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## **THE RUSSIAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN GEORGIA: THE PARTIES' ATTITUDES AND PROSPECTS**

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### Preface

The problem of the Russian military presence in Georgia at the present stage is interesting both in itself and for the analysis of the foreign and security policy of present-day Russia. This question also sheds light on the essence of Georgian statehood over the last six years of its existence. The position of Russian forces in Georgia, as well as the approaches to their presence on the part of the Russian and Georgian governments, may reveal the dynamics of development of both states, their political priorities and their attitudes towards each other. This helps us to understand the contradictory picture of the formation of visions of state interests and national security among the political elites of both states.

Prior to the break-up of the USSR, units and formations of the Transcaucasian Military District (Zakavkazskii voennyi okrug, ZakVO), of the 19th Army of Anti-Aircraft Defence and of the 34th Air Army of the Soviet Armed Forces were stationed in Georgia. Also located there were border-guard troops, ships of the Black Sea Fleet, units of internal troops and separate army units under central, Moscow command. Georgia hosted the chief headquarters of these forces, and there were more tanks and combat aviation in Georgia than in neighbouring Armenia. The republic was the stationing-ground for three missile brigades whose arsenal included nuclear warheads. Some authors estimate that by the end of the Soviet period about 100,000 Soviet officers and men were serving on the territory of Georgia (1). One may safely assert that at that time the grouping of Soviet forces in Georgia represented the main core of the forces targetting NATO's southern flank.

With the break-up of the USSR, the era of manifest confrontation of East and West came to an end. For the former Soviet forces it was now time to adapt to new political realities and search for a new mission, new structures and a new boss. Those formations that suddenly found themselves beyond the borders of Russia - the main legal successor of the USSR - faced these problems in an especially acute form.

Towards the end of 1991 and the beginning of 1992, the Soviet forces in Georgia were in the process of being resubordinated to new political structures. The idea of joint

armed forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States, whose creation in December 1991 coincided with the demise of the Soviet Union, proved stillborn. Yeltsin's decree of 7 May 1992 heralded the creation of the Russian Armed Forces. The units of the former ZakVO and other Soviet military outfits stationed in Georgia became Russian troops. In January 1993 an announcement was made concerning the formation of the Group of Russian Forces in Transcaucasia (Gruppa rossiyskikh voysk v Zakavkaz'e, GRVZ), which included almost all the former Soviet forces located in Georgia (2). Staying outside the framework of the GRVZ were the borderguards, who were soon transformed into the group of Russian borderguard troops "Georgia", as well as the peacekeepers stationed in the former South Ossetian Autonomous District and the 345th airborne regiment transferred from Azerbaijan to the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic in summer 1992.

Nothing has changed in that structure to this day - except for the appearance in 1994 in Abkhazia of the CIS peacekeepers, who are represented exclusively by Russian troops. But over this period the number of the troops has been changing, and, more importantly, so has the attitude towards them both in Georgian and Russian political circles. Their activities have been changing too. These changes have stemmed from the dynamics of Russo-Georgian relationships, but they have also influenced the latter.

Anticipating matters, one may note four stages in the Russian military presence in Georgia and in Russo-Georgian relations in the military field.

- Throughout 1990-1991, a radical approach, not devoid of naiveté, prevailed on the Georgian side, while a less than full understanding of the changing reality prevailed on the Moscow side. The military question was painful. The parties' alienation from each other reached a point of hostility.

- The period from 1992 to the first half of 1993 saw the initiation of bilateral state relationships. The question of the Russian military presence became the object of official negotiations. At the same time relations remained cold. The Georgian-Abkhazian war was leaving a negative imprint on the process.

- The end of 1993 until 1995 was a time of intensified Georgian-Russian military cooperation. Both sides in one way or another seemed to be coming to a solution of the problem of the military presence.

- 1996 marks a new stage of cooling in the Russo-Georgian relationships. It also reflected on the field of military cooperation, which became one of the main reasons for disagreement.

It should be stressed that at all stages events were observed that contradicted the basic logic of a particular stage described above. This is one more demonstration that the principal traits of Russo-Georgian relationships in the military domain are uncertainty, indecisiveness and mistrustfulness.

## **The National Movement and the Soviet Forces in Georgia**

Leaving aside the debate over whether the Soviet Union was just a modified Russian empire, one may with a certain degree of assurance start the modern history of Russo-Georgian military relationships with the year 1990. Then Moscow was still the capital of the USSR, but a national movement came to power in Georgia that did not wish to have anything in common with it and saw Soviet troops as merely Russian occupiers.

This was favoured by the logic and aims of the Georgian national movement, for which Moscow was the enslaver of Georgia and Soviet troops the main instrument of Muscovite colonialism. The situation was aggravated by the fact that on 9 April 1989 Soviet paratroopers dispersed an anti-Soviet meeting of several thousand people in Tbilisi. About 20 people were killed.

One of the first legislative acts of Georgia's first post-communist leadership, which came to power after the election of 28 October 1990, was a ban on the call-up of Georgian youth into the Soviet Army (3). In the autumn of 1991, towards the end of his short-lived reign, the then President of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, officially conferred on the Soviet forces stationed on Georgian territory the status of occupation forces (4). Such decisions proceeded from the course towards state independence and a notion that the presence of Soviet troops was incompatible with the idea of independence.

The Soviet government's reaction could only be negative. Its anger was most clearly manifested during the brief putsch in August 1991, when the State Emergency Committee (Gosudarsvennyi komitet po chrezvychainomu polozheniyu, GKChP) demanded that Tbilisi disband the newly-founded National Guard and prefectures - the local bodies of power (5). The hostility towards the Georgian nationalist government was also voiced by the Soviet military stationed in Georgia. As testified by the Russian military themselves, the sentiment felt by these troops was anti-Gamsakhurdia (6). Later, in December 1991, they rendered aid to Tengiz Kitovani, the chief of the National Guard, who came out against Gamsakhurdia (7).

Although in relations between the official Tbilisi and Soviet troops there were also instances that were at variance with the general context, Gamsakhurdia was not loath to use the Soviet forces for his purposes. On 18 February 1991, soldiers of the Soviet Army, using force, occupied the base of the Mkhedrioni paramilitary organization which was in opposition to the Gamsakhurdia regime (8). Before that, in January 1991, the Supreme Council of the Georgian Republic officially empowered the internal troops of the USSR to be stationed and to operate in the South Ossetian Autonomous District (9). In August 1991, Gamsakhurdia showed complaisance to the Moscow GKChP and lowered the status of his Guards to the level of a special unit of the Ministry of the Interior. Gamsakhurdia declaratively refused any alliance within the framework of the USSR or of the CIS which was set up in December 1992. But in December the same year, against the background of internal strife and armed revolt, he began thinking of joining the CIS and about the possibilities of securing military aid from the ZakVO against his armed opponents (10). However the anti-Gamsakhurdia armed uprising itself, which ended in the President's defeat, shows that at that stage mutual lack of understanding prevailed between Tbilisi and Moscow. At any rate, the Soviet military, which now became Russian, chose to help not the official Georgian government but the mutinous Georgian guardsmen (11).

## **Russia-Georgia: the Stage of "Divorce"**

The second stage in relations between Moscow and Tbilisi in the military field started in 1992. The overthrow of Gamsakhurdia and the break-up of the USSR laid the groundwork and set the stage for the warm spell. A premise was created for the establishment of bilateral state relations between Russia and Georgia, which, in its turn, influenced the process of settling military issues. Talks started at an official level.

Initially things went more or less smoothly. The new Georgian leadership headed since spring 1992 by the former First Secretary of the Communist Party of Georgia and USSR Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, rescinded the decision that conferred on the former Soviet troops the status of occupation forces. Georgia acceded to the Tashkent Treaty of May 1992 on the division of the quotas of conventional weapons in Europe that accrued to the Soviet Union. On the 24th of June, at a meeting between Eduard Shevardnadze and Boris Yeltsin it was decided to entrust Russia with a peacekeeping mission in the former South Ossetian Autonomous District. Between June and August the Russian troops handed over a large consignment of armaments to Georgia - from the former Akhalsikhe Motor Rifle Division of the Soviet Army Georgia received 109 T-55 tanks, 164 armoured cars and 76 artillery systems. By that time Georgia had received 29 SU-15 aircraft (12). But the Georgian-Abkhazian war that started in August 1992 revealed that the Russo-Georgian relations were a long way from reaching mutual understanding.

Although there had been problems earlier, before the outbreak of hostilities in Abkhazia, assaults against the Russian military installations and servicemen became more frequent. If in 1991 there were just 78 such assaults, in 1992 their number grew to 268 (13). Thus, for example, in spring 1992 Georgian guardsmen attacked a convoy of the Russian military who were transporting arms to Armenia (14) and artillery pieces were taken away from them (15). It cannot be asserted that such actions were directed by the Georgian government. The reason lies rather in the complete anarchy that followed both the overthrow of the Gamsakhurdia regime and the abolition of the ZakVO. Often such attacks were made up to camouflage incidents of illicit arms trafficking by Russian officers (16).

The Russian military still had a guarded outlook towards the new Georgian authority. Despite the annulment by Georgia of the occupation force status of the Russian troops, too many Georgian politicians continued to demand their full withdrawal from the country. Shevardnadze himself never made a definite statement, but the fact that Georgia was not a CIS member did little to dispose Russia's military and politicians alike to close cooperation with their Georgian partners. Besides, a major role in the new Georgian authority was played by the Mkhedrioni paramilitary formation, with which the Russian military had had problems dating back to Soviet times, "We could not trust Dzhaba Ioseliani" (the Mkhedrioni leader), said the Russian military as they recalled the year 1992 (17).

What Georgia received from the ZakVO inheritance was far from covering the quotas of conventional weapons due to it according to the Tashkent Treaty. In addition, the hardware was obsolete and in need of repair. The neighbouring countries of Armenia and Azerbaijan received better weapons (18). The official negotiations both on the comprehensive treaty and on purely military issues (including the Russian military presence) were dragging on indefinitely.

The entry of Georgian military units into the territory of Abkhazia, whose authorities did not conceal their desire to secede from Georgia and to integrate themselves into the CIS, turned into war. Russian military and political circles also became drawn into it. Before the war and in its initial stage there was evidence of Russian military aid to the Georgian Army (19). But in a short time Russian weapons (combat aircraft included) appeared on the Abkhaz side. Georgian official circles stated time and again that many operations of the Abkhaz were planned by officers of the Russian Army General Staff (20) and that in the ranks of the Abkhaz units there were many Russian citizens, including regular military men. The fact that in the course of the war years the sympathies of the Russian military and politicians towards Abkhazia were on the rise

and that real help stood behind them, is not denied either by independent experts or by some representatives of official Moscow (21). Officially Russia was neutral. Sometimes the actions of its officers might have had a private, unsanctioned character, but Russo-Georgian relations improved but little as a consequence of that. The issue of Russian military presence in Georgia became aggravated.

Besides the fact that attacks on Russian military installations intensified, so did the demands for their complete abolition. At a parliamentary session of the 25th of February 1993, Shevardnadze agreed that Russian units should be withdrawn from the territory of Abkhazia. In the long drawn-out Russo-Georgian negotiations, Nodar Natadze, the proponent of the speediest withdrawal of Russian troops from the country, was included in the Georgian delegation. The Georgian head of state issued a decree on the drawing up of a timetable for the GRVZ withdrawal (22), but Georgia took no final decision and its delegation did not pose that question in a categorical manner. Russia's position on the question of military policy (including its presence) in Georgia also suffered from uncertainty. During 1992 Russia withdrew the greater part of the former ZakVO not only from Georgia but from the whole of Transcaucasia. Some evidence shows that by the end of 1993 just 6,000 servicemen remained on Georgian territory in the ranks of the successor of the ZakVO - the GRVZ. The GRVZ command at the time did not rule out even complete withdrawal from Georgia (23).

It can hardly be said that the reduction of the GRVZ was the consequence of Georgia's demands. As pointed out earlier, Georgia did not pose unequivocal demands. What is more, not a single unit was withdrawn by Russia from Abkhazia despite the fact that it was on that particular question that the Georgian position was the most explicit. The reason for the reduction in the Russian military presence rather lay in internal Russian matters, in the vagueness of Russia's foreign-policy and military priorities and in its politicians' preoccupation with internal power struggles.

At the turn of 1992-1993, the Russian authorities were inclining to the idea of preserving special influence on the territory of the former Soviet Union. Such an objective was increasingly epitomized by military presence. Details of the Georgian-Russian negotiations are unknown, but one may presume that in the middle of 1993 the Russian side definitively decided to retain the GRVZ in Georgia and let it be known to its Georgian partners: in May Shevardnadze met Yeltsin. A communique was adopted, which noted that "the parties paid particular attention to the status of the Russian forces in Georgia" (24). Soon after Russia's Foreign Minister Kozyrev came to Tbilisi. Following these meetings Shevardnadze stated that if Georgia did not want Russia to play a negative role in Abkhazian developments, its interests had to be taken into account (25). Subsequent events revealed that what was meant in the first place was the retention of the GRVZ in Georgia.

This statement by the Georgian leader also demonstrated that amid the state of war, sensitive to internal political difficulties and Russian pressure (26), Tbilisi started to think of deriving some benefit out of the Russian military presence. The degree of compromise with Russia still remained to be determined, but one thing was becoming clear - from the summer of 1993 the stage of Russo-Georgian "divorce" was drawing to a close.

## **Along the Path of the Russo-Georgian Military Alliance**

In autumn 1993 events began to unfold with lightning speed, not giving the Georgian

side any time to choose the optimum variant of compromise: the Georgian forces in Abkhazia were beaten, while the supporters of the exiled President Gamsakhurdia started their armed attacks in Western Georgia. In October Shevardnadze openly requested military aid from Russia, whom he had accused of the occupation of Abkhazia in September - adding then that he would not fall to his knees before it any longer. On 18 October, the head of the Georgian state said he was conducting talks with Russia on jointly putting a stop to the "intervention" (27).

The Russians helped indeed, and Tbilisi was saved from the offensive of Gamsakhurdia's supporters (28). For his part, Shevardnadze announced the accession of Georgia to the CIS and the signing of a treaty on the status of the Russian troops in Georgia. From the end of 1993 till 1995 Russia and Georgia signed several agreements, military ones included. Georgia also adhered to a number of collective documents in the framework of the CIS which had military significance. Their analysis attests that the relations of Russia and Georgia in the military domain were acquiring the features of a strategic partnership in which the latter played the role of a junior partner under the "guardianship" of its northern neighbour.

The 1993 treaty on the status of Russian forces still contained the echoes of debates on the withdrawal of the GRVZ from Georgia. Nothing concrete was said, though: the treaty stipulated the terms of the stationing of Russian troops on Georgian territory until 1995, noting an automatic prolongation of these terms by three years. That document allowed Russian troops to use real estate on a gratis basis (29). Nothing was said about limiting the strength of the GRVZ. Russian troops had the right to use a major part of the country's military infrastructure jointly with the Georgian Army (30). The only bodies for control over the GRVZ on the part of Georgia, provided by the treaty, were: a mixed commission to determine losses incurred by either side, a commissioner in the issues of the presence and withdrawal of the GRVZ, whose functions were to be additionally defined, a mixed commission for the interpretation of the treaty, and a subcommission for the division of property (31). (By way of comparison it may be noted that in accordance with the treaty on defence and economic cooperation between Greece and the USA, a senior Greek officer is assigned to each American base, who has access to everything except for the national cryptographic rooms (32).

On the 3 February 1994, a separate agreement was signed on the Russian borderguard troops staying in Georgia. That agreement provided for the presence among the Russian borderguards of representatives of similar Georgian services (33). It was also said that the Russian borderguards that were located at the border with Turkey were pursuing their activity under the general guidance of the Georgian Foreign Ministry (34). But the leadership of Georgia's Foreign Ministry did not implement this, nor was it able to control the duration of the Russian borderguards' stay in Georgia. But on the other hand, under a separate protocol Georgia pledged to cover a part of the cost of these troops.

The next stage in formal relations came in 1995. In March, a treaty on Russian bases in Georgia was initialled, to be signed in September by Eduard Shevardnadze. The major novelty was that the treaty defined the structure, location and duration of stay of the GRVZ in Georgia. As for the time limits, the Georgian side suggested a treaty lasting for 15 years, but Russia insisted on a 25-year time frame, with the right of its automatic prolongation for 5-year periods unless either side demands its abrogation at least two years before the expiry of the next period (35). That treaty effectively closed the issue of a "planned withdrawal" of the GRVZ from Georgia, which was left unresolved in the treaty of 1993.

In the treaty on bases there are also clauses more concretely specifying the GRVZ's responsibilities. For instance, it says that the strength of the GRVZ is liable to be determined, and the Russian military in Georgia were required to have a certificate indicating that they belonged to or were otherwise related to the bases. But the new time limits and the incomprehensible practice of incongruity between the two versions of the treaty - the initialled one and the subsequently signed one, like the alterations made in it, all suggest that Russia, first and foremost, aimed at enhancing its military presence. Thus, for instance, whilst the initialled text speaks of four bases, the final variant, after enumerating the bases, contains the words "and others" (36). References to new military units in the towns of Senaki, Telavi, and Akhalkalaki have appeared in the supplement to the main body of the text (37).

Among the collective documents signed by Georgia in the framework of the CIS, the Conception of Collective Security, proclaiming the existence of common military policy interests of the Commonwealth, was signed at the summit of the CIS on February 10 1995. Georgia agreed with its provision that the build-up of forces of other states at the external borders of the CIS carries a potential threat. The conception proclaimed the goal of the formation of coalition forces and a single anti-aircraft defence (38). On the same day Georgia signed an agreement on the formation of a unified CIS anti-aircraft defence system. Leadership over the common air-defence system was entrusted to the commander of the Russian anti-aircraft defence troops (39). In the framework of this agreement the Georgian anti-aircraft defence officers are mainly trained about early warning at the Moscow command post (40).

These treaties, as well as the framework treaty of friendship and good neighbourliness signed in February 1994, implied Russian assistance in building the new Georgian Army. In 1994 the Georgian Army received 31 T-72 tanks and a number of new artillery pieces (41). Fifty Georgian officers were sent to Russian military colleges. Several joint staff exercises were held. Throughout 1994-1995, the Georgian authorities time and again expressed their adherence to an alliance with Russia, saying that without its help Georgia would not be able to solve its military and political problems. Pro-Russian sentiment especially began to prevail in the leadership of the armed forces and law-enforcement agencies. At that time a general of the Russian Army, Deputy Head of the GRVZ Vardiko Nadibaidze became Georgia's Defence Minister. The Ministry of State Security was headed by Igor Giorgadze, who also had close contact with his Moscow colleagues and with the Russian military and intelligence services resident in Georgia (42). Nadibaidze was especially open in his support of the idea of transforming the CIS into a military bloc.

But the assistance was found to be smaller than the Georgian government wished and expected. Under the Tashkent Treaty of 1992, the Georgian quota of conventional weapons was fixed at 220 tanks, 285 artillery systems, 100 combat aircraft, etc. (43). But by the beginning of 1996 Georgia had no more than 70 tanks and just a few aircraft in good repair. Naturally, Georgia expected Russia to help it fill the quotas. Russia, on its part, wanted Georgia to hand over to the GRVZ a portion of the quota due to it. Without dwelling on the details of the talks on partition as well as the real filling of the Georgian quota, one may summarise by saying that a final agreement was not reached (44).

The agreement on quotas was also hampered by other military and political problems. The question of the settlement of the Abkhazian conflict held a special place among them. Against the background of the UN's passivity and Russia's insistence, the conflicting sides agreed in April-May 1994 to a peacekeeping operation within the CIS framework. About 3,000 Russian soldiers and officers, part of whom had served in the

GRVZ and in the 345th regiment stationed in Abkhazia, were now found to be peacekeepers. The Georgian authorities presumed that both the agreement to a unilateral Russian mission and the conclusion of the aforementioned military treaties would help them in the matter of recovering Abkhazia. Georgia's Defence Minister bluntly stated as much (45). A little later, to a correspondent's question as to whether the GRVZ would pay rent for the bases, Shevardnadze replied that no money would be high enough to secure the return of Abkhazia (46). One of the main motives for Russo-Georgian military co-operation from the Georgian side can thus be seen to be the hope to re-establish the country's territorial integrity.

But progress in settling the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict was not observable, and at the end of the year the Georgian side drew up a draft of a new mandate for the peacekeeping forces, demanding the utilization of the whole GRVZ in the operation, the disarming of the Abkhaz formations and the establishment throughout the former autonomous republic of temporary military rule in the form of a commandant's office (47). The draft was not accepted at the CIS summit. One may agree that the demands of the Georgian side accorded but little with the international practice of peacekeeping. But in view of the many instances when the Russian forces did not shun the use of force, and also against the background of the indirect promises of Russian politicians and faith in their "omnipotence", the Georgian side was beginning to consider itself deceived (48).

At the beginning of 1996, Georgia made one more ally-like gesture towards Russia: the treaty of friendship and good neighbourliness was ratified. But that step seemed to fall out of the context and thereby underscored the end of the stage of the "cordial alliance" even more. At the hearings regarding the treaty Georgian MPs stressed that the ratification reminded the partner of unfulfilled obligations and called for reciprocal measures. Since spring 1996, discussion between Russia and Georgia increasingly took on the character of mutual reproaches.

Russia stuck to its policy of preserving and enhancing its military presence in Georgia. For this it employed measures of pressure, persuasion and the promise of various benefits. Georgia agreed to Russian proposals and made compromises. The Russian military presence and the treaties signed in the military sphere were appraised by the Georgian side in two ways: as a certain benefit but at the same time as a forced compromise. This was attested by the addition by the Georgian side to the treaty on Russian military bases initialled by the defence ministries: Georgia emphasized that the treaty would be activated only after the restoration of the country's territorial integrity - the return of Abkhazia (49).

Russia increased its military contingent in Georgia. It is variously estimated as being between 20-25 thousand men in 1995. Russian peacekeepers were controlling the zones of conflicts both in Abkhazia and in Georgia. But in other aspects of military cooperation progress was slight. Aid for the military construction of the Georgian Army remained negligible. The procrastination of both sides with regard to the ratification of military treaties was testimony to mutual distrust.

## **The Stage of Alienation?**

As mentioned earlier, suspicion marked Russo-Georgian relations from 1993-1995: the price of rapprochement was too great for these relations to become smooth. But from 1996-1997 innuendos grew into open friction. On the Georgian side, discontent was

mainly expressed with regard to the actions of the Russian borderguards and the "lack of action" by the peacekeepers. Friction was generated by the Abkhazian problem and transferred to the wider problem of the Russian military presence. Thus, for instance, in April 1996 the head of Georgia's border troops stated that his Russian colleagues had illegal contacts with Abkhaz separatists, and had also opened a post at its border with Chechnya without Georgia's knowledge (50).

On account of the arrest of a Ukrainian ship by the Russian border guards in Batumi, Georgia's commander of the borderguard troops as well as representatives of the parliamentary committee on defence and security and the Georgian foreign ministry held a press conference, at which it was stated that the actions of the Russian side impinged on the sovereignty of Georgia and only war could be worse than that (51). The Georgian side began to say that the presence of Russian borderguards in Georgian ports was not provided for by any agreements. In October 1996, Shevardnadze issued a decree on preparations for maritime border control by Georgia alone (52).

The criticisms of the Russian peacekeeping mission in Abkhazia have since spring 1996 acquired an official and explicit character. On 17 April 1996, the Parliament of Georgia passed a resolution demanding a more active role by the Russian peacekeepers in the matter of bringing the Georgian refugees back into Abkhazia. The resolution also featured accusations of smuggling by the Russian military (53). On 3 April 1997, the Georgian Parliament defined the Abkhazian problem as an "unsurmountable result of the annexation of Georgia by Soviet Russia in 1921" (54). On 30 May, in a new resolution the Parliament deemed it inexpedient to prolong the Russian peacekeeping mission in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict zone (55).

As we said earlier, frictions erupted both with regard to Georgian-Russian military cooperation and with regard to the Russian military presence. Commenting on such a turn of events, Shevardnadze said that Russo-Georgian cooperation should not be limited to the question of military bases, but should also be manifested in the assistance on the part of Russia in the restoration of the territorial integrity of Georgia (56). Starting from 1996, Georgian official circles have demanded a share in the Black Sea fleet and financial compensation for the presence of the GRVZ in Georgia (57). On 29 May 1994, Shevardnadze stressed at a press conference that Georgia would not ratify the military treaties if Russia did not help Georgia in the Abkhazian question.

Simultaneously, a tendency to search for new, and, more exactly, alternative partners in security matters has been accentuated in Georgian foreign policy. In February 1997, Shevardnadze visited Kiev and Baku. Assessing these visits, he stressed the strategic character of relations with Ukraine and Azerbaijan. From early 1996, Georgia heightened its stake in intra-Caucasian dialogue. In 1997, official contacts with Chechnya became more frequent. During the visit to Georgia of NATO General Secretary Xavier Solana, Georgia's foreign minister stated that integration into European structures is the foreign policy priority of Georgia (58). On the Abkhazian question, Georgia again started to demand that the format of negotiations be broadened and that other countries - members of the UN Security Council - be invited to join them. The Georgian side posed the question of internationalization of the peacekeeping mission.

All the steps described above have a logic of estrangement from the policy of special relations with Russia in the security field. In 1994 Shevardnadze stated on a visit to the USA that he did not request military aid, since the Georgian army-building was a sphere of Russian activity (59), but in July 1997, during the President of Georgia's second visit to Washington, official bulletins emphasized the existence of negotiations

on military questions, too (60). In Georgia's official circles talks began on the change in its strategic course (61). In Russian military and political circles this turn of events has been viewed appropriately. The commander of the Russian borderguard troops started to speak of a change in the Georgian strategic reference-points as early as in August 1996 (62).

Some retaliatory actions by Russia were also undertaken in the context of the growing alienation. As stated by the press-secretary of the President of Russia, Georgia did not have the right to demand a portion of the Black Sea Fleet, as it had already received it. The same was stated by the Secretary of the Russian Defence Council, Yuri Baturin who came to Georgia in July 1997; he pointed out that Georgian demands for its legal share from the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet has been already covered and even outweighed in that Georgia possessed the military facilities of the port of Poti (63). In June 1997 the State Duma of the Russian Federation again refused to ratify the Russo-Georgian treaty of friendship.

One should note that passions are being warmed up by competition over the transportation of Baku oil. On 9 October 1995, the international consortium set up for the development of Azerbaijani oil deposits took the decision to construct parallel oil pipelines from Baku: through the Russian Northern Caucasus and through Georgia (64). Georgian political circles see the transportation of oil, in which international capital is interested, as a guarantor against Russia's neo-imperialist forces (65). In recent times Georgia has increasingly hoped that it will be precisely its variant that will become the main transporting branch. On 14 July 1997, the Declaration on Cooperation signed by the Georgian and Turkish presidents said that the Baku-Ceyhan direction of the pipeline, technically easy to utilize, also has a strategic advantage (66). In Russia the pipeline problem and the Georgian-Turkish contacts are looked at with suspicion and in the light of competition for influence in the region and for profitable branches of the local economy (67).

By 1996 the strength of the GRVZ began to decrease and, according to some data, it numbers not more than 8,500 troops. The peacekeeping contingent decreased, too. But the frictions and testimonies of adjustment of the Georgian foreign and military policies so far do not allow one to draw a final conclusion about the cancellation of the special Russo-Georgian relationship charted since 1993. It would also be wrong to assess the reduction of the GRVZ or the peacekeeping contingent as Russia's abandonment of its share of influence on Georgia. The word *ãifã*, leaving the space for compromise, is present in all the above-mentioned official resolutions on the Georgian side.

After the expiry of the next phase of the Russian peacekeeping mission Georgia did not demand its termination. Georgia's Security Council decided not to prolong the mandate of the peacekeeping forces, but not to demand its termination either - alluding to the possibility that, according to the advice of representatives of the UN and Western countries, an immediate withdrawal of the Russian peacekeepers might cause complications (68). Shevardnadze again calls Russia a strategic ally (69), while after his meeting with the Secretary of the Russian Defence Council, Yuri Baturin, the latter stated that the preservation of the Russian bases in Georgia is in the interests of both countries (70). The Georgian president positively appraised Boris Yeltsin's role in the holding of a meeting in Moscow between Eduard Shevardnadze and the Abkhaz leader Vladislav Ardzinba.

All this suggests that demands for the internationalisation of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict and talk of the possible winding up of Russo-Georgian military cooperation are

by no means categorical or final. Vardiko Nadibaidze, known for his pro-Russian views, still remains Georgia's Defence Minister, and in spite of the frictions described above, he concluded with his Russian counterpart an agreement on military technological cooperation in autumn 1996 (71). As regards the partial reduction of the GRVZ, in the words of the chairman of the parliamentary committee on defence and security of Georgia, this is linked to the financial difficulties of the Russian defence ministry (72).

Thus at the present stage of Russo-Georgian military ties frictions are observable as these relationships are being curtailed. However, final decisions are a long way off, and the process continues to have a contradictory character. The parties' attitudes towards the subject of military cooperation are again far from clear. None of the juridical basis of military cooperation that has been developed up till today has been repudiated, but neither has it been ratified. Prediction of the further course of events is complicated by the almost permanent fluctuations in Russo-Georgian relations. Yet the analysis of developments described above brings us to certain conclusions.

### **The Sense and Perspectives of Russo-Georgian Military Co-Operation**

After describing and analysing the different stages of Russo-Georgian relationships one may answer questions about their significance and, in particular, about the essence of the Russian military presence, and also outline the perspectives. As regards the Georgian position, the answer flows from the aforesaid: at this stage the GRVZ and other Russian forces, in the eyes of Georgian politicians, increasingly acquire their old trait - that of a forced, imposed reality. One may partly agree with the opinion that from the very outset "the Russian presence in Georgia protects Tbilisi from...Russia itself. The situation is comparable to that of the mafia which offers to protect a shopkeeper from any aggression "which is possible in the dangerous world we live in". Needless to say, it is obvious who could eventually harm the shopkeeper" (73).

Between 1993 and 1995, Georgia expected from Russia a more positive assistance, including weapons and funding. But the hopes turned out to be exaggerated, while Georgia's relative stabilization and more frequent contacts with the West reinforced still more the negative perception of the Russian military presence described above. It remains to be seen what the genuine aims of the Russian military presence in Georgia are and how right those are who see in it at least a necessary evil. The answer to this question may be obtained both from Russian political documents and from the statements of Russian politicians, analysts and military.

In his decree entitled *The Russian Strategic Course towards the CIS Countries*, Russia's President declared the protection of Russia's economic and defence interests within the borders of the Commonwealth to be the country's foreign-policy priority. The same document speaks of the importance of defending the Russian-speaking population in these countries (74). Russia's former Defence Minister Pavel Grachev in his time clearly expressed the idea that Russia has a strategic interest in the Georgian Black Sea coast (75). The former Chairman of the Russian Federation Council Vladimir Shumeiko was even more frank. In his opinion, the presence of Russian bases in Georgia indicates that Russia has staked out a claim on that plot of land (76).

Not only the Russian military presence but also its peacekeeping mission is viewed by many as a means of ensuring Russian influence in certain regions. The frequent partiality of Russian peacekeepers in favour of a particular side in conflicts is well-

known after the Bosnian experience (77). In Russian military circles it is considered that behind the peacekeeping mission may also stand such an interest as the provision of access to the sea (78). All great powers or post-colonial states have their own strategic interests in different parts of the world and try to use military presence as a means to protect them. Permanent military bases are the most appropriate way to secure such interests. As for peacekeeping forces, they have in principle to serve other goals. The difference between these two forms of military presence can be seen in UN regulations which stress the impartiality and international staffing of peacekeeping missions. Impermanence is another characteristic of peacekeeping operations, different from ordinary military presence. It seems that Russian military policies hardly accept this difference.

Specialised literature notes not only the operational differences between Russian peacekeeping and other international experience in this field, but also the semantic discrepancy between the English word "peacekeeping" and the Russian *mirotvorchestvo* (peacemaking). It is pointed out that the latter contains an element of compulsion (79). In this connection one may recall that as far back as the beginning of the 19th century the Russian emperor who received the nickname of *Peacemaker* explained the military presence in Georgia by the desire for *peace and security* for the local population (80). The Russia of that time is seen as overtly imperialist. The similarity of the terminology of that epoch with the language of modern Russian politicians also suggests an idea of the immutability of the military and political policy of Moscow. Sometimes, however, Russian forceful peacemaking is called for by one of the warring parties. As stated above, the Georgian side did ask the Russian forces to disarm the Abkhazian troops and declare temporary military law in Abkhazia, forgetting the general rules of peacekeeping.

As testified by representatives of Russian military circles, the GRVZ serves Russian geopolitical interests, while the objective of Russian aid to the Georgian Army is to tie the Georgian military morally and materially to their northern partners (81).

Speaking about the prospects of the Russo-Georgian military cooperation, it becomes clear that the Russian understanding of its aims does not favour a positive evolution of events and increases distrust on the part of the Georgian side. The distrust is heightened also by the aforesaid frustration of Georgian government circles over the insignificance of Russian help on questions which are important for Georgia. But the main thing that suggests the lack of prospects for the Russo-Georgian military alliance is the condition of the GRVZ itself, the weakening of financial opportunities for Russia to ensure its influence in the region, and the intensified economic and political attraction of the West for Georgia.

We have already alluded to this latter factor, which is linked to the mutual interest of the West and Georgia in the transporting of Baku oil and the development of transport routes in the region.

As for the condition of the GRVZ and Russian financial opportunities in the field of guaranteeing Russo-Georgian military cooperation, this is attested by the following facts: the GRVZ suffers from a permanent lack of personnel and a high percentage of desertion; these phenomena are caused by low pay and bad housing conditions (82); the percentage of local inhabitants in the GRVZ is high; some data show that from 60 to 90 percent of the numerical strength of the Batumi and Akhalkalaki bases are Georgians and Armenians (83). One can hardly regard this composition of the troops as optimal for the defence of Russian interests. The technical state of GRVZ weaponry also leaves much to be desired (84). The difficulties of financial provision for Russian

military policy can be seen both in the forced reduction of the strength of the GRVZ and in the demand addressed to Georgian officers studying in Russian military colleges to pay for their studies, as a result of which many of them are compelled to leave these colleges (85).

Without relinquishing the traditional policy of retaining the protectorate over the territory of the former USSR, the Russian politicians simultaneously exhibit an increasing pragmatism when it comes to the financial backing for this policy. The history of Russo-Georgian military cooperation is just one more example of that. This allows one to assume that sooner or later a comprehension of the futility of relying on force will become firmly established in Russian policy.

There are three possible avenues for the future evolution of Russo-Georgian relationships: a) Russia reduces its involvement in Georgia; b) Russia helps Georgia to recover Abkhazia and build a national army, which will foster the consolidation of Georgian statehood; c) Russia uses its remaining influence on the Georgian armed and security forces and on the ethnic minorities in Georgia, leaving Georgia in its political orbit by means of keeping pressure on Tbilisi. All three options speak of a lack of prospects for Russo-Georgian military alliance. The decrease of military cooperation would be part of the first scenario. In the second case, though, the consolidation of Georgian statehood will deprive Russia of its levers of influence on Tbilisi (e. g., by way of Abkhazia), while the growing drive toward the West will hardly favour Georgia's voluntary agreement to an alliance with the northern neighbour, in relations with which a critical mass of distrust has accumulated. The third variant is real and partly operates at present. But its durability is dubious, as the possibilities for the frank use of force are being reduced in the modern world, and especially without a corresponding financial provision.

From the above reasoning it may be inferred that the normalization of Russo-Georgian relations has prospects only on the basis of equitable and mutually beneficial relations. As for the military alliance, it is scarcely possible henceforward. The objective interests of Georgia are at variance with a one-sided pro-Russian policy. The aforementioned stages of the Russo-Georgian military contacts were marked by permanent fluctuation and incompleteness. Russia is facing a choice between pragmatism dictating a renunciation of the struggle for unilateral influence in the region and traditionalism stemming from the aspirations of its imperial past. Georgia, which sees a new role for itself looming up in the changing world order, cannot break with the Soviet colonial past overnight. These factors may still have an influence for some time, but reality necessitates a choice that will less and less depend on the nostalgia of some people and the fear felt by others. Once again world politics is changing its aspect - the era of the "Russian Transcaucasus" is coming to an end.

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## Notes:

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1. Data from the *Georgian Military Chronicle*. Occasional Paper, CIPDD, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 1995; see also the interview with the chief editor of the newspaper *Zakavkazskie voennye vedomosti*, A. I. Dergilev, with the head of the press

- centre of Georgia's internal troops, I. Aladashvili and with the former Georgian Prime Minister, T. Sigua.
2. Interview with the chief editor of the newspaper *Zakavkazskie voennye vedomosti*, A.I. Dergilev, 9 January 1996.
  3. *ÎZakon o deystvii na territorii Gruzinskoy Respubliki zakona SSSR ob obiazatel'noy voinskoy sluzhbeâ in Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta Respubliki Gruziiya*, November 1990, p. 40.
  4. Interview with former Chairman of Georgia's Supreme Council, A. Asatiani, 18 March 1996.
  5. *DRO*, No. 3, January 1997. Reminiscences of the former Prime Minister of the Republic of Georgia, T. Sigua, and interview with former Chairman of Georgia's Supreme Council, A. Asatiani, 18 March 1996.
  6. Interview with the Military Attache of the Russian Federation in Georgia, V. L. Golub,, 11 November 1995.
  7. True, the aid was unofficial but tangible. Kitovani received ammunition from the Transcaucasian Military District (interviews with many participants in the fighting between the supporters of Gamsakhurdia and Kitovani).
  8. The fact itself was not denied by either side. The Mkhedrioni leader Dzhaba Ioseliani claimed that Gamsakhurdia himself set the ZakVO against him by convincing the Soviet military that the Mkhedrioni people had pillaged the Soviet Army's artillery college in Tbilisi. (See David Darchiashvili., *The Patriotic Organization "Warriors of Georgia"*., CIPDD, 1995).
  9. Interview with former Deputy to Georgia's Supreme Council, Member of Subcommittee on Defence M. Makashvili, 5 January 1996.
  10. Olga Vasilieva, *The Foreign Policy Orientation of Georgia.*, SWP-AP 2968., July 1996, p. 18.
  11. These guardsmen represented the core of the officers of the Georgian National Guard which supported their Commander in Chief Kitovani against President Gamsakhurdia in September 1991-January 1992. Kitovani had been dismissed, but about 300 guardsmen, mostly officers, followed him in a coup against Gamsakhurdia. These 300 guardsmen, veterans of the Georgian National Guard, claimed to represent the whole officer corps of the guard, apart from the Zugdidi battalion, which remained loyal to the president. The soldiers of the National Guard had been sent home during this turbulent period.
  12. *Georgian Military Chronicle*, Vol. 1, No. 1, November 1994.
  13. Interview with head of the press service of the GRVZ, G. V. Dolgachev, 19 January 1996.
  14. The guardsmen mentioned above were involved in such actions, but were then subordinated to the State Council headed by Shevardnadze. Their staff was filled with volunteers and a small number of conscripts. But this subordination to the State Council was quite formal. Each Unit acted according to its own desire or at the order of certain charismatic military leaders. In some cases, individual soldiers or officers acted voluntarily: they could join or leave the unit whenever they wanted. The Georgian National Guard (renamed later the Rapid Reaction Corps of the Ministry of Defense) was actually a militia, even if it was never considered as such, having also an extremely low level of discipline. Besides the National Guard/Rapid Reaction Corps, Georgia counted also other military formations, with different degrees of autonomy from the authorities, such as for instance the well known Mkhedrioni (Horsemen), who participated in actions against Russian military installations.
  15. Interview with the head of the press centre of Georgia's internal troops, I. Aladashvili, 6 March 1996.
  16. Ibid.
  17. Interview with the Military Attache of the Russian Federation in Georgia, V. L.

- Golub,, 11 November 1995.
18. *Georgian Military Chronicle*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1994.
  19. As was said earlier, Georgia received from the former ZakVO the first major consignment of arms just on the eve of the Abkhazian operation. According to some Georgian men and officers, the Russians facilitated the preparation of the airborne operation of the Georgian units on the northern coast of Abkhazia.
  20. See, e.g., interview with Georgia's President Eduard Shevardnadze in *Sakartvelos Respublika*, No. 141, 20 June 1997.
  21. See, e.g., Charles H. Fairbanks., *A Tired Anarchy, National Interest*, Spring 1995; and also speech by former Chairman of Russia's Federation Council Vladimir Shumeiko (*NT Segodnia*, report by Zaraelian, 21 December 1994).
  22. *Sakartvelos Respublika*, No. 85, 27 April 1993.
  23. M. Mirziashvili, supplement to *Georgian Chronicle*, Caucasian Institute, June 1993. The radical reduction of the Russian troops in Georgia in 1992-1993 is attested by the fact that in the Akhalkalaki Division officers mounted guard for want of lower ranks (*Zakavkazskie voennye vedomosti*, No. 141, 26 July 1995).
  24. *Sakartvelos Respublika*, No. 100, 15 May 1993.
  25. *Sakartvelos Respublika*, 27 July 1993. The fact that the Abkhazian events increasingly assumed an air of Russian pressure on Georgia by means of aid to the Abkhaz secessionists, was also noted by foreign researchers (*A Tired Anarchy, National Interest*, Spring 1995) as well as by the Abkhaz side: the Abkhaz leader Vladislav Ardzinba later stated that Russia used the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict to take Georgia back under its influence (*Georgian Chronicle*., Vol., 4, No. 8, p. 7, 1995).
  26. As H. Timmermann writes, Russia purposefully exerts pressure on certain republics so as to obtain their greater compliance (see H. Timmermann, *Ïvneshniaya politika Rossii: poiski novoy identichnostiâ in Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, No. 2, 1994).
  27. *Sakartvelos Respublika*, No. 227, 19 October 1993. The official Tbilisi sources dubbed the offensive of the ex-president's supporters an "intervention", in which North Caucasian irregulars ostensibly took part.
  28. In spite of the statement by Russia's Defence Minister that Georgia was an independent country and that Russia could not participate in the civil war taking place there (*Sakartvelos Respublika*, No. 229, 21 October 1993), Russian troops guarded the main roads in Western Georgia. Also, according to many eyewitness reports, Russian tanks took part in the counteroffensive of the troops of the official Tbilisi against the armed opposition. The official organ of the GRVZ, *Zakavkazskie voennye vedomosti*, also describes a clash of the Russian military with a gang. The clash took place during and in the zone of the civil war (*Zakavkazskie voennye vedomosti*, No. 200, 29 October 1994).
  29. *Dogovor mezhdru Respublikoy Gruziiya i Rossiyskoy Federatsiey o statuse voinskikh formirovaniy RF, vremennno nakhodiaschikhsia na territorii Respubliki Gruziiya*, Moscow, October 1993, pp. 14-15.
  30. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
  31. *Ibid.*, clauses 26, 27, 31 and 32, pp. 21-24.
  32. *Base Agreement between Greece and USA in Simon Duke, United States Military Forces and Installations in Europe*, Oxford University Press, SIPRI 1989, p. 169.
  33. According to the agreement Georgian border guards have to be represented in staffs (Russian term "apparat") of the representatives of Russian Frontiers (paragraph 9); the Russian and Georgian sides have to appoint permanent representatives dealing with issues related to the functioning of Russian frontiers in Georgia. The Georgian representative sends liaison officers to Russian units (paragraph 31). It is not clear whether these Georgian officers represent the

- Georgian border guard or not. It should also be pointed out that at that time the Georgian border guard belonged to MOD. Now they have a separate department.
34. *Soglashenie mezhdru Respublikoy Gruzziya i Rossiyskoy Federatsiey o statuse i funktsionirovanii pogranichnykh voysk Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Gruzziya*, (paragraph 9) pp. 4
  35. *Dogovor mezhdru Respublikoy Gruzziya i Rossiyskoy Federatsiey o rossiyskikh voennykh bazakh na territorii Respubliki Gruzziya*, clause 40, p. 24.
  36. Clause 2, p. 3.
  37. This supplement was never published. The information was obtained by the method of confidential interviews. This supplement serves to determine the total strength of the GRVZ.
  38. *Sodruzhestvo, Informatsionnyi biulleten.*, No. 1 (18), 1995, pp. 47-51.
  39. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.
  40. *Military Chronicle*, Vol. 2, No. 6, October 1995.
  41. Interviews with representatives of Georgia's Defence Ministry, January-February 1996.
  42. EVEN in 1996, the opinion was current in Georgian military-political circles that according to unwritten rules, the GRVZ command is exercising guidance over the army and security bodies of Georgia, and that it was Moscow that insisted on the aforementioned candidatures for ministers. According to many testimonies, the working day of Georgia's Defence Minister until recently started with a visit to the GRVZ headquarters. As far as the former chief of the Georgian state security was concerned, it may be asserted that he was setting up his special units with the active participation of his Russian colleagues (*Zakavkazskie voennye vedomosti*, No. 152, 15 August 1995). The close relationships between Giorgadze and the GRVZ command are demonstrated by the fact that his personal cars were stored at the Russian base. As testified by many, Giorgadze, accused of the attempt on Shevardnadze's life on 29 August 1995, flew to Moscow from the Russian military aerodrome (*Georgian Military Chronicle*, Vol. 2, No. 8, December 1995).
  43. *Protokol IO maksimal, nykh urovniakh dlia nalichiya obychnykh vooruzheniyâ*, p. 1.
  44. In Supplement No. 2 to the treaty on bases Georgia in principle agreed to a temporary renunciation in favour of the GRVZ of 115 tanks, 160 armoured cars and 170 artillery systems, but with a footnote that "concrete figures are to be negotiated". Besides, Georgia demanded that Russia take care to transfer to it the remaining portion of its quota. (Information received from Georgian military and political circles).
  45. *BGI Information Agency*, 23 November 1994.
  46. Interview on Georgian TV, 23 March 1995.
  47. *Georgian Military Chronicle*, Vol. 3, No. 9, January-February 1996, p. 1.
  48. In 1995, the Russian military leadership time and again announced the start of the mass return of Georgian refugees to Abkhazia. During the signing of the treaty on military bases there was talk of the forthcoming opening of the railway through Abkhazia. The foregoing statements of the Defence Minister and President of Georgia also bear witness to the existence of promises on the part of Russia that in return for the legitimation of the Russian bases Georgia would reestablish its territorial integrity.
  49. *Iberia-spektri*, 28 March 1995.
  50. Interview on Georgian TV with the Commander of Georgia's border guard troops, V. Chkheidze, 10 April 1996.
  51. Georgian TV programme *Matsne*, 15 December 1996.
  52. *Rezonansi*, 28 October 1996.
  53. *Sakartvelos Respublika*, 20 April 1996.

54. Against the background of the continued protest action of the Georgian refugees the Parliament adopted the opposition-drafted conception of stability of social life, enhancement of state sovereignty and security, and restoration of the territorial integrity. The above-cited definition figured in that document. The document was adopted as a basis for definition of state policy but never published.
55. *Akhali Taoba*, No. 147, 31 May 1997.
56. *Sakartvelos Respublika*, No. 80, 8 April 1997.
57. Foreign Broadcast Informational Service, SOV 96-046, pp. 53-54.
58. *Sakartvelos Respublika*, No. 34, 12 February 1997.
59. Interview with Shevardnadze on Georgian radio, 14 March 1994.
60. *Sakartvelos Respublika*, No. 166, 18 July 1997.
61. *Rezonansi*, No. 178, 2 July 1997.
62. *Akhali Taoba*, 15 August 1996.
63. *Akhali Taoba*, No. 179, 3 July 1997.
64. ICIS and Middle East in *A Monthly Summary and News Analyses of the CIS Press*, Vol. XX, No. 10-11, 1995, p. 6.
65. *Developing the National Security Concept for Georgia*, p.55, CIPDD, 1996.
66. *Sakartvelos Respublika*, No. 152, 16 July 1997.
67. Olga Vasilieva, *The Foreign Policy Orientation of Georgia*, SWP-AP 2968, July 1996.
68. *Sakartvelos Respublika*, No. 184, 2 August 1997.
69. *Sakartvelos Respublika*, 21 February 1997.
70. *Sakartvelos Respublika*, No. 152, 3 July 1997.
71. *Rezonansi*, No. 179, 3 July 1997.
72. *Army and Society in Georgia*, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 3, November 1996.
73. Patrick Zoll, *Russian Military Presence in Transcaucasus: Defence, Diplomacy, Imperialism. Research Essay*, HEI License, April 1997, p.10.
74. *Zakavkazskie voennye vedomosti*, No. 191, 5 October 1995.
75. Jonathan Aves, *Georgia: From Chaos to Stability?*, RIIA, 1996, p. 28.
76. *Zakavkazskie voennye vedomosti*, No. 136, 19 July 1995.
77. Albert Wohlstetter & Gregory S. Jones. *Peacekeepers that Keep War Going in European Studies*, TICA, Summer 1995, Vol. 12, No. 2.
78. Gail W. Lapidus and Renee De Nevers (eds.). *Nationalism, Ethnic Identity and Conflict Management in Russia Today*, CISAC, Stanford University, 1995, p. 9.
79. Roy Allison. *Peacekeeping in the Soviet Successor States in Chaillot papers* 18, November 1994, p. 2.
80. *Reskript Aleksandra Pervogo*, 19 April 1801, AKAK, Vol. 1, Tiflis, 1866, p. 419.
81. Interview with the chief editor of the newspaper *Zakavkazskie voennye vedomosti*, A. I. Dergilev, January 1996.
82. Interview with the chief editor of the newspaper *Zakavkazskie voennye vedomosti*, A. I. Dergilev, January 1996. See also *Zakavkazskie voennye vedomosti*, NO 136, 19 JULY 1995., No. 143, 28 August 1995.
83. Interview with A. I. Dergilev.
84. *Military Chronicle*, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 1995.
85. Interviews with representatives of Georgia's Defence Ministry, December 1996. (Let us note in passing that the USA and Turkey offer to train Georgian youths in their military colleges gratis).