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Center for International Security and Arms Control
Stanford University
320 Galvez Street
Stanford, California 94305-6165

(415) 723-9625

http://www-leland.stanford.edu/group/CISAC/

CaucasusWorking Papers

Georgia—The Search for State Security

David Darchiashvili

European Security and Conflict Resolution in the Transcaucasus

Nerses Mkrttchian

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David Darchiashvili, a 1997 CISAC fellow, is project director with Georgia's Caucasian Institute for Peace, Development, and Democracy. Nerses Mkrttchian, also a 1997 CISAC fellow, is senior analyst with the Armenian Center for National and International Studies.

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Abstracts

Georgia—The Search for State Security (p. 1)

David Darchiashvili's working paper traces the attempts of the modern Georgian state to deal with issues of national security since independence. Darchiashvili outlines the nature of contemporary national security dilemmas for post-Soviet Georgia. The paper examines Georgia's present security threats, as well as its current relationships with Russia and the other countries of the region. The paper also presents an in-depth discussion of the situation of civil-military relations in Georgia and the impact of these relations on state security. The author analyzes the roots of Georgia's problems in developing a coherent and practical security policy. He proposes that the ad hoc character of current security policy has resulted in passivity in dealing with threats such as ethnic conflicts, including the war in Abkhazia. In his conclusion Darchiashvili makes a recommendation for the elaboration of a consistent national security concept for Georgia. The author proposes that this security concept will need to include a framework for relations between society and the military. According to Darchiashvili, in order to attain this goal Georgia needs to maintain internal stability and to secure support from international institutions.

European Security and Conflict Resolution in the Transcaucasus (p. 29)

Nerses Mkrttchian's working paper examines the issue of security in the Transcaucasus since the fragmentation of Europe's international landscape, and the emergence of a new cooperative European security system that followed the disappearance of the continent's political line of separation. Mkrttchian proceeds to analyze the security issues in the Transcaucasus region within broader European, Eurasian, and post-Soviet contexts. The paper examines the current security structure of Europe, its relationship to Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and how these new security structures can affect the regional conflicts in the Transcaucasus. Mkrttchian analyzes the prospects for establishing regional cooperation on security issues in the Transcaucasus, and the role of international organizations in this process. The author points to the need for the development of 'cross-dimensional' cooperation as a way to resolve conflicts in the region.

Georgia—The Search for State Security

David Darchiashvili

Introduction

A discussion on the modern Georgian state may start from the year 1990, when the proponents of independence came to power in the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic. The collapse of the USSR that followed soon after made the dream of these Georgian nationalists come true. Before that, starting from the year 1921, Georgia did not have the possibility of functioning as a state. State-building was a totally alien field of activity for the last three generations of Georgian leaders. The elite adapted to Soviet rules of the struggle for power and lucrative positions, but it had little competence in the area of building a sovereign state.

To be sure, Georgia continued to produce intellectuals in the social sciences and humanities who dreamed of restoring their country's independence and made plans about the composition of sovereign Georgia and even the priorities of its foreign policy. But these plans were not sufficiently detailed, founded more on biased ideas borrowed from historical tales than on a knowledge of modern international relations or an understanding of the socio-political processes taking place in modern Georgia.

It is not surprising, then, that the first Georgian nation-state was led by a dissident and an intellectual-humanitarian. But Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Georgia's first post-Soviet president, suffered a quick defeat in his state-building efforts and was brought down within a year by an armed rebellion. One can agree with the opinion that a serious reason for Gamsakhurdia's downfall was political romanticism and a fascination with historical tales, according to which he tried to tailor the ethno-political and social realities to building a modern Georgian state.[1]

Gamsakhurdia's departure did not bring relief to the country, and the process of state-building continued simultaneously with the country's civil and ethnic wars. Eduard Shevardnadze, who came to power soon after Gamsakhurdia's ouster, relied on his remarkable abilities as a former member of the Communist nomenklatura in consolidating his power, which is more than can be said about his abilities in the area of state-building. However, there are distinct changes in Georgia's political landscape: the arbitrary activities of armed groups in the central part of the country have been curtailed, the civil war has ended, and military operations have stopped in the non-Georgian regions of the country. Elections for the country's parliament and head of state have been held twice, and a new constitution was adopted. Generally speaking, the signs of stabilization are obvious. But it is

the personal authority and charisma of one individual rather than a well-coordinated state mechanism that guarantee this fragile stability.[2] Nevertheless, Georgia's lack of experience in statehood and its inchoate state consciousness has not yet been overcome.

The power and stability of a state expresses itself in a consolidated and well-established set of internal and external policies, support of the given set of policies by a significant part of the society, and the maturity of the political elite and state structures that are supposed to implement these policies. In view of this, one can confidently conclude that Georgia lacks all three elements. The lack of such vital components is evident in Georgia's inability to form and implement even the most basic functions of the state, such as ensuring the internal and external security of the country.

This study attempts to illustrate the question of Georgian state security and the approaches of various authorities to these problems. It will also attempt to review the possible components of a future Georgian state security system and its possible priorities. The use of the word "possible" here suggests that both the system and the priorities of Georgian security are far from being established.

Security Threats in Georgia

The contemporary understanding of national security includes not only such traditional spheres of state activity as foreign or military policy. For the purposes of this paper, which focuses on the problems in the creation of Georgian statehood, such an understanding should also include the establishment of military forces and specific aspects of the internal structure of the state and its ethnic composition. This broader focus can be explained by the fact that if military-political issues are aggravated, they can create the grounds for an explosive situation in other, socio-economic factors of security.

A discussion of the most important threats to Georgia's national security hardly can avoid being subjective. Despite many attempts, Georgia has not adopted an official concept of national security or a military doctrine that could provide an answer to the question, What is the main danger to the country? However, without having a formal, official list of possible threats to the state, it is still possible, with a certain degree of confidence, to discuss the following question: What are the main problems of state security in the view of the Georgian political elite and the public? Some evidence for this analysis can be found in the statements and certain actions of the president and other politicians, from the press or the few seminars and conferences dedicated to these issues, and from the projects and provisions contained in relevant state documents.[3]

In the view of the Georgian public and political circles the main threat to the existence of the country throughout the entire period of independence came from the north—from the Russian Federation. All other possible external or internal political complications are tied to that danger.

During Gamsakhurdia's leadership, Moscow was perceived as a direct threat to the sovereignty of Georgia. The last political stage of the USSR—the Moscow coup and the three-day existence of the Emergency Committee—was perceived by the Georgian government at the time as a distinct pretext for intervention by Soviet troops in the internal affairs of the Georgian republic, with the possibility of disbanding the new structures of power and the young National Guard. This fear was grounded in the quite real demands of the

Emergency Committee.[4] After the failure of the Moscow coup, Gamsakhurdia insisted that the Georgian parliament declare the Soviet troops stationed on Georgian territory "occupational forces."[5] He also called the armed opposition movement that emerged in winter 1991 a clandestine intervention by Russia. The latter statement, which bears distinct traits of a paranoid mentality that was peculiar to the first president of Georgia, had some credence: According to the testimony of many participants in the events of that period, the Soviet troops stationed in Georgia sympathized with the opposition and provided them with weapons. The Russian soldiers themselves, according to their own confessions, harbored anti-Gamsakhurdia sentiments.[6]

During the five years of Shevardnadze's reign, the official attitude toward Russia was anything but clear-cut. Nevertheless, the North was—and continues to be—viewed as a source of serious danger for Georgia. The opinion of the national opposition is abundantly clear: In the words of the prominent representative of the right-wing nationalist Republican Party, I. Khaindrava, the military-political rapprochement with Russia is detrimental to the strategic interests of Georgia. The national opposition also states that the presence of Russian military bases on Georgian territory is a challenge to the security of the country.[7] It can be said with a great degree of certainty that this is the opinion of the independent Georgian media as well. The opposition is also unanimous in the opinion that the 1992–93 war in Abkhazia was primarily a war with Russia.[8] For these groups, the main cause of the Russia danger is the neo-imperial essence in the governing circles of Georgia's northern neighbor.

The official views and actions of the Georgian government in this regard are not at all congruent. There exists a Russian-Georgian treaty on friendship and good neighborly relations and a treaty on Russian bases on Georgian territory (signed by Shevardnadze, but not ratified). Despite these bilateral agreements, Tbilisi still views Russia as a danger. The very fact that these treaties were concluded reflects the Georgian government's desire to deflect the Russian danger. Georgia's entry into the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was described by the head of state as a desire to neutralize the expected negative influence of the country's northern neighbor.[9] Shevardnadze hinted only once that by "negative influence" he meant Russia's curtailing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. Immediately after the defeat of the Georgian troops in Abkhazia, he declared that Abkhazia was occupied by a third country and that he would not kneel before Russia again.[10] Shevardnadze specifically describes the "Russian danger" as: 1) the possibility of mercenaries and North Caucasus volunteers who support separatist movements on the territory of Georgia crossing over the border; and 2) the imperial thinking of certain circles in the Russian military-political establishment, especially among the opposition, that do not hide their desire of dividing Georgia or re-creating the Soviet Union. For instance, after Georgia's entry into the CIS, Shevardnadze declared that if Rutskoi or Khasbulatov gained the upper hand in Russian politics, he would voluntarily resign, because these forces would never leave him alone.[11]

In unofficial conversations—and lately, more openly—some Georgian officials point out that the danger originates not from certain circles in Russia, but from Russian policy in general. The criticism of Russian-Georgian relations has become more frequent among state officials, which makes its linkage to the issue of Georgia's state security all the more obvious.

As early as April 1993 the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement that Georgia may raise the question of Russian aggression in the context of the Abkhazian conflict.[12] But soon thereafter, the open friction with Russia ended. Starting from early 1996,

Tbilisi again expressed concern with the danger emanating from Russian policy. Particularly, the commander of the Georgian border troops, V. Chkheidze, expressed his displeasure with the unauthorized actions of the Russian border troops in Georgia. Chkheidze was referring specifically to the creation of a new Russian checkpoint on the Georgian-Chechen border and Russian border troops' contacts with the Abkhazian authorities, who do not recognize Tbilisi's authority.[13] On April 17, 1996, the Georgian parliament adopted a resolution on the settlement of the Abkhazian conflict. The resolution mentioned the ineffectiveness of Russian peacekeepers deployed in the conflict zone as well as their involvement in smuggling and antagonistic behavior toward the local population.[14] On August 14, 1996, the chairpersons of the parliament's Committee on Defense and Security and the Committee on Foreign Affairs stated that the Russian border troops in Georgia were interfering with the activities of Georgian customs officials.[15] Regarding the seizure of a Ukrainian ship by Russian border troops in the Georgian port of Batumi on December 4, 1996, the chairman of the parliament's Committee on Defense and Security, R. Adamia; the commander of the Georgian border troops, V. Chkheidze; and a representative of the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, M. Kakabadze delivered a statement that this action was damaging to the sovereignty and prestige of Georgia and that only a war could be worse.[16] Recently, Georgia has noted in particular that the presence of Russian border troops in Georgian ports is illegal.[17] In November 1996, Foreign Minister I. Menagarishvili and the chairman of the parliamentary Committee on Defense and Security visited NATO headquarters. According to unofficial accounts, Georgia's concern with the Russian danger was discussed.

Georgia is also wary of Russia's plans to skirt the limits imposed by the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) by increasing its quota of such weapons on its southern flank.[18]

This listing of evidence showing that Georgia perceives Russia as a dangerous factor can be continued. Among both the public and politicians there exists an opinion that all of Georgia's treaties with Russia are not worth much and that in the country's debates with its northern neighbor, Georgia can always expect arguments as well as tanks.[19]

The emphasis on the Russian danger in Georgian social and political circles is understandable; the relationship between the two countries abounds with frictions and suspicions that are characteristic of the relationship between the former metropole and the former colony. Nevertheless, one can cite many recent examples showing that the perceived danger corresponds to the present state of affairs.

The argument about the Russian danger is usually supported with facts from the history of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict. The Russian interference on the side of the Abkhazians is recognized by many Russian politicians and experts, as well as Western researchers.[20] One can recall the statement of a former chairman of Russia's Federation Council, Vladimir Shumeiko, who admitted that Russia helped the Abkhazians in the conflict.[21] The Abkhazian problem remains to this day Russia's main means of pressure on the Georgian government. This leverage was secured by drawing Georgia into the CIS and obtaining its agreement to sign the treaty on Russian military bases in Georgia.[22] One can also speculate about the connection of the Russian military to the terrorist acts against the Georgian government. According to Georgian officials, the former chief of the Georgian security service, I. Giorgadze, who was officially accused in the recent attempt on Shevardnadze's life, escaped arrest and fled to Russia aboard an aircraft that departed from a Russian military airbase.[23] The Russian military refutes this accusation, but it admits that Giorgadze kept his personal

cars on the base's territory. In the course of the investigation of this attempt, twenty members of the special security group Alpha were arrested. In this regard, it is interesting to note that this group was created by the Russian security services.[24] The Georgian authorities, it should be pointed out, do not have any real means of control over the Russian bases.[25] The unilateral actions of the Russian border troops described above also testify to Russia's real threats to the sovereignty and stability of Georgia.

Georgia's concern with the Russian danger is fed by the widely known political documents and statements of the Russian side. Russian military doctrine considers peacekeeping within the CIS as a way to protect Russia's vital interests; the Russian military does not rule out the use of peacekeeping forces to attain such strategic objectives as access to sea.[26] Yeltsin's decree on "Russia's Strategic Course with Regard to the CIS Countries" amounts to the defense of Russian economic and military interests within the framework of the CIS, as well as the protection of Russian-speaking populations in neighboring states.[27] The practical significance of this document can be illustrated by Shumeiko's statement regarding Western firms' proposal for the construction of an oil pipeline from Azerbaijan through Georgia: "The presence of the Russian bases in Georgia means that we have marked this plot and one does not need to intrude here," stated the former chairman of Russia's Federation Council, who could hardly be associated with the openly neo-imperial forces inside Russia.[28]

The Georgian political elite associates almost all other possible threats with the policies of Georgia's northern neighbor. This perspective pertains first and foremost to the ethnic problems and separatism as one of the main threats to Georgian statehood—even before the country declared its independence. These ethnic conflicts acquired a political dimension in 1990, when South Ossetia effectively refused to recognize the authority of Georgia's first post-communist government. In August 1992, the war in Abkhazia began.

At present, Tbilisi's central authority reaches neither South Ossetia nor Abkhazia, and the separation lines are guarded by Russian peacemakers. Quite a different situation has arisen in Ajaria, where power in this autonomy, which is inhabited predominantly by Georgians, rests entirely in the authoritarian regime of Aslan Abashidze. Abashidze formally recognizes the integrity of Georgia and the priority of central laws, but he hardly takes into account Tbilisi's interests in his policies, and there are serious frictions between him and many representatives of the political elite in Tbilisi. He holds sway over independent power structures and makes steps in the area of external political affairs that are not always consistent with Tbilisi's official line.[29] The situation in Georgia's overwhelmingly Armenian-populated southern regions is a complex one. The real power there is in the hands of local unregistered armed nationalist organizations.[30] In August 1995, these organizations demanded that Tbilisi grant autonomy to these regions.[31]

In this context, it is hardly surprising that the danger of separatism is perceived in Georgia in a particularly acute way and that the restoration of territorial integrity is considered an essential component of Georgia's security.[32] This perception becomes clearer when one considers the fact that in its deliberations over the new constitution, the Georgian parliament postponed the discussion of such an important issue as the new state's territorial composition until its territorial integrity was restored; the constitution was adopted without the corresponding section.[33]

It is also widely believed that the problem of ethnic minorities is aggravated by the Russian influence.[34] While Shevardnadze did not consider the deployment of Russian bases in Georgia to be an unambiguously positive development, he replied to a reporter's question about whether Russia would pay for its military presence by saying that the return of

Abkhazia cannot be valued in terms of money.[35] It is clear, however, that Georgia's official policy continues to view the problem of Abkhazia as a Russian creation and as one that Russia itself can resolve. It is also clear that until recently the Georgian government agreed to a certain limitation of sovereignty in return for assistance in securing the lost territories. The political opposition also considers the problem of separatism and lost territory to be an essential problem of national security. It is more open in emphasizing the danger of Ajarian and Armenian separatism. The difference is in the approaches to resolving the problem. The vast majority of the opposition does not accept the formula of limits to sovereignty in return for territorial integrity as an ineffective one.[36] Moreover, the nationalist opposition has almost made the Russian danger and separatism synonymous, considering the latter to be just another manifestation of Moscow's neo-imperial policy. On that point, the government's unofficial opinion and that of the opposition partly coincide.

The problem of external threats to Georgia's state security touches on the relations between Georgia and the Northern Caucasus. Despite the fact that Northern Caucasus is not an independent entity as stipulated under international law, it can play an independent role with regard to its southern neighbor. At least the official political circles in Georgia see the reality in these terms: During Russia's war in Chechnya, Georgia feared invasion by Chechen units and reinforced its northern border.

Georgia's relationship with its Transcaucasian neighbors is not free of contradictions either. Contested border points and future delimitation and demarcation of borders may lead to complications.[37] A number of recent border incidents, especially at the juncture of the borders of the Transcaucasian republics, saw armed groups from Armenia and Azerbaijan violate Georgian borders.[38] Georgian officials voiced concerns that the Armenian-Azeri confrontation could spill over into Georgian territory inhabited by these nationalities.

At the same time, Azerbaijan is coming to be seen as a strategic partner of Georgia from the perspective of transporting oil from Baku through Georgia. Unfortunately, no such partnership is in store for Armenia. The Georgian public is inclined to think that the aforementioned separatism of the Georgian Armenians is supported in one way or another by Yerevan. There was a recent outcry in Tbilisi about the statement of the Armenian minister of foreign affairs concerning thefts of cargo in Georgia that was bound for Armenia. The minister reportedly said that if the thefts continued, complications may arise in Georgian areas with predominantly Armenian populations.[39] The accuracy of this statement has not been established, but its discussion characterizes the perceptions of the Georgian public. However, on the scale of threats to Georgian security, the problems with Armenia rank far from the top. Georgian politicians fear Armenian separatism in the country's southern regions, a danger associated mainly with fears of Russia provoking a new ethnic conflict.[40] But the problem of Georgia's relationship with Armenia and Azerbaijan is aggravated by the lack of cooperative mechanisms at different levels that could minimize the existing mistrust and the possibility of various conflict-prone incidents.

The final external factor, which is perceived not as an immediate threat but as a potential danger, is Turkey. On this issue, there is a sharp division in the attitudes of Georgian social and political circles. Neither the government nor the political opposition mentions this danger. Even the opposition views Turkey as a partner and counterbalance to Russian influence.[41] But there are forces in Georgia who do not share this opinion and who are afraid of Turkish influence and the rise of pan-Turkism in the region. For the most part, these views are peculiar to Ajaria's Abashidze as well as a segment of the Georgian military.[42] According to independent Georgian media sources, Turkey was cast as the hypothetical adversary in

Georgian-Russian military exercises.[43] One can state fairly confidently that this attitude toward Turkey is a legacy of the Cold War, but one cannot ignore this mood either, since it is shared by a significant portion of the public. The idea of opening a Turkish university in Georgia faced strong opposition, which can hardly be explained by the efforts of the Russian security services alone.

After discussing the obvious, possible, or imaginary military-political threats to the national security of Georgia, one must tackle the issue of the extent and character of Georgia's civil-military relations, which have a direct impact on the security of the country. The condition, place, and role of the armed forces in the Georgian socio-political system has external political implications as well (e.g., Russian-Georgian relations in the area of army building). The key question for studying Georgian civil-military relations is the following: Are the Georgian armed forces a component of the country's security structure, or are they creating a problem?

Civil-Military Relations in Georgia and Their Impact on State Security

On December 20, 1990, the Supreme Council of Georgia, headed by President Gamsakhurdia, adopted a law on creating the nation's interior troops, the National Guard. Though earlier illegal armed groups based on personal or party affiliations were created during the last year of communist rule, during Gamsakhurdia's reign some of them were enlisted in the National Guard, while others continued to exist unofficially or were prosecuted. This consolidation of Georgia's militia groups was the first stage in the formation of civil-military relations and the creation of the armed forces.

A part of the National Guard's officer corps was selected from retired Soviet army officers of Georgian nationality. The majority of them had not served in the army for long, and represented lower level professions or draft committees. There were certain exceptions, however.[44] Thus the commander of the National Guard's First Brigade, A. Tskitishvili, graduated from the Leningrad Artillery Academy and until 1989 was a commander of a Soviet regiment in the Far East.[45] There were a few young officers as well who played an important role in the political events that followed. But many key military posts were occupied by representatives of political or paramilitary groups who represented the right wing of Gamsakhurdia's national movement.

There were members of the military among them as well, to be sure, those who proved their dedication to the national idea under communist rule and who participated in the creation of the first armed units. Many civilians whose main merit was their proximity to Gamsakhurdia also filled the ranks. For instance, the chairman of the governmental Committee on Defense and commander of the Guard was Tingiz Kitovani, a painter by trade. Subsequently, V. Kobalia, who worked under the Communists as an expediter, was nominated chief of the Guard administration. From the very beginning up to this day important positions in the Guard and Army were held by J. Chumburidze and T. Dumbadze, one of them a construction engineer, and the other an employee at a sewing factory; currently, both are generals.[46] This phenomenon can be understood as civilian control of a peculiar kind, but the problem was that, being incompetent, these figures could not control, much less lead in, issues of military policy. Moreover, they received military ranks at the same time.

A general lack of experience and knowledge characterized the young Georgian armed forces, but this was not their main problem. This general deficiency was partly compensated for by an enthusiasm that accompanied this important new task.[47] In fact, many civilians who had no ambitions to embark on a military career became enlisted the Guard. In the parliament, a special commission worked rather actively on developing the doctrine, structure, and the recruitment system of the future Georgian Army.[48]

The main problem in forming Georgia's armed forces was that the government sharply divided the country's unofficial armed groups into two categories. The members of one group were declared criminals and prosecuted, while the government turned a blind eye to the others or gave them an official status. The declared policy of uniting all groups into an official structure of the National Guard and the prohibition of independent groups applied only to political opponents. No serious attempt was made to cooperate with them, which could lead to complications at this still relatively early stage of state-building.[49]

A second serious problem was the shortcomings of the system of administration and control over the armed forces. Despite the creation of such formal structures as the governmental Commission on Defense; the main commission of the parliament on the rule of law and security, which included a subcommission on building the armed forces; and the main department of the National Guard, which became the Ministry of Defense in September 1991, the functions of these structures were not clearly delineated and specified. Moreover, they were created on the basis of party and clan connections. Among Gamsakhurdia's supporters there were a number of rival militias that to a certain extent controlled different bodies in the government's military administration. For instance, the Merab Kostava Society dominated the parliamentary Commission on Law and Security and preserved its armed group outside of the National Guard. The armed group under the control of Tingiz Kitovani, which represented the Union of Traditionalists political organization as well as certain rural clans of central Georgia, managed to take the task of creating the National Guard into its own hands. In his rivalry with the government's central administrative structures, Kitovani effectively managed to take control of both the executive (he was the commander of the Guard and a brigade general) and the controlling authority (the governmental commission on defense he headed) of the armed forces structure.[50]

President Gamsakhurdia himself was the source of problems in Georgia's civil-military relations. Gamsakhurdia faced opposition in regions populated by non-Georgians as well as from armed groups of his political opponents, against whom he even tried to use Soviet troops.[51] At the same time, however, Gamsakhurdia spoiled his relations even with his armed supporters. Fearing the increasing power of Kitovani, he decided to subordinate the Guard to the Ministry of the Interior and to create a separate Ministry of Defense; he also tried to get rid of the influential group of the Merab Kostava Society. Eventually, all these forces united against the president.[52]

The first stage of creating the Georgian armed forces lasted for one year, which was not sufficient time for detecting these myriad problems and their importance. Nevertheless, such an analysis is important, since these problems continued into the second stage of Georgian civil-military relations, a period that almost coincides with Georgia's new stage of statehood. The latter can be dated from early 1992 until fall 1993, from the collapse of the USSR and the recognition of Georgian statehood at the international level to the agreement of the new Georgian head of state to enter the CIS. The latter event was also influenced by the condition of civil-military relations.

The third stage continued until spring 1994 and transcended the country's entry into the CIS. Some of its characteristics were present until spring 1995, but one can say that it ended with the nomination of the Russian Army general Nadibaidze as Georgia's Minister of Defense. This stage in the formation of the Georgian armed forces and their relationship with the country's leadership is more widely known among Western analysts than either the first or the current stage.[53] In a word, this was a period of domination by independent, quasi-official armed structures. Having gained strength after the expulsion of Gamsakhurdia and during the anarchy that followed, these groups effectively divided the territory and the economy of the country into spheres of influence.

Young, inexperienced officers, and even people with no military education at all, took top positions in the military. They came to the army from the nationalist movement and were not influenced by the esprit de corps or organization of the Soviet army; their professional ethics made them look more like guerrillas. This militia spirit heavily influenced their staffing decisions, which have become somewhat engraved in the composition of the country's armed forces.

The symptoms of civil war and the economic collapse of the state, together with the rejection of conventional forms of discipline, led to the phenomenon of "self-financing" in Georgia's military. At times it had an openly criminal character of extortion and pillage in the areas of troop deployments. Many officers who were the products of a Soviet military education began to adopt this type of behavior, losing their professionalism and quickly getting accustomed to illegal procurement, insubordination, and unauthorized actions.[54] The leading military and militarized cadres were involved in the trade of oil, weapons, and tobacco, as well as the extortion of "patronage" and "protection" money.[55] Not only was the civilian leadership helpless to intervene in the financial dealings of high-ranking representatives of the paramilitary establishment, but the effective collapse of the finical-budgetary system provided the civilian leadership with its own justification to collect money for the army itself and for the war effort in Abkhazia by dispatching its representatives to the regions to demand cash from the local authorities.[56] All this generated embezzling and corruption.

The problem of political control over the armed forces worsened. Many decisions of the political leadership were ignored or implemented only formally. For instance, in December 1992 the Council on Defense and Security issued a decree on uniting all armed groups into one armed force. Within a year, the problem of "illegal groups" arose once more.[57] The groups that agreed to subordinate themselves to a single command did not change their behavior to a significant extent. They received official names of "guard battalions" or "military police" but in reality they remained internally autonomous, generally subordinate only to their immediate commanders. The commanders, who were formally nominated, often headed their own units that were formed by friends and relatives. These units sometimes participated in combat only according to their desire, much in the feudalist tradition. Inside many of these units, freedom of action and decision was no smaller, if not greater: a member of the unit could invoke an excuse of family affairs and leave the front.[58]

Georgia's major armed structures clashed with one another even after their formalization. There were incidents when the representatives of the guard, the military police and the secret service engaged in armed skirmishes. In December 1993 a physical confrontation took place at the level of the ministers of defense and security. Also during this period, the leaders of the armed groups or certain powerful government organizations could make negative statements against the parliament and the government with impunity. On April 27, Defense

Minister Kitovani declared during a press conference that the head of state must deal only with foreign policy, and that to dismiss the Minister of Defense, the army and the people must be consulted.[59]

In view of this, one can speak of the weakness, if not the absence, of civil and political control over the armed forces in 1992–93. Formally, and to a certain degree, practically, power remained in the hands of largely autonomous political bodies, which were constantly strengthened. This fact remains to be explained. Perhaps the leaders of Georgia's military groups were not interested in social responsibility, preferring to strive for power and money without fulfilling the duties of leadership.[60] However, the best explanation for such weak political control was not only the unwillingness of the guerrillas to return to politics, but also the policy of the head of state. Shevardnadze knew how to manipulate the conflicts among the groups but, unlike Gamsakhurdia, was not about to spoil his relations with all groups at the same time. Turning a blind eye to the many sins of the Mkhedrioni and other armed units, Shevardnadze strengthened the Ministry of the Interior, which was traditionally loyal to the authorities—and especially to Shevardnadze.[61]

When he thought that the time was ripe, Shevardnadze dealt with one or another armed group. Ultimately taking advantage of the attempt on his life in August 1995, Shevardnadze issued a decree disbanding one of the main para-military formations, the Mkhedrioni–Rescue Corps, for its criminal activities. How could he double-cross us? asked one of the Mkhedrioni members.[62] In sum, political control over the military and armed groups could be exercised at that time only through personal connections and by capitalizing on the squabbles among the groups.

The growing alienation between the military groups and the society was a dangerous factor during this period of Georgia's civil-military relations. Although not all soldiers and officers were criminals, the widespread opinion about the military groups was extremely negative. This sentiment can be illustrated by the fact that the military drafts of that time were a complete failure.[63] Despite the law on compulsory military service, more than half of the army was composed of volunteers. The only apparent link between the army and Georgian society were several hundred patriotic young people who, without any hesitation, joined the military operations in Abkhazia when the situation was declared critical. These guerrillas wanted to make a contribution. Their main complaint was "Why do people indulge in rest and entertainment when we are fighting?" A certain part of the blame lies with a political leadership that did not have a clear stance on the conflicts that were raging in the country and that could not persuade the society that sacrifices were necessary.

All these traits of Georgian civil-military relations could not avoid having a negative effect on the combat preparedness of the army and on the security of the country as a whole. In this regard, one can partly agree with Charles Fairbanks that the undisciplined militias of the postcommunist countries can transform conflicts into wars, but they cannot achieve victory or restore order.[64] As for discipline and morale, having failed to impose Soviet-style centralized subordination over the armed forces, the military leadership did not search for alternatives. At the same time, among certain groups of volunteers—not all of them criminal—there existed a certain esprit de corps; unfortunately, their experience was not appreciated.[65]

The third stage in the creation of Georgia's armed forces began in spring 1994. Several major changes distinguished the beginning of this period: 1) the abolition of the illegal or semi-official armed groups, an improvement in discipline, and the establishment of subordination in the army; 2) the purging from army ranks of nonprofessionals and people who

were clearly implicated in criminal activities; 3) restoration of the draft system; 4) the clarification of the army's structure; 5) restoration of the army's official funding mechanisms from the government's budget; and, 6) the strengthening of political control over the army, and its withdrawal from politics.

As early as January 1, 1995, in his New Year's address to the people, Shevardnadze stated that a positive breakthrough had been achieved in building the Georgian Army. At the time, Western analysts also noted the improvement in Georgia's civil-military relations.[66] But some evidence casts doubt on the depth of these changes and testifies to new problems arising in the area of civil-military relations.

Noting the positive changes in the armed forces, Jonathan Aves still expresses his reservations about the reliability of the new Georgian army and points to its growing Russian influence.[67] Given Georgia's perception of Russia as a major threat, and its view of the Russian military as the main proponent of a neo-imperial policy, its influence in the Georgian army understandably arouses concern. This influence was formally defined by the 1993–95 Russian-Georgian treaties and the collective treaties of the CIS. According to the Treaty on Friendship and Good Neighborly Relations, Russia promised to help Georgia in its army-building.[68] The treaty on the status of the Russian troops in Georgia provided for the transfer of matériel and assistance in military training.[69] These promises are also included in the September 15, 1995 treaty on Russian military bases and in the February 3, 1994 agreement on the status and functions of Russian border guards in Georgia. Despite the fact that not a single military treaty has been ratified (with the exception of the Friendship Treaty), implementation of some of their military provisions began right after they were signed.[70] In the context of the formal basis for the Russian influence on Georgia's security system, one can refer to the collective documents of the CIS signed by Georgia: "The Concept of Collective Security," "The Main Directions for Further Military Cooperation," and "The Treaty on a Common Air Defense System."

The first part of this study examined the dangers for Georgia emanating from these treaties, as well as the overall issue of Russian military presence. The practical influence of Russia on the Georgian army also has some traits that are not conducive to the best defense interests of the country. Almost all Georgian generals under the defense minister are former Soviet military cadres with many years of experience. Despite the newly emerging political frictions between the two countries, these generals easily find a common language with their former colleagues. The working day of Georgian Defense Minister Nadibadze begins with a visit to the headquarters of the Russian armed forces in the Transcaucasus, where he served before his transfer to his current position.[71] Nadibadze is one of the most active proponents of the idea of transforming the CIS into a military pact and creating coalition forces.[72] That these generals are even theoretically capable of working out countermeasures in case of a possible conflict with Russia is difficult to believe. For its part, the Russian military in Georgia does not hide the fact that what it wants is not simply to provide disinterested assistance, but to turn the Georgian army into an institution that would be loyal to it.[73]

Among the more dangerous aspects of the Russian influence on the Georgian armed forces is the almost total dependence on Russian deliveries of weapons and ammunition. Nadibaidze rejected the possibility of purchasing weapons of the same type from Ukraine.[74] At the same time, Russia is in no hurry to provide ammunition for the small number of Russian weapons it transferred to the Georgian army after Nadibaidze's nomination. At present, the Georgian army does not have enough ammunition even for military exercises.[75] The most active assistance provided by the Russian military was in creating Georgia's air

defense system. Currently this system, which is deployed around Tbilisi, is mainly for Moscow's benefit. Because of the Caucasus mountains' elevation, Russia cannot install an early-warning system on its side of the mountain range. Therefore, with the help of the radars installed in Georgia, Russia can extend the range of its territorial defense.[76] The question of improving Georgia's security with the help of this system remains controversial.

The Georgian army is currently being built and trained according to Soviet military guidelines. As one Georgian senior officer admitted, the guidelines contain items that had been rejected even by the Russian army. The experiences of the five-year-long conflict in Abkhazia are practically ignored. No experiments with Western guidelines are allowed. According to the results of the peacekeeping exercises Cooperative Osprey-96, which took place in the United States during summer 1996 and in which a Georgian platoon of military cadets participated, it became clear that even though this select unit had good drill skills, it fell behind in both its physical and combat preparedness. According to a few young officers, World War II–era tactics were used during the exercises, with no regard for the character of the local theater or battlefield lessons from the Abkhaz conflict. With Russia's help, the Georgian army is being constructed as a second-rate Russian division of the late Soviet period. "We are building a typical Soviet army," admits the chairman of the parliamentary Commission on Defense and Security, R. Adamia.[77] Even Georgian soldiers' uniforms look much like those of the Soviet army in the 1970s.[78]

Any discussion of one of the security system's main elements—civilian control—necessarily involves the constitution, which guarantees the primacy of the president and the parliament in military policy.[79] But one can also cite the words of the chairman of the parliamentary Commission on Defense and Security: "To say that our commission controls law-enforcement structures would be grossly exaggerated," said R. Adamia in April 1996.[80] The Minister of Defense repeatedly ignored the demand of the deputies to testify before parliament. "If you don't like me, dismiss me," Nadibaidze told the legislature.[81]

The defense budget—one of the levers of civilian control—for 1996 was adopted in a hurry and without a detailed discussion. The bill on the defense budget provided for the allocation of $42 million to the Ministry of Defense. These funds, quite significant on the Georgian scale, comprised only ten categories, one of which provided about $3 million for "other needs."[82] The Ministry of Defense also owns certain enterprises that enjoy various financial privileges and are difficult to control.[83] In the armed forces, more or less legalized mechanisms of self-financing remain, the ministry and its branches receive some of their revenue from servicing civilian ships in the port of Poti.[84]

Finally, the problem of civilian control is related to the relationship between the Russian and Georgian militaries. The Georgian army was created without a plan or concepts approved by the legislature and often contrary to the views of responsible political bodies. The Ministry of Defense conducts its own foreign policy, while there is not a single civilian official in its leadership.

The issue of professionalism is an acute one in the modern Georgian army. Putting aside the condition of preparedness and knowledge in the upper echelon of the military leadership, one may point to the catastrophic situation in the middle and lower tiers of command. As mentioned previously, following the resignation of Defense Minister Karkarashvili in February 1994, the army was subjected to purges. By dismissing many "outsiders" and lowering the excessive ratio of officers, the army not only lost many criminals, but also many people who had combat experience.[85] According to many estimates, the army lost 50–60 percent of the Guard warriors of the 1990–93 period.[86] The professionals from Soviet officer schools

are represented in the middle and upper tier, but after 1985, Georgian officers did not attend Soviet military schools. This has resulted in a vast lack of platoon commanders, which is compensated for by drafting reserve officers, mostly graduates of civilian colleges; not only do they lack the appropriate education, but they also typically desert.[87]

The cadre-recruitment problem and the disastrous financial condition of the soldiers have led to high desertion rates in the Georgian military. Despite the strengthening of the draft mechanism in 1995–96, by fall 1996 the army registered 3,000 deserters from its ranks, according to official data.[88] This accounts for 10 percent of the declared size of the Georgian army. However, the real number of deserters is at least twice as high. In the Eleventh Brigade, by unofficial estimates, 25 percent of the personnel are permanently absent.[89] An inspection of the Twenty-Second Brigade, which registered 103 deserters, revealed that the real number was 350.[90]

According to different sources, hazing has also become a problem in the army, including acts of violence against new draftees and squabbles between people from different regions. The number of suicides in the army is also on the rise. There were seven cases of suicide in the army in 1996. According to the Chief Military Prosecutor, one of the reasons for the increasing number of suicides is the lack of officers and sergeants to supervise the ranks.[91]

Despite the purges and the ban on semi-official armed groups, the patriarchal mentality among commanders that finds its expression in viewing a given detachment as one's own fiefdom has been largely preserved. From the level of the Defense Ministry down to the battalions, the enlistment of one's school mates, relatives, and other personal acquaintances is a common practice.[92] Despite the extraterritorial principle of enlistment, the nucleus of detachments is still formed by people who have certain regional or other ties, rather than professional ones.[93] The military leadership also does not deny the fact of corruption in the armed forces.[94]

One of the main shortcomings of civil-military relations in Georgia is the continuing alienation of the society from the army. The ratio of desertions illustrates the attitude of the society toward the army. Declared one of the deserters: "If patriotism means wearing torn clothes and eating what one is ordered to eat, then I am not a patriot."[95] For its part, the top military leadership often blames parents and the schools for not bringing up Georgian youth properly. It is a fact that society's attitude of contempt toward the army that existed in the 1970s and 1980s continues to the present day.

At the early stage of army-building many intellectuals became enlisted in its ranks, inspired by patriotic sentiments.[96] During the period of domination by independent armed groups, their ranks were bolstered by thrill-seeking youths. With rare exceptions, the cause of army-building is now in the hands of a social category that by its mentality and status neither reflects the leading values and norms of the country's urban culture nor represents the upper or middle stratum of Georgian society.[97] Reserve officers, typically drafted against their will, can be considered to be close to the dominant social values, but their widespread desertion proves for yet another time the social alienation of the army.

It is commonly accepted that the armed forces are a product of the society they serve. Sociological studies of many countries' military officer corps also demonstrate that the nucleus of the army's command echelon is identical to the society's elites, with the corresponding educational level and social ties.[98] The Georgian military establishment is an exception to this finding. The sociocultural identity of these people is provincial and backward, and can be perceived even as representing a foreign world view. In any event, this identity has little in common with the governing and intellectual elite.[99] These differences

obviously contribute to the gap between the army and the society and cannot help but explain the poor leadership and combat preparedness of the army.

Last but not least, the area of security policy in general and civil-military relations in particular has another, fundamental problem: the absence of a security concept and an officially accepted military doctrine. The armed forces of Georgia were created and operate on the basis of ad hoc interests and accidental events,[100] and the absence of a widely accepted security policy exacerbates the problem of officers' defining their own missions.[101] A widely shared belief among them holds that the political leadership has little interest in army-building. The absence of such interests and especially of an open discussion of security issues is yet another cause of alienation between the society on the one hand and the army and the government on the other. This alienation touches on the issue of insufficient civil loyalty in Georgia.[102] The dialogue on the issue of security policy between the government and the society is of particular importance, especially in new states.[103]

Civil-military relations in Georgia have posed, and continue to pose, a serious challenge to the security of the country. If, at the early stage, the danger was mainly that of insubordination or a military coup, at present the main problem is the inability of the army to fulfill its role adequately. At the same time, the problem also lies in the lack of specific definitions of the army's tasks and the absence of a security concept and a military doctrine. It is also clear that the Georgian army was not created to defend against the country's main danger; rather, it is the other way around. It is not certain that the Georgian public reacts adequately to this problem, but the growing number of newspaper articles on the subject shows that there is an understanding of this danger.[104]

Let us now turn to the response of government policy and the possible perspectives and priorities in building Georgia's security system.

The Practical Security Policy and the Possible Perspectives

By calling this policy "practical," I want to stress once again the absence of a theoretical basis and organized concepts for Georgia's security. The current Georgian policy is based more on opinions and intuition of particular individuals, on Soviet-era stereotypes engraved in the public consciousness, or on "tips" from abroad, rather than on a system of state priorities and the means of attaining them. Nevertheless, this policy exists, despite its lack of cohesiveness.

As mentioned in the first part of this study, starting from the second half of 1993 the leadership of Georgia was coming to the conclusion that the best solution to the Russian danger was to agree with its interests and demands. This is how the head of the Georgian state defined the essence of this policy: If we do not want Russia to play a negative role, we need to consider its interests.[105] While initialing the treaty on Russian bases, Shevardnadze stressed that the preservation of the Russian military presence is important for the stabilization and territorial unification of the country.[106] Georgia became a member of the CIS and joined the treaty on collective security of its member-states. A little later, he also signed the decision on creating a common air defense system.

But the crux of the Georgian choice were the bilateral treaties with Russia. The Russian troops whose withdrawal Georgia demanded in 1991 and 1992 and who were blamed for participating in the Abkhaz war against Georgian troops were henceforth declared to be the

forces whose task was to provide for "sovereignty and security of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia."[107] The reason for this turn of events was the fear of Russia. As one of the leading Georgian political analysts declared, Georgia finds itself in the frightening magnetic field of the "big brother."[108] But there is also a pragmatic calculation that the opposition calls a policy of ceding sovereignty for help in securing the country's lost territories.[109] At one time, Georgia's governing elite believed that the return of the lost territories was worth delegating a part of the country's sovereignty and agreeing to Russia's dominant influence over its foreign and military policy. Speaking of the agreement to join the CIS, Shevardnadze pointed out that it is difficult for a small country to exist independently.[110] The fact that Georgia demanded help in the Abkhazian conflict in return for an agreement on Russian bases can be seen in Georgia's appendix to the text of the initialized treaty on military bases. According to that appendix, Georgia will consider the treaty in effect after the restoration of its jurisdiction in Abkhazia.[111]

The Georgian government also had hoped that a close alliance with Russia would bear economic fruit as well. Shevardnadze believed at the time that without restoring the economic ties of the Soviet era, Georgia would not be able to recover.[112] In agreeing to a new form of a Russian protectorate, Shevardnadze faced the danger of losing his power. The supporters of ex-president Gamsakhurdia pressed on with their offensive against the government troops defeated in the Abkhazian war. Shevardnadze even asked Russia for military assistance against the armed opposition.[113]

By 1995, the Georgian political elite began to understand the controversial character of the policy that may be called "security by rapprochement with the security threat." With such an understanding came disappointment that the rapprochement with Russia did not yield the desired results either in the Abkhazian conflict or in the expected economic benefits. In any event, the Georgian attitude regarding the plans to turn the CIS into a military alliance can be characterized as cool. On the contrary, in October 1996 Shevardnadze issued a decree on controlling the maritime borders of the state with Georgia's own forces.[114] Georgian officials began to discuss the complete withdrawal of Russian border guards from the country. For the first time, officials were saying that the treaty providing for their presence was not ratified and, hence, void. The Russian military perceived such statements as a change in Georgia's strategic interests.[115] It is noteworthy that as early as 1995, Georgian authorities declared that to begin controlling their own borders they would have to prepare for at least a few years. Georgia also lent its voice to the demands to divide up the Black Sea Fleet and began to ask for financial compensation for the Russian military presence.[116] The representatives of the Georgian Foreign Ministry and the parliament stress more and more often that, in general, the Russian military presence has no legal basis, since according to the constitution all military agreements must be ratified.

While continuing its search for security policy alternatives, the Georgian government is now turning its attention to the West in a more strategic fashion. In spring 1994, after his return from the United States, Shevardnadze stated that he did not ask for military assistance, since it was in Russia's domain.[117] But in a fall 1995 interview with the German magazine Focus, Shevardnadze noted that Russia will not be able to force Georgia to change its priorities, to curtail its contacts with the West.[118]

Many factors may be behind this new shift in Georgian foreign policy. But the main factor for the cooling of Georgian-Russian relations is Azerbaijan's oil pipeline. Some Georgian politicians associate the construction of the pipeline and the creation of the Euro-Asian transport corridor through Georgia with the future of Georgian security: When the

West builds the pipeline, it will guarantee the security and, hence, the stability of Georgia, according to the acting head of the Georgian Ministry of Defense's Department of Foreign Relations.[119] On October 9, 1995, the international consortium created for extracting and transporting Azeri oil made a decision to build two pipelines, one through southern Russia and one through Georgia.[120] Georgia saw the decision as growing Western interest in the region and a precursor to real assistance in state security issues. Fostering great economic hopes in this project, the Georgian political elite at the same time notes the discontent of Russian politicians with building the Georgian section of the pipeline, which would mean a loss of Russian control. As mentioned above, there is some truth in this Russian concern: In Georgian official circles the oil pipeline is increasingly seen as one of the main guarantees against Russian neo-imperialism.[121]

Georgia is paying more attention to regional cooperation as a possible alternative to the Russo-centric security system. In February 1996, President Shevardnadze announced his idea of the "Peaceful Caucasus" pact during his meeting with Foreign Ministry representatives. Shevardnadze explained that the sphere of vital interests and the main factor of Georgian security is the Caucasus region, and proposed to cooperate in the task of regional stabilization. The idea of Caucasian cooperation was already a component of Georgian policy, but in 1994 Georgia proposed to the neighboring Transcaucasian countries cooperation under the aegis of Russia (the "3+1 formula").[122] The new initiative does not identify a hegemon and brings in Turkey, which the Russian military sees as the main rival in the region. Lately, Georgian officials have detected some interest in the idea of intensified cooperation with Ukraine, including security issues.[123] Analysts do not rule out the creation of a Kiev-Tbilisi-Baku axis, and Shevardnadze's recent visits to Ukraine and Azerbaijan were indirect evidence of such a possibility.

But the impulses distancing Georgia from its neighbor to the north are still too weak to speak about a new stage in Georgia's building a national security system. In adopting the law on national borders, the majority of the parliament agreed to keep the provision on the possible defense of the borders by "foreign troops." Moreover, On January 19, 1996, the Georgian delegation to the CIS summit conference presented a new proposal on the peacekeeping mandate for the forces deployed in the Abkhazian conflict zone. Demanding the disarmament of the Abkhazian separatists, Georgia agreed to Russian military rule in Abkhazia.[124] Until now, Georgia has not officially objected to the treaty on Russian bases.

At the May 1996 Vienna conference on CFE Treaty implementation, it was agreed that Russia would be given an opportunity to revise the weapons quotas on its southern flank. Moldova clearly stated that it would not allow the deployment of foreign (Russian) weaponry on its territory. Georgia, however, expressed its concern and merely repeated the provision included in the final document, according to which the deployment of additional weapons on its territory must take place with due respect for its sovereignty.[125]

It should be noted that in response to Shevardnadze's Caucasian initiative, Yeltsin held a pan-Caucasian meeting in Kislovodsk. Emphasizing that the attempts to alienate Russia from the Caucasus will lead to grave complications, the Russian president proposed to sign his draft of the final document.[126] The Georgian president declared that the views of Russia and Georgia in the area of Caucasian initiatives coincide. All this leads one to suspect that at any given point the Georgian policy may return to deepening the military-political alliance with Russia. This also shows that Georgia's foreign and security policy did not determine its main directions and partners. The indeterminate foreign policy led to an indeterminate internal policy, which also leads to procrastination in resolving a set of issues that pertain to the functioning of the army.

As for the creation of state structures responsible for Georgia's national security, it should be pointed out that Georgia has its army, Interior troops, and Ministries of Security and Internal Affairs. The constitution defines the functions of the presidential Council of Security. Legislation on defense and compulsory military service has been adopted; the law on national borders is under consideration. The Ministry of Defense has even prepared a draft document on Georgia's military doctrine. However, given these laws and the actual state of affairs in the army and in civil-military relations, it is clear that the concept of Georgia's national security is far from reality, or is absent altogether.

The previous section of this study examined the problems of civil-military relations and the building of the national armed forces. Yet without a coherent security policy, the attempts to craft a defense policy for Georgia suffered from eclecticism, the absence of a systemic approach in drawing from the existing defense policy, and the absence of expertise.

In 1995 the government finished the process of disbanding the semiofficial armed groups and creating a single command system officially subordinated to the supreme political authority. Shevardnadze considered this the end of the first stage in building the armed forces.[127] At present, the Georgian army has formally crossed the border between what M. Edmonds calls "military" and "armed services"; the first term implies various armed structures, and the second official services.[128] But this is practically the only achievement in modern Georgia's army building.

Are the army's structure and size determined on a legal basis and as the result of a realistic evaluation of the country's defense needs? According to the Georgian constitution, the types and numbers of troops are determined by law; the structure of the armed forces is approved by the president, their numbers by the parliament. Yet such a definition is ambiguous and contradictory. According to the law "On Defense," parliament is responsible for military building and for defining the army's structure. In 1997, the parliament set the size of the Georgian army at 30,000. Except for that act and the adoption of defense budgets in 1996 and 1997, the parliament did almost nothing in the field of military planning. The only law having some bearing on the structure, composition, and size of the armed forces is the 1992 law "On Defense," which is too broad and inadequate to incorporate contemporary realities. According to this law, the Georgian armed forces should be no smaller than those of other states with a territory and population similar to that of Georgia. As for the president, there is no mention that he officially adopts the structure of the army. During his meeting with the ministerial military commissions on October 31, 1995, Shevardnadze mentioned that the draft of the military doctrine was ready and that it would be discussed by the parliament. The Georgian military considers the doctrine a political document that does not affect the structure of the armed forces; a separate program was worked out for that purpose. According to Deputy Defense Minister Lieutenant General Guram Nikolaishvili, both the doctrine and the program of army building are in the planning stage and have not yet been adopted by the nation's political bodies.[129]

Despite the clear absence of a legitimate basis and a legal procedure for determining the needs of the state, the Georgian army is already acquiring certain contours outlined by these documents. The history of the past few years shows that the size and structure of the Georgian armed forces is determined and changed arbitrarily, according to the personal views of particular military officers or politicians. For instance, in 1992, the Georgian General Staff considered setting army personnel levels at 60–70,000. On May 13, 1993, Shevardnadze announced that he generally approved the structure proposed by then Minister of Defense Karkarashvili.[130] As it was revealed later, the army formally consisted of

several tens of thousands of soldiers and officers. The new Defense Minister Nadibaidze declared that he will drastically reduce the number of military personnel and units within one year. Shevardnadze himself argued earlier that the Georgian army should be a small one. "It is better to have 5,000 prepared fighters," said the head of state.[131] The Minister of Defense unilaterally announced at the same time that the nucleus of the Georgian army would consist of seven battalions with 1,000 soldiers each, and that the total number of troops will be 20,000.[132] One year later, it was announced that there was a 25,000-strong army composed of brigades, with a potential for further growth. One can only speculate about the link between these structural and quantitative changes and the actual defense needs of the country.

The questions of the structure, size, and composition of the Georgian army require a theoretical analysis and justification. It cannot be said that Georgian politicians and members of the military do not understand that.[133] Besides the drafts of the military doctrine and the program for army-building presented by the Ministry of Defense, President Shevardnadze issued a decree in fall 1996 on creating commissions to prepare the concepts of state security. One cannot yet assess the work of the commission, which is in its early stage, but the proposals of the Ministry of Defense are well known. The parliament's Commission on Defense and Security qualified the proposals as unsatisfactory, copied largely from Russian and Soviet sources. Let us put aside the debate on the degree to which this proposal's provision declaring that "cooperation should take place predominantly within the framework of the CIS" corresponds to the genuine interests of the state and its practical policy. It is clear, nevertheless, that these documents do not satisfy the requirements for such state programs. Their main shortcomings are ambiguity and superficiality. Having the objective of encompassing the political aspect of security issues, these proposals did not reflect the geopolitical priorities and the implications of their implementation (i.e., the Black Sea's strategic and economic significance for Georgia and the country's possible inclusion on transcontinental transit routes).

The question of foreign troops' presence is also excluded from these documents. Among the possible threats, only "separatism of different kinds" is mentioned, as well as the "desire of a group of countries to reach a dominant position in the world." The military portion of this set of documents is no less ambiguous. Describing the general structure of the armed forces, which is in the process of being implemented, the proposals do not explain the objectives of various types of missions or the logic behind their deployment. Nothing is said about the possible types of military actions and their corresponding operational art, the division of the army into mobile forces and main reserve, cooperation among the different services, or the different perspectives on participating in peacekeeping operations. There is no answer to the question, Is Georgia moving toward the development of such civilian control measures as a civilian Ministry of Defense.[134] The ambiguity of both the doctrine and the program make the evaluation of their implementation problematic.

These problems in documentation suggest that the culture of "white paper" is undeveloped in Georgia, which is in itself a problem of civil-military relations and of security policy as a whole. The reasons for this phenomenon may be found in the Soviet legacy, in the attitude toward security issues as a completely "closed subject."[135] The lack of knowledge should be pointed out as well. But the main reason is the absence of clear objectives and the Georgian political elite's fear of responsibility. This fear hampers decision making regarding the issues of Russian military bases, strategic partners, military reform, and creating an adequate concept of national security.

The final part of this study will briefly try to assess the possibilities and perspectives of creating the foreign and military aspects of the Georgian security system.

If bilateral interest and mutual benefit are taken as criteria for future prospects, then Georgia will hardly find a guarantee for stability in Russian policy. Georgia is linked to Russia by fear, but fear cannot sustain such a relationship on a long-term basis, especially in security policy. The mutual interest that undoubtedly exists because of cultural, historical, and territorial proximity, may triumph only if Moscow attenuates its neo-imperial impulses and Russian economic strength grows. Neither condition is foreseeable for the time being, and the Georgian economy is increasingly developing links in different directions. Losing its economic levers of influence in the region, Russia is increasingly turning to the military domain (e.g., the demands for increasing its arms quotas on its southern flank).

Russian peacekeeping is just one of the mechanisms for retaining its influence in the region. Military assistance is a method of tying the defense potential of Georgia to Moscow, which is not always adequate for improving Georgia's real defense capability. However, a different trend is on the way. Recently, a high ranking military delegation visited Tbilisi and mentioned the possibility of reducing the Russian military presence in Georgia in light of Russia's lack of funds.[136] Many Georgian politicians consider this reality to be a more important trend than all the existing military agreements. If this trend prevails, Georgia will have even fewer reasons to count on a serious security partnership with Russia.

To this day, the possibilities of the CIS in the area of defending the national interests of its members have not surfaced. The differences in the interests of its members are stronger than their common needs. In principle, the role of the CIS in Georgian security is limited to the issue of Russian-Georgian relations and does not have a beneficial purpose. The role of international organizations and developed nations in the formation and security of new nations is well known. Georgia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs clearly recognizes the role of the UN, the OSCE, and the Council of Europe, as well as the significance of strengthening ties with NATO. Will these structures—or just one of them—become the crux of the Georgian security system? This depends not only on NATO, because one thing is clear: Georgian policy should be more active in using the capabilities of all these forces; for various reasons, Georgia was not able to handle the funds allocated to it under NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program.

In the state security system of any country, and especially a small one, the regional context plays a particular role. To be sure, a state may establish its role, main interests, and mutually beneficial partnerships in the framework of the region. Georgia joined the process of establishing the Black Sea Cooperation forum and began to advance the idea of Caucasian or Transcaucasian regionalism. But in the context of security, the results have been modest. Unlike Western Europe, some countries of the Black Sea and Transcaucasus area have frictions and even conflicts with one another, and look for allies against their rivals. The situation is aggravated by the undeveloped intrastate structures of the many new members of these regions. Without openly defining their interests and models of development, and without creating responsible and well-coordinated structures of power, they arouse more suspicions than incentives for cooperation. Such sub-regional initiatives as the dialogues between Georgia and Ukraine and Georgia and Azerbaijan seem more realistic. It is not implausible, however, that the development of relations among these countries may increase the suspicions of other regional states.

Nevertheless, bearing in mind the complexity of the task, an active regional policy seems to be the most important and promising foundation for the foreign policy component of

state security. Georgia can and will have ties of different levels and intensities with the various actors in the region. Given the importance of the oil pipeline from Baku to the Black Sea, the perspective of closer cooperation with Azerbaijan, rather than Armenia, has not been ruled out. However, without creating a necessary level of confidence and security guarantees with Armenia, the region will remain conflictual and the question of the oil pipeline will be problematic.

Georgia is in the center of the Caucasus and has access to the Black Sea. Georgia does not have territorial claims on, or open conflicts with, its neighbors. This is a good starting point for enacting a regional policy, including the sphere of security. But to achieve this objective it is necessary to pay attention to the state's internal potential. Georgia's governing officials are beginning to understand the importance of economic and democratic reforms, which would, among other things, allow the country to strengthen its international prestige and attract solid trade partners.

However, Georgia's interest in the PfP program, which became evident during the past year, has drawn the parliament's attention to the issues of high rates of desertion in the army, the creation of commissions charged with working out security concepts, and the determination of the media in covering the problems of the armed forces. Such attention gives one hope that military reform is imminent. Another hopeful sign is the growing contacts of Georgian frontier troops with American and Ukrainian colleagues, which may be the beginning of a breakthrough to end the Soviet mentality in the Georgian military.

At this stage, it is necessary to overcome the lack of relevant knowledge and to tackle these questions in a broad social discussion. It is also clear that in both the security concept and the military doctrine, planners need to take into account the possible threats, geopolitics, and the landscape of the country and its resources, as well as the recent experience of the wars in Abkhazia and Chechnya. Without striving to create an invincible army, the government at least needs to improve civil-military relations to prevent them from turning into a threat to the state and the stability of the country.

Internal and external policy initiatives are the only way to develop Georgian statehood. Unfortunately, the current political elite is characterized by passivity and the permanent expectation of external assistance or support. It is no secret that some important aspects of the recent "Peaceful Caucasus" initiative came largely from outside.[137] History has shown repeatedly that great powers or international organizations are often inclined to support the status-quo to preserve stability when faced with various unexpected developments or organizational inertia. It is often the unrecognized peoples who strive to achieve difficult objectives and appear as harbingers of change. In Georgia there is a concern that by expanding to the east NATO may agree to recognize the dominant role of Russia in several regions, including the Transcaucasus. Even if this concern is not well founded, it proves again that countries of any size and significance must take care of their own destinies and secure their rights, in the eyes of the international community, by their activities.

Conclusion

The problems facing Georgia, even though they can be exaggerated in the view of the political elite and the society at large, create a danger for the country's political stability, state independence, and national sovereignty.

The measures undertaken by the government are somewhat rational and effective, but they generally have an ad hoc character. What is called the "policy of balance" sometimes acquires a passive character, the tactic of wait and see; the shortcomings of such a policy become apparent only after the fact. Until recently, Georgia fully supported Russian policy in Chechnya, it was slow in establishing ties with Ukraine, and it was passive in using the opportunities of the PfP program. Hoping to receive Russian financial aid and to restore the old economic ties of the Soviet era, it was slow with economic reforms.

Georgia's policy in the resolution of ethnic conflicts has been passive as well. The external factor—Russia—was absolutized; initiative and creative approaches were lacking. Even during the war in Abkhazia, the Georgian side did not have a plan. The leadership mainly awaited Russia's permission as to whether or not to conduct combat operations. Until the latest stage in the negotiations on the Russian military presence, Georgia was merely considering Russian proposals; the texts of some agreements are not even translated into Georgian.

The reasons behind Georgia's passivity are the belief in the omnipotence of external forces, especially Russia, lack of experience, and the lack of professional diplomats and civil servants. Fortunately, during the past couple of years the government has pursued a more active policy in various external and internal directions. Perhaps this has been a result of dispelling the hypnotic myth about the omnipotence of the former metropole, as well as realizing that sovereignty requires greater responsibility and creativity in decision making. One can only hope that this activization in both the economy and the foreign policy is a precursor of a new, responsible political elite and a cohesive political strategy.

But the signs of an active, well-conceptualized policy are too new to talk about a mature state consciousness in Georgia. For independent thinking and statehood to become established, the country needs further support of the international community within the frameworks of the OSCE, the IMF, and other organizations and programs.

In conclusion, it should be noted that state security and Georgian statehood in general require a number of necessary steps, such as working out the concept of state security and including as a part of this concept an optimal model of the relationship between the armed forces and the society. The latter step should be understood as one of the main components of state security. If a state's foreign policy encompasses its security, then the foreign policy must be multifaceted, maneuverable, and "balanced;" such requirements do not exclude stable interests, objectives, and priorities in foreign policy. However, civil-military relations must be founded on a clearer model.

The problem of the Georgian armed forces is particularly topical for two main reasons: 1) It is widely acknowledged that in order to achieve stability, social cohesion, and civic loyalty, the state must improve socio-economic conditions and guarantee the observance of basic human rights. As long as the conditions in the Georgian army are not improved and the society continues to see its armed forces as an evil that must be avoided, Georgia will continue to exist on the periphery of the international community. 2) The state has to protect the rule of law both inside the country and on its borders. Stability should be based on the guarantees and authority of legitimate state structures. Lacking such stability, Georgia's economic recovery is unlikely. This means that Georgia needs effective armed forces.

Without a conducive economic climate and civil rights guarantees, the Georgian state is deprived of its foundation. To foster and protect a democratic socio-economic and political infrastructure, the state needs effective armed forces. In the Georgian experience, these fundamental conditions of statehood are untenable unless the government turns its attention

to defining and organizing its civil-military relations. Georgia has no excuse to do otherwise since, in the view of Samuel P. Huntington, this governmental task does not incur great social or political costs and can be based on wide political support.[138]

Notes

[1] Ghia Nodia, "Georgia's Identity Crisis," Journal of Democracy 6 (January 1995): 104–116.
[2] Many Western analysts believe that Shevardnadze is virtually the only guarantee of Georgian stability. See Johnathan Aves, Georgia: From Chaos to Stability? (London: Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1996).
[3] In addition to monitoring the Georgian mass media, the author conducted interviews with different politicians and military people during 1993–1996. To a certain degree, the analysis of opinions on security from Georgian political circles is based on publications of the Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy, and Development, especially Developing the National Security Concept for Georgia (1996), Elections in Georgia (1995), and The Georgian Chronicle and The Army and Society (monthly bulletins). The author took a direct part in the preparation and editing of these publications.
[4] Reminiscences of the former Georgian prime minister T. Sigua, Dro, no. 3 (January 1997), in Georgian.
[5] Interview with the former chairman of the Georgian parliament A. Asatiani, March 18, 1996.
[6] Interview with the military attaché of Russian Federation in Georgia V. T. Golub, November 11, 1995.
[7] Developing the National Security Concept for Georgia, 48, 56, 63.
[8] In 1993 Member of Parliament N. Natadze informed the UN that Russia was conducting the war against Georgia. Georgian television program "Alioni," July 26 1993.
[9] Sakartvelos Respublika, October 12, 1993.
[10] David Darchiashvili, "Russian Troops in Georgia: The Aims and the Means," The Georgia Profile 1, nos. 7–8 (1996): 14.
[11] Interview with Shevardnadze, Georgian television, October 9 1993; Georgian radio, October 12, 1993.
[12] Sakartvelos Respublika, April 21, 1993.
[13] Interview with V. Chkeidze, Georgian television, April 10, 1996.
[14] Sakartvelos Respublika, April 20, 1996.
[15] Ahali Taoba, August 15, 1996.
[16] Georgian television program "Matsne," December 15, 1996.
[17] Alia, October 5–6, 1996. Regarding this, one should also note the recent decree of Shevardnadze about patrolling the Georgian sea coast with the country's own forces. Press Digest, Sarke information agency, November 28-–December 3, 1996.
[18] Speech of R. Adamia during hearings in the Defense Committee of the parliament, November 8, 1996. Adamia pointed out that in response to NATO enlargement to the east, Russia might press more against its southern neighbors.
[19] From unofficial conversations with the representatives of the Georgian political establishment.
[20] Aves, Georgia: From Chaos to Stability?, 28.
[21] Russian television program "NT Segodnia," December 21, 1994.
[22] Darchiashvili, "Russian Troops in Georgia," 14.
[23] The Georgian Chronicle 4, no. 10 (1995).
[24] Zakavkazskie Voennie Vedomosti, no. 158 (August 15 1995).
[25] According to the Agreement on the Status of Russian Troops in Georgia, which is considered an acting document, the mechanisms for controlling these troops are, in fact, established by the joint

commission responsible for interpreting the agreement (Article 32). For a comparison, one should examine the agreement on U.S. military bases in Greece, according to which each installation is supervised by a Greek officer who has access to everything except codes. See Simon Duke, U.S. Military Forces and Installations in Europe, Base Agreement Between Greece and the USA (New York: Oxford University Press/SIPRI, 1989), 169.

[26] Nationalism, Ethnic Identity, and Conflict Management in Russia Today, ed. Gail W. Lapidus and Renee De Nevers (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, Center for International Security and Arms Control, 1995), 9.

[27] Zakavkazskie Voennie Vedomosti, no. 191 (October 5 1995).

[28] Zakavkazskie Voennie Vedomosti, no. 136 (July 19, 1995).

[29] One can mention the refusal of Aslan Abashidze to meet the U.S. Ambassador in June 1996. (About the Ajarian case, see David Darchiashvili, “Adjaria: The Crossroads of Civilizations,” Tbilisi, Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy, and Development, 1996.

[30] Aves, Georgia: From Chaos to Stability?, 45

[31] The Georgian Chronicle 4 (August 1995).

[32] Developing the National Security Concept for Georgia, 55.

[33] Constitution of the Republic of Georgia, paragraph 2.

[34] Developing the National Security Concept for Georgia, 62.

[35] Georgian television, March 23, 1995.

[36] Developing the National Security Concept for Georgia, 50

[37] Confidential interview with the representatives of the Georgian Frontier Guard, September 19, 1996.

[38] Shvidi Dge, no. 42 (October 18–24, 1996).

[39] Iberia information agency, press release, March 29, 1994.

[40] In private conversations many Georgian politicians stress that if Russia wants to create new problems for Georgia, it will make them in Javakheti, an area inhabited mostly by Armenians and the location of a Russian military base.

[41] Developing the National Security Concept for Georgia, 49–50.

[42] Interview with Givi Bolotashvili, advisor to A. Abashidze, October 1, 1996.

[43] BJI information agency, press release, August 19, 1994; Droni, November 21, 1995.

[44] The lack of high-ranking Georgian combat officers in the military was a legacy of the Stalinist era. According to many witnesses (through interviews and private conversations with Georgian officers and politicians, among them: Deputy Defense Minister Lieutenant-General G. Nikolaishvili: Military Prosecutor of Georgia General N. Gogitidze; the head of the Low Department of the Georgian Border Guard, G. Kokhreidze; former Georgian prime minister T. Sigua; former member of the parliamentary military-building subcommission, M. Makashvili; employees of the Military Historical Institute of the Russian Federation; and former chief of staff of the army’s First Brigade, R. Tsitsishvili) in the second half of the 1950s, military service lost its attractiveness in the eyes of Georgians, largely attributable to the obstacles in military careers faced by Soviet officers of Georgian origin after the death of Stalin. In 1956, the national division of Georgia was abolished, which helped to foster the country’s antimilitary mood. After that, fewer and fewer Georgians entered Soviet military colleges. The situation may have been worsened by the devaluation of the communist idea, which became apparent in Georgia during the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1980s Georgia ranked low among Soviet nations in number of officers. From 1985 on, no Georgians graduated from Soviet military colleges. Among those graduates who chose military careers, the majority preferred rear service. At the time of the USSR’s collapse, from among 300 acting Georgian Soviet officers holding the rank of major or higher, 80 percent served in the rear. In fact, practically the only source of more or less educated and devoted professional cadres for a new Georgian army was the Tbilisi Artillery College. In the mid-1970s, the college graduated about ten Georgian officers. Afterwards, some of them played a prominent role in creating the new Georgian armed forces. Among them are former defense minister G. Karkarashvili; former commander of the Interior Troops, G. Toradze; and former chief of the General Staff of the Georgian army, A. Tskitishvili.

[45] L. Dolidze, Generalami ne Rojdaiutsia (Tbilisi 1993), 396–97.
[46] Ibid., 380, 387, 398.
[47] Many officers and people involved in army building stress the enthusiasm of those days. Besides the interviews conducted by the author, the data about it can be found in Dro, no. 3 (January 1997), and Mkhedari 2 (March–April 1991).
[48] Interview with M. Makashvili, the former member of the parliamentary subcommission responsible for army building, January 5, 1996.
[49] Sakartvelos Mkhedrioni 2, no. 22 (January 12, 1995).
[50] Interview with former member of parliament M. Makashvili, January 5, 1996.
[51] David Darchiashvili, "Mkhedrioni: Warriors of Georgia," Tbilisi, Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy, and Development, 1995. See also Sakartvelos Mkhedrioni 2, no. 22 (January 12, 1995).
[52] Such an opinion is also based on the personal impressions of the author, who was at that time the editor in chief of the political newspaper Kartveli Eri and directly observed the events inside these political circles.
[53] Roy Allison, Military Forces in the Soviet Successor States. Adelphi Paper 280 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, October 1993); Jane's Intelligence Review (December 1994): 559–61; Civil-Military Relations and the Consolidation of Democracy. Conference Report. (Washington, D.C.: International Forum for Democratic Studies and the George C. Marshal European Center for Security Studies, June 1995), 18–19; Aves, Georgia: From Chaos to Stability?; Charles H. Fairbanks, "The Postcommunist Wars," Journal of Democracy 6 (December 1995).
[54] Interview with an officer of the army's First Brigade, established in 1992. Unlike the National Guard, the upper tier of this brigade's chain of command was staffed by professional officers. Nevertheless, the brigade lost its "professional" quality quite soon, after some of its officers joined in the criminal activity. In summer 1993, the brigade refused to accept a new commander if he did not agree to certain conditions.
[55] For Mkhedrioni's criminal activities, see Alia, no. 313 (January 25–26, 1997).
[56] Interview with former prime minister T. Sigua, Sarangi, June 30, 1994.
[57] Interview with Chikobava, the head of the department in the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Georgian television, January 11, 1994.
[58] Data from the accounts of members of different units. See also; R. Bejashvili, "The Chronicle of Betrayal," Mkhedari, nos. 1–4 (January 1994).
[59] Shvidi Dge, no. 16 (April 30–May 3, 1993).
[60] Fairbanks, "The Postcommunist Wars," 29
[61] Police in Georgia traditionally lacked the public's respect and were especially loyal to the Communist leadership. Shevardnadze himself was Minister of Internal Affairs during the Soviet era.
[62] Confidential interviews with former Mkhedrionians,. Autumn 1996.
[63] Abjari, no. 5 (April 1993).
[64] Fairbanks, "The Postcommunist Wars," 22
[65] Such an assumption is based on conversations with many former soldiers and officers, as well as journalists, who saw the war. Certain units—Orbi, Afgans, Batumi unit, Sukhumi battalions, etc.—were involved in some sort of illegal activities to a lesser extent, and did not exercise violence over civilians. They also had a certain degree of cohesiveness and combat readiness.
[66] Aves, Georgia: From Chaos to Stability?, 21, 24.
[67] Ibid., 21
[68] Treaty on Friendship and Good-Neighborliness between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia, February 3, 1994, paragraph 3.
[69] Treaty on the Status of Military Formations of the Russian Federation Located on the Territory of the Republic of Georgia, October 1993, paragraph 5, article 19.
[70] The treaty on the status of Russian troops in Georgia came into the force by the personal order of Shevardnadze. Interview with the representatives of the Parliamentary Defense Committee, October 12, 1996.
[71] Confidential interviews with the representatives of the Ministry of Defense. According to the same

sources, there is an unwritten rule that law enforcement ministries of Georgia should be under the control of the headquarters of the Russian troops in Georgia, and after Georgia's joining the CIS the heads of these ministries are appointed only by Russian agreement. Close relations between the commander in chief of the Russian troops in Georgia, Reut, and Nadibaidze, as well as Giorgadze, somehow confirm these assumptions.

[72] The Georgian Military Chronicle 2, no. 8 (December 1995).

[73] Interview with Dergilev, the editor in chief of the newspaper of Russian troops in Georgia Zakavkazskie Voennie Vedomosti , January 9, 1996.

[74] BJI information agency, press release, January 12, 1995.

[75] Confidential interviews with the Georgian officers.

[76] The Georgian Military Chronicle 2, no. 6 (October 1995); interview with the author of the article, the head of the press service of the Interior Troops of Georgia, I. Aladashvili

[77] Developing the National Security Concept for Georgia, 47

[78] The problem of obsolete Soviet-style military training is discussed in Western literature. This problem is also faced by other post Soviet states. See Peter Vares and Mare Haab, "The Baltic States: Quo Vadis?," in Central and Eastern Europe: The Challenge of Transition (New York: Oxford University Press/SIPRI, 1993)

[79] Constitution of the Republic of Georgia, paragraphs 3, 65, 73, 98–100.

[80] Developing the National Security Concept for Georgia, 46

[81] Droni, December 20, 1996; Kavkasioni, December 19, 1996.

[82] The budget of 1997 was more detailed, but according to independent analysts it is still far from having the requirements of transparency.

[83] Interview with the former prime minister T. Sigua, January 1997.

[84] Interview with the former commander of Georgian navy, Admiral Javakhishvili, Dro, no. 3 (January 1997),

[85] In 1992–93, many volunteers were directly appointed as officers. The commander of the army corps was a young colonel who had never served in the Soviet army or studied in a military college. Some of these officers did not even know their specific military rank.

[86] Interviews conducted by the author.

[87] Confidential interviews in the Eleventh Brigade.

[88] Information from the main military prosecutor of Georgia, Georgian television, November 1, 1996.

[89] Information from the officers of the Eleventh Brigade.

[90] Shvidi Dge, no. 50 (December 13–19, 1996).

[91] Svobodnaia Gruzia, no. 12 (January 30, 1997).

[92] The new chief of the General Staff was a schoolmate of the minister; the commander of the headquarters company of the Eleventh Brigade is the son of the brigade's commander. Many officers said that every newly appointed commander managed to change the entire core of certain units.

[93] According to many accounts from the Eleventh Brigade, after the appointment of the new commander the number of residents from his own region increased not only among soldiers, but in the officer corps as well. The author had the opportunity to study the cadre issue in the Twenty-Fifth Batumi Brigade, in which the commander and the main core of its officers were from Batumi and its vicinity.

[94] Rezonansi, no. 192 (October 12, 1996); Kavkasioni, October 12, 1996.

[95] Akhali Taoba, no. 4 (January 7, 1997).

[96] It is a fact that, initially, the units like Mkhedrioni and Orbi were staffed mostly by people from the central districts of Tbilisi, inhabited mostly by middle and upper-middle classes and considered bearers of Georgian culture.

[97] According to initial data of a sociological poll conducted by the Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy, and Development, inhabitants of Tbilisi and their relatives almost completely refuse to serve in military bodies; village dwellers dominate the ranks of the army. Having had the opportunity to examine the personnel files of the officers of the Twenty-Fifth Brigade (from a total of eighty-one, it was possible to examine the files of nineteen officers, who represent the main posts; fifteen came

from peasant families and grew up in villages; one is a descendant of a military family; and one is from workers' family) the author concluded that the majority of the officers of this unit comes from the unprivileged areas of Soviet and post-Soviet society. Officers from the other units whom the author relied on to meet the residents of the more or less prestigious parts of the capital are exceptions. Regarding Georgian generals, one can say that they all have a thoroughly Soviet background. From a social point of view, they also represent mostly workers' and peasants' families. The defense minister himself grew up in mountainous village and was educated in Russia; by his mentality, he is alienated from the cultural orientations of the Georgian elite. The list and biographies of current Georgian generals are published in Generalami ne rojdaiutsia by L. Dolidze (Tbilisi 1993). It is interesting that among Georgian officers the joke that the Georgian army is a "Peasants' and Workers' Army" is widespread.

[98] Martin Edmonds, Armed Services and Society (Leicester, U.K.: Leicester University Press, 1988), 44–67.

[99] Alienation of the society from the army was mentioned at a recent conference on security problems in Georgia. See Developing the National Security Concept for Georgia, 21.

[100] Jane's Intelligence Review (December 1994): 559–61.

[101] From confidential talks in the Ministry of Defense. Such a problem was also revealed during the brainstorming session conducted by the author among the officers of the special unit of the Georgian Frontier Guard on August 17, 1996.

[102] The links between the lack of transparency in Georgian national politics on the one hand, and the problem of loyalty on the other, was especially brought out at the above-mentioned conference on Georgian security. See Developing the National Security Concept for Georgia, 60–66

[103] Jan Arveds Trapans, "National Security Concepts in Central and Eastern Europe," unpublished ms., March 1997.

[104] As an example, see "Against Whom Is the Georgian Army Preparing?" Droni, November 21 1995, p. 3.

[105] Sakartvelos Respublika, July 27, 1993.

[106] Interviews with Shevardnadze, Georgian television, March 23, 1995; Georgian radio, March 27, 1995.

[107] Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia on Russian Military Bases on the Territory of the Republic of Georgia, September 1995, paragraph 3, p.4.

[108] Developing the National Security Concept for Georgia, 50

[109] Ibid., 50

[110] Interview with Shevardnadze, Georgian television, October 9, 1993; Georgian radio, October 12, 1993.

[111] "Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia on Russian Military Bases on the Territory of the Republic of Georgia," Iberia spektri, March 28, 1995.

[112] Sakartvelos Respublika, July 14, 1993.

[113] Sakartvelos Respublika, October 19, 1993. One should note that such open requests are not generally appreciated by the Georgian public.

[114] Rezonansi, October 28, 1996.

[115] Akhali taoba, August 15, 1996.

[116] Foreign Broadcast Information Service, SOV- 96- 046, pp. 53–54; see also Rezonansi, December 2, 1996.

[117] Interview with Shevardnadze, Georgian radio, March 14, 1994.

[118] The Georgian Chronicle (November 1995): 5.

[119] Interview with Lieutenant-Colonel D. Nairashvili, January 1997.

[120] CIS and Middle East: A Monthly Summary and News Analysis of the CIS Press 20, no. 10–11 (1995), p. 6.

[121] Developing the National Security Concept for Georgia, 55

[122] Sakartvelos Respublika, February 15, 1994.

[123] Interview with the commander in chief of the Georgian Frontier Guard, General V. Chkheidze,

September 1996.
[124] The Georgian Military Chronicle 3, no. 9 (January–February 1996): 1.
[125] Joseph P. Harahan and John C. Kuhni, "On-Site Inspections under the CFE Treaty," Washington D.C., 1996, 334, 339.
[126] OMRI Daily Digest, April 6, 1996.
[127] Shevardnadze's speech at the meeting of the Board of the Defense Ministry, October 31, 1995, as reported by Sarke information agency, November 1, 1995.
[128] Edmonds, Armed Forces and Society, 22–27.
[129] Interview with Lieutenant-General G. Nikolaishvili, October 17, 1996.
[130] Sakartvelos Respublika, May 14, 1993.
[131] Interview with Shevardnadze, Georgian radio, February 21, 1994.
[132] Jane's Intelligence Review (December 1994): 560.
[133] Interview with the former commander in chief of the Georgian navy, Admiral A. Javakhisvili, Dro, no. 3 (January 1997).
[134] These documents have not been published yet. They were provided to the author by the parliamentary Committee on Defense and Security.
[135] The "List of the State Secrets," recently adopted by the president, proves the continued existence of Soviet-style thinking among Georgia's political elite. It is quite a strange document in itself if one keeps in mind that under the CFE and CFE-A1 treaties, Georgia is obliged to disclose much military-related data. According to this list, structure, armaments, number, strength, and even current history of the units are declared state secrets. Sakartvelos Respublika, February 4, 1997.
[136] Droni, no. 96 (December 24–26, 1996).
[137] The West tries to encourage Transcaucasian dialogue and cooperation. At the same time, Russia supports the idea of Caucasian friendship under its aegis. Georgian politics seems to be influenced from both directions and, balancing between them, often lacks its own initiatives.
[138] Civil-Military Relations and Consolidation of Democracy.

European Security and Conflict Resolution in the Transcaucasus

Nerses Mkrttchian

The formation of a new European security system is a subject of primary importance on the international agenda. After the collapse of the world order created at Potsdam and Helsinki, the problem of European security has re-emerged in a qualitatively new light. Paradoxically, with the disappearance of the continent's political line of separation, the problem of European security became more complex. Ethnic conflicts, the development of new states, and, generally, the process of sovereignization of ethnic entities have led to a fragmentation of Europe's international landscape. One might say that all the issues that have emerged recently amount to one essential question: What is European security?

In attempting to categorize the main arenas of European security, as well as other actors that can be of decisive importance for European security, one may identify three main groups of states: the Transatlantic community, the West European community, and the Russia-centered community. All three communities seek to play a leading role in the issues of European security at different levels of policy making. Moreover, within these three communities political thought differs on the configuration of borders, turning the problem of regional security into a problem of "European" or "Eurasian" security.

From the point of view of this study, the question arises whether the conflicts in the Transcaucasus are a part of European security or as part of security in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Middle East, or other regions that are unrelated to the European security structure. For the three republics of the Transcaucasus—Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia—the vital question is whether an all-European consensus can be created with respect to the structure of European security, its boundaries, and a body responsible for decision-making based on common norms. This consensus would permit the settlement of conflicts in the region as a constitutive element of European security.

From the point of view of conflict resolution in the Transcaucasus, this question of an all-European consensus is inextricably linked to the relationship of the three main groupings of states and their interaction, interdependence, and capabilities. Admittedly, the conflicts in the Transcaucasus cannot significantly affect the structure of European security; thus the purpose of this paper is to explore the extent to which the new image of the European security architecture affects the conflicts in this region, the possibility of the emergence of a pan-European security area, and the role of international organizations in that area. The vast majority of studies on this issue link the question of future European security with the stability of the Transatlantic community (NATO), the strengthening of the West European community (the success of the European Union and of European integration in general), and

the possibility of an emerging Russo-centric system (completing the integration within the CIS). Let us briefly characterize these three scenarios.

The Stability of the Transatlantic Community and the European Union

The majority of experts view the stability of the Transatlantic community as the most enduring factor of European security. One might say that in the countries of Western and East-Central Europe there exists a consensus on this issue, according to which NATO, owing to its efficiency in planning and operational capacities, can become the axis of European security.

However, the situation is not clear-cut. Among NATO's member-states there exist alternative strategies connected with the role of the organization in Europe and those of Europe's independent defense structures. Although the member-states of the European Union make constant references at the diplomatic level to the irreversibility of European integration, there are nevertheless serious contradictions among France, Germany, and Great Britain with respect to the independent defense policy of Europe and the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the issue of the monetary union, and mechanisms of governance. There are also serious disagreements among the aforementioned triumvirate on the strategy of EU enlargement. However, the Franco-German duet continues to be the engine of European integration.

With the emergence of an economically powerful reunited Germany in the center of Europe, the application for EU membership by the countries of East-Central Europe, and the admission of the Scandinavian countries and Austria, the center of the European Union has moved to the north, strengthening the influence of Germany in this region. France is interested in a commensurate expansion of the EU toward the countries of the Mediterranean basin, where there are areas of dangerous instability connected with its interests.

France has expressed a desire to create an alliance of common interests among the countries of "Latin Europe" (Spain, Portugal, Italy, and France) that could play a central role in the southern flank of the European Union. In this area, France's policy with regard to NATO is to command this southern flank of the alliance. The failure of the European Union in settling the conflict in Yugoslavia[1] and the decisive role of NATO under American leadership are to a large extent responsible for the return of France into NATO's decision-making structure. However, one might say that France has not changed its "Gaullic" approach toward NATO, but merely has replaced its strategy of external resistance with that of resistance from within.[2]

Germany's policy is characterized by its "openness" in all directions. According to a number of experts, Germany is conducting the "policy of an advocate" (Eastern Europe and Russia, EU and NATO, European integration and the structures of the North Atlantic alliance).[3] Objectively, Germany is destined to play a central role in Eastern Europe and have economic and political leverage in the affairs of Europe, which brings to memory certain historical precedents. Germany is interested in creating an independent European defense structure while preserving NATO. While these approaches may seem contradictory, they are more like two stages of the same policy. The expansion of NATO will neutralize the conditions of a vacuum in Eastern Europe, which was historically dangerous for Russo-German relations. At the same time, the creation of a collective security body for the

European Union is a future possibility and, if successful, will greatly enhance Germany's role in international affairs.

Great Britain decisively speaks in favor of preserving NATO's role as a guarantor of European security. From the very beginning of the process of European integration, Britain has had grave concerns about the prospect of consolidation in continental Europe, especially with regard to the political integration foreseen by the Maastricht agreement. The implementation of this agreement is ultimately aimed at effective supranational political, commercial, and military unification, which would push leadership toward the Franco-German pole. For this reason, the main postulate of British policy is to view NATO as the basis of European security.[4] British participation in European integration is intended, first, to prevent Britain from being marginalized and left out of the context of West European interrelations and, second, to influence the implementation of European integration according to its own model: to unite Europe as a free-exchange zone, without deep political, defense, and monetary-fiscal integration.

The sole European military structure, the Western European Union (WEU), has always been loosely organized and has not played any decisive role in either military defense or peacekeeping during its five decades of existence. In the Gulf War and the crisis in Yugoslavia it played the role of a second fiddle. In a tactical sense, it is not the main defense organization of the EU, although according to the Maastricht agreement, its status is denoted as such and, at the same time, as the European wing of NATO. Since 1996, the series of intergovernmental conferences that are to outline the future of the EU have put forward three different concepts for EU policy in the areas of defense and security:

a) The EU adopts clearly defensive objectives. These are implemented through the use of the military in accordance with an international mandate for evacuations, peacekeeping, and crisis-management operations. The WEU is directly subordinate to the orders of the appropriate body of the EU. All EU members can decide equally on their participation in such operations, while NATO must play the role of defending against territorial assaults on its member-states (according to the Finno-Swedish option).

b) NATO can also be used for the aforementioned operations (according to the Franco-German option).

c) Whatever objectives ultimately result from the intergovernmental conferences, the WEU must not be directly subordinate to EU commanders, but only assist the EU in carrying out its actions. In the WEU, decisions are made only by full-fledged members, while neutral countries can participate only after the decisions are made (according to the British option).

In all three options one finds the expression of national strategies which to a certain extent fluctuate between the real force of NATO and the guarantees and aspirations for an independent European defense system.[5] The theoretical difficulties demonstrate that it would hardly be possible to enact an independent European military mechanism in the foreseeable future. One should note that there exist Euro-American agreements aimed at creating a European defense capability: the Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Force (ARRC), the Multinational Division, the Euro-Corps, and the Combined Joint Task Force

(CJTF). However, these concepts of European forces still remain at the planning stage.[6] At France's initiative the countries of "Latin Europe" signed another agreement on a rapid-action force at the end of last year to conduct crisis-management actions in their southern regions. This became just another among similar paper projects.

Without dwelling on the issues of European defense and security structures and, in particular, on forces created within the WEU-NATO structure, one can say that in terms of realpolitik there is only one force on the European continent—NATO. After the Dayton agreements and the approval of a schedule and roster of new members for the expansion of NATO, it appears that the dilemma between America's isolationism and its assumption of an active, leading role in Europe has been resolved in favor of the latter (although many analysts point out that U.S. policy can change significantly over the course of time).[7]

Having conducted a new type of operation in Bosnia, NATO underwent a major transformation—from serving as a defensive alliance to conducting peacekeeping missions (i.e., becoming a guarantor of European security).

In my judgment it is possible to make the following conclusions regarding the stability of NATO:

- Among the member-states of NATO there exist different strategies regarding the issues of Europe's domain and the EU. The behavior of the West European countries shows signs of the classical system of "European equilibrium," whereby these countries conduct policies of counterbalance and "insurance." However, the current situation differs from this classical system since European integration has become a strong tradition that attributes a parallel nature to bilateral and multilateral relations.

- The formation of an independent European defense system is in a permanent embryonic condition, and the tempo of its formation has fallen far behind the speed of emerging dangers and threats to the EU. The diplomacy of small and big alliances, both in Western structures and outside of them, is an impediment to the military-political cohesion of the EU.

- For the vast majority of the countries of Western and Eastern Europe the only realistic prospect for European security is the preservation of a reorganized NATO and the expansion of its sphere of responsibility to the east.

- The United States has formalized the policy of expanding NATO and is committing resources and efforts to its implementation. At the same time the United States has, mainly at the diplomatic level, defended to a certain extent the official independence of the EU. The United States still lacks an allied European defense and security organization subordinate to a centralized command or capable of acting as a unified force that could share the burden of providing for European security. The fact of American leadership in Western Europe and the East-Central Europe region is obvious and currently has no alternatives. The Transatlantic community is, therefore, relatively stable and viable.

Russia, the CIS, and European Security

The subject of this study is directly linked to the relationship between European security and the Russian Federation and is an inextricable part of it. In particular, the problem of resolving the conflicts in the Transcaucasus is linked to the relations between NATO and Russia, between the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Russia, and to the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.

The July 1997 decision to admit new NATO members means that previous debates on the question of NATO expansion are now merely of archival importance. The principal question that requires clarification for Western strategy is whether European security needs a stable Russia or a weak and decentralized Russia unable to exert its influence on neighboring regions. The question of describing the Russian danger remains open: Under what circumstances is Russia dangerous? When it expresses an important role in its neighboring areas based on multilateral relations and agreements, or when external actors expect a new Russian revanchism and create separation lines to counter it? From the point of view of resolving the conflicts in the Transcaucasus, it is important to find a clear answer to these questions.

Recent Western strategies and political studies regarding Russia's relationship with its neighbors often refer to the country's nationalist and neo-imperialist motives. However, the situation is not that clear-cut, since it is difficult to conclude that Russia's policy of preserving its spheres of influence is simply an expression of its imperialist aspirations. In fact, events in the Transcaucasus pose a threat to Russian federalism, and the preservation of a Russian presence in these areas is a means of sparing the Russian Federation from a total collapse of its southern regions. The loss of Russian control over Georgia's secessionist Abkhazia region will also mean the strengthening of separatism in the Russian Federation's North Caucasus and the possible elimination of Russian sovereignty in that area. The destruction of Nagorno-Karabakh's sovereignization will open the door for the creation of a large zone of Turkish influence to include Chechnya, Bashkortostan, and Tatarstan. In Russian diplomatic discourse the notion of a Russian sphere of influence refers only to the "Near Abroad" (i.e., the countries of the former Soviet Union) and not those of East-Central Europe that are a new sphere of responsibility for NATO. In Russian diplomatic circles, the areas adjacent to East-Central Europe—generally speaking, the Balkans, Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan—are referred to as the "soft underbelly," vulnerable areas for Russia. As these two examples demonstrate, the use of confrontational concepts in characterizing Russian foreign policies is very dangerous. The localization of the "Russian danger," whether by isolating Russia or by isolating other countries from Russia, cannot be the best form for creating a new structure of European security.

Although NATO and certain U.S. political circles maintain that Russia will not be alienated by NATO expansion, and although a Charteron Cooperation has been signed by NATO and Russia, this will hardly be adequate to compensate Russia. Rather, it is an attempt to alleviate tension. The contradictory approaches at the March 1997 Helsinki summit between Russia, which seeks a legally binding accord, and the United States, which seeks a politically binding charter, confirm the tactical nature of the negotiations. The transformation of NATO's role in the Bosnian conflict from a military to a peacekeeping alliance seems utopian to Moscow and is hard for Russian military and political elites to comprehend. While no verbal diplomatic declaration will satisfy Russia, and even if it takes an extremely negative stance, its opinion will not be taken into account. Hence, the only

realistic option for Moscow is to obtain maximum benefit in return for withdrawing its resistance. Some observers claim that NATO expansion will serve to help avoid future danger in the region. However, Russia has no conflicts with the countries of East-Central Europe. So, in fact, the rapid expansion of this military alliance toward Russia's borders represents a present as well as a future danger for Russia. Western strategists must understand Russia's opposition and concerns. In Helsinki, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin were unable to agree that NATO should not expand to the countries of the former Soviet Union, and this clearly evidenced the uncertain status of this region.

The idea of concluding a charter agreement with Russia flows from a well-defined approach in "Western" policies that seeks to provide Russia a "+1" status: the Group of Seven (G-7)+1, the NATO 16+1, the Contact Group 4+1, etc. (The agreements achieved in Helsinki to include Russia in the G-7 as an active participant without full-fledged membership does not indicate a change in Russia's "+1" political and economic status.) The same status is accorded to Russia in the new European security structure. In Eastern Europe there will be securely defined borders and the agreement concluded with Russia that will allow for the West's political intervention in Russia's vast neighboring areas. This differs from the 1975 Helsinki agreements, in which the Soviet Union held a counterpart status. This conception of Russia's status is why Russia is striving to preserve the immediate post–Cold War "neutral buffer zone" in European security affairs. In the countries of East-Central Europe, Russian diplomacy is attempting to preserve and, if possible, innovate on the role of the OSCE.

Russia's policy toward the OSCE is developing in two directions that are diametrically opposed to each other. During the 1994 OSCE summit, Boris Yeltsin spoke about the "Cold Peace" and against NATO expansion. The Russian delegation advanced the argument that there is a need to create a pan-European security organization or to reform the OSCE to become the highest decision-making body on issues of European security. These arguments have two purposes: first, to preserve the right of veto in decision making on European security matters and, second, to acquire a mandate for conducting peacekeeping operations in the Near Abroad. In this way, any mandate of the OSCE for Russian (CIS), or even NATO, peacekeeping operations will have to reflect Russia's interests. In the case of operations conducted by Russia alone, its influence in the Near Abroad will be legitimized. If, on the other hand, operations are conducted by, or jointly with, NATO, this will mean that there has been a mutually beneficial diplomatic compromise.

However, the Russian position with regard to the OSCE is suspect, as clearly demonstrated by the conflicts in the Caucasus and Transcaucasus and especially after the Russian campaign in Chechnya. On the one hand, Russia is willing to preserve the influence of the OSCE on the territory of the former Soviet Union; on the other hand, it is limiting the circumference of its activity.[8] It is noteworthy that after the presidential elections in Chechnya, Russian officials declared that there was no longer a need for OSCE mediation. One can draw the conclusion that among the internationally accepted UN norms for peacekeeping operations, such as legitimacy and impartiality, Russia needs only the former principle for its policies. In other words, the Russian strategy is aimed at establishing within OSCE structures a system of mandates for regional powers to implement peacekeeping in their spheres of influence, following the example of the mandate system of the League of Nations or the status quo of "Helsinki-2" and the division of Europe into spheres of responsibility.

These arguments exist only as diplomatic stratagems and are far from reality, especially with regard to the formation of a Russo-centric system, since the majority of the former

Soviet republics pursue policies that essentially reject CIS integration in favor of creating small alliances based on subregional and functional interests (e.g. oil production and transport deals that link Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan). Indeed, the main basis of support for the CIS today is the unique Russian military-technical role in the commonwealth's regions, including the Transcaucasus and its conflicts.

From this standpoint, the chief item on the diplomatic agenda of Russian-Western relations is the CFE Treaty, which is the subject of much controversy and which the Russian Federation proposes to revise. The Russian policy of revising the CFE Treaty will become firmer in view of the real prospect of NATO enlargement. Russian officials have repeatedly expressed their concern with regard to the deployment of new conventional and nuclear forces in the future member-states of NATO.

The 1992 Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe was concluded as a result of the Treaty on Security-Building Measures, whose negotiations took place under the aegis of the Conference on (now Organization for) Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1986. Admittedly, the CFE Treaty was concluded during a transitional period, accompanied by intensifying regional conflicts on Russia's periphery. Especially after the Russian invasion of Chechnya, Russian officials demanded to revise the treaty. One of Moscow's reasons for revising the treaty is that the North Caucasus Military District, which was a rear area during the Soviet era, had become a border district after the USSR's dissolution.[9]

According to Russia's new military doctrine and the CIS Collective Security Treaty, the tasks of defending the external borders of Russia and the member-states of the CIS have become identical. Since the weapons used in all local conflicts occurring in the European security regions correspond to CFE Treaty classifications, it is essential for Russia to guarantee the presence of its military contingents in the flanks.

The successful implementation of this objective became possible mainly due to Russian leverage in such conflicts as Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, and Ossetia. Thus, two motorized rifle divisions are deployed in Georgia, which has also agreed to transfer its unused treaty-limited equipment (TLE) to Russia. One motorized rifle division is deployed in Armenia, and the Armenian government has agreed to lower its TLE ceilings; the remaining equipment would then be transferred to the Russian allocation for the flanks. Azerbaijan is the only country among the Transcaucasian states that does not want to cede its CFE allocations to Russia, and it is especially opposed to the Russian military presence on its territory, regardless of the mission (such as defense of borders, etc.).[10] Hence, the CFE Treaty has an immediate impact on the settlement of conflicts in the Transcaucasus. One can conclude this sequence of arguments with the following observations:

a) Russian policy in the Near Abroad is not aimed at expansion or establishment of its military presence only, but at preventing the chain reaction of the Russian Federation's internal disintegration.

b) Isolating or distancing Russia is equally dangerous for the Transatlantic community, because it can radicalize Russian foreign policy and bring to power nationalists who favor coercive methods.

c) NATO's Madrid conference, which accepted the first of new NATO member-states, will also create the new blueprint for European security. Although there has been no discussion, even at the theoretical level, of admitting the Transcaucasian states into

NATO, the possibility still exists in light of the Yeltsin-Clinton summit in Helsinki, which failed to resolve the issue of NATO expansion to Moscow's satisfaction. Currently, therefore, the resolution of conflicts in this region is possible only within the framework of the CIS and OSCE. This framework implies a central role for Russia in the region. In the framework of the Partnership for Peace, it is possible to create special cooperative programs, as was the case with Ukraine, for instance. However, given the circumstances in the Transcaucasus, such special programs will not have a practical effect for conflict resolution.

d) The United States and its allies had serious doubts about Europe's security organizations during the peacekeeping mission in the former Yugoslavia. It is therefore difficult to think about the deployment of NATO or WEU forces in the remote region of the Transcaucasus. Such deployments that are authorized by the UN or OSCE, even with the consent of the parties in conflict, will not be successful, since UN and particularly OSCE peacekeeping guidelines are not sufficient for resolving these conflicts. The option of peace enforcement, if undertaken by any Western alliance, will present risks and encounter Russian resistance at any cost. Russian peacekeeping operations do not correspond to UN standards and are often aimed at coercive solutions. However, if one looks at the results of such operations in terms of the cessation of war, the Russian efforts were successful in all conflicts on the territory of the former USSR—in Abkhazia, Ossetia, Moldova, and Nagorno-Karabakh.

e) The expansion of NATO defines the areas of contest and uncertainty (i.e., the Soviet successor states). The denial of Russia's central role in this area—particularly in the Transcaucasus in light of the oil factor—will create occasional interference by the United States and the EU in the region, which will not be conducive to strengthening regional stability.

f) The internal stability of Russia depends on the stability of its bordering areas—the Caucasus, Crimea, Tajikistan, and East-Central Europe.

g) The noninstitutional participation of Russia in European security structures cannot be a solution to Europe's security dilemma from the strategic point of view. Since Russia's transitional processes of consolidating political power and economic growth are not likely to endure, its full-fledged participation in the activities of European institutions is essential. Among international organizations, the OSCE's globalization and its radical reform, especially the establishment of new decision-making mechanisms, are important. The "consensus+1" model has proved unproductive, and OSCE's peacekeeping initiatives have clearly demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the organization as an institution for conflict resolution.

h) International interest in Caspian Sea oil fields and the indefinite geopolitical situation in the Transcaucasus have turned the region into a zone of contest with negative diplomatic, military, and economic implications, increasing the possibility for the use of coercive methods to resolve disputes, regular breakdowns of the negotiation process, and the disruption of economic ties between the region's states, Russia, and Western powers.

Regional Cooperation and the Prospects for Stability

Analyzing the prospects of forming new European security structures and their implications for resolving conflicts in the Transcaucasus, we can speak of the possibilities of involvement of "third forces" and their interaction. Naturally, the conflicts in the Transcaucasus are too small to have a substantial impact on issues of European security, unlike the conflict in Yugoslavia, for example. However, the region is linked by many threads to security issues in both Europe and the Middle East, and its importance should not be underestimated. Indeed, conflicts in the Transcaucasus as well as the entire Caucasus region affect the process of restructuring a new security system for Europe.

Mass popular movements in the Transcaucasian republics for the establishment of democracy and sovereignty during the last years of the Soviet era were accompanied by the revitalization of national ideologies. Democracy and market economies were declared top priorities by the new political groups that came to power. However, the process of restructuring new institutions of governance was accompanied by interethnic confrontations as well as internal political and social discord. Regional tensions were further complicated by political contradictions between Western states and Russia. The leading powers in the region, Turkey and Iran, on their own or with the support of allied powers, converted the post-Soviet Transcaucasus into a territory for their political and economic interventions, creating a new knot of problems in the region.

A set of issues that requires further analysis pertains to the settlement of conflicts and regional cooperation:

1. Within what framework should conflicts in the Transcaucasus be settled—by means of multilateral or bilateral relations, through comprehensive or partial solutions? Powerful states prefer an exclusive central role in the settlement of regional conflicts and tend to reject cooperation according to internationally accepted norms. For the establishment of stability under these circumstances, global powers will probably endeavor to reach comprehensive agreements in which they will have special rights for peace enforcement in their spheres of interest and influence in the new European security system. If this trend persists, a thorough reform of the UN and OSCE should be considered.

2. What will be the relevance of the unraveling military, political, and diplomatic achievements in attempting to settle conflicts in the Transcaucasus to the formation of a new concept of security for Europe? Several factors have contributed to the inefficiency of West European states to settle the Bosnian conflict, not the least of which were the rapid deterioration of the situation, the complicated structure of ethnic interaction, a desire to accord statehood to the territories inhabited by the country's different ethnic groups and the contradictory pressure to preserve the status quo, and the absence of a rapid military response mechanism. The failure of the Contact Group discredited a multilateral option of settlement, while NATO's involvement confirmed the efficiency of a single force to bring the parties to the negotiating table. The conflict of interests and the slowness of the OSCE peacemaking process in the Transcaucasus pose a similar conflict-resolution scenario. When powerful actors support different parties in conflict and compete over different mediation initiatives, the region becomes extremely militarized, and solutions by force become inevitable. Should a specific state be given an international mandate to solve the set of conflicts in the Transcaucasus? If this mechanism is accepted, the new

> system of security for Europe can be based on an acknowledgment of the pivotal role of a single guarantor power, resembling to some extent the mandate system at the beginning of this century. And yet, the impossibility of establishing a unified institution for pan-European security is a source of great danger.

Understandably, there exist both old traditions and new prospects for cooperation in the region, as well as traditions of "people's diplomacy" and trade and commercial interests. The region does have internal resources for cooperation; they are fragmented, but they often work even at times of crisis.

The "sovereignization" of ethnic minorities is the basis of the three conflicts in the Transcaucasus. Even for a relatively small region, this presents a grave danger. Although ethno-political conflict is not a disintegrating factor for ethnically homogenous Armenia, ethnic separatist and self-determination movements are a serious reality in Azerbaijan and Georgia. These two states are multiethnic, inhabited by such groups as Lezgins, Akins, Mingrels, Kurds, Cherkess, Talish, Tat, and others. The question of how far ethnic fragmentation can continue in these states is of vital importance, and the notion of a Transcaucasian union seems unrealistic from this point of view. The attempt to create a single economic or political union clashed with the region's "interest groups," which can be categorized at three levels: intraregional, consisting of bilateral relations between Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, and trilateral contacts; interregional, defined by the clash of Russian, Turkish, and Iranian interests in the region , as well as bilateral and multilateral relations; and international, informed by the regional roles of the OSCE and the UN, European and Middle Eastern security issues, development of the region's energy resources, and the involvement of the United States and the EU in the Transcaucasus.

No efforts have been made at institutionalizing cooperation at the intraregional level. Rather, they were aimed mainly at establishing a subregional balance of power, not Transcaucasian cooperation. The Transcaucasus may be characterized as having more of a tendency to disintegrate than integrate, with plain survival rather than development the overall desire. Trilateral relationships include different approaches toward groups striving for self-determination and statehood, such as Karabakh Armenians, Lezgins, Ossetians, Abkhazians, Kurds, etc. Alongside interstate economic contacts there exists an inter-clan free- exchange market and trade routes. In some cases, people's diplomacy is successful in relaxing regional tension: agreements on trade in the border regions, regulation of common water systems and land, exchange of prisoners of war, and cease-fires during seasonal work are among its results. The governing elites of the region realize that a second wave of war and violence will jeopardize not only their ability to stay in power, but also the very existence of these countries by expanding the area of conflict and the number of participants. However, the military elites of the Transcaucasus are closely linked to Russian political circles, and this may encourage the pursuit of military options.

A number of organizations function at the interregional level: the CIS, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, and the Caspian Cooperation Organization. Among these organizations, the CIS has the most established form and content, as well as the largest number of interstate agreements. Yet it is a Russo-centric organization and, as such, its functioning is dependent on the strength or weakness of Russia. There exist different groups of CIS and neighboring non-CIS countries that are united by various international, domestic, and economic interests. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation forum is an organization that Turkey spearheaded to strengthen its role in regional cooperation; as such, it can serve as a

rival to the CIS. Its role is currently limited to providing a wide forum and convenient channels for the exchange of ideas and dialogue on economic and trade issues. Many observers point out the prominent north/south and east/west axes in the region: Teheran-Yerevan-Moscow, and Baku-Tbilisi-Ankara, respectively.

However, these approaches are artificial, since without Georgia there can be no north/south axis, and Armenia is making great efforts on the east/west dimension to expand contacts in the directions of Azerbaijan–Central Asia–China and Turkey-Europe. To achieve this objective, Armenia is currently working within the Yerevan-Teheran-Ashkhabad triangle. However, these channels are dynamic and change rapidly, according to new initiatives from Turkey, Russia, and Iran.

Among the interest groups at the international level, the most notable are the United States and West European countries, which have distinct economic interests in Azerbaijan. It would be unrealistic to think that the oil factor does not and will not play a role in political developments. The strategic reserves of the Caspian Sea and Central Asia have focused U.S. and EU policies on Azerbaijan; as for Georgia and Armenia, policies are linked to issues of transporting this oil. It does not seem probable that the United States and the EU will succeed in maintaining a strong presence in the region, since this could lead to extremely volatile consequences. But the diplomatic practice of periodic pressures, encouragements, and coercive interventions will continue. As mentioned above, the OSCE and the UN are on the brink of reforms, and their previous peacemaking failures will hardly allow these two organizations to play a central and decisive role in the Transcaucasus. At all three levels—intraregional, interregional, and international—the situation in the Transcaucasus is uncertain and unstable. A knot of diverse interests precludes the Transcaucasian states from finding venues for cooperation and working on a common strategy of development. Models of democratic polities and market economies that have proved effective elsewhere have, when introduced in this region, turned into authoritarian rule and to clan-monopolistic economies. Nevertheless, a democratic state, the rule of law, and a free market are among those universal ideas that are capable of promoting regional cooperation.

The ideology of regional cooperation must be, first and foremost, of an economic nature and take into account mutual interests in industry, trade, transport, and communications. It is essential that this ideology be extended to the establishment of bilateral trade and economic ties among all sides directly involved in conflicts in the Transcaucasus (i.e., between Tbilisi and both Abkhazia and Ossetia, and between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh). Ties among conflicting parties should be complemented by trilateral contacts with the three Transcaucasian states. Regional cooperation will also require the establishment and development of multilevel ties and joint projects in the intergovernmental (involving especially military establishments) and nongovernmental sectors as well as cultural and information exchanges.

Mutually beneficial economic relations are of primary importance. For the prospect of creating a regional organization it is necessary to evaluate the internal capabilities of the Transcaucasian republics, and, for the transitional period, it is necessary to enact new mechanisms for peace.

Conclusions and Implications

An active process of forming regional security structures is under way on the European continent. Cold War institutions are undergoing reform and a cooperative European security system is emerging, the domain of which coincides with the borders of East-Central Europe. A genuine Transatlantic community is not only viable, but is expanding its sphere of responsibility to the borders of the former Soviet Union. After the expansion of NATO, the uncertain condition of East-Central Europe will shift to the former Soviet republics, including those in the Transcaucasus. Indeed, one cannot foresee the incorporation of the Transcaucasus into any Western alliance in the near future. Russia's central role in the CIS is subject to controversy in the CIS itself and in the international arena; hence, this region, including the Transcaucasus, has become an area of contest. The oil factor and the diplomatic impact of Russian, Turkish, and Iranian influences have contributed to the disintegration of the region and threaten its security and development. The uncertain direction of Russian foreign policy, the absence of a well defined military doctrine, and the disintegration of hierarchical power are the main destabilizing factors in the Transcaucasus.

Given the failure of OSCE- and UN-led peacekeeping operations, especially in the former Yugoslavia, and the necessity of reforming these organizations, it is unlikely that they will play an active role in settling the conflicts of the Transcaucasus region. Hence, the destiny of this region will depend on the balance between this region's pro- and anti-Russian policies.

In the Transcaucasus, the practice of forming horizontal and vertical alliances is a confrontational and dangerous one. Development can be ensured only by "cross-dimensional" cooperation. From this point of view, reconciliation in the Armenian-Turkish dialogue is particularly important, as is the case with parallel Azeri-Iranian cooperation. The efforts of settling the ex-Yugoslavian and Chechen conflicts demonstrate that economic approaches are the most productive. Therefore, in the Transcaucasus, it is necessary to establish an economic basis for conflict resolution and organize the intraregional market using both traditional and new possibilities. An argument in favor of this approach is that all liberation movements in the Transcaucasus promoted the ideal of market economy, as well as the fact that in Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkhazia one of the main reasons for the establishment of cease-fires was the desire to avoid economic collapse.

The idea of regional cooperation, although it seems impossible in the current political context, has yet to be attempted and can lead to new initiatives aimed at resolving the region's conflicts. The uncertain international position of the region can be compensated by its internal resources and, during the transitional period, provide a relatively neutral condition to avoid external interference.

Given the current reality, one form of regional integration could follow a confederational approach, with the participation of national units that have some attributes of statehood. The principal objective of this approach should be to establish the infrastructure for economic development and the foundation for state building in the region. The requisite conditions for the formation of such a Transcaucasian confederation are the acceptance of economic interests of integration, rejection of military solutions to conflicts as a factor that leads to economic disintegration, open exchange of communications as a spur to economic development, the creation of an intraregional free-exchange market, and the adoption of corresponding legal norms. The nonaligned nature of such a confederation is of the utmost importance.

Although the region is a diverse entity, its components have a lot of common features in culture, customs, mentality, social organization, administration, and governance among them. The separate development of the Transcaucasian states and the disruption of different means of communication are the main factors contributing to the persistence of the region's tension. The restoration of traditional relations and political and economic cooperation among the three states will considerably assist in the organization of the Transcaucasus as a distinct entity. The motivation to develop interstate and intraregional ties is inherent to democratic governance and market relations, and may become the basis for a comprehensive resolution to outstanding problems. The processes of integration in the Transcaucasus are a prerequisite for its development and stability. To this end, it is important for the region's state building to harmonize the application of democratic theory and practice with the region's traditions.

Notes

1. Germany's recognition of Slovenia and Croatia and France's pro-Serbian policy were serious impediments to cooperation between France and Germany, while French and British military cooperation in Bosnia did not yield any real results. Paul R. S. Gebhard, United States and European Security. Adelphi Paper 286 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, February 1994), 21–22.
2. Alyson Bailes, "Europe's Defense Challenge," Foreign Affairs (January/February 1997): 16.
3. Ibid., 16
4. Roger Palin, Multinational Military Forces: Problems and Prospects. Adelphi Paper 294 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1995), 11.
5. See Bailes, "Europe's Defense Challenge," 17–18.
6. Palin, Multinational Military Forces; and Catherine Kelleher, "The Future of European Security," Washington, D.C. 1995, 12
7. Kelleher, "The Future of European Security," 19.
8. John Maresca, "The End of the Cold War Is Also Over," Center for International Security and Arms Control, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif. 1995, 10-12.
9. Jeffrey McCausland, Conventional Arms Control and European Security. Adelphi Paper 301 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1996), 24.
10. Ibid., 32

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