action. The complex would (and will) hardly allow post-Soviet republics to purchase other-than-Russian armaments.

Georgia resumed imports of armaments last year: a significant number of Kalashnikov submachine guns (by some estimates 8-9,000) was imported from Uzbekistan. During the war in Afghanistan, the USSR stored a great amount of armaments in Uzbekistan, having created a huge transit base there. These armaments used to be supplied to the 40th Soviet Army (deployed in Afghanistan) and pro-Soviet Afghani governmental forces. After the break-up of the USSR, this vast stockpile of armaments appeared in possession of Uzbekistan.

The former Georgian defence minister Vardiko Nadibaidze's friendly relations with his Uzbek colleagues might have accounted for the deal that provided Georgia with thousands of submachine guns. Some military experts consider this deal rather profitable for Georgia, both from pure military and economic viewpoints. In exchange for the armaments, Georgia exported to Uzbekistan cargo vehicles produced by the Kutaisi Automobile Works. The price of the vehicles was calculated as \$25,000 for each - a rather exaggerated figure for vehicles of such quality.

Except armament imports from Uzbekistan, there was one more case and its repercussions have recently badly "hit" the MOD. In particular, on November 27 Main Military Procurator's Office sealed the rooms of the MOD armaments department in connection with the last year's imports of Czech-made ammunition most of which, according to investigators of the Office, appeared out-of-order. Last year a huge amount - several hundred tons - of artillery shells was imported into Georgia from the Czech republic. A part of the shells were out-of-date, though some officials claimed that they could serve the purpose. It must be mentioned that the shells were purchased at a rather low price.

There is one interesting aspect: investigation of the case has been under way for more than an year. For all this time the ammunition was kept in sealed depots. However, Military Procurator's Office sealed the MOD armaments department only this November - just when the Czech deputy defence minister was visiting Georgia. It looks as if some forces wanted to overshadow the ascending Czech-Georgian military co-operation.

Investigation is still going on: investigators have already questioned Vardiko Nadibaidze, the former defence minister, and other officials. However, armament imports from the Czech republic continue. Right on November 27, at his press-conference in Prague, another Czech deputy defence minister, Peter Taks, officially announced that Georgia was interested to purchase about 100 T-55 tanks of the Czech army - each priced at about \$30,000. In exchange, the Czech

Air Force will get spare parts of Su-25 FGA produced by Tbilisi Aircraft Works. This information was refuted by the Georgian MOD leadership - they said purchase of tanks was not on the table during the Czech deputy defence minister's recent visit to Georgia. Nevertheless, two days later Revaz Adamia, the chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee, confirmed the Czech deputy defence minister's information - Georgia, in his words, will get Czech-made T-55 tanks which afterwards will be modernised into T-72 models. The deal will cost Georgia \$35,000 per each tank. So despite contradictory statements of the MOD and the parliamentary committee, Georgia seems going to buy allegedly out-of-date tanks in the Czech republic.

But every military expert well knows that it is practically impossible to transform T-55 (which come out in the 50s) into T-72: T-55 MBT - a modification of earlier T-54 model - has a 580 HP engine, a 100-mm gun and a crew of 4, while T-72 MBT has a 780 HP engine, a 125-mm automatic gun and a crew of 3, let alone lots of other minor differences. So such modification (replacement of the engine, the gun and other equipment) will require quite substantial sums. The cost may become so high that it may be more profitable to merely purchase new T-72 tanks (few know that the Georgian army has already several tanks and armoured personnel carriers produced in former Czechoslovakia - Georgia inherited them from the Soviet army).

The author of the article disapproves of purchasing tanks in principle since they do not conform with the concept of mobile combat units Georgia needs first of all. In mountainous regions tanks are rather inefficient - this was clearly manifested during the wars in Abkhazia and Chechnya. Besides, foreign military experts (for instance, General Gary Johnson, ISAB, Georgia) have recommended the Georgian military not to give priority to heavy armaments. One soldier armed only with the anti-tank gun RPG-7 can easily destroy T-55 and damage T-72. If Georgia aims to create a small but mobile army, it will have to purchase entirely other types of weapons and ammunition such as, first of all, portable anti-tank guided missile systems and anti-aircraft weapons (like "Stinger", "Igla" or "Strela"), grenade launchers and missile flame-throwers. In the author's opinion, it would be much better to barter spare parts of Su-25 for Czech technologies rather than armaments and ammunition. First and foremost, it must be the know-how for serial production of detonating fuses/caps of shells and anti-tank missiles, and gun barrels. It is always better if a country produces most of the armaments by itself (even theoretically it is impossible to produce everything).

SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE GEORGIAN OFFICER CORPS

By Zaza Dvalishvili (retired officer)

At the outset of the army-building in Georgia some people predicted that the army would be undermanned with officers. Despite such a prognosis, however, the Georgian armed forces have in fact never suffered from the lack of officers. On the contrary, the number of officers, both in war and peace, has been always sufficient.

The 1992-93 Georgian officer corps may be divided into three categories:

1) Former Soviet cadre officers - most of them have graduated Leselidze military school, Tbilisi (as a rule, countryboys from poor families used to learn there). They constituted the upper and middle level of the officer corps and introduced Soviet traditions and mentality into the Georgian army. This played a negative role in following years of the army-building. It must be mentioned, however, that these officers were professionals. There were in fact no other professional officers in the Georgian army.

2) Patriotic young men who came from the national movement - most of them were members of various political organisations and paramilitary units emerged on the basis of patriotic ideas: Union of Georgian Traditionalists, Merab Kostava Society, Choloqashvili Legion, "Imedi", "Mkhedrioni", etc. They were genuine

when taking up the military service. Faithful service to the homeland was their main goal and they fulfilled it by enlisting the armed forces. The majority of them were non-professionals who were learning military profession along with soldiers. On the other hand, their non-professionalism was somewhat counterbalanced by enthusiasm and energy.

3) People with criminal past and mentality. At that time the boundary between armed forces and criminal units was rather unclear. That is why a lot of criminals and potential perpetrators managed to enlist the army. There was an ambiguous attitude towards them in the armed forces. On the one hand, the professional military quite logically were negatively disposed towards officers with a criminal past, on the other hand, these last inspired fear but were respected for courage (as a rule, most of them were brave men). Some time later, when, due to the lack of care on the part of the government, the army turned into a self-sufficient gang, they appeared to have been distinguished for certain practicality and fortitude. Just these people best adapted to the anarchy that followed the war. Professional officers despaired of their ability to solve, say, logistical or procurement problems and such a situation suited the "criminal officers" perfectly. Impudence and relations with Mafia helped them get everything and, therefore, these officers were regarded as useful people in their units. Nowadays, some people claim that after these people retired from the army the situation in the armed forces became worse. This sort of officers had one more important trait. They used to support each other so that their community - "brotherhood" - was more consolidated. For instance, they considered it greatly disgraceful to abandon a friend at the battlefield or in dire straits. Such cases shamed not only the wrongdoer but the entire "brotherhood". These officers viewed interests of the "brotherhood" as their own ones and regarded humiliation to the "brotherhood" as a personal insult. On the contrary, other officers, for instance the professional military, were not consolidated (though looked such by appearance) being often mistrustful, envious, and careerists.

After the war ended, law and order was gradually established in the country. Most of the criminal officers were imprisoned, others retired from the army. As a result, the role of professional officers increased remarkably. A significant officer stratum emerged in peacetime. It was made up of the officers who continued the service and those who enlisted the army after the war because of the need to subsist. A relatively high salary - 80-100 GEL per month - plus meal allowance and stable job looked attractive against the background of general economic hardships. Most of these officers do not like the military profession and are not interested in the service. Had they another job, they would retire from the army with pleasure. However, even such a salary is not enough for normal life. Therefore, the already low professional level of the Georgian officers has become even lower.

Professional officers (who, paradoxically as it is, took a back seat during the war) and "seekers for a subsistence wage" took the lead in the army after the war. Cadre officers brought Russian military traditions to the army - emphasis was laid on senseless drill, while less time was spent on combat training. Priority was given to absurd aspects of the military discipline. For instance, great attention was paid to whether white collars of the soldiers' uniform were fixed properly, ignoring the fact that soldiers had not gone to the baths for weeks. It was not necessary to wash every day but the collar must be always clean. There were lots of similar foolish demands.

Most of the officers who came from paramilitary units retired from the army after the war. As a result, the army lost solidarity, mutual support, enthusiasm, interest for the service. On the other hand, Georgian officers became less excitable, more obedient, manageable and predictable. Rivalry for better positions and intrigues against rivals overwhelmed the army. During the war soldiers and officers stood together, they shared common hardships, and the officer corps was itself more solid and active. Nowadays, such a corps does not exist any longer. Officers are concerned only about their own problems. At least they do not seem to be a single organism with common interests and problems. Georgian officers currently avoid to focus on personnel training and refer the

issue to sergeants. As a result, the prestige of an officer has fallen - soldiers fear them at best on the one hand, and the role of sergeants and "old" soldiers increased on the other. There is obviously some confrontation between them. The sergeant who has got used to being the "boss" of the barracks does not obey officers. Such a situation somewhat splits the soldiers. Sometimes soldiers fear their fellow-soldiers more than officers and escape from military units after being abused by the former. In one of the military units sergeants and officers clashed on alcohol drinks brought by parents of newly drafted recruits. Fortunately, it did not turn into a tragedy. It is clear that in this case there was no division between the status of a soldier or a NCO and that of an officer.

Despite all of this, there are still good officers in the Georgian army, especially their young generation, who have graduated the Joint Military Academy. A lot of them like their profession and have strong vocation for military career. During the war in Abkhazia the majority of them fought as ordinary soldiers, while after the war they entered the Academy and zealously learned military profession. These officers do not follow Russian military traditions. They are candid in relations with soldiers and have no intentions to drill soldiers senselessly. Unlike old cadre officers, they attach more importance to the essence and idea of military discipline rather than to its senseless, dead articles. A good deal of the graduates of the Academy had participated in the war in Abkhazia and, therefore, pay great attention to combat training of the soldiers (it is less characteristic of old cadre officers). They consider it less important whether soldiers are dressed strictly in accordance with regulations. In some cases they protested when their soldiers were ordered to carry out hard, inadequate for a serviceman, tasks, arguing that each battalion has a special unit responsible just for such kind of work. At the same time, it was important for them how accurately soldiers hit the target during shooting practice, how physically strong they are. They devote most of the time to soldiers' physical training.

Military Chronicle

Georgian press reports

Conflict zones

An armoured personnel carrier of the RPF was mined near the village of Kvishona, Gali district of Abkhazia, on November 2, killing one Russian peacekeeper and wounding four others. One more armoured personnel carrier was mined in the district on November 29, wounding seven Russian peacekeepers. Another similar incident occurred in the district on November 11 - a military vehicle was mined killing two Abkhaz military observers and wounding four. In an attempt to suppress terrorism in the region, the RPF has reinforced its patrols in Abkhazia. According to General Sergey Korobko, RPF commander-in-chief, RPF lacks manpower to control the situation in the region as there are currently only 1,600 peacekeepers instead of 3,000.

"7 Dge" No. 129, November 4-5, p. 3

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 293, 295; November 11, 13; p. 1

"Resonance" No. 328, November 30, p. 2

Abkhaz gunmen took two Georgian residents of the Gagida village, Gali district, hostage on November 14. According to Londer Tsaava, the chairman of the Tbilisi-based Council of Ministers of Abkhazia, one of them was later beaten to death. The Georgian guerrilla unit White Legion threatened to attack the RPF, unless Russian peacekeepers took prompt measures to free the hostages.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 157, November 20, p. 1

Gunfire with the use of grenade launchers and machine guns burst out between Russian peacekeepers and Abkhaz militiamen near the central bridge over Enguri on November 23 and near the Riqe village of the Zugdidi district on November 26. No casualties were reported.

"Resonance" No. 325, November 27, p. 6

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 309, November 28, p. 1

If withdrawn from Abkhazia, Russian frontier troops would be replaced by Abkhaz frontier guards, Astamur Tania, the Abkhaz leader Vladislav Ardzinba's advisor, said. The property of the Abkhazia-stationed Russian frontier bases, in his words, will be transferred into possession of Abkhazia. He considers it necessary to continue Georgian-Abkhaz border talks in order to avoid conflicts between Abkhaz and Georgian forces after withdrawal of Russian frontier troops from Abkhazia.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 328, November 28, p. 5

Army building

The autumn call-up to the army (started on October 26) is carried out on the basis of the territorial principle - recruits will serve in the units close to their homes. Colonel Revaz Toidze of the Main Military Commissariat explains this decision by the need to cope with desertion - recruits will be allowed to spend weekends at home and will be easy to find if deserted. Besides, the ex-territorial conscription requires substantial funds for transportation of recruits. On the other hand, supporters of the ex-territorial principle argue that territorial conscription may enable "explosive" regions - Adjara and Samegrelo-Zemo Abkhazeti (dominated by the Armenian majority) - to create their own "military forces". More importantly, the military doctrine of Georgia stipulates only ex-territorial conscription.

"Resonance" No. 303, November 5, p. 5

Tengiz Abuladze, the former head of the State Customs Department, has been appointed deputy chairman of the SDFD. He believes that his experience of the customs service will help him in the new office.

"Resonance" No. 305, November 7, p. 2

The defence minister David Tevzadze has appointed General Ghia Toradze commander of the MOD Eastern Direction.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 146, November 7, p. 2

The president's 1998 October 28 decree granted the Army Support Society with three-month exclusive rights to supply the army, though, according to the Law on State Budget, all the deals, requiring budgetary financing over 10 thousand GEL (about \$6 thousand), shall be settled through tenders. Winner companies shall be paid 25 percent of the deal in advance to start serial production. So far, however, the MOD has failed to pay the winners their money and its current debt to them totals 20 mln GEL (about \$11.7 mln). According to Nino Gogotadze, the head of the foreign economic relations department of the Ministry of Economics, the president's decree contradicts also the anti-trust legislation. "No enterprise should be granted such exclusive rights", she said. The Society is made up of about 70 various commercial organisations. The main of them is "Polytechnic Intellect of Georgia" Ltd. led by the president Grigori Kinteraia and vice-president Guram Tevzadze, the defence minister's brother. Mr. Kinteraia holds 49 percent of the company's shares and, at the same time, is one of the owners of the Balting Shipping Company (Germany). To improve food supplies to the army, the Society is going to use soy-beans and give up old Soviet rations. However, the MOD logistical services are still unaware of exact daily food norms (how many foodstuffs - cabbage, potatoes, etc. - needs one battalion a day) and apply approximate figures. The MOD supply department that was responsible for supplies to the army earlier has been recently dismissed by the defence minister's order and its functions were assigned to the newly created MOD department of material-technical maintenance.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 149,356; November 11, 18; pp. 1, 2

"Droni" No. 135, November 26-28, p. 5

The Society for Soldiers' Rights held a conference on soldiers' rights on November 17. Givi Yukuridze, the head of the Main Military Inspectorate, censured the Poti base of the frontier troops. There are, in his words, only 20 officers and 15 soldiers armed with "a pair of binoculars and three Kalashnikov

submachine guns". "It is an absolute zero not a unit", he said. Participants emphasised the need for state ideology. Without such, in their point of view, it would be hardly possible to fight against corruption, homosexuality, violence and the lack of professionalism in the army. According to the Society's last sociological survey, a lot of Georgian soldiers are illiterate; many of them know almost nothing about Georgia, what threats are facing the country, etc. "Akhali Taoba" No. 318, November 18, p. 2

Ghia Qarqarashvili, the former defence minister, has proposed his plan of military reforms. Particularly, the size of the army, in his opinion, should be reduced from 30,000 to 10-15,000 servicemen; in mountainous regions the armed forces must be manned by territorial conscription; some military units must be entirely professional - for instance, the army may embody five-six elite battalions manned with professionals (1,500-2,000 altogether); every Georgian military garrison or unit should be assigned its own strategic mission; Georgia should also create strong reserves on the basis of its National Guards - reservists should pass one-month training in special centres once in three years. Georgia had better reduce its troops - 3,000 servicemen - currently deployed in eastern Georgia, along the Georgian-Azerbaijani border, the former minister argues. In Qarqarashvili's words, as Azerbaijan is a friendly state there may be stationed only 400-600 Georgian servicemen. On the contrary, defence of southern Georgia, at the Georgian-Armenian border, requires more troops. Nowadays, there is only the MOD Akhaltsikhe brigade - 2,500 servicemen - which will be hardly able to check possible invasion by Armenian forces. However, Mr. Qarqarashvili believes that the brigade may be manned mostly with locals, though the region is populated predominantly just by the Armenians. The number of the MOD troops in Adjara, in his opinion, may be also reduced from 1,000 to 500 servicemen. The Western Direction (Samegrelo-Abkhazia) is the most important of all, Qarqarashvili claims. He proposes to deploy the first echelon of the MOD troops in Zugdidi, the second in Khobi, while strategic reserves in Kutaisi.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 304-305, November 22-23, p. 7

The MOD and the Patriarchate of the Georgian Orthodox Church signed an agreement on November 23 which aims to increase the role of the Church in "patriotic breeding of military personnel". According to the document, the Church undertakes to take care of wounded servicemen and their families, and look after tombs of the lost soldiers. It must be mentioned that not only Orthodox priests but those of other confessions will be also allowed to visit military units. "Kavkasioni" No. 86, November 30-December 6, p. 6

Visits. Negotiations. Co-operation

Valeri Chkheidze, the SDFD chairman, and Konstantin Totsky, the director of the Federal Frontier Service of Russia, signed an agreement in Moscow on November 3 on ceding the property of the Georgia-based Russian frontier troops to Georgia. According to the document, the first stage of the withdrawal of Russian frontier troops from Georgia has to be completed by December 31, 1998. By that time Georgia is supposed to take control of the Batumi and Poti frontier check-points, the Ochamchire naval base and the Sukhumi frontier check-point (both in Abkhazia), the Akhaltsikhe frontier base and some other objects. During the second stage - January 1 - July 10, 1999 - Georgia will take over the rest of the frontier objects. Some of them are also situated on the Abkhaz territory. In Chkheidze's words, Georgian and Russian experts have jointly worked out three possible models of the ceding process in Abkhazia. One of them would be surely implemented, he said. Russian frontier guards have to re-deploy their armaments and other property from Abkhazia to western Georgia. By and large, all the movable property of the Georgia-based Russian frontier troops must be divided equally between the two countries. Besides, Russia and Georgia signed a frontier co-operation agreement which stipulates joint search/investigation operations and measures against illegal migration, cross-border smuggling of weapons, drugs, explosives and radioactive materials. The SDFD proposed to strengthen its frontier control at the Chechen, Daghestani and Ingush sectors of the Russian-

Georgian border and enlist retired Russian frontier guards who used to serve at the Georgian borders. In exchange, Russia must impose stricter frontier regime at the Abkhaz and South Ossetian borders and provide Georgia with consultants. Georgian frontier officers will also get a chance of training in Russian military colleges. The Georgian parliament ratified both agreements on November 25. "In the similar vein, the parliament will resolve on the withdrawal of all the Russian military bases from Georgia", Revaz Adamia, the chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee, said at the parliamentary session. "Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 142,145; November 3, 6; pp. 1, 2

Alan Stolberg of the Command of the U.S. Troops in Europe and Johnny Pirtskhalaishvili, the Chief of the General Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces, have signed the 1999 plan of the Georgian-American military co-operation. According to the document, the two countries will carry out about 30 joint military exercises next year. It also provides for mutual visits of the top military and co-operation in military personnel training. "Resonance" No. 309, November 11, p. 2

A delegation of the Georgian MOD led by Grigol Katamadze, deputy defence minister, visited Turkey on November 7-11 for talks on the two countries' military co-operation. According to the MOD press centre, Turkey will grant Georgia a patrol boat this December. Its crew of 28 Georgian mariners is currently being trained in Turkey. "Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 295, November 13, p. 1

Valery Chkheidze visited Batumi on November 19 for tet-a-tet talks with Aslan Abashidze, the Adjarian leader. According to George Targamadze, the head of the press centre of the Supreme Council of Adjara, the talks were focused on border issues. The Adjara-based SDFD troops should be manned with local residents since a lot of them had experience of service in Russian frontier troops, he said. "Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 157, November 20, p. 2

Since 1995 Georgia's debt to Russia for training Georgian officers has reached \$22 mln. To train each officer in Russian military colleges, Georgia has to pay about \$1,500 per month, let alone officers' salaries (NCOs - 70-80 GEL (about \$45) per month, officers - 100-120 GEL (about \$ 65) per month) and allowance for their families who also live in Russia. This year Russia was ready to train 170 Georgian servicemen but the MOD has sent only 90 of them, mainly of most vacant positions - naval, air defence, aviation, paratrooper officers, and some others. As to another vacant profession - pilots, the MOD rejected Russia's assistance as Moscow charged too much - \$24,000 - for each hour of training flights. Georgian pilots may be well trained at home - it will cost only \$1,000. Just recently Georgia has purchased some L-29 Czech-made training planes. At the same time, Georgian servicemen are offered good training opportunities in Turkey - 50 Georgian officers and cadets have been sent to Turkey this year for three-year training courses. In the first year they will entirely focus on learning the Turkish language. Most importantly, Turkey covers all the expenses. Besides, Turkish military colleges have a wider range of training courses - interpreters, general arms, medical service, navy, marine troops, air force, etc. Greece has also promised to train 60 Georgian servicemen under the same conditions. So did Germany and the USA. Ukraine is ready to train Georgian officers, though not free-of-charge but it will cost Georgia 30 percent less than in Russia. "Droni" No. 131, November 14-17, p. 5

After Jaromir Novotny, the first deputy defence minister of the Czech republic, visited Tbilisi on November 23, Georgia has grown interested in purchasing Czech-made armaments (reportedly, T-55 tanks). It is noteworthy that the Czech republic is going to become a NATO member in some months to come. As a result, it will have to dispose of old Soviet-standard armaments. The deal may prove profitable for both countries: Czech-made armaments may be bartered for spare parts of Su-25 FGA produced by the Tbilisi Aircraft Works. Besides, Vazha Tordia, the director general of the Works, hopes that the Czech Air Force may order the TAW to repair its Su-25.

Miscellany

Military Procurator's Office sealed rooms of the MOD armaments department on November 27 and started investigation of the last year's imports of Czech-made armaments. According to the investigation, last year the MOD signed a contract with one of the Czech companies to purchase Czech-made armaments - mainly machine guns - which were imported into Georgia in the autumn. However, after military units complained with the MOD and Procurator's Office, experts revealed that 70-80 percent of the imported armaments were out-of-order. The investigation has to find out whether it was an intentional sabotage or embezzlement. Although no official has been formally charged so far, some experts deem that General Vano Gurgenidze, the head of the department, and Colonel Anatoly Lomidze, the head of the department staff, may be prosecuted.

"Alia" No. 200, November 28-29, p. 3

"Resonance" No. 330, December 2, pp. 1, 2

Press Digest

Generally speaking, armament imports has always been a painful issue for Georgia, the Kavkasioni (No. 86) comments. So far, Georgia has purchased only Russian armaments but David Tevzadze, the defence minister, seems likely to change the rules of the game, the newspaper claims. The Meridiani 44 (No. 140) argues that in such a way Georgia may solve one of the main problems all post-Soviet republics have been facing since the break-up of the USSR - to build a national army without Russian (Soviet-made) armaments. Russia, in the newspaper's opinion, has proved a bad military partner for Georgia.

Strategically and politically it has little confidence in Georgia, i.e. it will never help Georgia build up its military potential. Russia's last foreign policy actions obviously urge Georgia to look for new military partners. The Russian military threaten that they will pull out all their property from Georgia. Under such circumstances, the newspaper deems, Georgia may found itself without a proper defence system, unless an alternative partner is found. From this viewpoint, East European countries may provide the best partnership opportunities. For instance, co-operation with the Czech republic or Bulgaria (as well as Poland, Ukraine, etc.) seems likely to become much more beneficial for Georgia, the Meridiani 44 concludes.

GLOSSARY:

NSC - National Security Council
MSS - Ministry of State Security
MIA - Ministry of Internal Affairs
SDFD - State Department of Frontier Defence
RPF - Russian Peacekeeping Force
MBT - main battle tank
AIFV - armoured infantry fighting vehicle
APC - armoured personnel carrier
ARFV - armoured reconnaissance fighting vehicle
MRL - multiple rocket launcher
AAA - anti-aircraft artillery
ATGW - anti-tank guided weapon
AGM - air-to-ground missile
SLM - sea-launched missile
SAM - surface-to-air missile
MRB - motor rifle brigade
FGA - fighter, ground-attack