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**THESIS**

**DEFENSE INSTITUTION BUILDING: THE DYNAMICS  
OF CHANGE IN GEORGIA AND THE NEED FOR  
CONTINUITY OF EFFORT**

by

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March 2014

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GEORGIA AND THE NEED FOR CONTINUITY OF EFFORT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present work analyzes two decades of Georgian defense institution-building since the country gained independence from the Soviet Union at the start of the 1990s. Georgia has succeeded from being a failing state in the '90s to the nation state that is able to contribute in international security efforts with its NATO/Partnership for Peace allies and partners. However, the country still needs to continue its efforts to build democratic and successful state institutions, including those of security and defense. The objective of the work at hand is to reveal the challenges that the Georgian defense institution faced during its establishment and transformation. In particular, this study assesses manpower management as a reflection of the institutional process and challenge to defense institution-building in Georgia's young history as an independent nation state since 1991. Due to the common Communist legacy and path to NATO integration, this analysis of the political and other factors that challenged the Central and Eastern European states has relevance here. The work can serve as a guide and primer as well as comparative analysis for the defense institution-building effort in other parts of the world, especially in post-Communist nation-states.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANP	Annual National Plan
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DEEP	NATO Defense Enhancement Program
GAF	Georgian Armed Forces
GTEP	Georgia Train and Equip Program
IPAP	Individual Partnership Action Plan
ISAB	International Security Advisory Board
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MAP	Membership Action Plan
MOD	Ministry of Defense
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGC	NATO-Georgia Council
NGO	Non-Government Organizations
NSC	National Security Concept
OCC E&F	Operational Capabilities Evaluation and Feedback Programme
PAP-DIB	Partnership Action Plan for Defense institution-building
PARP	Planning and Review Process
PDP	NATO-Georgia Professional Development Programme
PfP	NATO Partnership for Peace
PPBS	Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System
SDR	Strategic Defense Review
SOFA	Status of Force Agreement
SSOP	Sustainment and Stability Operations Program
UK	United Kingdom
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

This thesis analyzes two decades of Georgia's contemporary defense institution-building by assessing its programmatic progress, failures, and challenges in comparison with the experience of the new (that is, post-1989) NATO members in the recent accession process since 1995. This work outlines further efforts in various realms of state and will evaluate the armed forces' need to develop more effective defense institutions amid rapid change in the strategic world. In particular, this study assesses manpower management as a reflection of the institutional process, and challenges to defense institution-building in Georgia's young history as an independent nation state prior to, and since, 1991. Despite its extensive attempts at progress in defense institution building, the government of Georgia still needs to focus on achieving effective defense systems that provide national security, and on becoming fully compatible with NATO membership criteria. The primary question this thesis will answer is: What factors impede Georgia from successfully achieving defense institution building?

The challenges in responding to this thesis question have been multiple. In the 1990s, the newly established Georgian security institutions were still functioning like Soviet-type organizations. At that time citizens of Georgia felt particularly sensitive about their national, political, and ethnic identities. Additionally, Russia was attempting to restore its political influence over the region. All of these factors played a role in one civil and two ethnic wars in the country. These conditions operated during the course of the 1990s, when defense institutions were first established in Georgia under challenging conditions that exceeded those of Central Europe. In parallel, the Georgian Armed Forces (GAF) and the Ministry of Defense (MoD) suffered from a legislative insufficiency, scarceness of resources, a high rate of corruption, a Soviet inherited administration, and a lack of skills and professionalism.

Despite the doubts in the country and in the West, and what seemed at the beginning as a nearly impossible prospect, Euro-Atlantic integration was the only way to start development of the defense institutions, “as in many Central and East European countries.”<sup>1</sup> In addition, there was little progress toward extricating Georgia from its dilemma of inadequate security and government. When Eduard Shevardnadze, the President of Georgia (and previous Foreign Minister of USSR), began talking about “knocking on NATO’s door,” few people with authority had a clear understanding of the various challenges or the advantages of the NATO integration. The first years were marked by frustration and setbacks, which ultimately gave way to the 2003 Rose Revolution. The new Georgian government, led by President Mikheil Saakashvili, and referred to as the “Reform Team,” made significant reforms to the security sector, to the process of democratization, to the economy, and to the fight against crime and corruption.

The course toward defense institution-building and NATO integration intensified through the establishment of democratic civilian control over the newly created and untested armed forces. In 2004, with encouragement from NATO nations, Georgia began defense reforms via the Strategic Defense Review (SDR). The SDR considered the development of a conceptual framework and outlining short-, mid- and long-term development plans. In parallel, increased defense budget and international assistance—especially from the U.S.—improved GAF capabilities and made them more compatible with NATO. This enabled GAF to participate in international operations, such as with the Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghan campaigns.

A brutal and heartbreaking development in this process was the 2008 Russian-Georgian War, an event that underscored the security problems of the Caucasus, as well as the ambition of the Russians to put a stop to NATO enlargement. Georgia attempted to resolve the financial and infrastructure loss resulting from this brief conflict by increasing international assistance, focusing on the economy, and supporting the national will to retain independence. During its first term, Saakashvili’s government achieved much success and demonstrated its ability to implement radical reforms (e.g., extracting

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<sup>1</sup>Chris Donnelly, “Reform Realities,” in *Post-Cold War Defense Reform Lessons Learned in Europe and the United States*, eds. Istvan Gyarmati and Theodor Winkler (Washington, D.C: Brassey’s, 2002), 40.



corruption, gaining broad population support for democratization), although at some point, further institution building appeared constrained by the political interference.

As the theories of civil-military relations<sup>2</sup> and practices of East European countries like Hungary<sup>3</sup> suggest, the teething problems of the democratic civilian control have hampered vigorous democratic civil-military relationships and defense institution-building processes. Throughout the 2000s, the weakness of the civilian institutions in Central and Western Europe have promoted “common failing with frequently disastrous results.”<sup>4</sup> To respond to these failings, this thesis will focus on the second phase of the institution building, when the basic financial, logistical, and infrastructural requirements were met and the main challenge was related to effective civilian control. Even later, when available training and education enabled personnel to further development, defense policy still remained less effective amid the subjects of domestic and international criticism.

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

The importance of this thesis is manifest in the fate of the Caucasus as a question of contemporary European security, and the efficacy and prospects for the NATO-Russian relationship, and the vitality of new democracies in regions of crisis. This case also speaks to the record of democratic defense institution-building since 1991. Defense institutions form the core element in ensuring Georgia’s sovereignty, national security, and foreign policy priority integration into NATO, and they also have greatly aided in the building of a modern democratic state.

Supported by NATO integration, defense institution-building contributes to the necessary development of the civil society in the country, due to the Soviet legacy and its entropy of state and society. Georgia should realize that “integration with NATO is more

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<sup>2</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, “Power, Professionalism, and Ideology: Civil-Military Relations in Theory,” in *The Soldier and the State the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957), 80–84.

<sup>3</sup>Jeffrey Simon, *Hungary and NATO Problems in Civil-Military Relations* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2003).

<sup>4</sup>Donnelly, *Reform Realities*, 42.

than integration with military alliance. The integration with a community of values is based on freedom, individual liberty, democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and the rights of minorities.”<sup>5</sup> Georgia knows it must share these values and establish contemporary systems of defense management. Defense institutions, to be effective, require long-term planning, integrity, and respect for established rules more than individual rules. These new requirements will also support the development of a new organizational culture within defense institutions, and will encourage positive cultural changes. As defense institutional capacity is developing, it can become the best practice for other state institutions. Finally, defense institution-building considers well-educated and skilled military personnel and defense civilians, and they are becoming more capable contributors to state societal development.<sup>6</sup>

Since its beginning, defense institution-building in Georgia has made considerable progress in absolute terms from the nadir of 1991; however, as is often the case when parliaments in the West look askance at soldiers and armies as a function of budget, and as a U.S. Congressional report in 2010 stated, “In practically all areas, GAF defense institutions, strategies, doctrine, and professional military education were found to be seriously lacking.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it is important to explore such short falls and study the aspects that are crucial to overcome them, especially when the defense institution-building fails to be an object of policy analysis in Georgia.

After 2008, only a few Georgian and foreign experts studied defense institution building; however, their work was constrained due to the lack of institutional transparency. According to the Institute of Development of Freedom of Information, the

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<sup>5</sup> Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Joint Press Conference with President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili and NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, June 27, 2013, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_101792.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_101792.htm).

<sup>6</sup>Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (London: Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1971), 430–435.

<sup>7</sup>*Georgia: One Year after the August War: Hearing before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate*. 111th Cong. 17 (August 2009).

Georgian Ministry of Defense has been revealed as one of the “most closed”<sup>8</sup> civil agencies in terms of sharing public information. Limiting the public and expert awareness of defense institutions, the MoD has constrained the opportunity for a better use of the assistance of partners—including the U.S.—and has also limited the possibility of comprehensive research. This research would contribute to a better understanding of the existing challenges to more effectively developing defense institutions.

### **C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES**

Institution building in a state represents a long and complex process, and many soldiers and civilians have little insight into its dynamics and imponderables. In a democracy’s defense, institution building starts with institutionalization of democratic control, often with a legacy of totalitarian or authoritarian statecraft that has ended poorly. This considers civilian and legislative involvement and supervision in the development, endorsement, and implementation of policies and strategies, and also decision making in the defense field. The important part is to establish appropriate procedures to ensure that laws are properly implemented and defense institutions cooperate to achieve common goals.<sup>9</sup>

Georgia has achieved progress over the last ten years in establishing civilian control; developing defense legislation, policies, and strategies; reforming the defense institutions by defeating corruption; training and educating personnel; and forming inter- and intra-agency cooperation mechanisms. The Georgian Armed Forces are compatible and able to operate with the NATO Allies armed forces in international peacekeeping missions. At the same time, the following concerns continue to arise: nearly all concepts in the defense field lack plans for implementation; civilian control lacks competence and sufficiency; command and control, decision making, and resource allocation lack effectiveness and efficiency; and further training and development are required to

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<sup>8</sup> Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, “Public Information Database.” [www.Opendata.Ge](http://www.opendata.ge), <http://www.idfi.ge/?cat=main&topic=222&lang=en&header=Presentation%20of%20the%20Results%20of%20the%20Project%20E2%80%9CPublic%20Information%20Database%20E2%80%93%20www.opendata.ge%20E2%80%9D> (accessed 11/20, 2013).

<sup>9</sup>Hari Bucur-Marcu, *Essentials of Defence Institution Building* (Vienna, Austria: National Defence Academy: Austrian Ministry of Defence and Sports, 2010), 20.

implement the mechanisms of a more effective utilization and management of personnel competencies.

One hypothesis regarding the cause of this situation is that parliamentary oversight is weak, thus impeding defense institution building. Parliamentary oversight, which has been developed from a non-existence level in the 1990s to the capacity of holding the security sector accountable, still lacks effectiveness.

The second hypothesis is related to the political immaturity and interference that is defined as “political will.” The impatience, personally biased decisions, and desire to accomplish goals quickly, and ‘to take short-cuts’ while compromising the basic principles of rule of law and “international best practices,” are often used to illustrate the way Georgian reforms impede institutionalization of the reforms and achieved progress.

The final hypothesis lies in the lack of professional expertise as the institutional factor that impedes the defense institution building. Georgia still lacks educational opportunities in the defense and security field. Yet there are no educational programs in the security field in civilian higher education schools. The National Defense Academy provides ongoing reforms and offers tactical and operational courses. Partners offer broad opportunities to Georgian military and defense civilians, and in response, the level of expertise is increasing in defense institutions. In parallel, the relatively short institutional history and traditions, still shaded by post-Soviet influence, do not encourage initiatives and independent decision making on lower levels. While the knowledge and skills received in international educational and training institutions are accumulated on such lower levels among junior and mid-career officers and civilians, their exclusion from decision making affects the progress of institutionalization.

## D. LITERATURE REVIEW

The statement “the security sector is little studied in Georgia,” expressed in 2004,<sup>10</sup> is still valid and relevant in terms of providing a comprehensive picture of the whole sector, including defense institutions. The reason that the security sector has not been examined thoroughly is undoubtedly rooted in the fact that defense institutions have always been less transparent in Georgia. The resulting lack of primary sources and expertise on a national level shapes the scarcity of literature.

Initial attempts at a comprehensive analysis of the defense sector conducted by international experts (i.e., the International Security Advisory Board, ISAB, and the first White Paper on the Georgian defense mission and status, published in 2002) served as primary sources for scholastic analysis. Later on, the development and publishing of security and defense concept documents, such as the National Security Concept (2005, 2011), National Military Strategy (2005), Minister’s Vision (annual or semi-annual), and Strategic Defense Review (2007, 2013),<sup>11</sup> have filled the gap in the absence of the strategy and concepts and have provided the possibility for learning and analyzing the vision, strategy, development plans, and reforms progression in the defense sector.

The Minister of Defense has launched a series of Georgia Defense Conferences (2006–2013), and begun cooperation with the NGO’s alliance Civil Council on Defense and Security. Together with the existing legislation on defense, the security and defense documents opened the floor to scholars to summarize and analyze the strategy and development plans of the defense institutions and the mechanisms of civilian control.

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<sup>10</sup>Antje Fritz, “Security Sector Governance in Georgia (I): Status,” in *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia’s Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform*, eds. Philipp H. Fluri and Eden Cole (Vienna, Austria: National Defence Academy and Bureau for Security Policy, in cooperation with the PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes: Study Group Information, 2005a), 51.

<sup>11</sup>Minister of Defense, “Ministry of Defense of Georgia/Policy,” [www.mod.gov.ge](http://www.mod.gov.ge).

Scholars such as Antje Fritz,<sup>12</sup> Geoffrey Wright,<sup>13</sup> and Duncan Hiscock,<sup>14</sup> attempted to fill the lack of research on institutional developments, informal decision-making processes, and realistic situations behind the documents and official “show-cases.”<sup>15</sup>

The existing literature indicates several phases and turning points in defense institution-building in Georgia. The first phase began after Georgia regained its independence and started state-building processes during the political, economic, and social chaos in the 1990s. The first signs of progressive developments for the GAF appeared after the 9/11 terrorist attacks when the U.S. shifted its foreign policy priorities, and intensified the fight against international terrorism.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, the U.S.-assisted projects—the Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP), and the Sustainment and Stability Operations Program (SSOP)<sup>17</sup>—began. The second phase, and turning point, was the governmental change after the 2003 Rose Revolution and the launch of wide-ranging reforms oriented to NATO integration. The reforms process and defense institutional developments were underlined by official sources; however, the criticisms expressed in a few sources were validated by the weakness of Georgian defense institutions revealed during August of 2008. The war provided evidence for further research on the impeded reforms, and also revealed the broad spectrum of deficiencies of the ongoing reforms and institutional developments. There is even less literature on the most current trends and processes after the 2012 change in government and legislative

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<sup>12</sup>Fritz, “Security Sector Governance in Georgia (I): Status,” 51.

<sup>13</sup>Geoffrey Wright, “Defense Reform and the Caucasus: Challenges of Institutional Reform during Unresolved Conflict,” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (July 2009), 19–39, doi:<http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.nps.edu/10.1215/10474552-2009-012>.

<sup>14</sup>Duncan Hiscock, “Impatient Reformers and Reignited Conflicts: The Case of Georgia,” in *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, eds. Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabe (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2009).

<sup>15</sup>Wright, *Defense Reform and the Caucasus: Challenges of Institutional Reform during Unresolved Conflict*, 19–39.

<sup>16</sup>Peter Forster, *The Paradox of Policy: American Interests in the Post-9/11 Caucasus* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2004), 30–31.

<sup>17</sup>David Darchiashvili, “Georgian Security Sector Reform: Achievements and Failures,” in *Security Sector Governance in Southern Caucasus: Challenges and Visions*, eds. Anja H. Ebnöther and Gustav E. Gustenau (Vienna, Austria: National Defence Academy and Bureau for Security Policy, in cooperation with the PiP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes: Study Group Information, 2004), 95–96.

authority, although the MoD is becoming more transparent by revealing its operational details.

The first phase of the security sector development was extensively studied by Georgian scholars David Darchiashvili and Tamara Pataraiia, and also by other scholars working for the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the Austrian Ministry of Defense. These scholars' publications contributed to security sector reform and defense institution-building in the South Caucasian region.<sup>18</sup> These publications incorporated several comprehensive analytical articles, including works by the Georgian scholars working in civil-military relations and defense institutions fields, such as Shorena Lortkipanidze, Tamara Pataraiia, and Teona Akubardia.

David Darchiashvili is a well-known expert on defense institutions and civil-military relations in Georgia, and has conducted invaluable and comprehensive research.<sup>19</sup> He points out the deficiency of political culture and awareness of state building in societal and political circles. The causes of these deficiencies vary from the heavy impact of Soviet "nomenklatura" on political institutions, to the influence of pre-Soviet poetry, older history and historical heroes, and the values of the Orthodox Church on social-cultural developments. The early defense institutions were referred to as paramilitary units. After the first multiparty elections of 1992, the newly established

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<sup>18</sup>Anja H. Ebnöther and Gustav E. Gustenau, eds., *Security Sector Governance in Southern Caucasus: Challenges and Visions* (Vienna, Austria: Bureau for Security Policy at the Austrian Ministry of Defence/DCAF/PfP-Consortium, 2004), <http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Security-Sector-Governance-in-Southern-Caucasus-Challenges-and-Visions>; Philipp H. Fluri and Eden Cole, eds., *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia's Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform* (Vienna, Austria: National Defence Academy and Bureau for Security Policy, in cooperation with the PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes: Study Group Information, 2005b); Philipp H. Fluri and Eden Cole, "Defence Institution Building 2005 Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institutions Building (PAP-DIB) Regional Conference for the Caucasus and Republic of Moldova" (Tbilisi, Georgia, April, 25, 2005a); Philipp Fluri and Viorel Cibotaru, *Defence Institution Building: Country Profiles and Needs Assessments for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova Background Materials* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2008); Tamara Pataraiia, ed., *Democratic Control of Armed Forces of Georgia since the August War 2008* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for Democratic Control Over the Armed Forces (DCAF), 2010).

<sup>19</sup>David Darchiashvili, "Georgia: A Hostage to Arms," in *The Caucasus: Armed and Divided* (United Kingdom: Saferworld, 2003); David Darchiashvili, "Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform," in *Statehood and Security: Georgia After the Rose Revolution*, eds. Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold. American Academy Studies in Global Security (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 117–154; Darchiashvili, "Georgian Security Sector Reform: Achievements and Failures;" Darchiashvili, *Security Sector Reform in Georgia* (Tbilisi, Georgia: Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, 2008).

government created the first official military structures, which, according to Darchiashvili, suffered from many insufficiencies in command and control, discipline, procedural administration, financial, logistic, infrastructural resources, and professionalism, as well as in the understanding of mission and tasks, absence of conceptual framework, weak civilian control, corruption, weapons and equipment, and inherited conventional weapons from Soviet bases stationed on the country's territory.<sup>20</sup>

The literature by David Darchiashvili,<sup>21</sup> Tamara Patariaia,<sup>22</sup> Shorena Lortkipanidze,<sup>23</sup> Daniel Hiscock,<sup>24</sup> Robert Hamilton,<sup>25</sup> Jim Nichol,<sup>26</sup> and Geoffrey Wright<sup>27</sup> emphasized a turning point in defense reforms after the change of government in 2004 and the setting of NATO integration as a foreign policy priority in Georgia's political development agenda. The NATO integration process is actively discussed in the Georgian defense institution-building literature as the facilitator of security and defense reforms and democratic institution building. The analysis and criticism can be divided into two parts. One includes the formal and visible provisions and developments, and the other includes informal and invisible realities and "short cuts" that President Saakashvili and his government were criticized for as the most common way of doing business.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Darchiashvili, "Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform," 117–154.

<sup>21</sup>Darchiashvili, *Security Sector Reform in Georgia*, 38.

<sup>22</sup>Tamara Patariaia, "Defence Institution Building in Georgia," in *Defence Institution Building: Country Profiles and Needs Assessments for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova*, eds. Philipp Fluri and ViorelCibotaru (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2008), 50.

<sup>23</sup>Shorena Lortkipanidze, "After Revolution–Toward Reform: the Georgian Security Sector Initiatives and Activities," in *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia's Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform*, eds. Philipp H. Fluri and Eden Cole (Vienna, Austria: National Defence Academy and Bureau for Security Policy, in cooperation with the PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes: Study Group Information, 2005), 233–234.

<sup>24</sup>Hiscock, "Impatient Reformers," 119.

<sup>25</sup>Robert H. Hamilton, *Georgian Military Reform – An Alternative View* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2009).

<sup>26</sup>Jim Nichol, *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests* (Washington, DC: United States Foreign Press Center, 2006), 16.

<sup>27</sup>Wright, "Defense Reform and the Caucasus: Challenges of Institutional Reform during Unresolved Conflict," 26.

<sup>28</sup>Hiscock, "Impatient Reformers," 17.



The writings by Darchiashvili,<sup>29</sup> Pataraiia,<sup>30</sup> Lortkipanidze,<sup>31</sup> and Akubardia<sup>32</sup> analyzed how Georgian legislation has established the legal framework of civilian control of the military. These authors also emphasize the relatively weak role of Parliament in comparison to the President as “responsible for every decision made by government.”<sup>33</sup> These researchers shared the same concern about the strong role of the President with other scholars such as Christofer Berglund,<sup>34</sup> Thomas De Waal,<sup>35</sup> Cornel and Nilsson.<sup>36</sup> When assessing Presidential power versus the weakness of the Parliament, all of these scholars indicate the signs of non-democratic parliamentary control,<sup>37</sup> and tendencies of the shift from “rule of law (to) law of the ruler.”<sup>38</sup> In Darchiashvili’s evaluation, the limitation of parliamentary control is exacerbated as the structural, functional, and procedural norms are set by bylaws such as presidential orders and internal regulations. In parallel, the scholar assumes that decision-making divisions between the President and the Parliament regarding the composition and structure of the armed forces can cause contradictions and delays.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Darchiashvili, *Security Sector Reform in Georgia*, 38–42.

<sup>30</sup>Pataraiia, “Defence Institution Building in Georgia,” 51–54.

<sup>31</sup>Shorena Lortkipanidze, “Parliamentary Oversight on the Security Sector: Mechanisms and Practice,” in *Democratic Control of Armed Forces of Georgia since the August War 2008*, ed. Tamara Pataraiia (Geneva: Geneva Centre for Democratic Control Over the Armed Forces, 2010), 20–24.

<sup>32</sup>Teona Akubardia, “Overview of Legislation Facilitating the Civil Democratic Oversight of Armed Forces in Georgia,” in *Democratic Control of Armed Forces of Georgia since the August War 2008*, ed. Tamara Pataraiia (Geneva: Geneva Centre for Democratic Control Over the Armed Forces, 2010), 41–43.

<sup>33</sup>Pataraiia, “Defence Institution Building in Georgia,” 53.

<sup>34</sup>Christofer Berglund, “Georgia,” in *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe*, ed. S. Berglund et al., 3rd ed. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013), 785.

<sup>35</sup>Thomas De Waal, “Georgia’s Possible Future,” presented at *Georgia’s Choices: Charting a Future in Uncertain Times*, Brussels, Belgium on July 19, 2011, <http://www.carnegieeuropa.eu/2011/07/19/georg-s-choices-charting-future-in-uncertain-times-bjz4>

<sup>36</sup>Svante E. Cornell and Niklas Nilsson, “Georgian Politics since the August 2008 War,” *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 17, no. 3 (July 2009), 251–268.

<sup>37</sup>Antje Fritz, “Security Sector Governance in Georgia (II): Achievements,” in *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia’s Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform*, eds. Philipp H. Fluri and Eden Cole (Vienna, Austria: National Defence Academy and Bureau for Security Policy, in cooperation with the PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes: Study Group Information, 2005b), 129–130.

<sup>38</sup>Berglund, “Georgia,” 789–790.

<sup>39</sup>Darchiashvili, “Georgian Security Sector Reform: Achievements and Failures,” 101.

Another concern these scholars expressed when analyzing the legislation is related to the process of defense budgeting and the definition of state secrets that are related to transparency issues. The issues of transparency are best analyzed in the reports developed by the organization Transparency International, which emphasizes the insufficient openness of defense institutions and requires that more detailed information be available for the public, as supportive of public investments and better engagements in civilian democratic control of decision-making processes.<sup>40</sup>

Challenges for defense institution developments are rooted in insufficient legislature and exacerbated by the large number of varying factors, such as lack of conceptual implementation plans and capabilities, and the absence of ‘political will’ to reform. While discussing and analyzing the legislation and concepts, the majority of literature, including the previously mentioned most recent works of Akubardia and Lortkipanidze, lacks the information on processes and procedures of instructional developments and decision making.

Discussing defense institutions before the governmental change, Fritz,<sup>41</sup> Pataraiia,<sup>42</sup> and Darchiashvili<sup>43</sup> emphasize the absence of main concepts and strategy of defense and security, the high rate of corruption, and the poor condition of the armed forces due to insufficient financial resources. Although these challenges were overcome, the impediments for reforms and institutional developments, such as political will, cultural mentality, and relationship factors dominating the laws and regulations that were revealed by Fritz in 2004, appear to remain according to the literature,<sup>44</sup> which criticizes the dark side of Saakashvili’s reforms. The value added to the research conducted by Fritz came from the individual interviews with the staff working in the institutions, which supplemented the scarcity of primary sources and gave deep insight into the situation which was invisible from the outside. These challenges explored by the author—

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<sup>40</sup>*Reform of Georgia’s Defence Sector* (Tbilisi, Georgia: Transparency International Georgia, 2007).

<sup>41</sup>Fritz, “Security Sector Governance in Georgia (I): Status,” 59–61.

<sup>42</sup>Pataraiia, “Defence Institution Building in Georgia,” 16.

<sup>43</sup>Darchiashvili, “Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform,” 117–154.

<sup>44</sup>Hiscock, “Impatient Reformers,” 16; Wright, “Defense Reform and the Caucasus: Challenges of Institutional Reform during Unresolved Conflict,” 39.

corrupted system, political goodwill, personal power-oriented/centered attitude, law awareness and request of democratic control from public, insufficient capabilities of Parliament, clannish and clientele attitudes—were shading the regulations and decision making. Fritz states that “most experts agreed that it is not a lack of expertise or experience, but the absence of political will that prevents the implementation of a national security strategy” and “the serious progress of the reforms,”<sup>45</sup> which seems to be valid as many officers or civilians have the opportunity to become educated and trained in U.S. and European institutions. Hiscock also criticizes the reforms, as he sees them as “sketchy, without deliberate preparation, shared and understood only by a small number of people, and lacking the capabilities of ongoing changes to be institutionalized.”<sup>46</sup>

The paradox of presidential dominancy over the Parliament as a security sector was even more detrimental in practice as the President had strong personal involvement and interference in practically all institutions,<sup>47</sup> including defense.<sup>48</sup> As evaluated by Fritz in 2004, the depth of the system, “which is determined by personal relationships, rather than by well-defined democratic procedures,”<sup>49</sup> remains valid and is emphasized in later literature, despite multiple reforms and changes in government. In general, all previously mentioned critics point out that there is a the lack of civilian expertise and legally-supported role of the President, as well as a misuse of international assistance, budgeting problems, lack of transparency, and weak public involvement and engagement.<sup>50</sup>

The 2008 August War revealed the areas of weakness of the Georgian defense, and has become the source of analysis and evaluation by the U.S. Congressional Research Service and other scholars such as Robert Hamilton.

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<sup>45</sup>Fritz, “Security Sector Governance in Georgia (I): Status,” 62.

<sup>46</sup>Hiscock, “Impatient Reformers,” 135.

<sup>47</sup>Nicole Gallina, “Puzzles in State Transformation: Armenia and Georgia,” *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 4, no. 1 (Winter, 2010), 30.

<sup>48</sup>Berglund, “Georgia,” 23.

<sup>49</sup>Fritz, “Security Sector Governance in Georgia (II): Achievements,” 119.

<sup>50</sup>Berglund, “Georgia;” Wright, “Defense Reform and the Caucasus: Challenges of Institutional Reform during Unresolved Conflict;” Hiscock, “Impatient Reformers.”

Defense institutions were examined after the 2008 August War, but these academic works were heavily influenced by political affiliations, and the assessments may have deviated toward political preferences. Even so, the evaluations offered by the U.S. Congressional Research Service emphasize the shortfalls of defense institutions. Additionally, official Georgian sources, such as the Georgia Defense Conference proceedings or the Strategic Defense Reviews, are continuously accentuating planning phases while permanently postponing the implementation of plans. It is obvious that defense institution-building and GAF reforms, even as they are conceptualized and planned, are not fully progressing.

While previously mentioned scholars discuss general political developments and institution-building trends and facets that can be applied to the defense, U.S.-based scholarly work—based on the practical experience of working with defense sector development in Georgia (Hamilton,<sup>51</sup> Mangum and Craven<sup>52</sup>)—emphasizes specific defense institutions. Although Mangum and Craven are more focused on general concepts of optimal defense structure and developments—rather than current status assessment—their work can be used for general recommendations. Robert Hamilton provides more comprehensive analysis of and offers direction to the Georgian defense reform process. Hamilton criticizes the *New York Times* article by C. J. Chivers and Thom Shnaker,<sup>53</sup> who point out high centralization; impulsive decision making; ineffective, unclear command and control; and biased personnel-related decisions in higher positions in defense institutions and military command. Hamilton agrees to the areas of deficiency, but claims that these assessments lack the understanding of context, such as the relatively short history of the institution, constrained finances, and the large number of reforms that the Georgian defense has achieved in a short period of time.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Hamilton, “Georgian Military Reform – An Alternative View.”

<sup>52</sup>Ronald S. Mangum and William Craven, “Measuring Defense Reform,” *Small Wars Journal* 5 (2010).

<sup>53</sup>C. J. Chivers and Thom Shnaker, “Georgia Lags in its Bid to Fix Army,” *New York Times*, December 17, 2008.

<sup>54</sup>Hamilton, “Georgian Military Reform – an Alternative View.”

Defense institutions and armed forces development features are also discussed in Russian-based academic works, whose critiques can be assessed as fair in terms of institutional effectiveness, but are heavily influenced by political affiliation.<sup>55</sup> These scholars neglect Georgia's defense reform's aim toward NATO integration, but point out the Saakashvili government's intentions to use force to restore Georgia's territorial integrity. In addition, Russian-based scholars provide unidentified "Internet reports"<sup>56</sup> to emphasize unprofessionalism, undisciplined performance, poor training, and negligence to learn within Georgian Armed Forces.

Even fewer sources are available on the use of well-organized personnel management as the demonstration of broader defense institution building. Although the literature recognizes the importance of personnel management in institutions, and especially in defense contexts, it emphasizes the lack of policy, long-term vision, planning, and implementing of personnel management. Darchiashvili's work describes the low trust from the society toward a military servant before the reforms. The improvement of attitudes is obvious from society and from the civilian leadership, as the personnel management and training systems are being reformed. Although as the reports show, further improvements are needed in terms of management, rights, and responsibilities of the military servants.<sup>57</sup> In the opposition to SDR in 2007, sources revealed the ambiguity of manpower plans in long-term perspectives, highlighted the planned downsizing of manpower by approximately 10,000 in order to have smaller but better equipped and trained armed forces, and displayed the increased number of personnel.<sup>58</sup> Fully transitioning to the all-volunteer forces (AVFs) that were represented in the 2007 SDR is still in the MoD agenda and still under financial calculation during 2013–2014.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Paul Holtom, "Tanki Augusta: SbornikStatei (Tanks of August: A Collection of Articles), by Barabanov, Mikhail, Lavrov, Anton, and Tseluiko, Viacheslav," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 23, no. 4 (November 2010), doi:10.1080/13518046.2010.538331.

<sup>56</sup> Paul Holtom, "Tanki Augusta," 13.

<sup>57</sup>*Reform of Georgia's Defence Sector*, Transparency International, Georgia.

<sup>58</sup>Hiscock, "Impatient Reformers," 123.

<sup>59</sup>Alasania, Irakli, Minister of Defense of Georgia, *Minister's Vision 2013–2014* (Tbilisi, Georgia: Ministry of Defense of Georgia, 2013).

Eastern European states, due to their former efforts for the integration into the Euro-Atlantic space and similar patterns of socialist and soviet past, provide relevant examples and studies for comparative analysis and lessons learned for Georgia. The number of authors discussing new NATO member country defense reforms<sup>60</sup> emphasizes the role of NATO integration for reforms and institution building in Slovenia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Estonia and Latvia.<sup>61</sup> Some authors even indicate that after integration reforms, the pace has slowed, and at some point the focus was lost for the political decision makers after integration due to “the lack of ‘carrots and sticks.’”<sup>62</sup>

## **E. METHODS AND SOURCES**

This thesis uses several methods in its research and analysis, including historical, comparative, and case studies to prove the hypothesis related to parliamentary oversight, political interference, and professional expertise, and to answer the central question. It focuses on studying the defense institution-building and explores how these institutions have been established and developed. Toward this goal, it relies mostly on historical sources. The history of defense institutions will be analyzed from an institution-building perspective, and will show how historical background and developments affected the organizational culture and the structure of the institutions we have today.

A comparative study method is used to compare the defense institution-building in Georgia with the practice of the new NATO countries that at some point shared similar historical background, and have provided a foundation for the NATO integration. These countries include new NATO members and former Soviet or Socialist Bloc states. Study

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<sup>60</sup>Istvan Gyarmati and Theodor Winkler, eds., *Post-Cold War Defense Reforms; Lessons Learned in Europe and the United States* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s, 2002); Simon, *Hungary and NATO Problems in Civil-Military Relations*; Alexandra Gheciu, *NATO in the “New Europe”: The Politics of International Socialization After the Cold War* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2005).

<sup>61</sup>Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei, *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>62</sup>Florina Cristiana Matei, “NATO, the Demand for Democratic Control, and Military Effectiveness Romania,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, eds. Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei (New York: Routledge, 2012), 328.

focuses on the features of institutional developments, and not on the states, when comparing their unique way of development.

Finally, this thesis studies the case of manpower management to narrow the focus from the broad lenses of institution building. The focus on personnel management was chosen to accurately reflect all processes and challenges of defense institution building. In addition, the author would like to build in personal experience and expertise.

The research uses primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are related to national legislation, such as the Constitution, Defense Law, laws regarding status of military servants, Defense Planning Law, Defense Minister's orders, and conceptual documents, such as the National Security Concept, National Military Strategy, Minister's Visions, Strategic Defense Reviews, and policy concepts developed in the MoD. In addition, the author's personal experience in defense reforms as a member of the Interagency Commission on SDR is used.<sup>63</sup> To analyze the effectiveness of defense institution building, the study uses the research of Georgian and foreign scholars regarding literature review processes.

## **F. THESIS OVERVIEW**

The Introduction (Chapter I) states the major research question, importance of the topic, problems and hypotheses; briefly discusses the primary and secondary research sources; and outlines the overall thesis structure.

Chapter II discusses the early stages of defense institution building, the establishment of the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff, and the chaos caused by multiple military and paramilitary groups. This chapter discusses the political, institutional, financial, and cultural challenges the institutions faced during the beginning stages. Existing shortfalls and impediments are analyzed in the case of personnel management, revealing how corruption, scarce resources, and poor decision making affected the manpower management from the organizational perspective.

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<sup>63</sup>Saakashvili Mikheil, Order # 372 of the President of Georgia, September 7, 2004 on establishment of Interagency Commission on elaboration of Strategic Defense Review, [https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com\\_ldmssearch&view=docView&id=95380](https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com_ldmssearch&view=docView&id=95380)

Chapter III discusses the reforms begun after the new government took a clearly demonstrated course toward NATO integration in 2003. This included establishing defense institutions to ensure national security, cooperating with NATO, and contributing to international security. The chapter introduces and analyzes transformation processes that were facilitated by the NATO integration aspiration. These processes are also demonstrated by personnel management cases that reflect the general situation, challenges, and developments.

Chapter IV presents a comparative analysis of Eastern and Central European practices of defense institution-building and the NATO partnership. The processes and perceptions are discussed and analyzed from the perspective of the similarities of challenges.

Chapter V provides an analysis of the challenges the defense institutions faced at the early stages and after the “Rose Revolution” governmental changes. Early stages challenges such as insufficient legislation, financial constraints and corruption, Soviet type administration, and lack of professionalism are discussed as the background. Afterwards, the chapter discusses the institutional challenges, such as weak parliamentary oversight, political interference, and lack of professionalism, which became more obvious when the early stage challenges were more or less overcome.



## **II. EARLY STAGES OF GEORGIAN DEFENSE INSTITUTION BUILDING, 1991–2003**

This chapter discusses the early developments and challenges of defense institution-building from the 1990s up to the 2003 “Rose Revolution.” The relevant political, economic, and socio-cultural features of this moment shaped not only institutional development processes highlighted in the next section, but also personnel policies and “patterns of relationships” in defense institutions and are analyzed here in detail.<sup>64</sup>

### **A. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Defense institution-building as a part of state building is closely related with and impacted by political, economic, and socio-cultural developments in government, in society, and in the heritage of the armed forces themselves. Instability and immaturity of all the three aspects shaped Georgian defense institutions from the preliminary stages, where the impact of the Soviet system as well as very formidable security challenges of a distressing nature imposed themselves at the outset.

At the early stages, political challenges affecting defense institution-building were multiple. During the Soviet era, Georgia strived for independence, and all underground national movements were focused on this goal. After gaining independence, former dissident political activists found the people’s broad support in elections. However, the new government, due to its lack of knowledge and understanding of the modern state and democratic principles, failed to establish democratic state institutions.<sup>65</sup> From the defense institutions perspective, widespread unfamiliarity with the principles of democratic civil-military relations, such as that found in the Atlantic region, largely impeded the establishment of the institution that would be accountable to the public and able to

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<sup>64</sup>Darchiashvili, “Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform,” 117.

<sup>65</sup>Dov Lynch, “Georgia: An Emerging Governance: Problems and Prospects,” in *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia’s Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform*, eds. Philipp H. Fluri and Eden Cole (Geneva: Geneva Centre for Democratic Control over the Armed Forces, 2005), 249–268, 251–252.

exercise oversight over the armed forces. In addition, newly established defense institutions struggled with Soviet institutional legacy and Russia's attempts to maintain its influence. Political challenge was also to determine the defense development direction: either pro-Russian, wanting to strengthen ties within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), or pro-Western, seeking participation in the NATO Partnership for Peace Program (PfP).<sup>66</sup>

Soviet institutional legacy played its role.<sup>67</sup> Institutions in the independent Georgia still functioned almost identically to the "Soviet nomenklatura." That was as a highly centralized institution in which decision making and authority were concentrated among a small number of individuals, the delegation of authority was absent or informally included the people falling into the patronage network, and the members (i.e., staff only were allowed to follow the rules set by those who had authority). As Jonathan Wheatley summarizes, the "nomenklatura" "was characterized by rule-breaking, dissimulation, corruption, clientelism, indifference toward the affairs of ordinary citizens, and an extreme degree of dependency on superiors."<sup>68</sup>

The newly independent country, which lacked natural resources, failed to transition successfully to a market economy and create economic development conditions.<sup>69</sup> A failing economy created the extreme deficiency of financial and logistic resources needed for defense institutions, and encouraged the corruption and illegal activities by the people with guns.<sup>70</sup>

As a young and inexperienced state in the shadow of war, Georgia also struggled to establish democracy-based national values. Georgian national identity, with its legacy from Greco antiquity and Orthodox Christianity deeply rooted in the country's history,

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<sup>66</sup>Darchiashvili, *The Army-Building and Security Problems in Georgia*, 22–24.

<sup>67</sup>Stephen F. Jones, "Democracy from Below? Interest Groups in Georgian Society," *Slavic Review* (2000), 42–73, 66–67.

<sup>68</sup>Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union (Post-Soviet Politics)* (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 23.

<sup>69</sup>Archil Gegeshidze, "Georgia: In Quest of a Niche Strategy," *The Quarterly Journal*, no. 3 (2002), 3–12; Nicole Gallina, "Puzzles in State Transformation: Armenia and Georgia," *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 4, no. 1 (Winter 2010), 32.

<sup>70</sup>Darchiashvili, "Georgian Security Sector Reform: Achievements and Failures," 110.

shaped the independent movements during the Soviet era. Despite independence and the establishment of Georgia as a sovereign country, the shift of values appeared hard. Due to the lack of knowledge of the values and principles of democracy and modern statehood, most politicians and citizens were still focused on national and ethnic identity. Such socio-cultural perceptions restrained defense institutions from developing democratic oversight and public accountability.<sup>71</sup>

Finally, security challenges emerged after independence which impeded democratization and institutional developments.<sup>72</sup> Ethnic conflicts broke out in Georgian territory—Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Political, economic, and military support from Russia enabled Abkhazian and South Ossetian separatist forces to establish their own regimes in both regions of Georgia, and the country still struggles for territorial integrity. Such situations had and still have profound negative effect on defense institution building<sup>73</sup> and Georgia's integration into the Euro-Atlantic space.<sup>74</sup>

## **B. DEFENSE INSTITUTIONS AT THE STAGE OF ESTABLISHMENT**

At the beginning stage and also for a long time after, state institutions in Georgia were challenged by the common unawareness of modern state requirements and the heavy influence of the Soviet legacy. After independence from the USSR in 1991, Georgia struggled to set up state institutions and establish control over different armed groups which were emerging in the 1980s when political activists mobilized the national independent movement against Soviet authority. In 1990, when the USSR still existed, the country managed to conduct the first multiparty elections and create the first post-Communist legislative body, the Supreme Council.

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<sup>71</sup>Darchiashvili, "Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform," 118–120.

<sup>72</sup>Ghia Nodia, "Dynamics of State-Building in Georgia," *Demokratizatsiya* 6, no. 1 (1998); Berglund, "Georgia," in *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe*, ed. S. Berglund et al., 3rd ed. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013), 5.

<sup>73</sup>Pataraiia, "Defence Institution Building in Georgia," 71; Darchiashvili, "Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform," 120.

<sup>74</sup>Karl-Heinz Kamp, "NATO Enlargement Reloaded," *Research Paper, NATO Research Directorate* 81 (2012).

At the beginning of the 1990s it was “impossible even to imagine having Georgian military forces;” therefore, such groups existed only as non-formal paramilitary groupings commanded by public or political entities or individuals.<sup>75</sup> They were not subordinate to the newly established political authority and were chaotic, poorly missioned, and poorly managed. The first attempt to organize existing armed groupings and constrain their activities within a legal framework was the “Law on Internal Troops – National Guard” approved in December 1990 by the Georgian Supreme Council. By this law the new government created its first official military structure—the National Guard, which, as it is argued, was still a paramilitary unit due to its name, mission, and subordination.<sup>76</sup>

The National Guard fell under the Ministry of Interior and was responsible for the public order and territorial integrity. Clearly the new organization had embraced missions with two very different functions. Even though the paramilitary nature and diverging missions of the new institution at first glance emphasized the government’s political unawareness, scholars see deeper political reasons behind it. As Darchiashvili posits, having such paramilitary groupings was the best solution in the existing political and security situation. As Georgia was still part of the Soviet Union, the establishment of military forces would provoke Soviet authorities and also would threaten and exacerbate emerging separatist movements in autonomous regions.<sup>77</sup>

The National Guard, despite its vague mission and objectives of defending public order, was seen as the military service by the Georgian population. The National Guard also incorporated in it all the existing military groupings. It became very popular among the officers previously serving in Soviet Army and also among young Georgians to join the National Guard. Mostly their enthusiasm was based on intensified feelings of national identity. Based on the two years’ compulsory service, the National Guard counted 12,000

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<sup>75</sup>Levan Alapishvili, “The Civil-Military Relations and Democratic Control on Armed Forces in Caucasus Region: A Comparative Study,” NATO Publications (1995), 16–17, <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/97-99/alapishvili.pdf>.

<sup>76</sup>Darchiashvili, “Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform,” 123.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 117.

personnel in 1991.<sup>78</sup> However, this enthusiasm evaporated very soon due to National Guard's quick fall in the prestige and legitimacy and the hard conditions of service. Consequently, the rate of evasion and desertion increased significantly.<sup>79</sup>

In 1991, Georgia declared its independence and elected its first President—Zviad Gamsakhurdia, former chairman of the Supreme Council. Trying to strengthen his position, President Gamsakhurdia appointed his personal friend as the Head of the National Guard; however, the President soon lost influence and control over the National Guard. Later, the National Guard was transformed into more of a bandit-type of organization, conducting violations, such as hijacking cars and engaging in illegal arms trade with the Russian military units located on Georgian territory.<sup>80</sup>

The Ministry of Defense had been established on September 9, 1991; but as Darchiashvili argues, the newly established institution had only one function—providing logistical support to the National Guard. Gamsakhurdia's failed attempt at control of highly influential military groups, together with the rough political transition, indeed created a “chaotic pattern of civil-military relations” and contributed to the military coup.<sup>81</sup> The coup brought a change of government, and Eduard Shevardnadze, who in the past had served as Foreign Affairs Minister in the USSR, was later elected as the second President of Georgia.

In 1992 Georgia inherited conventional weapons and materiel from Soviet bases stationed on the country's territory. But still, “Shevardnadze was a leader of the state with no army.”<sup>82</sup> Reorganization of military units had started with the establishment of the 11<sup>th</sup> Army Brigade, and the National Guard became the Rapid Reaction Force under the Ministry of Defense. Although, as Lynch argues, any change and reform in power

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>79</sup>Lynch, “Georgia: An Emerging Governance: Problems and Prospects,” 251.

<sup>80</sup>Wheatley, “Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution,” 54.

<sup>81</sup>Darchiashvili, “Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform,” 124–125.

<sup>82</sup> Jesse Driscoll, “Inside the Leviathan: Coup-Proofing After State Failure” (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 2008), [https://politicalscience.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/workshop-materials/cp\\_driscoll.pdf](https://politicalscience.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/workshop-materials/cp_driscoll.pdf), 23.

institutions which were distorted by Soviet legacy was almost impossible.<sup>83</sup> In reality, the army was still disorganized and undisciplined, command and procedural administration was disordered, commanders were more like warlords, and democratic civilian oversight on any sound basis did not exist.<sup>84</sup> The decisions in the Ministry were made spontaneously, without a conceptual and planning basis.<sup>85</sup> Ministers and deputies were granted the full and independent authority to hire or dismiss personnel, including military personnel. Based on his personal interviews and observations, Driscoll argues that “warlords could thus formalize their patron relationships with their subordinate clients, and new recruits into the police and military could be screened for personal loyalty to a particular militia faction.”<sup>86</sup> Darchiashvili mentions the press conference when the Defense Minister declared that neither the President nor the Parliament but the “people” and the army are to decide the appointment and dismissal of the Defense Minister.<sup>87</sup>

President Shevardnadze managed to maintain weak control over the military and get rid of the influential military leaders, mainly due to his personal influence. Darchiashvili sees Shevardnadze’s influence in the broad perception of him as the only person guaranteeing international image and support.<sup>88</sup> Although Driscoll argues that Shevardnadze’s main pillars to exercise his personal control over armed structures and power ministries were his involvement in career promotions of young mid-career officers to achieve guaranteed support from them, frequent shuffles of these increasingly influential officers, and “overlapping mandates” and vague missions between the power structures.<sup>89</sup> Obviously, Eduard Shevardnadze using his Soviet experience was able to

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<sup>83</sup>Lynch, “Georgia: An Emerging Governance: Problems and Prospects,” 249–267.

<sup>84</sup>Darchiashvili, *The Army Building and Security Problems in Georgia*, 33–34

<sup>85</sup>Richard Wolff, “The Armed Forces of Georgia—an Update,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review* (1994): 559–561.

<sup>86</sup>Driscoll, “Inside the Leviathan,” 25.

<sup>87</sup>Darchiashvili (1997) based on Georgian newspaper *Shvidi Dge* (Seven Days) no. 16 (April 30–May 3, 1993), “The Search of Georgia State Security,” Caucasus Working Papers, The Center for International Security and Arms Control, Stanford University. Available <http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/10255/caucasus.pdf>.

<sup>88</sup>Darchiashvili, “Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform,” 128.

<sup>89</sup>Driscoll, “Inside the Leviathan,” 26.

establish and implement his personal control by ignoring national objectives which were to establish strong democratic institutions.

The formation of the Army as a new institution was possible from 1995, when all existing paramilitary and armed groups were disbanded and the Russian-supported Minister of Internal Security had to escape from Georgia after the unsuccessful assassination attempt on the President. Still, the newly established army and Ministry of Defense were under heavy influence from the Russian political and military elite<sup>90</sup> and suffering from demoralization after their defeat in the war in Abkhazia in 1993. Shevardnadze did not take any radical measures in response to the defeat in Abkhazia; rather, he just appointed a new head of General Staff. In addition, with the broad shadow of Russia's interference into the conflict and support to separatist regimes, the defense institution failed to observe and analyze its own weaknesses, failures in command and control, and operational deficiencies and tactical incompetence.<sup>91</sup>

In the period of 1993–98, internal battles in the Ministry of Defense and the General staff, as on the national level, mainly related to the direction of the development of the armed forces. These battles and instances of revenge included high officials charged in decision making. In 1993, President Shevardnadze appointed Soviet General Vardiko Nadibaidze as the Minister of Defense. General Nadibaidze's career included high positions in the Soviet and post-Soviet Russian Armed Forces. Scholars emphasize the impact of Russian President Boris Yeltsin's visit in Tbilisi on this decision. By this decision Moscow seemed more relieved, as it saw Nadibaidze as the guarantor of the pro-Russian direction of the Georgian army.<sup>9293</sup>

According to the Georgian newspapers, Shevardnadze also was trying to get the Russian military assets located on Georgian territory by using Nadibaidze's personal links with Russian military (especially Defense Minister Grachev).<sup>94</sup> Certainly,

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<sup>90</sup>Driscoll, "Inside the Leviathan," 253.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 253.

<sup>92</sup>Wolff, "The Armed Forces of Georgia—an Update," 559.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>*Shvidi dge* (7 days) [Georgian newspaper], March 13, 1998.

Nadibaidze had been able to sketch the ministry as an institution, although heavily based on Soviet tradition, and had “displayed leadership and an acute grasp of military affairs.”<sup>95</sup> Consequently, his Ministry of Defense was heavily staffed by Soviet or Russian educated military personnel and relied heavily on Russian assistance in the creation of a “highly motivated professional army and an effective senior command and control system.”<sup>96</sup> Indeed, any attempts to establish a professional army or defense institution were impeded by corruption, the scarceness of resources, absence of a conceptual framework, weak civilian control,<sup>97</sup> and lack of education in military and security fields. The fact that Russia was willing to assist Georgia in educating Georgian officers in Russian military schools was based on Russia’s intentions to retain its influence on the Georgian military elite. In 1993–94 more than 300 Georgian officers and cadets received such training.<sup>98</sup>

From 1998 onwards, Georgia officially declared its Western orientation, withdrawal from the Collective Security Treaty, and its desire to join NATO from the foundation of Partnership for Peace, which the country joined in 1994. At the same time, NATO moved into high gear with the accession of its first new Central European members. This decision on Western orientation became the turning point for the GAF and Ministry of Defense as it created new requirements to adopt and move Georgian defense institutions and armed forces toward NATO compatibility. Accordingly, Shevardnadze dismissed Defense Minister Nadibaidze. Also in this realm, in 1998, Georgia extended an invitation to the International Security Advisory Board (ISAB), which had had previous successful experience in the Baltic States.<sup>99</sup> It is noteworthy that the head of the Parliamentary Committee on Defense and Security, Revaz Adamia, who was well known by his preferences for NATO and Western institutions, played an important role in

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<sup>95</sup> Wolff, “The Armed Forces of Georgia—An Update,” 560.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Darchiashvili, “Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform,” 133.

<sup>98</sup> Wolff, “The Armed Forces of Georgia—An Update,” 560.

<sup>99</sup> International Security Advisory Board (ISAB). “ISAB Report” (2006), [http://gfsis.org/media/download/GSAC/resources/ISAB\\_REPORT\\_2006.pdf](http://gfsis.org/media/download/GSAC/resources/ISAB_REPORT_2006.pdf).



inviting and supporting ISAB's work in Georgia.<sup>100</sup> However, he used his personality more than the agency itself to influence the President to receive them.

ISAB's focus included advice on how to establish an effective resource management system. Parallel to ISAB, the U.S. also assisted in introducing and setting up a new resource management system. The recently established Resource Management Department met numerous internal and external challenges, especially in regard to Planning Programming Budgeting System (PPBS) development. Internal challenges were basically a lack of knowledge and understanding, and resistance to change. The new department, despite the huge support from foreign advisors (including the U.S. and UK) had been through tough disputes not only in the department, but also in the ministry. The main problem was that the new system considered the establishment of transparent budgeting procedures and was limiting the possibilities of corruption.<sup>101</sup>

External challenges appeared more powerful and the first program-based budget failed in parliamentary hearings due to the disagreement between MoD and Ministry of Finances (MoF). Moreover, MoF was able to cut the defense budget by about half. As the implementation of the new resource management system failed, the agency continued budgetary processes according to the old Soviet way, which was feeding the existing corruption.

The first real steps were taken toward modernization after 9/11 when the U.S.-assisted programs started in a more direct manner. At this stage with the absence of, or only nominal, democratic civilian control, military commanders in the ministry as in the General Staff were "as warlords and indifferent to civilian leadership." As Darchiashvili puts it, "one of the most tangible of the Shevardnadze government's inconsistent steps toward military reform"<sup>102</sup> was the launch of the U.S.-assisted Georgian Train and Equip Program (GTEP). The increase of U.S. assistance to Georgia and interest in the region was related to the U.S. global war on terrorism started after 9/11. As the outcome of

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<sup>100</sup> *Shvidi Dge* (7 days) [Georgian newspaper], March 13, 1998.

<sup>101</sup> Fritz, "Security Sector Governance in Georgia (I) Status," 66–67

<sup>102</sup> Darchiashvili, "Georgia Defense Policy and Military Reform,"<sup>132</sup>.

GTEP, four trained and equipped battalions were able to conduct counterinsurgency and antiterrorist warfare operations. In the summer of 2003, GTEP proved to be successful as the Georgian military effectively accomplished an antiterrorist operation in Pankisi Gorge of Georgia<sup>103</sup> and later in multinational coalition operations in Iraq.<sup>104</sup>

### **1. Personnel Management at Early Stages**

Despite the fact that Georgia did not have a large number of military officers serving in the USSR Army,<sup>105</sup> personnel management as well as institutional arrangements were heavily influenced by the Soviet legacy and was understood as centralized administration. Personnel management appeared hard to reform even after the change of political system and eradication of corruption. Therefore, it has been a subject of harsh critique for decades. Western human resources practices consider established policy, planning, standards and procedures for recruitment, strength management, promotion, and professional and career development. Such organization does not leave much space for personal or politically-biased decisions either in military or civilian personnel management in defense institutions.

In the first decade of the new defense institutions, corruption, financial resource scarcity, and the absence of policy, strategy, and knowledge on modern management, backed by a Soviet-inherited mentality, were the most visible challenges. In the 1990s, the only mechanisms to arrange recruiting and manning of armed forces was legislation. The “Law on Universal Military Service” obligated all 18-year-old male citizens in Georgia for two years of military service with exceptions on acceptance of alternative service based on religious beliefs. Professional military service was only considered for officers, and non-commissioned officers’ corps did not exist. All positions in the Ministry of Defense were military no matter whether or not the job required military skills. The positions, according to the “organizational table,” had a “rank ceiling,” usually with the

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<sup>103</sup> Steven Lee Myers, “Georgia: Region Under Control,” *New York Times*, September 3, 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/03/world/world-briefing-europe-georgia-region-under-control.html>

<sup>104</sup> Andrew E. Kramer, “Georgia Becomes an Unlikely U.S. Ally in Iraq,” *New York Times*, October 8, 2007, [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/08/news/08iht-ally.4.7803155.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/08/news/08iht-ally.4.7803155.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

<sup>105</sup> Jesse Paul Lehrke, *The Transition to National Armies in the Former Soviet Republics, 1988–2005* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 145.

highest officer's rank being colonel. There were no limitations on or margins of the lowest rank that could be appointed to the position. So the lowest military rank of junior lieutenant could be appointed with the appointed maximum rank of colonel and could stay in position until reaching the rank of colonel. In addition there were no policies and requirements for professional development, and the next higher rank was up to the length-in-service or commander's will.

Institutional problems resulted from such a system as there was no systematic performance evaluation. Thus, there was no reliable method to select the best performers for promotion, to improve performance, or plan development, and initiative was not required or appreciated adequately. Such a system also attached people to the positions and created space for individually-biased decisions in assignments, promotions, and dismissal of staff.

Another personnel-related institutional problem was ambiguity regarding the number of personnel. Although the sources identify the number of personnel based on official information, the real number of personnel actually serving in the armed forces is hard to identify. There were actually serving personnel and personnel assigned to certain positions who never appeared at military units or performed any duty—so-called “dead souls.” The problem of “dead souls to justify funding requests for food and clothing”<sup>106</sup> existed until 2004. The benefit of having “dead souls” for the commander was funding for clothing, food, and salary, and the benefit for the person (“dead soul”) was getting a military ID (especially identifying him in a high position on General Staff). This ID could be used to “cover” his personal business from criminals. In 2004 as part of the reforms started, a special commission had to visit each military unit to count, register, and issue digital IDs to all who were present and actually performing their duties.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup>Darchiashvili, “Georgia Defense Policy and Military Reform,” 137.

<sup>107</sup> As a member of Strategic Defense Review Commission, we reported about these activities.

Apparently, all previously mentioned features of personnel management negatively affected the image of the military servant in society. They often were tied to violence and therefore were not much trusted or respected.<sup>108</sup>

### C. CONCLUSION

To summarize the security and defense environment of which defense institutions were part in post-Soviet Georgia in this first epoch of such reform, Darchiashvili's work can be quoted:

The state is weak, organized crime is widespread, ethnic conflicts remain unresolved, and the public has little trust in the government security agencies. State bodies are woefully under-funded, and this encourages corruption, as officers supplement their income through bribery and coercion; meanwhile, government ministries have various economic interests which provide extra-budgetary revenue. The Georgian security sector suffers from weakly coordinated and overlapping roles and remits. Although the idea of political control over the military and security sectors is recognized in principle, in practice much of the relevant legislation is largely declaratory, with little real impact on the ground.<sup>109</sup>

This general overview of the security field is applicable to the Ministry of Defense as well as to the armed forces. Financial constraints limited the satisfaction of even such basic needs in military units, as food, uniforms, equipment, training, and living and training infrastructure. The General Staff and the Ministry of Defense suffered from the shortage of electricity, computers, office supplies, Internet access, heating, etc. Corruption and bribery were part of the system and everyday working routine. At the same time, however, young officers were making great efforts to utilize their knowledge and capabilities to perform their jobs. They were intensively learning from partners and

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<sup>108</sup>Darchiashvili, "Georgia Defense Policy and Military Reform," 139–140.

<sup>109</sup>Darchiashvili, "Georgia: A Hostage to Arms in The Caucasus: Armed and Divided," 1.

supporting the slow path of the reforms.<sup>110</sup> The core was their understanding of the need for the reforms.

In parallel with the previously mentioned shortages of food, equipment, finances, training, working and social conditions, personnel management was challenged by Soviet-type bureaucracies, which in reality delayed and disorganized the administering of orders regarding assignments, promotions, leaves, and dismissals. The total number of manpower at that time was hard to define because of existing of “dead souls” or “ghosts.”<sup>111</sup> Assignments and promotions were not transparent, fair, and standardized.<sup>112</sup> No concept and policy documents were available, only disciplinary codes and administrative guidelines, to “manage” manpower. In these circumstances, the desire for NATO integration appeared the most realistic way of development.

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<sup>110</sup>I have been working in the Ministry of Defense since 1999. It was a newly established department and we had to start everything from zero with 20 people and three computers. In winter we were heating the office with handmade heaters brought from our homes. As a rule, I, as almost all my colleagues, have never left the office before 10 p.m. The monthly salary was equivalent to \$40, which was not enough for public transportation during the month, and even that amount was rarely paid. I still have not received eight months of the salary from 1999–2000. We used to call them “frozen salaries.” Not unlike the “frozen conflicts” that formed the strategic environment of our work.

<sup>111</sup> Personnel who officially are assigned to positions, but do not serve in reality. The commanders was getting their salaries and were able to have military IDs for privileges. The practice was common in post-Soviet countries.

<sup>112</sup>Inherited from the Soviet system, the position-rank relationship was not standardized; positions only had the maximum rank assigned initially. So, a third lieutenant could be assigned to the position with a ceiling at colonel and could stay in the position of third lieutenant until he reached the rank of colonel. Promotions were based on an individual’s length of service and the supervisor’s/commander’s will. Such a system created situations in which a colonel was subordinate to a captain, or even a lieutenant.

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### **III. DEFENSE INSTITUTION-BUILDING AND NATO INTEGRATION, SINCE 2004**

#### **A. IMPORTANCE AND BACKGROUND OF NATO INTEGRATION**

This chapter analyzes defense institution-building after the Georgian government changed in 2004 and radical reforms started in all state institutions, including defense. Three main national security goals—provision of national security, integration into NATO, and contribution to international security—shaped the Georgian defense institution and ongoing reforms. Integration within the Alliance requires Georgia to develop its security and defense capabilities to achieve NATO compatibility. Therefore, NATO integration aspiration as it had in many Eastern and Western European countries facilitated reforms in Georgian defense.

The mechanisms of cooperation such as the Integrated Partnership Action Plan, the Planning and Review Process, the Intensified Dialogue, the Annual National Plan, the NATO-Georgian Commission, as well as cooperation through PfP (Partnership for Peace) and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) have been employed to promote the institution building, armed forces development, and NATO integration processes.

Security sector reform and defense transformation in Georgia are supported by vast assistance from partner states, and Georgia is increasingly a contributor rather than a consumer of international security. Georgian peacekeepers have participated in multiple international operations, including Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Georgia is the largest non-NATO state contributor in ISAF, and Georgia is contributing more troops than most NATO Allies. Georgia is planning to participate in the post-ISAF mission in Afghanistan by training, educating, and assisting Afghan forces.<sup>113</sup>

The challenges Georgia faces in pursuing NATO integration are political and institutional. The political challenges relate to Russia's opposition to Georgia's

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<sup>113</sup>Irakli Alasania, Minister of Defense of Georgia, "Georgia Reiterates Post-2014 Afghan Contribution," *Civil Georgia*, February 22, 2013. <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=25779>

aspirations, and also the existence of breakaway regions on Georgian territory. NATO state members have to date failed to reach an agreement on further advancement of Georgian integration mechanisms such as granting Membership Action Plan (MAP) status.<sup>114</sup>

Despite the dynamic reforms in Georgian defense, numerous institutional challenges have been revealed and emphasize the need for further institution building that NATO compatibility requires. These needs include improvements in defense institutions and capabilities. This chapter focuses on how Georgian defense institutions have developed through NATO integration processes. It also analyzes institutional challenges for Georgian defense, such as political interference, institutional weakness, and organizational and manpower management deficiencies.

## **1. Political Background of NATO Integration**

The disagreements among the NATO allies on the accession of Georgia to NATO and even on the steps to advance the integration process are seen as being politically motivated. NATO's open door policy has been articulated in various statements, and the strong support from particular Allies creates hope for Georgia that its aspiration and continuous efforts to achieve NATO integration will result in positive outcomes. At the same time some Alliance observers note that NATO enlargement is not the mission and core function of the Alliance, and new members should be admitted if it is a "win-win situation" for both the new member and NATO. Some observers directly point to the two breakaway territories within Georgia, which are seen as impediments to Georgian integration according to paragraph 6 of the 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement, which requires that a country peacefully solve its territorial problems before entering NATO in order to ensure stability in the North Atlantic area. Some observers also argue that breakaway regions create a possibility that the "territorial disputes ... could lead to another war in the region."<sup>115</sup> In parallel, Russia still maintains its imperialistic attitude

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<sup>114</sup>Julianne Smith, "The NATO-Russia Relationship: Defining Moment or Déjà Vu?" CSIS, 2008, [http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/081110\\_smith\\_natorussia\\_web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/081110_smith_natorussia_web.pdf).

<sup>115</sup>Smith, "The NATO-Russia Relationship."



toward NATO enlargement and regarding Georgia's choice of its security and political development. It is remarkable that some NATO members have expressed uncertainty about how Georgia's leaders would behave if they had support from NATO in terms of using Article 5.<sup>116</sup>

In this regard, it should be noted that the new government elected in 2012 has a much less harsh attitude toward Moscow and is trying to renew Georgia's relationship with Russia. According to the current Defense Minister, Irakli Alasania, Georgia is "not going to end up entangled in a military confrontation." Georgia is attempting to improve its relationship with Russia "step by step," and trying to reintroduce itself to Abkhazians and South Ossetians as an attractive country in which all ethnic groups can peacefully live together.<sup>117</sup> How the changes in the Georgian attitude toward Russian political pressure will affect the Georgian-Russian relationship and each NATO member state's position will be shown at NATO's next summit. However, these prospects vary in the judgment of different scholars and politicians.<sup>118</sup>

## **2. Importance of NATO Integration**

Despite the delays in acquiring NATO membership or a MAP, the NATO integration process is advancing the security and defense developments in Georgia. The integration process is encouraging institution building, widening international cooperation, facilitating the cultivation of democratic values and standards, and introducing the country as a contributor to international security. According to the National Security Concept (NSC) 2011, Georgia, as a South East European country, has made its sovereign choice to go back to its "natural course of development"—that is, to be part of the West—and the NATO integration process is supporting the correction of "historic cataclysms." Georgia had been kept apart from Europe. As an aspirant country, Georgia is committed to further adoption of Western democratic values and principles.

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<sup>116</sup> David S. Yost, draft of Chapter 8, "NATO Enlargement in *NATO's Balancing Act* (unpublished).

<sup>117</sup> Joshua Kucera, "The Bug Pit Interview: Georgian Defense Minister Irakli Alasania," August 1, 2013, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/67335>.

<sup>118</sup> Nigel Chamberlain, "Momentum Gathering Behind Georgia's Relentless Drive to Full NATO Membership," *NATO Watch*, June 22, 2013.

NATO integration has been Georgia’s security and foreign policy priority since the 2003 “Rose Revolution,” and officially Georgia sees it as the way to “strengthen Georgia’s security and ensure its stable development.”<sup>119</sup> The changes in understanding and expectations are visible in NSC 2011, in comparison with NSC 2005, which stated that NATO membership is, as Weber, Sperling, and Smith described it, “the only means for guaranteeing the security of the state, for restoring its territorial integrity, and for protecting ‘Georgia’s land, air and maritime space.’”<sup>120</sup>

Together with the enhancement of the country’s national security interests, NATO partnership provides a framework to broaden Georgia’s regional and international cooperation with NATO member states and other partners. Georgia welcomes and supports deepening NATO cooperation with the other two south Caucasian countries (Armenia and Azerbaijan). In terms of regional cooperation Georgia puts special emphasis on security cooperation with Turkey as a NATO member country and a regional leader.<sup>121</sup> Finally, NATO integration also contributes to Georgia’s endeavors to achieve its primary mission—to protect the state’s sovereignty and ensure the national strategic mission’s accomplishment by developing its defensive capabilities and transforming its armed forces and defense institutions.

## **B. PARTNERSHIP MECHANISMS**

Georgia has approached NATO with an interest in further cooperation. It joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1992 and the Partnership for Peace in 1994, signed a PfP Status of Force Agreement (SOFA) in 1995, and obtained an approved Individual Partnership Program (IPP) from NATO in 1995. The area of cooperation and partnership assistance has consequently increased. In the PfP and IPP frameworks, Georgia has been able to participate in various training and educational activities and hosted the following trainings: Medceur-2000, Cooperative Partner-2001, Cooperative

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<sup>119</sup>Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, [http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang\\_id=ENG&sec\\_id=453](http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=453)

<sup>120</sup>Mark Webber, James Sperling, and Martin A. Smith, *NATO’s Post-Cold War Trajectory Decline or Regeneration?* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 103.

<sup>121</sup>Mikheil Saakashvili, *Threat Assessment for 2010–2013* (Tbilisi: National Security Council, 2010), 20.

Best Effort-2002, Eternity-2002, Medceur/Rescuer-2003, Medceur/Rescuer-2005 Eternity-2005, Cooperative Archer-2007, Cooperative Lancer/Cooperative Longbow-2009<sup>122</sup> and receive expertise and advice from NATO allies for further institution building and armed forces reforms. “PfP programs ... finally became the real cornerstone of the army build-up.”<sup>123</sup> Because Georgia’s military was inherited from the Soviet Union, the equipment and the infrastructure needed to be investigated, standardized, and further improved in order to achieve NATO compatibility. In parallel, personnel needed training and education, which would enable them to communicate and cooperate with partners. These aspects were the focus of the IPP.<sup>124</sup>

By joining the Planning and Review Process (PARP) in 1999, Georgia took the responsibility to determine the policy objectives and reform plans, to agree on them with NATO, and to report on success. PARP was the first mechanism to plan, implement, and assess success in reforming the armed forces in line with the Partnership Goals (PG) to achieve NATO interoperability. The progress that Georgia made enabled the country to be represented and participate in the NATO-led peacekeeping mission in Kosovo (KFOR). Later on, Georgia succeeded in establishing host nation capabilities and hosted two PfP training exercises—Cooperative Partner 2001 and Cooperative Best Effort 2002.<sup>125</sup>

As cooperation was progressing, Georgia officially announced its aspiration to join NATO and its readiness to start an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) in 2002, and it became the first country with an approved IPAP from NATO. Georgia highly praised the importance of IPAP, not as the mechanism of integration, but as the mechanism for supporting institution building and NATO compatibility. IPAP had four major areas for future reforms and asked the Georgian side to define target objectives, set timeframes, and share the progress for annual assessment. The four major areas of

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<sup>122</sup> Partnership Mechanisms, Ministry of Defense, <http://www.mod.gov.ge/?pages=nato-georgia&lang=ge>.

<sup>123</sup>Darchiashvili, “Georgian Security Sector Reform: Achievements and Failures,” 113.

<sup>124</sup>Nika Chitadze, *NATO North Atlantic Alliance as the Main Guarantee of Peace and Stability in the World*. (Tbilisi, Georgia, 2008).

<sup>125</sup> NATO’s Relations with Georgia. NATO. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_38988.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_38988.htm).

security reforms were: 1) political and security affairs; 2) defense, security and military affairs; 3) public information, scientific, environmental protection, and emergency management issues; and 4) administrative, information security, and resource affairs.<sup>126</sup>

The turning point of intensification in the NATO-Georgia relationship and defense reform was the change of government in Georgia in 2003.<sup>127</sup> NATO integration became the top priority, and therefore, IPAP actions were to guide the defense reforms. Beginning in 2004, in each fiscal year the Georgian MoD took the commitments according to IPAP, worked on the implementation of the reforms throughout the year, and reported on progress to a NATO assessment team at the end of the fiscal year. The reforms were supported by an increased defense budget, and consequently cooperation with NATO deepened, and Georgia received the Intensified Dialogue (ID). In 2007, the IPAP had to be revised due to the achievements that Georgia had made and the need to progress on further reform plans. Since 2008 Georgia has advanced to the preparation of an Annual National Plan (ANP) considering post-war (Russian-Georgian War in August 2008) realities, and the need for reconstruction. For example, the new NSC added cyber security in the list of national interests,<sup>128</sup> as Georgia had also experienced cyber attack during the war. In addition, the Threat Assessment document, developed in 2010, is highly influenced by the threats coming from Russia.<sup>129</sup>

During the Russian-Georgian August War in 2008, NATO allies expressed deep concern, “calling for a peaceful and a lasting solution to the conflict based on respect for Georgia’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity,”<sup>130</sup> and NATO supported

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<sup>126</sup>Office of the State Minister on Euro-Atlantic Integration. [http://eu-nato.gov.ge/index.php?que=eng/G\\_A\\_N\\_E/Individual Partnership Action Plan/IPAP](http://eu-nato.gov.ge/index.php?que=eng/G_A_N_E/Individual%20Partnership%20Action%20Plan/IPAP)

<sup>127</sup>Hiscock, “Impatient Reformers,” 119; Hamilton, *Georgian Military Reform – An Alternative View*; Jim Nichol, *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests* (Washington, DC: United States Foreign Press Center, 2006), 16; Wright, “Defense Reform and the Caucasus: Challenges of Institutional Reform during Unresolved Conflict,” 26.

<sup>128</sup>Saakashvili, *National Security Concept of Georgia*. (Tbilisi: National Security Council, 2011), 6. <http://www.nsc.gov.ge/files/files/National%20Security%20Concept.pdf>.

<sup>129</sup>Saakashvili, *Threat Assessment for 2010–2013*. (Tbilisi: National Security Council, 2010), 1–2. [http://www.nsc.gov.ge/files/files/legislations/policy/threatassessment2010\\_2013.pdf](http://www.nsc.gov.ge/files/files/legislations/policy/threatassessment2010_2013.pdf).

<sup>130</sup>“Deepening Relations with Georgia.” NATO Backgrounder, 3. [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static/assets/pdf/pdf\\_publications/Deepening\\_Relations\\_with\\_Georgia\\_EN.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/Deepening_Relations_with_Georgia_EN.pdf)

the country in assessing damage to the state infrastructure and the military establishment. NATO also contributed a total of EUR 2.87 million for demining and clearing the conflict territory of dangerous exploding munitions. The NATO-Georgia Commission (NGC) was established in 2008 by the signing of the framework document during the North Atlantic Council (NAC) visit in Tbilisi in September, 2008. In the framework of the NGC, the NATO-Georgia Professional Development Programme (PDP) was launched. The program supports the enhancement of civilian democratic control and capacity development in Georgia's defense and wider security sector. The PDP provides opportunities for training, internships, experience sharing, and consultations in defense policy and planning, public relations, strategic leadership, human resource management, education, information analysis, crisis communication, building integrity, etc. The second phase started in 2009, and extended the program's capacity to the wider security sector including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the National Military Academy, the National Security Council, and other institutions. The expansion over the wider security sector contributes also in interagency interaction and cooperation.<sup>131</sup>

Georgia sees its participation in the ISAF and the post-ISAF activities as a mechanism of NATO integration,<sup>132</sup> because the Alliance needs Georgian troops to meet NATO compatibility requirements, with an ability to conduct full-scale operations independently and with NATO allies, including U.S. forces. Currently Georgia has over 1500 personnel deployed in Afghanistan in the district of Musa Qala in Helmand Province in southern Afghanistan, where "Georgian soldiers partner with Afghan National Security Forces to conduct patrols, clear roadside bombs and engage with locals."<sup>133</sup> By participating in international peacekeeping operations, Georgia demonstrates its will and capabilities to contribute to international peace and security and enhances its cooperation with NATO. At the same time participation in international

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<sup>131</sup>"NATO Fact Sheet," NATO website, [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static/assets/pdf/topics\\_graphics/20111122\\_nato-georgia-pdp.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/topics_graphics/20111122_nato-georgia-pdp.pdf).

<sup>132</sup>Alasania, *Minister's Vision 2013–2014*.

<sup>133</sup>"Georgia: Now the Top Non-NATO Troop Contributor in Afghanistan," NATO website (June 26, 2013).

operations enhances the operational capabilities and professionalism of Georgian troops. General David Petraeus, a former commander of the ISAF mission, has said that he was “the only American General, who commanded Georgian soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.” General Petraeus told Saakashvili that he was amazed with the bravery of Georgian soldiers.”<sup>134</sup> According to the Georgian President, Mikheil Saakashvili, ISAF “has not been in vain and resulted in moving U.S.-Georgia military cooperation to ‘a new level’ that would help Georgia to increase its self-defense capabilities.”<sup>135</sup>

Georgia has taken note of the participation of the light infantry company in the Operational Capabilities Evaluation and Feedback Programme (OCC E&F).<sup>136</sup> Georgia has been a member of this program since 2004. The program increases the partner state’s capabilities to participate in NATO-led operations and the NATO Response Forces. Georgia also shares its capabilities with NATO and PfP. In 2010, the Sachkhere Mountain Training School was granted the status of NATO/PfP Mountain Training and Education Centre, and since then it has hosted training for the military forces of NATO and PfP countries.<sup>137</sup>

Partnership has been progressing. In 2010, based on the NAC’s decision to strengthen military-to-military cooperation, the Military Committee with Georgia Work Plan was launched. The Work Plan is focused on the development of the GAF, and elaborated concrete actions that the GAF need to conduct and the area of NATO support to meet ANP and PARP goals.<sup>138</sup>

To support effective civilian control and defense institution-building in 2009 NATO introduced a NATO Defense Enhancement Program (DEEP), which covers broad transformation processes. DEEP assistance is tailored to the individual nation’s

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<sup>134</sup> “President Saakashvili met with General Petraeus in Washington,” February 3, 2012, Embassy of the United States in Georgia, [http://georgia.usembassy.gov/latest-news/press\\_releases2012/saakashvili\\_met\\_gen\\_petraeus.html](http://georgia.usembassy.gov/latest-news/press_releases2012/saakashvili_met_gen_petraeus.html).

<sup>135</sup> “Gen. Petraeus Praises Georgian Troops in Afghanistan,” *Civil Georgia* (Tbilisi), March 30, 2011, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=23290>.

<sup>136</sup> Ministry of Defense of Georgia, “Partnership Mechanisms,” (Georgian version) <http://www.mod.gov.ge/?pages=nato-georgia#sthash.8N2vMMLX.dpufd.gov.ge/?pages=na>

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

requirement to the development defense education institutions' curricula and faculty.<sup>139</sup> Georgia also participates in the NATO Building Integrity (BI) project as an observer; however, deeper engagement is planned as the MoD sees BI as the tool for reinforcing transparency and accountability.<sup>140</sup>

### **1. Reforms to Defense Institution-Building**

Georgia builds its defense institutions to accomplish the country's national security mission and to achieve NATO compatibility by establishing democratic control and implementing continuous systematic reforms. The reforms and progress Georgia has made in the ten years from 2003 to 2013 is impressive and the difference between defense institutions now and then is enormous. At the same time, Georgia's defense institutions, including the armed forces, were subject to harsh criticism regarding organizational management, personnel systems, resource management effectiveness, decision making, transparency, etc. History shows that institution building has required long and complicated processes and has been commonly challenged by internal institutional and external factors, and best practices teach that long-term processes of institutionalization are needed for institutions to form effectively.<sup>141</sup> For Georgia, both aspects work hard. The main external factors are the security risks the country faces, and the internal factors vary from the country's political and cultural features to its financial constraints. However, the country might have achieved greater progress without personal and political interference. This is why Georgia needs to establish firm institutions enhanced by an effective legislative system to limit, if not eliminate, the space available for such interference.

NATO General Secretary Anders Fogh Rasmussen assessed Georgia as a model partner. "This country is, in so many ways, a model partner for NATO. You play a strong role in our operations, you are carrying through important reforms, and you are

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<sup>139</sup>James M. Keagle and Tiffany G. Petros, "Building Partner Capacity through Education: NATO Engagement with the Partnership for Peace," *The Quarterly Journal* (Winter 2010), 48.

<sup>140</sup>Ministry of Defense of Georgia, *Partnership Mechanisms*.

<sup>141</sup>Hiscock, "Impatient Reformers," 135.

committed to democracy and to membership of the Alliance,”<sup>142</sup> Rasmussen addressed to an official Georgian audience in Tbilisi.

The first practical steps toward Western defense institution-building started after the Rose Revolution in November 2003, when the government enhanced civilian control over the armed forces. This control was exercised by the first civilian defense minister and the MoD. In 2004, the NATO Euro Atlantic Partnership Council approved the launch of the Partnership Action Plan for Defense institution-building (PAP-DIB) for partner states in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, and also Moldova. This included Georgia by using existing partnership mechanisms such as IPAP and PARP. The ten PAP-DIB objectives covered all aspects of institution building including democratic control, civilian participation in defense and security policy, legislative and judicial oversight of the defense sector, national risks and requirement assessment, the defense management, compliance with international norms in defense and security field, personnel issues including training and career development, efficient defense spending, and international and regional cooperation.<sup>143</sup>

In 2004, the minister of defense became a civilian and the ministry started to employ civilian personnel, civil servants. The civilian Defense Ministry became accountable to the Parliament and the National Security Council. Parliament as the supreme legislative organ approves defense related laws, determines foreign and domestic policy directions, and controls governmental activities. The role of Parliament is determined in the Constitution, and “Parliamentary responsibilities are also outlined, with a certain degree of generalization and with less emphasis on the functional arrangements for ensuring its effectiveness, in appropriately related legislation.”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup>“NATO Praises Georgia and Encourages Further Reforms,” NATO website, June 22, 2013, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_101669.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_101669.htm).

<sup>143</sup>“Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building (PAP-DIB), June 7, 2004, NATO Official text e-library, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-893CA940-43427163/natolive/official\\_texts\\_21014.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-893CA940-43427163/natolive/official_texts_21014.htm).

<sup>144</sup>Philipp Fluri and Hari Bucur-Marcu, *Partnership Action Plan for Defence Institution Building: Country Profiles and Needs Assessments for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova*. (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2007), 17.



Those observers who assessed the Georgian security and defense sector, at the initial phase of reforms, pointed out the lack of security concepts, strategy, and development direction as the fundamental problem. Therefore, by launching a Strategic Defense Review in 2004, the Ministry of Defense started the elaboration of a conceptual framework for security and defense to define security objectives, assess threats, and implement gradual, systematic reforms in the armed forces. According to the SDR plan, based on interagency cooperation, the first National Security Concept, National Military Strategy, Law on Defense Planning, and Annual Minister's vision were developed. Once the conceptual framework had been developed, the most important stage of institution building—the implementation of the policy or the actual transformation process, started. SDR, for the first time in MoD history, introduced conceptualized assessment of the security environment, GAF goals and tasks, a capability based approach, and long-term development plans. It introduced prognosis of budget and force structure up to 2016.<sup>145</sup>

Since 2005, NATO has approved Georgian MoD requests to have assistance in organizational management and the Financial Management and Planning, Programming, Budgeting systems (PPBS) development. The project team led by the Dutch government, with NATO support, helped Georgians to develop the *PPBS Concept and Manual*, which considered establishing effective and efficient resource management, long-term planning, program-based budgeting, and decentralized decision making in each of nine programs. The PPBS project and the establishment of the Management Team and Decision Making Board within its framework were the first attempts at linking defense planning to the National Military Strategy and the Threat Assessment, to develop medium- and long-term plans (which required close cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and its transformation on long-term planning), to distribute decision-making power horizontally in contrast to the existing vertical model.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup>David Kezerashvili, Minister of Defense of Georgia. Strategic Defense Review. Ministry of Defense of Georgia, 2007 (Georgian version)  
<http://www.mod.gov.ge/assets/uploads/files/yzqhgsgsregeo.pdf>.

<sup>146</sup>“Reform of Georgia's Defence Sector,” Transparency International, 2.  
<http://transparency.ge/en/node/220>.

The last SDR approved in 2013 develops careful approaches and sets sovereignty and territorial unity as key missions of Georgian defense forces. New leadership puts emphasis on wiser and more transparent budget allocations to ensure the development of needed capabilities enabling Georgia to fulfill its missions in country and in international peacekeeping operations. Contribution to international security remains as one of the top priorities, and sets the requirements of increased interoperability with NATO forces.<sup>147</sup>

Minister's Vision 2013 considers further improvement of command and control, doctrine, training, mobility, air defense surveillance, logistics, military intelligence, infrastructure, and reserve systems. Together these are institutional reforms, human resource development, NATO compatibility, international cooperation, and transparency and civilian control.<sup>148</sup> Both the revised SDR and Minister's Vision address weaknesses revealed in recent years and reflect critical approaches.

### **C. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

Personnel management and its sensible reform, as the key for institutional success and broadly acknowledged as one of the weakest points of Georgian defense, has always been the focus of the reforms. Therefore, it appeared at the top of the agenda for assistance from partner states and for the NATO assessment teams. The U.S. has assigned a special advisor on personnel issues; human resource management was added as the component of previously mentioned Dutch PPBS/FMS project; the UK has included personnel management in its assistance package; Germany has assigned a special representative for NCO issues; and Turkey has begun sharing its experience on personnel management.

The defense policy priorities for 2005–2006 submitted to the Parliament, stated that main defense policy priority—improving the GAF capabilities was requiring the training of the qualified personnel and improving their working and living conditions. The report also declared that development of personnel management policy had already

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<sup>147</sup>“Strategic Defence Review, 2013.” Ministry of Defence of Georgia, 2013.  
<http://www.mod.gov.ge/?pages=mimoxilvis-dokumenti>.

<sup>148</sup>Alasania, “Minister's Vision.”

started and was focused on the career management system. The very first step, which was also supported by the SDR, was to determine the exact number of personnel who actually serve in the armed forces and create an adequate database, to create a unified civilian and military personnel data system, and to issue digital identification cards which would support registration and maintain statistics on the existing personnel.<sup>149</sup>

To exercise civilian oversight for armed forces personnel management by developing policy and monitoring its implementation, in 2006 the Human Resource Management Policy Section was established as the part of Defense Policy Division. The section was broadened as a division and then later as a department in 2007. The department is responsible for developing policy for human resources, including military and civilian personnel, and executing the management of civilian personnel.<sup>150</sup>

While policy was being developed, the personnel management system started to progress noticeably. “Visible developments” occurred in developing personnel management concepts, job descriptions, performance evaluation, military occupational specialty, professional development, career management, and increasing social provisions.<sup>151</sup> From the previously mentioned assistance, the personnel management system was becoming more consistent with NATO requirements.<sup>152</sup>

The reform started setting up an electronic personnel database and established a performance appraisal system. The new system of evaluation considered the annual formal evaluation from two supervisors and acceptance/non-acceptance from the evaluated person. Training and written exams have been held to support the field commanders in conducting fair and effective evaluations and promotions. Newly created Selection Boards discussed and reached a consensus based on independent decisions on

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<sup>149</sup>Ministry of Defense of Georgia, “Defense Policy Priorities for 2005–2006 (Main Directions of the Ministry of Defense),” Parliament of Georgia, 1, [http://www.parliament.ge/files/292\\_880\\_864945\\_modeng.pdf](http://www.parliament.ge/files/292_880_864945_modeng.pdf).

<sup>150</sup>“The Regulation of Human Resources Management Department,” Ministry of Defense of Georgia, 2007, [https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com\\_idmssearch&view=docView&id=1878494](https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com_idmssearch&view=docView&id=1878494)

<sup>151</sup>Fluri and Bucur-Marcu, “Partnership Action Plan for Defence Institution Building,” 24

<sup>152</sup>Reform of Georgia’s Defence Sector,” Transparency International.

promotions and selection of personnel for educational opportunities abroad. According to the Transparency International report on Georgia, “the new system of evaluation and promotion is designed to reward education, experience, and ability while keeping nepotism in check.”<sup>153</sup>

To disrupt the practice of corruption and nepotism, the MoD has dismissed approximately two-thirds of senior personnel, including 35 Soviet-experienced generals. To refill the vacancies, as Hedvig Lohm quotes Vice Minister Sikharulidze, the institution was looking for “young talented people to learn by doing.”<sup>154</sup> To manage reorganization and redundancies, the Ministry of Defense cooperated with international organizations. In 2007, the International Organization of Migration launched the project to support dismissed military personnel in the separation and civilian reintegration processes. The project considered small grants, business consultations, and job counseling assistance for the military personnel who were redundant in the frames of personnel reforms and reorganization processes.<sup>155</sup>

In addition, a special focus was placed on training and education and the reform of the National Defense Academy (NDA). The reforms, which are going with “high intensity,” consider development of the faculty and establish new curricula such as Advanced Defense Studies granting a Master’s degree.<sup>156</sup> Together with bilateral assistance, Georgia benefits from the NATO Defense Enhancement Program (DEEP) which currently is tailored to develop NDA capabilities. The renovated NDA offers a number of educational courses to Georgian military branches and a Bachelor’s degree education to cadets. The process of developing the course curricula for all GAF branches is ongoing. English language is taught in each brigade. In parallel, the German-supported

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Hedvig Lohm, “It’s Not all Roses: Georgian Defense Reforms sine the Rose Revolution,” (2006), 32, <http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/o.o.i.s?id=24965&postid=1323368>

<sup>155</sup>International Organization of Migration, “Giving New Chances to Excess Military Personnel,” (2007), [http://www.iom.ge/index\\_iom.php?newslater4&home](http://www.iom.ge/index_iom.php?newslater4&home).

<sup>156</sup>Tengiz Pkhaladze and Alexander Rondeli, “Georgia,” in *Security Sector Reform in Countries of Visegrad and Southern Caucasus: Challenges and Opportunities*, ed. Security Sector Reform in Countries of Visegrad and Southern Caucasus: Challenges and Opportunities (Bratislava, Slovakia: Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs (CENAA, 2013), 12.

NCO school serves to train NCOs, and Sachkhere PfP Mountain School hosts students from PfP countries to be trained together with Georgian mountain troops.<sup>157</sup>

Evidently, personnel management became a part of the success story of Georgian defense reform; however, MoD needs to continue further efforts for reform. Establishment of the institutional mechanisms for personnel management, such as policies for assignments, promotions, and career management limited the space for nepotism and personally affiliated decisions. Also expanding the educational opportunities in the country and abroad provided more skilled staff members who are dedicated to change. Even so, personnel management reform as a whole transformation process has had delays and unsystematic changes of direction, which has constrained the complete success of the defense reforms.

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<sup>157</sup>Chitadze, "NATO North Atlantic Alliance as the Main Guarantee of Peace and Stability in the World."

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#### **IV. THE CHALLENGES OF DEFENSE INSTITUTION-BUILDING AMONG NEW NATO MEMBERS, 1989 ONWARD**

Since the end of the Cold War, Eastern and Central European countries have gone through similar patterns of transformation and faced similar institutional challenges shaped by the Communist legacy and its military heritage. Some of these countries, like Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, and Romania, have inherited established military structures and personnel and have needed to reshape these institutions and downsize their armed forces due to the changed political realities that occurred after the Cold War. The others, mostly former Yugoslavian, the Baltic states, and Slovakia, like Georgia, had to start from scratch or from the remnants of the predecessor state, usually in a jumble. Although, defense institutions in both cases suffered from a lack of understanding and experience exercising democratic civilian control; a deficiency of interoperable civilian and military expertise; the absence of security and defense policy, concepts and strategies; limited finances; and weak pluralistic institutional mechanisms. In some cases, ineffective and undemocratic civilian control in the new democracies of the Central and Eastern European countries led civilian authorities to use the armed forces as a tool for political power and influence, especially at the beginning stages in the early 1990s. In addition, transition to the market economy, emerging economic difficulties, and a lack of financial expertise negatively affected the budgetary processes, created financial irregularities, and encouraged massive corruption.

Poor civilian control and financial difficulties were undermining not only defense institutions but the armed forces as well. Chris Donnelly, who served as Special Adviser for Central and Eastern European Affairs to the Secretary General of NATO in 1989–2003, generalizes the situation in Eastern and Central European countries armed forces as “the uncontrollable sale or distribution of military materiel, lack of guidelines of officers using their positions and forces under their command for personal purposes, hiring out of soldiers by the officers, straightforward theft, and other corrupt practices—all highly destructive of military discipline—proliferated.”<sup>158</sup> Exacerbating the discipline

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<sup>158</sup>Chris Donnelly, “Reform Realities,” 37–38.

problem in the armed forces and increased corruption were making civilian control even more difficult and ineffective. However, as these countries have decided their orientation toward the West and their aspiration for NATO integration, they have initiated the necessary reforms in both civilian and military directions.

#### **A. ROLE OF NATO PARTNERSHIP AND ACCESSION**

NATO partnership and integration facilitated the reforms and defense institutions in most Central and East European countries. It has introduced the standards and tools for improvements, such as North Atlantic Cooperation Council (1991) and the Partnership for Peace (1994) and a number of individual partnership programs in growing detail and complexity. NATO partnership and accession criteria were endorsing the democratic civilian control, transparency of defense planning and budgeting, and operational and capability improvement of armed forces as compatible for cooperation with NATO members in international missions.<sup>159</sup> In practice, NATO membership has appeared to be an effective political tool forcing national governments to establish democratic civilian control and implement reforms.<sup>160</sup> It has led countries, for example Slovenia,<sup>161</sup> to increase defense expenditures, develop expeditionary forces for international missions, implement better personnel policies, and improve procurements and acquisitions. Scholars see positive and negative outcomes from using the NATO factor to inspire national governments, senior officers, or defense civilians to make changes and reforms in the shadow of the chaos in south Eastern Europe. The positive outcome is that the NATO factor definitely was “pushing” the reforms in Eastern Europe. Negative outcomes are mostly related to the inadequate spending and civil-military tensions amid. According to Donnelly, senior commanders often used NATO to justify the procurement of expensive and sometimes unnecessary equipment. The second negative outcome of using

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<sup>159</sup>Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council/North Atlantic Cooperation Council, “Partnership for Peace: Framework Document” (NATO Headquarters, Brussels, January 10–11, 1994).

<sup>160</sup>Florina Cristiana Matei, “The Impact of NATO Membership: Hungary,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, eds. Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei (New York: Routledge, 2013b), 229.

<sup>161</sup>Florina Cristiana Matei, “Civilian Influence in Defense: Slovenia,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, eds. Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei (New York: Routledge, 2013a), 160–161.



“NATO demands” as the excuse for pushing defense reforms was that “they [defense civilians] lacked the self-confidence to tackle this issue on their authority”<sup>162</sup> and such an attitude negatively affected civil-military relationships and public confidence.

By contrast, the political scientist Rachel Epstein offers different perspectives on why NATO has exercised more influence on civilian rather than military officers. She has developed the hypothesis on the circumstances which support international institutions to acquire and generate support from domestic actors to pursue the reforms. The hypothesis is that the change of regimes and discharge of old institutions/interest groups “leave domestic actors uncertain about how to make a policy.”<sup>163</sup> Such uncertainty was low in the military personnel in Poland, Romania, Hungary, and therefore, they resisted NATO influence. At the same time, civilians had a higher level of uncertainty, as these countries did not have democratic civilian defense institutions. As a result the civilians were more open to NATO advice, while militaries had highly self-confident visions of the reforms process.<sup>164</sup>

Nevertheless, as most scholars emphasize, NATO integration played a tremendous role in defense institution-building in Eastern European countries. Even so, establishment and development of democratic civilian control and defense institutions have faced numerous challenges, such as communist institutional legacy, political instability, and limited resources and capabilities.

## **B. DEMOCRATIC CIVILIAN CONTROL**

Defense institution-building and the establishment of democratic civilian control progressed slowly after 1989 and the process has been challenging.<sup>165</sup> The reforms started by developing the national laws in the defense sector, which established the

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<sup>162</sup>Donnelly, “Reform Realities,” 40.

<sup>163</sup>Rachel A. Epstein, *In Pursuit of Liberalism International Institutions in Post-communist Europe* (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2008), 14.

<sup>164</sup>*Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>165</sup>Matei, “Civilian Influence in Defense: Slovenia,” 161; Florina Cristiana Matei, “NATO, the Demand for Democratic Control, and Military Effectiveness Romania,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, eds. Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei (New York: Routledge, 2012), 221.

mechanisms of democratic control over the armed forces, and defined the missions, roles, and responsibilities of military and defense civilian structures. The civil-military has been 'problematique'<sup>166</sup> in the post-Communist era, as Epstein analyzes in the cases of Romania, Hungary, and Poland. It has differed from the most common practice of controlling the military, and was challenged by political interference in military affairs. The most common problem after establishing civilian control was that it appeared far from being democratic control as NATO sees it.<sup>167</sup> The issue of political interference and the efforts of political parties to exert their own influence on the military, especially the officer corps, challenged the democratic control in Bulgaria as well.<sup>168</sup> Hard challenges took place in Romania, where defense institution-building was accompanied by "hasty, erratic and inadequate de-politicization processes,"<sup>169</sup> according to Florina Matei. The progress in institution building in all countries has been slowed also due to the lack of understanding and education of the defense field in civil society. Soviet legacy has hindered people from requiring accountability. Even the NGOs, which have fewer opportunities for and traditions of defense education in post-Communist countries (for example, Hungary), lacked the competencies to demand and exercise adequate external civilian oversight on defense issues.<sup>170</sup>

Subjective civilian control, a term coined by Samuel Huntington, describes the situation in which the lack of defense field expertise on the part of civilians impedes democratic control, as was also broadly evidenced in Eastern European states' new defense institutions. One of the main reasons for defense incompetence in these countries comes from the lack of tradition and absence of educational opportunities as the common Soviet and Socialist legacy. Donnelly emphasizes the lack of general and national defense knowledge from civilian authority as one of the major problems for defense

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<sup>166</sup>Peter D. Feaver, "Civil-Military Relations 1," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1999), 211–241, 214.

<sup>167</sup>Epstein, *In Pursuit of Liberalism International Institutions in Post-communist Europe*, 108.

<sup>168</sup>Todor Tagarev, *Phases and Challenges of Security Sector Reform in the Experience of Bulgaria*, vol. 85 (Sofia, Bulgaria: Institute of Information and Communication Technologies, Centre for Security and Defence Management, 2011), 108.

<sup>169</sup>Matei, "NATO, the Demand for Democratic Control, and Military Effectiveness Romania," 327.

<sup>170</sup>Matei, "The Impact of NATO Membership: Hungary," 223.

reforms and institution building in Central and Eastern Europe. According to him, “no one in the government really knows how many hospital beds are the equivalent of the cost of a battalion of tanks, or if the civilian government cannot identify how many tanks are required to defend the country.”<sup>171</sup> Even after NATO accession, defense institutions and democratic civil-military relations were challenged by a lack of understanding of military affairs, weak cooperation between General Staff and MoD, corruption, bribery, and favoritism.<sup>172</sup>

In parallel, appointments in the ministries of defense were driven more by political motives than the finding and using of rare professionals in the defense sector. Such appointments sometimes included an appointment of a minister to grant a reward to a particular person for his political support or as part of a political deal. Matei points out the negative outcomes of such political interference on civilian control, military effectiveness, and resource allocations in Hungary.<sup>173</sup> Lack of expertise among defense civilians challenging defense institution-building was also demonstrated in Slovenia, where lack of expertise caused “erratic or ineffective” reforms and policies, political scandal, corruption, and blackmail.<sup>174</sup> She gives examples of such as continuing the “exceptional” promotions in higher rank officers. The reality of political immaturity in military issues aggravated civilian oversight mechanisms and saved room for personal decisions and interference. For example, the command system in Bulgaria, which considers the President as the Supreme Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces while the defense minister is approved by the Parliament, created a civil-military friction. As Todor Tagarev assesses, due to the personal conflict between the President and Defense Minister of Bulgaria, the military intelligence department was operating without the officially appointed head.<sup>175</sup> Another example of political interference in military issues is discussed by Matei. In Hungary, the decision on foreign military deployment fell under

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<sup>171</sup>Chris Donnelly, “Defence Transformation in the New Democracies: A Framework for Tackling the Problem,” *NATO Review* 45 (1997), 15–19.

<sup>172</sup>Matei, “NATO, the Demand for Democratic Control, and Military Effectiveness Romania,” 327.

<sup>173</sup>Matei, “The Impact of NATO Membership: Hungary,” 223.

<sup>174</sup>Matei, “Civilian Influence in Defense: Slovenia,” 164.

<sup>175</sup>Tagarev, “Phases and Challenges of Security Sector Reform in the Experience of Bulgaria,” 4–5.

the authority of Parliament. First, this situation has caused the politicization of a military issue, and second, it causes procedural complications if, for example, the unit needed to deploy when the Parliament was on vacation.<sup>176</sup>

### C. INSTITUTIONAL-ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES

The common institutional-organizational challenges that newly established or reshaped defense institutions faced due to the lack of defense expertise were the civilian-military tensions natural to domestic and international politics; unclear roles and missions; lack of vision and strategy; inadequate planning; ineffective organizational arrangements, decision making, and resources, including human resources, allocation, and management.

Western and Central European armed forces have commonly faced the inheritance of a large-size Soviet style military, trying to maintain its old, “massive” force structures and infrastructures, which were made to contrast by the smaller, all volunteer and expeditionary forces that came into vogue in the U.S./NATO in the wake of the 1990–1 Gulf War and 11 September terrorism episode. However, due to rapid social and economic changes, the transition to the market economy, and shrinking resources, old force structures quickly appeared inadequate to all concerned. Accordingly, even downsized armed forces have commonly remained top-heavy organizations, which have hindered the reform process. In addition, the dismissal of senior officers without appreciation, further financial and social security, or assistance in civilian reintegration appeared as a widespread practice in the post-Socialist military. Accordingly, these officers were trying to use all their power to stay in their positions which highly demoralized younger officers and frustrated the whole generation who previously were considering becoming career officers.<sup>177</sup>

Attempts to maintain “an old system” were not the only issue related to massive top structure. Once the downsizing problem was more or less solved, it appeared that the reform of the decision-making processes, flow of documentation, and intra-organizational

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<sup>176</sup>Matei, “The Impact of NATO Membership: Hungary,” 222.

<sup>177</sup>Donnelly, “Reform Realities,” 39.

relations between units met even more challenges than previous downsizing or structural reorganization. Most resources had been spent on either “keeping the old system on life support” or implementing only a cosmetic reform instead of a systematic and substantive one.<sup>178</sup>

The reforms, as scholars conclude, driven by NATO membership, appeared to be façade changes and they became more vulnerable after some countries’ accession to NATO. In the case of Romania, where as in most other cases NATO membership aspiration forced the reforms toward defense democratization and effectiveness, the continuation of reforms and further institution building started suffering after membership was granted as a result of “the lack of carrots and sticks.” The political elite including legislative bodies lost interest and objected to further budget allocation for defense reforms and modernization or acquisition of equipment and capabilities. Matei emphasizes the political will as “cardinal” in effectiveness and continuance of defense institution-building and armed forces reforms. This political will was lacking in regard to democratization of civil-military relations and also to military effectiveness.<sup>179</sup>

Institutionalization of democratic control was the biggest challenge faced by the Czech Republic’s defense institutions, as well. The fact that the Czech Republic gained independence through a “velvet divorce” from Czechoslovakia in 1992, political and societal circles were integrated in aspiration to share Western values, and NATO demonstrated eagerness and efforts to grant accession. Communist legacy, however, played a role. Newly established civilian control lacked the democratic nature, the defense budget was not fully transparent, and newly adopted legislative norms or policies lacked ownership by national actors. In short, as Gheciu concludes, Czech polity, including defense civilians, needed to change their thinking and “completely transcend old habits and Communist attitudes.”<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>179</sup>Matei, “NATO, the Demand for Democratic Control, and Military Effectiveness Romania,” 328.

<sup>180</sup>Gheciu, *NATO in the “New Europe,”* 357, 108.

Another common challenge rooted in these attitudes shared by Eastern European countries was a lack of understanding and facts to develop visions, concepts, and policies and to plan adequately. Furthermore, they were saddled with ambiguous command systems. Poland demonstrates this case, as the former Polish deputy defense minister and scholar Andrzej Karkoszka concludes. At its entry to NATO, Karkoszka explains, Polish Armed Forces “were visibly lacking a compatible level of command at the operational level” in western practice.<sup>181</sup> Also, Hungarian defense institutions suffered from the ambiguity in roles and missions, as well as the absence of concepts, which together hindered the effective institution building and promoted the rivalry and tensions between civilian and military settings. Unclear missions caused parallelism, duplications, and overlapping functions. The rivalry between civilian and military structures disrupted the efforts of cooperation and information sharing.<sup>182</sup> As a result, the reforms were slow and less effective.

Donnelly generalizes about one more of the institutional challenges in regard to defense reforms in Central and Western European countries as the people in these institutions who lacked a deep understanding and ownership of defense reforms. As to their lacking the understanding of Western models and practices, they either totally neglected the changes or applied some particular NATO country’s model to their defense systems without analyzing these practices and adapting them to the local environment, culture, or available resources. In some cases the advice they were getting appeared to be irrelevant, unreliable, and biased. Another vulnerable point to defense institution-building was the lack of ownership of the reform process. Change agents or advocates of reforms in some cases failed or achieved only temporary success because of this lack of ownership and active involvement from existing mid-level structures or because of discouragement from senior leadership “who viewed them as a threat.”<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Andrzej Karkoszka, “Defense Reform in Poland, 1989–2000,” in *Post-Cold War Defense Reform Lessons Learned in Europe and the United States*, eds. Istvan Gyarmati and Theodor Winkler (Washington, DC: Brassey’s Inc., 2002).

<sup>182</sup> Matei, “The Impact of NATO Membership: Hungary,” 222.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

One more common pattern revealed by Donnelly is the mismanagement of the training and education acquired in Western countries which were intended to contribute to the reforms process. Young officers, who received education abroad, instead of getting promoted or being involved as leaders of the reforms, were discouraged, demoted, ignored, or even dismissed.<sup>184</sup>

As a conclusion, it can be argued that defense institution-building in Eastern and Central Europe was strongly facilitated by NATO membership aspirations. However, the Communist past and an entrenched bureaucracy together with the immaturity of the new democracies challenged defense institution building. Newly established civilian control lacked democracy and accountability as a result of defense expertise deficiency and attempts of political influence. Institutional challenges rooted in the Communist past were political interference; ambiguous roles and mission; an absence of policy, concepts, and adequate planning; the lack of will and ownership of reforms; lack of expertise in defense issues, and mismanagement of resources, including human resources. The foregoing bears on the case of Georgia, in its own struggle to affect reform of its security sector and especially its defense personnel in the past twenty years of political change in Europe.

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<sup>184</sup>Donnelly, "Reform Realities," 41.

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## V. INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES OF GEORGIAN DEFENSE

Georgian defense institution-building has been turbulent for a variety of compelling reasons examined below in the realms of international politics, domestic politics and the dynamics of reform in armies and society. While at the stage of establishment of defense institutions, most attempts were to organize and control armed forces, at the second stage institutional deficiencies became apparent. At this stage, it was a struggle to establish defense institutions in the almost failing state. There were permanent financial shortages, widespread bribery and corruption, legislative insufficiencies, policy and strategy deficiency, and power centralization and absence of defense expertise impeded the institution-building. The second stage started after the 2003 Rose Revolution and the change of government. Step by step all basic financial needs started to be met, strategic direction toward NATO integration became well set, concepts developed, and personnel experienced improvements in working and living conditions, as well as opportunities for education and professional development.

Overall, Georgia has achieved the transformation from being a consumer to becoming a contributor in international peace. The country's new leaders have had to implement tough methods to fight against a Soviet legacy focused on corruption. However, the attitudes—especially regarding political involvement and personally biased decisions—appeared to be the most difficult to overcome. Moreover, legislative authority lacked the necessary oversight mechanisms. Also, the reforms and elimination of institutional deficiencies were impeded by continuous transition and frequent changes in political leadership and priorities. These changes made it difficult to develop and maintain still very scarce defense expertise.

This chapter analyzes the institutional challenges Georgian defense faced during its transformation, and it also discusses the problematic areas of the early stages as a background. The first part of the chapter discusses the deficiencies Georgian defense institutions suffered, such as permanent financial shortages, widespread bribery and corruption, legislative insufficiencies, policy and strategy deficiency, power centralization, and absence of defense expertise. After background discussion, the chapter

concentrates on the following areas of institutional challenges of Georgian defense: weak civilian oversight, political interference, and lack of defense expertise.

## **A. CHALLENGES AT EARLY STAGES**

### **1. Legislative Insufficiency**

Georgian legislation has some ambiguity regarding civil-military relations. The Constitution, as the basic document defining the civil-military relationship and defense institutions, authorizes the Parliament to define the main direction of internal and external policy and the President to lead and implement the policy.<sup>185</sup> Darchiashvili also emphasizes the ambiguity regarding the command authority. The President, who is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, defines its structure and appoints the Chief of Defense, while the number of the Armed Forces needs to be approved by the Parliament and the Defense Minister is appointed by the Prime Minister. According to Darchiashvili, “this ambiguity allowed personality, charisma, and personal influence to prevail over institutional framework,”<sup>186</sup> and even more, it may create a stalemate between President and Parliament if they fail to achieve consensus.<sup>187</sup> Indeed, vagueness and unclear distribution of authority and responsibilities among the President as the Supreme Commander of Armed Force, Defense Minister, and Head of General Staff have challenged civil-military relations.<sup>188</sup>

Similarly the Law on Defense, approved in 1997, which was intended to define the “basics and organization of Georgian Defense,” was criticized as also lacking clarity. Despite a similar amendment added in 2002, it remained vague and failed to achieve separation of authority and distribution of functions between the Ministry of Defense and

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<sup>185</sup> The Constitution of Georgia, 1995. Article 48 and Article 69. The text with the amendments up to 2006, [http://www.parliament.ge/files/68\\_1944\\_951190\\_CONSTIT\\_27\\_12.06.pdf](http://www.parliament.ge/files/68_1944_951190_CONSTIT_27_12.06.pdf)

<sup>186</sup> Darchiashvili, “Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform,” 134.

<sup>187</sup> This ambiguity existing from the approval of the constitution in 1995 still creates challenges. The 2012 Parliamentary election was won by the opposition party; therefore, the prime minister became the leader of the opposition party. The president used his authority and did not appoint the CHOD who was supported by the defense minister.

<sup>188</sup> International Security Advisory Board, ISAB Report 2004, [http://fes.ge/de/images/Fes\\_Files/05Publications/isab\\_full\\_new.pdf](http://fes.ge/de/images/Fes_Files/05Publications/isab_full_new.pdf).

General Staff. It also could not provide the civilian oversight mechanism. The minister was still military and there was only one civilian deputy minister with few staff.<sup>189</sup>

In parallel, Georgian legislation lacked the provisions to ensure transparency and democratic accountability. Before 2004, corruption was widespread at all levels of institutional arrangements, especially in the budgetary processes and procurements. Despite attempts at controlling defense budget and expenditures from the civilian side, such as establishing the Trust Group or Anticorruption Policy Coordination Council, they either were not granted full access to information or their reports were not adequately addressed by the President or Parliament.<sup>190</sup> In general, civilian control over defense spending was missing.<sup>191</sup>

## **2. Scarceness of Resources and Abundance of Corruption**

As the country was in transition and in deep economic crisis, the Georgian defense sector lacked financial resources. Therefore, logistics and infrastructural demands were not met. Personnel suffered poor living or working conditions, shortage of uniforms and equipment, and very low and sometimes undelivered salaries followed to budget sequesters. Such situations hindered any attempts at reform or development of institutional capacity.

Constrained finances and poor working and living conditions encouraged widespread corruption. In addition, the Soviet legacy of bureaucracy and the Georgian “traditional clannish relationship” played their role to make corruption a systemic problem for all state institutions including defense. Antje Fritz demonstrates a pyramid shaped corruption scheme, starting with the President and his family at the top and spreading widely downward through less influential societal elements to deep roots. The amount of money to be made from corruption depended on the hierarchy of the

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<sup>189</sup>Tamara Pataraiia, “Defence Institution Building in Georgia,” in *Defence Institution Building: Country Profiles and Needs Assessments for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova*, eds. Philipp Fluri and Viorel Cibotaru (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2008), 50.

<sup>190</sup>David Darchiashvili, “Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform,” in *Statehood and Security: Georgia After the Rose Revolution*, eds. Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold (American Academy Studies in Global Security. Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2005), 117–154., 135.

<sup>191</sup> Pataraiia, “Defence Institution Building in Georgia,” 50.

“pyramid.”<sup>192</sup> Also, all incentives, career or financial, very much depended on personal loyalty to the President and his network.<sup>193</sup>

### **3. Soviet Inherited Administration**

After small improvements in funding and meeting basic needs, institutional challenges such as the absence of concepts and relevant planning became more obvious. Without a strategy, scarce financial resources faced the threat of being mismanaged, and the reforms development missed vigilant short- and medium-term planning.<sup>194</sup> While the absence of conceptual documents was an obvious challenge, there were no guarantees that development of policy would have made a dramatic change. Despite the existence of the laws, officials based decisions on extensions of clannish or personal influence and could be reluctant to follow or would ignore the laws. Antje Fritz emphasizes the common Soviet legacy as the ground of the real challenge, which was implementation and enforcement the laws.<sup>195</sup>

Power centralization based on political loyalty coming from the President was widespread throughout the whole institution and exercised based on the previously mentioned loyalty network. Decisions regarding organization or resource management were based on personal relationships rather than missions or tasks, and they completely ignored democratic procedures.<sup>196</sup>

### **4. Lack of Skills and Professionalism**

Parallel to previous discussion, institution building was harshly impeded by absence of personnel development possibilities and tools, frequent and ungrounded

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<sup>192</sup> Antje Fritz, “Security Sector Governance in Georgia (I): Status,” in *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia’s Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform*, eds. Philipp H. Fluri and Eden Cole (Vienna, Austria: National Defence Academy and Bureau for Security Policy, in co-operation with the PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes: Study Group Information, 2005), 54.

<sup>193</sup> Darchiashvili, *Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform* (2005): 117–154, 135.

<sup>194</sup> Sir Garry Johnson. International Security Advisory Board Report: Georgian Foundation of Security and International Studies, 2006.

<sup>195</sup> Fritz, *Security Sector Governance in Georgia (I): Status*, 54.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

movement, and absence of “efficient, dedicated and politically neutral civil service.”<sup>197</sup> The same challenges applied to the military personnel, who also mirrored all the institutional deficiencies. While promotion was based on nepotism and there were few opportunities for training and education, together with an underpaid job, the majority of officers were unmotivated and uninspired to make any sound reforms.<sup>198</sup>

These were the legacy the new government inherited from post-Soviet, almost failing state, and the reforms started. Economic development, which would provide resources for defense transformation, would promote democracy and that would enhance civilian oversight and fight against widespread corruption. These became vital national goals.

## **B. INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES DURING THE REFORMS**

The post-Rose Revolution government has made tremendous changes—more than in many other countries—and these changes were especially obvious in the defense and military field.<sup>199</sup> The shift from being “a collection of loosely organized, poorly disciplined units with famously corrupt leadership”<sup>200</sup> to the defense institution managing the Georgian Armed Force’s contribution in international security has happened. The reforms have included a broad range of success stories at the “policy and conceptual ... [and] structural and institutional levels”<sup>201</sup> according to Greg Simons. He also assesses defense reforms as parallel processes and emphasizes “personnel, structural, equipment, doctrinal and psychological changes.”<sup>202</sup> However, despite the noticeable transformation Georgian defense has a long way to go to institutionalize and further develop these reforms. Careful analysis of the ongoing reforms reveals the institutional challenges,

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<sup>197</sup>Sir Garry Johnson. International Security Advisory Board Report, 6.

<sup>198</sup>Pataraiia, *Defence Institution Building in Georgia*, 50.

<sup>199</sup> Hiscock, “Impatient Reformers,” 119.

<sup>200</sup> Hamilton, *Georgian Military Reform—An Alternative View*, Commentary, Center for Strategic & International Studies, February, 3, 2009, <https://csis.org/publication/georgian-military-reform>

<sup>201</sup>Greg Simons, “Security Sector Reform and Georgia: The European Union’s Challenge in the Southern Caucasus,” *European Security* 21, no. 2 (06/01; 2014/02, 2012), 272–293. doi:10.1080/09662839.2012.665887/

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

which are mainly concentrated in three areas in this paper. First, strengthened civilian control lacked democratization, parliamentary oversight, and public accountability. Second, political interference, aimed at achieving either international or domestic political dividends or grounded on personal perceptions, corrupted strategic decisions and concept implementation. Third, reforming the personnel and organizational management system still could not provide and institutionalize a broad range of defense and military expertise.

### **1. Weak Oversight**

Georgian legislation provides the legal framework for Parliament to exercise oversight of defense; however, the parliamentary oversight was commonly assessed as weak and less capable of holding the government and its ministers accountable.<sup>203</sup>

The Constitution,<sup>204</sup> the Georgian Law on Defense,<sup>205</sup> and the Law on the Rules of the Procedures of Parliament of Georgia<sup>206</sup> set the mechanisms for policy and budgetary oversight of defense. According to the legislation the Georgian Parliament defines defense state policy, approves defense laws and development concepts, discusses and approves defense budget, approves the strength of the armed forces, and ratifies or abolishes international military agreements and treaties. It also oversees implementation of laws in the defense field. The Parliamentary Defense and Security Committee is responsible for initiating and drafting the defense laws or resolutions on defense related regulations.

Despite the legislative mechanisms, it is broadly noted that Parliament could not fully exercise legislative control and was not involved in elaborating national security

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<sup>203</sup>Christopher Berglund, "Georgia," in *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe*, ed. S. Berglund and others, 3rd ed. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013).

<sup>204</sup>*Constitution of Georgia*.

<sup>205</sup>Parliament of Georgia. "The rules of Procedure of the Parliament of the Georgia." (2004). [http://www.parliament.ge/files/819\\_18559\\_127313\\_reglamenti.pdf](http://www.parliament.ge/files/819_18559_127313_reglamenti.pdf).

<sup>206</sup>Parliament of Georgia. "Law on Defence Planning. (2006). [https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com\\_ldmssearch&view=docView&id=26230&lang=en](https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com_ldmssearch&view=docView&id=26230&lang=en).

policy.<sup>207</sup> Also defense budgeting and a majority of spending were classified, and therefore outside of legislative oversight to avoid disputes on military procurements.<sup>208</sup> Nicole Gallina gives the general assessment as following: “The period between 2003 and 2008 was characterized by a political stalemate, with the opposition boycotting the Parliament, and the President having an open field to act without (even if limited) parliamentary control.”<sup>209</sup> Although, it is worth noting that the Parliament “at some times could be very influential” and “hold the security sector on account through the Defense and Security and the Legal Issues Committees.”<sup>210</sup> As evidence of this statement, Hiscock brings the example of when the Parliamentary Temporary Commission on Military Aggression and Other Acts of Russia against the Territorial Integrity of Georgia questioned “something unthinkable in most other post-Soviet countries.”<sup>211</sup>

Weak legislative oversight together with the political interference discussed earlier hindered the building of democratic defense institutions. Less accountability to the Parliament as the legislative branch elected by society, nurtured the influence of personalities and individual perception-biased decisions. Such circumstances reduce democratic capacities and appear disruptive for the defense institution-building effort.

## 2. Political Interference

Defense institution-building is a highly political process as it is closely related to, impacts on, and is impacted by the international and domestic political developments and situations. Strong interactions with the political environment can have positive and negative effects. Effective outcome can be achieved if this closeness is used by

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<sup>207</sup>Teona Lortkipanidze, “Parliamentary Oversight on the Security Sector: Mechanisms and Practice,” in *Democratic Control of Armed Forces of Georgia since the August War 2008*, ed. Tamara Pataraiia (Geneva: Geneva Center for Democratic Control Over the Armed Forces, 2010).43.

<sup>208</sup>Berglund, *Georgia*, 27.

<sup>209</sup>Nicole Gallina, “Puzzles in State Transformation: Armenia and Georgia,” *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 4, no. 1 (Winter, 2010), 31.

<sup>210</sup>Duncan Hiscock, “Impatient Reformers and Reignited Conflicts: The Case of Georgia,” in *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, eds. Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabe (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2009), 128.

<sup>211</sup>*Ibid.*, 128.

institutions to acquire strong national and international support. On the other side, this closeness can create the possibility of influential impediments or political interference.<sup>212</sup>

Political interference at the start appeared effective to defeat corruption and military insubordination.<sup>213</sup> Nevertheless, the most recent years of defense institution-building showed that the institution was ready and able to implement successful reforms without radical pressure. Similarly, the operational preparedness and “outstanding leadership of battalion commanders”<sup>214</sup> of Georgian troops was acknowledged and praised by U.S. and NATO officials. The problems of defense and military institution building were concentrated around the strategic leadership, and the best manifestation of this statement was the August war and some other evidence.

The 2008 August War demonstrated important features of defense institutional deficiencies, such as political interference of incompetent senior civilian leadership and lack of defense and military expertise. The “strategic miscalculations,” the researchers note, during the war were partially caused by the lack of experience and expertise of the senior civilian leadership (who were personally close to the President) and appeared directly involved in the commanding of military and humanitarian operations.<sup>215</sup> Nevertheless, according to the *New York Times*, which quotes a Department of Defense report, the August war showed the lack of “doctrine, institutional training and the experience needed to effectively command and control organizations throughout the chain of command.”<sup>216</sup>

Another example of non-democratic civil-military relations and political interference was the process of organizing the responsive operation to the attempted

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<sup>212</sup>Hiscock, “Impatient Reformers.”

<sup>213</sup>De Waal, “Georgia’s Possible Future,” 6.

<sup>214</sup>“Gen. Petraeus Praises Georgian Troops in Afghanistan,” *Civil Georgia*.

<sup>215</sup>Geoffrey Wright, “Defense Reform and the Caucasus: Challenges of Institutional Reform during Unresolved Conflict,” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (Jul, 2009), 19–39.  
doi:<http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.nps.edu/10.1215/10474552-2009-012>.

<sup>216</sup>C. J. Chivers and T. Shanker, “Georgia Lags in Its Bid to Fix Army,” *New York Times*, December 17, 2008, [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/18/world/europe/18georgia.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/18/world/europe/18georgia.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)



military mutiny at Mukhrovani Base. The analysis of contradicting versions<sup>217</sup> of the mutiny's aim is not the subject of this paper. However, the video recording spread by social media, which was proved to be authentic,<sup>218</sup> shows the Minister of Internal Affairs (Ivane Merabishvili) directly giving illegitimate commands to the military officers, in a rude manner.<sup>219</sup>

In addition, the frequent changes of political leadership in the Ministry of Defense, which counts eight Ministers of Defense from 2004 to 2012, had a negative influence on institutional developments. Very commonly, the change of minister was followed by “turbulent personnel changes”<sup>220</sup> as ministers were accompanied by a ‘trusted team’ of civil servants who, in the most cases, were “oriented to gain protection and patronage in exchange for subordination, obedience loyalty, and supervisor dependency.”<sup>221</sup> Changes in leadership and personnel were negatively influencing the reform implementations, especially as it is mentioned earlier. The knowledge and skills related to the security field were deficient, and the loss of skills and experience was not easily recovered. Also, the feeling of instability and the job insecurity were affecting performance and initiatives. Parallel to the changes in personnel, the changes in leadership were followed by changes in priorities and focus of defense development. For example, sudden and unplanned change in the decision to increase manpower up to 37,000 in 2009 from 28,000,<sup>222</sup> while SDR 2007 considered moving to professional service of the whole armed forces and downsizing total strength from 28,666 to 18,755.<sup>223</sup> Again the 2012 Revised SDR document which was ready for publication needed to be changed according to the new minister's (Dimitri Shashkini) “3T

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<sup>217</sup>Simons, *Security Sector Reform and Georgia: The European Union's Challenge in the Southern Caucasus*, 272–293, 283.

<sup>218</sup>“Vano Merabishvili: I Was Ordered To Search the Two Corpses of Russian Advisors,” *Tabula*, January 30, 2014, <http://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/content/vano-merabishvili/25247738.html>

<sup>219</sup>Ibid.

<sup>220</sup>Lortkipanidze, “After Revolution–Toward the Reform.”

<sup>221</sup>Berglund, “Georgia,” 21–22.

<sup>222</sup> Eugene Kogan, “Georgia's Armed Forces: Army of the All or Army of the Few, The Hub:International Perspective.” April 5, 2013. <http://www.stratfor.com/the-hub/georgias-armed-forces-army-all-or-army-few>

<sup>223</sup> Kezerashvili, *Strategic Defense Review*. 2007.

concept”—total training, total care, and total defense—brought to the MoD as his personal achievement.<sup>224</sup> He also declared the importance of organizational and staff job stability<sup>225</sup> while during the next few days approximately 20 MoD civilian employers were dismissed and new people from his trusted circle were appointed. It should be mentioned that, during these turbulent changes, NATO and partner state representatives were very concerned about the high turnover in staff and especially of those who had been trained and educated in partner state institutions. Very often the possible “pressure from NATO” was used to maintain the staff in the MoD.<sup>226</sup> NATO commitments were also serving as the guarantor of the started reforms development. The national foreign policy priority—NATO integration and PARP and IPAP/ANP commitments implementation—were enforcing general direction and continuation of the ongoing reforms.

At the same time some sources have also harshly criticized the reform progress and claim that Georgian officials lack ownership of the reforms, conduct them just to gain membership, and are focused on just façade features and not on deep changes. According to the critics, only small teams are in charge of these reforms, and they are not profound institutional processes.<sup>227</sup> Critics also claim that the reforms are only for “showcasing” to “English-speaking civilian elites” or peacekeeping participation in Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan.<sup>228</sup> Behind the “shows” they see the Georgian Armed Forces as “over-centralized, prone to impulsive decision-making, undermined by unclear lines of command and led by senior officials who were selected for personal relationships rather than professional qualifications.”<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Dimitri, Shashkini “Interview with Dimistri Shashkini about the Assessment of Four Years after August War.” Ministry of Defence. August 6, 2012. <http://www.mod.gov.ge/index.php?pubid=60&lang=ge>.

<sup>225</sup> Foreign Media about New Concept of Georgia’s Defence Ministry, *Georgian America*, [http://georgianamerica.com/geo/news/foreign\\_media\\_about\\_new\\_concept\\_of\\_georgias\\_defence\\_ministry\\_6316](http://georgianamerica.com/geo/news/foreign_media_about_new_concept_of_georgias_defence_ministry_6316).

<sup>226</sup> Based on personal experience, when I was representing the HR department in meetings with NATO Assessment Teams.

<sup>227</sup> Hiscock, “Impatient Reformers,” 130, 135.

<sup>228</sup> Wright, “Defense Reform and the Caucasus,” 20.

<sup>229</sup> Chivers and T. Shanker, “Georgia Lags in Its Bid to Fix.”

### 3. Lack of Defense Expertise

For a country with the legacy of absent defense education and defense institutions, the lack of defense expertise posed a special burden to progress. Moreover, the education from Soviet institutions was not relevant to the current security environment and Western defense organizations. Later, when the assistance from partner states became focused on the training and education, the challenge shifted to maintenance of this expertise. Frequent changes in leadership have caused the outflow of these skills and proficiencies. Thus, the limited defense educational opportunities at the national level still stands as a challenge to defense institution building.

The problem of knowledge deficiency was critical at the beginning stage of reforms, rooted in the limited educational opportunities in the security field in post-Soviet educational institutions in Georgia.<sup>230</sup> In parallel, the opportunities for Georgian officers to get such an education abroad were very limited. Even at the early stages, the positive influence of education was obvious, as Duncan Hiscock quotes an international expert on Georgia, “the system was not listening, but the individuals were.”<sup>231</sup>

This problem was more or less solved by the assistance of partner states and NATO. Lately, Georgian civilian and military servants are offered vast opportunities for education and training<sup>232</sup> in the best European and U.S. security schools, such as the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, U.S. National Defense Academy, U.S. War College, NATO Defense College, NATO School, the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, etc. The NATO-Georgia Professional Development Program discussed earlier broadly assists Georgians to acquire critical skills for contemporary security development. The pool of Western-educated and trained personnel counts about 500 personnel for the U.S. International Military Education and Training program alone.<sup>233</sup> At the same time,

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<sup>230</sup> Shorena Lortkipanidze, “The Georgian Security Sector: Initiatives and Activities” in *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia’s Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform*, edited by Philipp H. Fluri and Eden Cole (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2005), <http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/From-Revolution-to-Reform>

<sup>231</sup> Hiscock, “Impatient Reformers,” 130.

<sup>232</sup> Chitadze, “NATO North Atlantic Alliance.”

<sup>233</sup> “Georgia’s Defence Transformation,” *The Messenger Online*, February 12, 2014, [http://www.messenger.com.ge/issues/3051\\_february-12-2014/3051\\_mod.html](http://www.messenger.com.ge/issues/3051_february-12-2014/3051_mod.html).

national education institutions such as NDA and PDP are developing the programs relevant to the changing security environment and MoD requirements.

Although the larger institutional challenge remains whether the available expertise is used and applied properly by Georgian entities. Despite that the professional development as the priority of defense reforms has been stated for a long time in the Minister's Visions, Ministry of Defense and has just recently been announced as a "new systematic approach to the selection process for assignments on positions and foreign education."<sup>234</sup> The new initiative manifests the challenges that the defense institution has faced in the recent decade, such as unfair and partial selection, personal pressure, nepotism, and incomplete career management and professional development systems.

Another problem contributing to the lack of expertise and challenging defense institution-building was the outflow of educated employees. Changes in government up to 2012, and the new Defense Minister, mostly meant changes in personnel. For example, the change of the Defense Minister in 2012 caused changes in non-political, civil service positions<sup>235</sup> such as the Head of Administration and Departments of Internal Audit, Public Affairs, Financial Management, Defense Policy and Planning, Procurement, etc. New directors were personally introduced by the Minister and were appointed to the positions without open competition.<sup>236</sup>

The challenges defense institutions face in their more advanced stages differed to its development stages. While in the early stages permanent financial underfinancing, the high rate of corruption, insufficiency of legal or conceptual basis, and Soviet-type administration were at the center of the impediments. At the second stage, challenges concentrated on weak parliamentary oversight, political interference, and the continued lack of professionalism.

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<sup>234</sup>Khatia Ghogoberidze, "Assignments on Ministry of Defense Will Be Made by the Selection Board," *News.Ge* (March 5, 2013), <http://new.ge/ge/news/story/47858-tavdatvis-saministroshitanamdebobebze-danishvna-sherchevis-sabchos-mier-mokhdeba>.

<sup>235</sup> Georgian Law on Civil Service (1997).

<sup>236</sup> "Ministry of Defense of Georgia Has New Personnel," Information Portal Internet.Ge, July 9, 2012.

## VI. CONCLUSION

A number of external and internal factors of the international system, domestic politics, the legacy of the past, and the character of Georgian government have contributed to the uneven development of defense institution-building in Georgia. External factors are related to Russia, NATO integration, and partnership with NATO Allies, with a particular emphasis on the U.S. After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Russia's attempt to maintain its influence in the region impacted on defense institution-building in the early stages, and also later on the August War of 2008 heavily interfered with the defense reforms. In parallel, Russia's interests in the region and its support toward the breakaway territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia create a political background hindering Georgia's integration into NATO. The positive external outcome of NATO's enlargement and Georgia's aspiration to achieve NATO integration was that it strongly encouraged and assisted Georgia in building its defense institutions and armed forces to be compatible with Western standards. Also, the U.S. foreign policy shift in 2001, which related to the global war against terrorism, placed Georgia into a U.S. area of interest and caused the flow of military and financial assistance aimed at strengthening defense institutions and military capability development.

Even greater is the impact of the internal political, economic, and socio-cultural factors on the institution building. Political factors include the political developments, which on their side, were heavily impacted by a Soviet legacy and unfamiliarity with modern, democratic statehood in the early stages. After the Rose Revolution, defense institution-building got special emphasis and therefore influences the content and pace of the state transformation. Economic underdevelopment in the first decade of Georgia's post-Soviet statehood almost drove the country to failure, fed the widespread corruption, and disrupted the development opportunities for state institutions including defense. Socio-cultural features affecting the defense institution were the lack of preparedness and awareness of the post-Soviet society of how to contribute to state building and national values development.

Consequently, the Georgian defense institution at the stage of its creation and early development suffered from political turmoil, legislative insufficiency, scarceness of the financial resources, Soviet-type administration, and the absence of defense expertise. The very first challenge for the country and for the defense institution, as well, was the ambivalence regarding the state development either toward a Russian-influenced organization such as CIS or to the West. In parallel, one civil and two ethnic wars exacerbated the country's political and economic situation when the defense institutions were being established. These wars were fought by armed groups who were united around particular leaders and were not subordinate to the state. Defense institution-building began by establishing control over the existing armed groups and transforming them as legitimate military forces. However, the process was severely impeded by permanent underfinancing and a high rate of the corruption. Soviet-type administration, by concentrating the decision making power in the hands of a few people, delayed if not disrupted cost-effective decisions and directed them to serve the personal interests of those influential clans. The clannish relationship rather than the level of professionalism and performance were needed for assignments, promotion, and rewards. As a result, the defense institution remained fragile and underdeveloped with little hope.

The positive changes started when Georgia made a preference toward NATO partnership, invited the ISAB for advice, and when the U.S. increased financial and military assistance. Joining the NATO PfP and U.S. assistance programs gave opportunities to Georgian defense and military officers to participate in operational and educational training and to contribute to defense institutional developments. However, their knowledge was disregarded or even wasted in the fragile, mismanaged, and corrupt defense institutions

The turning point became the Rose Revolution in 2003, which led the country to the change in regime. Declaring NATO integration as the foreign policy priority and establishing national security interests, the new government facilitated defense reforms. The Minister and Ministry of Defense became civilian to ensure civilian oversight of the armed forces. After 2004, by launching the SDR which introduced the framework and development plans of the defense institution and armed forces, comprehensive reforms

began. Radical measures against corruption and bribery, together with economic developments, and partners' increased assistance have brought about progress in defense institution building. The development and introduction of resources, especially human resources, management policy and tools increased the level of professionalism and its fair application. Development of defense institution and military capability enabled Georgia to shift from being a failing state to becoming a successful contributor in international security. However, international experts and facts from 2008 August War revealed institutional deficiencies, which in this thesis are categorized in the three following areas: weak civilian oversight, political interference, and lack of professional expertise.

Prior to NATO integration, and to some extent afterwards also, the weakness of civilian control and institutional-organizational challenges have been revealed among new NATO members as well. Obviously, a common Communist legacy affected the new institutions. The defense institutions in the post-Socialist states in Eastern and Central Europe suffered from non-democratic civilian control; and new, still fragile institutions in the absence of policies and with only vague roles and missions could not avoid political interference. Also the Socialist regime's common legacy was the absence of the opportunity to get education in the defense and security fields. This logically caused the lack of defense expertise, which later became one of the priorities of defense reforms.

The political realities and strong Presidential institution in Georgia constrained the Parliament from fully utilizing all legislative mechanisms of oversight of the defense institutions. State senior leadership often interfered in the defense decision making. Political immaturity and frequent change of civilian defense and military leadership caused unplanned and hectic changes in defense development directions, as well as in mid-level managerial and operational decisions. Improved personnel policy and management could not always implement the policy and overcome interference in particular decisions regarding promotions and assignments. Therefore, a general lack of professionalism was exacerbated by the mismanagement or outflow of defense expertise.

Consequently, and optimistically, according to the Minister`s Vision<sup>237</sup> the current priorities of defense institution development concentrate on enhancement of democratic civilian control and cooperation with the Parliament, increasing defense transparency, maintaining and developing skilled professionals, and implementation of institutional reforms.

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<sup>237</sup>Alasania, Irakli, Minister of Defense of Georgia, *Minister`s Vision 2013–2014* (Tbilisi, Georgia: Ministry of Defense of Georgia, 2013).



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