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The Georgian View of Military Reforms and Modernization Efforts since 2008

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Open Source, Foreign Perspective, Underconsidered/Understudied Topics

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THE GEORGIAN VIEW OF MILITARY REFORMS AND MODERNIZATION EFFORTS SINCE 2008

By Katherine Hilkert

Abstract

This research of the Georgian view of military reforms and modernization efforts since 2008 revealed that the Georgian government, political opposition, media, and public have divergent opinions regarding these reforms. The government recognizes the importance of the military reforms since 2008 and identifies shortfalls in equipment & materiel, command & control, and education & training. Political opposition accuses the Georgian Armed Forces of politicization, nepotism, and poor management. The Georgian mainstream media considers military-to-military training and NATO-Georgia agreements as particularly important, and the Georgian public favors NATO membership and Georgia's rapprochement with the West.

Several opportunities and threats presently face the Georgian Armed Forces. Such opportunities are the armed force's continued participation in NATO's international missions, engagement of the private sector in the military-industrial complex, and the expansion of regional alliances. The continued threats facing the Georgian Armed Forces are the possibility of a new Russian-Georgian war, Russia's creeping occupation and the uncontrolled de facto territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as cyber threats.

Background

Georgia has a twofold strategic importance to the United States: First, Georgia is the most ambitious pro-Western democracy in the former Soviet space and the second largest non-

NATO member contributor of forces to all international missions¹. Second, Georgia is an important transit hub of gas pipelines connecting Europe with Turkey, the Caspian Sea Basin, and Central Asia, bypassing Russia.

On August 8, 2008 Russian military forces invaded Georgia and advanced as far as the town of Gori, located 59 miles northwest of the capital city of Tbilisi. The Russian-Georgian war lasted five days, but, as a former US State Department Official, Ronald D. Rasmus, put it, “this little war shook the world.”¹ Georgia’s attempt to establish a Western style democracy and become a part of NATO was incompatible with Russian geopolitical interests.² Moscow gave a clear signal that it would not tolerate NATO’s meddling in its backyard.³ In the August 2008 war, heavily armed Russian forces not only destroyed Georgian military facilities and hardware, but also exposed the poor combat readiness of the American-trained Georgian Armed Forces and its inadequate command & control system.⁴ Although after the five day war, then Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili’s government was able to mobilize international support to rebuild the armed forces, the lost war eventually cost his administration reelection. These and other crushing blows to Georgia negatively impacted the country’s military modernization efforts, which could have a more global impact.

This paper examines Georgia’s modernization efforts since the 2008 Russian-Georgian War and answers three main questions: What do Georgians see as the most significant or effective reforms and modernization efforts in the armed forces that have taken place since the war? What impact, from a Georgian perspective, did the deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan have on the armed forces? And, which military reforms and modernization efforts do Georgians

¹ Since 1999, the Georgian armed forces have successfully participated in many international peacekeeping missions in the Balkans, Persian Gulf (Iraq and Afghanistan), Central African Republic, and others.

see as necessary, but either too expensive to carry out, or unlikely to receive in the form of security assistance from another country?

The Georgia scenario is not unique. Shortly after the Russian-Georgian war, an emboldened Russia made similar moves to occupy Crimea, Eastern Ukraine, and defend President Assad's regime in Syria. If left unchecked, Russia could also threaten the sovereignty of its former Baltic Republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, all currently NATO member states.

Perspectives of Military Reforms and Modernization: Divergent Viewpoints in Georgia

Georgia's government, political opposition groups, the media, and the public have divergent viewpoints on the military reforms and modernization of the Georgian Armed Forces. The Government of Georgia is concerned about the financial shortage for continued modernization efforts, but highly values the Georgian Armed Forces' participation in international missions. The political opposition groups are mainly critical towards the Georgian Armed Forces' participation in foreign wars. The Georgian media and public have mixed viewpoints on these issues.

Government

Following the 2008 Russian-Georgian war, the Georgian government identified major shortfalls in the armed forces and implemented reforms in three main areas: equipment & materiel, command & control, and education & training.⁵

The Georgian Ministry of Defense (MoD) renovated and rebuilt the main military infrastructure. It also replaced and upgraded old and obsolete equipment according to modern

standards and adopted a multi-force integrated command & control system to reach interoperability with NATO.⁶ The MoD began building a professional armed force with an effective reserve and improved maintenance and logistics to enhance system capability. The Georgian Armed Forces currently has Mechanized Infantry,² Artillery, and Logistics (tanks and maintenance) units.⁷ According to Georgia's 2011 National Security Concept, the nation's defense planning is based on the principle of total defense, which requires the successful implementation of a civil defense system, the development of proper infrastructure, as well as the creation of an effective military reserve, along with related education and training.⁸

Continued officer education and force training became of particular interest for the government since 2008. The MoD has increased the military budget for education and training and expanded such trainings with NATO member countries. On April 11, 2017, Georgia's Defense Minister Levan Izoria, met with the Minister of National Defense of Lithuania, Raimundas Karoblis, to discuss bilateral cooperation between the two countries, assistance in training of special operations forces, and joint training operations. As part of the bilateral cooperation format, Lithuania will help Georgia develop a NATO-compatible reserve mobilization system. The Lithuanian defense minister also pledged support to his Georgian counterpart to provide educational assistance. The parties agreed to launch a student exchange program between the Georgian Defense Academy and the Lithuanian Defense College. Izoria also invited Karoblis on training operation "Flaming Sword 2017".⁹ Georgia and Lithuania are primarily interested in cooperation of a deterrence policy, due to mutual threats the two countries face.¹⁰

² The Mechanized Infantry includes armored vehicles, tanks, infantry fighting vehicles including BMPs, which are similar to the US Stryker and represents a Soviet amphibious tracked infantry fighting vehicle. (BMP stands for *Boyevaya Mashina Pekhoty*, meaning "infantry fighting vehicle").

In the government's perspective, deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan have had a major impact on the military. By participating in NATO-led international missions, the armed forces gained invaluable experience in real world combat operations, and saved the government a lot of money for necessary simulated training. Furthermore, these deployments significantly enhanced the Georgian Armed Forces' interoperability with NATO.

According to Irakli Sesiashvili, a Georgian military expert, the country's primary goal is to increase its own defense capabilities and enhance the potential of the armed forces' combat capabilities. Therefore, participating in such international peacekeeping missions is paramount, since no mock military operations and training will replace real-life experience. Dimitry Shashkin, a former defense minister added that prior to these deployments, the armed forces received special training, which increased their experience and combat abilities, and potentially reduce the loss of lives of the soldiers in future conflicts. Georgia is also a signatory party of the US-Georgia Strategic Cooperation document, which obligates it to participate in these international missions.¹¹

In addition, Georgia currently continues to receive major security assistance from the United States and Europe. In February 2016, during the 52nd National Security Conference in Munich, former Georgian Defense Minister Tina Khidasheli stated that, per her conversations with US and NATO generals, Georgia's aid in the defense sector will increase three to fourfold. The former Defense Minister also mentioned various projects that Georgia will receive from its Western partners in 2017. However, she did not identify the details of this project, perhaps due to security reasons.¹²

The government still depends on its international partners for continued military modernization efforts like equipment, military hardware, and education. In order to lessen

dependency on partner nations, Georgia has been developing its own military industry since 2010. The Georgian State owned military-scientific research center *Delta* has been producing various military hardware not only for local use, but also for sale. For example, in 2015, Delta sold Azerbaijan mortars and grenade launchers, as well as cash-in-transit armored vehicles to Egypt and anti-hail systems to Moldova. Saudi Arabia signed a \$40 million contract with the company to purchase 100 units of medical evacuation armored vehicles. Delta also manufactures armored vests, helmets, rocket-launching systems, UAVs, rifles, anti-tank mines, artillery systems, combat helicopters, and military tents. The company recently rolled out the infantry fighting vehicle *Lazika* and the armored personnel carrier *Didgori*.¹³

Despite considerable successes achieved by the government in the efforts to modernize the armed forces in the post-August 2008 period, many challenges remain. The primary challenge lies in defense budgetary constraints. The nation's defense budget as a percentage of gross domestic product peaked in 2007-2008 to 8.8 and 9.1 percent respectively. By 2016 and 2017, it dropped to 2 and 1.9 percent respectively because of the economic crisis.¹⁴ In addition, the armed forces face shortages in qualified personnel, acquisition, and procurement systems. It also suffers from an insufficient number of qualified personnel poor logistics, protection against cyber security threats, and organizational and structural shortfalls. Former Defense Minister Khidasheli asserted that the armed forces require complete decentralization. She suggested that the government should focus on mobilizing all of its resources to make sure that no region of Georgia would become vulnerable in the event of external aggression, as it happened in the 2008 Russian-Georgian war.¹⁵

*Political opposition*³

The political opposition recognizes the effects of a successful transition of the Georgian Armed Forces from the old Soviet model to a NATO compatible army, but they remain skeptical because of the Georgian government's practices of politicization, nepotism, and its poor management skills. Deputy Defense Minister Nodar Kharshiladze believes that a horizontal planning mechanism, unheard of in the Soviet military, has been slowly replacing previous vertical planning and that this has been having a positive impact. However, difficulties of horizontal planning still prevail in the armed forces.¹⁶ He claimed that although Georgia strives to build a professional military force and reach interoperability with NATO, the personnel management system has been lagging behind. Another problem is the frequent change of leadership in the armed forces. Such shifts are not necessarily prompted by appointment of more qualified personnel, but by appointment of the successive governments of those who are their close friends and loyalists, resulting in the loss of well-trained, experienced personnel. Political opposition of the government express discontent with the Georgian authorities for abolishing the air force and navy.¹⁷ They are equally concerned about the armed forces' lack of understanding of modern secure communications systems. In the war with Russia, Georgian armed forces were unable to operate the American systems of secure communications equipment properly and used

³ The term *political opposition* defines all segments of population, including former government service members and representatives of current opposition parties who challenge current government and criticizes its reforms, including the Georgian National Movement Party, the United National Movement party, the Georgian Labor Party, the National Democratic Party, and others.

mobile telephones on the battlefield, thus jeopardizing security and coordination of military actions.¹⁸

The opposition is quite critical towards Georgia's participation in international missions, viewing the armed forces' deployments in foreign wars as a waste of lives of young Georgian men. They claim that the missions were unnecessary for such a small country. For example, out of 1700 Georgian soldiers fighting in Helmand Province in Afghanistan, Georgia lost 29 young men. Nino Burjanadze, the leader of an the political opposition Democratic Movement party, claims that Georgia has its own unresolved problems in that Russians occupy 20 percent of the country's territory. Furthermore, the opposition contends that Georgia's support of NATO may lead to the outbreak of terrorist activities in Georgia, similar to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States and the 2005 London attacks. Furthermore, the opposition is concerned that the international deployments of the Georgian Armed Forces may further provoke Russia. Receiving no outside help during Russia's attack on Georgia in August 2008, despite Georgia's staunch support of the NATO-led international missions, is still fresh in their memory. Members of the opposition parties warn that despite multiple deployments, the Georgian Armed Forces has not gained the necessary experience to face conventional forces. Instead, training has been limited to asymmetric warfare designed for only anti-terrorist operations.¹⁹ In their opinion, homeland defense requires a different set of skills and training in conventional combat and defense operations to face its conventional enemies.²⁰

Some members of the opposition assert that the current MoD lags behind in training and equipping the armed forces.²¹ They express concern that the government is losing its vision and strategy of the future development of the armed forces by no longer acquiring new weapons systems. They assert that the government spends a large portion of its defense budget on salaries

of an ever-growing bureaucracy that leaves necessary modernization challenges unanswered.²² By 2016, this trend reversed somewhat after the MoD instituted a major personnel downsizing, mostly in civilian personnel. However, the government still spent 59.1 percent of the military budget for salaries and only seven percent in procurement.²³

*Media*⁴

Georgian mainstream media generally applauds the armed forces' modernization efforts since 2008. The media considers military-to-military training, deployments and signing of various NATO-Georgia defense agreements as particularly significant. In addition to conventional western partners, Georgia expanded its military cooperation with China. On April 2017, the MoD hosted a Chinese defense delegation and devised plans for joint military exercises and training. Defense Minister Levan Izoria also invited China to the Georgian Defense and Security Conference, while Chinese officials extended invitations to Georgian cadets to train in Chinese military institutions.²⁴

Furthermore, the media sees international deployments as a springboard for Georgia to join NATO. The Georgian media extensively covers all news related to deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. Such coverage is generally positive. According to the Georgian mainstream media, the armed forces gained invaluable experience in Iraq and Afghanistan. The media considers a highly trained and educated army as the nation's great deterrent force against any potential foreign aggressors. A case in point is an article published on the MoD website on April 18, 2017,

⁴ The term *media here* includes Georgia's mainstream printed or electronic media, but does not include social media.

which covers the successful protection of the Bagram air base in Afghanistan by the II infantry brigade, 23rd battalion as part of “Resolute Mission.”²⁵

Georgia is a signatory of many joint international military agreements and a participant in various international missions. At the NATO Wales Summit in September 2014, Georgia received the alliance’s special partner status, which ensured Georgia’s continued participation in international peacekeeping missions. In addition, the first ever workshop on Substantial NATO-Georgia Package Synchronization (SNGP), conducted in March of 2017, was widely covered by the Georgian media.²⁶ The aim of this three day meeting was to achieve a joint approach to a new strategic direction, consolidate international support, identify the Georgian Armed Forces’ support needs, and improve its resource management. The SNGP plan includes state procurements, a NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Center, logistics, air defense, aviation, Defense Institution Building, strategic communications, cyber security, exchange of intelligence information and safe communications, counter mobility, naval security, military police, special operations forces, crises management and operational planning.²⁷ SNGP was considered to be yet another tool for bringing Georgia closer to NATO.

On the other hand, the Georgian Armed Forces face several constraints from the perspective of the mainstream media. It noted the lack of funds and need for heavy armaments and the absence of a centrally operated radar systems. It has been reported by the media that the MoD has struggled to acquire anti-tank and anti-aircraft systems due to their high cost and that the government eliminated the air force and navy due to high maintenance costs. In 2010, the Chief of Command of the Georgian Armed Forces announced that the Air Force was an “expensive luxury.”²⁸ The Georgian Air Force was subsequently abolished and subordinated to the Land Forces as the Aviation and Air Defense brigade.²⁹ The media also identifies the

importance of a professional reserve force, but acknowledges the shortage of both professional army reserve specialists and expensive modern technologies.

Public

The Georgian public sees continued training and education of the Georgian Armed Forces as very significant process of joining NATO. Surveys conducted in 2008 by *Baltic Survey* and *Gallup* showed that 85 percent of Georgians favor NATO membership and rapprochement with the West.³⁰ The public also recognizes the tremendous value in training and equipping the armed forces, as well as various types of assistance received from NATO partners. The same survey shows that the Georgian people care about national security, Georgia's territorial integrity, and economic development.³¹

The Georgian public has divergent opinions on the armed forces' deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Some people consider these deployments as helpful for Georgian Armed Forces to receive necessary training and experience, while others believe that Georgia should not be involved in foreign wars and demand the immediate withdrawal of the armed forces from the various theatres of operation. Tengiz Pkhaldze, a military strategist believes that Georgia's participation in these operations represents a small contribution for Georgia's Euro Atlantic integration.³² In addition, many Georgian veterans post comments on Georgian social media sites claiming poor treatment from their commanders during deployments, insufficient food rations, and complete disregard of their problems. Also, many of them cannot find employment upon returning home. Former Defense Minister Khidasheli's decision to dress the armed forces only in locally-made uniforms and boots caused tremendous problems for soldiers. Most Georgians feel that the government disregards complaints about the poor quality of military boots that hamper

soldiers' maneuverability on the battlefield, while military elites live a good life and purchase luxury cars and expensive items.³³ Those who oppose deployments claim that the armed forces receives training in small-scale anti-terrorist operations, which is not enough to face conventional forces to properly defend the homeland.

The Georgian public believes that the air force is paramount for national defense. Proponents of air defense claim that anti-aircraft missile systems are insignificant unless the nation has a well-trained air force. The decision to abolish the Georgian Air Forces concerns many people. Georgia continued to depend on its partner nations for support and cooperation. For example, as part of the defense cooperation with Japan, Georgia participates in an exchange of military experts and in joint education and research. According to the Deputy Minister of Defense, David Ebralidze, by 2018 the US will supply Georgia two Iroquois Helicopters with crew training as part of a \$50 million grant. Air defense systems, on the other hand, are very expensive and modern and highly effective ones are even costlier. The average systems cost \$50 million and more. This price tag easily increases after adding crew training and infrastructure development.

The Chair of the Defense and Security Committee, Irakli Sesiashvili has speculated that the M1 Abrams tank, which appeared at a parade in 2016, will deploy to Georgia for deterrence purposes.³⁴ He noted in his interview with the newspaper *Resonance* that the Abrams tanks brought to Georgia by Americans will be used in the joint US-Georgian military exercises planned in spring of 2016, and upon the end of the exercises these tanks could possibly stay in Georgia.

Opportunities and Threats Facing Georgia's Armed Forces

Opportunities

The former President of Georgia, Mikhail Saakashvili, noted that Singapore began building a small military industry with its own research and development, and Georgia needed to follow a similar development path.³⁵ Judging by discussions on various Georgian forums and commentaries, the general public welcomes the opportunity for the military industry to develop, so as to lessen Georgia's dependency on foreign aid.³⁶

Deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan also provide the armed forces great opportunities. In these theatres it gained necessary combat experience in asymmetric warfare tactics that weakens an adversary and affects its ability to wage war, according to the great military strategist Sun Tzu. In the event of a renewed Russian attack, Georgia's only chance of survival is asymmetric warfare. Fighting in Georgia's complex geography and mountainous terrain also represent natural barriers to a conventional enemy and provide greater opportunities for asymmetric warfare. History has shown many examples of small armies overwhelming and defeating larger conventional forces through protracted fights and surprise attacks. For example, an online news source, *Democracy & Freedom Watch* described how "during Russo-Georgian blitz war in 2008, General Khrulyov command[ing] 58th army of the Russian Armed Forces. . . was severely wounded in August 9 when his column was hit by the artillery and attacked by the Georgian Special Forces in the outskirts of Tskhinvali."³⁷

Furthermore, Georgia lacks a local private sector engagement in the military modernization efforts. Ownership of any nascent military industrial complexes in Georgia are quickly subordinated to the MoD. Most tenders issued by the government are for procurement of small construction services, IT spare parts, and uniforms, to name a few. There are no large

private government contractors like Halliburton, Lockheed Martin, or BAE systems in Georgia. The MoD's tendency to subordinate private companies under its control, on the one hand, and the country's limited military budget, on the other, provide insufficient incentives for such companies to emerge and thrive. Georgia has an opportunity to facilitate the formation and growth of the privately owned military-industrial base. By doing so, the government may be able to increase the quality of its procurements, create competition among contractors, provide better products for more affordable prices, and contribute to job growth.

Finally, Georgian aspirations to NATO membership is extremely important for its national security, but the nation will also gain from forming regional alliances. Although Georgia currently cooperates on military issues with Ukraine and the Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, it is unclear if Georgia has ever made any attempts to enhance military alliances within the greater Caucasus and the Central Asian regions. Such alliances should be based on mutual interests and deterrence against common threats.

Threats

Georgia currently faces three main national security threats and strategic resource challenges to address them. The threats include the possibility of a new Russian-Georgian war, Russia's creeping occupation and uncontrolled de facto territories, and cyber threats. Georgia's lack of air and naval defense capabilities, along potential cuts of international grants and programs for defense capabilities development, are the principle strategic resource concerns.

Another Russian-Georgian war is still a possibility and the main reason for this threat is Georgia's aspiration to join NATO. The nation's continued militarization efforts and joint training exercises with the members of the alliance threaten Russia's regional geopolitical

interests. The Kremlin sees Georgia within the sphere of its influence and Tbilisi's rapprochement to NATO is unsettling for Russia. For example, General Alexander Shlyakhturov, former head of the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the Russian General Staff, admitted that Russian intelligence assets carefully monitor Georgia's military efforts.³⁸ Russia is aware that Georgia continues to receive military support from NATO, Israel, and Ukraine. It is unclear how Moscow would react if Georgia is officially offered membership in NATO and at that time, a Russian preemptive attack against Georgia cannot be excluded.

Georgia faces another significant threat from Russia: A creeping occupation of its territory. Since the Russian-Georgian war, the Russian peacekeeping forces stationed in South Ossetia have been gradually moving borders into Georgia proper. A Georgian online paper, *the Newsday Georgia*, wrote that the Russian occupational regime once again moved one kilometers into the Georgian proper in the village of Khurvaleti. The Russian forces even posted a banner within 50 meters from the British Petroleum Oil Pipeline.³⁹ Furthermore, Georgia faces threats from its two secessionist de facto territories, Abkhazia and South Ossetia that are currently controlled by Moscow. The 2017-2020 Defense Strategic Review identifies the Russian occupation of these territories as Georgia's aggravated national security threat that not only violates Georgia's sovereignty and human rights, but also turns these territories into a hotbed of organized transnational crimes.⁴⁰

Cybersecurity is an emerging threat for Georgia. If past behavior is any indication of future actions, the Kremlin will continue to wage cyber warfare against Georgia. Russia successfully used cyberattacks on Georgia prior to the five day war by implementing denial-of-service attacks on the government's websites and hampering the nation's internet communication capabilities.⁴¹ Cybersecurity is a pressing threat for the government, but by 2020 the MoD plans

to issue tenders to purchase necessary technical and software programs to improve its IT security system.

The lack of an air force and navy represent a grave deficit in Georgia's defense capabilities, and make Georgia dependent on its partners for its national security. For example, the MoD Strategic Review 2017-2020 recognizes the need for continued reforms in anti-armor, air defense, explosive ordnance disposal, artillery, and intelligence capabilities, and made recommendations to increase the budget to finance these areas.⁴² Additionally, international assistance to build Georgian military capacity is a paramount and irreplaceable strategic resource, but subject to cuts and precariously outside the nation's control.

Conclusion

This research revealed that the Georgian government, political opposition, media, and public have divergent opinions regarding military reforms and modernization efforts in Georgia since 2008. The continued reforms are important in the eyes of the Georgian government in order to overcome shortfalls in equipment & materiel, command & control, and education & training. Political opposition is concerned about politicization, nepotism, and poor management of the Georgian Armed Forces. The Georgian mainstream media widely covers news on NATO-Georgia military-to-military trainings and remains optimistic of Georgia's NATO membership. Georgian public is hopeful that a strong military will both defend the Georgia' national sovereignty and bring Georgia closer to the European community.

Endnotes

¹ Asmus, Ronald D. 2010. *A Little War That Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan

² Independent Mission Report on factual circumstances related to the Conflicts in Georgia
<http://smr.gov.ge/Uploads/66c4e7.pdf>

³ Georgia's rapprochement with the West began at the end of 1990's when Georgia joined European Commission. These relations further strengthened following September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the US reorientation of its foreign policy towards NATO's eastward expansion. In this time period, US provided strong help to Georgia for modernization of the GAF. In the run up to the August 2008 war, NATO made a procedural decision, which included a MAP action plan for Georgia and Ukraine. Ibid.

⁴ The United States took on bigger responsibility to modernize the GAF. The US support of Georgia was mainly concentrated on the military reforms within the NATO cooperation framework "Partnership for Peace" (PfP) and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). Ibid.

⁵ These reforms are still ongoing

⁶ Copyright (c) 2011. RFE/RL, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington DC 20036. www.rferl.org
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1532128268?pq-origsite=summon&accountid=11091>

⁷ NSC https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/07/GEO_National_Security_Concept_Georgia_2012.pdf

⁸ National Security Concept of Georgia
https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/07/GEO_National_Security_Concept_Georgia_2012.pdf; The term *total defense*, was first mentioned by Georgia's former President Saakashvili in July 2010. <http://bit.ly/2rEl3hx>

⁹ *FLAMING SWORD* is a multinational exercise testing for special operations forces. This exercise involved forces from NATO nations and partners, including: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States.

¹⁰ Georgia, Ministry of Defense of. 2017. *Georgian and Lithuanian Defense Ministers' Joint Press Conference*. Tbilisi, April 11. <https://www.mod.gov.ge/c/news/litva-saqartvelpreskonferencia>

¹¹ Georgia is an active participant in various international missions including European Union multinational military training missions in Central African Republic (EUTM RCA, EUTM MALI), as well as a member of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the European Union in The Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). Georgia signed various international cooperation mechanisms such as, the Annual National Program, Planning and Review Process, NATO-Georgia Commission, Military Committee + Georgian Work Plan as well as other NATO programs and initiatives.

¹² Ministry of Defense of Georgia. 2016. Defense Minister summarized Munich Security Conference.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGs5ZXBEFk&feature=youtu.be>

¹³ <https://forum.ge/?f=49&showtopic=33593620&st=1650>

¹⁴ See Figure “Defense Budget of Georgia as a Percentage of GDP 2004-2017.

¹⁵ Shamugia, Vakhtang. 2016. Structural Modernization of GAF: Georgia Creates Two, Eastern and Western Commands. http://www.resonancedaily.com/index.php?id_rub=2&id_artc=28278

¹⁶ <https://jamestown.org/program/georgia-reviews-results-of-its-military-reform/>

¹⁷ Republic of Georgia. 2009. Irakli Sesiasvili: Today’s Army cannot defend the homeland. <http://www.opentext.org.ge/index.php?y=2009&art=8163>

¹⁸ Menabde, Giorgi. 2014. “The Jamestown Foundation.” *Eurasian Daily Monitor*. February 4.

¹⁹ Macfarlane, S. Nick. 2012. *Georgia: National Security Concept and National Security*. Tbilisi, August.

²⁰ <http://www.militaria.ge/?page=history>

²¹ Particularly former high-ranking military officers who served in the GAF during the Saakashvili government and lost their positions.

²² Menabde (Ibid)

²³ The Ministry of Defense. The White Book

²⁴ <https://www.mod.gov.ge/c/news/izoria-chineli>

²⁵ <https://www.mod.gov.ge/c/news/uflebamosilebisgadbareba-bagramissaaviaciobazaze>

²⁶ <https://www.mod.gov.ge/c/news/SNGP-samushao-shexvedra>

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Maintenance of just an SU-25 engine cost the MoD \$180,000 and the price for Air Force combat readiness was \$800 000

²⁹ Tsuladze, Zaza. 2014. Voice of America. Georgia abandons Air Force. <http://www.amerikishma.com/a/georgia-wants-to-sell-6-su-25-planes/1943058.html>

³⁰ Number of Georgians favoring NATO membership fell in 2015 due to NATO’s unfulfilled promises. According to public opinion polls conducted in April 2015 by the US National Democratic Institute (NDI) 68% of Georgians were in favor of joining the EU and 65% were in favor of joining NATO. https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/pw_57_ang_georgian_drift_net.pdf

³¹ National Library of the Parliament of Georgia. Support of Georgian Public of NATO integration. <http://www.nplg.gov.ge>

³² Should Georgia Participate in International Military Operations? August 31, 2014 <http://www.militaria.ge/?page=history>

³³ <https://forum.ge/?f=49&showtopic=33593620&st=1650>

³⁴ <http://accent.com.ge/ge/news/details/7272>

³⁵ Saakashvili Talks about “Total Defense.” Civil Georgia. July 28, 2010. Tbilisi. <http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=23008>

³⁶ Defense Policy of Georgia – Total Defense. Giorgi Tavdgiridze. 09/14/2010. <http://presa.ge/new/?m=military&AID=895>

³⁷ Russian General, wounded in 2008, appointed at Abkhazian army military command. 2015. Democracy & Freedom Watch. <http://dfwatch.net/russian-general-wounded-in-2008-appointed-at-abkhazian-army-military-command-35811>

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³⁹ Russia’s Creeping Occupation Continues. Newsday Georgia. 11 JUL 2015 <http://bit.ly/2ripY8a>

⁴⁰ Ministry of Defense of Georgia. Strategic Defense Review 2017-2020. <https://mod.gov.ge/assets/upload/uploads/pdf/SDR-GEO.pdf>

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⁴² Ministry of Defense of Georgia. Strategic Defense Review 2017-2020. <https://mod.gov.ge/assets/upload/uploads/pdf/SDR-GEO.pdf>