

# The Army and Society in Georgia

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## **DO THE CIS COLLECTIVE SECURITY STRUCTURES HELP MEMBER STATES TO BUILD THEIR OWN SECURITY SYSTEMS?**

*By Tamara Pataraiia*

The first attempts to create a security system of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) aimed at the establishment of a common strategic-military space under a unified command and it took the member states more than a year to make the final decision and reject the idea of joint command and subordination to Russia in the military sphere. In June 1993 the joint command created right after the CIS emerged was dissolved and replaced with the smaller CIS Joint Staff with limited responsibilities. The ambitions of the CIS have been reducing since the creation of the organisation, especially after the member states, facing the failure of dozens of agreements under the CIS umbrella, gradually gained the experience of dealing with the security issues independently. The leaderships of the member states have grown increasingly doubtful about the prospects of this regional organisation and its future usefulness.

After the USSR collapsed, each of the former Soviet republics faced the challenge of emerging security problems. All of them needed serious assistance in the development of a security strategy and structure, and an adequately strong defence system. Some of them, already identifying themselves as independent states, started building up their security structures independently. They began with the creation of armed forces. But due to the lack of co-operation with western countries they mostly relied on the support and assistance of Russia as a strong military power. The other republics did not view themselves as "entities beyond the collective": "Their "national" security was that of the CIS... and saw no need to create independent armed forces".

Relying initially on the country's own security structures, the Georgian governmental forces were defeated in the ethnic war in Abkhazia. The government decided to join the CIS in late 1993. As a result, in a few days Russia openly helped the Georgian government to forestall a wide-scale and prolonged civil war. As to Armenia and Azerbaijan, although both had their own armed forces, they tried to use the CIS structures in their interests - i.e. to solve the

armed conflict in Nagorno Karabakh which also largely depended on Russia's political will and support.

During the negotiations on the establishment of the CIS security system Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Moldova announced their plans to create own armed forces by the beginning of 1992 and opt out of the unified command<sup>3</sup>. Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan and Tajikistan supported the unified command structure which granted the member states with no rights to have own armed forces. Kazakhstan assumed that it would be better to have someone else responsible for its national security. But the proponents of such an idea were in minority. The Central Asia states supported the idea of unified forces until Russia resolved to create its own army and began to work out its military doctrine. As a result, the leaders of six states - Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan - signed the Collective Security Treaty in Tashkent on 15 May 1992, which stipulated that signatories would build their own armed forces under the respective national ministries and heads of states. Ukraine and Moldova had the guest status only within the framework of this agreement. Azerbaijan, Byelorussia and Georgia joined the agreement in 1993, while the treaty itself came into force on April 20, 1994, with the right to be prolonged.

However, despite the creation of independent armed forces of the CIS member states, the Russian military establishment took a lead in the development of the CIS collective security. Having declared itself the successor state to the Soviet Union in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) in May 1992, Russia inherited the already existed security structures and Soviet strategic weapons. According to the Tashkent agreement, Russia was also recognised as the legal successor to all of the USSR international liabilities. Under the Tashkent Treaty, the Soviet Union's quotas of conventional armaments allowed by the 1990 Paris Treaty were divided among the former Soviet republics. The Tashkent agreement actually did not touch the issue of dividing the former Soviet military property. Russia tried to prevent the republics from filling their quotas at the expense of the Soviet armaments. Russia took over the already acting security structures and former Soviet armed forces, while the other former Soviet republics - especially non-Slavic ones - seriously suffered from the lack of national cadres, professional officer corps and experienced security services.

Another important step in the development of the CIS security system was the adoption of the Collective Security Concept on February 10, 1995. It was agreed that the collective security system should consist of inter-state and state managerial agencies, and provide for measures and means to safeguard interests, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the member states. The state structures of the collective security system were represented by political and military authorities of the member states. The build-up of the collective security system was to be completed in three stages. During the first stage the member states were supposed to create their own armed forces; to work out and begin to implement a development program in the sphere of military- and military-technical co-operation; to develop legislative acts and regulations to regulate the functioning of the collective security system. At the second stage a joint air defence system and coalition forces had to be created and their mission defined; a creation of joined armed forces discussed. The collective security system had to be completed at the third stage.

But in reality efficient implementation of the documents dealing with the CIS security issues remains doubtful. The following reasons account for the fact that "many already adopted documents are in fact dead letters":

- The legacy of a Soviet past - i.e. the practice of approving documents without bothering about how to execute them - Russia has often given such examples to the member states. Thus the member states have little confidence in these agreements.
- Underdeveloped bilateral economic and political co-operation between the member states, which lack experience of direct contacts. In the times of the USSR, the Soviet republics had to co-operate through the intermediate centre - Moscow. The absence of bilateral institutionalised co-operation between the

member states has caused the weakness of the CIS as a regional organisation. The CIS agreements have been always difficult to implement. A huge bureaucratic machine of the CIS impedes the progress and further consolidation of the Commonwealth. Nowadays all of the member states are more concerned with developing efficient bilateral relations and result-oriented short-term projects.

- The economic weakness of the member states and their poor defence capabilities cannot contribute to the success of the endorsed security documents and agreements. The member states have always needed strong assistance in the development of security strategy, defence policy and army-building.

Here are some examples of failed CIS military co-operation projects:

Inability of some member states to defend their borders efficiently because of the undeveloped security system urged them to sign the border agreement which stipulated that border troops shall be under a unified command. The agreement on protection of the CIS external borders was signed at the CIS 26 May 1995 Summit. It was supplemented by a number of bilateral agreements between Russia and some other CIS states: Byelorussia, Georgia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan. Russian frontier troops were declared the main force to defend the CIS external borders, though Ukraine and Azerbaijan did not allow the Russian military to protect their frontiers. In the course of time, however, some of these states imposed restrictions on the functioning of the Russian frontier guards at their borders. In some time to come the Russian Federal Frontier Service will have to withdraw its units from Georgia. Some Russian analysts tend to ascribe Russia's inability to safeguard the CIS external borders to financial difficulties facing the country. Russia's failure to co-ordinate the CIS customs and frontier legislation placed another obstacle to the development of the principles of the CIS external frontier defence. The problem seems to be a rather complicated one as the member states are anxious about collecting customs duties and do not want the Russian frontier guards to control their export/import operations.

The CIS Agreement on Integrated Air Defence System was signed on February 10, 1995, by all the member states, save Moldova and Azerbaijan. Turkmenistan and Ukraine insisted on some additional provisions. Russia took responsibility for the creation of national air defence systems in Georgia, Kirgizstan and Tajikistan. But these projects finally failed due to financial problems of Russia. According to independent experts, the Russian military-industrial complex is more interested in selling its production to foreign countries rather than to the CIS states, even though "the joint air defence system is the most sensitive item for the CIS security system".

As an alternative way to improve the air control and management the U.S. government has offered East European states to take part in the Regional Airspace Initiative proposed by the U.S. President in 1994. Ukraine and Georgia received this offer lately and both expressed interest in this initiative as a way to neutralise the shortages of the CIS air defence system.

Russia regards "double" membership (being involved in two initiatives simultaneously) as an illegal action contradicting the CIS Joint Air Defence agreement. The problem is that participants of the Regional Airspace Initiative are required to exchange data and information on radar sites - their operations and communication. However, the member states are determined not to give up their intentions. Their attention is now focused on individual actions aimed to develop own security systems, no longer relying on the Russian support.

The weapons procurement poses an increasing number of problems for the CIS states which are currently unable to satisfy their need for military hardware, equipment and spare parts, and to dispose of outdated armaments, in other words they "are not self-supporting states militarily". They have to look for money to finance the army-building process and the development of defence and security systems. In this respect, the CIS was considered the most profitable and cheap market. But Russia - the main producer of military hardware in the former Soviet space - appears to have suffered from the decline in production so that it can

neither equip its own military forces with proper conventional weapons nor satisfy the CIS procurement demands.

Moreover, the status of a CIS member gives no advantages in the conventional arms trade. Russia and other producers of conventional arms in the CIS have to observe international laws and agreements. In June 1996 the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies came into force. So far Russia and Ukraine have adhered to its principles. On January 26, 1998, Byelorussia announced its interest in acceding to the Wassenaar Arrangements.

The CIS member states have grown eager to get military and security assistance from non-CIS countries. On August 6, 1996, the U.S. administration lifted the embargo on the imports of armaments into Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Turkmenistan, Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia thus making western weapons available. The CIS structures attempted to resist likely effects of this decision. The CIS Military-Technical Committee was established in November 1996 to ensure a collective policy towards the outside suppliers of military equipment. But despite such a quick reaction, the committee quite predictably has made no influence on the ongoing processes. So the above mentioned republics have got a good chance of developing their own procurement policy and using the western assistance in a proper way. The economically weak states have now a lot of possibilities to build up their military strength by purchasing second-hand weapons in East Europe and other countries. It calls into question their military co-operation within the CIS.

On the other hand, the CIS still offers the benefits of a huge and relatively cheap informal armament market. But the very existence of such a market threatens every CIS republic as it may encourage separatism. It is especially dangerous given the weakness of the security structures of the CIS member states. Throughout its history as a regional organisation, the CIS has failed to develop effective arms control mechanisms which could have helped the weak CIS states avoid the threats posed by the illegal conventional and light arms trade.

The failure of the CIS in solving security problems of its members increases the importance of western assistance in this field. This makes the CIS member states understand that not every regional organisation is an effective umbrella for their national security, especially if the membership in such organisations is not based on a free choice.

## **THE GEORGIAN OIL PIPELINE AND SUPSA OIL TERMINAL MUST BE PROTECTED THEY MAY BECOME A TARGET FOR TERRORISTS**

*By Irakli Aladashvili*

Some time ago Caspian oil started to flow through the Baku-Supsa pipeline. Experts say the Supsa oil terminal will be filled by the spring 1999. Afterwards, oil will be transported by tankers to the European markets.

The Georgian government pins great hopes (sometimes pretty exaggerated due to propaganda reasons) on the above mentioned project. True, initially the yearly income was calculated as rather small but the oil pipeline is supposed to help develop various Georgian infrastructures, including the automobile, the railway, the air and the sea transport systems, communications, etc. Besides, many countries of the world which are going to invest in the "century oil project" are deeply concerned with peace and stability in the South Caucasus. As a result, there are more guarantees of the Georgian state security.

However, along with these positive aspects there will surely be (and already is) the other, relatively negative, side of the coin - some forces in a number of

countries will do their best to spoil the project as it contradicts their strategic interests. They may be conditionally divided into two groups. The Russian opposition to the project belongs to the first one. Certain Russian circles want Caspian oil to flow through the Russian territory in the hope of getting high profits from the oil transits and, in addition, they are anxious to prevent western countries from investing in the South Caucasus (particularly, in Georgia) in order to keep the region in the sphere of Russian strategic interests. The second group is made up of forces that function in the oil exporting countries. Not by chance, Saudi Arabia provides significant financial support to the Vahhabism movement in the North Caucasian Muslim republics. Being rather radical, Vahhabists can easily provoke new armed conflicts which may threaten stability in the whole Caucasus.

Anyway, the Georgian oil pipeline obviously needs protecting, as both above-mentioned groups will make every effort, including terrorist actions and subversive operations, to ruin the project. Under such circumstances, those Georgian power agencies which will be ordered to defend the oil pipeline must meet the challenge. The author thinks that not only the pipeline (several hundred kilometres) but the Supsa marine-loading oil terminal and the 3-km off-shore loading pipeline may become the target for terrorists.

To some extent, the pipeline is safe since it has been laid underground. But today's security services are armed with some special weapons capable of destroying even underground targets. For instance, the main intelligence department (GRU) of the Russian MOD has special mines KZ-5, KZ-6 and KZ-7. In case of a war, these mines may be used by airborne commando units to destroy airfields, underground command centres, oil and gas pipelines, grids and communication lines, etc.

Briefly, KZ-5 weighs 12.5 kg, including 8.5 kg of a cone-shaped explosive which creates a cumulative strike effect. When exploding, the mine makes a 45-sm hole in an armoured sheet, a 1.4-metre hole in a reinforced concrete wall, and almost a 2-meter hole in frozen ground. In Georgia, where ground is not frozen, this mine can easily destroy underground pipelines. As to the Supsa oil terminal, there are four huge storage facilities (each contains about 50 thousand tons of oil) which may be easily destroyed by AGM or by SLM with the range of 100-150 km each. The current state of the Georgian Air Defence and Coast Guard makes it impossible to check such a missile attack.

At the end of 1997, in times of then defence minister Vardiko Nadibaidze, the Georgian Air Defence troops carried out an exercise in Maltaqva (about 10 km from Supsa) having launched four SAM (S-125). Theoretically, the Air Defence units deployed there may be assigned the mission of protecting the Supsa oil terminal. In practice, however, it is hardly possible as the Georgian Air Defence system needs technical modernising.

There is one more danger: the 3-km off-shore loading pipeline may be destroyed by an underwater terrorist attack with consequent environmental pollution. A submarine can easily steal up on the place and deliver terrorists armed with underwater magnetic mines. When exploding underwater, one of such mines - the Soviet-made UPM - makes a 0.3-sq. m. hole in an 80-mm armoured sheet. So during the loading process, the pipeline and tankers must be guarded by special underwater anti-terrorist units.

Finally, terrorists may sneak up on the storage facilities of the terminal and damage them by the use of ATGW (such Russian models as "Fagot", "Khrizantema", "Kornet" or others). To forestall this threat, the terminal is currently defended by several power agencies - State Safeguard Service (its servicemen mainly check entrance permissions) and Internal Troops (their sentries stretch around the whole terminal). Due to the October 19 mutiny in western Georgia, additional forces of the Guria regional police and MSS were deployed in the terminal. Most importantly, Aslan Abashidze, the Adjarian leader, ordered two companies of the Batumi-based 25th MRB of the MOD to defend the terminal (though, by some sources, nobody asked him to do so). In the author's opinion, such concentration of various forces in the terminal may cause misunderstanding

and a lack of co-ordination between the power agencies. To prevent terrorist actions against the oil pipeline, the Georgian power agencies and their western colleagues must carry out co-ordinated and carefully elaborated complex measures.

The December 18 closed-door sitting of the NSC was focused right on the security problems of the oil pipeline. Quite naturally, the government pays special attention to this issue as any terrorist action may call into question the country's prospects. Actually, the underground oil pipeline will be unprotected till the end of 1998. So far, there has been a backstage rivalry between the power agencies for this "titbit" - Internal Troops, MIA Protection Police Department and State Safeguard Service. By the latest information, the president assigned the mission to this last. The SSS is in charge of protecting foreign embassies and state buildings. To this end, the state budget allocates \$240 per each of the SSS personnel (though the money will not be paid as salaries).

## **GEORGIAN COMMANDOS - A MYTH OR REALITY?**

**Interview with Capt. Nika Djandjghava, commander of the MoD training centre for other-than-war military operations**

*By Guram Dumbadze*

The Kodjori-based MoD training centre for other-than-war military operations was created on August 1, 1998, under the command of Capt. Nika Djandjghava, former intelligence officer of the MoD reconnaissance department and hitherto the only Georgian ranger (he has passed a U.S. rangers' training centre). Below, Mr. Djandjghava answers some questions of the CCMRSS.

CCMRSS: Who first initiated the idea of such a centre?

N.D.: Mr. David Tevzadze himself did, right after he was appointed defence minister.

CCMRSS: What do you mean, when saying "other-than-war military operations"?

N.D.: I mean limited intensity armed conflicts - without a large number of troops and heavy armaments (i.e. commando and counter-insurgency operations, etc.) and peacekeeping missions.

CCMRSS: Why is the centre deployed in Kodjori?

N.D.: It is a strategic point: on the one hand it is close enough to the capital, on the other hand it is characterised by good training opportunities [the place is in a forested area about 12 km west of Tbilisi; it is a former field command centre of the Soviet Army; in 1992-94 Orbi Battalion commanded by David Tevzadze used to be deployed there].

CCMRSS: What are the aims and the structure of the centre?

N.D.: The centre aims to master NATO standards of combat and teach them in other military units of Georgia. From this viewpoint, it is important that more than a half of the officers of the centre have American or European military education and all of them are enthusiasts for their work. Actually, we train commandos who will be capable of carrying out special missions in forested and mountainous regions. They may also work as instructors and drill into other servicemen tactics of commando warfare - mining, reconnaissance, etc. As to the structure, the centre is in fact made up of one battalion and is directly subordinated to the defence minister.

CCMRSS: Do you plan to enlarge in the future?

N.D.: It is unlikely in the near future. First of all, we need to perfect out current resources and structure, and gain enough strength. Only then it would be possible to think about an enlargement.

CCMRSS: What a training program do you apply?

N.D.: We have developed our own training program. To this end, we took into account experience of some western countries in this field. As to the Russian tactics and military regulations, I think they do not suit Georgia.

CCMRSS: What problems is the centre facing?

N.D.: Actually, they are the same as in other military units. First of all, the centre suffers from the lack of finance. On the other hand, we are better supplied with foods and uniforms, thanks to the Tbilisi City Hall which is of great help to our centre.

CCMRSS: How are recruits drafted into the centre?

N.D.: Firstly, drafting offices select volunteers who are willing and feel themselves able to pass training in the centre. Thereafter, we chose the best of them - the main criteria are their health and the sense of commitment.

CCMRSS: What are your main achievements and future plans?

N.D.: We have created the main basis of the centre and this is, in my opinion, our main achievement. However, there is still a lot of work to do. In the future, among other things, we want to develop a new morale code - esprit de corps - of the Georgian national army. We plan also to train professional peacekeepers. In this respect, it would be very useful if our servicemen learned such disciplines as international relations and peacekeeping. Therefore, we consider it important to co-operate with non-governmental organisations such as the Centre for Civil-Military Relations and Security Studies (Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development).

CCMRSS: Have the servicemen of the centre ever put their skills into practice?

N.D.: Yes, they have but I'd rather not to go into detail now.

CCMRSS: Do foreign countries assist the centre?

N.D.: We maintain steady contacts with military attaches of some western countries. They are now examining our activities in order to define directions of future co-operation. At the same time, I'd like to point out the American aid. Just recently, the USA has provided all the necessary equipment and literature to organise the English language course in the centre.

## **MILITARY CHRONICLE**

*Georgian press reports*

### **Conflict zones**

Two Abkhaz high ranking militia officers were assassinated and two other militiamen wounded in the Gali district of Abkhazia on December 7. The Georgian guerrilla unit White Legion denied its involvement in the incident and blamed the terrorist action on an independent group of gunmen led by the commander nicknamed "Meskhi". Eduard Shevardnadze condemned the action and said it was carried out by forces interested in spoiling Georgian-Abkhaz peace negotiations. "Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 173, December 9, p. 2

In its recent statement the MSS expressed concern about concentration of Abkhaz forces in the Gali district of Abkhazia. To avoid new bloodshed and repression against local Georgian civilians, the MSS and MIA put their units deployed in western Georgia on full alert. The MSS also offered the RPF Command to take preventive measures against possible renewal of hostilities. According to some sources, however, additional forces of Abkhaz militia were deployed in the region in order to find several prisoners who had escaped from the Dranda jail. "Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 180, December 18, p. 1  
"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 330-331, December 20-21, p. 1

At the December 21 peace talks the Georgian and Abkhaz delegations led by Vazha Lortkipanidze, the state minister, and Sergey Bagapsh, prime-minister, respectively agreed that both sides would withdraw their armed units confronting

each other near the Georgian village of Khurcha, Zugdidi district (situated on the right bank of the Enguri river), by December 28. Ghia Shervashidze, the commander of the Georgian Internal Troops, told journalists: "There is no threat to the Khurcha". Internal Troops, in his words, are re-deployed from the vicinity of the village to its centre, while the periphery of the village will be controlled by joint Georgian-Abkhaz-Russian patrols.

"Alia" No. 152, 215; December 28-29, December 24-25, pp. 1, 3

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 332, December 22, p. 1

The Georgian Internal Troops deployed in the village of Orsantia, Zugdidi district (left bank of the Enguri river), were fired at from the other side of the river in the evening on December 21. As a result, one Georgian serviceman was killed. Allegedly, gunfire was opened by Russian peacekeepers of the 208th RPF post situated in the Otobaia village, Gali district of Abkhazia. Ghia Shervashidze claimed the incident to be a provocation aimed to spoil the agreement reached the same day (see the previous information).

"Resonance" No. 361, December 23, pp. 1, 2

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 333, December 23, p. 2

Vazha Lortkipanidze, the state minister, has denied reports of some Russian and Abkhaz mass media about a landing operation of Georgian marine forces in the village of Primorskoe, Gali district of Abkhazia, at the end of December. According to Lortkipanidze, these reports were also refuted by Sergey Bagapsh, the Abkhaz prime-minister, in a telephone conversation between the two.

"Meridiani 44" No. 151, December 28-30, p. 2

According to Abkhaz sources, two Abkhaz citizens were taken hostage in the village of Tchuburkhindji, Gali district, on December 27. On the whole, the number of Abkhaz hostages has reached nine. The Georgian guerrilla unit White Legion denied its involvement in the incident.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 359, December 29, p. 3

According to Soso Mazmishvili of the Kareli district police station, the police have arrested 7 persons (all of them Ossetians) and instituted 34 legal proceedings for the last year in connection with drug-smuggling. In his words, drugs are smuggled from South Ossetia into neighbouring Georgian districts mainly by servicemen of the Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion.

"Meridiani 44" No. 151, December 28-30, p. 2

## **Army building**

Vice-colonel George Gogashvili was appointed chief of the MoD Military Inspectorate in July 1998. He was born in Tbilisi in 1960; graduated the Georgian Polytechnic Institute in physics engineering, Tbilisi State University in sociology and Moscow school of the State Security. Since 1992 he has held offices in the special task department of the MoD, the analytical service of the NSC apparatus and the Main Military Inspectorate of President. The MoD Military Inspectorate is an internal control body of the ministry created to check combat efficiency of the army, he says in his interview with the newspaper. Since David Tevzadze was appointed defence minister, the inspectorate has undergone some organisational changes. Previously, there was only the inspection group. Now there are two new groups - analytical and operational. The inspection group examines various aspects of the MoD activities: combat training, finances, supplies, armaments, management, morale, etc. As a rule, inspection is held once in every 2-3 years. In addition, it can be launched at any time when there are appropriate grounds to do so. The operational group is responsible for preventive measures and actions against revealed violations. The minister may also order it to carry out an internal investigation. The analytical group collects and analyses all the materials (protocols, statements, etc.) obtained during inspection, works out recommendations for the MoD leadership and submits final results of inspection to the minister. It also analyses all the documents issued by the MoD.

"Kavkasioni" No. 90, December 28-January 5, pp. 6, 7

Reportedly, 50 servicemen of the Senaki Battalion who participated in the October 29 mutiny in western Georgia have escaped from the Kutaisi-based artillery regiment (however, the regiment command denied this information). By some sources, the incident occurred after a quarrel between one of the servicemen and an officer. After the mutiny was put down, the rebel servicemen (those of them who were not prosecuted) were dispersed among other units, including the regiment which played one of the most important roles in the anti-mutiny operation.

"7 Dge" No. 149, December 21-22, p. 1

Nowadays, the National Guards (NG) is made up of 2,800 servicemen, 85 percent of which have served from the very creation of the NG, Djemal Tchumburidze, the head of the MOD Department of National Guards, says in his interview with the newspaper on the occasion of the 8th anniversary of the NG. During its eight-year history, the NG has lost 1,200 servicemen, 400 are missing, and 300 have become invalids and are retired. The department has its own two foundations - charity and family foundation (created by donations of servicemen themselves, businessmen and ordinary citizens) - which spend money on purchases of military equipment, ammunition and armaments, and which offer aid to wounded servicemen and families of the lost. The department also has two agricultural farms that help improve food rations in the NG. At present, 34 NG servicemen are studying in western military colleges, while 28 of them have already graduated. The Georgian NG has established good relations with the National Guards of Georgia, USA.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 330-331, December 20-21, p. 6

According to the Military Commandant's Office of Tbilisi, the following statistical data has been registered from July 1 to December 16, 1998: 547 servicemen are under investigation; 39 servicemen died during various incidents, including five lost at combat. In comparison with the previous year, the number of crimes and incidents in the army and the Internal Troops has slightly reduced.

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 365, December 29, p. 4

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

In accordance with the November 3 Russian-Georgian border agreement, Georgian Frontier Troops have taken over the Akhhaltsikhe check-point at the Georgian-Turkish border. The Russian frontier guards who controlled this area before left for Volgograd, Russia.

"Resonance" No. 349, December 21, p. 2

A regular meeting of the heads of CIS frontier services took place in Tbilisi on December 3. The participants discussed prospects of CIS frontier co-operation (with priority given to the field of communication) and signed 23 resolutions and 6 documents. Georgia refused to sign only one of them which contained a provision dealing with control over CIS "external borders" and stipulated that frontier legislations of CIS countries shall conform with each other. "We do not distinguish between internal and external borders. A border is a border", Valeri Chkheidze, the SDFD chairman, said. Despite Georgia's efforts, the meeting abstained from a resolution renouncing separatism. "It is beyond our competence", Konstantin Totsky, the director of the Russian federal frontier service, said. According to him, the Russian Duma's recent decision to allow exports of Abkhaz citrus fruits to Russia is based on a respective Georgian-Russian agreement.

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 169, December 4, p. 1

"7 Dge" No. 142, December 4-6, p. 3

Victor Dobin, the chief chaplain of the British armed forces, visited Tbilisi on December 1-2 for talks with the leadership of the MoD, the Patriarchate of the Georgian Orthodox Church and the Joint Military Academy. While at the Academy he met with cadets of some religious minorities.

"Droni" No. 138, December 3-5, p. 6

"Akhali Taoba" No. 333, December 3, p. 3

A patrol craft (PFC), Turkey's gift, arrived in Poti on December 7 (length - 40 metres, width - 6.4 metres, displacement - 170 tons). It is armed with 40mm and 20mm automatic guns and a 12.7mm machine gun; its crew of 28 has passed free-of-charge training in Turkey. The presentation ceremony took place in Poti on December 12. Meanwhile, Gennady Haidarov, the commander of the Navy, has suggested that all of the country's naval forces (Coast Guard and Navy) must be under single command. In almost all countries, he says, the coast guard is a part of the navy (only in the USA is the coast guard under the ministry of transport).

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 173, December 9, p. 1

"Kavkasioni" No. 90, December 28-January 5, p. 7

Konstantin Totsky and Valeri Chkheidze, the SDFD chairman, visited Batumi on December 16 to examine frontier bases in the Adjarian sector of the Georgian-Turkish border which are to be ceded to Georgia in accordance with the November 3 Russian-Georgian border agreement. They held talks with Aslan Abashidze, the chairman of the Supreme Council of Adjara, who agreed in principle that Russian frontier troops should be withdrawn but added that the process requires more attention and responsibility. Russian frontier guards, in his opinion, must be replaced with "adequate" troops. According to the agreement, SDFD shall take full control of the country's borders by July 10, 1999. By December 31, 1998, Russia should cede the Batumi check-point (Adjara), the Ochamchire naval base and the Sukhumi check-point (both in Abkhazia). On December 18, Totsky and Chkheidze visited Sukhumi for talks with the Abkhaz leadership but with no positive results. Sukhumi denied Tbilisi's proposal: Abkhaz frontier troops are manned with locals but are subordinated to the SDFD, while the Georgian Coast Guard controls the economic zone along the whole length of the Abkhaz marine border. Abkhazia strongly objects to the withdrawal of Russian frontier guards and proposes joint Abkhaz-Russian frontier control. Sukhumi is ready to cover half of the expenses of the Abkhazia-based Russian frontier troops. Totsky said Abkhazia's proposal would be delivered to the president Boris Yeltsin. According to Gela Khutsishvili, deputy chairman of the SDFD, Chkheidze's and Totsky's tour aimed only to "inspect" frontier units along the border including those deployed in Adjara and Abkhazia.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 347, December 17, p. 3

"Resonance" No. 345, 346; December 17, 18; p. 2

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 180, December 18, p. 2

"Es Kvira" No. 25, December 20-26, p. 2

A Georgian military delegation led by David Tevzadze visited Romania, the Czech republic and the USA at the beginning of December. When in Romania, Tevzadze and his Romanian opposite number signed a Georgian-Romanian military co-operation agreement which provides for co-operation in personnel training, technical assistance and joint military exercise. A similar agreement was endorsed during Tevzadze's visit to the Czech republic. On December 10 in Washington Tevzadze and Edward Warren, U.S. deputy defence minister, signed a Georgian-American co-operation agreement. According to the document, the U.S. Defence Ministry will assist Georgia in military personnel training (Georgian cadets will learn in U.S. military colleges), in safety flight initiatives and in the development of air management/control. It will also help Georgia to host a PFP exercise in 2001. The USA will provide Georgia with consultations on security issues and hold seminars in Tbilisi on resource management, logistical problems, defence planning, peacekeeping missions, and environmental problems of defence. Georgia also seems likely to get two American transport helicopters CH-46 in 1999, though such a deal needs approval of the Senate. In 1998 the USA allocated \$1.6 mln to the participation of Georgian servicemen in PFP joint exercises. In 1999 the sum remains the same. Besides, \$4 mln will be spent on additional defence articles. While in the USA, Tevzadze met with managers of the Lockheed-Martin, one of the world's largest aviation and telecommunications companies, which is going to provide the Georgian Frontier Troops with modern electronic and communication devices. During his tour, Mr. Tevzadze introduced Colonel Archil Tsintsadze, former commander of Shavnbada Battalion and a graduate of the military-diplomatic academy in Moscow, as a would-be military attaché to the

USA. On his way back, Mr. Tevzadze visited Moscow and held talks with Igor Sergeev, the Russian defence minister.

"Droni" No. 146, December 24-26, p. 2

"Kavkasioni" No. 89, December 21-27, p. 3

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 174, December 11, p. 1

David Tevzadze did not participate in the December 21 summit of the CIS defence ministers in Moscow. The MoD press centre explained his decision as due to the increased tensions in the Gali district of Abkhazia. According to Grigol Katamadze, deputy defence minister and the head of the Georgian delegation, Georgia did not sign half of the 31 articles of the next year's CIS military co-operation plan.

"Resonance" No. 361, December 23, pp. 1, 2

At his December 24 press-conference David Tevzadze said it was up to politicians to decide the fate of Russian military bases in Georgia. In his words, a delegation of Russian military experts will visit Georgia in January 1999. The Russian military is dissatisfied that it has to pay customs on its goods imported into Georgia. Tevzadze, however, said this was stipulated by the Georgian legislation: "It is neither strange nor extraordinary". He says Georgia is going to purchase armaments in East European countries, such as the Czech republic, since prices are lower there. However, he does not seem very satisfied by the quality of weapons: "We will buy these armaments, but I wish they were better".

"Akhali Taoba" No. 355, December 25, p. 5

A Russian military delegation led by Viktor Kazantsev, the commander of the North Caucasian MD, visited Batumi to inspect the 12th Russian military base. The delegation was met by Aslan Abashidze, the Adjarian leader.

"Resonance" No. 353, December 25, p. 2

## **State security**

Six empty containers of radioactive wastes (caesium 137) have been recently found in the town of Tchiatura. However, the waste itself has yet to be revealed. According to Soso Kapanadze, deputy head of the Radioactive Security Centre, 28 contaminated areas have been detected in Georgia so far. One of the most radioactive of these sites is located in the mountainous Swaneti region. However, the MIA civil defence department did not allow experts of the international nuclear agency to examine the place. The Centre lacks finance to operate efficiently and has actually ceased its activities. Nowadays, the Ministry of Environmental Security and Natural Resources is negotiating the possibility of air-photo examination of the whole Georgian territory with the international nuclear agency. This is the only way to reveal all the contaminated areas in the country, Kapanadze says.

"Resonance" No. 344, December 16, p. 6

"Sakartvelos Gazeti" No. 180, December 18, p. 2

Malkhaz Khoshtaria, former head of the Samtskhe-Djavakheti regional department of MSS, was dismissed some time ago. Informal sources ascribe the dismissal to his "non-professional" work in the region dominated by an Armenian population and his failure to "defeat" timber-smuggling there. For his part, Khoshtaria says he resigned on his own and explains his decision by discords between the centre and the region. Some political forces, in his words, are attempting to aggravate the situation in Samtskhe-Djavakheti. Just recently, Khoshtaria was appointed deputy authorised representative of the president in Samtskhe-Djavakheti. Informal sources claim that he is a relative of Gigla Baramidze, the president's authorised representative in the region, but Baramidze has clarified that Khoshtaria's wife merely has the same last name as his.

"Resonance" No. 346, December 18, p. 2

Sulkhan Papashvili, the head of the SSS, and Denis Stuart, vice-president of the Georgian Pipeline Company (GPC), signed an agreement on December 21 for the protection of the Georgian part (370 km) of the pipeline to export Caspian crude

oil. According to the document, the SSS is the main agency responsible for security of the oil pipeline in Georgia. Other power agencies also participate in the defence of the pipeline. It will be constantly patrolled by mobile and standing sentries. Oil started to flow on December 10 and will reach Georgia by the end of the month.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 332, December 22, p. 1

The Georgian president issued Decree 709, December 23, on security measures in the GPC's infrastructure. The decree created a standing state inter-departmental commission for security of the GPC:

- 1) Sul Khan Papashvili - the head of the SSS, chairman of the commission;
- 2) Nugzar Babutsidze - deputy security minister;
- 3) Teimuraz Grdzeldze - deputy chairman of the SID;
- 4) David Gulua - deputy interior minister;
- 5) Karlo Gudjabidze - the president's authorised representative in the Guria region;
- 6) Akaki Dardjania - mayor of Poti;
- 7) Andro Zodelava - deputy head of the presidential service for regional policy and management;
- 8) Zurab Tavartkiladze - deputy minister for environmental security and natural resources;
- 9) Nodar Ulumberashvili - deputy finance minister;
- 10) Johnny Pirtskhalaishvili, the chief of the General Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces;
- 11) Pridon Shengelia - deputy head of the SSS;
- 12) Avtandil Tskitishvili - deputy chairman of the SDFD, the chief of Staff of the Frontier Troops;
- 13) Valeri Khaburdzania - head of the security service of the NSC apparatus.

According to the decree, to protect the GPC, the SSS shall create a special department, while its personnel will increase by 200. In addition, special units will be created within MSS, MIA, MoD, SDFD and SID. To co-ordinate their activities, the commission has to work out a plan of joint actions in case of emergency. These agencies are also authorised to collect and analyse, within their competence, all the information connected with the security of the GPC. Heads of respective local administrations are ordered to assist the SSS if necessary. The chairman of the commission has to report results of the implemented activities to the NSC once every six months.

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 4, January 7, p. 2

According to some informal sources, the Guta-Bank of Moscow, which is said to be owned by former chairman of the finance-budget commission in Gamsakhurdia's government Taniel Gelantia and ex-finance minister Guram Absandze (now imprisoned for terrorism charges), has allegedly financed the February 9 assassination attempt against Shevardnadze and financially supports "zviadist" movement in Georgia. Besides, according to preliminary investigation, the terrorists who committed the attempt were trained in a military-training base in the village of Avtur (Chechnya). Several years ago the Procurator's Office of Georgia issued a warrant for Gelantia's arrest and he has been wanted by law-enforcement authorities ever since.

"Droni" No. 146, December 24-26, p. 1

## **Miscellany**

On July 15, 1998, the Georgian company "Amat-GMI" and the MoD signed a contract for the supplies of fish to the army. The company delivered 26 tons of frozen fish but some time later the MoD claimed it to be out-of-date. For its part, the company denied this accusation. Had the fish been really out-of-date, the MoD would have returned it back immediately, the company managers say. The MoD, in their opinion, merely does not want to pay for the fish 45 thousand GEL (about \$22 thousand).

"Resonance" No. 337, December 9, pp. 1, 2

Vice-Colonel Rashid Migriauli, deputy head of the MoD military transportation department, was arrested on December 8. The Military Procurator's Office still abstains from any comments concerning the arrest.

"Alia" No. 207, December 10-11, p. 12

Anatoli Lomidze, former head of the staff of the MoD armaments department, and Michael Tqemaladze, former head of the artillery-missile division of the department, have been dismissed and put under domiciliary arrest in connection with imports of out-of-order Czech-made machine guns. In October 1997 Georgia purchased 1,000 Czech-made L-59 MG (the contract totalled about \$300 thousand). Military Procurator's Office claims that most of them are out-of-order and that the guns were purchased without preliminary tests and proper documentation. According to Czech experts, these machine guns were second-class and needed repairing but the repair required additional \$7 thousand. The MoD preferred to have them repaired by Georgian specialists (the MoD has its own repair base "Arsenal" with the experience of repairing such machine guns - L-59 MG were first imported into Georgia during the war in Abkhazia) in order to reduce the cost. At the same time, Czech experts wonder why the machine guns were sealed by Military Procurator's Office in depots immediately after being delivered to Georgia and have been stored there ever since. They find it strange that the Office was silent for almost a year and started legal proceedings only now, after Georgia and the Czech republic signed a military co-operation agreement. It is also noteworthy that when purchasing the machine guns in the Czech republic, Lomidze and Tqemaladze had constant telephone contact with the MoD and consulted the ministry about every detail of the deal. Vardiko Nadibaidze, defence minister at the time, and some of his former deputies have been already questioned in connection with the case. Some military officials consider Lomidze, 58, a former officer of the Soviet Army, one of the best experts on armaments and the originator of the Georgian army's current armaments system. He had been in office since the very creation of the Georgian army.

"7 Dge" No. 147, December 16-17, p. 2

"Alia" No. 211, 215; December 17-18, December 24-25; p. 11, 12

"Droni" No. 6, January 21-23, pp. 4, 5

About 300 members of former paramilitary units - Avaza, Orbi, Tbiliseli, Tskhumi, Chologashvili Battalion, White Legion, Mkhedrioni - gathered in Shavnabada (the former Komsomol residence and the base of rebelled National Guards in the times of Gamsakhurdia) on December 19 in order to unite "for the country's revival and reconciliation" and co-ordinate their efforts in solving common problems. Participants resolved to create an organisation committee for their future union. "We want to create a sort of trade union to help veterans and families of the lost", Giga Arveladze, the chairman of the Mkhedrioni board, told journalists. Participants said they would keep out of politics. Elena Tevdoradze, the chair of the parliamentary penitentiary subcommittee, and MP Koba Amirhashvili attended the meeting.

"Es Kvira" No. 25, December 20-26, p. 2

"Resonance" No. 348, December 20, pp. 1, 2

"7 Dge" No. 149, December 21-22, pp. 1, 2

The Defence Foundation was created during the war in Abkhazia to cover a part of the expenses as the government did not want to show the real scale of military operations. With the help of the foundation, power agencies used to purchase armaments and ammunition. The foundation was involved in raising money until 1995. Afterwards, donations gradually reduced and actually ceased in 1997. However, in 1996-97 the foundation allocated 6,000 GEL (about \$4,600 by the exchange rate at the time) to the creation of a computer centre in the MoD. It also organised a seminar for frontier officers, ordered 50 flack-jackets for the MIA, paid the Institute of Psychology 1,500 GEL (about \$1,150) for the development of a draft national security concept, and gave four scholarships for cadets of the Joint Military Academy. In 1997 the president allowed the foundation to run commercial activities. Nowadays, it has two of its own commercial companies: one collects scrap metal for the Rustavi Metallurgical Works, while the other is a tourist/information agency. According to the foundation's regulations, 49% of the income is spent on the armed forces, 25% on

the families of the lost and of invalids, and 35% on the development of the foundation. Its board is made up of deputy power ministers, 4 MPs, and some other persons. Reports on implemented activities are regularly submitted to the NSC. Currently, the foundation is focused on the aid to families of the lost (2,700 such families reside only in Tbilisi) and children with an invalid parent. Its operations cover mainly Tbilisi.

"Droni" No. 145, December 22-24, p. 7

The Institute of History awarded MG Tengiz Shubladze, the rector of the Joint Military Academy of Georgia, a PhD degree in military history on December 26. He has become the first-ever PhD of Georgia in the field of military science.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 339, December 29, p. 1

## **ABBREVIATIONS:**

PFC - fast patrol craft, coastal

MG - machine gun

AGM - air-to-ground missile

SLM - sea-launched missile

SAM - surface-to-air missile

ATGW - anti-tank guided weapon

MD - military district

SID - State Intelligence Department

PfP - Partnership for Peace program

MoD - Ministry of Defence

NSC - National Security Council

MSS - Ministry of State Security

MIA - Ministry of Internal Affairs

SDFD - State Department of Frontier Defence

RPF - Russian Peacekeeping Force

SSS - State Safeguard Service

MRB - motor rifle brigade

CIS - Commonwealth of Independent States

## **PRESS DIGEST**

Since Georgia and Russia signed the November 3 border agreement, the Georgian government has cherished a forlorn hope of taking full control of the Georgian-Turkish border by July 1999 - but the aim seems to be a long way off, the Droni (No. 144) argues. Although the agreement and follow-up protocols stipulate that the Georgian Frontier Troops shall take over all the Georgia-stationed Russian frontier bases by that time, in reality, according to the newspaper, they are likely to get only one of them - the Akhaltsikhe frontier base (Samtskhe-Djavakheti region), while the Adjarian and Abkhaz sectors of the border remain actually uncontrolled by the SDFD. Let alone the breakaway Abkhazia, the government's ability to control the border in Adjaria - given its loyalty to Russia - is still in doubt, even though Russian frontier guards are indeed leaving Georgia. However, Tbilisi does not seem to care much about changing anything. Otherwise, it would have checked the Adjarian leader Aslan Abashidze's intentions to control the Adjarian sector of the border independently, which is none but a sabotage against the state, the newspaper suggests. It is understandable that the government cannot control Abkhazia but the situation may become the same in Adjaria, unless Tbilisi stops being calm and silent, the Droni concludes.

Some people say defence ministers of foreign countries rarely visit the USA twice a year but David Tevzadze, the Georgian defence minister, proved an exception to the rule - quite a natural fact as Georgia is going to become the key point of TRACECA, one of the world's largest transport corridors, the Kavkasioni (No. 89) reports. Hence, all the participants of the project are

interested in stability of the Caucasus, and of Georgia in particular, which can be guaranteed by national armed forces. However, Georgia is still too weak economically and progress of the country's army-building much depends on assistance of partner states. From this viewpoint, co-operation with the USA - as well as with Turkey, Greece or other countries - becomes increasingly important, the newspaper claims. It must be mentioned that American aid has grown substantially since Georgia decided to take full control of its borders. The USA has approved a \$20-mln assistance program to help build the Georgian frontier system. Besides, the USA will organise seminars for Georgian specialists on resource management, logistical services and defence planning. However, in the newspaper's opinion, American experts will hardly make a miracle: the recent severe financial crisis has left the logistical system of the Georgian army actually without finances. But American approach is simple - American experts will merely teach the Georgian military how it could help itself. Further still, the newspaper remarks, every army needs personnel with respective professional background. That is why David Tevzadze, the defence minister, said he wanted to have Georgian cadets trained in the largest American training centres. He is also going to revise the educational policy of the Joint Military Academy. The minister's plans, however, require constant contacts with partner states but due to the lack of finance Georgia still has no military attaches in other countries, though all the leading powers - USA, Germany, Russia, China, Turkey, Ukraine, Greece - have already accredited theirs to Georgia, the Kavkasioni concludes.

The analysis of the defence minister David Tevzadze's activities suggest that the minister still has no foreign policy orientation, the Meridiani 44 (No. 143) argues. In the newspaper's opinion, the fact that he has graduated a U.S. military college means nothing. Just recently Tevzadze has toured some East European countries, the USA and Russia. His first negotiations - in the Czech republic - proved rather successful. Georgia, the newspaper reports, has in fact made a breakthrough in the East European armament market so that the Georgian armed forces will be able to buy not only Russian weapons. As to the USA, co-operation with this country is actually focused on personnel training only. On the other hand, Tevzadze's visit to Moscow must be considered rather meaningful. After his talks with Igor Sergeev, the Russian defence minister, Russian mass media reported that Tbilisi may agree to prolong the stay of the Russian military bases in Georgia. Tevzadze obviously attempts to keep out of politics but his efforts are doomed to fail as a defence minister is a political figure, especially in Georgia, the Meridiani 44 concludes.