

The Development of Civil-Military Relations and National Security Decision-making
Capability in Georgia: Authoritarian transition or State Capture?

Ronald S. Mangum

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Supervisor: Professor David Darchiashvili

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Abstract

This research project examines Georgia's path toward democracy from its independence in 1991 to the present time, emphasizing the role of civil-military relations in that journey. The research offers an historical review of the political events that impacted the country's uneven movement toward democracy and the personalities who steered the country forward. Using Huntington's concept of an authoritarian transition that is unique to modernizing states, and especially the former Soviet republics, the research concludes that Georgia remains in its authoritarian transition, but also raised the issue that this transition may have been further derailed by State Capture. This study is important for donor states to understand the historical and cultural traditions that affect the effectiveness of their assistance to Georgia. The study concludes with several recommendations to assist Georgia to advance toward becoming a consolidated liberal democracy and the necessity to free its civil-military relations from partisan politics and State Capture.

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Chapter One: Introduction

“Democracy is messy”
(attributed to former U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld¹)

Many in NATO and the Euro-Atlantic community are frustrated by the slow progress in the Former Soviet Republics (FSR) in adopting western models of democracy and national security formulation. They do not understand the cultural impediments wrought by more than two centuries of subservience to the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union and they do not understand the difficulty of the demands that they place on inexperienced governments as they struggle to urgently change cultural outlooks on the world. Using Georgia as a case study, this research explores and makes available to the English-speaking world a description of the structures and history of national security decision making in Georgia. It examines the political imperatives that hamper both development of a liberal democratic state and the creation of an effective and continuous process of developing national security policies suitable to a modern liberal democratic state. Concomitantly, the research examines the role of the military and its relationship to the civilian government as it relates to Georgian’s journey toward becoming a liberal democracy. The research tends to show that although Georgia has moved close to becoming a liberal democracy, it still has a way to go. This research is intended to show that western countries can improve their understanding of these processes in order to better fashion assistance to these countries, including Georgia, to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic community.

Research Questions

Changes in the political and institutional structure of national security decision-making in Georgia detract from Georgia’s journey toward becoming a liberal democracy. Concurrently, do changes in the relationship between the civilian government and Georgia’s armed forces affect that journey? The research questions that drive the completion of this research are therefore threefold: “how do changes in the national security structure of Georgia, and its relations between the armed forces and the civilian government, affect the state’s movement toward liberal democracy? What are the mechanisms of state government that hamper the country’s movement toward becoming a liberal democracy?”

Samuel P. Huntington establishes a two-level framework for the study of national security². The Operational level includes the structure and functions of military forces, and the Institutional level includes the guidance given to the operation of those forces. Thus,

¹ Larry L. Eastland, The Washington Times, December 29, 2011
<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/dec/29/eastland-democracy-is-messy/?page=all> (accessed 11.4.14)

² Samuel P. Huntington, “Reforming Civil-Military Relations”, in Diamond and Plattner, Eds. “Civil-Military Relations and Democracy.” Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1996 pp.4-5

Huntington mainly deals with the direct contact between the military soldier, qua professional, and the institutions that provide guidance to the operational elements of national security. The present study assumes that civilian control exists mainly through a national security council but examines how the structure and operation of the armed formations in Georgia are subject to political currents of civilian control which contribute to or detract from Georgia's journey toward liberal democracy.

Democracy is a contested term and Larry Diamond examines several elements and definitions of liberal democracy³. None is absolute and this research accepts the vagueness but understands that civilian control of the security institutions at both the institutional and operational level, is key to attaining the status of a liberal democracy. In Diamond's view, a consolidated democracy exhibits most of the elements that make up a liberal democracy.

At the same time, national security is a "relational term" in that the concept of security changes with the perceptions of both the Georgian state as well as the perceptions of states who are both sympathetic and hostile toward Georgia⁴. "...the term "security" covers a range of goals so wide that highly divergent policies can be interpreted as policies of security."⁵ While national security decisions are naturally subject to the political will of the state, in a true liberal democracy, the military develops a professionalism that is recognized and permitted to operate in its own sphere by the civilian leadership, and likewise, the civilian leadership educates itself about military affairs, not to usurp the military's expertise, but to provide guidance to the military arm in the exercise of national security policy. This has not always been the case in Georgia, and it is doubtful whether that professional dichotomy exists today.

Hypothesis

Georgian security policy is hostage to partisan politics stemming from internal security challenges as well as from legacy Soviet thinking. Development and functioning of the National Security Council(s) under presidents from 1991 to 2019 demonstrate this tendency and can only be understood in light of history. As well, Georgia may have become a prisoner of State Capture, a pervasive form of political corruption that has been a hallmark of governments from Shevardnadze to the present. As a result, liberal democracy is not achievable in Georgia until the ongoing security challenges related to imbalances in civil-military relations are reassessed, re-understood and corrected by the political elite.

³ Larry Diamond, "The Spirit of Democracy", Henry Holt and Company, LLC, New York, 2008

⁴ Mykola Kapitonenko. "Ukrainian Crisis as an Ongoing Threat to Regional Security". Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review 1:9-20.<https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=616328>

⁵ Arnold Wolfers. "National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol". Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 67, No.4 (Dec. 1952), pp. 481-502, p.484

Discussion of Hypothesis

In Georgia, as in many modern countries, the National Security Council is the focus of civil-military relationships. An NSC is supposed to examine threats to a country's security, and provides to the country's leaders solutions to meet the threats. It is the hub of civil-military relations because it functions as the nexus between the civilian controlled government and its armed forces. A recent publication by this author and Professor David Darchiashvili concludes that the national security decision-making process and the civil-military relations between the armed forces and the government of Georgia are hostage to the winds of political change.⁶

Georgia established a National Security Council under its first president Gamsaxurdia in 1991, but the NSC barely functioned and was intended to be a control mechanism under the domination of the power ministers. Under its second president, Eduard Shevardnadze, it began as a security and defense committee and continued to be a control mechanism throughout Shevardnadze's reign. Under Saakashvili, it continued to function as a control mechanism. But, in late 2007, Mikheil Saakashvili set up the Task Force for Free and Fair Elections under the NSC, and after the Russian invasion in 2008, he set up the Deputies Committee, and the NSC became less of a control mechanism and more of a national security coordinating body, but it continued to function under authoritarian leaders. Now, since 2012, national security responds to the whims of the country's "Grey Cardinal", a new autocrat. In recent years the national security council was abolished and then, recreated under the Prime Minister. Further, a relatively new theory of political corruption in modernizing states⁷ appears to have taken root in Georgia. Shevardnadze's government is widely acknowledged to have been extremely corrupt, but after the Rose Revolution of 2003, Saakashvili was seen as a reformer battling corruption. As his administration progressed, however, the government was 'captured' by private interests who deflected the path of democracy to one toward authoritarian control of society and State Capture by private interests. While a democracy thrives on compromise between political factions, the current trend in Georgia has turned to such a state of control under the Georgian Dream coalition that the Prime Minister vows to "finish" the political opposition.⁸

In a consolidated liberal democracy such as the United States, a national security council is an autonomous exploratory and advisory body that examines potential threats to the

⁶ David Darchiashvili and Ronald S. Mangum, "Georgian civil-military relations: hostage to confrontational politics", *Caucasus Survey*, June 2018.

⁷ *Anticorruption in Transition: A Contribution to the Policy Debate*, World Bank Publications, Jan 1, 2000, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/825161468029662026/Anticorruption-in-transition-a-contribution-to-the-policy-debate>

⁸ Civil society • 16 October 2018

https://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/alarm_over_increasing_signs_of_state_capture_and_pressure_on_civil_society

state's security, develops means and methods to deal with those threats, and reports its findings and recommendations to the leaders of the country. As detailed below, in Georgia, the national security council's function has most often been to control the mechanisms of an authoritarian government in order to stifle political dissent. Consequently, instead of providing a continuing flow of security analysis and recommendations, the NSC has responded to the political crises of the day, and as such has been continually buffeted by the political winds of state.

Georgia's 200 years of subservience to Russian and then Soviet occupation has produced in most average Georgians a reluctance to innovate or explore new ideas for fear of criticism that has often led to ostracism, imprisonment or even death. In part because of this long history of subservience, Georgia has an overriding fear of continued Russian interference with Georgia's democratic processes, that has stunted the growth of liberal democratic norms, such as freedom of expression. Some outlets of Georgian media is often perceived as controlled from Russia and many of the state's political leaders are perceived to cater to, if not being subservient to, Russian pressure. Legacy Soviet mentality hinders some sectors of the national security mechanism, such as defense, and under the latest Constitutional changes the National Security Council has been removed from its former position in the Georgian Constitution and now is a statutory agency reporting to the Prime Minister. From its creation under Gamsaxurdia in 1991, the NSC served as an instrument to 'control' nearly every aspect of Georgian government and reluctantly morphed partially for a time into an agency that provided advice and recommendations to the head of government. The current agency seems to have returned to its original purpose as a mechanism to control political dissent in Georgia. Its first Secretary was the Minister of Internal Affairs, who became Prime Minister. Most recently, the current Secretary has been the former Minister of Defense, who at the same time has been moved to lead the Intelligence Agency.

The purpose of this research is to examine the historical and current methods of National Security Decision Making in Georgia since the break-up of the Soviet Union. Under Soviet domination, the former Soviet republics were subservient to central control from Moscow over virtually all of their government functions and policies. Since independence, some Former Russian Republics, like Ukraine and Georgia, have expressed a desire to join NATO. Others, like Armenia and Azerbaijan have taken relatively friendly views toward the West, but do not aspire to NATO membership. And some former Soviet Republics, like Belarus, have not left the Russian orbit. As newly independent nations, these states either have little experience in developing national security policies or are stuck in legacy Soviet models that are mired in conformity and antithetical to innovation that prevents them from exploring new approaches to national security decision-making or following western national security decision making models.

The research aim is, using Georgia as a case study, to uncover the history and explain the purposes, processes and obstacles to national security decision-making in Georgia

as a Former Soviet Republic and how those obstacles have, and continue, to hinder the country's progress toward becoming a liberal democracy. The hypothesis stated above (where above? posits that immediately after independence, the quest for national security was directed inward to control the state in much the same way that it was controlled during Soviet times. Democracy in a post-Soviet state does not prosper until the political situation stabilizes, usually under an authoritarian leader, and when the national security focus broadens to include external as well as internal events. At some point, the national security decision-making structures morph from control mechanisms to become facilitators of civil liberties. The dependent variables are democracy and national security. Because of the need to define 'democracy', independent variables include those structures/events that impact or demonstrate democracy, such as free elections, free economy, free press, universal education, lack of internal intelligence collection, and civilian control of the military, which as positive variables, are balanced by negative or non-events: corrupt elections, press censorship, lack of education standards, secret police, and internal troops.

What has been discovered during the background research process is that "Democracy" in Georgia did not begin to prosper until the political situation in Georgia began to stabilize and allowed the national security structure to become a facilitator of democratic freedoms instead of a control mechanism over internal events. The conclusion of the research is, however, that this process never fully matured and is still on-going. This is shown not only by interviews, but also by public perceptions and the sequence of adoption of decision-making structures and their attendant decisions. While this may be an intuitive result of the study, it also should guide countries who provide advice and assistance to Former Soviet Republics to encourage a broader more open examination at national levels of international events and how they impact and can be shaped by national security decision makers. A concomitant finding is that until the internal political situation in a country stabilizes, "national security" is all about controlling the government and preserving the political elites in power. Consequently, this work draws on historical sources to frame the political and historical environment in which the national security structure has operated. One of the key elements in demonstrating successful movement toward democracy is that when the internal political situation stabilizes and the national security apparatus is able to focus on, and facilitate, civil freedoms, liberal democracy awakens.

Literature Review

The research answers the research questions in three major themes: civil-military relations, democratic governance, and Georgian national security studies. The many works that were consulted are listed in the Bibliography, but some of the more important literature is mentioned here.

On Civil Military Relations

The classic literature on civil-military relations includes Huntington's "The Soldier and the State". Huntington's works have been followed by dozens of subsequent titles and articles explaining or disagreeing with his conclusions. This research does not claim to have reviewed all of his publications, but it contains the concepts of the major ones:.

Samuel P. Huntington, the leading thinker in the field of civil-military relations and democracy, has written several publications and articles on civil-military relations. This literature review summarizes his concepts. See Huntington⁹: *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*.

As Huntington said in a short chapter on *Reforming Civil-Military Relations*¹⁰:

"...the kind of civil-military relations characteristic of the world's industrial democracies, which I once termed "objective civilian control". . . involves: 1) a high level of military professionalism and recognition by military officers of the limits of their professional competence; 2) the effective subordination of the military to civilian political leaders who make the basic decisions on foreign and military policy; 3) the recognition and acceptance by that leadership of an area of professional competence and autonomy for the military; and 4) as a result, the minimization of military intervention in politics and of political intervention in the military." "Civil-military relations in authoritarian regimes differed from this model in varying degrees: In the military regimes, no civilian control existed at all and military organizations often performed a wide variety of functions only distantly related to normal military missions. . . ."

And he asks the question: "How well have new democracies dealt with these problems?" His conclusion, written in 1996, is that "Overall, their record has been spotty at best, In many cases, economic performance has declined . . . and has been manipulated to benefit members of the old authoritarian elite. Crime and corruption have increased. Human rights guaranties in new constitutions have been routinely violated. The press has been controlled or subverted. Political party systems have been fragmented and personalistic, incapable of producing either effective governments or responsible oppositions." While in many cases the movement toward democracy has improved, many of Huntington's concerns remain.

⁹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957

¹⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, "Reforming Civil-Military Relations", in Diamond and Plattner, Eds. "Civil-Military Relations and Democracy." Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1996 pp. 3-4

Huntington cites Anton Bebler, who with regard to Central and Eastern European states, (1994)¹¹ lists 11 main components of change:

“(1) increased transparency of defense policies and often a greater supervisory role by parliaments and public opinion; (2) civilianization of defense ministries; (3) radical personnel changes in the upper echelons of the armed forces; (4) national emancipation from Moscow and resultant new security doctrines; (5) partial redeployment of and an altered profile for the armed forces; (6) a greater stress on participatory managerial styles within military establishments; (7) relative political neutralization of the armed forces; (8) discontinuation of the military’s internal-security role; (9) ideological pluralization; (10) abolition of obtrusive discrimination against religious believers; and (11) decriminalization of conscientious objectors.”

Professor, and former United States Assistant Secretary of Defense, Joseph S. Nye, Jr. echoed Huntington in the Epilogue of the same book:

“The liberal tradition, which is a key product of our democratic heritage, establishes specific responsibilities for both the military and civilian leaders. The military must recognize that 1) armed forces are accountable to the rule of law and obliged to respect civilian authority, and that 2) armed forces are nonpartisan and remain above politics. Civilians are required to 1) recognize that armed forces are legitimate tools of democratic states; 2) fund and respect properly developed military roles and missions; and 3) educate themselves about defense issues and military culture.¹²”

Huntington concludes that Democracy is the best form of government, but he recognizes that attaining true democracy is not easy and many modernizing states are at different stages in their quest to achieve a consolidated democracy. Huntington posits that In order to attain a consolidated democracy a state must have a stable government that actually governs its people.¹³ In order to achieve a period of stability to allow democracy to blossom, a state must often go through a period of authoritarian control in which authoritarian leaders use power and force as is necessary to assure stability. In this period of governing stability democratic institutions can develop and democracy can flourish.

This study uses Huntington’s criteria to examine the obstacles along the erratic path of Georgia as it wends its way toward becoming a liberal democracy. The conclusion of the research is that it is not possible for Georgia to become a true liberal democracy until its political elite recognize the proper role of the military in a civilian government that is free

¹¹ Anton Bebler, “On the Evolution of Civil-Military Relations in Eastern and Central Europe,” Inter-University Seminar Newsletter 23 (Fall 1994). P.9

¹² Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “Epilogue: The Liberal Tradition” in Diamond and Plattner, p. 153

¹³ Huntington, (1968), p. 391

from partisan politics. The aim of this research is not to study the many theories of democracy, but to answer the question of how to define liberal democracy, as well as, to answer if democracy is an end state or a process. As is broadly covered in the research, democracy is defined variously by supporting concepts of government transparency, lack of corruption, civilian control of the military, a free media and perhaps above all, by free elections. The leading thinkers on democracy state that a country becomes truly democratic when the people are able to freely express their will as to who shall govern them and how they will govern. While this opinion continues to be open to argument, it provides a basis from which an analysis of the democratic process in Georgia can be made.

On Democratic Governance

Larry Diamond classifies democracies as ‘thick’ or ‘thin’. At a minimal (thin) level, “if a people can choose and replace their leaders in regular, free, and fair elections, there is an electoral democracy.”¹⁴ He quotes Joseph Schumpeter’s definition of a ‘thin’ democracy as a system “for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote.”¹⁵

On the ‘thick’ side, Diamond says that a democratic system must be able to insure:

- Substantial individual freedom of belief, opinion, discussion, speech, publication, broadcast, assembly, demonstration, petition, and the Internet.
- Freedom of ethnic, religious, racial and other minority groups to practice their religion and culture and to participate equally in political and social life.
- The right of all adult citizens to vote and run for office.
- Genuine openness and competition in the electoral area, enabling any group that adheres to constitutional principles to form a party and contest for office.
- Legal equality of all citizens under a rule of law, in which laws are ‘clear, publicly known, universal, stable and nonretroactive.
- An independent judiciary to neutrally and consistently apply the law and protect individual and group rights.
- Thus, due process of law and freedom of individuals from torture, terror, and unjustified detention, exile, or interference in their personal lives by the state or nonstate actors.
- Institutional checks on the power of elected officials, by an independent legislature, court system, and other autonomous agencies.
- Real pluralism in sources of information and forms of organization independent of the state: and thus, a vibrant “civil society.”

¹⁴ Larry Diamond, “The Spirit of Democracy”, Henry Holt and Company, LLC, New York, 2008, p.22

¹⁵ Diamond, p. 21, citing Joseph Schumpeter, “Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy,” 2nd ed. (New York: Harper, 1947), p.269.

- Control over the military and state security apparatus by civilians who are ultimately accountable to the people through elections.¹⁶

Even having all or most of the ‘thick’ processes in a society does not necessarily make it a true democracy. Nominally democratic institutions can be subverted by corruption or unbridled power and become what Diamond calls ‘pseudo-democracies.’ Russia springs to mind with a constitution that seems to contain all of the protections of a democratic society, but which functions in a most undemocratic way. He further notes that ‘while free and fair elections are only one component of democracy, they are the most indispensable one, and they are one that ruling parties and presidents have a strong incentive to manipulate and degrade.’¹⁷

Diamond doesn’t address economics in his list of attributes of a thick democracy, but later in his book he recognizes the importance of economic growth on democracy. Democracy can flourish in economically poor countries, such as India or Bangladesh, but as a rule, economic growth disperses resources and power to larger segments of society, provides wider access to sources of information, and as a society gets richer, power tends to shift away from the government and ruling elites and is transferred to a broader set of individuals and to civil society¹⁸.

Diamond accepts Huntington’s concept of a period of authoritarian transition in modernizing states and he notes that in some states, such as China, the period of authoritarian transition may last for decades.¹⁹ While this research has found that authoritarian control has been a hallmark of Georgian politics since independence, it also has found that private interests emanating from political parties has raised the bar of corruption to such a level that the government functions not for the good of the people of Georgia but instead it exists for the good – and financial gain – of a limited group of its political elite – a concept in developing states that is called “state capture.”²⁰

In summing up his concepts of democracy, Diamond notes that societies must be fertile political soil for democracy. There must be a culture of political bargaining to resolve disputes among conflicting groups and people must believe that the political process will

¹⁶ Diamond, p. 22.

¹⁷ Diamond, p. 26.

¹⁸ Diamond, p.99

¹⁹ Larry Diamond, “Why East Asia—including China—Will Turn Democratic Within a Generation, The Atlantic Monthly, Emerson Collective, January 24, 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/01/why-east-asia-including-china-will-turn-democratic-within-a-generation/251824/>

²⁰ Joel Hellman, et al. Measuring Governance, Corruption, and State Capture, The World Bank Institute, Washington, D.C., April 2000 <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWBIGOVANTCOR/Resources/measure.pdf>

peacefully and fairly settle those disputes. See also Diamond²¹ *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World*. Diamond also directly addresses the relationship between civil-military relations and democracy in his book by that name²².

Literature on Georgia's Security Sector

There are many titles that examine the security of Georgia and other south Caucasus states, but turning specifically to civil-military relations in Georgia, one notes a limited amount of literature that provides an in depth look at Georgia's security structures, how they operate and what is their effect on Georgia's movement to become a consolidated liberal democracy.

In one of his many articles on civil-military relations in Georgia, David Darchiashvili notes:

"Civil-military relations are crucially important for stable statehood and a successful security sector reform process, which, in itself, can be regarded as an important element of a country's transition to democracy. They require efficient, capable, and legitimate institutions (and a clear procedural basis) that are responsible for and guide the definition and implementation of security and defence policy. At the same time, civil-military relations affect the effectiveness of the state and the population's political loyalty to the state. If military and paramilitary structures in charge of the country's security and political authorities of the state are out of balance, and if there is no mutual trust between the society and the security apparatus, the entire political system may be eroded. If the quality of government and national morale are important characteristics of a country's strength, the interrelationship between politicians, military/paramilitary, and ordinary citizens reflects the might and security of the nation-state."²³

In a more recent article by Darchiashvili and this author,²⁴ after reviewing the course of civil-military relations in Georgia since its independence in

²¹ Larry Diamond. *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World*. New York: Times Books/Henry Holt and Co, 2008.

²² Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, Eds. "Civil Military Relations and Democracy", Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1996

²³ David Darchiashvili, "Civil-Military Relations and Security Sector Reform in a newly transitional state: The Georgian Case," in: *Security sector reform and post-conflict peacebuilding*, Schnabel, Albrecht and Hans-Georg Ehrhart, United Nations University Press, Tokyo, 2005. P.156

²⁴ David Darchiashvili and Ronald S. Mangum, "Georgian civil-military relations: hostage to confrontational politics", *Caucasus Survey*, June 2018.

1991, the authors note limited optimism for progress in Georgian civil-military relations and conclude:

“Together with general good governance principles of transparency and accountability, as well as better constitutional design of the overall system of political checks and balances, such measures may practically help Georgian society to overcome the syndrome of confrontational politics inherited from its history and damaging its security posture. Besides, political will for such changes has to be developed through diverse civic education activities and the academic community should serve this purpose through the analysis of current systemic weaknesses of Georgian polity – its civil-military relations included.”

Other works on Georgia include Jones²⁵ “Georgia: A Political History since Independence”; Nodia²⁶ “Developing a National Security Concept for Georgia” and with Theodor Hanf, “Georgia Lurching to Democracy”²⁷ as well as “Georgia: From Chaos to Stability?” by Jonathon Aves.²⁸ These works do not directly address the hypothesis of this research, but each adds background information that helped the author analyze the research and identify broad trends in Georgia’s drive toward becoming a liberal democracy.

In his general history of Georgia since independence, Stephen Jones provides a detailed and useful timeline of events in recent Georgian history. The timeline not only provides information, but it also identifies political events that led to further research²⁹. Jones examined the period of Saakashvili’s presidency, and while noting that Saakashvili ushered in an era of international development in Georgia, he notes that “the old casings of the imperial state, and the ingrained habits of citizens used to avoid it, raised challenges to the practice of democracy in Georgia,” and that foreign attempts to “clone” democracy in Georgia didn’t work.³⁰ In commenting on civil-military relations in Georgia, Jones notes that in the early years of independence, the Georgian military, such as it was, depended on personal loyalty to commanders, and was generally derided by the population.³¹ The Georgian military was not a unifying institution as it is in many countries.

²⁵ Stephen Jones, “Georgia: A Political History since Independence,” I.B. Tauris & Co., London, 2013

²⁶ Ghia Nodia (Ed), Developing a National Security Concept for Georgia, The Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, Tbilisi, Georgia, 1996

²⁷ Ghia Nodia and Theodor Hanf, “Georgia Lurching to Democracy,” Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, 2000.

²⁸ Jonathan Aves, “Georgia: From Chaos to Stability”, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1996.

²⁹ Jones, pp. 273-79.

³⁰ Idem, p. 6.

³¹ Idem, p. 10.

Nodia's editing of the proceedings of the 1995 Conference to Develop a National Security Concept for Georgia³² addresses many national security issues which Georgia faced at that time. The book is filled with discussions on the national security environment, but only addresses the military aspects of national security with minimal discussion of the political, economic and ethnic issues that drive national security decision making in Georgia³³. The chief of Georgia's Border Guards, MG Valeri Chkheidze, noted that "the key problem which Georgia faces is the complicated process of developing new institutions."³⁴ The research on the history of the Georgian National Security Council shows that development of those institutions is still a work in process. As Professor Alex Rondeli said at the conference "the security of Georgia largely depends on the involvement of international powers."³⁵ One participant noted that in the Former Soviet Republics the development of democratic systems is greatly hampered by "remnants of the old mentality."³⁶

In *Georgia Lurching toward Democracy*³⁷ Nodia and his co-author Thodor Hanf, use empirical surveys of the Georgian population to identify popular perceptions that shape the country's path toward democratic governance. The Georgia that declared independence in 1991 was significantly different from the Georgia that declared independence in 1918,³⁸ The 1918 Georgia did not display the intense nationalistic divisions that occurred in the late 20th century. Under Soviet rule, the nationalities of the citizens of Georgia and other Soviet states was more important than their citizenship, and the holder's nationality was noted on all official documents. But even with the nationality issues, three years of independence of Georgia was enough for Georgians to feel "intensively Western"³⁹ and was one factor that set the background for Georgia's movement toward the West in the 1990's. The book has an informative narrative of Georgian history leading up to its declaration of independence in 1991, and the ethnic divisions and challenges that nearly derailed that attempt at independence. The ethnic divisions also affected military cohesion so thoroughly that the Army, often a unifying institution in modernizing states, was not an effective instrument for national unification in Georgia.⁴⁰ Nodia's descriptions were very helpful in understanding some of the troubles

³² Ghia Nodia (Ed), *Developing a National Security Concept for Georgia*, The Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, Tbilisi, Georgia, 1996.

³³ Ghia Nodia (1996),

³⁴ *Idem.*, p. 16.

³⁵ *Idem.*, p. 18.

³⁶ *Loc. Cit.*

³⁷ Ghia Nodia and Theodor Hanf, "Georgia Lurching to Democracy," Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, 2000.

³⁸ *Idem.*, p. 15.

³⁹ *Idem.* p.13.

⁴⁰ *Idem.*, p. 60.

that Georgia suffered in the period after independence and that have not been fully resolved even today.

One other short text, "Georgia: From Chaos to Stability?"⁴¹, by Jonathan Aves, a lecturer in 20th Russian studies, provides additional insight into the reasons for the Georgian Civil War and ethnic conflicts. His paper assesses how the foundations of the revised Georgian state appeared to be emerging at the end of 1995. He investigates the political institutions and structures on which President Shevardnadze based his power and examines the main problems including the influence of Russia in Georgian internal affairs, the impact of economic transformation and investment prospects, ethno-regional tensions, and the task of restoring Georgian jurisdiction in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. He concludes that in 1995, "the main consequence of the January 1992 coup and the Abkhazian war had been the leakage of power from constitutional structures to paramilitary organizations with strong links to organized crime."⁴² In his treatise on Paths to Independence in Georgia⁴³, Aves provides a history of the national movement, which arose in the Soviet Transcaucasian republic of Georgia at the end of 1987, until the victory of one element in that movement over the Georgian Communist Party in October 1990. It inevitably makes a number of assumptions about the legitimacy of the idea of establishing a Georgian national state, based on the present Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic, and it examines the way that the nationalist movement developed.

As for the structure or operations of the decision-making structures in Georgia, there are numerous books and articles that address the national security and political situation in Georgia and in the Caucasus, such as Nodia's text on developing a national security concept noted above, but the research has disclosed few, if any, English language publications that examine the structure or operations of the decision-making process, especially the National Security Council, in Georgia or its effect on liberal democracy.

Georgian scholar and former Member of the Georgian Parliament, Dr. David Darchiashvili, has written many articles and chapters that discuss the National Security policy in Georgia, but on the NSC, other than stating that the law as adopted needs more clarity, he has not written an analysis of the history of the NSC or how it works. One interesting commentary on the creation of the National Security Council is contained in a work authored by Wolfgang Gaul/Babek, on the formulation of the 1995 Constitution of Georgia.⁴⁴ But other than describing some of the Constitutional Committee debates, Babek does not examine the history or functions of the NSC.

⁴¹ Jonathan Aves, "Paths to Independence in Georgia, 1987-1990," The School of Slavonic and East European Studies: University of London, London, 1991.

⁴² Aves, 1996. P.58

⁴³ Aves, 1991.

⁴⁴ Wolfgang Gaul „Verfassungsgebung in Georgien: Ergebnisse internationaler rechtlicher Beratung in einem Transformationsstaat“ (German), Berlin Verlag, Berlin (2001).

A recent book mentioned above, that touches on the National Security Council was published in 2013 by Stephen Jones, who perhaps best states the reason for such paucity of examinations:

“The absence of such studies results in part from the language barrier – Georgia has its own alphabet and unconnected to the great linguistic families – but it is also due to our own shallow focus. Georgia, when it slips into the view of Western powers, has been an ethnographic curiosity or a strategic object, and Caucasus—in which Georgia is the keystone state, is perceived as an unstable ethnic mélange on the periphery of Europe.”⁴⁵

Jones’ observation is a poignant comment on the tragedy of Georgia – a land too often dismissed as a relic of Soviet society and an unpredictable gauge of the progress of democracy in the modern world. The intent of the present research is to examine the history and process of national security decision making in Georgia and from that history to examine the broader area of civil-military relations in Georgia and Georgia’s progress toward becoming a liberal democracy – and to offer it as a case study for decision-making processes in other post-Soviet states.

Research on the broader question of how national security decisions are made in Former Soviet Republics (FSR) has been limited to few titles in English. Consequently, the English-speaking community (and therefore most of Europe) has little knowledge of how these often very strategically located states view their place in the broader world and on what basis they make national security decisions. Likewise, there is no recognized standard against which the effectiveness of national security decision making is judged.

An extensive review of the extant literature has uncovered no books and very few articles in English on the specific topic of the national security decision making process in Georgia and its effect on liberal democracy in Georgia. There may be additional studies in Georgian, Russian or other languages that address the issue of national security decision making, but discussions with senior researchers at Georgian NGOs, such as the Georgia Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS), indicate that these studies do not exist because most FSR’s consider the topic to be sensitive and classified.⁴⁶ None of the existing English language literature goes into any depth in examining the national security decision making process in Georgia. None of the identified literature explores recent developments in national security decision making, especially Georgia’s National Security Review (NSR), the second, and possibly duplicative, national security decision-making structure, the National Security and Crisis Management Council and the new statutory National Security Council.

General working definition of central terms or ideas:

⁴⁵ Stephen Jones, 2013, p. xxi

⁴⁶ Interview with Alexander Rondeli, 5 May 2014.

The research is based on the premise that National Security Decision Making includes all decisions made to assure the security of a nation. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, traditional ‘power ministries’ such as defense and internal affairs but can also include other agencies that share in the security sector, such as a Coast Guard under a ministry of internal affairs as well as Ministries that deal with Georgian culture and language that are key elements of Georgia’s ideal as a nation. This research is based on an in-depth review of state documents that establish national security decision-making organizations and on limited records⁴⁷ of their major decisions. In addition, interviews were conducted with current and former government officials, politicians, educators, and NGO representatives who were members of the Georgian defense establishment or the National Security Council and who have served on or worked with these organizations.

Preconceived Findings

When designing the research process, certain pre-conceived notions and anticipated findings surfaced. They were:

- All national security decision-making during Soviet times was made external to the Soviet Republics, in Moscow, and limited decisions were left to the government of the Georgia Soviet Socialist Republic (GSSR).
- During the period following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, national security decision making was ad hoc and poorly organized as executed by the Gamsaxurdia government. The ‘military’ was largely based on numerous poorly financed bands of ‘patriots’ who lived off the local populations and therefore were often viewed as criminals. There was consequently little control over military forces that could be the forces used to execute a national security policy.
- During the Shevardnadze period, decision-making was reestablished under the central government, but primarily internally focused on the purpose of controlling internal power ministries. Corruption was rampant and the quality of military forces continued to be poor and their ability to carry out national security decisions was questionable.
- Since the ‘rose revolution’ a national defense structure, under civilian control, emerged that focuses on an organized, logical process of examining Georgia’s place in the international community and less on internal control. At some point, when the national security decision-making relaxes its grip on power, democracy – as demonstrated by free and open elections – begins to take hold.
- After the defeat of the Saakashvili government in 2012, the succeeding administration, the Georgian Dream coalition led by former Prime Minister Bedzina Ivanishvili, has demonstrated conflicted and apathetic steps toward formalizing the process to provide for Georgia’s national security.

⁴⁷ Most of these records are “classified” and unavailable for public inspection.

Methodology

Qualitative Research Strategy: Extensive archives on recent Georgian history (since circa 1989) exist in Georgian state libraries. This research is based on a retrospective review of documents that establish national security decision-making structures and limited records of their major decisions. The research of archived documents has been conducted (under the guidance of the author) by a Russian/Georgian language speaking researcher who has knowledge of, and access to, the Georgian library archives in Tbilisi. In addition, interviews have been conducted with individuals in Georgia who have served on or worked with the National Security Council and other security organizations involved in the decision-making process.

Most of the source material for this work comes from primary sources; interviews with people who participated in the events, official publications of the Georgian government in the Journal Saqartvelos Respublika and laws and Presidential decrees maintained in the Ministry of Justice archives (Matsne). No information about the informants is intended and because of continual political tension in Georgia, interviews were taken under the Chatham House Rule of non-attribution. Consequently, unless interviewees have freely agreed to have their names published in connection with their comments, informants are identified only by their title or as a Georgian official, politician, etc.

Some of the material observations are based on the researcher's nearly six years of residence in Georgia and his work with the country's national defense ministry. The analysis of the findings is based on inductive logic using qualitative research, generalizing to past experiences and theories contained in the literature and on personal observation. Data has been analyzed by looking for broad patterns and generalizations and using the results to form themes or categories.

The research has already translated many primary source Georgian and Russian language documents and more than fifty personal interviews have been conducted with former and current government officials, politicians, academics, civil society members and others, in English and in Georgian with the assistance of a translator. The research has been collated generally into a chronological timeline of important events.

It appears that the Georgian National Security Council statute was based primarily on the United States' National Security Council, so to highlight the differences between national security decision-making in a western consolidated democracy with the procedures used in Georgia, a comparison of the mission, operation and function of the Georgian National Security Council is made with the United States National Security Council.

Delimitations and limitations: The study is limited by lack of access to closed archives and by the documents in the open archives that have been classified as sensitive. While most

interlocutors were very willing, even eager, to share their knowledge and experiences, some individuals have felt uncomfortable in being identified when providing information. Georgia is still an immature democracy and speaking too openly is often perceived as exposing oneself to criticism or even prosecution for past actions. Consequently, interviews were conducted under the Chatham House Rule of non-attribution and interviewees are not identified except when they explicitly give permission to use their names. A second limitation is that much of the facts and conclusions are based on the memory of the interviewees. In some cases, memory may be faulty, or the interviewee may be biased and offer a distorted picture of the events. That bias is double checked with other interviews and with written records, but in some cases, information had to be accepted based on best information 'available'. Finally, most of the relevant documents are written in Georgian or Russian and they have been translated; therefore, the issues of difficulty of translation into English may limit some interpretive value of the documents.

Structure of the Work: The research is presented chronologically because that is how the national security decision-making process and the course of becoming a liberal democracy, developed from independence in 1991 to the present. After the introductory chapter, the work takes two chapters to review the slow and gradual, chronological developments in the field that effect Georgia's search for democracy and its effect on civil-military relations. Chapter four examines the foreign assistance that Georgia received in developing its national security decision-making structures and chapter five takes a comparative view of how the national security decision-making process and, especially the National Security Council of Georgia, compares with the national security decision-making process in the United States. Chapter six summarizes the findings and conclusions and presents some recommendations for Georgia to use to continue. Each chapter ends with a reference to Huntington's framework and a reference, if appropriate, to Bebler's criteria. The research results show an uneven progress from a totalitarian post-Soviet state to a relatively modern democratic society that strives to appear to be irrevocably committed to building democratic institutions, but which continues to be hampered in its progress by authoritarian leaders who have fostered corrupt practices leading to what may be considered state capture.

Acknowledgements and thanks: In collecting information I must give great thanks to two persons who helped me as Research Assistants. First is Catherine (Ketivan) Stewart-Hilkert, a former student of mine who is a Georgian-born American and who provided invaluable assistance translating from Georgian into English. I also want to thank Merab Surguladze, a historian and former senior Georgian military officer serving on the Joint Staff of the armed forces, who delved into the official Georgian journals and archives to find many of the critical laws and regulations, as well as providing historical commentary from his personal experience on the events that gave rise to the publications. I could not have completed this research without them.

Chapter Two: The Chaotic 1990's, Independence and Civil War

This chapter follows the progress of the Georgian state leading from its declaration of sovereignty as an independent state in 1991 through the civil wars in west Georgia, and especially the complex civil-military relations that evolved during that period. The chapter carries through the Shevardnadze period.

Even when Georgia was ensconced in the Soviet Union, dissent toward Soviet rule simmered in the country. In 1986-7, several dissident groups formed in opposition to the government, usually around one intellectual's personality – a pattern that continues in Georgian politics today. Those groups were not effective enough to be labeled as political parties or movements, but they laid the groundwork for Georgian independence. There was a general consensus that Georgia should be independent from the Soviet Union.

On April 4, 1989, while students occupied the steps of Government House, Georgian dissidents Zviad Gamsaxurdia and Gia Chanturia demanded Georgian independence, abolition of Abkhazian autonomy and the introduction of NATO troops into Georgia⁴⁸. On April 9, 1989, a large rally supporting independence was called by opposition groups to be held on Rustaveli Avenue in the heart of Tbilisi. The government responded by sending Russian paratroopers to disperse the demonstration. The paratroopers brutally assaulted the demonstrators with shovels and batons, killing 19 – mostly women – and injuring over 425.⁴⁹

One eye-witness reported⁵⁰: “suddenly the tanks appeared again, this time heading up Rustaveli Avenue towards the Government Building. Nobody attacked them or resisted. Everyone just said, 'let them go', and stepped out the way and began to sing songs. But the Special Forces troops were right behind, this time carrying shields and batons. They advanced in through the crowd and surrounded the hunger strikers on the Government Building steps with a cordon. Then all of a sudden, they threw gas in the air, and began attacking the protestors-most of whom were young women-and beating them with spades.

The troops took out aerosols sprayed them in their faces, broke ampoules full of poison under their noses. Many died right there and then in violent spasms, but without showing any visible wounds. When they tried to run away, they found they were trapped inside the cordon and the soldiers chased them. Meanwhile the men protestors and the Georgian police tried to prevent this and break the cordon; but without weapons (the police had been disarmed two days before). They too were attacked, and many of our Georgian

⁴⁸ Jones, 32

⁴⁹ George Shavishvili, “9th April 1989 Red Army Assault (sic) on Tbilisi, Georgia”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztW6-U5OaSk>, accessed 1/30/15.

⁵⁰ Peter Nasmyth, “Georgia in the Mountains of Poetry”, Taylor & Francis, New York, NY, 3rd Edition (2006), pp. 16-17

police ended up in hospital. These soldiers behaved like savages, almost as if they were mad. One 17-year-old girl was chased half a kilometer and killed with a spade outside the Iveria Hotel"

Based on this savage response to a peaceful demonstration, the Soviet leadership lost the legitimacy to rule Georgia and set Georgia on its path to independence.

Zviad Gamsaxurdia⁵¹ was a member of a Georgian noble family. His father, Konstantin Gamsaxurdia, was a popular writer in Georgian, German, Russian, French and English⁵². His son, Zviad was an avowed populist oppositionist to Soviet Rule, but "like many Third World leaders, he was a product of the imperial system. Although bitterly opposed to Soviet structures and values, he was cast in their likeness."⁵³

Even though Gamsaxurdia's family were intellectuals, they were 'rural' intellectuals from Mingrelia in western Georgia, and Zviad had the image of a 'village teacher' – not well accepted by the higher intellectual elites in the capital of Tbilisi⁵⁴. Gamsaxurdia considered himself to be an intellectual and he didn't need other intellectuals, but as a populist, most of his supporters were from the villages. Gamsaxurdia's speeches carried his passionate desire to assimilate all non-ethnic Georgians into Georgian society, but the extreme logical conclusion of this position – the oppression of non-Georgian minorities – led to fractionalization of the country and ultimately to civil war.

In 1990 several groups united and formed the Round Table/Free Georgia of which Gamsaxurdia was the head. The party campaigned for Georgian independence and in the parliamentary elections on October 28, 1990, this bloc was elected by 54% of the vote to the Georgian Supreme Soviet (Parliament). The election was hardly a free and democratic exercise in the plebiscite – one source reported that only the officers of the party blocs initially had voted before the Parliamentary election to accept Gamsaxurdia as the country's leader.⁵⁵ Subsequently, on November 14, 1990, Gamsaxurdia was elected by the Parliament as its Chairman⁵⁶ and on March 31, 1991, a popular referendum was held on the issue of Georgian independence. Eighty-nine percent of the eligible voters voted for independence (the election was generally boycotted by Abkhazians and South Ossetians), and on April 9, 1991 – the second anniversary of the Tbilisi massacre – Gamsaxurdia in a broadcast speech to Parliament declared Georgian independence.⁵⁷ Gamsaxurdia was not elected because of his programs, but because of his personality –

⁵¹ The first President of Georgia's name is variously written Gamsakhurdia, Gamsakhurdya, or Gamsaxuridia. I have chosen Gamsaxurdia – the 'x' is pronounced as an aspirated 'h'.

⁵² Donald Rayfield, "The Literature of Georgia: A History". Routledge, New York, 2000, p.246.

⁵³ Jones, 53

⁵⁴ Interview with former Georgian official,

⁵⁵ Mamuka Giordadze, personal interview, 9/27/14

⁵⁶ Jones, 274

⁵⁷ djultimo1, "9_April_1991_Georgia_Announced_Independence_Zviad_360.m4V", <https://www.youtube.com/results?q=9+april+georgia>, accessed 1/31/2015

he was making anti-communist speeches, but his government was still controlled by communists⁵⁸.

Contemporaneously with the public announcement of independence, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia adopted the following act:

The whole period of Georgia being forcefully incorporated in the Soviet Union, has been characterized by bloody terror and repressions and the tragedy of 9 April 1989 was the last manifestation of the aforementioned. The clandestine war against Georgia is still going on. This war aims to undermine Georgia's aspiration to freedom and democracy.

The Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia, elected through multi-party, democratic election on 28 October 1990, and referring to the unanimous will of the population of Georgia expressed during the 31 March referendum, resolves and publicly declares the restoration of Georgian Statehood independence based on the 1918, 26 May Independence Act.⁵⁹

Despite the references to the 1918 constitution of Georgia, Gamsaxurdia kept the Soviet 1978 Georgian constitution and all its structures⁶⁰. Under the 'new' government, the Parliament was to elect a President of Georgia. Gamsaxurdia knew that he had the votes to become President of an independent Georgia and offered himself to Parliament as President on 14 April. The nationwide vote on 26 May that elected him President was more of a formality – the result had already been pre-determined.

Although Gamsaxurdia championed democracy, it is likely that he did not really understand it. As one interviewee said: "was it 'democracy or kacha puri'?"⁶¹ In his public speeches he expressed the desire for open government and free transition of leadership, but his government structure and policy continued the same closed and repressive system as under the former Soviet government, and as soon as he officially gained power, instead of determining how there could be a transition to transparent government and free elections, he began to plan how he could keep that power.⁶²

In his "Chicken Speech" in Kiev on August 1, 1991, U.S. President George H.W. Bush failed to include Georgia in the list of former Soviet Republics supported by the U.S., and this was taken as a slap at the Gamsaxurdia government. An article criticizing the US position regarding the Soviet Union appeared in "Sakartvelos Respublica," the official Georgia journal, on August 9, 1991. The article accused President Bush of trying to

⁵⁸ Giorgadze, idem

⁵⁹ Bulletin of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia, 1991, # 4, p. 26-27

⁶⁰ No new constitution was adopted, but the government made incremental changes to the 1978 law. See, for example, "Law on Changes and Amendments to the Constitution, Bulletin of the Supreme Council of Georgia; # 7, 1991, p. 88-89, 25 July 1991

⁶¹ Kacha puri is traditional Georgian bread with cheese. Quotation is from former Georgian diplomat, July 24, 2014

⁶² Giorgadze, idem.

persuade former Soviet Republics to sign a Union agreement and thus deprive them of their independent status. President Bush said that Georgia and its Government were “going against the stream” at a meeting with the media in Washington DC on August 21. But In response to President Bush’s “you cannot go against the stream” Gamsaxurdia responded that – “only dead fish drift”. Confrontation with America was becoming the official orientation of Georgian policy. This was a big mistake.⁶³

As the Soviet Union was dissolving, Mikhail Gorbachev sought support for a continued national entity through an ‘all-union’ referendum held on March 17, 1991⁶⁴. But Georgia and the Baltic States refused to participate in the referendum. The Baltics escaped serious criticism, but Georgia was seen as a recalcitrant and rebellious state – something with which the West did not want to deal. Gamsaxurdia’s reaction to President Bush’s speech was not diplomatic and further convinced the West that Georgia’s new government was not ready to join the Commonwealth of Nations. Georgia became more and more isolated from the West and from the international community.

Gamsaxurdia desperately wanted the West, especially the United States, to officially recognize Georgia’s independence, but as he became increasingly dictatorial and removed from his own people, the likelihood that the West would support him diminished. Georgia’s refusal to participate in the All-Union referendum or to sign a friendship agreement with Russia further labeled Georgia as nonconformist and foreclosed the possibility of Western support. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was formed by the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Belarus on December 8, 1991. On December 21, 1991 eight additional former Soviet Republics were admitted to the CIS at Alma Ata, Kazakhstan. But because of Gamsaxurdia’s rejection of compromise with Georgia’s former Russian rulers Georgia was not invited -- nobody needed Gamsaxurdia.⁶⁵ CIS membership would have shown the West that Georgia was willing to play the political game of international politics and could have given a chance for Gamsaxurdia to remain in power.

Visits by foreign delegations did not go well. In August a visiting delegation from Germany came upon a large banner hung by the Gamsaxurdia administration on the posh Iveria Hotel that said, “Georgia for Georgians”. This shocked the Germans who took this to demonstrate Gamsaxurdia’s xenophobia against its national minorities.⁶⁶

⁶³ Dimitrii Shvelidze, "Political opposition and overthrow of the national government in Georgia," Versatile Person Publishing, Tbilisi 2008. Pp 309, 310, 311, and 312.

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=b0b9c2668c&view=att&th=144dafedcdd62213&attid=0.1&disp=safe&zw>

⁶⁴ The referendum asked: “Do you consider necessary the preservation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics in which the rights and freedom of an individual of any nationality will be fully guaranteed?” <http://sputniknews.com/infographics/20110313/162959645.html>, accessed 2/1/2015.

⁶⁵ Interview with Georgian Member of Parliament, 5 June 2014

⁶⁶ Interview with former member of the foreign intelligence service

On September 2, 1991 some American congressmen visited Georgia, witnessed the dispersal of anti-government protest marches in Tbilisi accompanied by gunfire and were not impressed with Georgian 'democracy'. However, after President Bush failed to mention Georgia as one of the former Soviet republics that were supported by America, the congressional visits gave some hope to Georgia for the development of a positive relationship between Georgia and the USA. By that time there was an increasingly negative image among American politicians of Gamsaxurdia's government because of its authoritarian tendencies and elements of ethnic nationalism. Gamsaxurdia wanted foreign journalists and American congressmen to see the true situation in Georgia because world media was giving distorted information, but events on the ground conveyed a different image of a growingly repressive Gamsaxurdia government.

A second congressional delegation of the U.S. Commission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), "left Georgia with a much more negative impression. It meant only one thing – the total isolation of Georgia from the International Community. The response of the Government of Georgia appeared to be too idealistic and emotional.

On November 14, 1991, Gamsaxurdia wrote to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, asking for United States' official recognition⁶⁷:

"However, it is difficult for our country to understand why with independence now restored, the U.S. fails to see it as a sovereign state and withhold official recognition. . . It must be noted that the Government is in power as a result of a free election in a multi-party system, on the one hand, and promiscuous parliamentary opposition on the other. And that opposition includes illegal armed terrorist attacks and harassment. . ."

"It is our feeling that establishment of a complete democracy in Georgia would have been bolstered by the support of the U.S. And that support should have been extended to the legally elected state government."

There is no record of an official response to this plea for recognition, but by this time the die was cast. It is clear that the United States was in no hurry to recognize Georgia, especially until the United States had decided how to deal with other states of the former Soviet Union.

Russia tolerated Georgian independence because Russian leaders thought that they could secretly control Georgia through their many senior officials in the Georgian government who continued to take orders and advice from Moscow. On April 24, 1991,

⁶⁷ From the private correspondence of a former Georgian official

Georgia's cabinet of ministers issued a decree to recruit the country's youth for compulsory military service in the Georgian National Guard. Conscription into the National Guard officially launched on April 30 of that year.

Gamsaxurdia wanted independence from the Soviet Union, but Georgia and its President were trapped by events in Moscow. The August 19-21, 1991 putsch ("gegachape") against Gorbachev in Moscow that was in power for only three days played a fateful role in the development of independent Georgia and the state of its government⁶⁸. The position of the national government on the putsch became the source of crisis, which lingered for months. The opposition accused the government of supporting the putschists, who were members of the State Committee for Force Majeure Situations, "GKCHP," of the USSR. On August 19, 1991, a Russian General who was second in command of Soviet internal police, came to Georgia and demanded that the Georgian National Guard be disbanded or Russia would attack.⁶⁹ Gamsaxurdia immediately complied and was branded by the opposition as a Russian stooge.⁷⁰ This act cost him the support of many in the country, as well as caused a complete break with Tengiz Kitovani, who had been appointed head of the National Guard.

It was in order to prevent bloodshed that, on August 20, 1991 a decree was issued in the name of Gamsaxurdia 'reorganizing' the National Guard by making it a subordinate unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and eliminating the post of guard commander. This acceptance of the putsch organizers' demands, although made under coercion, was used by the political opposition in Georgia to crucify the Gamsaxurdia government for supporting the putsch. Gamsaxurdia tried to demonstrate that he did not support the putsch, but opposition accusations became the tinder that ignited the flames of civil war. Before the putsch, Gamsaxurdia had good relations with Yeltsin; met with him in Kazbegi and discussed establishment of an anti-terrorism program⁷¹. But because Gamsaxurdia was perceived as supporting the August 19, putsch in Moscow, Gamsaxurdia lost his close contact with the Russian leadership and incurred increasing enmity toward Gamsaxurdia from his supporters in Georgia⁷².

After the September protest marches, former Gamsaxurdia supporters began to distance themselves from the government. The government, instead of trying to attract supporters to bring into the government camp, seemed to easily become accustomed to the withdrawal of its supporters. This may have been the result of the antipathy between the Tbilisi 'elite' and Gamsaxurdia's 'country' supporters. Tbilisians tended to look down on

⁶⁸ Interview with N. Molidinashvili, 9/16/14; An interesting description of the coup and its plotters is contained in the New York Times Sunday Review: The K.G.B.'s Bathhouse Plot, August 21, 2011, p SR4

⁶⁹ Interview with Georgian professor and historian, 5/24/14. The USSR Constitution provided that in case of 'national emergency' up to 40,000 Soviet troops could be stationed on the territory of any republic.

⁷⁰ Interview with former Shevardnadze Chief of Staff, 24 October 2015.

⁷¹ Interview with former member of Gamsaxurdia's military guard, 16 May 2014.

⁷² Interview with Georgian foreign office official, 24 July 2014

Gamsaxurdia's rural supporters, and it is likely that Gamsaxurdia and his supporters returned the feelings and believed that they were above the Tbilisi elite.

As a consequence of rising unrest in the country, Gamsaxurdia was forced to take action and on September 21, 1991, he issued a decree creating a National Security Council, consisting of 18 members:

“Aiming to solve urgently the issues of Georgian integrity, provision of its independence and sovereignty, guidance of armed forces, arrangements of the ethnic conflicts, protection of lawful order from the point of national security and extreme situations as a result of natural calamities:

1. To establish Council of the National Security under guidance of the President of Republic Georgia
2. To approve the following members of the Council of National Security:

Chairman of the Council:

Z. Gamsaxurdia – the President of the Republic of Georgia

Deputy Chairmen:

A. Asatiani – the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia

B. Gugushvili – the Prime-Minister of the Republic of Georgia

Members of the Council:

Z. Bokuchava – Advisor to the President of Republic Georgia- responsible member of the Council

N. Giorgadze – First Deputy Minister of Defense of Georgia

J. Goletiani – Deputy of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia

T. Vashadze – Deputy Minister of Affairs on Architectural Constructions of the Republic of Georgia

N. Molodinashvili – Head of Office of Local Guidance of the President's Office with temporary charge - Deputy of the Supreme Council

T. Ninua – Temporary Executive of the Chairman duties of the State Security Committee of the Republic of Georgia

M. Omanidze – Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Georgia, Minister of Foreign Affairs

V. Razmadze – General Attorney of the Republic of Georgia

P. Tkebuchava – Minister of Communications of the Republic of Georgia

K. Pirtskhalava – Deputy to the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia

J. Pirtskhalashvili – Minister of Defense of the Republic of Georgia

V. Kobalia – Chief of the Main Board of the National Guard of the Republic of Georgia

B. Kutateladze – Deputy Minister of Defense of the Republic of Georgia

D. Khabuliani – Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia

J. Khetsuriani – Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Georgia

Z. Gamsaxurdia - President of the Republic of Georgia, September 21, 1991⁷³

There had been no National Security Council in the former communist Georgian structure – the functions of the NSC were carried out, as in Russia, by the Committee of State Security or KGB. It is likely that the adoption of a ‘western style’ NSC was another attempt by Gamsaxurdia to demonstrate his adherence to western standards. But why did it take Gamsaxurdia five months after independence to create such an important structure in his government? Apparently, work on creating an NSC began after the Presidential election in May, but because of the destruction of the Georgian KGB and the loss of its extensive files, the ability to establish a functional security apparatus was delayed⁷⁴.

The government was not professional. The NSC was composed of a mixture of Gamsaxurdia’s inner circle of supporters who carried on naïve discussions focused on internal threats – of course they touched on external issues, e.g. energy discussions that involved an analysis of Azeri issues⁷⁵. But reviewing the list of appointed members of the NSC shows disorder in its composition. Before the NSC was established there were many informal meetings of Gamsaxurdia’s cabinet. Typically, Ministers would come to Attorney General Razmadze to have him prepare documents for discussion, but important government decisions were made based on “information from the street, from the bazroba (the market), and from families” – decisions were made officially and non-officially⁷⁶

Up until this time Georgia had its National Guard but it did not have an Army. Several groups of local militias had formed even before independence, the largest of them were the Mkhedrioni (Horsemen), led by Jabba Ioseliani⁷⁷ Georgia and the Kostava Society, led by V. Adamia. Initially these groups supported the new government, but slowly Gamsaxurdia’s dictatorial policies and arrogation of powers turned these leaders against him. A year earlier, on December 20, 1990, the Supreme Council of Georgia had created the National Guard. Part of the National Guard’s officer corps were selected from retired Soviet army officers of Georgian nationality, the majority of whom had not served in the army for long and represented lower level professions or draft committees. The Chairman of the government Committee on Defense, Tengiz Kitovani⁷⁸, had been named Commander of the Guard. He was a painter by trade, and later V. Kobalia, a shipping expediter, was nominated as Commander. Important positions in the Guard were held by

⁷³ Order of the President of Republic Georgia On establishment of the National Security Council under Guidance of the President of Georgia. Newspaper “Republic Georgia” No 185 (205) September 21, 1991

⁷⁴ The authors of the law were V. Razmadze, Vazha (?) Adamia and Nodar Natadze worked on the concept and law. Interview with N. Molodinashvili, 16 September 2014

⁷⁵ Interview with Georgian politician and member of Parliament, 6 June 2014.

⁷⁶ N. Molodinashvili interview, 16 September 2014.

⁷⁷ Ioseliani was twice convicted in Russia, first for bank robbery and the second time for manslaughter. “Dzhaba Ioseliani, 76; Oft-Imprisoned Leader of Georgian Paramilitary Force”, The Los Angeles Times, 5 March 2003, From Associated Press, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2003-mar-05-me-dzhaba5-story.html>

⁷⁸ Former art Instructor and painter; see Jonathan Wheatley (2005), *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., Surrey, England.

(Generals) J. Chumburidze and T. Dumbadze, one of them a construction engineer, and the other an employee at a sewing factory."⁷⁹ ⁸⁰

Tengiz Kitovani had been appointed by Gamsaxurdia as the Commander of the National Guard, which was the rough equivalent of a Georgian Army, but as dissatisfaction developed and Gamsaxurdia began to fear a military coup, he fired Kitovani, created a new National Guard and took control of the remaining National Guard officers. Ioseliani, who was in prison from February was freed by the war that broke out in Tbilisi, and with his Mkhedrioni force he joined the now rebellious Kitovani in a base near the Tbilisi Sea and from there threatened the capital. Kitovani always had a close relationship with Moscow, and at this time it appeared to many that he was taking directions from Moscow.

In September 1991 there were armed clashes in Tbilisi between former National Guard units and Gamsaxurdia's militia. Gamsaxurdia had support from the Police and the police special commando units⁸¹, and he declared a state of emergency. On approval of the decree of the president of Georgia "On the declaration of a state of emergency in Tbilisi September 25, 1991" N 725:

The Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia Approves the Decree of the President of Georgia dated September 24, 1991, "On the declaration of a state of emergency in Tbilisi September 25, 1991." Signed, Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia, Akaki Asatiani. Tbilisi, October 6, 1991.

After the events of September, the capital of Georgia was overwhelmed by daily demonstrations, marches and other forms of actions expressing protest by the opposition. Slowly, the government began to unravel. Former companions-in-arms left the government side and joined the opposition (e.g. Kostava Society; Charter-91, separate persons). The government met this dissolution with inconceivable composure and coolness and did not try to stop it. The protest movement that began after September 2, was not homogeneous. Initially its goal was the struggle for democracy, but later it was swallowed by more negative goals. For radicals the principal purpose was to deprive the Gamsaxurdia government of power; for the elite intelligentsia, to regain its social status and normalization of the *status quo ante* through compromise with all factions. While opposition supporters asserted that the movement was a democratic movement, characterization of events were misleading. Only the radical elements of the opposition

⁷⁹ Darchiashvili, 1997, p.7

⁸⁰ The lack of high-ranking Georgian combat officers in the military was a legacy of the Stalin era. In the second half of the 1950's military service lost its attractiveness to Georgians mainly because of obstacles placed in the path of advancement after Stalin's death and denunciation. In 1956, the national division of Georgia in the Soviet army was abolished. After 1985, no Georgians graduated from Soviet military colleges, and by the late 1980's from 300 Georgian Soviet officers above the rank of captain, 80 percent served in the rear. The Tbilisi Artillery College in the 1970's, the only national source of Georgian officers, only graduated about 10 officers a year. From Darchiashvili, 2007, footnote 44, p23

⁸¹ Private correspondence of the author with Georgian historian.

actively took part while the government continued to enjoy the support of the majority of the population.

As the country edged closer to Civil War, Gamsaxurdia began to take actions to marshal his forces. First, on October 29, 1991 he created a Ministry of Defense and appointed officials therein⁸², and secondly, on November 11 he ordered that all weapons and armaments of the former Soviet troops in Georgia would henceforth belong to Georgia⁸³:

To further consolidate his power, on November 16, 1991, Gamsaxurdia had the Supreme Council of Georgia abolished the Georgian Ministry of State Security (KGB) and replaced it with a Department of National Security of Georgia under the direct control of the President. In a second decree Tamaz Ninua, former NSC member, was appointed as the acting Chairman of the new Department and also served as the acting head of the Committee for State Security.⁸⁴

Of the most important events during the period of October to December 1991, were negotiations conducted between the government and now mutinous National Guard units commanded by T. Kitovani. Despite the fact that neither side wanted more bloodshed, neither party expressed a desire to yield. Simultaneously with the negotiations the mutineers were armed at the expense of robbery, attacks on police departments and government structures, as well as support from commanders of the Military District of Soviet Troops in Transcaucasia. This led many in the population to view the Guard as a band of thieves. Many elements of the Guard wanted to buy arms from the Russians. The "Imedi" (hope) unit of 100 soldiers, led by N. Natadze, initially was located in the region of Tskhinvali (approximately 80 miles west of the capitol) defending Georgian villages from marauding units of Ossetian militia. Imedi subsequently joined Kitovani's National Guard and relocated to Rkoni before removing to the Tbilisi Sea.⁸⁵

Kitovani's Guard, which encamped at the Tbilisi Sea was a destructive force that violated the daily life and stability of the capital. In such a situation the government was mercilessly passive and deliberately did not participate in any measures to root out anti-government actions and to restore stability. In the face of such passivity by the power structure, the opposition shifted to support of the armed rebels. The primary single purpose of the amalgamated opposition became the overthrow of the existing government.

⁸² Appointed the following positions in the Ministry of Defence:

T. Lauria deputy defense minister of Georgia

Colonel Shota Banadze - Head of training.

Major General Panteleimon Giorgadze - Chief of the Border Guard.

Colonel Alexander Javakhishvili - Chief of the Navy.

Signed: Zviad Gamsaxurdia. Tbilisi, October 29, 1991.

⁸³ Decree no. 793, published in "Sakartvelos Respublica," on 11 November 1991.

⁸⁴ Private correspondence of the author with Georgian Historian.

⁸⁵ Natadze, 19 November 2014.

On September 22, some rebel units of the National Guard left their encampment on the Tbilisi Sea and moved into Tbilisi proper. They occupied the building and area of the national TV and radio broadcasting agency on Kostava Street. The protest movement had taken a new direction and had acquired an anti-constitutional and anti-state character. In fact, the peaceful movement of protests grew into a rebellion of mutinous National Guard units against the government.⁸⁶ Tensions continued to increase, with Gamsaxurdia supporters (approximately 80% from the regions outside of Tbilisi) meeting in front of the Parliament on Rustaveli Avenue, and Kitovani's supporters (approximately 80% from Tbilisi) meeting by the Radio station on Kostava Avenue – only about two kilometers apart, and Gamsaxurdia became a virtual prisoner in the Parliament building.

The days of October 4-5 were the culmination of the confrontation of supporters of the national government and the mutineer opposition. Both parties were headed by leaders, who were against any form of compromise. Regardless, up until that time armed confrontation did not take place because the mutineer opposition did not believe that it had enough resources for armed attack. After 4-5 October, however, the two forces finally confronted each other - the government and mutineer opposition, or more correctly - the government was opposed by the units of the mutineer National Guard and the opposition who joined it.⁸⁷

The growing conflict appeared to ease a bit in November. At a meeting of the Supreme Council of Georgia on November 25, 1991, the first item of consideration was a resolution requiring all armed groups to join the regular defense structures of the country. The Minister of Internal Affairs, Dilar Habulani, said that some of the armed groups at the Tbilisi Sea were ready to pledge allegiance to the government, but before the Council would accept their allegiance they decided to send a delegation to Tbilisi Sea to negotiate with the rebellious Guardsmen. At this meeting or the next, Gamsaxurdia reported that the process of incorporating illegal armed formations into either his national guard or into a municipal militia was progressing, and after he met with mutineers in the city of Gori, the special purpose battalion, Tetri Artsivi (White Eagle) located at Tbilisi Sea and the Kutaisi battalion expressed their loyalty to the government. Gamsaxurdia emphasized, however, that the rest of the armed groups at the Tbilisi Sea must submit to legitimate authority. After the President's speech, V. Adamiya, Chairman of the Parliament who had formed the armed Society of Merab Kostava,⁸⁸ declared that he had no armed group. This was disputed by other members of the Supreme Council and the meeting degenerated into argument.

⁸⁶ Private correspondence of the author with Georgian Historian

⁸⁷ Idem.

⁸⁸ Interview with Georgian professor and member of Parliament, 27 May 2014.

During fighting in Tbilisi on the morning of December 2, 1991⁸⁹ J. Ioseliani - the head of "Mkhedrioni", the chairman of the NDP party G. Chanturia, G. Xaindrava and others were leading the rebel units. But on December 28-29 the oppositionists were expelled by loyal Gamsaxurdia forces from Rustaveli Avenue to the plaza that is now the site of the luxury Radisson Hotel. Reportedly, Xaindrava, Ioseliani and Sigua were so frightened that at night they slept on a sofa in the office of the deputy commander, S. Bepayev, of the Russian Transcaucasian military district. The commander, General Patrikeev, wasn't in Tbilisi and therefore Bepayev was in command. Then on December 29-30 on Rustaveli Avenue Russian T-72 tanks and artillery with Russian military personnel appeared and turned the outcome of the short civil war in favor of the "opposition". During the fighting in Tbilisi, on both sides 113 people were dead and 400 wounded.

“Before the fighting in Tbilisi we accepted arms, bases and military equipment from the Soviet internal troops. Everything went well, but then operations between oppositionists and Gamsaxurdia began. We were without money in that time, but after Gamsaxurdia’s withdrawal from Georgia Russia sent us new Russian money. Now it is possible to understand who was interested in promoting the Civil War⁹⁰.”

Nodar Natadze was a dissident in Soviet times and became a member of the Gamsaxurdia parliament when he was elected in 1990 to fill the place of a deceased Member of Parliament. Professor Natadze, states that Gamsaxurdia made a serious mistake in appointing Kitovani as head of the National Guard because in Natadze’s opinion, Kitovani was a pure Russian agent. But Gamsaxurdia trusted him. When Russia told Gamsaxurdia to disband/disarm the National Guard, Gamsaxurdia obeyed and put the National Guard under the Internal Security Department. The National Guardsmen (around 5,000) were patriotic volunteers and didn’t want to be policemen, but Russia wanted Georgia to be defenseless and without an army. Kitovani moved the National Guard to the Rkoni Valley (40 miles west of Tbilisi near the River Zama). Natadze, who was with his “Imedi” militia was in a mild conflict with Gamsaxurdia so he sent a message to Gamsaxurdia through the President’s advisors to tell Gamsaxurdia that if he created an army, the mutinous National Guard would join it. One of Gamsaxurdia’s other mistakes was appointing Tengiz Sigua, who was also in Natadze’s opinion, 100% a Russian agent, as Prime Minister (Gamsaxurdia didn’t distinguish between Red Russians (bad guys) and White Russians (good guys), he simply saw a Russian as a Russian, and he applauded Russian ‘democrats’).⁹¹

Informal discussions of the members of the newly created NSC were held in September through December, but the NSC officially met for the first time in late November or early

⁸⁹ The Tbilisi war started on 22 December 1991, the day before the Russian-sponsored Commonwealth of Independent States was created and Georgia didn’t join it.

⁹⁰ Georgian Historian, loc. Cit.

⁹¹ Natadze, 19 November 2014

December. The meeting was attended by the “power ministries”: Defense, Interior, General Prosecutor, and the NSC Secretary N. Molodinashvili. The second, and last, formal meeting of NSC took place on 21 Dec 1991 – all present recognized the inevitable collapse of the government. They listened quietly to the discussions, but they knew the future – the ministers were paralyzed – the outcome was obvious. The Deputy Minister of Defense, B. Kutateladze, complained that the Ministry of Defense didn’t need anyone (e.g. the Prosecutor General or the Minister of Justice) to stick their noses into Defense business because, he boasted, the Defense Ministry was just waiting for the opposition to come forward and the Ministry would destroy them. Molodonishvili asked with what forces this would happen. Kutateladze was embarrassed, and became silent - he hung his head, looked down and apologized. He quietly told the President, “I cannot defend you” and suggested that Gamsaxurdia resign⁹². After this meeting, it was clear that Gamsaxurdia’s government would collapse and on 22 December, the civil war in Tbilisi started.

During the fighting Gamsaxurdia held out in his ‘bunker’ in the Parliament cafeteria for another two weeks, but at 06:00 on January 6, 1992. Gamsaxurdia fled the capital. A caravan of three armored cars and three busses with about 50 people left Tbilisi for Azerbaijan – the Russians made sure that the road was open⁹³. “A serious reason for Gamsaxurdia’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.”⁹⁴

Gamsaxurdia first went to Ganja in Azerbaijan to seek asylum, but the Azeri president refused to receive him, so Gamsaxurdia then went to Dilijan, Armenia, but the Armenian president also refused to receive him, so he returned north to the border town of Noyemberian. There, the Georgians were surrounded by Armenian soldiers and had no food or money. They tried to get food and supplies from the Armenian villages but were turned down. The Armenians let some Georgian soldiers bring bread to the group. N. Molodinashvili, who had been appointed special assistant to Gamsaxurdia, as well as serving as Secretary of the NSC, returned to Sukhumi to meet with a representative of Chechnyan leader Dudaev to arrange safe passage for Gamsaxurdia to Chechnya. Only one question was asked: “would Gamsaxurdia support Chechen independence?” – Molodinashvili gave a guarantee of support that was passed to Dudaev, and Dudaev sent his private plane with the head of his bodyguard to pick up Gamsaxurdia in Armenia. The Chechnyans forced Armenia to release Gamsaxurdia by threatening a terrorist attack on Armenia, and the ‘kidnapped’ Gamsaxurdia was flown to Chechnya⁹⁵. (Russia was not involved in this transfer – too many internal problems at that time in Russia). N. Molodinashvili accompanied Gamsaxurdia to Grozni and when Gamsaxurdia was safe, Molodinashvili returned to Georgia⁹⁶. But Gamsaxurdia did not disappear from Georgian

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Interview with former head of Gamsaxurdia’s guard, 26 May 2014.

⁹⁴ David Darchaisvili, “Georgia – The Search for State Security,” Caucasus Working Papers, December 1997, p.1

⁹⁵ Interview with N. Molodinashvili, 16 September 2014.

⁹⁶ Idem.

history or politics. He remained the head of a government in exile and his house in Chechnya sported a sign that said, “President of Georgia.”⁹⁷

Huntington sees civilian control of a professional military as a key to the exercise of liberal democracy – he never seems to contemplate the situation, as it became in Georgia, where the civilian leaders, such as Kitovani and Ioseliani, actually become the military leaders of the country. Part of Huntington’s concern was caused by a vacuum of military professionalism after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Former soldiers of the USSR Transcaucasia force were left militarily homeless and had to fend for themselves. There was no longer a Soviet civilian government to give them guidance as to what to do or whom to support. Former Soviet troops gave or sold their weapons to whichever side in Georgia would pay them – again a complete breakdown of the separation of civilian and military functions. Initially, Georgia had no military forces. The only armed formations in Georgia were the militias of the civilian politicians who vied for control of the country. Georgia’s only one military training institution was a former Soviet artillery school that graduated less than 10 officers a year. Artillery is a supporting arm, so that graduates were not expected to engage in higher strategic planning or to command large formations of troops. Consequently, the Georgian military expertise was limited to troops who waited to take orders from their higher commanders.

Although Gamsaxurdia created a National Security Council, that NSC barely functioned, holding only two meetings at a time close to the collapse of the Gamsaxurdia administration. There is no indication that the NSC provided any recommendations to the President as to how to gain control of the deteriorating political situation. Russian demands to disband the only “national” military force in Georgia – the National Guard – to which Gamsaxurdia rapidly acquiesced, also demonstrates the lack of independence of the government from its former master – the USSR. An independent state should be able to control its own foreign policy decisions, but that control did not exist in Georgia at the time.

There are many reasons why democracy failed in Georgia – disastrous economic problems, a government that did not know how to court international approval, the collapse of its pre-eminent external source of support in the USSR, an international system that was in turmoil, and a total lack of internal experience in governing a county composed of different ethnic groups – not to mention that two significant areas of the country – Abkhazia and South Ossetia – each declared their own independence from Georgia and therefore refused to support the Georgian administration. Among many others, one of the key markers of a liberal democracy continued to be missing in the Gamsaxurdia administration – civilian control of a professional military – and it would be a long road to create that element of democracy.

⁹⁷ Interview with Georgian historian and professor, 24 May 2014.

The Military Council (or Council of War)

Upon Gamsaxurdia's departure, governmental power was assumed by a Military Council of War composed of Tengiz Kitovani, former National Guard Commander, and Jaba Ioseliani, head of the Mkhedrioni military. Even before Gamsaxurdia left the country the Military Council issued the following decrees:

“From the moment of coming to power in Georgia Zviad Gamsaxurdia established a dictatorship. In the cruelest way human rights were violated, which especially incurred the hatred of the international community. Despite the appeals of many leaders of the opposition to begin dialogue with the people and representatives of the intellectuals for the government to normalize the situation in the country, nothing resulted.

On the orders of the President, his loyal forces several times opened fire on civilians that led to victims. There was only one way to rescue Georgia - overthrow of the government by armed force. The goal of the overthrow of the dictatorship in Georgia is the establishment of democratic institutes and the establishment of guarantees of freedom for all inhabitants of the country.

For this purpose, an advisory political body ("Military Coordinating Council") has already started working, in which representatives of all political parties and organizations are united. In this regard we report that in this council the door is open even for representatives of the parties and organizations who supported Gamsaxurdia. The only exception is the dictator.

The Council has begun, on the basis of democratic principles, to establish a state system in Georgia, and the Council works to hold new parliamentary elections. The Council of War of Georgia declares that on creation of a provisional government all power will be concentrated in the Prime Minister and his office.”

And address of the Military Council to the people of Georgia:

“On January 2, 1992 the government of Z. Gamsaxurdia was deposed. All government power was assumed by the Military Council of War in the country. The Council temporarily suspended the constitution and dismissed the parliament. All government institutions of the country are subordinate to the Council of War. The prime minister of Georgia Bessarion Gugushvili is removed from his post. The position of the Prime minister of Georgia is temporarily transferred to Tengiz Sigua.

It is proposed to create an Advisory council which will prepare parliamentary elections and develop a program of political development of the country. All political parties and organizations in Georgia, representatives of ethnic minorities and individuals who will be invited by the Advisory council will have the right to work in this council

From January 3, 1992 from 00:00 o'clock in the morning (after 12.00 in the night) a state of emergency exists in the city of Tbilisi. The Council of War takes all law enforcement and administrative agencies of the country under its control and tasks them during the state of emergency to do everything possible for the establishment of peace and stability.

When a new government is formed in Georgia, the Council of War will give all power to it."⁹⁸

A new government structure was beginning to form around the establishment of the Military Council that arrogated unto itself all powers of government in the country. The Military Council was able to take this step to seize power because the only two regular military formations in Georgia, the National Guard and the Mkhedrioni, were represented by the two members of the Council, Kitovani and Ioseliani. In effect, in civil-military relations, the military usurped the power of the civilian government.

After January 6, 1992 power in Georgia was seized by the Military Council which declared a state of emergency and imposed a curfew from 23:00 to 06:00; all government institutions were usurped. On January 6, 1992, T. Sigua was appointed by the Military Council to the post of Prime Minister. On TV he congratulated the people on the overthrow of the dictatorship. The next day, on January 7, 1992 from Moscow, Shevardnadze congratulated the Georgian people and said that he was personally ready with the support of the international democratic community to work to build a democratic state in Georgia.⁹⁹

After the beginning of 1992 Kitovani, Ioseliani and Sigua resolved all issues in a narrow circle and the creation of a National Security council wasn't necessary for them. They appeared to consult with Moscow on all important issues. Ioseliani, Sigua and Kitovani had very good communications with the leadership in Moscow. At this time Georgia was rent not only by internal divisions of the Georgian people between the supporters of Gamsaxurdia and the "usurpers", but further war was brewing with the Union Republic of Abkhazia and the Oblast of South Ossetia (Shida Kartli)¹⁰⁰ that were also on the path to

⁹⁸ Sakartvelos Respublica, 2 January 1992, p.1

⁹⁹ Georgian historian, private correspondence with the author, 7 May 2014.

¹⁰⁰ Under the Soviet Constitution, Georgia was a Union Republic directly under the government of the USSR, and it retained the (theoretical) right to secede from the USSR. Abkhazia was an 'Autonomous Soviet Republic' which meant that it was part of a union republic, Georgia and did not have the right of secession.

declaring independence from Georgia. The popular belief was – and is – that Russia encouraged this separatism in order to destabilize the government in Tbilisi and make it more amenable to Russian control. Subsequent events would bear out this assessment.

In the face of potential anarchy from the collapse – or disestablishment – of civil government resulting from the ouster of Gamsaxurdia, the Military Council re-established the authority of the last democratic Constitution of Georgia that was in force during the existence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, 1918-1921. The Military Council began steps toward creating a government run on liberal democratic principles, but the leaders of that government were simply the former Military Council members, so there was no real transition to a civilian controlled government.

The Military Council sought to establish, or re-establish the legitimate legal structure of the Republic of Georgia:

“The founding State documents of the Republic of Georgia are: “the Act of State Independence of Georgia”, declared by the National Council of Georgia on 26 May 1918 and the Constitution of Georgia, adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Georgia on 21 February 1921.

The Democratic Republic of Georgia, founded on the principles laid down in these documents and other legal acts adopted in 1918-1921, was recognized both de jure and de facto by the League of Nation and by the major member -States of it.

It was determined that the Constitution of Georgia would be exercised “permanently and uninterruptedly” (chapter 1, General Provisions, Article 10). After the adoption of the Constitution, the Parliament of Georgia did not determine procedures of its abrogation or suspension. Adoption of such a decree became possible through a decision made by the people through referendum, without which the Constituent Assembly was authorized neither to abrogate nor suspend the Constitution.

On 2 January 1992 the current Constitution of Georgia ceased to be functional and as a result the justice was restored. The period, contradicting the Constitution of Georgia from legal point of view, came to an end.

The Constitution of Georgia was adopted on 21 February 1921 when Georgia was at war with the Soviet Russia. This reality predetermined incorporation into the Constitution of some protective mechanism that would guarantee validity and continuity of the document in case of annexation and occupation of the country.

The Soviet Regime, being unable to introduce constitutional changes without compromising validity and continuity of the Constitution, had grossly violated that principle through abolishment of the Constitution and having resorted to military force changed local elected and democratic structures, and established its own political regime and replaced a Constitution adopted by the independent Georgian State with the Constitution of the Georgian SSR (GSSR).

The Authorities of the Republic of Georgia overthrown on 2 January 1992 was a legal successor not of the Democratic Republic of Georgia of 1918-21, but it was a successor of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia proclaimed to have come into existence on 25 February 1921. Hence, it recognized the supremacy not of the Constitution of Georgia adopted by the Constitutive Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Georgia on 21 February 1921, but rather observed the totalitarian principles of Constitutions of the Georgian SSR adopted in 1922, 1927, 1937 and 1978 and were not immediate successor of the Parliament of Georgia, but were Authorities created on the basis of the aforementioned constitutions.

The Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia, based on the results of the referendum held on 31 March 1991, adopted the Act of State Independence of Georgia on 9 April 1991, thereby restoring independence of Georgia attained by the virtue of the Act of Independence of 26 May 1918, and recognized the legality of the Constitution of the Democratic republic of Georgia. The Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia failed to carry out in real life the principles declared by itself.

The Georgian Authorities refused to declare themselves a legal successor of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and did not restore the Constitution of 1918. Moreover, instead of establishment of a democratic State of Georgia, it has established the authoritarian regime.

On 22 December the President having usurped the power has unleashed war against the nation and suffered a natural defeat.

The Military Council of the Republic of Georgia that represents the State power at the moment deems it unacceptable to replace one illegal authority by the other similarly illegal one and emphasizes the necessity of restoration of lawful constitutional regime in Georgia.

Proceeding from the aforementioned, the Military Council of the Republic of Georgia declares that:

1. Without changing the current borders and State –territorial arrangement of the Republic of Georgia (with current status of Abkhazia and Ajara), it recognizes the international legal acts and supremacy of the Constitution of Democratic Republic of Georgia of February 21, 1921 and its implementation with due account of current realities.
2. Elections to the Parliament of Georgia shall be held based on the principles set out in the Constitution of Georgia of 21 February 1921, no later than autumn of 1992.
3. The Military Council of the Republic of Georgia alongside the Interim Government shall resign and confer power to a newly elected Parliament of Georgia at the very first session of the Parliament.”¹⁰¹

And in order to assure an orderly transition to a new government structure, the Military Council decreed that existing laws would remain in effect unless they contradicted the 1921 Constitution¹⁰² In terms of civil-military relations, the military continued to directly dictate the course of government affairs, while continuing to declare that the Council would dissolve itself upon the creation of a true civilian controlled government.

Shevardnadze, the “Silver Fox”, returns: “Take from the past not the ashes, but the fire”

¹⁰³Eduard Shevardnadze, familiarly known to friends and family as “Babu”, was from the village of Mamati, in the Guria region of west Georgia. His family wanted him to study medicine, but Shevardnadze was bent on pursuing a career in the political service of his native land. He was known as a realist who was able to balance conflicting forces to produce an acceptable solution to any problem. While his family was not ‘political’ (in fact all Georgians are political), his father was an ardent Stalinist to the disappointment of Babu’s mother, so he often heard his relatives disputing political views. As he later admitted, “If I inclined toward one opinion, I did not reject the opposing view out of hand, because I wanted to understand what was guiding a person dear to me, and why he put things one way and not another. If you eat such bread in childhood, you will always have a taste for it.”¹⁰⁴ This attitude served him well during his political life.

Shevardnadze joined the Communist Party as a youth and rose quickly to become first secretary in the Georgian Komsomol. It was in the Komsomol that he met and developed a close relationship with Mikhail Gorbachev during their annual outings at Pitsunda on the

¹⁰¹ “Sakartvelos Respublica”, # 36, 25 February 1992, p.1.

¹⁰² “Idem.

¹⁰³ Edward Amvrosievich Shevardnadze, “The Future belongs to freedom” (Catherine A. Fitzpatrick, Trans.), MacMillan, Inc., New York, NY 1991, Page 160. Shevardnadze quotes French Socialist Jean Jaures thusly, but the original quotation by Jaures is “take from the altars of the past the fire -- not the ashes”. <http://izquotes.com/quote/295734>, accessed 2/4/15.

¹⁰⁴ Shevardnadze, p. 8

Black Sea Coast. He continued to rise in Georgian politics, serving as Minister of Internal Affairs under the Georgian KGB, and subsequently as First Secretary of the Communist Party of Georgia in 1972¹⁰⁵. In 1985 he received a call from his old friend, Mikhail Gorbachev, telling (not asking) Shevardnadze that he was to become the Foreign Minister of the U.S.S.R. Shevardnadze protested, saying that he had no diplomatic experience beyond welcoming foreign diplomatic visits to Georgia and asking "shouldn't the foreign minister be a Russian?" Gorbachev told him that the matter was settled and that he should report to Moscow the next day.

As Foreign Minister, Shevardnadze forged a reputation for honesty and openness. The Ministry staff feared Shevardnadze's predecessor, Andrei Gromyko, but when Shevardnadze became foreign Minister within five weeks, he had met with each of his 150 staff members in the Ministry. He always began his meetings with: "I am here to listen to you, it is necessary to know each of you personally," he wrote down everything and sometimes the interview would continue for two or three days¹⁰⁶. He was, with Gorbachev, opposed to the closed, dictatorial system of communism. As U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, another close Shevardnadze friend, said: "I decided by May of '89 that this was somebody whose word was good, whom you could trust completely," Baker said. "He felt like something dramatic was going to come, and that they ought to make it happen in an orderly and peaceful way."¹⁰⁷ Shevardnadze put it this way:

"At the negotiation table, I always tried to be seen primarily as a person, and not the personification of a hostile idea...I did not back down from my convictions, but at the same time I didn't hold the negotiation hostage to them. Naturally, I had my country's interest uppermost in mind, but I also respected my partner's interest. And I expected the same of him. I was always aware of what divided us, but I tried to discover what united us. Common interest and values would come to the forefront, sweeping aside everything else."¹⁰⁸

Journalist Michael Mercer spent time in Tbilisi and described his memories of the Georgian President with this observation, "Eduard Shevardnadze is an open and unassuming man. He is quiet and reflective, and I couldn't find an aide who remembered the last time he had raised his voice. He always seems to be alone, even when he is not." And Shevardnadze confirms his openness and willingness to listen to advisors: "I never embark on anything without the advice of specialists. . . . I always carefully considered

¹⁰⁵ Carolyn Ekedahl Goodman and Melvin Allan, "The wars of Eduard Shevardnadze", Brassey, London, 2001, p 12.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with V. Lortkipanidze, 13 November 2014.

¹⁰⁷ Michael Spector, "Rainy days in Georgia," The New Yorker, New York, 18 December 2000, p. 56

¹⁰⁸ Shevardnadze, p. 61

their (the staff) opinions. Even so, I invariably correlated what they told me with my own understanding and perception of the general strategic issue.¹⁰⁹

It was hard to have a personal relationship with Babu, he wasn't an easy person to get along with; he had an extraordinary mind, he was not dogmatic, always forward thinking, dynamic – he found a way out of any situation. He was a hard worker; went to bed at 3-4 A.M., worked 20 hours a day and demanded the same hard work from his employees. He read everything even though he had only 4 hours sleep - never wore reading glasses – he had trained one eye for near sight and one for far sight. He would come home at 04:00, and at 08:00 met his staff - everyone thought that he had just come from 2 weeks' vacation. Finally, this routine began to destroy his health, and from 2000-2003, his activity decreased, he was burned out.

He never shouted, even during the war. He had a soft humor and always appeared to be easy going, but he did not open to anyone, never trusted anyone, never gave promises. If he changed his mind he always called, sometimes with humor. Discussing agreement about a person, he would say maybe he made a mistake, "If I were a woman I would be a hooker." In the 1970's Shevardnadze had no reaction to people's comments – stone faced – neutral body language. Shevardnadze liked Stalin's way – listen to everybody, all points of view- systematically record information – make everybody responsible for a decision in this process. But when he made a decision, he carried it through to the end¹¹⁰.

Shevardnadze was opposed to the August 19, 1991 Moscow putsch against Gorbachev; summarizing his position: "In the final analysis ...I take enormous personal satisfaction, because the outcome of the August events confirmed the correctness of my chief principle: the policy that is morally right will be victorious, only the political idea which takes human freedom as the measure of all things is invincible."¹¹¹

Even though Shevardnadze had retired as Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union and had no apparent connections with the tumultuous events occurring in Georgia, the Gamsaxurdia opposition during this period often traveled to Moscow to consult with Shevardnadze. Shevardnadze repeatedly stated that he had no intention of returning to Georgia. In fact, Gamsaxurdia even asked Shevardnadze to return to Georgia and said he would give Shevardnadze all power. Shevardnadze demurred saying "I'm an old man, not interested in politics," but despite his denial, Shevardnadze is believed to have worked behind the scenes to unseat Gamsaxurdia¹¹². He said "Gamsaxurdia was negative, he should focus on the economy, and not provoke Russia – I could help."¹¹³ Shevardnadze was an opponent of Gamsaxurdia from the beginning – and he couldn't resist 'turning the knife' to cause Gamsaxurdia trouble. But when the Civil War started in Tbilisi in December

¹⁰⁹ Shevardnadze, p. 100

¹¹⁰ Vazha Lortkipanidze, 27 September 2014.

¹¹¹ Shevardnadze, p. 221

¹¹² Interview with Georgian Lawyer, 19 May 2014.

¹¹³ Interview with Georgian Politician, Member of Parliament, 5 June 2014.

1991, Shevardnadze consulted with his foreign friends: Baker, Schultz, Thatcher, and John Hart about whether or not he should return to Georgia¹¹⁴. Based on subsequent events, the general consensus must have been “yes”.

On March 7, 1992¹¹⁵, Eduard Shevardnadze arrived in Georgia and on March 10, the Military Council dissolved itself and created in its stead a State Council to govern the country. This was the first attempt to distance itself from the form of military government, but the major players in the new State Council remained the same as under the Military Council. The State Council appointed Shevardnadze as its Chairman, making him the effective head of government of Georgia. From the day of his arrival, Shevardnadze started to build his shadow structures to mobilize the people who he trusted. So sometimes the ‘official’ structures were sort of a decoration. On 10 March 1992, the Military Council created the State Council of the Republic of Georgia in order to “establish civil concord, political stability, acceleration of economic reforms, and for establishment of law and observance of the laws of the Republic” and to dissolve itself.¹¹⁶ On the same day, the newly created State Council appointed Shevardnadze as the Chairman of the State Council of the Republic with Jaba Ioseliani as his deputy, and to create a Presidium of the State Council with the following members: Dzhaba Ioseliani, Tengiz Kitovani, Tengiz Sigua and Eduard Shevardnadze¹¹⁷

After the military overthrow of the Gamsaxurdia administration in early 1991, the succeeding Shevardnadze-led government inherited the negative civil-military impediments of its predecessor. There was no professional, or even effective, military forces in Georgia. The existing armed forces were private militias or remnants of private militias. What “military” existed was clearly deeply involved in Georgian politics from having recently overthrown the elected Gamsaxurdia civilian government. Georgia did not have the basic elements of a liberal democracy in its civilian relations with the military. While Shevardnadze had the opportunity to correct the errors of his predecessors, his administration was wracked by incessant corruption, which Shevardnadze permitted in order to maintain the government’s control over (most of) the country. Gamsaxurdia was a stubborn romantic dreamer whose xenophobia for “Georgia for Georgians” alienated potential American and European allies, as well as minorities living in Georgia. Shevardnadze, on the other hand, was a conciliator who wanted everyone to get along, so he failed to curb the “thieves in law”, who were the mafia bosses who controlled most of the businesses in Georgia and to whom Shevardnadze gave a free hand to run the country.

Creation of the National Security and Defense Council

¹¹⁴ Interview with Georgia diplomat, member of parliament, 6 May 2015.

¹¹⁵ Coincidentally, the day of his wife’s birthday

¹¹⁶ Sakartvelos Respublica," 3 November 1992, p. 1

¹¹⁷ "Sakartvelos Respublica," 3 November 1992, p.10

On October 28, 1992, Parliamentary elections were held and the Parliament subsequently elected Shevardnadze as Head of State and Chairman of Parliament. Shevardnadze named Vazha Lortkipanidze as his Chief of Staff and Head of the Administrative Department. On November 16/17, 1992 Lortkipanidze created the structure of the Administrative Department and chose its employees. It was Shevardnadze's idea to create a National Security and Defense Council¹¹⁸. The National Security and Defense Council became one of two services in the Administrative Department, and COL Hamlet Gegenova (Deputy of the State Commissariat for recruiting) was initially chosen as Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council within the Administration¹¹⁹. Shevardnadze was Chairman of Council as Head of State; members of the Council were the Prime Minister, Chief of Parliament, Minister of Defense, Minister of State Security, Minister of Internal Affairs, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Finance and Lortkipanidze became Secretary of the Security Council¹²⁰.

The National Security and Defense Council (the name was changed after the Civil War to National Security Council) was located in same building as the Head of State and had the same support staff. Although Shevardnadze was chairman, a short time after its creation the council functioned under his Chief of Staff, V. Lortkipanidze. After 1995, when the security situation in Georgia became more stable, the National Security Council became an independent state structure: that is, its administration was independent, but the government financed the council although it operated independently under the supervision of the Chief of Staff, who was its Secretary.¹²¹

On December 3, 1992 the first official confirmation of the creation of the National Council of Security and Defense and its structure was published.¹²² Its structure was:

E. Shevardnadze - Chairman of the Parliament, Head of State: Chairman and commander-in-chief of the country's armed forces;
Tengiz Sigua - Prime Minister of the Republic of Georgia: and Vice-chairman of the National Security and Defense Council;
Djaba Ioseliani: Vice-chairman of the National Security and Defense Council; and
Tengiz Kitovani - Minister of Defence: Vice-chairman of the National Security and Defense Council

¹¹⁸ Private correspondence with former Georgian Government official, 27 February 2015.

¹¹⁹ Normally all 'structures' in the Georgian Government were created by an Order, Decree or Normative Act of the President or Parliament. No record of the creation of the National Security and Defense Council (NDSC) during this period has been found. It is possible that the organizing law was classified and not open to public review. The first 'official' document on creation of the NDSC was published in the Sakartvelos Respublica on 3 July 1993.

¹²⁰ Lortkipanidze, 27 September 2014.

¹²¹ Lortkipanidze, 13 November 2014.

¹²² "Republic of Georgia", 3 December 1992 p.1.
Sakartvelos Respublika_1992_N247.pdf

Members of the council were:

Irakli Batiashvili - Chief of the Information and Intelligence Service;
Alexander Kavsadze - Chief of the Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and International Relations;
Anatoly Kamkamidze - First Deputy Minister of Defence, Commander of the Armed Forces;
Nodar Natadze - Chairman of the Permanent Commission of Parliament on National Security and Defense;
Tedo Ninidze – Prosecutor General;
Alexander Chikvaidze - Minister of Foreign Affairs;
Temur Xachishvili - Minister of Internal Affairs;

It is highly likely that there was more a comprehensive Order that detailed the duties and structure of the Council, but it has not been found, and it may be considered to be a classified document not available to public examination. The first Decree that gives the functions and structure of the Council was adopted on July 2, 1993 and published on July 3, 1993. Between 1992 and 1996 the National Security and Defense Council served as the point of “merger of the Executive and Legislative functions of government.”¹²³

In the Sakartvelos Republica of December 23, 1992 on page 1 are two resolutions of National Security and Defense council. The first concerns the armed formations in Georgia that don't come into the armed forces of Georgia. It also reports a resolution of the Council of December 14, 1992 which tasks the Ministers of Defence and Internal Affairs, the national intelligence service, and regional and city government institutions to immediately register similar armed formations. “The National Security and Defense Council is entrusted to execute and monitor this resolution within 10 days. (December 21, 1992 signed by E. Shevardnadze).” The second reports the appointment of Brigade General Georgy Karkarashvili as a member of the National Security and Defense Council. (December 21, 1992 signed by E. Shevardnadze).

On 24 December 1992, in Sakartvelos Republica there is a resolution of the National Security and Defense Council creating a permanent commission to control the observance of human rights in Georgia, and in the same article the structure of this commission is listed, signed by E Shevardnadze.)

In Sakartvelos Republica on December 30, 1992 on page 3 there is mention of the "National Security and Defense Council" and its resolution of December 23, 1992 concerning acceptance of strict measures for railway safety and safety of movement of passengers and freight and a report of a meeting that had taken place on November 27, 1992 at which the structure of the NSDC and powers of the Head of State were discussed.

¹²³ Interview with Georgian Professor, 27 May 2014.

The Sakartvelos Respublica reported that on January 23, 1993 was the next meeting of National Security and Defense Council which considered an appeal of the Georgian army.

“The chairman of the NSC E. Shevardnadze made the statement concerning yesterday's events when the gas pipeline delivering gas to Armenia in the territory of Georgia was blown up. The First Deputy Minister of Defence, General A. Kamkamidze reported also that in many regions conscription isn't carried out. The Prosecutor General, T.Ninidze, the Minister of Internal Affairs, T. Khachishvili, the heads of districts of the city of Tbilisi and the chiefs of military recruiting departments spoke on the same subject.

Shevardnadze agreed with many of the remarks and said that it is necessary to create an army in which not only government institutions, but also all of the population of the country, must participate. He said that it is necessary to recall Georgian officers who served in the Russian army and to appeal to the country's spirit of patriotism. The media and television must be involved, and he reported that a project for the "Conscription of Recruits and Reservists" is ready.¹²⁴

The Parliamentary Law of Georgia Created the National Security and Defense Council on 2 July 1993, and because of the importance of this law to civil-military relations, excerpts are quoted in detail:

Article 1. General provisions and rules.

The National Security and Defense Council is the government body in the sphere of safety and defense which reports to the national parliament. The tasks, functions, formation of Council and the principles of its work are defined by this Law and Acts of Georgia.

Article 2. Tasks of the Council.

The main objectives are providing the country with defense and safety, sovereignty and protection of its citizens, law and order, providing social, economic and political stability, and also providing the implementation of a policy of peace.

Article 3. Functions of Council.

- considers and solves internal questions, and also important questions of foreign policy which are directly connected with the defense and safety of the country¹²⁵;

¹²⁴ Press-center of the head of the country, "Republic of Georgia," 30 January 1993, p. 2

¹²⁵ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs promoted foreign policy but didn't advise on National Security Policy; that was the job of the NSC, Interview with Georgian diplomat. 24 July 2015.

- considers and approves programs for the construction of the armed forces and promotes their implementation.
- controls combat readiness of the armed forces and sets tasks for the armed forces, and also exercises control¹²⁶ over their execution.
- coordinates military and research work.
- considers training of military personnel, their distribution, and also questions of military appeal and demobilization.
- directs, controls and coordinates the work of the bodies of defense, safety and a public order, provides and improves purposeful policy on issues of personnel in these bodies.
- organizes and controls activity in the ministries, committees, departments, institutions, in local authorities of the autonomous republics, in local public authorities on questions in the sphere of national security and defense;
- takes measures on questions of risks for the country, both internal, and external, and also takes measures for holding special events for the solution of these questions.
- during a state of emergency, carries out expeditious actions in the areas of serious political, social, economic, ecological and other crises in order to resolve them. Takes measures to avoid serious consequences during these periods.
- organizes and controls actions for protection of the vital objects of the country and takes measures for their safe functioning.
- in regions where a state of emergency is declared, appoints special representatives of the Council to whom it allocates emergency powers.
- considers appointments to the highest military positions of those persons who are given the highest military ranks and makes recommendations for these appointments to the Head of the State.
- also resolves issues of legislation and other questions.

Article 4. Powers of Council during a state of emergency.

During a state of emergency, the Council can resolve issues are within the authority of a ministry.

On questions that arise during martial law, the Council has the right:

- to introduce a special regime on entrance and departure of citizens from the country.
- to invalidate any decision of local authorities if they contradict the law on defense or contradict the performance of other tasks of the Council.

Article 5. Structure of the Council.

¹²⁶ While 'control' would indicate that the NSC was an operational agency – and it largely was – 'control' as translated from the Georgian usually indicates 'monitoring' rather than actual control of operations.

The following are the members of the Council and in compliance with their areas of competence take part in the work of the Council:
Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia - Head of the Country: Chairman.
Prime Minister of Georgia: Deputy Chairman.
Deputy Prime Minister for industry.
Minister of Defence.
Chief of the Information Intelligence service.
Attorney-General.
Minister of Internal Affairs.
Minister of Foreign Affairs.
Chairman of the Committee on Protection of Human Rights and international relations.
Chairman of the Parliamentary commission on defense and safety.
The Mayor of Tbilisi”¹²⁷

Because the National security and Defense Council had been operating from at least December 1992, there must have been prior law, orders or regulations that established and governed it. These, however, have not been found, and the July 2, 1993 Resolution of Parliament is the earliest version found to date. This version is particularly important because it mirrors in many respects the 1996 law establishing the National Security Council and several subsequent laws and resolutions on the National Security Council.

Shevardnadze appointed his long-time confidant, Nugzar Sajaia, as Secretary of the National Security Council, and because of that position, Sajaia was also the national security advisor to the President.¹²⁸ Sajaia had been the head of Shevardnadze’s Administration when Shevardnadze was First Secretary of the Communist Party of Georgia, so Sajaia was empowered by this close relationship to act on behalf of Shevardnadze¹²⁹ But, even with his trusted relationship with Sajaia, Shevardnadze kept security issues closely under his control. In Sajaia’s office were two telephones: one was a special phone directly connected to Shevardnadze, and a second phone had a direct line to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Sajaia was a very rigid but effective manager. He was known as Shevardnadze’s “bull dog”¹³⁰ and he created many enemies. Kitovani, who was living in Moscow after he left prison in 1999, gave an interview in which he claimed that Sajaia was a homosexual – a crime according to the powerful Georgian Orthodox Church. Because of this accusation, Sajaia believed that it would affect his effectiveness as Secretary of the NSC and he submitted his resignation to Shevardnadze. Shevardnadze refused to accept the

¹²⁷ "Republic of Georgia", 3 July 1993, p.1.

¹²⁸ Sajaia held the military rank of Lieutenant General, most likely for pay purposes because he had no military training background. Interview with Abkhaz NSC member, 18 June 2014.

¹²⁹ Interview with Georgian Diplomat, 24 July 2014.

¹³⁰ Interview with former Georgian government official, 3 June 2014.

resignation, saying that a resignation would admit the charges,¹³¹ but Sajaia couldn't take the negative pressure – his son was teased by his schoolmates about his father's 'proclivities'.¹³²

On February 22, 2002, the Sakartvelos Respublica reported Sajaia's suicide:

"This morning in Sajaia's office a shot was heard. Sajaia was immediately transported by his staff to the hospital, but without regaining consciousness, the Secretary died. At that moment around the building of the Republican hospital in Tbilisi are enforcement units.

A few days ago, a Member of Parliament, Boris Kakubava, publicly accused Nugzar Sajaia of organizing terrorist acts in Georgia. Kakubava said to journalists that Sajaia was a "grey Cardinal" in Georgia. According to Kakubava, he can present incriminating documents regarding the Secretary of the NSC. After these accusations Nugzar Sajaia appealed to the Prosecutor General's Office to immediately launch an investigation into a case of rejecting the charges against him involving Boris Kakubava for slander.

Nugzar Sajaia was 60 years old. He was Secretary of the Georgian NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL since 1995."¹³³

Sajaia's staff heard what sounded like a shot in Sajaia's office, but according to one interviewee who was present at the time, nobody entered the office immediately because Sajaia hadn't called. When they entered the office, they found Sajaia who had been shot in the left temple with a small 5.45 Caliber Communist Control Pistol that had been a gift from friends.¹³⁴

Shevardnadze: dealing with civil war

Shevardnadze, with the assistance of his two quasi-military council members, Kitovani and Ioseliani¹³⁵, had successfully cobbled together a new government for the country of Georgia. In name, but hardly in substance, the government went from a military government to a civilian controlled government, but in reality, the country still did not have a professional military force and there remained no significant separation between the military and the civilian leaders (warlords) of the country. Likewise, Russia was still the major player in Georgian political decisions, not only because of its extensive border with

¹³¹ Interview with former Abkhaz NSC member, 29 May 2014.

¹³² Interview with former Georgian government official, 23 May 2014.

¹³³ Sakartvelos Respublica, page 1, 22 February 2002

¹³⁴ Interview with former Abkhaz NSC member, 29 May 2014 who claimed to have given the pistol to Sajaia as a gift. Immediately, conspiracy theories emerged because Sajaia was right-handed. The pistol was destroyed after Sajaia's death.

¹³⁵ Although Kitovani and Ioseliani held commanding positions in the armed forces in Georgia, they were what could be termed "galvanized" civilians. They did not have formal military training nor an understanding of the profession of arms.

Georgia, but also because the government was laced with former Russian officials. For example, in April 1994, the Shevardnadze-appointed Minister of Defense, Varden (Vardiko) Nadibaidze, was a former Russian General and appeared in Parliament for his confirmation in a Soviet military uniform. When asked why he was still in a Russian uniform, Shevardnadze replied, “there was no time for formality, everybody knows who he is.”¹³⁶

The new “civilian” State Council controlled the country with an iron fist. Although the government had created a somewhat western style National Security and Defense Council, that institution functioned as a control mechanism for the government, not as an advisory body like its counterparts in the West. Using Huntington’s criteria, Georgia still lacked a professional military, and in fact the civilians, untrained in military affairs, had taken over the functions traditionally assigned to the military. There was little civilian control of the military – the civilians were the military. More troubling, the economy was in shambles, but more trouble was brewing in West Georgia and in the ethnic regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. That would occupy Shevardnadze’s attention for the next two years. It somehow contradicts to the above point, that Nadibaidze became a minister.

Rumblings of War in West Georgia

Both South Ossetia and Abkhazia are considered by Georgia to be natural and historic parts of the Georgian nation. Despite occasional outbursts of nationalist fervor, the two populations lived peacefully in a patchwork of interwoven Ossetian and Georgian villages. Abkhazia, on the other hand, had a much more mixed population with large numbers of Greeks and influxes of Armenians and other groups that diluted the ethnic Abkhaz population. In fact, in the Soviet era the largest ethnic group in Abkhazia were ethnic Georgians, about 45% of the population, and the ethnic Abkhaz amounted to only about 18% of the population. During his long rule, Stalin, an ethnic Georgian adopted a policy of ‘nationalities’ by which he artificially divided states into ethnic groupings that allowed the Soviet Union to maintain mastery over the nationalist groups. South Ossetia was an “Oblast” in the Soviet Union, and it had its separate government, but it was considered to be an endemic part of Georgia. Abkhazia was at first a ‘union’ republic and then an “Autonomous” republic, which meant that it was recognized as an independent governing area subject to control of the central Georgian government

When Zviad Gamsaxurdia was elected President in Georgia, he entered on a course of xenophobic politics of “Georgia for Georgians,” which caused resentment and exacerbated an existing desire for independence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, on November 28, 1991, South Ossetia declared its independence and in a popular referendum held on January 9, 1992, ninety-two percent of the voters opted to unite with North Ossetia and become part of the Russian Federation¹³⁷. Abkhazians had pushed for their independence for several years and

¹³⁶ Interview with Shevardnadze Chief of Staff; Nadibaidze’s godfather was General Grachev, Soviet Defense Minister

¹³⁷ Which merger did not happen.

finally, on July 23, 1992, the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet adopted the 1925 Abkhazian constitution which declared Abkhazia as a sovereign nation. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetian separatists were all jockeying for favorable positions. Georgia did not recognize the election in South Ossetia nor the declaration of sovereignty of the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet.

A brief military conflict took place around Tskhinvali, the capitol of South Ossetia in the late 1980's, but the situation stabilized with occasional minor hit and run guerilla tactics. In Abkhazia, tensions continued unabated and in June 1992, Abkhaz militants attacked Georgian government buildings in Sokhumi. On July 2, 1992, an agreement to calm tensions was reached between Georgia and the Abkhazian government under which all armed formations in Abkhazia were to be subordinated to the Georgian Ministry of Defense.¹³⁸

Adding to the frustrations of the fragile Georgian state was the fact that the conflict between the supporters of Gamsaxurdia and the new government was also not yet over. Most of Gamsaxurdia's supporters came from the region of Mingrelia, which borders Abkhazia, and throughout 1992 and 1993, those supporters variously fought or allied with Georgian government forces. Gamsaxurdia's supporters were doing their best to disrupt and discredit the Shevardnadze government by blowing up bridges and railway lines. Sakartvelos Respublica, reported that on March 13, 1992, a delegation of the State Council met in the city of Zugdidi with the population to negotiate with the separatists:

“The armed groups which support the former president have again shed blood, there are those who were killed and wounded, bridges are blown up, television towers are blown up, houses and hotels are burned, the railroad is damaged, continuation of which will bring disaster to the country though because of an inequality of forces, your armed performance doesn't make sense.”¹³⁹

This report was signed by Kitovani and Ioseliani “on behalf of the Management of the armed forces of Georgia.”

On April 11, 1992, the State Council called for the establishment of an Army of the Republic of Georgia and called on all existing armed formations to unite under the Ministry of Defense. In reality, the Ministry of Defense existed mainly on paper because the real armed formations of Georgia continued to be Kitovani's National Guard and Ioseliani's Mkhedrioni. The National Guard was formed from about 8,000 volunteers, including criminals, murderers with death sentences, who were released from jails during the Tbilisi war and many of whom then joined Kitovani's army'.¹⁴⁰ This military had no civilian control and parliamentary authority over the military was weak to non-existent. For example, the

¹³⁸ Human Rights Watch (HRW), “Georgia/Abkhazia: Violations of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict,” March 1995, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1995/Georgia2.htm>, last accessed February 15, 2015.

¹³⁹ "Sakartvelos Respublica," March 14, 1992, page 1.

¹⁴⁰ Private correspondence from Former Georgian Government official, 27 February 2015.

Minister of Defense refused to testify before Parliament and said, “if you don’t like it, dismiss me.”¹⁴¹

In April 1992, Shevardnadze made an attempt to create a real army for Georgia. The Resolution of the State Council was adopted to create the Armed forces of the Republic and to subordinate them to the Ministry of Defence. The Resolution directed all armed forces existing in the Republic (formations, and groups) to unite under the Ministry of Defence, approve the structure of the joint General Staff of the Ministry of Defence; to develop a system of reserve formations; and to submit to the Ministry of Defence a temporary provision for general conscription.¹⁴² and an appeal for recruits for active service in Armed forces of Georgia.¹⁴³

On July 9, 1992, several Georgian officials were taken hostage by Gamsaxurdia’s forces, and on August 11, 1992, the Georgian Minister of Internal Affairs and several other officials who had traveled to Zugdidi to negotiate the release of the hostages were themselves taken hostage.¹⁴⁴

In mid-August 1992, Defense Minister Tengiz Kitovani led a mechanized column of the National Guard consisting of about 1,000 soldiers backed by tanks and helicopters, to the Gali district to free the hostages taken by Gamsaxurdia and that were thought to be sequestered in Abkhazia. Kitovani was ordered to secure railroads and highways that had been under frequent attack. Kitovani, however, led his troops into Sukhumi on August 14, 1992, and attacked and captured the city by August 19, 1992, in violation of the July 2, 1992 Agreement between Abkhazia and Georgia. Abkhaz President Ardzinba and his government fled to the Russian military base in Gudauta. Once more the Russians mediated a ceasefire agreement between Shevardnadze’s forces and the Abkhazians that was signed on Sept 3, 1992, but this ceasefire was promptly violated by Abkhazian forces which drove the Georgians back and took control of Abkhazia north of the Gumista River. Fighting over the next nine months was intense, with numerous attacks and counterattacks by Georgian and Abkhaz forces mainly along a line of contact that followed the Gumista River. On March 15, 1993 in Abkhazia Abkhaz forces attacked Sukhumi. The attack was repulsed with big losses. Russian troops were accused of informally supporting this attack. The see-saw fighting was going nowhere and straining relations between Shevardnadze and his military commanders. At the May 6, 1993 NSDC meeting, Kitovani was asked by Shevardnadze to resign from the NSDC and he did. Irakli Batiashvili¹⁴⁵, Head of State Security insulted Kitovani, who was also verbally attacked by Ioseliani. Batiashvili then attacked Ioseliani (deputy of NSDC) and said that he should resign because of Mkhedrioni. Ioseliani said, “no problem, I will resign, it’s not necessary to discuss it.” He stood up and left¹⁴⁶. Also, on 6 May 1993, Shevardnadze

¹⁴¹ From newspaper reports, in Darchiashvili, 1997, footnote 81.

¹⁴² Sakartvelos Respublica, 11 April 1992, page 1

¹⁴³ “Sakartvelos Respublica, April 18, 1992, page 1

¹⁴⁴ HRW, op. cit.

¹⁴⁵ Irakli Batiashvili was appointed Min of Security because Jaba insisted on it. Irakli was the son of the sister of Jaba’s mistress and Jaba wanted more support among law enforcement structures. Private correspondence with former Georgian Government Official, 27 February 2015.

¹⁴⁶ Lortkipinadze, Loc.cit.

replaced Kitovani as defense minister with 28-year-old General Giorgi Kharkharashvili. Shortly thereafter, Ioseliani also resigned¹⁴⁷. Subsequently, Kitovani went to Jabba: "have you seen Shevardnadze and Lortkipanidze? We need a new rebellion; you are a courageous man"¹⁴⁸. At least at this point in time civil-military relations between Shevardnadze and his military commanders, as well as among the military, were fractured, likely because the difficult military situation which raised tempers.

Intense fighting continued, and on July 2, 1993 separatist forces began a major offensive to capture Abkhazia. Separatist forces, composed of some Abkhaz, but also Russian troops and 'volunteers' from the North Caucasus conducted a sea landing beginning at 04:30 in the morning: One participant in the fighting recounted:

"I got to a position in Zemo-Kindgi. We suffered heavy losses, but the enemy did also. From 100 people who went to Zemo-Kindgi we lost about 70; I was a little wounded. All of us were from the internal troops. At this time the enemy wanted to surround Sukhumi by this maneuver and therefore the enemy was landing around Ochamchira. In the beginning they managed to cut off the roads to Sukhumi around Tamysh south of Sukhumi.

The enemy also wanted to destroy our artillery in Akhali Kindgi that was 4 to 5 kilometers from our position. If the enemy had taken our position, within 1 or 2 hours the fate of Sukhumi would have been sealed. But we detained the enemy's advance for 8 to 9 hours. At the beginning of the attack the enemy disconnected the landline to our handheld transceiver (radio) and we couldn't correct the fire of our artillery. This feat of the soldiers and officers of the internal troops is still not appreciated. This landing consisted of the Russian mercenaries."¹⁴⁹

Perhaps coincidentally, but more likely in response to the Abkhaz offensive, on page 1 of the newspaper "Republic of Georgia" there is reported a resolution of parliament appointing Major General Tamaz Nadareishvili as a member of the National Security and Defense Council. During this period, General Nadareishvili was Chief of the Council of Defense of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and was in Sukhumi. The speaker of parliament Vakhtang Gogvadze on July 2, 1993 signed this appointment order in Tbilisi. Further, on the same day, July 2, 1993, Shevardnadze and the Chairman of the Parliament, V. Gogvadze, issued the law establishing the structure for the National Security and Defense Council.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ HRW, op cit.

¹⁴⁸ Lortkipanidze, Loc.cit.

¹⁴⁹ Georgian historian and former senior military officer. private correspondence with the author.

¹⁵⁰ SakartvelosRespublika_1993_N142-143 (9).pdf The law was adopted on 2 July 1993 and published on 3 July 1993 in "Republic of Georgia". Any time that there was a change in the structure of a government organization a 'new' law was published with the new structure. Consequently, even though the National Security and Defense had existed since December 1992, the addition of General Nadareishvili may have triggered the publication of this law on 2 July 1993.

The situation in West Georgia continued to deteriorate with frequent attacks and disruption of rail transport, which was the lifeline of the Georgia¹⁵¹

“The country's livelihood depends on its rail transport system and this is threatened by attacks by armed gangs, frequent blockage of transport communications, explosions and damage to railway rolling stock and cargo, and the capture, kidnap, and robbing of passengers and transport workers and forced deprivations of life. In addition, these barbaric acts by armed gangs appear to involve some of the district's population.”

Meanwhile, on the battlefield, on July 13, 1993 the road to Sukhumi was unblocked, and a landing by the Abkhaz was partially repelled by Georgian forces near the city of Ochamchira. The Abkhaz forces then tried to force a surprise landing from the north and east and attacked Sukhumi near the Gumista River. This attack was also repelled with significant losses. In July 1993, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 872 which called for a cessation of hostilities and pledged 50 UN peacekeepers to patrol a settlement, “if” one could be achieved.

Under pressure from Russia¹⁵², a peace process was initiated at this point by a Georgia-Russia-Abkhaz Commission, and on July 27, 1993 in the city of Sochi in the "Zhemchuzhina" hotel under the mediation of Russia, a "Ceasefire and Development of Mechanisms for Monitoring Agreement" which would come into force at noon on July 28, 1993, was signed.¹⁵³

On August 14, Georgian troops began their withdrawal in accordance with the terms of the peace agreement two Georgian observation posts remained by the Gumista River and Georgian forces began to disband their battalions and remove their heavy equipment to Poti. Life in Sokhumi began to return somewhat to normal and from September 1-15 1993 the mass return of the population began, the academic year opened and in the city recovery work was carried out.¹⁵⁴ At the same time, Gamsaxurdia supporters again launched attacks in Mingrelia against several villages that hampered the delivery of supplies to Georgian troops in Sokhumi and also hampered the withdrawal of heavy weapons that was required under the ceasefire agreement¹⁵⁵.

However, on September 16, Abkhazian separatist forces with the support of Russian military units, initiated a massive surprise attack on the now mostly disarmed Georgian units in the Ochamchire region, followed by a major assault on Sukhumi. Abkhazian renewed hostilities clearly coincided with the final removal of Georgian armaments from the war zone in accordance with the July 27 ceasefire agreement and in flagrant violation

¹⁵¹ Resolution of the Presidium of the State Council And Introduction of Railway Transport Emergency, 10 August 1993, signed by Eduard Shevardnadze, Chairman of the State Council.

¹⁵² HRW, *idem*.

¹⁵³ Private correspondence with Georgian historian.

¹⁵⁴ *Idem*.

¹⁵⁵ Russian Black Sea Fleet helped the Georgian's evacuate some of their heavy weaponry to keep it from falling into the hands of Gamsaxurdia's supporters, HRW, *op. cit*.

of that agreement. Georgian unpreparedness plus renewed hostilities by pro-Gamsaxurdia troops in west Georgia prevented reinforcements from reaching Georgian forces in Sokhumi and prevented any concerted opposition to the Abkhazian attacks.¹⁵⁶

The siege of Sokhumi lasted 12 days. President Shevardnadze was present in the city throughout the fight, vowing to die rather than let the city fall into Abkhazian hands. When at last the city fell, and he was forced to board the last plane out, he said, “May I be forgiven by my contemporaries and posterity.” On the last day of the siege he sent Boris Yeltsin a telegram saying that Georgia would join the CIS if the assault were stopped, clearly indicating his conviction that the aggression was planned “in the General Staff of the Russian Army¹⁵⁷.” On September 27, 1992 Sokhumi fell and the Minister of Defense surrendered the city to Abkhazian, Russian and Chechen forces. Shevardnadze stayed until the end. He took the last plane out of Sukhumi and flew to Tbilisi.¹⁵⁸ After the surrender, 30 people refused to abandon the Minister of Defense and stayed three days longer and escaped to Georgia on foot through the mountains.¹⁵⁹

The September 16, 1993, assault was generally carried out against civilians of Sukhumi, and on September 27, 1993 Sukhumi fell to Abkhazian forces and by September 30, 1993, the Abkaz separatists occupied all of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia. From September 27, 993 and during the month of October, the slaughter of the Georgian population began. More than 250,000 ethnic Georgians were compelled to leave their homes and to become refugees. That this constituted ethnic cleansing of the Georgian population was confirmed by resolutions of the OSCE summits: 1994 in Budapest, 1996 in Lisbon and 1999 in Istanbul.¹⁶⁰

During the Abkhazia civil war Shevardnadze spent a lot of time on the battlefield while Lortkipanidze remained in Tbilisi. Before Sukhumi fell, for 2 weeks there were no landline communications. The United States provided one radio and trained Georgian operators. It was a secure coded mini-radio station so that Vazha Lortkipanidze could talk to Shevardnadze. Often the connection was bad – calls dropped. Shevardnadze would give long ideas and ask “do you understand?” If Vazha didn’t get the entire transmission he said “no” and Shevardnadze would start again; he never got angry or impatient.¹⁶¹

With the fall of Sukhumi, continued fighting in Abkhazia, occupation of coastal ports by Chechens, increasingly active and aggressive attacks by Gamsaxurdia forces, Shevardnadze was at his wit’s end. It was feared that Gamsaxurdia forces would march on Tbilisi to retake the government. The Georgian Ministry of Defense was nonfunctional;

¹⁵⁶ Rosen, p. 245

¹⁵⁷ Rosen, Idem.

¹⁵⁸ Rosen, Idem.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with former Georgian Military Official, 20 November 2014.

¹⁶⁰ [Resolution of the OSCE Budapest Summit, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 1994-12-06](#); see also Human Rights Watch report. [Georgia/Abkhazia: Violations of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict](#), March 1995, p.23.

¹⁶¹ V. Lortkipanidze, Loc.cit.

it had no communications with the battlefield. Shevardnadze had no military forces, no army, and there was panic in the streets of Tbilisi. Kitovani had been fired and the loyalty of his National Guard was questionable, and Ioseliani had also resigned. Tbilisi was in a panic.

The only cohesive body of military troops that stood between Tbilisi and Gamsaxurdia's supporters was Ioseliani's Mkhedrioni, but Shevardnadze felt that it would be politically difficult to get Jabba back officially – society was skeptical of the bona fides of Ioseliani and his Mkhedrioni, and Shevardnadze would likely have to make concessions to Jabba to get him back. In this situation Vazha Lortkipinadze asked Shevardnadze “what if society requests you to bring Jabba back?” Shevardnadze agreed that he would have to concede to societal pressure. Consequently, Vazha quietly arranged to have 60-70 society leaders come to Shevardnadze and ask to bring Ioseliani back. Shevardnadze ‘conceded’ and that calmed the panic in Tbilisi.¹⁶²

The situation in Abkhazia and Western Georgia was complicated by the appearance of supporters of Gamsaxurdia who were observed from August 31, 1993 in districts of the cities of Senaki, Gali, etc. Successes by Gamsaxurdia's forces, as well as continuing fighting by Abkhaz forces pushed Shevardnadze to desperation. Gamsaxurdia, supported by North Caucasus forces, threatened to move to attack Tbilisi. Then, when Gamsaxurdia arrived in Western Georgia, his supporters blocked supply routes to the Georgian forces in Abkhazia. By October 29, 1993, Georgian troops from the Ministry of the Interior approached Zugdidi on their way to clear Senaki of opposition forces.

Unsubstantiated sources reported the participation of Chechens and Abkhaz forces with Gamsaxurdia's supporters which, if true, would indicate that Russia was supporting Gamsaxurdia while at the same time negotiating with Shevardnadze to end the Civil War. Russian intent became clear when at a meeting on October 8, 1992 in Moscow, Yeltsin took a map of Georgia and drew a heavy black line along the Surami Ridge in the middle of the country – Gamsaxurdia would control the Western half; Shevardnadze would control the Eastern half.¹⁶³ Shevardnadze was quiet. The next day Shevardnadze announced a reversal in policy toward Georgia's incorporation into the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS): after having consistently rejected membership, he now stated that he would bring Georgia into the CIS.

Shevardnadze then flew to Kutaisi, called Leonid Kuchma, President of Ukraine and told Kuchma what Yeltsin had said about dividing the country between Shevardnadze and Gamsaxurdia, and asked for Ukraine's help. Georgia was living on humanitarian aid that came in by sea on the west coast, and a move by Yeltsin to isolate that lifeline would have strangled Georgia and would have given Shevardnadze no choice but to accede to

¹⁶² Lortkipinadze, 13 November 2014; subsequently, Shevardnadze found reasons to put both Kitovani and Ioseliani in prison.

¹⁶³ Lortkipinadze, Idem.

all of Yeltsin's demands. The Baltic fleet was in port at Sevastopol in Ukraine, and Kuchma convinced Russian Admiral Baltin to move forces to the Georgian Black Sea coast. Some sources report that Chechens, with Russian support, had captured Poti and were blocking aid, but when the Baltic fleet approached the coast, the Chechens disappeared, and the 'siege' was lifted.

On October 22, Shevardnadze, true to his word, signed a decree approving Georgia's membership in the Russian-led Confederation of Independent States and on October 25-26, Georgia and the CIS concluded a collective security treaty.¹⁶⁴ Shevardnadze would continue fighting to save his country. Sensing that after the fall of Sukhumi, victory might be near, Gamsaxurdia arrived in Zugdidi from Chechnya. He had flown to Senaki and drove by vehicle to Zugdidi to be at the head of his supporters. But on December 31, 1993, it was reported that Gamsaxurdia had committed suicide under strange circumstances. Witnesses say that he was shot two times in the head¹⁶⁵. His body was taken to the village of Sopeli Xibula and then removed to the village of Djchashkari in the house of one Zarandia. Shortly before this event, Russian General Baltin arrived in Poti with 4,000 soldiers. He brought tanks from the Russian base in Batumi and after a short battle, the remaining forces surrendered the city¹⁶⁶. Maybe it was just coincidence that after Shevardnadze had agreed with Yeltsin to cave in to Russian demands, the whole face of the Civil War changed – there was a Russian enforced peace in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the segment of the Black Sea coast was secure in Georgian hands, and Shevardnadze's nemesis, Gamsaxurdia, mysteriously died. But the civil wars were over, and Shevardnadze had saved Georgia from dissolution, but at a high price.

After Russia agreed to help end the civil war, Georgia's price for that support was not only to join the CIS, Russia also covertly advised the appointments of the Georgian Minister of Internal Affairs, the Minister of Defense, and the Minister of State Security. Shevardnadze had to agree to a treaty with Russia that gave Russia long term basing rights on Georgian soil and the treaty provided that Russia would arm and train a Georgian army and provide heavy equipment – it didn't.

The treaty was never ratified by Georgia, so in light of Russia's failure to perform its agreements, in 1994 and 1995 Shevardnadze turned to the west. From that time on, political decisions in Georgia were still influenced, but no longer controlled, by Russia. Shevardnadze dismissed the Russian ministers in his government and used the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) troop/arms limitations to oust Russian bases in GE. Shevardnadze's victories included OSCE membership, international support for the removal of Russian bases at the Istanbul Summit, and agreement to field the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Human Rights Watch, *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁵ Interview with former Gamsaxurdia military commander, 26 May 2014.

¹⁶⁶ *Idem.*

¹⁶⁷ Interview with former Georgian government official, 23 May 2014.

But Russia continued to stir the pot in Georgia. In February 1998, Shevardnadze survived a third attempt on his life. While returning to his Krtsinisi residence, his column of vehicles was attacked by assailants armed with heavy machine guns and rocket propelled grenades. Shevardnadze escaped, but one of his bodyguards was killed.

“According to Georgian officials, the former chief of the Georgian Security Service, I. Giorgadze, who was officially accused . . . escaped arrest and fled to Russia aboard an aircraft that departed from a Russian military base. In the course of the investigation . . . twenty members of the special security group Alpha, which was created by the Russian security services, were arrested.”¹⁶⁸

On 18 May 1998, Georgian ‘guerillas’ who were supporters of former President Gamsaxurdia, killed twenty Abkhaz policemen in a surprise attack. This combat, although localized to the Gali region, caused some 30,000 Georgians who had fled the 1992-93 civil war to once again flee their homes and seek refuge on the Georgian side of the border. President Shevardnadze stated that he would not commit the Georgian army to the conflict but would use diplomacy to settle the issues. Georgian ambassador to Russia, Vazha Lortkipanidze and Abkhaz president Ardzinda negotiated a cease fire that provided for the withdrawal of Abkhaz forces from Gali and the return of refugees. The agreement was signed by the Foreign Ministers, Menegarishvili for Georgia and Shamba for Abkhazia, and countersigned by the Commander of the Russian Peacekeeping forces. Of course, if Georgia had no control over the guerillas, it is questionable that they could control their disarmament. In sum, the cease-fire agreement was only partially fulfilled and conflict in the region continued to simmer.¹⁶⁹

Civil-military Relations during the Shevardnadze period

Georgia desperately needed a professional military force, but recruitment was not easy. Sakartvelos Respublica reported¹⁷⁰ that as of January 1993, from all registered persons called up only 21% reported for active duty and only 14% of the conscripted reservists reported. Local heads of regional administration were warned that if recruiting did not improve, their jobs were in jeopardy, and the resolution of the National Security and Defense Council further directed commanders of military units to provide for the assembly of recruits and reservists on the established schedule, to provide for their accommodation in deployment places, and their equipment, food and medical care. In order to combat general lethargy toward military service in the country, the Council directed an appeal to be carried in the

¹⁶⁸ Darchiashvili, 1997, p. 4-5.

¹⁶⁹ RFE/RL Reports, 26 May 1998, Volume 1, number 13

¹⁷⁰ “Resolution of the National Security and Defense Council of the Republic Georgia on conscription of recruits and reservists,” 23 January 1993, page 1

mass media and published in schools and other educational institutions to consider initial military training as a subject of state value that will help in the future for the defense of the country.¹⁷¹

In connection with the appeal to citizens to serve in the Army, during this period many people didn't want to do military service because they still considered Shevardnadze as an usurper who overthrew the legitimately elected Gamsaxurdia government and, especially in Mingrelia and Ajara, they continued to support Gamsaxurdia. Some people joined the Mkhedrioni to avoid Army service. Only in the internal troops was there order and parents released their children to serve there. The Internal troops were patriotic. They screened out criminals and marauders and had practically no deserters. The country was at war and the Internal Troops protected civilians from bandits and from other armed groups. Business was complicated, however, by the fact that Gamsaxurdia continued to consider himself as the President and had many supporters and armed groups¹⁷².

Even though the country's military situation began to improve during the later 1990's, there continued to be recidivist support for the deposed President Gamsaxurdia, and in 1998 a group of some 200 soldiers took over the Senaki military base and threatened to march on the city of Kutaisi. The mutiny, led by Colonel Akaki Eliava was ostensibly caused by Shevardnadze's political decision to build an oil pipeline through western Georgia to the port of Poti, but it was also caused by an underlying opposition to Shevardnadze. The mutineers commandeered several tanks and three armored personnel carriers and marched out of their Senaki base on 18 October 1998. They were met by other Georgian troops under the personal command of the Minister of Defense, Lieutenant General David Tevzadze. A brief gun battle incurred in which one service member was killed, and the mutineers surrendered and agreed to return to their barracks. Eliava, who was charged with treason, escaped.¹⁷³ Eliava and several of his followers continued to resist the government allegedly from the refuge of the forests until he was shot by government forces in 2000.¹⁷⁴

“According to the BBC Moscow correspondent, Andrew Harding, says western Georgia remains the stronghold of supporters of former President Gamsakhurdia, who was overthrown in 1992.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Signed by Head of State, Chairman of the National Security and Defense Council E. Shevardnadze Tbilisi, 23 January 1993.

¹⁷² Private correspondence with Georgian historian.

¹⁷³ See also, “Politics of Oil Fuels Georgia Revolt” (BBC News, 19 October 1998); Georgian Mutiny Collapses, (BBC News, 20 October 1998).

¹⁷⁴ Lee, R. "Georgian Military Revolt of 1998", http://www.historyguy.com/Georgian_Military_Revolt.html; Eliava was a leader in the 1993 attempt by President Gamsaxurdia to regain his presidency. Eliava was captured and convicted of the revolt, but as is not unusual in Georgia' frenetic civil-military environment, a few months later he was released from prison and joined the Georgian Armed Forces with the rank of Colonel. (See <https://www.revolvy.com/page/Akaki-Eliava>)

¹⁷⁵ Lee, Loc. Cit.

Further discontent over pay (or no pay at all) and poor living conditions continued to sour civil-military relations. In May 2001, hundreds of National Guardsmen seized a Ministry of Interior base in Mukhrovani, about 25 kilometers east of Tbilisi, with four T-72 tanks and several armored personnel carriers. The Guardsmen were joined by about 200 Ministry of Interior troops at the base. The mutineers demanded "to be paid on time, to have normal conditions of service, and normal food." After negotiations with the National Guard Commander and other officials including Minister of Defense Lieutenant General David Tevzadze, and with a promise by Shevardnadze to visit the rebels, the mutiny ended. Some called the uprising an attempted coup d'état. The news also reported:

"Nobody shows any respect for the army nowadays. Nobody wants to be drafted and nobody would ever send his son to the army if he had the opportunity not to do so. In general, I wonder whether we need an army where conscripts begin starving from the very first day they get there, and where they don't [even] get shoes. We have many generals and few soldiers. We have an army of generals and all the money goes to [these people.]"¹⁷⁶

The news service also commented since the breakup of the Soviet Union, Georgia had had a "long history of short-lived mutinies in the armed forces."

Consequently, civil-military relations in Georgia continued to be problematic throughout the Shevardnadze administration.

Creating military forces

In Huntington's view, Georgia during the Shevardnadze period would not achieve democratic status for several reasons: there was still no military professionalism or subordination of the military to real civilian control, there was little separation of military and civilian spheres, and consequently no acceptance by civilian leaders of the military's professional competence, and finally a lack of minimization of military intervention in politics.

Georgia also fails under Bebler's criteria in several respects especially relative political neutralization of the armed forces and discontinuation of the military's internal security role, and while there was nominal civilianization of the Ministry of Defense, Georgia's reliance on Russian military personnel to fill its ministerial positions indicates that the military was not totally under Georgia's civilian control, but more likely under heavy Russian influence.

¹⁷⁶ Jean-Christophe Peuch with Koba Liklikadz, "National Guardsmen Mutiny Over Hardship", Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Liberty, May 25, 2001.

Therefore, Georgia's quest for liberal democracy would have to wait for another day. In the meantime, progress would continue under new national governing documents; specifically, a new Constitution.

Chapter Three: The end of an era: the Rose Revolution and Beyond

This Chapter continues the historical events that introduced the Saakashvil period of institutional modernization and infrastructure building that ultimately resulted in Saakashvili's downfall and the entry of the Georgian Dream (which some have said has become the Georgian Nightmare!), and brings the research to the modern era.

Parliamentary elections were held on Tuesday, 2 November 2003, and by November 6, something was clearly wrong. The elections were filled with irregularities: ballot boxes destroyed and so on. The NSC, which was supposed to monitor the electoral process was paralyzed. Tedo Japaridze was a great diplomat, but he had less success running the NSC. Shevardnadze had always held the top security issues – like elections – close to his chest, and when the irregularities surfaced, Japaridze had to admit on Television that he had no possibility to meet with the President. The die was cast.

Since 6 November, busloads of oppositionists descended on Tbilisi to protest the results of the Parliamentary Elections. Shevardnadze considered using the Army for protection and asked the Minister of Defense if he would deploy the Army to protect him and the Parliament building. General Tevzadze refused – he asked Shevardnadze “How many deaths are you planning?” When it became apparent that a revolution was in progress, the Minister of Defense called his Chiefs of Service at 1 or 2 A.M. and they discussed until morning what they should do. “Maybe Shevardnadze is trying to involve us and take the army to the streets.”¹⁷⁷ The Minister of Defense and his Chiefs of Service refused to use the military against their own people, consequently the military refused to be involved in a political situation and sat out the developing events.

Demonstrations against the elections began to flood onto Rustaveli Avenue. Koba Narchemashvili, Minister of Internal Affairs, ordered General Shervashidze¹⁷⁸ (MOIA) to send his internal troops to protect the Parliament. The troops formed a wall against the crowds, but they had no orders about what to do next. They had no rest breaks and no food and after two weeks without supplies or orders, Shervashidze lost control of the troops and the ‘wall’ disintegrated, and the MOIA soldiers took no action. But a confrontation was inevitable. On November 23, with crowds filling Rustaveli Avenue and Freedom Square, ‘revolutionists’ with red roses in hand, stormed into the Parliament without opposition.

Shevardnadze was trapped in the Parliament building by crowds led by a triumvirate of Mikhail “Misha” Saakashvili, former Minister of Justice, Zurab Zhvania, Former Speaker of the Parliament, and Nino Burjanadze, Speaker of the Parliament. Shevardnadze said, “I’m going home;” these words marked the success of the opposition’s project “Georgia

¹⁷⁷ Interview with former Georgian military leader, 20 November 2014.

¹⁷⁸ Officials in the Georgian government were often given military rank titles for pay purposes.

without Shevardnadze,” and he left for his residence in Krtsinisi. Burjanadze stayed at the Parliament, Zhvania and Saakashvili followed Shevardnadze to Krtsinisi. Later, Shevardnadze explained “I realized that it was better to go and stop all of this peacefully, without blood and sacrifice. Confrontation would not be without blood. I never betrayed my people.”¹⁷⁹

Russian Federation Minister of Foreign Affairs, Igor Ivanov, was in Tbilisi at that time. In what may have been a prelude to the Rose Revolution, when Ivanov arrived in Tbilisi he first met with the opposition, then with Shevardnadze. At his residence, while meeting with Ivanov and the opposition, Shevardnadze received a telephone call from the Chief of the Georgian General Staff, who had something ‘urgent’ to say. The phone was on speaker and his visitors wanted to leave the room. Shevardnadze said “stay – you will learn what’s going on.” The Chief of the General Staff had received a telephone call from the Russian General Krasni, who did not know that Ivanov was in Tbilisi. Krasni said “as far as the Russian military knows, there is going to be a change of power – If you need help, we will help you.”

At this time, Shevardnadze was tired – his wife was very ill. Shevardnadze had been saying since 1999 that he wanted to resign – the work and his age were catching up with him, he was tired and his desire to retire from politics took hold. Both the triumvirate of revolutionaries and Moscow did not want Shevardnadze to resign, they wanted him to stay in office to lend legitimacy to the transfer of power – but Shevardnadze would not play that role. One interlocutor told me, “if Sajaia were alive, the Rose Revolution would not have happened – Sajaia was Shevardnadze’s bulldog, and a strong administrator. As it was, the Rose Revolution was more of a coup d’état, and not a revolution.”¹⁸⁰

Reporting from Kiev, the online newspaper, Planet, assessed the revolution:

“At the same time, many in Georgia and abroad fear that the coming to power of the nationalists, foremost of which is Mikhail Saakashvili, who can equally be called as a charismatic and populist leader, will have the most negative consequences. Before the new Georgian leader today is a much more serious problem than the ousting of Shevardnadze, whom they consulted. The first step is to guarantee absolute stability in the country – on the part of its territory, which is still controlled by Tbilisi. And then, if the predictions come true optimists, the new Georgian parliament, government and president, came to power on a wave of “friendship against Shevardnadze”, on the wave of popular discontent of living conditions, will have to prove that they are able to cooperate effectively and after his victory, actually able to change people’s lives for the better. Only then will the

¹⁷⁹ Varvara Zhluktenko, “Day” Topic: Day of the Planet Newspaper: № 213, 25 November 2003, <http://www.day.kiev.ua/ru/article/den-planety/zhestkie-perspektivy-barhatnoy-revolyuicii>, accessed 10 February 2014

¹⁸⁰ Interview with former Georgian military leader, 20 November 2014.

project “Georgia without Shevardnadze” succeed. Otherwise, it really turns into a disaster “Georgia without Georgia.”¹⁸¹

In the U.S., Secretary of State Colin Powell called Nino Burjanadze and offered his support. Powell also spoke with Shevardnadze, who the State Department valued for his work as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR under Gorbachev. Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov denied that Russia had anything to do with the coup but stated that Russia wanted to see stability and an orderly transition of power in Georgia.

The main concern in Tbilisi at the time, was the reaction of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, where President Aslan Abashidze, announced a state of emergency. Abashidze did not recognize the new leadership of Georgia and called it unconstitutional. After talks with Abashidze, Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov said it was too early to make optimistic forecasts of future developments in Georgia. Noted Georgian constitutional expert Kote Kemularia, of the “National Movement” said “I am sure that the new power structure will find common language with Adjara. The main reason for the conflict [with Adjara] was that there was no official constitutional law on the delimitation of powers between the center and the regions. Everything was decided on the basis of telephone law.” George Sepashvili, editor of the online magazine “Civil Georgia” observed that

“All actions of the opposition were impeccably organized. There was order in all their meetings, no crimes or similar activity. Two- or three-kilometer columns of vehicles filled with oppositionists from the regions traveled to Tbilisi. After the change of power, the real problem is Adjara. The loss of an ally such as Shevardnadze is catastrophic for Abashidze.”¹⁸²

The New Government

Under the Georgian constitution, on the premature departure of a President, elections for a successor must be called within 40 days. Saakashvili could not be an interim leader and then be elected a President, so Nino Burjanadze became the acting President of Georgia pending Presidential elections that were called for January 5, 2004. During the interregnum, Burjanadze basically signed decrees as Saakashvili directed.¹⁸³ Constitutional amendments hastily passed by Parliament late in Shevardnadze’s tenure introduced the concept of a Prime Minister¹⁸⁴, designed to give control over the Georgian government: Saakashvili was to assume (be elected to) the Presidency, Zhvania was to

¹⁸¹ Zhluktenko, loc cit.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Interview with former Georgian government official, 2 June 2014.

¹⁸⁴ Shevardnadze had maintained that under the confused political situation in Georgia a Parliamentary system with a Prime Minister was unworkable. Interview with Georgian Academician, 10 June 2014.

become Prime Minister and Burjanadze would control the legislature¹⁸⁵. The amendments also changed the Georgian Coat of Arms and the national flag.¹⁸⁶

The first task of the new government, as in any unplanned transfer of power, was to provide stability for the transition to take effect. After Saakashvili was sworn in on 25 January 2004, he moved aggressively to develop a National Security Concept (2005), National Military Strategy (2006) and a Strategic Defense Review (2007). While all of these documents fulfilled a urgent national need, they were also designed with a view to demonstrating to European nations and especially NATO, that Georgia was progressing rapidly toward becoming a stable society. Also, in 2005 Georgia sent a battalion of its Army to fight along side NATO forces in Iraq primarily in order to portray Georgia as a provider of international security rather than as a consumer.¹⁸⁷

The Rose Revolution changed everything in government – it destroyed the mammoth centralization of power that occurred under Shevardnadze. The Georgian government system under Shevardnadze had become dysfunctional – the only choices were to study the reasons for dysfunction or to replace it – and replacement was the swifter option. It was modeled on the United States' governance system. The difference in approach between Shevardnadze and Saakashvili was stark: if food shortage was an issue, under Shevardnadze the entire matter of bread consumption was centralized – Shevardnadze would want to know how many tons of grain were produced and harvested. Saakashvili's approach was to defer to private companies to solve the problem. Indicators of success were established to measure the reform progress. Saakashvili was impatient because he knew that his political capital was highest after the change in government – and that his capital diminished as it was spent. Therefore, anything that was necessary was possible. Many criticize Saakashvili's tactics, but Saakashvili found that political reform is like walking through a graveyard, no one is there to help.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Jones, p. 143

¹⁸⁶ As the symbol of opposition to the Shevardnadze government, the opposition adopted a medieval flag of Georgia that had a broad red Saint Andrew's cross and four smaller cross pattee on a white background. In 1999, the Parliament approved a law adopting the opposition flag as the national flag of Georgia, but Shevardnadze refused to sign the law and relegated the question to a heraldry committee. The original flag appears in a 1347 map of Tbilisi and was supposedly used by Georgian Monarch David the Builder in the eleventh century. The signature used by Queen Tamar in the twelfth century was a Shepard's crook with a cross bar and four dots in each quadrant. After Saakashvili was elected president, on January 15, 2004, he signed a law adopting the new flag as the flag for Georgia. Source: Interview with Georgian politician, 20 September 2014, and

http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2003/11/whats_with_georgias_flags.html
(accessed on 18 Feb 2004)

¹⁸⁷ The troop rotations to Iraq, and later Afghanistan, were also intended to give combat experience to Georgian soldiers. Troops were trained by the U.S. Army and Marine Corps before deployments, but the training focused on peacekeeping in counter-insurgency environments in those two countries, and provided little training in conventional military tactics. The emphasis on counter-insurgency training provided little useful military skills when it came to engaging in combat with Russian troops in 2008.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with former Georgian official, 23 July 2014.

Saakashvili basically had no feeling for institutionalization. He was a fast reformer who wanted to move ahead, sometimes without an assessment of the costs. Institutionalization is more than creating structures, it is about filling those structures with trained personnel who remain in office long enough to create an institutional culture and long enough to create continuity of actions and policies. Although Saakashvili began to create some institutions in his second term, Georgia was still a new democracy and Saakashvili's attitude was that there was not enough time to institutionalize. The Rose Revolution was a classic example of non-institutionalization.¹⁸⁹ Saakashvili's advice to reformers is to strike fast and make reform "a continuous process uninterrupted by pauses." Every reformer "should know that the race for the future is won by the swift."¹⁹⁰

Stephen Jones quotes Adam Michnik, a leader of the Solidarity movement in Poland as saying that "if Georgia wants security, it needs democracy," because as Jones puts it "democracy, if it works, encourages debate, holds its leaders responsible, and secures legitimacy."¹⁹¹ And further, Georgia "will always be vulnerable to external influence. But if [its] economy works, [its] government institutions function, corruption and crime is stemmed, and citizens are engaged, they can reduce those vulnerabilities."¹⁹²

The Saakashvili National Security Council

When he was sworn in as President on 25 January 2004, Saakashvili inherited the structure and personnel of the Shevardnadze NSC, but as is typical of Georgian politics, when the leader ("Uprossi") changes, so do all of the subordinates.¹⁹³ However, because in Georgia the pool of workers with any government savvy is severely limited, often people who worked in a previous administration are re-hired, not because of their experience, and usually not to a position or in an agency in which they had worked, but because they are perceived as loyal to the new leader.

As one interviewee noted, "The NSC follows the President's personality"¹⁹⁴ Saakashvili wasted no time in creating his own administration. One week after he took office, on 1 February 2004, he issued Decree Number N38 creating his own National Security Council and defining its duties. The general provisions, purposes and structure of the NSC were strikingly similar to the Shevardnadze NSC.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with former NSC official, 23 May 2014.

¹⁹⁰ Jones, 226

¹⁹¹ Jones, 268

¹⁹² Jones, 263

¹⁹³ This practice tends to create a complete lack of continuity in government. Georgia does not have a recognized civil service to provide an 'institutional memory', so in almost all cases, everything starts over with little or no record of what preceded the change. Another challenge to the government personnel system is that most people are hired on the recommendation of someone known to the person who is doing the hiring. In addition, there are few instances where a new hire is given a job description or even on the job training. Very often they are simply told, 'figure out your duties by yourself and talk to your supervisor.' Again, a great disincentive for any continuity.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with former Georgian official, 3 March 2014.

The staff has special importance; it is completely secretive and works on secret information as a facility with a special mode, and conducts its activities pursuant to the Georgian law on “state secrets,” as well the normative acts on enactment of a Georgian law” according to “granting information a status of state secrecy and measures of its protection,” approved by decree #42 of the President of Georgia, dated 21 January 1997. The NSC was created as a top-secret organization to:

- “coordinate and organize implementation of the state strategy in defense, security, justice, anti-corruption activities, foreign policy and the other relevant fields.
- Evaluate the state and international security, challenges and strategy of its main internal and external threats and provide prognoses.
- Implement¹⁹⁵ state security policy and strategy recommendations and suggestions.
- Perform permanent control of the state’s security situation.
- coordinate activities in state security, fight against crime, and protection of public order.
- evaluate implementation of the President’s orders and recommendations regarding the NSC.
- draft Presidential acts in defense, security, law enforcement and justice fields regarding the appointment of officials, granting certain military and special ranks to them, and ensuring their compliance with the legislation.
- Provide crisis management and coordination of emergency situations in the country pursuant to the President’s order.
- The staff reports only to the President of Georgia.”

(emphasis added. The underlined language demonstrates that the Saakashvili NSC was expected to “do”, not just advise. It was an operational NSC.)

The NSC staff was divided into five structural departments:

a) Department of Defense matters. Its main goal is to participate in the reconstruction of the Georgian military forces; coordinate national and international programs with respect to the nation’s defense and the state border defense; facilitate in the development of the military and defense industrial-scientific complex. The department provides assistance to the international commission activities in the military-technical issues found under the National Security Council.

b) Law enforcement and intelligence department, the main goal of which is to facilitate fight against crime, protect public order and coordinate intelligence activities. The department participates in the development and

¹⁹⁵ As noted in the underlined language, the NSC was expected to “control” the country’s security mechanism and to “implement” changes in the system. This makes the NSC an “operational”, not advisory, body.

implementation of the state strategy for law enforcement reforms; manages crisis situations, and coordinates regional, national, and international anti-terrorism activities.

c) Anti-corruption policy coordination department, the main goal of which is to develop the anti-corruption national policy, as well as participate in development of specific anti-corruption measures for their nationwide implementation; coordinate activities of the state structures that are engaged in anti-corruption activities.

d) Political security department, whose main goal is to coordinate interagency executive government structures for the nation's foreign political security, as well as regulate conflictual situations and participate in development and implementation of the state policy to reintegrate the potential conflict regions. The department provides monitoring of implementation of Georgia's international obligations in the human rights defense field.

e) The Department of organization and information security whose main goal is to protect state secret information, register the President's relevant secret acts, provide financial-industrial, human resources, technical and organizational issues for the staff and develop webpages. The department provides oversight on the implementation of control tasks of the President of Georgia and the NSC secretary. The department organizes the NSC council meetings.

On 11 November 2004 the Parliament approved a new statute for the National Security Council, replacing the Shevardnadze law of 24 January 1996, naming it as a consultative body under the President of Georgia. The Council was established to elaborate high-level political decisions in the field of military building and organization of national defense, on strategic issues of internal and external security policies, stability and legal order, as well as other national security matters. The law directed the NSC to:

- draft a national security concept.
- assess security-related situations in the country; and the main internal and external risks/challenges.
- Consider main issues of internal and external policy which are directly linked to the ensuring of national defense and security.
- Consider programs for building and strengthening military forces and ensures the organization of their implementation.
- Arrange elaboration of state strategies in the fields of defense, state security, law enforcement, anti-corruption, foreign policy and other spheres of state security.
- Study and analyse extant situations and perspectives in the international conflict zones.

- Draft proposals concerning Georgia's cooperation within collective security systems.
- In accordance with international treaties and agreements concluded or acknowledged by Georgia, consider issues of Georgia's participation in providing security outside the state borders.
- With the aim of defending the country, in extraordinary cases and in conformity with the law in force, considers bringing, employing and moving armed forces of other states in the country.
- draft proposals concerning the quantity of the Georgian armed forces and submit them to the Parliament of Georgia for approval, together with Georgian draft state budget submitted by the Georgian government.
- Consider combat- and mobilization readiness of military forces; Control activities of Georgia's ministries, self-governance bodies of autonomous republics and other state bodies in the spheres of security and defense;¹⁹⁶

The duties and functions of the Saakashvili NSC were almost identical to the Shevardnadze National Security Council. The membership in the Saakashvili NSC was changed slightly to substitute the Minister of Finance for the Minister of State Security, which no longer existed, and eliminate the Chairmen of the Supreme Representative Bodies of Abkhazia and Adjara Autonomous Republics as participants in Council meetings. The other change that might have been more cosmetic than substantive was to declare the Office of the NSC as a "special importance body working on top secret and classified information" and state that NSC meetings are closed. Under Shevardnadze meetings were closed and NSC activities were secret, but the law under Saakashvili made that lack of transparency explicit.

Saakashvili appointed the Secretary of the NSC secretaries, who in theory, served as his advisors, but typically the principals of the government met on a consistent, informal basis and decisions were made informally and then translated into concrete actions. The formal structure of meetings that had been developed under Shevardnadze continued for a short time, then melted away.

Saakashvili's secretaries of the National Security Council were:

Ivane "Vano" Meribashvili

After he approved the NSC structure under the Shevardnadze law, Saakashvili in January 2004, appointed as NSC Secretary Vano Meribashvili, who was to become the long serving Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia. Meribashvili's first crisis was dealing with a rebellious Aslan Abashidze, the leader of Adjara, who in May 2004 refused to send taxes to Tbilisi or to allow Georgian troops into the region. After a short military confrontation, Abashidze fled to Russia and Georgia regained full control of the area. During the Adjara crisis Meribashvili and the NSC was in 'crisis management mode,' but it was Meribashvili

¹⁹⁶ http://nsc.gov.ge/index_en.php?p=11 accessed 12 February 2007

who was the main actor to successfully reintegrate Adjara into Georgia. Merabashvili shook the NSC out of its lethargy and it became a new organization. He held several 'formal meetings' in the mold of the Shevardnadze NSC, but daily interaction between key government players severely reduced the need for formal meetings. When meetings were held, they were a 'show' to announce changes, the real decisions had already been made in informal meetings.¹⁹⁷ One source reported that Merabashvili was the Secretary in name, but because of his active focus of controlling the government, the NSC was really run by its Deputy Secretary.¹⁹⁸

In the beginning there were few changes. The NSC continued to produce an intelligence report each week. The intelligence service worked issues Monday to Friday and on Monday morning delivered reports to the NSC Secretary. The issues for intelligence review were either chosen by the Intelligence Service or reviewed on request from "higher levels."¹⁹⁹ Most source information for reports and analysis was taken from unclassified, open source material from the Internet ("any college student can do it"). NSC records were kept manually: one lady there from the beginning, records the title of a document, a short synopsis and files them in binders. The Office started to use software to file documents, but "the lady is best – when she leaves, who knows?" (She retired in June 2014)²⁰⁰

During his short term in office, Merabashvili downsized the NSC staff and the number of departments to departments dealing with NATO, the international security community, and international affairs. There were only one or two cabinet meetings during the period, but the President always attended. The NSC did not provide briefings to Georgian ambassadors, but it screened ambassadorial candidates before Saakashvili appointed them.²⁰¹ Actual membership on the NSC or its staff was not important. Even though "Vano put things in order," the NSC staff remained a "sinecure."²⁰² Important decisions were made by Saakashvili and he rotated all positions in government, including the NSC and its staff, among his inner circle.²⁰³

Saakashvili was routinely not interested in planning; he only called the NSC Secretary when he wanted to talk. This was good because Saakashvili didn't interfere in the development of the NSC process and let the NSC coordinate government activity. The staff could call ministries at any time – this ability was not enshrined in law, but the authority developed slowly.²⁰⁴ Under the new law the NSC had seven members: President, Prime Minister, Minister of State Security, Minister of Internal Affairs, Minister of Finance, Minister of Defense and Minister of Foreign Affairs; the Secretary was an

¹⁹⁷ Interview with former Georgian government official, 20 September 2014.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with former ISAB member, 18 June 2014.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with former Georgian government official, 30 May 2014.

²⁰⁰ Interview with National Security Council official, 23 May 2014.

²⁰¹ Interview with former Georgian government official, 2 June 2014.

²⁰² Interview with Georgian academician, 6 June 2014.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Interview with NSC official, 23 May 2014.

assistant to the President. The Council was an advisory body to the President. The NSC was an executive body, not judicial or legislative, but part of the Western-style separation of branches into the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative. The Prosecutor General and Minister of Justice were not part of the Council and the Chairman of Parliament attended and participated in NSC meetings, but not as member of the NSC.

Like the United States' National Security Council, Georgia's NSC was structured on two levels: at the higher level the Council was composed of Ministers (who were the Principals) and the Deputy Ministers (Deputies Committee). The Office of the Council was a less influential structure composed of employees hired by the Secretary of the NSC. The Office was typically small, under Shevardnadze it had 35 members.²⁰⁵ The Deputy Ministers Committee produced papers for the NSC Secretary who was the Security Advisor to the President.²⁰⁶ The Ministries were generally active in their own areas of responsibility and produced reports for the NSC. The NSC, when it was consulted, was mainly a discussion board, however on NATO issues, the NSC actively supported the Ministry of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration headed at one time by Deputy Prime Minister, Giorgi Baramidze.

Gela Bezuashvili

Gela Bezuashvili was Minister of Defense when Saakashvili appointed him as Secretary of the NSC in June 2004. He instituted less control over the ministries, more coordination and provided a bridging function between ministries. At first the NSC was collegial; it was not the Sajaia bulldog; ministers come to the NSC to seek answers, gain consensus and approval – they were not summoned – but needed or wanted NSC support. Later, Ministers started to avoid discussions within the NSC and began to form 'clubs' around the President. Two or three Ministers would discuss issues privately and then bring the 'solution' formally to the NSC.

The NSC held a regular meeting every Friday with a formal agenda. A Minister would bring items to be put on the agenda, e.g. authorized strength of the Armed Forces. The Minister of Defense would analyze the issue, bring recommendations to the NSC, and when the NSC approved, bring the law to the President for approval and presentation to Parliament.

Bezuashvili was offered the rank of general for pay purposes, but he refused; he thought it would not be correct because he had little military experience.²⁰⁷ Bezuashvili left the NSC in October 2005 to become the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and his deputy, Levan Choladze, was temporarily appointed as interim NSC Secretary. With Choladze's appointment, however, one source said that the NSC became a "dead body."²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ Interview with former Georgian government official, 3 June 2014.

²⁰⁶ Interview with NSC official, 23 May 2014.

²⁰⁷ Interview with former Georgian government official, 3 June 2014.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

One benefit of Saakashvili's preoccupation with reform was that the NSC had the freedom under Bezuashvili to enact some major changes to the government. For example, it recommended to the President the Merger of two military structures²⁰⁹ – the internal troops under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Army under the Ministry of Defense. During the Shevardnadze period the Internal troops were used to balance and check, if necessary, the Army. The Interior Troops became an “alternative” army. NATO continued to be concerned about the less-than-transparent role of the Internal Troops, and finally in 2005 most of the Ministry of Internal Affairs forces were merged into the Ministry of Defense – all heavy artillery, weapons and officers were transferred to the Ministry of Defense. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, however, kept the riot police and SWAT units.²¹⁰ The Special Protective Service (SPS) provided Presidential security, as well as a pipeline protection role, and the protection of diplomatic missions. This role didn't follow the mandates, so the SPS role was reduced to Presidential Protection and MOIA kept pipeline protection because there were police stations along the pipeline.

Georgia's National Security Concept (2005)

In 2005, under the supervision of the NSC, and ten years after the first NSC law directed the drafting of a National Security Concept, the government published its first National Security Concept. As noted below under the discussion on Foreign Assistance, efforts to create a National Security Concept began in 1996 but progressed agonizingly slowly because Shevardnadze was skeptical that Georgia had the apparatus or resources to implement a National Security Concept. A draft was finally ‘accepted’, but not officially²¹¹, and was published, in 2000. Saakashvili reactivated the discussions under Bezuashvili's tenure. The document was not unlike the Shevardnadze “Georgia and the World,” and it continued to downplay tensions with Russia. The draft listed territorial integrity as the primary national interest and after much debate, the NSC convinced Saakashvili to remove territorial integrity from the number one spot because Georgia clearly needed to develop democratic institutions and eliminate corruption, and those interests became the focus for action and resources.²¹² Russian aggression was considered to be a threat, but with a low probability of occurring. The introduction to the National Security Concept stated:

“The people of Georgia have made an unequivocal decision to build a democratic and free state that ensures the rule of law, human rights, security, prosperity of its citizens and a free market economy. . . .

²⁰⁹ Which had been a recommendation of the ISAB since 1999. ISAB report in the possession of the author.

²¹⁰ MOIA troops wore the same uniforms as the Georgian Army and trained with Army units. There was often confusion in the press and among international observers as to which Ministry was involved in an operation. This became an issue when demonstrations were put down by force. Did the government use its army against its own people (not acceptable in a NATO country), or were the forces ‘police’ from MOIA?

²¹¹ Shevardnadze was cautious of making official public pronouncements that might irritate Russia.

²¹² Interview with former Georgian government official, June 3 2014.

The *National Security Concept of Georgia* is the keystone document that presents a vision of secure development of the state and of fundamental national values and interests. It describes threats, risks and challenges to national security and sets major directions of national security policy. The Concept underlines the aspiration of the people of Georgia to achieve full-fledged integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU), and to contribute to the security of the Black Sea region as a constituent part of the Euro-Atlantic security system.”²¹³

The document lists the fundamental national values of Georgia as Independence, Freedom, Democracy and Rule of Law, Prosperity, Peace and Security. In order to protect those values, the Concept states that the National Interests of Georgia are: Ensuring Territorial Integrity, Ensuring National Unity and Civil Accord, Regional Stability, Strengthening Freedom and Democracy in Neighboring States and Regions and Strengthening the State’s Transit Function and Energy Security, Environmental Security of the Country and the Region and Preserving National and Cultural Uniqueness. Several “Threats, Risks and Challenges” were identified as: Infringement of Georgia’s Territorial Integrity, Spillover of conflicts from Neighboring States, Military Intervention, International Terrorism, Contraband and Transnational Organized Crime, The Russian Federation’s Military Bases, Corruption and Inefficient Public Administration System, Economic and Social Challenges, Energy Related Challenges, Information Related Challenges and Environmental Challenges.

With respect to Russia, the document says: While the likelihood of open military aggression against Georgia is low, cross border incursions by state and non-state actors are real, and they threaten the security of the country – an observation that in hindsight of the 2008 War would be soundly criticized for not taking a stronger view of the Russian threat to Georgian security. The Concept also highlights:

Lack of a democratic tradition of governance and mechanisms of checks and balances has led to an increase in corruption. During recent years, corruption has penetrated the public sector and become so systemic and dramatic that it jeopardizes the security of the state by draining its resources, undermining people’s confidence in democratic values and institutions and hampering economic development, thus negatively affecting civic cohesion and social balance.

Specific actions to meet the challenges and provide security to the country include joining or integrating into NATO and the European Union.

Membership of NATO would not only endow Georgia with an unprecedented degree of military and political security but would allow it to contribute to strengthening the security of Europe, particularly the Black Sea region.

²¹³ <http://www.mod.gov.ge/?l=E&m=3&sm=1> accessed 12 Feb 2007.

Development or strengthening of regional partnerships and a pledge to eradicate poverty and develop targeted social assistance programs were a sign of increased concern for the individual Georgian citizen. The first National Security Concept of Georgia was approved by the Parliament in July, 2005²¹⁴

Alexander “Khakha” Lomaia

In November 2007, Alexander “Khakha” Lomaia was appointed Secretary of the NSC. The office of the NSC had 30 people and when he took over, he asked when was the last time that they held an interagency coordinating meeting – No one could remember when. The staff – and others – felt that the NSC had a too vaguely defined mission and vision. And until 2007, the NSC was perceived as not having an important role in national security, it mainly prepared for international meetings and conferences. It was “not an instrument woven into the texture of the Georgian national security community.”²¹⁵

When Lomaia was appointed NSC Secretary the NSC role developed a certain clarity -- a light bulb came on and the Council, became an interagency coordinating platform dealing with national security. Two major events occurred during the Lomaia tenure: a snap presidential election in January 2008, and a war with Russia. The NSC became a platform for government bodies to come together to establish agreement: Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Parliamentary Committees, and the intelligence services, in an open and cooperative manner.

According to one source, before Lomaia, the NSC was mainly seen as a place for pensioners – its primary role was to lobby overseas for Georgia and any action taken was a response to a crisis; there was no anticipation, and little planning. Under Lomaia, real strategic planning began. Before Lomaia, there was zero interest (on a 10-point scale) in planning. During the Lomaia period that interest level increased to 3 or 4 and under Bokeria (2011) it increased to 10. Under Lomaia, planning resulted in the beginning of the National Security Review process, a Law on Defense Planning, and a Law on Coordination of planning activities. During the Russia-Georgia War, the Deputy Secretary carried a list of names and phone numbers of everyone in the government and was empowered to call them at any time of night or day.²¹⁶

During Lomaia’s term as Secretary there were about twelve meetings in thirteen months, nearly once each month. Saakashvili always attended the NSC meetings. During the 40-day period between 25 November 2007 and 20 January 2008, when Nino Burjanadze was for a second time the acting President of Georgia, the NSC met more often – Burjanadze was very active with the NSC. After the special election in January 2008 that re-elected Saakashvili , the meetings tapered off.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ Matsne document: <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/43156?publication=0> accessed 12 July 2009.

²¹⁵ Interview with former NSC official, 11 August 2014.

²¹⁶ Interview with NSC official, 27 May 2014.

²¹⁷ Interview with former NSC official, 11 August 2014.

On election issues, appropriate Non-Governmental Organizations and other agencies were invited to attend NSC sessions – the invitation list was “tailored in composition to the project” under discussion. For example, the Inter Agency Task Force (IATF) for free and fair elections was set up for elections and designed as a channel to deal with opposition grievances. On other issues, NGO’s were not invited.²¹⁸

Lomaia Insisted on retaining the second level of participants (Deputy Ministers) in order to maintain continuity for the NSC to be effective

Saakashvili always attended NSC meetings – always read reports, would ask questions, issue orders to ministries, after which Lomaia would call ministries (or ministers) to give them Saakashvili’s guidance. Lomaia worked hard not to irritate or alienate the ministries, but to maintain collaboration. This was not always easy because Saakashvili reserved the right to pick up the phone and talk directly to a Minister and Lomaia would have to surmise the nature of Saakashvili’s conversation and perhaps Saakashvili’s new guidance to the ministry.

Feedback from the Ministries was important – it was a relatively new concept, Lomaia kept a suspense file of ‘guidance’ on which he would follow up. The NSC was an apparatus; and the Secretary’s job was always to know what was going on if Saakashvili asked. Saakashvili was not confined to any one way to make decisions, but in this author’s discussion with Lomaia he stated that he rarely remembered any decision of Saakashvili’s that was a total surprise. When Lomaia was asked to be NSC Secretary, he made a personal request to Saakashvili that he expected Saakashvili either to act through him or to inform him. Saakashvili agreed and kept his word; promptly informing Lomaia in real time²¹⁹.

Ekaterina “Eka” Tkeshelashvili

Under NSC Secretary Ekaterina “Eka” Tkeshelashvili, December 2008 to November 2010, in a step toward more open democracy, the NSC engaged in open engagement with opposition leaders; it provided updates on significant issues, e.g. with regard to the occupied territories, because of the realization that in a democratic society the opposition needs to be informed.²²⁰

There was not a set schedule of NSC meetings – meetings were more often held at the Deputy Minister (DEPMIN) level. Georgia has no “open meetings law” so formal NSC meetings were infrequently needed. The Secretary could suggest a meeting, a Minister could suggest a meeting, and generally the NSC met 4-5 times a year²²¹. Of course, the Secretary always called a meeting when Saakashvili wanted one and Saakashvili always attended.²²² Other attendees at NSC meetings included more members from

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Correspondence with former NSC Secretary in the author’s possession.

²²⁰ Interview with former NSC official, 9 June 2014.

²²¹ Interview with former Georgian official, 2 June 2014.

²²² Interview with former NSC official, 9 June 2014.

Parliament and the Mayor of TBS once or twice. There were no open sessions – at the beginning of meetings there was often a “media” time when the issues to be discussed were presented, photographs taken, followed by a closed session for NSC discussion. There was a flexible working relationship among the Ministers and the staff – while secrecy was maintained, many remembered and were afraid of the Soviet “double doors”²²³.

The Secretary had the authority to directly call Ministers to coordinate activities – but it was a collegial effort – and less of a ‘control’ mechanism. Documents were prepared by a coordinated effort – working with deputy ministers to get a buy-in to the process and to establish trust in working together. When the National Security Review process began, and the permanent interagency Deputy Ministers (DEPMIN) Committee was established working groups – heads of departments (NSC and other Ministries) – worked together under the DEPMIN Commission and with the Group of Trust in Parliament on secret matters. Because the chairman of the Parliament was often present at NSC meetings²²⁴, documents were immediately available to the Parliament. And the NSC continued its involvement with foreign lobbying – especially providing information on the occupied territories, economic development, NATO issues – this was extensive work²²⁵

When the National Security Review process began, the NSC and its Deputies Committee was the focal point for the process. It was an inclusive process to get buy in from all stakeholders – all line ministries – the emphasis was on process – to get to an endpoint. Under the NSR, the NSC was responsible to pull together the country’s strategic planning as embodied in a National Security Concept and a National Threat Assessment.

Giorgi “Giga” Bokeria

In November 2010 (until November 2013), Giorgi “Giga” Bokeria was appointed NSC Secretary. Again, there were no regular meetings, the President convened maybe 6 or 7 formal meetings in two years. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Defense Minister, the Interior Minister and the Minister of Justice were the formal members along with the NSC Secretary, and ‘formal’ meetings were an opportunity to allow others to attend, especially when security issues were discussed. If the economy was on the agenda, the Prime Minister also attended. For example, the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations were coordinated by the NSC staff – the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs conducted the actual negotiations, but because of the high U.S. interest in the outcome, and the delicate relations with Russia’s admission to the WTO, it was “a tricky path for Georgia.”²²⁶ An inner circle of Presidential confidants often came to informal decisions, e.g. MOIA, MINJUS, others, but they never bypassed the NSC on issues that NSC was required to handle.

²²³ In Soviet times the walls of an official office were thick enough to hold an inner and outer door to each office. The space between the doors could be used to eavesdrop on the conversations in the office.

²²⁴ Interview with former NSC official, 28 May 2014.

²²⁵ Interview with former NSC official, 9 June 2014.

²²⁶ Interview with former NSC official, 10 June 2014.

After introducing amendments to the old statute of the NSC office in December 2010, the structure of the NSC office from December 2010 to December 2013 looked as follows: Secretary of the NSC, four Deputies, 5 Departments: 1) Analytical Department, 2) Foreign Policy Department, 3) Defense and National Security Policy Department, 4) Human Rights, Minorities and Rule of Law Department, 5) Administrative Department. The departments were not divided into divisions. Thirty-eight (38) people were working in the office in total. ²²⁷

Structural changes to the Council during Bokeria's term in office included:

1. Adding minority integration to the NSC portfolio²²⁸ (e.g. return of Meskhetian Turks who had been deported by Stalin.
2. The Electoral process – the NSC was referenced in the Georgia Electoral Code
3. Declassification of documents – the NSC was in charge of classification and declassification – 34 NSC personnel could not deal with so many declassification issues. If an agency wanted to declassify a document, it notified the MOIA, and if the MOIA didn't block (provide a reason to keep it classified), it was declassified automatically – MOIA could block the declassification by giving classified documents a 'declassification time period')
4. Crisis Management of national emergencies – The UK assisted in developing a formal structure, but it was never tested

By that time the concept of a National Security Council had matured to the point that the NSC's view was definitely more external and international; it did discuss the issues related to the balance of internal power, but its main effort was to assess threats vis a vis Russia (and other countries) and to forecast issues in the National Security arena. With increased transparency in government and a drastic reduction in street-level corruption, the seed of liberal democracy in Georgia was ripening. The one area that would make the spread of democracy apparent to the citizens of Georgia and to the world, was free and fair elections.

The Interagency Task Force for Free and Fair Elections

Real or perceived election fraud had caused the downfall of Shevardnadze, and while the overwhelming victory of Saakashvili in January 2004 was not considered to have been rigged, it was conducted in the 'heat of the moment' – the Georgian people had thrown out the Shevardnadze 'scoundrels' and the election of Saakashvili was inevitable under the circumstances. The Georgian Constitution provided that the President serve a five-year term. The date of elections is not prescribed – elections were called by the President – but 2009 would be the next scheduled election period. In Georgia politics are anything but calm, and any number of events can set off protests. By 2007, the blush was off the

²²⁷ Private correspondence with former NSC official, 10 June 2014.

²²⁸ One of several conditions imposed by the Council of Europe for Georgia's membership In the Council, <http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=16669&lang=en>

revolutionary rose and a strong, but divided opposition of at least ten parties had formed, demanding satisfaction for a series of largely unrelated, and in some cases unsubstantiated grievances.

On 17 October 2007, the opposition issued a political manifesto calling for reforms to include early parliamentary elections, amendments to the Election Code and amnesty for 'political prisoners.' The demonstrations were for the most part peaceful. However, on 2 November 2007, more than an estimated 35,000 demonstrators gathered in front of the Parliament Building on Rustaveli Avenue and began calling for Saakashvili's resignation. On 7 November 2007, the government, tired of the long-standing disruptions of its main commercial avenue, used water cannons, tear gas, sonic emitters and other devices to end the demonstrations and clear the streets. More than 250 demonstrators were admitted to hospitals with injuries. There were many accusations as to who ordered the police actions, and the dissatisfaction with the government intensified because the Ministry of Internal Affairs troops (troops or units? Troops moved to MOD, right?) wore the same uniforms as the Georgian military, giving rise to some claims that the government was using the army against the people²²⁹

The demonstrations played well in Europe and America. European newspapers and media claimed that "Georgia was on fire."²³⁰ This was simply not true – other than some violence in the immediate area on Rustaveli, life in the capitol went on as usual. Whether in response to foreign pressure, or to catch the opposition off guard, Saakashvili called for a 'snap' Presidential election to be held on January 5, 2008, and in accordance with the requirements of the Georgian Constitution, he resigned. Nino Burjanadze, Parliamentary Chairperson, resumed the position of Interim President that she held immediately after the Rose Revolution in 2003-2004. Twenty-two candidates officially submitted petitions and credentials to the Central Election Commission (CEC) of which seven had their applications approved, while the remaining were denied based on a failure to submit 50,000 legitimate signatures. Saakashvili won the election handily, but with 53.47% of the vote, much less of a majority than in 2004,

Even before the snap election of 2008, there were concerns among senior government officials about a gap of a real-time communication between the Government, the election administration, the parties running in the elections, and observers/monitors and the fact that for years there was no mechanism to deal with grievances and concerns of major stakeholders. The proposed solution was to create an ad hoc task force, chaired by the Secretary of the National Security Council, to serve three major purposes: (1) to be a reference point for the Government with regard to election related issues (2) to serve as a rapid response mechanism if there was an election related concern with regard to reported Government misbehavior registered by political parties, monitors/observers, or media, and (3) to make recommendations for government agencies (and local governments) on how to contribute to a better electoral environment and prevent

²²⁹ Personal observation of the author.

²³⁰ Personal observation of the author who was in Brussels and living in Tbilisi during and after the riots.

irregularities²³¹. The concept was presented to the President and he approved it sometime between November 2007 and January 2008.²³²

Civil-military relations after the Rose Revolution

Since the Rose Revolution of 2003, Georgia made steady movement toward becoming a liberal democracy. Civil-military relations during this movement improved but did not reach the optimum level of democratic actions. The early days of the Saakashvili government continued many of the challenges of the Shevardnadze period in that the military bumped along with much international assistance but failed to fully implement or mature the principles that would demonstrate its integration into a liberal democracy.

In the last days of the Shevardnadze period, various terrorist groups were beginning to disrupt the peace and stability of the Middle East and threatening to expand their franchise into the Caucasus and southern Russia. Putin accused Georgia of harboring training camps in the mountainous Pankisi Gorge, and gave broad hints that Russian forces may move into Georgia to deal with the threat. The U.S., in order to counter Russia's threat created the Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP) in May 2002 under which program training was conducted using U.S. Special Operations Forces and U.S. Marine Corps forces. During this time approximately 2,600 Georgian soldiers, including a headquarters staff element and 5 tactical units, received training. Another assistance program, which in order not to antagonize Russia, was renamed the Georgia Security and Stability Operations Program (Georgia SSOP), was launched in January 2005, but really was a continuation of GTEP. Trained Georgian contingents served with NATO forces in Kosovo and continued to participate in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. While the civilian leadership in Georgia saw U.S. training as a means to improve the combat readiness of its armed forces, the training was not geared to prepare Georgia for conventional combat, such as it would face in the Russia-Georgian War. It was geared toward training in counterinsurgency and peacekeeping operations. This lack of understanding by the civilian leadership of the difference between training for combat and training for peacekeeping further displayed the lack of stability in Georgian civil-military relations.

One example of the inability of the central government to control its military took place in Western Georgia in the Kodori Valley. The Kodori Valley was technically within the borders of Abkhazia but was controlled by Georgian forces under warlord Emzar Quitsiani. Saakashvili decided to disarm Quitsiani's forces and in 2006 ordered the army to conduct an operation to achieve that result. Instead of assigning the task to military commanders in the Georgian Armed Forces, however, Defense Minister Irakli Okruashvili personally sidelined the official unit commanders and took to the field in an army uniform

²³¹ Private correspondence with a former Georgian official, 18 May 2015.

²³² Several parties agree that the IATF was established by a Presidential decree, but that document has yet to be found.

to lead the Georgian forces, thus continuing to mix the roles of civilian leadership with military operations.²³³

Another example of the tensions between civilian leaders and the military was that Saakashvili, in his impatience to effect reform made continual changes in key personnel in the Ministry of Defense and the Georgian Armed Forces, appointing five ministers of Defense between 2004 and 2011, and five Chiefs of the General (or Joint) Staff²³⁴. This constant turnover in key personnel destroyed any hope of continuity that is necessary for changes to imbed in and take hold. On the positive side, military salaries improved to the point that senior officers no longer needed to take second jobs (as taxi drivers, for example) in order to supplement their income, and a steady staff of civilian employees of the Ministry of Defense began to learn the complex tasks of military planning and budgeting, thus improving the overall civil-military relations in the country.²³⁵ The acid test, however, of this assistance and training was to be seen in the near future with the Russian invasion of Georgia and the Russian-Georgian war of 2008. That event shaped not only civil-military and political events within Georgia, but also severely changed Georgia's position in the world community.

Civil Military Relations - War with Russia and beyond

The major national and international event in modern Georgian history tested the viability of civil-military relations in Georgia as well as the mettle of the Georgian Armed Forces, and both were found wanting. There are numerous arguments as to who started the war with Russia and even when it started. Tensions between Russia and Georgia were endemic – a continued 'love-hate' relationship, that some psychologists would say can only exist between close relations. Georgians had been closely interwoven into Russian history. During the Napoleonic Wars one of the most famous Russian generals was Pyotr Bagration, a scion of the Bagratid royal dynasty of Georgia, who distinguished himself during the defeat of Napoleon at the battle of Borodino²³⁶ The long-serving leader of Soviet Russia, Josef Stalin was born Ioseb Djugashvili in Gori, central Georgia.

During the early years of Georgian independence, with Shevardnadze, former Soviet Foreign Minister, as the President of Georgia, the relationship seemed to go well primarily because Moscow felt that it could control Georgia. But at the end of the twentieth century Shevardnadze began to openly cozy up to NATO and the West. In 1996-97 the Georgian economy was growing by 11% per year,²³⁷ Georgia was getting more friendly with NATO

²³³ Private conversations with members of the General Staff as well as observations by the author of newspaper and television reports of the operation.

²³⁴ Author's personal observation

²³⁵ Civil-military relations continued to be

²³⁶ Napoleon was not technically defeated at the battle, but his forward movement was halted which ultimately led to his withdrawal from Russia, suffering huge losses. The Soviet Army offensive of 1944 was code named Operation Bagration in honor of the Georgian general.

²³⁷ Interview with former Georgian National Security Advisor and Ambassador to the United States, 17 July 2014.

and with the U.S.²³⁸, and Russia wanted to do something to stop/delay this trend. Maybe coincidentally, as noted above, on 10 February 1998, Shevardnadze's motorcade was returning to his Krtsinisi residence when it was attacked by several assailants armed with anti-tank weaponry. Shevardnadze escaped but it was suspected that Russia was behind the assassination attempt because one of the attackers who was killed was carrying a Chechen passport and was from Dagestan.²³⁹ Shevardnadze refused to send troops to Gali and relied instead on diplomacy to avert a renewed civil war with Abkhazia. A similar scenario was developing in 2007-2008. The Georgia economy was growing rapidly, and at the NATO Summit in Bucharest the Allies pledged that "one day" Georgia and Ukraine would be admitted to membership. Russia again began a series of events to put pressure on Georgia to reverse its western turn. As with the scenario in 1998, Georgia had the same choices: use military force or use diplomacy in hopes that the international community would put pressure on Russia. In 1998, Shevardnadze relied on diplomacy, while in 2008 Saakashvili tried diplomacy and when that failed opted for military force.²⁴⁰

It was during Saakashvili's tenure that what some call the greatest tragedy of modern Georgia occurred – the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008. There were numerous 'provocations' by Russia in 2007 and 2008, ranging from the mysterious shelling of a Georgian radar site to several violations of Georgian airspace by Russian military aircraft²⁴¹. August always seemed to be a month for tensions between Georgia and Russia to flare, and 2008 was no different. Artillery shelling began in early August, from Ossetian militias against Georgian villages in the Tskhinvali district and corresponding shelling from Georgian artillery against Ossetian villages. The shelling was not especially new – it flared from time to time – but this appeared to be more than a flare up. Consequently, on 7 August 2008, Georgian troops were ordered to move into Tskhinvali to counter Russian forces that were entering Georgia through the Roki Tunnel. The plans that had been developed for years to meet a Russian invasion were abandoned when the war began. When the troops went to Tskhinvali, the Joint Staff²⁴² decamped to an unimproved artillery battalion headquarters in Gori where it remained during the war, out of communication with troops in the field or with the Ministry of Defense. Deputy Ministers of Defense who had no military background, went onto the battlefield and began issuing,

²³⁸ One source reported that the NSC was carrying on secret negotiations with the U.S. to quell disturbances in the Pankisi Gorge. The source stated further that Russia knew of the negotiations and put pressure on Sajaia to stop them. This added to the pressure that Sajaia felt and may have contributed to his "suicide."

²³⁹ Assassination Attempt on Shevardnadze, Jamestown Foundation Monitor, Vol. 4, issue 27, 10 February 1998. <https://jamestown.org/program/assassination-attempt-on-shevardnadze/>

²⁴⁰ Interview with former Georgian Ambassador to the U.S., 23 July 2014.

²⁴¹ These comments on the Russia-Georgia war are based on the personal observation of the author who spent the duration of the conflict in Tbilisi watching the anti-Russian demonstrations as well as bombs falling on the communications center near the Tbilisi Sea.

²⁴² The name "joint staff" was used euphemistically to indicate that there was a Georgian Army, Air Force and Navy, but there was little of what western militaries would call joint planning. During the war the Georgian "navy" was virtually destroyed, and after the war it was transferred to the Georgian Coast Guard. Likewise, the Georgian Air Force was put under the Georgian Army, so the name Joint Staff ceased to have any real meaning.

often conflicting, orders to military units²⁴³. Clearly civil-military relations were turned upside down.

The cause of the invasion, whether it was provoked by Russian aggression or whether it was an impetuous move by Georgia's civilian government with military concurrence, will be argued for years to come. For civil-military relations, however, the war is illustrative of the disconnect between the civil society, the government and its military. Plans to fight a major battle in the then-breakaway region of Ossetia had been developed and rehearsed by the General Staff of the Georgia Armed Forces for several years before 2008.²⁴⁴ When it became apparent that Russian troops were on the move into Georgia, the plans were ignored and a makeshift collection of forces that had never trained together was adopted²⁴⁵. The General Staff, instead of operating out of a command center where it could be kept apprised of the conduct of the battle and keep the civilian leadership advised of the conduct of the battle, as well as the civilian leaders of the Ministry of Defense, decamped to an artillery unit headquarters near Tskhinvali and remained there throughout the conflict, often ignorant of the actual situation on the ground, and therefore unable to muster the necessary forces to halt or delay the invasion. Likewise, senior civilian leadership of the Georgian government, including civilian Deputy Ministers of Defense²⁴⁶ and the Secretary of the National Security Council, wandered into the battle area instead of remaining in a national command center where they could have affected the battle.²⁴⁷ The most effective action on the part of Georgia was to begin a media campaign to castigate the Russian invasion and attempt to garner international support. Accusations of Russian troops destroying Georgian towns and villages was largely acknowledged. The media campaign became the real battle. Initially international opinion reacted to the Georgian accusations and put the blame for the damage on Russia. The benefit for Georgia was that the United States pledged one billion U.S. dollars to help Georgia rebuild and additional pledges from the international community brought the total

²⁴³ Confidential conversations with members of the Joint Staff.

²⁴⁴ Personal observation of the author and confidential discussions with members of the General Staff.

²⁴⁵ Private conversations with Joint Staff and Armed Forces Commanders: The initial force that moved into Tskhinvali was composed of one battalion of infantry, one battalion of interior troops, a special forces company and a pipe-line security company. These units had not trained together and in fact did not have common communications that could talk with one another. Of course, they had also never trained for the mission that faced them – complex combat with Russian troops. United States training since 2002 had focused on Peacekeeping duties, not combat. Russian military forces has also trained for a war in the South Caucasus, and their military preparation and performance were not much better than Georgia's. See for example: Russian Performance in the Russo-Georgian War Revisited, Michael Kofman, Texas National Security Review, 4 September 2018, <https://warontherocks.com/2018/09/russian-performance-in-the-russo-georgian-war-revisited/>

²⁴⁶ Private conversations with former Ministry of Defense officials, 15 August 2008.

²⁴⁷ Jonathan Littell, "Carnet de route en Géorgie," Le Monde.fr, https://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2008/10/03/carnet-de-route-en-georgie-par-jonathan-littell_1102090_3214.html

to around four billion dollars.²⁴⁸ As time went by, however, the same countries that ponied up the contributions began to look at the Saakashvili government and the Georgian people as too impetuous to be allowed into the circles of the international community – fearing that some rash act of Georgia would cause an armed conflict with Russia.

The sober reality for the Georgian people was that although the international community could sympathize with Georgia and its democratic aspirations, it was not ready to provide defensive aid to Georgia. Consequently, Georgia must act around the edges of international relations to try to rebuild the trust of the international community. It is unclear to this day if the invasion of Tskhinvali by the Georgian military was under the advice of the civilian government, or whether the hubris and rashness of that young over-confident government simply misunderstood the civil-military aspects of the country. Clearly, preplanning for what for years had been a predicted invasion – or at least a serious provocation by Russia – fell by the wayside when the event actually occurred.

Perhaps because of increased Russian ‘provocations’, the NSC became much more active in 2008 than in previous years. After Saakashvili resigned on 8 November 2007 to prepare for the snap presidential election in January 2008, the NSC convened on a weekly basis chaired by the speaker of Parliament, Nino Burjnadze. Immediately after Saakashvili was sworn in as President in late January 2008, he instructed the NSC to become a coordinating platform for the entire defense and intelligence community of the country. Consequently, the NSC met about twice a month in the lead-up to the war, including a meeting on August 7 that the President convened at 13:00 in his residence in Tserovani.

During the short war, the NSC was convened several times in a wider format, with the participation of senior lawmakers. The meetings were held mainly at the NSC offices in Tbilisi, but meetings were also held at various locations, mostly at the NSC office, less often at the President’s administration in Avlabari, at the President’s residence at Shavnabada and once in Tserovani. Usually the attendees were, the President as the head of the Council, the Prime Minister, Ministers of foreign affairs, interior, justice, finance, defense, sometimes joined by some senior lawmakers and the mayor of Tbilisi. Secretary Lomaia personally toured the battlefield during the war²⁴⁹ because there was no “war room” in the government from which information from the battlefield could be collected, analyzed, and orders issued. Because the NSC was a policy coordination agency, it did not deal with ongoing classified information. That was the job of the Foreign

²⁴⁸ Steven Lee Myers, “White House Unveils \$1 Billion Georgia Aid Plan”, New York Times, 3 September 2008, www.nytimes.com/2008/09/04/world/europe/04cheney.html?mcubz=3

²⁴⁹ Jonathan Littell, “Carnet de route en Géorgie,” (in French), Le Monde.fr, 10/3/2008, http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2008/10/03/carnet-de-route-en-georgie-par-jonathan-littell_1102090_3214.html

Intelligence Service. Furthermore, there was no command/situation center, although there had been plans underway to set up one in Avlabari and at the Ministry of Defense.

Before the war, Saakashvili was in constant contact with international leaders including those from Russia. For instance, he met with deputy Prime Minister of Russia Sergei Ivanov on the sidelines of the Munich conference in February 2008 and had phone conversations with the newly elected Russian president Medvedev in March 2008. The last time that Saakashvili met with Medvedev was in May 2008 in St. Petersburg on the sidelines of the CIS summit. Saakashvili debriefed the NSC after this meeting, and said that when he was trying to assure that Russia would respect Georgia's territorial integrity, Medvedev pointed his finger to the map of Georgia that Saakashvili brought with him in his attempt to explain where exactly the Russian troops were infiltrating in Abkhazia: "We recognize only one subject of international law on the territory of Georgia and its center is located here in Tbilisi", Medvedev said while pressing his finger on Kutaisi, 200 km to the west of Tbilisi.²⁵⁰

A National Security Council should have the responsibility to provide analyses of the world situation to the national leadership. In Georgia that responsibility was not clearly defined. The Foreign Intelligence service was responsible for providing intelligence information to the leadership and the Ministry of Defense is responsible for providing military estimates of enemy intentions and capabilities. From personal observations and discussions with Georgian military attaches and ambassadors, it is doubtful if these roles are perceived or performed. Consequently, the NSC's role in peacetime was unclear and its role in wartime was even less clear. Because the NSC does not have responsibility for 'managing' a crisis, such as war – that role is retained by the Ministry of Internal Affairs– it had no pre-war planning for wartime operations.²⁵¹ Likewise, there was no central crisis management facility established, nor any drills or rehearsals to exercise the time-sensitive decision-making process during crises. As a result, during the Russian-Georgian war, the NSC played no significant role. Its members – the various Ministers – scattered to whatever vantage point they thought appropriate. Communications were usually by unsecured cell phones²⁵²

NATO and the National Security Review Process²⁵³

The North Atlantic Cooperation Council was established by the NATO Allies on 20 December 1991 "to develop further the process of regular diplomatic liaison and to build

²⁵⁰ Private correspondence from a former Georgian Government Official, 24 April 2015.

²⁵¹ One former Minister of Defense said that "planning" in Georgia was when Ministries simply wrote down what they were doing, not what they planned to do.

²⁵² One commander told the author that while on the battlefield engaging Russian forces his cell phone rang. He answered and someone asked 'what's the situation?' When the officer demanded to know who was asking, it turned out to be Mikhail Saakashvili himself!

²⁵³ "Georgia's National Security Review Process", *Georgia Today Politics*, Issue #453, Tbilisi, Georgia 3 April 2009; "A National Security Review for Georgia," 24 Saati Online, Tbilisi, Georgia 4 August 2009; "Georgia's National Security Review Process." *Georgia Today Politics*, Issue #453, Tbilisi, Georgia, 4 April 2009

genuine partnership among the North Atlantic Alliance and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.”²⁵⁴ Georgia joined the NACC in 1992 and was the first Caucasus country to join the NATO Partnership for Peace Program on 3 March 1994. The Partnership for Peace (PfP) Program is

- A U.S. initiative, Partnership for Peace (PfP) was launched by the January 1994 NATO summit to establish strong links between NATO, its new democratic partners in the former Soviet bloc, and some of Europe's traditionally neutral countries to enhance European security.
- It provides a framework for enhanced political and military cooperation for joint multilateral crisis management activities, such as humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping.
- It enables PfP members to consult with NATO when faced with a direct threat to its security but does not extend NATO security guarantees. Participation in PfP does not guarantee entry into NATO, but it is the best preparation for states interested in becoming NATO members.

One part of the PfP process is a commitment by the Partnership nations to take steps toward free and democratic processes and military interoperability with NATO forces. Each country negotiates and signs an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO Headquarters. The IPAP is monitored by the NATO Force Planning Division through annual visits to the partnership country. For 2008, Georgia's IPAP visit was scheduled for September, but the war with Georgia rearranged the schedule. Instead of the regular IPAP evaluation visit, a NATO Force Development team of two visited Georgia to assess the damage caused by the Russia-Georgia War and to determine NATO's next steps. The team, accompanied by representatives from several of the NATO countries accredited to Georgia, visited the damaged First Infantry Brigade base in Gori and the damaged Georgia Air Force Base in Marneuli. After assessing the damage, the team returned to Tbilisi where it prepared to give an 'out brief' to the international diplomatic corps on the team's findings. Before the diplomats arrived, this author and the team discussed the next steps. Georgia's Ministry of Defense had completed a well-received Strategic Defense Review, but the damage caused by the Russian invasion had yet to be assessed and quantified. Moreover, Georgia had prepared for previous IPAP assessment visits with various reports and statistics. While these reports were accepted by NATO, there was a nagging concern that the reports did not fully disclose the status of all Georgian armed troops – especially the interior forces that remained under the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The team discussed setting a new requirement for a complete assessment of the current military structure and requiring that the report include all armed units of both the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Stating the requirement was easy – the real question was what to call it and how to define it. This author suggested using the

²⁵⁴ North Atlantic Cooperation Council Statement on Dialogue, Partnership and Cooperation, Press Release M-NACC-1(91) 111, Issued 20 December 1991, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_23841.htm?selectedLocale=en, accessed 17 April 2015.

term “National Security Review” that would encompass the entirety of security threats to Georgia. That name was accepted and when the diplomatic community representatives entered the conference room, they were given the known facts about the damage to Georgia’s military from the war and were told that Georgia would be required to develop and present to NATO a National Security Review.

There were no details provided to Georgia regarding a National Security Review, and no other NATO country had been required to complete such a broad ‘whole of government’ assessment. Because the bulk of the assessment would lie with the Ministry of Defense, it was assumed by the Georgian government that it would be the lead agency in the process, especially because it had the planning expertise from completing Georgia’s first Strategic Defense Review. American advisors on the Cubic Georgia Defense Reform Program team²⁵⁵ immediately recommended that an agency be set up to coordinate a whole of government process, and on 16 October 2008, less than a month after the NATO Force Planning Team visit, President Saakashvili designated the National Security Council as the base for a permanent coordinating interagency committee to coordinate implementing strategic documents of national security²⁵⁶. The interagency committee was charged with implementation of appropriate proposals on reform of the national security system and state policy; implementation / update appropriate proposals and submission of recommendations regarding such conceptual defense planning strategic documents as: The concept of national security of Georgia; assessment of threats against Georgia; the other national military strategic and national security documents; and coordination of interagency activities to facilitate the appropriate events during defense and national security reforms.

In a 7 January 2009 memorandum to the First Deputy Minister of Defense, the Cubic Defense Reform Team noted that a National Security Review (NSR), as distinguished from a Strategic Defense Review (SDR), should address all aspects of the nation’s security and should assign responsibilities to agencies other than Defense and Internal Affairs:

“A National Security Review, as distinguished from the SDR, should encompass all elements of the security sector in order to comprehensively define the national security needs of Georgia. ...

National security planning begins with the development of a National Threat Assessment through an inter-agency process that attempts to define all threats to the national values and interests, not just military threats. The national values and interests are defined by the national government (and currently identified in the National Security Concept) and threats to these

²⁵⁵ Cubic Defense Applications, Inc. was contracted by the United States Department of Defense’s Defense Security Cooperation Agency in 2003 to provide defense reform advice to the Georgian Ministry of Defense and to train battalions in the Georgian Army. The training mission ended in 2006, but Cubic developed a computer supported battle simulation center and developed a Command and General Staff College for senior Georgian officers. The Cubic contract still exists as of this writing.

²⁵⁶ Presidential Decree No. 500, 16 October 2008

values and interests encompass military, political, economic and diplomatic threats to virtually every aspect of the nation: social security, energy security, financial security, economic security, and so on. After threats are identified through the inter-agency process, the National Security Council develops a National Security Concept to counter the threats.”²⁵⁷

The National Security Review process began with deputy ministers from most ministries and agencies in the Georgian government with an intensive program of defining the critical interests in each of their areas of responsibility, the threats or challenges to those interests and the means to defend or protect them. It was the responsibility of the NSC to review the agency plans, determine their feasibility and to allocate resources to implement those plans while assessing and accepting the risks of the inevitable lack of resources to accomplish every plan.²⁵⁸

Elections

One of the key indicators of a ‘liberal democracy’ according to Larry Diamond²⁵⁹ is the ability of peoples to have a significant say in their future. Without free elections, the people don’t control the future – only the government does. Elections were held in Georgia at least from its existence as a free state in the Democratic Republic of Georgia, 1918-1921. Elections were also held during Soviet times, but they were never determined to be ‘free’, but instead always supported the sitting leaders’ decisions and policies. Even when Georgia declared its independence on 9 April 1991 and subsequently elected Zviad Gamsaxurdia as President. His election in a moment of national euphoria over independence was predictable. Elections results under Shevardnadze were accepted, but the final Shevardnadze period election of November 2003 was widely believed to have been ‘rigged,²⁶⁰’ which led directly to the Rose Revolution. Saakashvili’s first election in 2004 was likely to have been relatively ‘free’, but it was held in the euphoria of revolution – again, a predictable result, so little need to control the voting. But as Saakashvili noted, one’s political capital is greatest after winning an election and it begins to decline as it is spent in making tough, often unpopular, decisions while in office. Therefore, did ‘liberal democracy’ really come to Georgia? The seed had been planted at least as early as 1918, but when did it blossom and what was the role of the National Security Council in that blossoming?

By 2007, Saakashvili’s political capital was in danger of being exhausted. Many praised him for the reduction in corruption and the tremendous infrastructure improvements that he had fathered, but many criticized Saakashvili’s authoritarian tendencies at ‘cronyism’ and often strong-armed actions in allowing his family and friends to prosper from

²⁵⁷ From the author’s personal files. The memorandum was prepared by this author.

²⁵⁸ Interview with NSC official, 23 May 2014.

²⁵⁹ Diamond, “Elections without Democracy: Thinking about hybrid regimes.” *Journal of Democracy* Volume 13, Number 2 April 2007.

²⁶⁰ The joke is that after the election results were tabulated, an aide congratulated Shevardnadze on winning the election; “the good news is that you won the election, that bad news is that nobody voted for you.”

Georgia's progress. Serious demonstrations began in Tbilisi in 2007. Troops, officially from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA), used what opponents described as excessive force to quell these demonstrations in November 2007. Probably to avert giving time for a growing opposition, Saakashvili called for snap elections in January 2008. Once again, Nino Burjanadze became the interim President, allowing Saakashvili to resign and run for the office of President again. The strategy worked. The opposition did not have sufficient time to form a united front against Saakashvili's United National Movement, and Saakashvili won with more than approximately 53% of the vote.

In order to assure that the political process was open and free from corruption, the President established an "Interagency Task Force (IATF) for free and fair elections. The IATF operated under the Ministry of Justice, but the NSC Secretary was secretary of the Task Force and the NSC was the "back office" and engine for the elections – while the 'face' was the Ministry of Justice. The IATF was first set up for the snap Presidential election called for January 2008 and in the subsequent Parliamentary elections later that Spring. The IATF was looked to as a reliable source for reacting and responding to opposition grievances on election issues. The flower of a liberal democracy was opening and by 2012 the democratic election process appeared to be in full bloom!

NSC Operations from 2009 to 2013

Secretary of the National Security Council, Alexander "Khaka" Lomaia was among the first to bring stakeholders to the table. He decentralized policy coordination and made sure that NSC deliberations were based on political recommendations, not on operations. The work of the NSC was done through the Deputy Ministers – through informal contacts on a collegial basis. The staff would gather facts and create a narrative for discussion and recommendations. All NSC meetings were called by the President – and he attended all NSC meetings. Saakashvili took tough stands at meetings; he was very clear in making decisions, but he did not come to meetings with a decision already made – he listened to debates²⁶¹ During the tenure of Lomaia and his successor, Ekaterina Tkeshelshvili, the NSC was mainly involved in coordinating the government's external communications with the International community, and specifically not on internal issues. The NSC was the primary political coordinator with Georgia's lobbyists in the U.S. and elsewhere. The NSC did not interact with the media or TV – other ministries did that. The NSC Mission was to have the Georgian government speak with one voice. Unfortunately, as a small country Georgia was always reactive – it simply didn't have the power to be proactive.²⁶²

During 2011-2012, the NSC played a major role in the national security planning process²⁶³. With respect to the National Security Review – the NSC Staff worked with the coordinating Commission of DEPMINs, with Civil Society and with the Parliamentary

²⁶¹ Interview with former NSC official, 28 May 2014.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Interview with NSC official, 18 November 2014.

Group of Confidence. The NSC was responsible for completing the Strategic Defense Review (SDR) and a new National Security Concept²⁶⁴

After the War with Russia, it was obvious that Georgia had to amend its National Security Concept. Until the war, Russia was not listed as major threat to Georgian security – the government was always wary of Russia but didn't think that it was a major threat. After war, the NSC was roundly criticized for not amending the National Security Concept. But there was external pressure not to change, 'friends' including NATO tried to talk Georgia out of changing the National Security Concept in a way that would antagonize Russia and reduce the opportunities for a normalized relation between the two countries. But it had become clear that Georgia needed to prepare for the worst.²⁶⁵

Working through the "Deputies Committee" and interagency working groups, the NSC crafted a new National Security Concept that was ratified by Parliament in 2011. The Georgia-Russian war of August 2008 revealed many gaps in the Georgian Armed Forces (GAF) military capabilities. Regardless of who started the conflict -- and that will be debated for years in the capitals of Europe -- the truth is that the Georgian military was not prepared to do battle with Russia. That is not to say, as most in Georgia readily admit, that Georgia can defeat a determined invasion by Russia – the Russian forces, although not very impressive in the short 2008 conflict, have enough assets to crush any Georgian attempt at victory. On the other hand, Georgia does have the possibility of making an invasion by Russia so painful that it would not be worth the Russian attempt. In order to achieve that goal – to deter or delay Russian forces – Georgia had to revise the basic political military and political assumptions under which it had planned its strategy prior to August 2008.

Georgia had completed its first Strategic Defense Review (SDR) in November 2007. It was a painful process that severely tested the nascent skills of the Georgian Joint Staff and Ministry of Defense (MOD). Officials had clearly missed many elements that might have been addressed in a more mature security system. But despite its shortcomings, the SDR process educated the Joint Staff and MOD officials to the basic considerations of national security concepts. The SDR concentrated on military planning and military threats to Georgia. The National Security Review (NSR) to the contrary was a 'national' security review that was created to encompass all ministries and agencies of the Georgian national government because the threats to Georgian national security are much broader than simply the direct or indirect pressures brought by Russia against Georgia. The Russian threat may remain the most serious issue in the minds of nearly every Georgian citizen, but Georgians must recognize that there are greater threats – some of which are threats simply because they can facilitate the Russian threat itself, such as loss of U.S. support to Georgia. Geography assures that Georgia's major

²⁶⁴ Interview with former NSC official, 10 June 2014.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

challenge remains Russia, but Georgia cannot take its eyes off other threats in pursuing a National Security Concept.

The 2011 document is formatted similarly to the 2005 Concept, but the definition of threats and challenges is substantially different. In defining the security environment in which Georgia is placed, the 'invasion' of Georgia by Russia in August 2008 is highlighted, and Georgia places the continuing threat to Georgian and Caucasus security squarely on Russia:

A Swedish Army assessment of Defense Reform in Georgia observed that the new National Security Concept contains both internal and external weaknesses because it contains "too much political messaging that overpowers strategic analysis of Georgia's National Security and "it also contains many weaknesses, including disregard of important risks, misunderstanding of threats and generation of unrealistic expectations, which leads to overlooking real obstacles and creation of unnecessary friction with other states." However, a major strength of the Concept is "the recognition that security is not only about military and diplomatic affairs but also about the wider context of economic development and interdependence, energy vulnerability, and modes of domestic governance."²⁶⁶

Similar to the 2005 National Security Concept, the national values of Georgia are defined as sovereignty and territorial integrity, Freedom, Democracy and rule of law, Security, Prosperity and Peace, while its national interests are expanded to include: Ensuring sovereignty and territorial integrity; developing state institutions and strengthening democracy; Development of an efficient national security system; Strengthening national unity and civil consent; European and Euro-Atlantic integration; securing stable long-term economic growth; ensuring energy security; ensuring regional stability; Strengthening the transit role of Georgia; ensuring the environmental security of Georgia and the region; ensuring civil integration and maintaining national and cultural uniqueness; strengthening cyber security; demographic security; and relations with the diaspora.

The Threats to Georgia begin, naturally, with Russia, and included:

- Occupation of Georgian territories by the Russian Federation and terrorist acts organized by the Russian Federation from the occupied territories: increased Russian military presence within 25 miles of the Georgian capital of Tbilisi.
- The risk of renewed military aggression from Russia: with the intent to changing Georgia's foreign policy (stopping the movement toward the West) and violently overthrowing the democratically elected government of Georgia.

²⁶⁶ S. Neil McFarlane, "Georgia: National Security Concept versus National Security" Chatham House (in association with Center for Social Sciences, Tbilisi), London, 2012, P.2.

- Violation of the rights of internally displaced persons and refugees from the occupied territories: ethnic cleansing and displacement of approximately 500,000 persons.
- Conflicts in the Caucasus: spillover of conflicts and presence of ungoverned areas of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.
- International terrorism and transnational organized crime: providing a haven for non-state actors.
- Economic and social challenges: low rate of economic growth.
- Energy challenges: maintaining energy independence.
- Cyber threats: Russian cyber-attacks during the 2008 war.
- Environmental challenges: degradation of the environment by Russia to prepare for the Sochi Olympics.
- Demographic challenges: resettlement of Russian citizens in the occupied territories
- Challenges to civic integration: all citizens should learn the Georgian language.
- Destruction or damage of cultural heritage monuments: in the occupied territories.

Georgia's priorities for National Security Policy is more nuanced than the earlier National Security Concept and include: Ending the occupation of Georgia's territories, the reintegration of people living in these territories, and the restoration of Georgian sovereignty on the whole territory of the country are the most important priorities of the country's national security policy.

“The Government of Georgia is determined to take timely and effective steps toward the de-occupation of Georgian territories through peaceful means, based on the principles of international law. Georgia remains committed to the non-use of force obligations undertaken under the Russian-Georgian Ceasefire Agreement of August 12, 2008.”

The Saakashvili NSC in Summary

In many ways, especially in its early years, the Saakashvili NSC was similar to the NSC under Shevardnadze. The NSC could allocate funds to a ministry, recommend appointment of personnel, send directions and monitor performance. The NSC remained as a breeding ground for possible next ministers. If Shevardnadze had a problem with a minister, he would put an opponent as head of the NSC department that monitored that Ministry – which put pressure on the Ministry (they worried about their jobs

Under Saakashvili the NSC 'controlled' Ministries the same as under Shevardnadze, and it was a pre-ministerial training ground, where NSC department heads could (and did)

become ministers²⁶⁷ The difference was the while the Shevardnadze NSC followed a rigid format and meeting schedule, under Saakashvili there was only one political team, so the formal “NSC” didn’t need to meet except 2-3 times a year. The team met informally all the time (often at 02:00), so it was not necessary to hold formal meetings to reach decisions.²⁶⁸ Saakashvili would often ‘fast track’ decisions on his own initiative. The NSC didn’t produce ‘legal’ documents so they are not in the archives, but the staff produced lots of reports and papers for Saakashvili and for discussion. The NSC was not rigid, there were evolving functions – in decision making every Minister had large authority and had the right to call Saakashvili directly – but if Saakashvili needed something immediately, he went to the NSC²⁶⁹

Internal national security issues were focused on Abkhazia and South Ossetia, monitoring political systems, solving election grievances and reacting to other domestic crises. With regard to external issues, the NSC staff worked on the National Security Strategy, the National Security Review (Georgia’s first real interagency planning effort), and it designed documents, e.g. sanctions on Iran to follow the U.S. sanctions lead. The NSC’s job was to coordinate foreign policy, to formalize decisions made at the informal meetings, and to designate a lead agency to implement the decisions. The NSC had two separate goals: deal with internal discussions and formulate decisions for public and international consumption. Money for public relations consultants and lobbyists was paid through the NSC and the NSC’s role was to develop a proactive agenda, to calibrate external messages, and define the external perception of the position of Georgia.²⁷⁰

Civil-Military Relations and the National Security Council under Saakashvili

The Georgia-Russia war revealed many gaps in the relationship between civilians and the military in Georgia. While plans had been developed to meet the contingency of a military conflict with Russia, those plans were abandoned with the first shot of the war. Civilian authority was poorly exercised – Deputy Ministers of Defense, who had no military background, took to the battlefield and began issuing orders to military units. There was no centralized structure to collect information from the battlefield and to disseminate coordinated orders to the Georgian forces. Russian performance was hardly better, but Russia had overwhelming force at its disposal.

Georgia’s defeat in the Georgia-Russian war was a blow to the pride and morale of the Georgian Armed Forces. The Minister of Defense resigned and many senior officers were relieved of their positions or were sidelined. The disorganized defense of the military

²⁶⁷ Idem.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Interview with former Georgian government security officer, 24 July 2014.

²⁷⁰ Interview with former Georgian official, 23 July 2014.

forces led many to conclude that something had to be done to restore (or develop) military capability.

In 2009, there was a move to assess the professionalism of Georgian military officers. The MOD designed a written test to assess an officer's basic knowledge of the military. Testing included all members of the Joint Staff. Only one-third of the officers tested were able to pass the simple test of basic military knowledge. Of the two-thirds who failed the test, one-half were considered for dismissal from the Army, and the other half were considered to be educable. The mass dismissal didn't happen. Military service was considered to be simply 'a job', and too many depended on their salaries to survive. Civil-military relationships did not improve, and if anything, took a backward step as unqualified civilian leaders in the Ministry of Defense ignored – probably rightfully – the military "professionalism" of its soldiers and usurped the military's duties in time of crisis.

Apart from the war, Georgia continued its painfully slow progress toward liberal democracy, and If free and open elections are a hallmark of a liberal democracy, the overwhelming victory of the Georgian Dream coalition, led by ex-patriate billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili, in the parliamentary elections of October 2012 were proof that the concept could work in Georgia. But as we shall see, the Georgian Dream faced its own challenges. Ivanishvili, although an authoritarian, has not proved to be either a Shevardnadze who panted over the corruption of his subordinates, nor a Saakashvili who impatiently dragged his country into progress and the future.

Enter the Georgian Dream coalition: The Parliamentary Election of 2012 and The Great Divide between Ivanishvili and Margvelashvili

The parliamentary election of 2012 was a watershed in Georgian Politics. Even though the Saakashvili administration had many critics, it was widely assumed that his party, the United National Movement (UNM), would retain its majority in the Parliament. Amendments to the Georgian Constitution had been passed by Parliament on 15 October 2010 with the intent of creating a Parliamentary form of government in which most power lay with the Prime Minister²⁷¹. Cynics claimed that these changes were made so that no matter who became President, Saakashvili would be named Prime Minister, ala the Putin-Medvedev switch of roles, and he would continue to rule for at least another five years.

During the election campaign, however, a new figure emerged – Bidzina Ivanishvili – a Georgian businessman who had moved to Russia in 1982 to study and who remained to amass a huge fortune. In April 2012, Ivanishvili announced his intention to enter Georgian politics and he formed the Georgian Dream coalition of parties to oppose Saakashvili's United National Movement. In a bitterly contested campaign, the Saakashvili government

²⁷¹ Civil Georgia, 15 October 2010, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=22757>, accessed 4/18/2015

tried several ways to bar Ivanishvili from participating in the election, including imposing massive monetary fines for alleged campaign violations and removing Ivanishvili's Georgian citizenship. Because of international disapprobation of Saakashvili's methods and because the Georgian legal and political system had achieved an acceptable level of democratic processes, Saakashvili's methods failed and on 1 October 2012 the Georgian Dream coalition won an upset victory with almost 55% of the vote. On 25 October 2012, the Georgian Parliament, firmly controlled by the winning Georgian Dream coalition, confirmed Ivanishvili as Georgia's Prime minister.²⁷² Notably, this was the first peaceful transition of national power through a reasonably free and fair democratic popular election in Georgia since its independence.

The 2012 election demonstrated what appeared to be a free and open election process that is inherent in liberal democracies, and despite the continued challenges in dealing with Russia, it appears that the net result of the 2012 election was that Georgia traded one authoritarian leader – Saakashvili – for another, Ivanishvili. As head of the winning political party, Ivanishvili served as Prime Minister only from 25 October 2012 to 20 November 2013, when he retired to his villa overlooking Tbilisi. It is the common perception, however, that he never left politics and continues to influence – if not direct – Georgian politics as its “Grey Cardinal.”²⁷³

In the realm of national security planning, the Ivanishvili/Margvelashvili period began with much confusion, apparent animosity and mixed messages to the Georgian people and to the international community. As would be expected in a liberal democracy, those elements of confusion were worked out in an orderly, if somewhat confused manner, so that the current result is that one council – a National Security Council – under the Prime Minister, as head of the government, is responsible to plan for the nation's security.

Under Ivanishvili, the parliament changed the instruments of national security decision-making by creating a new national security organ – the State Security and Crisis Management Council (SSCMC) that would function under the Prime Minister: the impetus for this change appears to have been the great divide because of the animosity that developed between President Saakashvili and the head of the Georgian Dream coalition, Bedzina Ivanishvili. The period between the Parliamentary elections of 2012 and the Presidential election of 2013, should have been a harmonious transition period, especially because the country was in the process of changing from a Presidential system to a Parliamentary system. But the intense hostility between Saakashvili, who tried several questionable maneuvers to prevent Ivanishvili from participating in the election created an unworkable transition period in which many laws and structures that needed to be

²⁷² Civil Georgia, Ivanishvili Confirmed as Prime Minister, 25 October 2012, <http://civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=25389>, accessed 18 April 2015.

²⁷³ Lomsadze, Giorgi (13 November 2014). *"Georgia: Political Crisis Prompts Speculation About Ivanishvili's Political Role"*. eurasianet.org. [Open Society Institute](http://OpenSocietyInstitute.org).

harmonized were left in place. After George Margvelashvili, won the Presidential election, Ivanishvili appointed a new Prime Minister, Irakli Garibashvili. The new State Security and Crisis Management Council closely mirrored the existing National Security Council, except that it reported to the Prime Minister. While the new law intended to establish a disaster management organ, the members of the new Council, effective 1 January 2014, included government positions that were also named to the existing National Security Council:

- Prime Minister - Chairman
- Minister of Finance - Member.
- Ministry of Internal Affairs - Member.
- Minister of Defence - Member.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Member.
- First Assistant to the Minister of State for Security Affairs - Secretary

Its duties included “Implement security in the field, assessing internal and external threats; review domestic and foreign policy issues that are directly related to state security; organize the field of foreign policy and security strategy.”

The two councils appeared to have duplicative purposes but served two different masters. Initially there was confusion over the duties of the two councils, and the Prime Minister refused to attend the President’s National Security Council meetings.²⁷⁴ The main reason for the confusion was that when the Georgian Dream coalition defeated the UNM government, but with Saakashvili remaining as President, there was no coordination of the two sides. The normal process of “co-habitation” during a transition of administrations stopped, as did forward progress and planning on harmonizing the roles of the two top officers as well as harmonizing the laws. Normally the NSC could function as be an effective platform for political transition between UNM and GD.²⁷⁵ But the bitter political rivalry between Saakashvili and Ivanishvili prevented this type of cooperation. Partisan politics trumped the state’s need for clearly defined security planning.

The changes in the Constitution that increased the power of the Prime Minister at the expense of the power of the President failed to clearly define the separate roles of each official and this lack of clarity created inherent tension between the President and the Prime Minister. Each thought that his role – the President as the head of the country and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and the Prime Minister as the head of the government -- warranted its own NSC, so the Security and Crisis Management Council was formed under the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister’s council operated more in the Soviet model of an operational NSC – controlling all agencies, budgets, personnel appointments, etc. The government exhibited a serious lack of coordination, as the Security and Crisis Management Council began to parcel out work to separate Ministries without coordinating with the NSC.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ Government of Georgia Resolution № 38, 6 January 2014,

²⁷⁵ Interview with former Secretary, National Security Council,

²⁷⁶ Letter to author from Georgia NSC Department Head

Georgian researcher Tornike Shurgulaya, in an interview reported:

“As the National Security Council, under Article 99 of the Constitution is intended to be a consultative body, but recent developments to restrict the constitutional rights of the Security Council are quite inefficient. From October 2012 to June 2013, the National Security Council did not hold a single meeting.”²⁷⁷

The law of Georgia on the Georgian Government Structure, Powers, and Rules of Operation was amended on 13 February 2014, to create the second national security body, explaining that:

“A new government administration was formed under the authority of Prime Minister to provide organizational support to the Government; prepare analytical, informational, and other materials, and also exercise control over implementation of the government’s decisions.”²⁷⁸

President George Margvelashvili at a press conference, said of the Security Council's creation of a constitutional amendment.

“I want to thank you again for taking into account my **vision** on expanding the composition of the National Security Council of Georgia. From now on, the Parliament is directly involved in the work of this constitutional body; the council institutionally ensures the President’s working relations with both the Government and the Parliament. . . . I deem it important to discuss the process of implementation of the substantial package with NATO within the format of the National Security Council, because the successful implementation of this package will increase the country’s defence capabilities, its interoperability with NATO and will speed up the process of NATO membership. . . .”²⁷⁹

President Giorgi Margvelashvili presided over a session of the National Security Council (NSC) on 1 August, which was convened to discuss Georgia’s preparation for the NATO summit in Wales in September. PM Irakli Garibashvili did not attend the meeting . . . President Margvelashvili said after the NSC meeting: “I would have been glad if he had attended.”²⁸⁰

Relations between the President and Ivanishvili began to deteriorate soon after Margvelashvili’s landslide election victory over the UNM. Allegedly the rift developed

²⁷⁷ Tornike Shurgulaya interview 13 May 2013 “The National Security Strategy of the Western experience in formulating and Georgian reality,” George Gogashvili reporting, Monday, 13 September 2010, Civil.Ge

²⁷⁸ The President of Georgia Decree N2355-IIS, 2 May 2014, Georgian Legislature “Matsne” N3, 13.02.2004, Article 7.

²⁷⁹ Text of President Margvelashvili Address to the Parliament, (*Unofficial translation*), 14 November 2014, Kutaisi Georgia, Civil Georgia, Tbilisi / 14 November 2014.

because Ivanishvili felt the the President was not a “strong” enough leader,²⁸¹ and likely not obedient enough to Ivanishvili’s wishes.

The ruling Georgian Dream government saw no difficulty in the President maintaining an advisory body, while the executive authority of the Prime Minister maintained a similar institution. “I do not see any difficulty here in that on the one hand, to maintain a constitutional advisory body to the President, on the other hand, the prime minister under his authority in the executive branch to organize his advice in a convenient form.” said the President.”²⁸²

“President Giorgi Margvelashvili met on 19 August with several GD and UNM lawmakers, legal experts and political pundits, as well as some Tbilisi-based western diplomats to discuss role of the National Security Council (NSC). The role of the NSC ... was sidelined by the security and crisis management council, which ... is chaired by the Prime Minister.”²⁸³

Finally, in March 2015, a compromise was reached to address and coordinate the two security councils but the law on the Coordination of the National Security Policy of Georgia²⁸⁴ raised a couple of concerns. Military ranks are given by the Prime Minister instead of according to a process set up and conducted by the defense forces, as in western armies. This is likely in response to pay issues where civilians working for the Council are given military or military-equivalent ranks for pay and prerogative purposes. Also, the Law recognizes an internal security role that could be fulfilled by Ministry of Internal Affairs para-military forces – a concept sceptically received by NATO.²⁸⁵

The State Security and Crisis Management Council was abolished in December 2017 and its functions merged with the Emergency Situation Management Service under the Prime Minister. The National Security Council, no longer functioned and instead, the newly adopted constitution establishes a National Defense Council, which will function only during periods of martial law to coordinate the work of the constitutional bodies, and will consist of the President, the Prime Minister, Parliamentary Chairman and the Head of the Armed Forces of Georgia.

“President Salome Zourabichvili’s inauguration on December 16,2018, marked entry into force of the new constitution, which completes the country’s evolution from semi-presidential to parliamentary system of governance. Under the new constitution, the National Security Council, which “organizes the military development and defense of the country” and was led by the President under the previous constitution, will no longer exist.”²⁸⁶

²⁸¹ Ex-PM Ivanishvili 'Disappointed' in Margvelashvili, Civil Georgia, Tbilisi, 18 March 2014

²⁸² National Security Council Discusses Abkhazia, Civil Georgia, Tbilisi, 28 October 2014

²⁸³ President Tries to Put Sidelined NSC Back in Spotlight, Civil.ge 19 August 2014

²⁸⁴ 4 March 2015, N3126-IIS, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2764463> (Accessed 15 April 2015)

²⁸⁵ From the author’s personal experiences working with Georgia’s NATO individual Partnership Action Plan and with the NATO Force Development Division.

²⁸⁶ <https://civil.ge/archives/271293>

In April 2019, the law on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination was further amended to create a new National Security Council of Georgia under the Prime Minister. The new NSC held its inaugural session on May 1, 2019, chaired by the Prime Minister, Bakhtadze. The new National Security Council was established four months after the former President-led National Security Council ceased functioning following entry into force of the new constitution.²⁸⁷

The new NSC statute provides that one of the members of the NSC will be named as its Secretary, and therefore the advisor to the Prime Minister on security matters. The weakness in this procedure is that one Minister will have two roles – one as the head of a ministry and the other as a planner of responses to national crisis situations. If, as recently, the Minister of Defense is the Secretary of the NSC, when does he put on his NSC hat and assess near and long-term threats to the nation, and when does he change hats to develop counters to those threats. This is an awkward transition that didn't exist in the previous statutes. The Secretary of the NSC was supposed to be a national security expert who focused his time on developing recommendations for the government to deal with internal and external security threats to the nation.

A summary of Civil-Military Relations under Saakashvili and Ivanishvili

Under Saakashvili, turmoil had continued in civil-military relations, likely because Saakashvili feared an uprising of the Georgian Armed Forces. For example, from 2005 to 2012, the Saakashvili appointed five different Ministers of Defense and five different Chiefs of the Joint Staff. Such constant change occurred not only because Saakashvili was impatient for progress and change, but likely also to keep any one Defense Minister or Chief of the Joint Staff from gaining enough power to challenge the government. Continued difficulties in civil-military relations were demonstrated when in May 2009, newspapers reported that the government had foiled an attempted coup d'état at a military base near Tbilisi:

“Georgia said it had quelled a mutiny at an army base on Tuesday, claiming it was part of a Kremlin-orchestrated plot to disrupt NATO military exercises beginning in the country on Wednesday. Mikheil Saakashvili, the president, said national security was at stake before rushing to the Mukhrovani tank base 19km outside Tbilisi, the capital, to negotiate with the rebels. Earlier about 30 tanks and armoured personnel carriers entered the base.”²⁸⁸

Although Saakashvili claimed to have personally defused the 'rebellion', opposition leaders claimed the no mutiny existed and that the President conjured the rebellion to take credit for confronting Russia and to take the focus off public discontent over Saakashvili's increasingly authoritarian policies.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ New Security Council Convenes Inaugural Session 5 January 2019. <https://civil.ge/archives/218898>

²⁸⁸ Isabel Gorst (from Moscow), “Georgia ends mutiny at army base,” Financial Times, 5 May 2009

²⁸⁹ Tom Parfitt (from Moscow), “Georgia says it foiled 'Russian-backed' mutiny aimed at NATO exercises,” The Guardian, 5 May 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/may/05/georgia-military-revolt>

With respect to the Georgian Defense Forces, military professionalism improved considerably with the stabilization of senior leader assignments. Pay improved as did discipline. The defense forces were firmly subordinate to the country's civilian political leaders and those civilian leaders seemed to recognize the military's area of competence. As mentioned above, foreign advisors helped create a Command and General Staff education program for senior (Major and Lieutenant-Colonel) Georgian officers.²⁹⁰

After the Victory of Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream in the parliamentary elections, and later on, inauguration of Margvelashvili as a new president, civil-military relations in Georgia appeared to stabilize, if not improve. In a continuing effort to impress the NATO allies, Georgia provided forces to the stabilization and counterterrorism efforts in Afghanistan, and to a new European Union peacekeeping training operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While these missions, certainly in Afghanistan, exposed the participating Georgian units to combat conditions, they were still focused on peacekeeping and not on the major planning and execution matrices involved in sustained contemporary combat operations. Likewise, while NATO allies and the EU demonstrated appreciation of Georgia's military contributions, the possibility of a confrontation with Russia continues to stymie Georgia's progress toward NATO and EU membership.

The National Guard of the Gamsaxurdia days had become a reserve force when the Georgian National Army was created. The Army became better off under Saakashvili. Soldiers' pay became more regular, and deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan added a substantial bonus to each paycheck, but most soldiers pocketed the benefits and quit the service on returning home. There was still only a weak concept of patriotic duty to the nation – serving in the military was only a job – and there was little concept of a profession of arms.

Compulsory military conscription within the Ministry of Defense was temporally halted under Defense Minister Khidasheli²⁹¹, and all soldiers were to become "professional" by signing a written contract. Military leaders in NATO understand that signing a contract doesn't make a soldier a "professional". To achieve the type of professionalism envisioned by Huntington takes a long-term commitment to training and the study of the profession of arms. That type of commitment and training did not take place in the Georgian Armed Forces. Military appointments to command positions were still based on personal relationships, not on demonstrated merit

²⁹⁰ The program was created by the Cubic Georgia Defense Reform Program. From the personal observation of the author and from classified discussions with members of the General Staff.

²⁹¹²⁹¹ In June 2016, minister of defence, Tinatin Khidasheli, signed a decree annulling conscription by the MoD. The decree only applied to the MoD and not to other ministries and state agencies such as the Ministry of Interior, state security and others in charge of the penitentiary system. Her successor revoked the decree in February 2017. Adriana Lins de Albuquerque and Jakob Hedenskog, Georgia: A Defence Sector Reform Assessment, Swedish Armed Forces, Report number FOI-R-4306-SE, Oct 2016, p. 29

Also, since the early days of the army pay had been based on the soldier's position, not on rank. Attempts were made for several years to have Georgia adopt a pay-by-rank system in which all soldiers of the same rank would be paid a similar amount of money.²⁹² The reluctance to modify the pay system was based on the common practice of appointing soldiers to positions based on clan or personal relationships rather than on merit. A lieutenant could be given command of a Brigade – a job normally reserved for a Colonel. Since 2014, the pay system was changed to pay-by-rank so that all soldiers of the same rank receive nearly the same pay. It remains to be seen how that system is working, but if implemented fully, it will be a major step forward for Georgian military forces.

Likewise, even though universal conscription was the law, anyone with money and connections could avoid military service. Many of those unlucky enough not to have either money or connections were consigned to perpetual duties guarding military facilities for the duration of their term of service. In fact at one point, soldiers who were not under contract – hence not 'professional' – were expected to show up for their guard duty only three days a week. This system provided cheap military labor and permitted the Ministry of Defense to save money because a soldier would only be paid while on duty²⁹³.

The hallmark of the Saakashvili period was the rapid turnover of Ministers of Defense and Chiefs of the Joint Staff²⁹⁴. Also, during his administration, Saakashvili fostered a plan of "Total Defense" in which every Georgian citizen would have a personal weapon and would melt into the hills and forests to fight a guerilla war to expel any enemy – of course, Russia. Although advised by his foreign advisors that this was a chimera – guerilla forces need much more coordination than do regular forces in order to be effective – he persisted in his vision.

Cultural issues continue to plague the effectiveness of the Georgian military. Many legacy concepts survive from the 200-year Russian and Soviet occupation of Georgia. Security structures tend to be compartmentalized and based on a rigid hierarchy, with a lack of transparency and emphasis on control vs. initiative, and on quantity vs. quality. Soldiers often refuse to do any task, even though it makes common sense, unless ordered by a superior, because doing something that turns out to be incorrect is subject to criticism while doing nothing is less difficult to defend: "nobody told me to do it." The same mentality mitigates against continuity or progress in the military services. Thus, following Huntington's criteria of dealing with a professional military, the Georgian military – now labeled the Georgian Defense Forces – likely doesn't qualify as professional despite years of assistance from European and American training programs.

²⁹² There would still be inequality of pay because some positions would be entitled to special pay for their position, but generally all soldiers of the same rank would be paid the same.

²⁹³ Private conversations with members of the Joint Staff and from personal observation.

²⁹⁴ Until around 2003, referred to as the Joint Staff because the Georgian Armed Forces were comprised of an Army, a small Air Force and small Navy. The navy's vessels were nearly all sunk in the Russia-Georgian War, and at the conclusion of the war the whole naval force was transferred to the Georgian Coast Guard which had been receiving used vessels from Europe and the USA. In the same vein, the Georgian Air Force carried out only one sortie, on the Java tunnel, before its aircraft were all grounded to keep them from being destroyed by Russian forces. The Air Force was subsequently merged into the Army.

A 2016 assessment of defense sector reform in Georgia by a team from Sweden found problems in the management of both the Georgian military and the Ministry of Defense. Its conclusion was:

“Although the military on average is well regarded by the population, a military career is generally not considered attractive. Even individuals who would like to pursue such a career have problems advancing without personal connections. This means that positions within the GAF have often been criticized for being filled through nepotism rather than merit. In addition, experts reported that military officials who have received valuable international training or education abroad often fail to be incorporated into the system in a manner that allows them to draw on these skills and contribute.”²⁹⁵

Consequently, civil-military relations in Georgia continued to be problematic, although progress appears to be made toward norms established by NATO and more advanced Western nations, such as the United States.

²⁹⁵ Adriana Lins de Albuquerque and Jakob Hedenskog, “Georgia: A Defence Sector Reform Assessment”, Swedish Armed Forces, Report number FOI-R-4306-SE, Oct 2016

Chapter four: National Security Planning with Foreign Assistance

Georgia has not traveled its path toward modernization alone. This chapter examines how foreign well-wishers provided advice and assistance to Georgia from the Shavardnadze period, and particularly through the Saakashvili administration, to help Georgia achieve its goals. This chapter returns to the early period of Georgia's national security planning and the new Constitution that was developed after relative political stability was ushered in after the end of the Civil War. The narrative follows progress made with foreign assistance to the present day, and demonstrates that the Georgian NSC eventually moved toward a Western pattern, although it still did not fully adapt to Western standards..

The civil war of 1992-1993 introduced major changes in the way that Georgia was governed, and consequently in February 1993 President Shevardnadze established a Constitutional Commission, chaired by Member of Parliament, Vakhtang Khmaladze, to write a new constitution. The commission represented a cross section of Georgian politics, but the real work was done by a small drafting committee. Numerous European and American advisors were called on to assist the Commission and by 1994 the Commission had prepared two drafts – one based on a German Parliamentary model and one based on a French Presidential model. A single version, called the “Chicago variant” was endorsed by the prestigious Venice Commission, but it was rejected by Shevardnadze who said that anything resembling a Parliamentary system was “unacceptable” in Georgia's chaotic political landscape. Shevardnadze wanted stronger presidential powers, and so a quickly revised draft was prepared that most closely resembled the American Constitution²⁹⁶. This final draft was approved but Shevardnadze lamented that “the constitution will only have an irrevocable force when its ideas have put down roots in the people

The 1995 Constitution consisted of 109 Articles, and most important for this study is Article 99 of the Constitution that established the National Security Council. This was a step beyond even the U.S. model in which the U.S. NSC is never mentioned in the U.S. Constitution and is in fact an appointive structure of the Executive Office of the President of the United States:

“With a view to organising the military construction and defence of the country, the Council of National Security shall be set up which shall be guided by the President of Georgia.”²⁹⁷

Even though civil-military relations in Georgia appeared to stabilize after the civil war ended, Shevardnadze still could be a victim of disgruntled members of the military and a victim of acts of terrorism.²⁹⁸ When Shevardnadze was on his way to sign the document on 24 September 1995, a bomb in a car parked at the Parliament building was detonated

²⁹⁶ Jones, p. 100

²⁹⁷ THE CONSTITUTION OF GEORGIA, Adopted 24 August 1995, Article 99

²⁹⁸ Quoted in Aves (1996), p.7, citing Swobodnia Gruzii, 19 October 1995.

in an attempt to assassinate the President²⁹⁹. Shevardnadze was shaken and lightly injured, but he survived to sign the new Constitution.³⁰⁰

After the assassination attempt, a light bulb seemed to go on for Shevardnadze – he realized that the main insecurity in the country continued to emanate from internal enemies. By this time Shevardnadze also understood that Russia wanted to continue to control actions in Georgia and didn't care to see him as head of the country. So, he populated the constitutionally mandated NSC in order to provide internal control over the government and appointed Nuzgar Sajaia as head of the NSC.

The Shevardnadze NSC was clearly oriented on control and internal stability: Georgia was just coming out of a civil war – and the NSC provided support during elections using state resources. 1999 Parliamentary elections were accepted as relatively not corrupt, and this conclusion was supported by the West. The NSC apparently didn't "manage" elections but kept informed on all results and how they would affect internal stability.

The NSC Staff prepared agendas for all meetings. The NSC Staff screened and approved all Ministerial appointments. NSC meetings were recorded; the Deputy Secretary prepared protocols (minutes of meetings) – but most decisions were, and still remain, classified.

The NSC structure had several deputies. One Deputy was paid a salary from the Ministry of Defense and held the military rank of General for pay purposes. One was a Deputy for Human Rights. Another deputy's portfolio included Defense and Foreign Policy, which in 1998-1999 was the first time that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense established a close working relationship. The law required the NSC to prepare a National Security Concept, and the International Security Advisory Board (ISAB) was contracted to assist with Georgia's first National Security Concept. A committee was formed that among others consisted of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, with the Minister for State Security, as Chairman. A National Security Strategy was developed, but it was primarily³⁰¹ for external consumption; the NSC continued to control internal affairs. Ministers reported any personnel moves and appointments to the Secretary of the NSC; appointments were screened by the 'NSC' desk that monitored that Ministry with the goal of "preserving the system."

After the death of NSC Secretary Sajaia, according to one source the NSC became a "dust bin Department." For example, the third Deputy Secretary at the NSC had been

³⁰⁰ The assassination attempt was attributed to Lieutenant General Igor Georgadze, Minister of State Security, with the assistance of Special Police Unit "Alpha", who fled to Russia after the attempt, but Georgadze denied any connection with the attempt and a lengthy trial could not tie Georgadze to the attempt on the President's life. Special Police Unit Alpha had, according to one source, been trained by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

³⁰¹ Correspondence with ISAB member David Ochmanek, Rand Corporation and former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and for Force Development.
https://www.rand.org/about/people/o/ochmanek_david.html

Minister of State Security who surrendered to Abkhaz forces in Senaki. He resigned but was put in the NSC as the Deputy responsible for State Security and Internal Affairs.³⁰²

The next Secretary, Georgian Ambassador to the United States, Tedo Japaridze, tried to use the NSC as a think tank, and the Georgian NSC was initially modeled by Japaridze on the U.S. NSC³⁰³

In 1994, Shevardnadze had traveled to the United States. Georgia was opening to the world community and joined the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In 1994-95 Georgia signed an energy treaty in Baku, Azerbaijan. Shevardnadze wanted to promote the westernization of the South Caucasus and supported the 1993 Brussels Declaration forming the European Union. His dream was a linkage of central Asia with Europe traveling through the South Caucasus. Consequently, in 1999 Georgia joined the Council of Europe, sponsored Collective Security Treaty of the CIS, and supported the 1999 Istanbul Summit that required the removal of Russian bases from Georgia. Of course, this would only be possible if Russia cooperated, and with Russian 'peacekeepers in Georgia's 'break away' regions, Shevardnadze's dreams would remain just that – dreams. While in Washington, Shevardnadze asked for U.S. support and during the visit, United States President Bill Clinton said that U.S. would give support to Georgia, but Clinton would not intervene to get an international peacekeeping mission in Abkhazia.³⁰⁴

The National Security Council under the Constitution was visibly created to organize military construction and the defence of the country, but its actual scope of authority went far beyond that charge. The NSC was Shevardnadze's primary control mechanism in the Georgian government:

“The National Security Council is an advisory body of the President of Georgia for decision-making on strategic questions of the organisation of military construction and defence, internal and foreign policy related to the security of the country, maintenance of stability, law and order.”³⁰⁵

The NSC was charged with the responsibility among other duties, to draft the Concept of National Security, to consider major questions of internal and foreign policy, directly related to the maintenance of defence and the security of the state. The Council included the President of Georgia (Chairman of the Council), the State Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of State Security, the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Secretary of the National Security Council, who ex officio, was the Assistant to the President of Georgia on questions of national security.³⁰⁶

The NSC was loosely modelled after the United States NSC, and Nugzar Sajaia was its first Secretary and organized the NSC office. The formal members were designated by

³⁰² Interview with Georgian diplomat, 25 July 2014.

³⁰³ Interview with former Georgian Minister, 23 July 2014.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ The Law on the National Security Council, No. 90, 24 January 1996.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

law, but later, because of the poor economic situation in the country, others such as the Mayor of Tbilisi and Minister of Finance sat in on meetings. Attendance and attendees were based on the necessities of the moment. Sajaia was a close confidant of the President; he knew how to balance issues, people, parties and ministries, but he did not think that the NSC could establish an implementation mechanism for a National Security Concept.³⁰⁷ Consequently, no National Security Concept was published on Sajaia's watch.

The Office of the NSC was organized into several Departments, e.g. Defense, Security, and Internal affairs. The conduct of the NSC business was strictly organized. The Staff held meetings twice a week; the Monday meeting focused on ongoing operations while the Wednesday meeting focused on items for the next NSC meeting. Sajaia was always present when Vazha Lortkipanidze met with the State administration – it was difficult to meet alone with Shevardnadze. The Office of the NSC consisted of heads of Departments which had six or seven technical departments. Among those Tedo Japaridze was in charge of strategic analysis and handled the visits of foreign presidents, while Gela Charkviani, dealt with relations with foreign countries, protocol, writing letters for the President and translation. The NSC had some relations with Ministry of State Security³⁰⁸

NSC Meetings were held two times each month – very regular. There was an Order published for each meeting. Each member had a file/folder with his name on it, containing the issues for the meeting. The file was sealed and signed and delivered to the member the day before the meeting. At the end of the meeting, the file was left on the table to be collected.

The agenda was usually prepared from requests written by Ministries or others to the Secretary, outlining a problem or an issue. The NSC office departments worked the issue and prepared a draft decision or recommendation for the NSC. The draft could, and did, often change after the NSC meeting. The Deputy Secretary prepared a protocol of the meeting that was signed by the Secretary. Each decision had a time period for implementation. The entire NSC structure was a “well organized machine.” Very collegial atmosphere with daily coordination among the staff.

The President chaired meetings and the NSC office oversaw/controlled implementation of the decisions. There was an orderly list of decisions and a calendar for implementation and as a decision approached its implementation deadline, the Deputy Secretary could summon a Deputy Minister or Minister to come and explain progress. If there was a delay, there had to be a formal request for extension of time to complete the decision.

³⁰⁷ Interview with Georgian academician, 10 June 2014.

³⁰⁸ Lortkipanidze, 13 November 2014.

Shevardnadze was always very calm, never shouted. He had no unofficial or 'kitchen' cabinet, but the relationship between the President and the NSC Secretary was very close and confidential³⁰⁹. But among members, there were real debates at NSC meetings.³¹⁰

The purpose of the NSC under Shevardnadze was internal control of the power ministries, especially law enforcement (Interior Ministry) and defense and also controlled personnel appointments in the government. The NSC had an Administration Department that was focused on control and coordination of the power ministries. The NSC made decisions itself, with Shevardnadze's approval and carried them out – it was an 'operational NSC, that controlled only the power ministries; there was no interagency function involved.'³¹¹

The NSC was a breeding ground for possible next ministers. If Shevardnadze had a problem with a minister, he would put an opponent in charge of the department that monitored that ministry in the NSC as the Department Head. This put pressure on the ministry officials who were worried about their jobs. The NSC could allocate funds to a ministry, recommend the appointment of personnel, send directions and monitor performance.³¹²

Tedo Japaridze, became the next NSC Secretary on March 5, 2002, and served until November 2003. At the time of his appointment as NSC Secretary he had been serving as Georgia's Ambassador to the United States since 1994. Japaridze was familiar with the Georgian NSC because before becoming ambassador he was one of the Division Chiefs under Sajaia in the National Security and Defense Council from November 1992 to June 1994.

In a contemporary interview, Japaridze explained his view of the work of the NSC:

“Under Mr. Sajaia the NSC had an oversight function over the power ministries, the new model will be more like the NSC in the United States. As we embark on a joint mission to fight terrorism with the United States, it will also be easier to work together if we have similar systems. Our NSC can of course not be an exact replica of the American NSC because we have different problems and different priorities, but the concept will be similar. I guess I will be a very untraditional NSC advisor because I will not only work foreign policy and security, but also domestic issues. Today the domestic challenges we face are the main threat to Georgia, and they are closely linked to our foreign and security policies.”³¹³

³⁰⁹ Sajaia had been the head of Shevardnadze's Administration in the 1980s, Interview with Georgian politician and former government official, 5 June 2014.

³¹⁰ Interview with former Georgian government official, 23 May 2014.

³¹¹ Interview with Georgian politician and former government official, 5 June 2014.

³¹² Interview with former Georgian government official, 23 July 2014.

³¹³ Interview with Tedo Japardize published on Eurasianet.org, 2 March 2002, <http://www.eurasianet.org/print/60340>, accessed 18 February 2015.

As Secretary, Japaridze made many abrupt changes to the NSC, e.g. Sajaia had a long working table in his office extending from the front of his desk – visitors would sit there. Japaridze removed table and he sat in front of his desk which was uncomfortable for many visitors.³¹⁴ Shevardnadze trusted Japaridze, wanted to be informed, but told Japaridze to do what he thought was correct. Japaridze created departments for Defense, State Security, Internal Affairs and Protection Services, and others – close to 12 departments. He created a new interagency system – During the Sajaia era Ministers would talk at meetings, then each Minister would go to Shevardnadze separately and plead their case. Japaridze insisted that they discuss items together, make consolidated recommendations, then go to Shevardnadze. At the first meeting under Japaridze, there were fist fights between Ministers; they hated one another, but Japaridze forced them to cooperate. He tried to break the system of “feudal pluralism” and treated all Ministers as equals.

Sajaia was an apparatchik who kept discipline and presided over a pyramidal structure. The NSC was a control apparatus – a “Bull Dog” under Sajaia – that exercised control over law enforcement and defense, including control of personnel appointments – it was just a ‘command and control’ mechanism.³¹⁵ Clearly it was an operational NSC.

Japaridze made the structure more horizontal, expanded the scope of NSC activities (Sajaia was interested only in power control), opened discussions on energy, the economy, foreign policy, internal region concerns and international issues in order to provide Shevardnadze with a complete picture and an estimate of situations. The NSC met once a week or once every two weeks. Under Sajaia, the Ministers never coordinated their activities, they met with Sajaia separately but Japaridze created a Principals Committee composed of those Ministers who were appointed to the NSC, and a Deputies Committee, similar to the United States NSC.

The first Deputy Secretary would take over if Japaridze was not present. The NSC deputies were expected to contact their appropriate counterpart Deputy Ministers in the other Ministries, and then bring recommendations to the Principals level and prepare memos for the President. When appropriate, members of the opposition were invited to lower level staff meetings – for example, the NSC had a Department of Conflict Resolution³¹⁶ The Deputies Committee met at least one time each month³¹⁷

Japaridze also expanded the NSC structure, creating an organization that designed strategies: An expert team would initially work an issue and then turn their recommendations over to a larger expert working group. The working group would refine the recommendations and give them to the Deputy Ministers’ Commission who would, in

³¹⁴ Interview with former Georgian government official, 23 May 2014.

³¹⁵ Interview with Georgian government official, 23 May 2014.

³¹⁶ Interview with former Georgian politician and government official, 5 June 2014.

³¹⁷ Interview with former Georgian government official, 23 July 2014.

turn, provide the recommendations to the Principles Committee. In addition, Japaridze would establish Specialty commissions of outside experts when necessary.³¹⁸

After the Rose Revolution, Japaridze's job became more difficult. Japaridze had a working relationship with Condoleezza Rice – and worked with her to establish a U.S.-like NSC, but when Saakashvili took office there was tension between Saakashvili and Japaridze. Saakashvili wanted a new government free from the Shevardnadze era. An apocryphal story is that when Saakashvili traveled to France on 9 March 2004 to meet with French President Chirac he took Japaridze, who was his Foreign Minister, with him but Japaridze was not allowed to attend the meeting of the Presidents. During the meeting Saakashvili asked Chirac if he (Saakashvili) could appoint the French born, but ethnic Georgian French ambassador to Georgia (Salome Zourabichvili) as his foreign minister. Chirac agreed, but there was no prior consultation with Japaridze³¹⁹ ³²⁰ Japaridze left government shortly thereafter.

Foreign Assistance in National Security Planning

Georgia has not traveled its path toward democracy alone. At least since the entry of the Shevardnadze administration, Western nations, especially the United States, NATO and the Baltic States provided assistance to Georgia to plan for and implement democratic programs. This can perhaps best be explained because Eduard Shevardnadze was well known and well respected by Western diplomats. U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said of Shevardnadze when he was Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, "he is a man that I can trust." Georgia was the first of the Former Soviet Republics to openly turn to the West and to openly embrace democracy – and the West was ready to reciprocate with aid and assistance. Likewise, the Baltic states are similar in size to Georgia and face a similar existential threat on their borders – Russia. That similarity fostered a close relationship between the Baltic States and Georgia that continues today.

At least as early as 1996, the international community was actively providing assistance to Georgia's efforts to democratize. The Causian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, with NATO and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung of Germany co-sponsorship, held an international conference in Tbilisi for the purpose of "Developing a National Security Concept for Georgia".³²¹ The sixty-five participants were from several OSCE

³¹⁸ Interview with former Georgian government official, 23 July 2014.

³¹⁹ Interview with former U.S. advisor, 7/23/14

³²⁰ The story is slightly different from Salome's point of view. According to a Washington Post article, hours before Saakashvili was to meet Chirac the new Georgian president sprang his request on the French ambassador to Georgia. "I was surprised. But without thinking I said yes, on condition that President Chirac agreed. He not only liked the idea, but was enthusiastic about trying it out." <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A14316-2004Jun3.html>, accessed 5 April 2015.

³²¹ "Developing a National Security Concept for Georgia: Proceedings of the International Conference," The Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, Tbilisi, 1-2 April 1996

countries, and included ambassadors, military specialists, academics and members of the National Security Council of Georgia. The reported discussions covered the geopolitics of the Caucasus and Georgia's internal conflicts, but no document that could be called a National Security Concept was produced, likely because Georgia was still fixated on its internal conflicts and its relationship with Russia.

International Security Advisory Board (ISAB)

In order to speed the process of creating a National Security Concept, NATO officials indirectly proffered to Georgia the International Security Advisory Board (ISAB), headed by retired United Kingdom General Sir Garry Johnson. ISAB was established in 1996 to provide "strategic advice to governments seeking to transform and modernize their security sectors." ISAB is an "independent international body of senior individuals with high-level diplomatic, political or military experience" who hold no official appointment in their own national governments, but who remain in close contact with their national authorities. Members are separately funded by their own governments, but the 'host' country pays all in-country expenses.³²² While the ISAB members have no official ties to their own governments, reports were prepared by ISAB after every meeting and members distributed them as they saw fit and received comments or instructions from their governments based on the content of the reports.

The concept of ISAB began at a 1994 Security and Defense Conference held in Norway. Three Baltic ministers, two from their Ministries of Defence and one from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, approached General Johnson who had just retired as Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces Northern Europe, to set up an organization to assist the Baltics in security planning. As Sir Garry tells it, he rang up the appropriate office in the Ministry of Defense in London and explained the request. After a half-hour break, he received a return call, and was told that the message came from "across the road" (meaning from the UK government). The concept was approved, but Sir Garry was told "don't get us into trouble, keep us informed, don't promise anything, and speak for yourself."³²³

From 1995 to 1998, ISAB worked with the Baltic States to modernize their defense establishments and to move toward NATO membership. Sir Garry led that effort and it was largely successful in transforming the Baltic military and its strategic planning process from legacy Soviet thinking into Western compatible security systems.

In 1996 General Johnson came to Georgia at the suggestion of George Robertson, NATO Secretary General, and met with Shevardnadze one-on-one to "soften the ground." It was important to get Shevardnadze to agree that the Georgian government, and especially the Ministry of Internal Affairs, would accept the ISAB recommendations. Without that agreement, progress was not foreseeable. Shevardnadze, who spoke with General Johnson through a translator, agreed and said that ISAB should work first with the Ministry

³²² ISAB pamphlet, n.d., in the possession of the author.

³²³ Interview with Sir Garry Johnson,

of Defense, then the Border Guards, and then the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Shevardnadze was very much the fox, with a cautious, measured approach, but Sir Garry had to make sure that the Georgian leadership was ready to accept the depth of ISAB recommendations.

On 14 April 1998, Sir Garry signed a Memorandum on Creation of International Security Advisory Board for Georgia³²⁴, with Nugzar Sajaia, Secretary of the National Security Council and Assistant to the President on issues of National Security. ISAB would report formally to the National Security Council but would work through the Committee of Defense and Security of the Parliament of Georgia to establish relationships with the various agencies of the Georgian government. The initial period of consultation was for one year, after which progress would be reviewed and a future way ahead determined.³²⁵

ISAB submitted annual reports to the NSC from 1998 to 2006. The composition of the ISAB changed slightly over the nine years of its existence, with the initial team composed of General Sir Garry Johnson (UK)(Chairman), General Henning von Ondarza (Germany) and Mr. David Ochmanek (USA). The initial ISAB report provided a general assessment of the security sector in Georgia and made broad recommendations for reforms in a number of areas:³²⁶

GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION

(...)

7. In the security and defence spheres, the historical legacy remains evident in the hierarchical, compartmentalized nature of state security structures, having a built-in deficit of transparency and accountability; and in a residual cultural approach which emphasizes reliance on control rather than initiative, and on quantity rather than quality. To these disadvantages must be added a very limited public understanding of, and interest in, security and defence affairs, and a chronic underfunding which is common to all public expenditure areas

8. On the other hand, the Board was impressed by the determination of President Shevardnadze, together with many senior members of the Government and Parliament, to bring about fundamental change. But the Board noted that, although this positive approach is strongly supported by many individuals at all levels, there remain a significant number who, at worst, question the direction in which events are taking them or, at best, doubt the ability of the system to reform itself. Overall, however, ISAB believes that a general willingness to take action is clearly evident, and that the basic condition for a positive outcome is

³²⁴ ISAB was originally set up in 1996 to assist the Baltic States become modernized members of NATO.

³²⁵ See ISAB Pamphlet in the possession of the author.

³²⁶ See ISAB reports 1998 – 2006, in possession of the author.

therefore in place.

(...)

14. General Recommendation GR2: that NSC act as the coordinating body for ensuring the success of the process and that ISAB is requested to monitor the process and to report on progress one year after the necessary decisions have been taken.

(...)

This national security concept and strategy statement is the essential first step in defence planning and force sizing. Work is hand to write this concept within the Commission established for this purpose by Presidential decree. Once reviewed and accepted by Parliament, it will provide the basis on which to evaluate policy initiatives and future budgetary requests of the various Ministries active in the security and defence field.³²⁷

ISAB submitted its final report on 15 February 2006, from a team composed of General Sir Garry Johnson, Ambassador David Smith (USA), and Major General Franz Werner (Germany):

Review of Progress

The policy framework

(...)

6. Report 1999 stressed the importance of setting a clear course for the country by means of a democratically endorsed foreign and security policy.

7. The Government of Georgia gave early indication of the direction it intended to follow in a paper entitled *Georgia and the World: a Vision and Strategy for the Future*, issued in 2001. Following further elaboration and consultation, the National Security Council presented the *National Security Concept of Georgia* to Parliament, which endorsed it on 8 July 2005. This document states the unambiguous intention of Georgia for “full integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic community.” More recently, the MFA has set out its vision and directives for 2006 in a document that is “consistent with Georgia’s National Security Concept and Foreign Policy Strategy for 2006-2009”.

8. In pursuance of this objective, Georgia actively seeks closer ties with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the European Union. The *Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP)*, which was agreed between Georgia and NATO on 29 October 2004, is the instrument by which

³²⁷ Private copy of the 1998 ISAB report in the possession of the author

Georgia is preparing itself for membership of that alliance. Georgia sees the development of an *Action Plan* under the *European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)* as serving a similar longer-term intention towards the EU. A State Minister for Integration has been established to coordinate Georgia's progress towards these goals.

From an ISAB standpoint this clear policy framework provides the benchmarks against which to evaluate progress in modernisation and reform across the wider security sector.

Central mechanisms

(...)

12. In Report 1999, and subsequently, ISAB drew attention to the weakness of central mechanisms for coordination and control of the security sector and for crisis management. A law has been enacted restructuring the National Security Council and defining its functions. It is important to ensure that the drastic reduction in staff numbers that has been carried out does not weaken the ability of the NSC in its important inter-agency coordination role.

13. As stated in Report 2005, ISAB recommendations with regard to intelligence functions have been fulfilled and the recommendation to improve analytical capability is being addressed.

14. ISAB has consistently recommended development of a more coordinated and effective public information capability. This recommendation remains important as the pressures on Georgia increase in the build-up of its campaign for NATO membership.

Democratic oversight

15. The role of Parliament in the democratic oversight of the security sector has been strengthened. In December 2004 the Law on Defence of Georgia defined the roles of the President, the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Defence. A civilian Minister of Defence now leads a civilian MOD, separate from the General Staff. A Law on Military Service, which defines the obligations of citizens, regulates contract service and sets up a military police structure, has passed its first reading in Parliament. A military discipline code, drafted with the involvement of military commanders, NGOs and external advice, is awaiting Presidential signature and promulgation. MOD legal department intends shortly to begin drafting legislation preparing the way for an all professional force and for a Status of Forces agreement with NATO.

(...)

17. ISAB has continually drawn attention to the importance of the part played by free media and informed responsible Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in democratic oversight and development of the security sector. There is on-going debate about the extent of freedom of expression which is appropriate in a developing state, but there is no doubt that the media in Georgia remain healthily uninhibited and vocal in expressing their point of view. Several of the large number of NGOs are developing the capability to make substantive contributions to public affairs, and their participation in public debate on security sector issues is having a beneficial effect.

ISAB Summary

(...)

31. The executive decisions required at Presidential level to give effect to the original ISAB recommendations have been taken, the necessary legislation to execute these is in train and the necessary re-structuring at ministerial level has taken place. To this extent the conceptual and strategic requirements of modernisation have been satisfied.

32. The progress described above has been neither smooth nor easy to achieve, and the implementation process required to underpin it is only just beginning to engage. If the political objectives of Georgia are to be gained in the desired timeframe, it will be necessary for the Government, working with focused external support, to drive through a more effective implementation programme in all fields, with a priority towards embedding and institutionalising robust change.³²⁸

ISAB worked with the NSC through its secretary, Sajaia. One assister commented that Sajaia was a classic Russian product, always came with notes, businesslike, and held short meetings. Sajaia reported directly to Shevardnadze, who controlled the pace of activity. The Ministry of Defense coordinated and sponsored ISAB visits. It appeared that more than achieving modernization of the security sector, the real goal was to adhere to a NATO path.

Georgian officials were in 'acceptance mode' – they readily agreed with all recommendations, but the challenge was to define what progress really meant, i.e. how to implement the recommendations within the Georgian system and culture. The biggest challengers were those threatened by change, and those who were puzzled and unable to grasp the concepts presented, or who didn't want to grasp the concepts because they challenged vested interests. 10% accepted change, 10% opposed change, and 80% needed to be convinced

³²⁸ Copy in of the 2006 report the private possession of the Author

“Working with (the Georgian security establishment) was like pushing water uphill with a garden rake: you could push up a certain amount and then it rolled down again; there was some progress, but slow.”³²⁹

Near the end of 2002, Shevardnadze was in decline. He was the last of his time, a *Zeitzeuge* – one foot in Soviet Russia and one foot in Georgia. He encouraged ISAB to work and understood that things had to change and that he had to do something, but he was not sure how to accomplish change – it was hard for him to understand democracy. He was open to advice, but change was difficult. He wanted Georgia to be a real ‘state’ and a leader in the region – but that was for the younger generation, “not my business”.³³⁰ Similarly, Shevardnadze’s successor as President, Mikheil (Misha) Saakashvili, was not really interested in ISAB’s mission: “Please work with my NSC”³³¹ he said. Saakashvili listened carefully to the ISAB reports and comments, he asked good questions, but he had different priorities.

Nino Burjanadze, Parliamentary Chairperson and acting President was very interested in ISAB’s assistance. She asked ISAB to come to her office and discuss their findings and recommendations, but one former ISAB member noted that it seemed that she thought ISAB could help her reach her personal political goals. She was open to western thinking, and critical of her own people.³³²

ISAB meetings were mainly with the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of the NSC. The Board perceived that its mission was to evaluate and make recommendations to reform the entire security sector. On paper, Georgia accomplished nearly everything that ISAB recommended, but in fact they only implemented about one-half of the recommendations:

- Appoint a civilian Minister of Defense: done
- Reorganize the Ministry of Defense: partially
- Create a Joint Staff: done, but it still functioned as a General Staff
- Separate J-5 (Military Strategic Planning Department) from civilian Policy and Planning: partially done
- Establish an NCO System: partially done
- Implement pay by rank (instead of position): not done
- Civilianize Ministry of Internal Affairs, move troops and equipment to the Ministry of Defense: partially done

ISAB provided basic advice in staff work: “Have to stay with it” – gain their trust, make them know that you are coming back to check on the work that they have done. As one U.S. sergeant who was training Georgian soldiers to deploy to Iraq said: “they are trying

³²⁹ Interview with former ISAB member, 16 September 2014.

³³⁰ Interview with former ISAB member, 18 June 2014.

³³¹ Interview with former ISAB member, 16 September 2014.

³³² Interview with former ISAB member, 18 June 2014.

real hard to learn what American kids learn in High School; there is no concept of teamwork in the Georgian culture”³³³ This description could also be applied the ISAB’s work at the upper government levels.

Rand Corporation

The United States has long had a special relationship with Georgia. U.S. President George W. Bush visited Georgia in 2005 and in a speech on May 10, 2005 in Tbilisi’s Freedom Square, President Bush made clear that Georgia had the full support of the United States: “The path of freedom you have chosen is not easy, but you will not travel it alone. Americans respect your courageous choice for liberty. And as you build a free and democratic Georgia, the American people will stand with you.”³³⁴ Georgia was a star in the constellation of the Bush Administration’s Freedom Agenda.³³⁵

Consequently, the U.S. government provided assistance to the Georgian security establishment in many forms, one of which was a U.S. Department of State contract with the Rand Corporation to help develop “a National Security Council (getting ready for the end of the Shevardnadze presidency and (to train) a group of younger Georgians to be leaders in governance, foreign policy.”³³⁶ The grant – around \$300,000 –funded senior U.S. advisors, including former U.S. ambassador to NATO and member of the U.S. National Security Council, Ambassador Robert E. Hunter, to travel to Georgia.

The State Department funded a second program of around \$50,000 also through the Rand Corporation to assist the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies to help to find permanent funding, to set up an institute, and to hold conferences, etc. on national security issues.³³⁷ The Institute was intended to train the next generation of Georgian leaders to run the system. U.S. support was supposed to be a three-year program from 2002 to 2005, but the contract was terminated shortly after the Rose Revolution in 2004.³³⁸

The advisory teams first worked with the Shevardnadze government. Their observation was that Shevardnadze was not interested in developing an agency that would coordinate national decision making; he coordinated everything personally. Consequently, there was no will to reform the NSC, and there was a too frequent turnover in personnel, so the training and reform didn’t work effectively.

After the Rose Revolution, the team continued its work with the Saakashvili government, but the attitude was that Saakashvili didn’t want to create an agency with which he could

³³³ Interview with former ISAB member, 25 July 2013.

³³⁴ George W. Bush, 10 May 2005, <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/2059773/posts> accessed 7 April 2015.

³³⁵ <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/freedomagenda/> accessed 2 April 2015.

³³⁶ <http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Hunter,%20Robert%20E.toc.pdf>, accessed 5 April 2015.

³³⁷ Interview with former U.S. advisor, 23 July 2014.

³³⁸ Interview with Georgian academician, 10 June 2014.

consult. “Misha is always in transmit mode. If there were ten minutes to decide an issue, Misha would talk for an hour.”³³⁹

Reform of the Georgian security sector was and is difficult because Georgia is a dynamic state – not mature in its democracy – and often acts as a post totalitarian country with totalitarian technocratic thinking. Georgia politicians don’t appear to understand the human element of government. In Georgian politics, everyone is focused on their own area, acting within their own stovepipe, with little coordination or collaboration. A program of feudal pluralism.

Under Shevardnadze Georgia wanted to become a market economy and a democracy, but neither were products of its historical development and the concepts didn’t take. People saw TV views of wealthy western countries and started to build structures, but there was no background, no product of political thinking that would produce a supporting system, consequently Georgia’s efforts to seek help from the West. The dominant thinking in Georgia is political interests and political power – not strategic goals for the country³⁴⁰

Georgia Defense Reform Program

Another major support program from the United States Government was a Department of Defense (DoD) contract to establish the Georgia Defense Reform Program .³⁴¹ The GDRP contract was awarded to Cubic Defense Applications, Inc. in the fall of 2003 and shortly after the first contractors arrived in Tbilisi, the Rose Revolution occurred. The GDRP was a multifaceted approach that provided on-the-ground advice and assistance to the Ministry of Defense in areas of national security planning, as well as all areas of ministry management. Because the program was funded through a contract, DoD oversight was always concerned with whether contract assistance was producing positive results. Consequently, the first yard stick of ‘progress’ was Georgia’s movement toward NATO membership. Georgia’s progress toward NATO was codified under an annually reviewed Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) negotiated between the NATO Force Planning department and the Georgian Ministry of Defense.

Contract assistance included assessing the needs of the Ministry of Defense – including its strategic planning process -- and developing programs to train MOD personnel in strategic planning, as well as to assist in drafting key strategic documents such as the National Military Strategy, the National Security Concept, and the National Threat Assessment. In addition, the Cubic team worked closely with MOD personnel to plan and complete the first Strategic Defense Review (SDR), the public version of which was

³³⁹ Interview with former U.S. advisor, 24 July 2014.

³⁴⁰ Interview with Georgian academician, 10 June 2014.

³⁴¹ Other defense support programs were also supported by the U.S. government, for example the Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP), but these programs did not directly affect Georgia’s capability for security planning.

released in 2007. The SDR laid the basis for sizing the Georgian armed forces and developing a plan to organize, train and equip the force.

As Georgia moved toward NATO accession – efforts that were derailed by the Georgia-Russia War of 2008 – a more refined measure of progress was needed both for the GDRP team as well as for DoD funders and the Georgian Government. Consequently, the GDRP team developed a Defense Reform Matrix that was used to assess program progress.³⁴² The DoD contract was renewed periodically and is still in place.

Other programs

The programs provided by NATO/ISAB and the United States Government were not the only foreign support provided to Georgia in the national security arena, but they were major programs to assist Georgia to find its way in the national security morass. The UK also provided periodic support through its Security Sector Defense Advisory Team, who worked primarily with the Georgian Ministry of Defense to develop modern personnel programs, and the Government of the Netherlands Assistance that provided periodic assistance to the Ministry of Defense to develop a modern Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS), but the only long-term, on the ground continuous support to national security planning remained the United States' Georgia Defense Reform Program.

Shevardnadze and reform: a summary

In Georgia everyone wants to get in their thoughts by constant interrupting. There is no presumption by most people that would permit two world views – only theirs. But Shevardnadze was very different; he had a great capacity for listening without interruption and for taking copious notes. But Shevardnadze didn't understand democracy – and no one dared to lecture him on it. He knew that under democracy the state must give up some economic control, but he would not tolerate a free economy. For example, he would not give up direct personal control of the country's railroads or the port of Poti. In one draft of an annual National Architectural Program, his advisors recommended privatization of the railroads and the port of Poti – Shevardnadze read the entire 200-page report and struck that recommendation. The next year the recommendation reappeared and again, Shevardnadze took it out. The report's author asked why he should bother making recommendations if Shevardnadze was going to ignore them and Shevardnadze calmly replied that the use of the report was up to him. Shevardnadze's philosophy was like Louis XIV: "le'etat, c'est moi"

Shevardnadze was great at preserving the state and balancing competing interests. He divided the country into functional, operational territories, but he appointed his cronies as leaders of these territories and agencies and he turned a blind eye to their rampant corruption because he knew that corruption helped build social order, bureaucracy, and

³⁴² Ronald S. Mangum with Craven, William J. "Measuring Defense Reform," *Small Wars Journal*, 26 April 2010, www.smallwarsjournal.com

mechanisms in what had been a lawless land after independence and civil war. Under Shevardnadze's system everything began to function – private interest (corruption that today would be labeled state capture) -- was the main motivation and glue that held society together. Unfortunately, Shevardnadze became the victim of the corrupt system – and he was too old and tired to change the system – he didn't know how or when to stop. He created powerful business and political warlords - 'mutants' who were able to fund political opponents³⁴³. This ultimately led to the Rose Revolution.

Georgia's National Security Strategy

Even though drafting a national security concept appeared in the law as the first task of the National Security Council, no such document was formally adopted during Shevardnadze's time. All of the foreign assistance culminated in a "type" of National Security Concept entitled "Georgia and the World: A vision and strategy for the Future," which appeared in 2000, but was never signed by Shevardnadze nor formally adopted as national policy.³⁴⁴ So the question is: if developing a National Security Concept was a high priority, why did it not happen?

Shevardnadze was a great realist and he knew very well the real place and weight of the small and failed state of Georgia in the international system. I remember how skeptical he was about public statements and publications: he knew, that any text would annoy Russians much, which would harm Georgia, and at the same time the text wouldn't be sufficiently "anti-Russian" and "pro-western" for his Georgian audience.³⁴⁵

Shevardnadze, the great balancer, was caught between two worlds. Despite Georgia's turn toward the West, Russia continued to exert a growing influence in the Georgian military. Because Georgia viewed Russia as a major threat, Shevardnadze adopted an appeasement policy to keep Russia at bay.³⁴⁶ In the *Treaty on Friendship and Good Neighborliness between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia*, 3 Feb 1994, Para 3, Russia agreed to help Georgia build its Army. The *Treaty on the Status of Military Formations of the Russian Federation Located on the Territory of the Republic of Georgia*, October 1993, para.5, article 19, provides for the transfer of materiel and assistance in military training. The *Treaty on Russian Military Bases*, 15 Sep 1995, and the agreement on the status and functions of Russian Border guards in Georgia further illustrate the growing dependence of Georgia on Russia. In reality, the working day for the Georgian Minister of Defense Nadibadze usually started with a visit to the headquarters of the Russian Forces in Transcaucasia.³⁴⁷

³⁴³ Interview with Georgian Academician, 10 June 2014.

³⁴⁴ Copy in the Author's possession.

³⁴⁵ Private correspondence with a former Georgian Government Official, 21 April 2015.

³⁴⁶ "If we do not want Russia to play a negative role, we need to consider its interests." Sakartvelos Respublica, 27 July 1993. Russian military presence was considered to stabilize Georgia and preserve its territorial unification. Shevardnadze in Darchiashvili (1997), p. 14.

³⁴⁷ From Darchiashvili, (1997), p.11.

The “Concept” that appeared in 2000 reads like a National Security Concept, but Georgia’s National Security Concept should be signed by the President and accepted by Parliament in order to become law. That didn’t happen under Shevardnadze³⁴⁸ even though the West spent tens of thousands of dollars assisting Georgia in developing the document, beginning at least with the 1996 conference on “Developing a National Security Concept for Georgia”.³⁴⁹ Funding was also provided to the Georgia Strategic Research center, which worked with the Rand Corporation advisors and others to develop the document.

Georgia and the World: A Vision and Strategy for the Future

*In this environment of rapid and profound change, it is especially important that the Government of Georgia articulates a clear vision of the future for the nation and that it describes the path by which it intends to reach that future. Both the Georgian people and the world at large need to understand the direction that Georgia is taking and the roles it intends to play. This document is intended to contribute to that understanding.*³⁵⁰

The document begins by outlining the Goals of Georgia as Independence, Security, Freedom, National Unity, Prosperity and Peace, and then comments on the international environment. Georgia recognizes that the collapse of the Soviet Union provided the opportunity for Georgia to gain its independence and it seeks a stable and harmonious relationship with the Russian Federation. The greatest challenge to accomplishing Georgia’s vision is building the unity of the state. “The most pressing need is to resolve disputes with separatist elements within Georgia . . . and to seek the phased withdrawal of foreign forces and bases from Georgia.”³⁵¹

The document then outlines “Securing and Advancing Georgia’s Interests: A Strategic Concept.”

Georgia is joining the full community of nations. Georgia actively seeks to broaden and strengthen its ties with those nations that share its values of democracy, respect for human rights, the market economy, and the free flow of ideas. . . Georgia’s goal is to integrate in all of the major institutions of the European and Euro-Atlantic communities. Georgians see participation in this international community as the only way to achieve the ambitious goals they have set for themselves as a nation.

³⁴⁸ Shevardnadze was always careful not to irritate Russia, and the multiple assassination attempts that some argued were supported by Russia, made him even more careful. As a consequence, he was hesitant to make statements, (interview with former Minister of Foreign Affairs)

³⁴⁹ “Developing a National Security Concept for Georgia: Proceedings of the International Conference,” The Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, Tbilisi, 1-2 April 1996

³⁵⁰ From the Introduction of the document “Georgia and the World.”

³⁵¹ Georgia and the World, p. 4

Georgia seeks to promote rapid economic modernization and growth along market principles. The Georgian Government sees a healthy and growing economy as a key factor in consolidating the unity of the nation and achieving other important goals. Georgia offers increasingly attractive business opportunities and a favorable economic climate for foreign investment.

Georgia rejects the use of force as a means of resolving international disputes. While Georgia will provide armed forces for its own defence and will contribute forces to international peace operations, it will never pose a threat to its neighbours, nor does it intend to employ its military assets in coercive ways. Likewise, Georgia does not accept the right of other states to use or threaten to use military power against Georgia.

Georgia promotes national unity through peaceful means. The Government of Georgia aspires to be a positive example of national development via democracy and free markets. Successful economic and political reforms will provide a strong impulse to national unity.

Regional issues are also addressed:

Regional and Sub-regional Cooperation Initiatives

Georgia has played a leading role in trying to improve dialogue and policy coordination among the three states of the South Caucasus. Georgia's policy for the region seeks the transformation of the South Caucasus into a zone of mutually beneficial cooperation. To this end, President Shevardnadze in February 1996 put forth six principles that should be fundamental for the establishment of the long-term peace and stability in the Caucasus. These principles, which form the basis of what has since become known as the Peaceful Caucasus Initiative, are:

- Respect for the territorial integrity and inviolability of existing borders
- Commitment to the protect human rights anywhere and from anybody
- The protection of transport and other communication means and non-acceptance of their blockade
- Joint efforts to preserve the natural environment and to fight the consequences of natural disaster
- Promotion of ethnic and religious tolerance, and the renunciation of extreme forms of nationalism
- Support and comprehensive protection of international projects and investments in the Caucasus region.

The Peaceful Caucasus Initiative has enjoyed broad support. In June 1996, the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Russia signed a declaration on inter-ethnic harmony, peace, and cooperation in the Caucasus. Georgia will continue to strive, through bilateral and multilateral means, for peace and stability in this region.

The Document Concludes by saying:

Georgia has begun a new and exciting chapter in its long history. The magnitude of the task that lies before Georgia as it strives to take its place in the community of free nations is not underestimated. At the same time, there is no doubt that the chosen path is the right one. Independence, freedom, and the free market are the keys to allowing people everywhere to realize their full potential. As Georgia takes its full place in this global community, it seeks not only to build a better life for its own people, but also to make positive contributions to the world, as is consistent with its history.

The document downplays any conflict with Russia, which follows Shevardnadze's policy of not irritating Russia, while at the same time it insists that Georgia is entitled to peace and security within its internationally recognized borders, i.e., including Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Adjara. While the document recognizes that there are challenges that arise from events beyond its borders, such as the on-going disputes in Chechnya and Nagorno-Karabakh, and issues of international terrorist threats, international smuggling and other forms of organized crime, the main focus of the document is on the internal problems of Georgia.

Progress in Security Planning – Chapter Four Summary

With foreign assistance, Georgia was beginning to close in on the concept of becoming a liberal democracy. But all of the foreign assistance could not overcome Georgian cultural obstacles. As an American Sergeant who worked at training Georgian soldiers during the Georgia Train and Equip Program said, "there is no teamwork in Georgia." While perhaps that is an overgeneralization, it continues to apply today. Georgian politicians don't appear to seek the betterment of the state, they seem instead to seek their own advantage, which denies the ability of political parties to form in the long term. Parties are haphazardly created around the personality of one individual politician, and when that politician leaves the political scene for whatever reason, the party dissolves.

Likewise, security planning is often a misnomer. Georgian's are admittedly poor at developing plans. When the author advised the Ministry of Defense in security planning, he often asked the Georgian officials to prioritize their goals. What came back to him was a simple list of actions to be addressed without any priority. When all topics are important there is no priority. While the NSC was a nominal body for national security planning, the real power lay with the Ministry of the Interior. As one former defense minister and former member of the NSC said: "MOI (Ministry of the Interior) was police, FBI, Foreign Intel,

Crisis response (not management) – all have police roles, there was no strategic planning, they only wrote plans that described what they were already doing.”³⁵²

For a short period, the National Security Council even disappeared altogether and in 2019, the law on security planning was changed to recreate the National Security Council reporting to the Prime Minister. One of the continuing concerns of the world’s consolidated democracies, represented in this case by NATO, is the former Soviet idea of using internal armed forces to control, e.g. stifle, internal dissent. Georgia had a robust internal armed force that looked like, and trained with, the Georgian army.³⁵³ This armed force was under the Minister of Internal Affairs, and the new law initially may have created a suspiciously similar structure.

The “scorecard” for national security reform in Georgia is impressive. Using Huntington’s criteria the military began to develop, with foreign assistance, a senior level study course in military strategy and planning. Military officers were prohibited from joining political parties, but it is doubtful that this prohibition was enforced – it appears that all Georgians are ‘political.

- 1) a higher level of military professionalism and recognition by military officers of the limits of their professional competence - done;
- 2) the effective subordination of the military to civilian political leaders who make the basic decisions on foreign and military policy - done;
- 3) the recognition and acceptance by that leadership of an area of professional competence and autonomy for the military - done; and
- 4) as a result, the minimization of military intervention in politics and of political intervention in the military - done.

And using Bebler’s criteria:

- (1) increased transparency of defense policies and often a greater supervisory role by parliaments and public opinion – partially done, but many defense decisions remain classified.
- (2) civilianization of defense ministries – done, but there was no training provided to new employees in MOD³⁵⁴;
- (3) radical personnel changes in the upper echelons of the armed forces – done, but as has been shown, there has often been so much change that there is a lack of continuity.

³⁵² Interview with former Minister of Defense, 2 June 2014

³⁵³ Personal observation of the author at the Orpholo training area.

³⁵⁴ From the Author’s personal observation and confidential discussion with Ministry of Defense. Staff members are hired based on who they know, not what they know, and when asked what they were told about their duties they replied that they were told to create their own job description.

(4) national emancipation from Moscow and resultant new security doctrines – partially done. There is deep understanding that Georgia's main enemy is Russia.

(5) partial redeployment of and an altered profile for the armed forces - done.

(6) a greater stress on participatory managerial styles within military establishments – partially done. Participatory management is a poorly understood concept in Georgia.

(7) relative political neutralization of the armed forces – done, with an emphasis on 'relative';

(8) discontinuation of the military's internal-security role – mainly done. The main body of interior troops has been transferred to become the military's Fourth Brigade.

(9) ideological pluralization – no opinion.

Most of these changes began to take shape under Shevardnadze, but he was often stuck in Soviet mentality and found it difficult to effect many of the changes. Additionally, by the turn of the new century he was over seventy years old and tired of politics. He expressed his desire to retire, but he didn't know how to accomplish that. Events overtook him and retirement was soon forced upon him.

Chapter Five: Comparative Analysis with the United States National Security Council

“Because (commanders) often use their power to discourage combat actions proposed by diplomats and political appointees, there is a reversal of roles: military officers advocate diplomatic solutions, forcing civilians to advocate combat actions even though they lack the necessary expertise.” – Edward Luttwak³⁵⁵

“What’s the point of having this superb military that you’re always talking about if we can’t use it?” – Madeline Albright³⁵⁶

As stated in the first chapter, the National Security Council is the cleanest nexus for examining civil-military relations. The NSC is chaired by the head of state, its members include the head of the Defense Ministry and the chief commander of the national armed forces. In addition, in Georgia another NSC member, the Minister of Internal Affairs who led the other major armed formation, the internal troops, is also a member of the Council. Consequently, the NSC in Georgia figures prominently in our review of democracy and civil-military relations. As for the movement of Georgia towards becoming a liberal democracy, in Georgia, after the Shevardnadze period in which a quasi-military government ran the country, it is not easy to directly tie military events to the movement toward democracy, but certain broad trends emerge from the history of the NSC.

In 1991, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, issued a Presidential Order creating a National Security Council. Where did he get the idea to create a national security Council? The Soviet Union did not have a national security council and neither did the Democratic Republic of Georgia that existed in 1918-1921. Gamsakhurdia clearly admired the United States, if for no other reason than it was the only counter-balance to a dying Soviet Union, but who recommended the creation of a National Security Council in the newly independent Georgia? While the origins of all things are usually lost³⁵⁷, we can assume that Gamsakhurdia either knew of the U.S. National Security Council or was advised of it by some of his American visitors, such as Richard Nixon. Therefore, conceding that the idea of the first Georgian National Security Council of 1991 originated in America, and knowing that the subsequent Shevardnadze National Security Council of 1996 was supposed to be patterned on the American model³⁵⁸, how closely did Georgia imitate the U.S. model in design and in operation?

The United States National Security Council

During the Second World War, the United States had an ad hoc arrangement of agencies and committees that were supposed to coordinate the war effort. Clearly that arrangement functioned well because the United States and its allies won the war. But unease over the

³⁵⁵ E. Luttwak (1999) *From Vietnam to Desert Fox: civil-military relations in modern democracies*, *Survival*, 41:1, 99-112, DOI: 10.1093/survival/41.1.99

³⁵⁶ Said to Colin Powell, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on Bosnia, recounted in *Madam Secretary, A Memoir*, by Madeleine Albright, Harper-Collins Publishers, New York, NY (2003), p. 182

³⁵⁷ A concept credited to Abbe Henri Breuil, 1877-1961, a noted pre-historian.

³⁵⁸ Shevardnadze named his Ambassador to the U.S., Tedo Japaridze, as Secretary of the Georgian NSC with the specific understanding that based on his relationships with Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of State James Baker, Japaridze could recreate an American-style NSC in Georgia.

multiple chains of reporting between the military and civilian branches of government called for a more focused and organized arrangement.

...inadequate coordination of the departments during World War II was also a significant problem, attributed in part to President Roosevelt's "sometimes chaotic, ad hoc management style for guiding the war effort."³⁵⁹ Roosevelt had sought, to some degree, greater coordination of the departments. He approved a recommendation in 1938, for example, to establish a Standing Liaison Committee to facilitate policy coordination of the Departments of State, War, and Navy. But after the outbreak of hostilities in World War II, the committee's influence over policy planning rapidly declined and the committee was disassembled in 1943.³⁶⁰

A similar committee, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC), was established in December 1944 to coordinate the views of the respective departments and, after the war, to coordinate post-war policies.³⁶¹ The SWNCC, consisting of Assistant Secretary-level officials and modeled in part after the British War Cabinet,³⁶² was a significant development and "achieved what no other committee had before, providing a forum in which important policy issues could be thrashed out"³⁶³ But like the Standing Liaison Committee, the SWNCC lacked sufficient authority to make policy decisions or to consider interagency issues (unless an issue was referred by a department), eventually leading to its demise.³⁶⁴

The United States National Security Council was an outgrowth of the National Security Act of 1947 when the "term "national security" only entered the foreign policy lexicon after 1947 to reflect the merger of defense and foreign affairs."³⁶⁵ The National Security Act was signed into law by the President Harry Truman on July 26, 1947. Section 101 of Title I, Coordination for National Security, defines the NSC and its purpose is stated as:

"(a) The function of the Council shall be to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security so as to enable the military services and the other departments and agencies of the Government to cooperate more effectively in matters involving the national security.

³⁵⁹ Cody M. Brown, "The National Security Council: A Legal History of the President's Most Powerful Advisers" Project on National Security Reform (PNSR), Legal Working Group, sponsored by the Center for the Study of the Presidency, Washington, D.C., www.pnst.org, 2008, pp.1-2

³⁶⁰ 20 *Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council 1* (Karl F. Inderfurth & Loch K. Johnson eds. 2004).

³⁶¹ *Id.* at 41.

³⁶² Stuart, *supra* at 69. The SWNCC was renamed the State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee in 1947 and it terminated in June 1949.

³⁶³ *Fateful Decisions*, *supra* note 20, at 2

³⁶⁴ See Ernest R. May, *The Development of Political-Military Consultation in the United States*, *Pol. Sci. Quarterly*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (June 1955), at 178.

³⁶⁵ Anne-Marie Slaughter, in a preface to "A National Strategic Narrative, by Mr. Y", Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington D.C. 2011, www.wilsoncenter.org,

(b) In addition to performing such other functions as the President may direct, for the purpose of more effectively coordinating the policies and functions of the departments and agencies of the Government relating to the national security, it shall, subject to the direction of the President, be the duty of the Council

(1) to assess and appraise the objectives, commitments, and risks of the United States in relation to our actual and potential military power, in the interest of national security, for the purpose of making recommendations to the President in connection therewith; and

(2) to consider policies on matters of common interest to the departments and agencies of the Government concerned with the national security, and to make recommendations to the President in connection therewith. . . .

(d) The Council shall, from time to time, make such recommendations, and such other reports to the President as it deems appropriate or as the President may require.”³⁶⁶

Early debates on the drafting of the National Security Act revolved around the functional role of the NSC. The military advisors recommended that the NSC be an operational integrator of national policies, empowered to make decisions and to implement them while other voices called for the council to have only an advisory and recommendatory role.

“President Truman seized the middle ground—submitting his military unification bill to Congress in February 1947 with a provision to establish the NSC by statute but establishing it solely as *an advisory rather than decision-making body*. At White House insistence, the language of the congressional draft was changed so that the NSC role would be “to advise the President with respect to the integration of . . . policies” rather than “to integrate . . . policies” as proposed in the original draft legislation. The authority to make decisions, resolve disputes between departments and direct departmental resources—fundamental authorities for integration—remained solely the responsibility of the President, with the NSC being a coordinating and advisory body.”³⁶⁷

Making the NSC an advisory body rather than an integrating organ weakened its role as a true whole-of-government coordinating agency because the NSC has no power to make and enforce decisions, consequently the U.S. NSC remains focused almost entirely on developing policies, providing staff functions for the President and managing crises rather than on developing long range strategic plans, and the record shows that policy is often disputed more than integrated, oversight is lacking, and crises are often exercises in discovery learning rather than strategic management or anticipatory governance.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁶ 50 United States Code §402

³⁶⁷ Jack A. LeCuyer, A NATIONAL SECURITY STAFF FOR THE 21ST CENTURY, U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, December 2012, p.4

³⁶⁸ Idem, p. 8

“Statutory changes to the national security system ... have focused on improving the traditional individual instruments of power and their linkages to congressional oversight committees rather than their integration and collaboration in a “whole-of-government” effort at the strategic level in both branches of government... whole-of-government integration across departments and disciplines remains elusive and is still left almost entirely to an overburdened President.”³⁶⁹

By statute the NSC is the principal forum for consideration of national security policy issues requiring Presidential determination, chaired by the President and called into session at the President’s discretion. Its statutory members are the President, Vice President, and the Secretaries of State, Defense and Energy. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the statutory military advisor to the Council, and the Director of National Intelligence is the intelligence advisor. Other than its statutory members, there is little law on the structure or functions of the NSC – it is an agency of the executive branch and it operates as each President dictates. Some Presidents such as President Eisenhower who was used to military staff actions, use the NSC extensively, while others such as President Obama only use the NSC when other networks of government aren’t effective. This often leads to a notable lack of coordination among agencies.

Unlike Eisenhower, Kennedy did not view the NSC as the central forum for presidential decision-making. Bundy, wrote to Senator Jackson: “[T]he National Security Council has never been and should never become the only instrument of counsel and decision available to the President in dealing with the problems of our national security.”³⁷⁰

As an example of the lack of coordination in the U.S. NSC, during the Bosnia crisis in the 1990s, council disagreements were supposed to have been elevated to President Bill Clinton. However, “if a clear consensus was not reached at these Deputy Committee (level) meetings, the decision-making process would often come to a temporary halt, followed by a slow, laborious process of telephoning and private deal-making; since *consensus views, rather than clarity, [were] often the highest goal of the process . . . the result was often inaction or half-measures instead of a clear strategy.*”³⁷¹

Regrettably, the dramatic changes in the global national security environment have not resulted in a corresponding change in the fundamental way that the United States manages its national security system at the strategic level. For example, the current Department of Defense (DoD) definition of national security remains embedded in the

³⁶⁹ Idem, p. 9

³⁷⁰ Letter from McGeorge Bundy to Senator Henry M. Jackson (Sept. 4, 1961), reprinted in *Decisions of the Highest Order, Perspectives on the National Security Council* (eds. Karl F. Inderfurth & Loch K. Johnson 1988), p. 82.

³⁷¹ Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War*, New York: The Modern Library, 1999, p. 81; In a 2008 landmark study, *Forging a New Shield*, the Project on National Security Reform (PNSR) conducted a total of 107 case studies representing one of the most extensive collections of U.S. national security decision-making and policy implementation studies ever compiled. These case studies have been published by the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College. See Richard Weitz, ed., *Case Studies*, Vol. 1, 2008, and Vol. 2, 2012.

past: [National security is] a collective term encompassing both national defense and foreign relations of the United States. Specifically, the condition provided by:

- a military or defense advantage over any foreign nation or group of nations;
- b. a favorable foreign relations position;
- or c. a defense posture capable of successfully resisting hostile or destructive action from within or without, overt or covert³⁷²

National Security Analysis (as opposed to Interagency Policy Coordination (IPC) committee decisions) interagency and intergovernmental policy assessments and accountability should be institutionalized and scheduled on a predictable basis to focus on six critical areas for the President:

- “1. Testing the underlying assumptions of our national security strategy and interagency implementation plans;
2. Determining whether departments have committed the requisite resources and are performing the ongoing mission tasks assigned to them by Staff/IPC developed and presidentially approved interagency implementation strategies and plans;
3. Assessing whether mission objectives are being accomplished and whether policies and interagency implementation strategies and resource commitments are appropriate for such objectives;
4. Assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of interagency activities that seek to accomplish objectives and missions that involve the integration of expertise, capabilities, or resources of multiple departments;
5. Assessing the role of the instruments of national power in terms of current capabilities, and when there are gaps, addressing the need for reallocation of resources, development of further capabilities, and improved organization. (“Instrument of national power” refers to a national security function, sometimes summarized as “DIMEFIL+” [diplomacy, military, intelligence, economic, finance, information, law enforcement, plus others]). Each instrument of national power is inherently an interagency/intergovernmental activity; for example, federal law enforcement spans at least DOJ, DHS, Treasury, and JIATF-South at the federal level, while the military instrument of national power covers both DoD and DHS (Coast Guard) as well as the state national guards and the industrial base; and,
6. Identifying and distributing the information on best practices, lessons learned, and hindrances to effective and timely interagency policy implementation.”³⁷³

The organization and influence of the NSC have varied significantly from one Administration to another, from a highly structured and formal system to loose-knit teams of experts. It is universally acknowledged that the NSC staff should be organized to meet

³⁷² Ibid. 30, citing 68. *Joint Publication (JP) 1.02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, updated February 15, 2012, available from dtic.mil/doctrine/new-pubs/jpl.02pdf.

³⁷³ Ibid, pp. 79-80

the particular goals and work habits of an incumbent President. The history of the NSC provides ample evidence of the advantages and disadvantages of different types of policymaking structures.³⁷⁴

Some observers would have preferred to include a stronger international economic component within the NSC itself, but others have raised strong objections to such an approach on the grounds that national security policymaking, in significant measure the province of diplomats and military officers, is not as closely related to domestic political concerns as international economic policy. Proponents of the latter view argue that economic issues inevitably involve concerns of various domestic groups and the NSC is ill-suited to integrate them into its policymaking processes.

On 13 February 2009, the President (Obama) signed Presidential Policy Directive-1, *Organization of the National Security Council System*....The Principals Committee will be the “senior interagency forum for consideration of policy issues affecting national security” while the Deputies Committee will “review and monitor the work of the NSC interagency process” and “shall be responsible for day-to-day crisis management.”

At the end of World War II, Congress sought to pass legislation that would, in part, reorganize the conduct of national security affairs for the U.S. government to ensure that a surprise attack upon the United States, such as that inflicted at Pearl Harbor, would never again occur³. President Harry S Truman supported some kind of reorganization. When looking at the disparate pieces of information available to different elements of the United States government prior to December 7, 1941, President Truman was reported to have concluded, “If we’d all had that information in one agency, by God, I believe we could have foreseen what was going to happen in Pearl Harbor.”³⁷⁵

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger synthesized the Eisenhower and Johnson models into a new vision for the NSC:

“The National Security Council should be the principal forum for issues requiring interagency coordination, especially where Presidential decisions of a middle and long-range nature are involved. It should meet regularly, and discussion should be limited to agenda subjects. The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs – at the direction of the President and in consultation with the Secretary of State – should be responsible for determining the agenda and ensuring that the necessary papers are prepared – normally by the responsible departments. The NSC staff should assist by synthesizing and sharply defining the options, and occasionally by

³⁷⁴ Best, Robert A. Jr., “The National Security Council: An Organizational Assessment,” Richard A. Best Jr., Congressional Research Service, September 23, 2010, www.crs.gov; Whittaker, Alan G., Brown, Shannon A., Smith, Frederick C., & McKune, Elizabeth (2011). *The National Security Policy Process: The National Security Council and Interagency System*. (Research Report, August 15, 2011, Annual Update). Washington, D.C.: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University, U.S. Department of Defense, p. 5

³⁷⁵ Clark Clifford, “The workings of the national security system: past, present, and future,” SAIS Review, Winter-Spring 1988, interview with Philip Geyelin, pp. 19-20

providing an independent staff study. To keep the meetings small, only principals should attend (with the possible exception of the Under Secretary of State).³⁷⁶

Another element of the American system is that the NSC forms a permanent secure location where information during a conflict can be collected, evaluated and used to direct the actions of the military through the Secretary of Defense to the appropriate Combatant Commanders.

Georgia's National Security Council(s) compared

Because it appears that the Georgian National Security Council was created to mirror the United States' model, it is appropriate to analyze how the Georgian model compares to the U.S. model.

By statute, the Georgian NSC was originally established "to exercise coordination and control implementation of the highest political decisions in state security."³⁷⁷ Most importantly, however, we must recognize that the Georgian model has changed over time in purpose and function. In the Gamsaxurdia and Shevardnadze periods, and in the early Saakashvili administration, the NSC was intended to be a mechanism to coordinate and control the power ministries of Georgia. This function was considered by the drafters of the U.S. model, but it was rejected at the creation of the Council. The U.S. model has always been an agency to coordinate – not control – the actions of multiple cabinet departments and to make recommendations to the President for action, the implementation of which were left to the discretion and direction of the President. The Georgian NSC arguably changed direction later in the Saakashvili period when it became involved with the Task Force for Free and Fair elections, and therefore arguably a more effective body for advice and coordination.

The U.S. NSC is an outgrowth of a National Security Act of 1947 and is organized as an agency within the Office of the President from where it reports directly of the President. The Georgian version was until recently enshrined in Article 99 of the Georgian Constitution of 1995 and subsequent constitutions and was under the chairmanship of the President. Since the Constitutional changes that moved Georgia from a Presidential form of government to a ministerial government under the Prime Minister. It appears that the role of the NSC is an operational agency has likely returned and will continue as such in the future.

The Georgian NSC has often been the incubator for new Ministers in the Georgian government. In contrast, the members of the U.S. National Security Council, and

³⁷⁶ Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs-Designate (Kissinger) to President-Elect Nixon, Memorandum on a New NSC System (Dec. 27, 1968), at 4], reprinted in Dept. of State, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy, 1969–1972, Foreign Relations, 1969–1976, Vol. II, available at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/77855.pdf>.

³⁷⁷ Georgian Law on the NSC.

particularly the National Security Advisor to the President, have not been politicians. They have occasionally moved into other U.S. government positions, such as Henry Kissinger who became the Secretary of State, or even into the Presidency as was the case with George H.W. Bush, but that is the exception, not the rule. In Georgia, in line with the controlling role of the NSC, Shevardnadze and Saakashvili could put pressure on a Ministry by appointing an opposition candidate to head the NSC department that dealt with that Ministry, and often move that Department Head to be the new Minister.³⁷⁸

The activities of the U.S. NSC have generally been open and transparent. Certain topics are classified, but for the most part the NSC operations are available to everyone's review. The Georgian model, on the other hand, has always been highly classified and only some reports of NSC actions are reported in the Press. In fact, interviewees indicated that Saakashvili made most of his decisions in informal discussions with his chief ministers and only called NSC meetings when he wanted support to publicly announce his decisions. Under Shevardnadze the NSC met on a regular basis, but like the operational methods of several U.S. Presidents, under Saakashvili the Council met infrequently and at the call of the President.³⁷⁹

The U.S. National Security Council is divided into functional committees that consider different areas of the world. As many as 178 people are employed by the U.S. NSC.³⁸⁰ Certainly the United States has broader interests than Georgia and requires more people to monitor happenings in the world that affect the United States. But, even though both countries' NSC are supposed to study and predict major happenings, both the U.S. and Georgian NSC's have been accused of failing in that task. One reporter even castigates the U.S. NSC for failing to discern the lack of solid information leading to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, while Georgians have faulted their NSC for failing to predict and effectively respond to the Russian invasion of 2008.

Since at least Japaridze's tenure as Secretary of the NSC, the Georgian NSC, similar to the United States version, is divided into a Principals Committee, consisting of the Ministers of several Georgian Ministries, and a Deputies Committee composed of those ministers' deputy ministers.

Georgia has had multiple National Security Councils operating at the same time under the most recent administrations. Although there were slight differences in the names of the councils – National Security Council and National Security and Crisis Management Council – their functions were overlapping and even as were their members. This caused

³⁷⁸ Correspondence with former Department Head of the NSC.

³⁷⁹ Correspondence with former NSC Department Head.

³⁸⁰ Reuters News Service, "Exclusive: Trump's new national security adviser plans to return NSC to traditional coordinating role." <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-nationalsecurity-exclusive/exclusive-trumps-new-national-security-adviser-plans-to-return-nsc-to-traditional-coordinating-role-idUSKBN1WP31Z>, accessed 4 November 2019

confusion and likely inaction in Georgian affairs. The U.S. has a National Security Council, a National Economic Council and a Homeland Security Council, and while overlap of members is apparent, each council has its unique set of concerns and apparently doesn't cause confusion even when its senior Principals act on different councils.

Because of its non-partisan nature, the U.S. NSC has seldom become involved in politics – political decisions and actions are left to the President. In Georgia, however, we have seen that during the 2008 Georgia-Russian war, Ministers and the Secretary of the NSC were on the battlefield, and in some cases issuing orders to Georgian Armed Forces. The only reported time that something similar happened in the United States was when Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, while on the U.S. NSC, diverted money to support the Sandinista rebels in Nicaragua. North was subsequently convicted of this action, and other political activities of NSC employees has not been reported.

In other respects, the role of the U.S. NSC in civil-military relations has always been behind the scenes and not overt. That is not to say that NSC decisions in the United States do not affect the military and its civil-military relations, but the overt actions of the NSC are carried out as a result of decisions made by the President and not directly attributed to the National Security Council. In Georgia on the other hand, the NSC, especially in its early days, was often directly involved in politics and controlled actions of the Ministries of State.

Comparison of civil-military relations in Georgia and America

Civil-military relations in the United States have been relatively unexceptional since the end of America's involvement in the Vietnam War in the 1960's. That war was intensely unpopular with the American people (largely because of North Vietnam's successful media campaigns) and that unpopularity soured relations between the American population and its military. The military was seen as an uncontrolled arm of violence that angered the average citizen. Anti-war and anti-military demonstrations were common in American cities and at many military posts it was against the commander's orders to wear a military uniform in public.³⁸¹ The response of the military and the Congress was to separate the military from the citizenry by ending the mandatory conscription of civilians into the military and by creating an all-volunteer army. For several years after the end of the Vietnam war, the military was not popular, and recruiters had difficulty meeting their goal of recruiting enough troops to fill the country's defense needs.

That attitude slowly changed and by the time of the first Gulf War in August 1990, the popular image of the American soldier took a dramatic turn around. Victory parades became common and the soldier was extolled as a valued member of society who was willing to give his/her life to defend the country. The American soldier has lived by a clear

³⁸¹ The author served in the U.S. military during this period and was often spit at when he appeared in public in uniform. This was not an uncommon experience.

set of expectations that subordinate his individual feelings and beliefs to the good of the country – at least as that good is defined by the government and military leaders. By law, military officers are forbidden to openly criticize the Commander-in-Chief (President) and the only acceptable way for an officer to show his disagreement with the President's decisions is to resign his commission. Retired senior officers are permitted to discuss their disagreement with the Commander-in-Chief's policies, but even this disagreement is frowned upon.

Although there is continued academic discussion of civil-military relationships in American³⁸², the status of that relationship is a problem without a crisis. As Richard K. Betts put it in analogizing civil-military relations as a crisis: "In American civil-military relations the water never gets chin deep. In the worst of times, it splashes up toward the knees level. Our feet are always wet (with discussions of civil-military relations), but the water rarely goes above our ankles."³⁸³

Civil-military relations in Georgia, on the other hand, have been difficult. In the first years after independence when Georgia faced unrest and civil war, leaders of armed formations, Kitovani and Ioseliani, ran the government. Although they did not meet Huntington's vision of military leaders – one a painter and the other a convicted robber – they controlled the only effective armed formations in the country. When the civil wars ended, the military generally returned to their barracks but the civilian governments continued to delve into purely military affairs. During Saakashvili's administration, Saakashvili named five different Ministers of Defense and five different Chiefs of the Joint Staff. The reason was that the government continued to fear a military coup and consequently changing the leaders often kept any one Minister or Chief from gaining too much power.³⁸⁴

Such fears were not completely unfounded because during Shevardnadze's presidency in 1998 a battalion of the regular army mutinied and marched toward the capitol from its barracks in Senaki. The reported cause of the revolt was the lack of pay and poor living conditions of the troops. The rebellious troops were confronted by loyal units and quickly surrendered with only a minimal number of casualties. Another uprising occurred during the Shevardnadze period. In 2001 some 40 to 50 soldiers seized a military base near the Capital to protest anticipated action against them. The mutineers were allegedly in contact with former dismissed National Guard commander Tengiz Kitovani, then living in Moscow. The base was surrounded by army forces and the mutineers surrendered, with 18 arrested.³⁸⁵ Again, during Saakashvili's administration a tank battalion near the capitol

³⁸² See for example, Travis, Donald S., "Saving Samuel Huntington and the Need For Pragmatic Civil-Military Relations", *Armed Forces & Society*, Sage Publications, 2016

³⁸³ Richard K. Betts, in "American Civil-Military Relations" (Nielsen and Snider, Eds.), The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 2009, p.45

³⁸⁴ Confidential discussions with members of the Ministry of Defense and of the Joint Staff.

³⁸⁵ Georgian National Guard veterans seize military base, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 3 March 2003, <http://www.hri.org/news/balkans/rferl/2003/03-03-24.rferl.html>.

mutinied in 2009 and again the mutiny was quashed and with limited casualties.³⁸⁶ This time the rebellion was supposedly sponsored by Russian provocateurs.

Russian-Georgia War: As stated elsewhere in this study, the situation during the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008 wrought total chaos in civil-military relations with the National Security Advisor and Deputy Ministers of Defense wandering on to the battlefield and issuing orders to military units.³⁸⁷ Although the NSC and the Joint Staff each had permanent offices, those offices were not used as central command posts – NSC and Ministry of Defense officials put themselves wherever they thought appropriate without consideration of jointly collecting and using battlefield information. Even the Commander-in-chief used his cell phone to directly contact military commanders on the battlefield to find out what was going on.³⁸⁸ This demonstrates a lack of military professionalism in the Georgian Armed Forces, which is a key Huntington marker for proper civil-military relations..

The Georgian military reserve system has likewise not been successful or robust. Under the prior system all persons liable for military service from 18 to 40 years once a year underwent 18-day military training. Persons who underwent military service three times were exempt from conscription. One political party, the Girchi party, founded a religious organization, the Christian, Evangelical, Protestant Church of Georgia – Biblical Freedom' organisation. and for a small donation provided a certificate to members that they were clergymen and therefore exempt from military service.³⁸⁹

A nation's reserve system is usually established not only to provide troops to supplement active forces in a crisis, but also as a way to marry the military to the civilian population – often a critical element in civil-military relations. Until the Napoleonic wars, militaries were either raised by impressment of civilians to round out a skeletal force of professional officer cadres or formed by cohorts of professional soldiers who made soldiering their occupation. Napoleon was the first to raise a "levee en mass" to fight his wars in Europe, in which Imprest civilians were forced into formation surrounded by professionals who attempted to keep the newcomers from fleeing the battle.

During the civil wars of the 1990's patriotic citizens, and those who simply wanted the thrill of battle or the plunder that came with victory formed the militia groups that crisscrossed the country. The military under Shevardnadze held the reputation earned by the military formations that had to steal and plunder to try to pay their way, and were considered no better than thieves or criminals by the civilian population. Especially in the capitol, no one would seriously consider sending their son into the military. With the Rose Revolution, the situation began to look up for the military. Pay increased and training was

³⁸⁶ Some have questioned if there was really a mutiny or if this was just a display for Saakashvili to distract attention from other problems in Georgia.

³⁸⁷ Private discussions with members of the General Staff.

³⁸⁸ Private discussion with former senior Georgian military commander.

³⁸⁹ Zaza Abashidze, JAMNEWS, TBILSI, 4 September 2018.

more regular. Because of the continued threat of Russian military action against Georgia Saakashvili developed a concept of “Total Defense.” Patterned after the guerilla movements of the Balkans during and after the second world war, the concept was that in case of a Russian invasion all citizens would be expected to take up arms and fight the invader. Of course the popular guerilla movements in the Balkans were defeated by the Communists and all fighters killed or captured, but Saakashvili could see no other way to defend the country against overwhelming odds posed by a Russian invasion.

The concept of Total Defense had the potential to bring civilians and the military closer together, but the concept never worked. During the Russian invasion of 2008, the reserves were called up and many patriotic Georgians reported for duty. But there was no place for them to go, they had no government furnished weapons and no trained leaders, and the Ministry of Defense realized that using poorly trained reserves would likely create a large number of casualties if the reserves were put into battle, and under those circumstances, the reserves were told to go home.³⁹⁰

The Georgian Minister of Defense issued a decree to cease military conscription within the Ministry of Defense³⁹¹ in June 2016, but after she was dismissed as Minister of Defense her successor reintroduced conscription in February 2017. The conscripts received almost no training or equipment and their duties consist mainly of guarding installations. Because they received no combat training conscripts added very little to the capabilities of the Georgian Armed Forces and provided almost no benefit to civil-military relations in Georgia. Under a recently revitalized system, conscripts are drafted for one year and are supposed to receive three months of “hard” combat training followed by nine months of continuous combat training.³⁹² This may offer the country the ability not only to strengthen its armed forces, but also to inculcate democratic concepts in the recruits.

Sceptics doubt that the new system will work, or even that it is needed:

“Compulsory military service is in force in Georgia. However, if you have the money and the necessary connections in the military registration and enlistment office, or at least, a familiar priest, you can completely avoid conscription. The poor and those who do not have connections are less fortunate – they have to part with their usual way of life, work and family, and in return may well end up not having learnt how to shoot a firearm after the end of their military service.”³⁹³

The latest version of the reserve system is scheduled to begin in June 2020. The reserve will be composed of former servicemen and law enforcement officers, and will ensure “immediate involvement of reservists, as well as strengthening and supporting the armed

³⁹⁰ Private discussions with members of the Ministry of Defense and of the Joint Staff.

³⁹¹ The decree only applied to conscription in the Ministry of Defense. Conscription in other agencies generally was not affected.

³⁹² Agenda.ge, 14 February 2017 - 15:30, Tbilisi, Georgia

³⁹³ Zaza Abashidze, JAMNEWS, TBILSI, 4 September 2018.

forces.” A territorial reserve will be established under the National Guard and will support the armed forces in their respective territorial units.³⁹⁴

With so many false starts of a reserve system, it is difficult to tell if this new system will work, will it be accepted by the populace, will it be affordable, will it serve a real purpose?

³⁹⁴ Civil Georgia, Tbilisi / 8 Feb.'18, http://www.civil.ge/eng/_print.php?id=30856

Chapter Six: Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

The hypothesis posed at the outset of this study is as follows:

Georgian security policy is hostage to partisan politics stemming from internal security challenges as well as from legacy Soviet thinking. Development and functioning of the National Security Council(s) under presidents from 1991 to 2019 demonstrate this tendency and can only be understood in light of history. As well, Georgia may have become a victim of state capture, a pervasive form of political corruption that has been a hallmark of governments from Shevardnadze to the present. As a result, liberal democracy is not achievable in Georgia until the ongoing security challenges related to imbalances in civil-military relations are reassessed, re-understood and corrected by the political elite.

The hypothesis was modified based on completed research in which it has become clear that it is a complex statement encompassing at least two major topic areas that inter-relate in complex ways: liberal democracy and civil-military relations.

Legacy Soviet thinking generally refers to a narrow-minded pattern of thinking that inflexibly follows the dictates of a higher political or military hierarchy. In the words of ISAB's 1999 report:

“In the security and defence spheres, the historical legacy remains evident in the hierarchical, compartmentalized nature of state security structures, having a built-in deficit of transparency and accountability; and in a residual cultural approach which emphasizes reliance on control rather than initiative, and on quantity rather than quality. To these disadvantages must be added a very limited public understanding of, and interest in, security and defence affairs, and a chronic underfunding which is common to all public expenditure areas.”³⁹⁵

In the early days of Georgian independence national security decisions were controlled by politicians, and in fact, there was little difference between the military and politicians. Using Huntington's criteria, there was not a high level of military professionalism or recognition by military officers of the limits of their professional competence or effective subordination of the military to civilian political leaders who make the basic decisions on foreign and military policy. Often the “civilian political leader” became the military leader and imposed their will on the armed forces of Georgia. Consequently, it is difficult to argue that there was recognition and acceptance by the leadership of an area of professional competence and autonomy for the military or the minimization of military intervention in politics or of political intervention in the military.

³⁹⁵ ISAB Report 1999 to the National Security Council of the Republic of Georgia, <http://www.osgf.ge> and <http://civilcouncil.net>

Chaos in the 1990's: In examining Huntington and Babel's elements of a professional military and its effects on the development of liberal democracy, it is clear that most, if not all, of the elements were missing during the Gamsaxurdia presidency. On the democracy side of the ledger, the distinction between the military and civilian leaders of the government did not exist – military formations were cobbled together by civilian leaders and near the end of Gamsaxurdia's tenure the military was actively involved in seeking an end to the civilian government.

Civil war and rebellion: After independence during a period of civil war and unrest, it was necessary for the military to establish stability in the country so that a real civilian government could function. As the political situation stabilized, the need for strong government control of the economy and suppression of unrest led to the suppression of individual rights that fly in the face of the attempt to create a liberal democracy. This trend was understandable and follows Huntington's concern that the first responsibility of government is stability and then a loosening of control to allow individual freedoms to surface.

Return to stability: During the civil war, and belatedly because of it, a national army was created, but it had weak civilian control. Shevardnadze still had to turn to Ioseliani's Mkhedrioni to protect the capital, Tbilisi. In addition, even though the State Council adopted a law that all armed formations would come under the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA), continued to maintain its own troops for internal defense. Civil-military relations continued to be rocky. Several military mutinies occurred, during this period and even though none of them succeeded in a change of administration, they demonstrate the potential dissidence of the military forces of Georgia.

War with Russia: The argument over who started the war with Russia will continue for decades, but the war surfaced some important aspects of civil-military relations. Although the Joint Staff had contingency plans for dealing with a conflict with Russia, those plans were abandoned as the first shots were fired. The government had no central headquarters from which the leaders, civilian and military, could gather current information and issue directives. The Georgian Armed Forces attempted to capture Tskhinvali and when repulsed the army fell apart. Civilian Deputy Ministers of Defense with no military training wandered onto the battlefield and issued conflicting orders to military units, violating Huntington's cautions to maintain the separation between civilian and military functions.

National Security Planning: Shevardnadze was reluctant to sign any "planning" document – he would approve them but leave them unsigned, and such was the fate of the national security concept developed with foreign assistance in 2000. Several western powers, especially the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom – provided training and assistance in national security planning. This assistance led to the production under

Saakashvili of several important security documents that began to show real interface between the civilian government and the military.

Civil Military Relations summary: Using Huntington's criteria, there has been some progress toward professionalism in the Georgian military, mainly around the creation of a military academy for mid-level officers by the Georgia Defense Reform Program. But despite the training and education of a small cadre of Georgian officers, Georgian soldiers – brave sometimes to the point of foolhardiness – see service in the Army as simply a job, not as a calling to the service of their country. Under Saakashvili Georgia did adopt many of the foreign recommendations: appointment of a civilian Minister of Defense and separation from the military of a civilian-staffed Ministry of Defense that increased the democratic tenor of the Georgian security sector, but many challenges remained. Under Georgian law, serving military members are prohibited from membership in political parties, but that prohibition may be honored more on paper than in reality.

Progress begins toward liberal democracy: As stability returned to Georgia the need for control had become habitual and, in some respects, continues today, but some cracks in the control schema began to appear. One evidence was the creation of a Task Force for Free and Fair Elections in 2007 under Saakashvili. The parliamentary elections 2012 brought a sea change to Georgia and could have been the impetus for a complete shift to liberal democracy. The reality, however, is that Georgia traded one authoritarian autocrat³⁹⁶, Saakashvili for another, Ivanishvili, who remains the “Grey Cardinal” controlling nearly every aspect of the Georgian government.

Civil-military relations in Georgia appear to have stabilized in recent years. The Georgian armed forces have transformed from poorly trained and organized militias into a trained professional army that provides security not only for the country, but also in world hot spots in support of NATO forces. The armed forces are a respected institution of Georgian Society³⁹⁷, but service in the armed forces is still not seen as providing a desirable career path for young people.³⁹⁸ This is not to say that the military has not been on the minds of the Georgian government or its people. And while the relationship between the armed forces and the government has stabilized, at least two times since independence, elements of the Georgian military have mutinied against the civilian government in 1998 and 2009, but in each case the mutiny was suppressed and confined to isolated units and not widespread.

³⁹⁶ Zalmayev, Peter and Lincoln Mitchell, “The rise and fall of Mikheil Saakashvili”, Al Jazeera, 20 Feb 2018, see also POLITICO, Brussels, 12 February 2018, <https://www.politico.eu/article/the-rise-and-fall-of-mikheil-saakashvili/>

³⁹⁷ Public Opinion Survey, Residents of Georgia, April 10-22, 2018, Center for Insights in Public Survey, International Republican Institute, https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2018-5-29_georgia_poll_presentation.pdf, p. 4. Favorable opinion of the work of the Georgian Armed Forces, is 83%, second only to the favorable opinion of the Georgian Orthodox Church at 84%.

³⁹⁸ Albuquerque and Hedenskog, P. 34.

The Great Divide: Saakashvili eliminated corruption at the street level of the ordinary citizens of Georgia, but despite his best efforts to modernize the Georgian state and its economy, in 2012 his party was resoundingly defeated by the Georgian Dream Coalition under Bidzina Ivanishvili. Ivanishvili, after serving as Prime Minister, resigned from government but in popular belief he continues to control the government as its “Grey Cardinal”. The general public attitude toward the Georgian Military is favorable, but few really want to serve in the military and military service is generally considered just a job and not a patriotic calling.

Progress under the Georgian Dream: In the realm of national security planning, the Ivanishvili/Margvelashvili period began with much confusion, apparent animosity and mixed messages to the Georgian people and to the international community. As would be expected in a liberal democracy, those elements of confusion were worked out in an orderly, if somewhat confused manner, so that the current result is that one council – a National Security Council – under the Prime Minister, as head of the government, is responsible to plan for the nation’s security.

With respect to the Georgian Armed Forces, now named the Georgian Defense Forces, military professionalism improved considerably with the stabilization of senior leader assignments in the Georgian Defense Force. Pay improved as did discipline. The defense forces were firmly subordinate to the country’s civilian political leaders and those civilian leaders seemed to recognize the military’s area of competence.

Comparison with the United States: The Georgian National Security Council is patterned after the U.S. NSC, but it operates in a very different fashion. The U.S. NSC is an advisory body in the Office of the President and continuously monitors international events in order to prepare advice for the President. In Georgia, the NSC is a secretive body that often is used to control the Ministries of government – even to the extent of approving appointees to the Ministries. That secrecy and control does not need to hinder the development of a liberal democracy, but it sets up a system that can be used for nefarious purposes.

I think that in the final analysis you have to say more on ups and downs of NSC from Zviad to Bidzina

The National Security Council has had its share of change. From mere existence without substance in Gamsaxurdia’s administration, the NSC became a functioning organ of national government under Shevardnadze, performing in a very regimented format. Under Saakashvili It was used mainly as a propaganda tool when Saakashvili wanted to announce a new policy, but it did function and created at least two important scions: the Interagency Task Force for Free and Fair Elections and a functioning inter-agency Deputies Committee that brought together the various agencies in the Georgian

government. Unfortunately, under Ivanishvili the NSC and its confusing twin, the National Security and Crisis Management Council, seemed to be searching for its proper role in government. Currently the NSC is functioning under the Prime Minister, but it is not clear – mainly because all of its actions are secret – if it provides a real value to the current Georgian governing structure. Only time will tell.

One final issue: Authoritarian transition or State Capture

Huntington, a strong proponent of democracy as the best system to run a government, recognized that in developing, or as he called them modernizing countries that were transitioning from a dictatorial system to a democracy, instability and chaos was a common event. His solution was to recognize that often an authoritarian government was necessary to establish the necessary stability for the country to progress toward democracy – an authoritarian transition. While this transition has been helpful in many countries, it can lead to high levels of corruption in which private interests in politics or commerce, because so pervasive that they affect the very nature of government functioning for the benefit of the private interests. This phenomenon is known as “State Capture”.

As defined in a publication by the World Bank, the definition of state capture is derived by the concept or regulatory capture which has been established in the economics literature.

“State regulatory agencies are said to be ‘captured’ when they regulate businesses in accordance with the private interests of the regulated as opposed to the public interest for which they were established. . . . State capture . . . encompasses the formation of laws, rules and decrees by a wider range of state institutions, including the executive, ministries and state agencies, legislature and the judiciary. . . that focuses exclusively on illicit, illegitimate and non-transparent forms of influence.”³⁹⁹

Several states have been accused of being victims of state capture, with the most notable being South Africa.⁴⁰⁰ In *The Shadow State*, the authors define state capture:

The aim of state capture is not to bypass rules to get away with corrupt behavior; the term ‘corruption’ obscures the politics that frequently informs these processes, treating it as a moral or cultural pathology. Yes corruption, as is often the case in South Africa, is frequently the result of a political

³⁹⁹ From concentrated power to state capture: Georgia’s backsliding anti-corruption reforms- Corruption Perceptions Index 2018 in focus, Transparency International, 14 Feb 2019, <https://voices.transparency.org/from-concentrated-power-to-state-capture-georgias-backsliding-anti-corruption-reforms-c94d76bb2b21>

⁴⁰⁰ Camaren Peter and Hannah Friedenstien; *Shadow State: The Politics of State Capture*, WITS University Press, 1 October 2018,

conviction that the formal ‘rules of the game’ are rigged against specific constituencies and it is therefore legitimate to break them. The aim of state capture is to change the rules of the game, legitimize them and select the players who are allowed to participate.”

Georgia has arguably undergone at least two periods that would qualify under Huntington’s definition of an authoritarian transition, first from Shevardnadze to Saakashvili and most recently from Saakashvili to Ivanishvili.

But the question raised here is if the corruption attendant to the transition rises to the level of state capture, and more research is required to reach a conclusion on this issue. Corruption was rampant under Shevardnadze and it can be argued that private interests controlled the government under his regime. Saakashvili began his presidency as a reformer to eliminate corruption, and according to public opinion he succeeded at the ‘street level’ but as his presidency continued into its second term, Saakashvili became more authoritarian and arguably more corrupt at the higher levels of government. Did this rise to the level of state capture by private interests – it might have.

The Ivanishvili election victory was a strong public rebuke of the corruption under Saakashvili, but it simply replaced one autocrat by another. For example, in the 2016 election, Ivanishvili promised to use his personal fortune to forgive up to 600 lari (about \$200) of every Georgian citizen⁴⁰¹ – a clear attempt to purchase votes! More recently, Ivanishvili, as chairman of the Georgian Dream coalition, promised to support a constitutional change to establish proportionate voting the country to level the political playing field between the ruling party and oppositionists. He apparently reneged on his promise when his tightly controlled parliament voted against the change, causing massive public protests in the streets of Tbilisi and other cities.

The heart of liberal democracy is the ability to establish compromise between opposing factions, but Ivanishvili’s nominee to be Prime Minister, publicly stated that instead of working to end the political disputes between the government and its opposition, the governing party will allow no compromise: “we will finish you,” he said.⁴⁰² This attitude is often the result of a one-party political system, and the Georgian Dream, relying on its massive election victories, is treating Georgia as a one-party state.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰¹ Debts of 600,000 Georgian citizens to be cleared just before second round of presidential elections, JAM News, 18 November 2018 <https://jam-news.net/debts-of-600000-georgian-citizens-to-be-cleared-just-before-second-round-of-presidential-elections/>

⁴⁰² Margarita Antidze, Georgian parliament approves new prime minister Giorgi Gakharia, Civil society • 16 October 2018, https://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/alarm_over_increasing_signs_of_state_capture_and_pressure_on_civil_society

⁴⁰³ Antidze, U.S. urges Georgia to reinforce democracy, rule of law, Reuters world news, December 24, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-georgia-politics-usa/u-s-urges-georgia-to-reinforce-democracy->

This research is not able to determine that Georgia is actually a victim of stare capture, but it raised the issue for further research and future examination.

Recommendations:

Georgia has achieved a great deal since its independence in 1991, but it still has a way to go to become a consolidated liberal democracy. The most recent (2019) Freedom House survey of democracy in the world shows Georgia as partly free with a score of 63 out of a possible 100 points:

“Georgia holds regular and competitive elections, and its democratic trajectory showed signs of improvement during the period surrounding a change in government in 2012–13. However, progress has stagnated in recent years. Oligarchic actors hold outsized influence over policy and political choices, and the rule of law continues to be stymied by political interests.”⁴⁰⁴

Achieving “freedom” and liberal democracy in any country is a complex and formidable task and may take generations to reach an acceptable goal. And Georgia is no different. It is unlikely that Georgia will fully achieve liberal democracy any time soon, but some recommendations to help the nation move toward that goal are listed below;

Liberal Democracy

1. Educate the voting public to its power and its role in achieving liberal democracy. As noted in the research, many in Georgia, including many of its political leaders don't fully understand, or maybe don't want to understand, liberal democracy. The 2012 parliamentary election should have shown the Georgian people that they have the power through the ballot box to control their destiny, but the election of the Georgian Dream did not provide the hoped-for freedoms. The country is widely acknowledged to be under the influence of billionaire non-politician Bidzina Ivanishvili whose private interests control the direction of Georgia's foreign and domestic priorities. Georgia must develop an understanding among a majority of the population of their civic duties. In some countries with universal military service provide this education to new recruits, but Georgia does not have that luxury. Consequently, encouraging public debate on the meaning of democracy and the public's role in democracy is important to move forward.

National Security Planning

[rule-of-law-idUSKBN1YS17D](#); Dato Parulava, The Caucasus Digest: Georgian Dream refuses to enforce the law. Dec 10, 2019, www.css.ethz.ch > cis > center-for-securities-studies > pdfs > CAD89

⁴⁰⁴ “Democracy in Retreat,” Freedom in the World 2019, Freedom House, Washington D.C., (2019), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/georgia>

1. Recreate a National Security Council functionally separate from the Government. The NSC should be staffed, to the extent possible, by professionals who have been trained and are skilled in examining internal and external threats to Georgia's democratic goals and in developing national security plans to meet those threats. The Secretary of the National Security Council should be a security professional who devotes his/her time to the affairs of the Council, and should not simultaneously hold the position as Minister of a Ministry.

2. Use external training in the United States and other NATO countries and make hiring decisions for NSC staff based on merit testing. Provide tenure to the NSC professionals to allow them to gain experience and knowledge and to provide stability in the planning process.

3. Make the NSC responsible to both the President as the Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces and to the Prime Minister as the head of government, and require periodic reporting to both officials.

Civil-Military relations

1. Develop a sense of patriotic service in the armed forces. Currently, the armed forces, Georgia Defense Force (GDF), is only a job. Patriotism is high among Georgians, but soldiers enlist (or are conscripted) only to get paid, not because it is their duty to protect the country. This attitude is not unusual among former Soviet republics, but it hinders civil-military relations by destroying long-term commitment to the country. The following recommendations would attack this failing:

A. Re-institute a real national draft that has limited exemptions and provides real military training to conscripts. Use the required conscription time to educate recruits to the concepts of liberal democracy. Of course, this will require significant financing and long-term commitment, but as the entire male population learns to serve the country it is an investment worth making. Likewise, encourage the study of military subjects in the schools and universities. Give awards to students who excel in the advanced study of military history, strategy, tactics and so on.

B. Create some heroes. Georgians have fought in many wars, but other than venerating the 12th century king, David the Builder, there appears to be little attention given to military heroes. Encourage Georgian historians to research noble acts of its warriors and use that research to develop courses to educate military conscripts and students in educational institutions to acts of selfless service in the military service of the state.

C. Re-institute military Orders. The Georgian government awards several medals for exemplary service, but in ancient times Georgia had military Orders. Returning to a noble class society is not necessary and could be deleterious to retaining democratic equality but encouraging military service by recognizing individual patriotism can be one method to instill pride in military service.

It is doubtful that true liberal democracy can be achieved in Georgia until the Georgian people realize that they have the power through the ballot box to control their own destiny, and until the Georgian military is no longer seen as only a job but as a source of pride and not as a source of potential rebellion. These are long-term recommendations and may take a generation or more to come to fruition, but Georgia has a rich history and a real potential to blossom as a democratic member of the international community.

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Wolfgang Gaul/Babeck, Expert member 1995 Constitution Committee
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Giga Bokaria, Secretary, National Security Council
Levan Chkhedize, Member, Young Lawyers Association
Levan Choladze, Secretary, National Security Council
Dr. Davit Darchiashvili, Professor, Ilia State University
Lasha Darsalia, Head, Analytic Department, National Security Council
Archil Gegeshidze, Ambassador to the U.S., National Security Advisor to Shevardnadze
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Batu Kutelia, Chief, Foreign Intelligence Service, Deputy Foreign Minister, Deputy Secretary, NSC, Ambassador to the U.S.
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