A Critical Geopolitical Assessment

of

The Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process

Successes, Setbacks, and Collapse

(1990-2008)

Acknowledgements

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisors PD Dr. Lutz Mez and Dr. Dieter Boden for the continuous support of my study and research. I want to extend a special thanks to my mentor Dr. Behrooz Abdolvand for his motivation and guidance throughout the time of research and writing of this thesis.

I thank Dr. Gary Smith, the founding executive director of the American Academy in Berlin, and its former CFO Andrew White, for having granted me a sabbatical leave to undertake field research in the Caucasus region.

I want to convey my gratefulness also to Dr. Alex Rondeli for his long-standing support and care as well as to Dr. Ivliane Haindrava for sharing his knowledge and networks in Georgia and Abkhazia with me.

My deep appreciation goes to all of my impressive interview partners for taking the time to meet with me and share their fascinating insights. I am especially grateful for the assistance of Ani Lortkipanidze as well as Khibla Vozba in arranging countless of these meetings and translating a great number of them.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank my family: my husband, parents, grandmothers, brother and in-laws for their encouragement and for supporting me and this project faithfully and in so many ways…

Table of Contents

III

Introduction

The Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process and its relevance in international affairs

Only days after Georgia was officially accepted as a member to the United Nations (UN), the war in Abkhazia began in the summer of 1992. The consolidation of the Georgian state in the months and years after being recognized as a sovereign entity by the international community thus ran parallel to attempts to de-escalate the situation in Abkhazia and create a lasting peace. Consequently, the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process nearly eclipses modern Georgian statehood, which started with the emancipation of the country from the Soviet Union in the late 1990's. In many ways, Georgia as a modern state can thus only be fully understood in the context of the secessionist conflicts in its Abkhazian and South Ossetian territories.

While both conflicts exhibit a number of similarities, not least with regard to Russia's stand and approach to their resolution, the UN's focus on managing the peace process in Abkhazia resulted in comparatively more international attention and resources deployed in this area. Hundreds of millions of Rubles, Dollars and Euros were spent to fuel an extensive peacekeeping mission, a UN Observer mission to monitor the peacekeepers, and peace initiatives in Geneva, Moscow, Tbilisi and the Abkhaz capital Sukhumi. Significant funds were also used to finance international confidence-building measures, civil society and rehabilitation projects. Over the course of time, various UN institutions, which included a designated Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Abkhazia, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union (EU), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and the United States as well as additional state-centric and non-governmental actors tried in vain to contribute to a lasting peace in Georgia.

When full-scale war broke out again in the South Caucasus in 2008, the internal conflicts soon developed into a full-fledged war between Russia and Georgia. The immediate cause of the five-day Russo-Georgian war had been armed skirmishes between Georgia and its secessionist region South Ossetia. Yet the conflict in Abkhazia and the way the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process was conducted must be regarded as a long-term cause of this war. As a logical consequence of the latter, this war not only played itself out in South Ossetia, but fighting also erupted at a western front in Abkhazia. The Russo-Georgian war sealed the fate of the first Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process which lasted from 1992 until 2008. The large scale outbreak of violence in August 2008 undermined ongoing efforts to resolve the conflict by peaceful means. Russia's subsequent recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as sovereign states signified a decisive change in the existing power balance and shattered any hopes for a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in Georgia in the near future. The open and formalized Russian support for Abkhazia during and after the 2008 war upset the previously existing status quo between

1

the conflicting parties to an extent that it resulted in a paradigm shift. The Georgian side subsequently declared the established fundament for the peace process, the 1994 Moscow agreement, null and void. Although Georgians and Abkhaz still meet occasionally to discuss a variety of topics in Geneva under the auspices of the UN, any talks about a peace process are qualitatively different from the first process which lasted from 1992 until 2008. In order to better understand this twenty yearlong plight for peace, the following dissertation takes a deep dive into the here so-called *first Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process* in order to reveal its successes and failures.

The developments of 2008, especially the Georgian-Russian war, which is intimately linked to the once "frozen" secessionist conflicts on the Georgian territory, and which dealt the final blow to the first Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process, brought great instability and renewed uncertainties not only to Georgia, but also to the North and South Caucasus regions and its European neighbours. Among other things it also carried implications for the EU, which had only recently moved closer to Georgia geographically with the accession of Bulgaria and Rumania to the Union. Thus even prior to 2008, a common border with Georgia impacted the EU's cooperation with the former and illustrated its heightened concerns over security, borders and a stable neighbourhood. Tragic wartime experiences still largely define European reactions to international conflicts and by getting involved in a war with Russia, Georgia hit some of Europe's deepest fears. The war with Russia also affected Georgia's relations with the west overall – particularly with NATO member states who had merely postponed Georgian entry into the association in Bucharest in the spring of 2008. It also changed the nature of Georgia's close ties with the United States, which had sternly advocated Georgia's pro-western course, a course that various observers afterwards regarded as a contributing factor to tensions between Russia and Georgia prior to 2008[1]. The actors listed above were thus also directly or indirectly affected by armed conflict in Georgia especially at the point when Russia was actively and deliberately drawn into the conflicts as a warring faction. In addition, the large amount of resources deployed in the past to avoid and resolve conflict in the country illustrates that Georgia has been and will continue to remain part of the agenda of multiple international actors.

One of the most prominent reasons why Georgia has and will continue to be important to international politics was given by its late President Eduard Shevardnadze, who formerly held the position of foreign minister of the Soviet Union and engineered the end of the Cold War together with Mikhail Gorbachev. In his first address to the United Nations as head of the Georgian state on 2 October 1992, shortly after the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process had begun, Shevardnadze made it clear that Georgia, "that tiny

---

[1] One prominent advocate of this view was the late Ronald D. Asmus

part of Earth […], which history has nailed to the geopolitical cross"[2], was a geopolitical nexus of global importance, where the problems arising from a widespread security vacuum at the end of the Cold War had converged. He raised awareness regarding Georgia's secessionist conflicts and warned that "here as nowhere else is the danger so great that the existing internal conflicts will merge with the ones in neighbouring states and grow into regional or even continental wars […]."[3] His predictions turned out to hold true in August 2008, when it became clear that what had started out as small-scale secessionist conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia evolved into interstate war with a global impact. Shevardnadze expressed his concern over what he then perceived as a continuing global geopolitical trend even after the fall of the Iron Curtain, namely "the displacement of a global confrontation onto regional level".[4] Most importantly, the Georgian President based his predictions on ideas derived from a geopolitical school of thought to highlight the importance of the developments in his Georgian homeland. Like many of his counterparts in Abkhazia and Russia, Shevardnadze used geopolitics to conceptualize the world and build an explanatory framework that was proposed to other world leaders. He did so in an attempt to gain their assistance and position Georgia on the agenda of global powers. Shevardnadze's appeal and the geopolitical concepts he invoked to frame Georgia's situation must be regarded at least as an important reason why the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process drew the attention of international institutions, actors and world leaders to it since then like few other comparatively small-scale conflicts before it. Scholars and practitioners from the Caucasus region explain this phenomenon, i.e. the attention Georgia received over the course of the past twenty years, by pointing to an idea based on a geographical notion, namely that whoever controls Georgia controls the Caucasus.[5] Georgia is thus viewed as a gateway, a source of stability or instability for an entire region. This is partly due to the fact that historically, great powers could only secure access roads to the southern Caucasus and beyond via Georgia. Abkhazia, for example, was the location of the only passage way from Russia which was ice-free all year around. Once in Georgia, a power seeking conqueror did no longer face the mountainous barriers of the Caucasus mountain range to proceed with his conquest. In its regional setting, Georgia has also been the only country of the three South Caucasian states with an access to the open sea.[6] Neither land-locked Armenia nor Azerbaijan share that geographical luxury. In addition, Georgia regards itself as having a lighthouse function for the

---

[2] Shevardnadze, Eduard. "Address by Mr. Eduard A. Shevardnadze, Chairman of the Council of State of the Republic of Georgia." General Assembly: Forty-Seventh Session - 12th Meeting. United Nations. UN Headquarters, New York, NY. 25 Sept. 1992. Speech.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Among them Alexander Rondeli (Tbilisi), Sergey Shamba (Sukhumi) as well as Alexander Iskandaryan (Yerevan) during private conversations with the author.

[6] Although the Black Sea disqualifies as an open sea to some due to the narrow Bosphorus passage, in the context of Georgian-Russian relations the open sea doctrine can be regarded to come closer to the warm sea doctrine propagated for example by Alexander Dugin and emphasizing the importance of ice-free ports for Russia, which the Black Sea provided.

entire southern ad parts of the northern Caucasus. After the 2003 Rose Revolution this function was even extended to countries such as Ukraine who followed suit with their own colour revolutions. Successful defiance of a dominant power or even successful reforms that brought the country closer to the transatlantic powers, for example, were perceived to lead the entire region by example. Thus, among other factors which do not find consideration here, its proximity to EU member states, Russia, and NATO member Turkey, its ice-free ports, its passage ways and general strategic location as a gateway to the east and the energy riches of the Central Asian region, support the argument that Georgia is a region sought after for foreign military deployment or alternative ways to exert control over it with a potential to spread into the region it is embedded in. In addition to notable regional scholars, political geographers such as Alfred Thayer Mahan, Nicholas Spykman and Sir Halford Mackinder also recognized the importance of Georgia and its surrounding region in terms of its strategic significance. These political geographers understood the country's importance less in terms of gaining and maintaining influence over the Caucasus region, but instead with respect to the ability to control a so-called *Pivot* or *Heartland* area, nowadays roughly comprising Russia, Central Asia and the areas adjacent to the Caspian Sea.
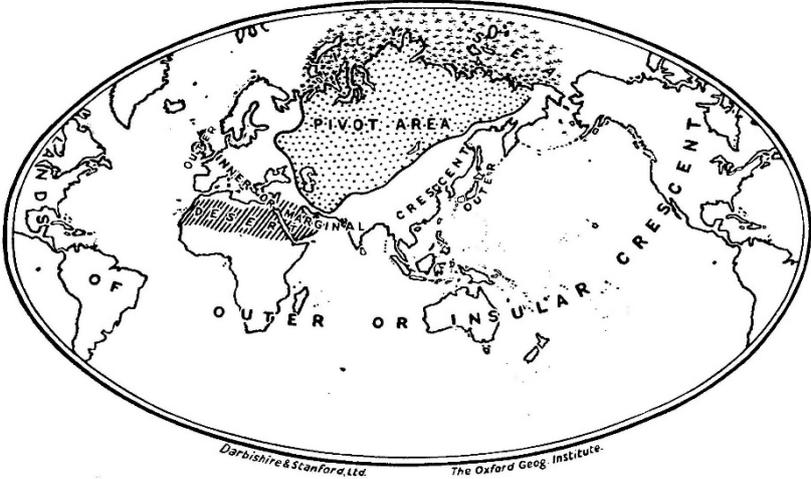
Figure 1. From Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace*, p.36

The *Heartland* comprised such a wealth of resources that any power exercising control over this area and the adjacent transit routes held the key to global domination, according to views expressed by political geographers such as Mackinder.[7] Thus, they posited that any such power had to be challenged

---

[7] The arguments put forth by 19th and 20th century political geographers is similar to Brzezinski's arguments put forth in his book Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*. New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1997. Print., discussed in further detail below.

before control could be established, in order to avoid endangering global stability. Such a challenge would only be possible via control of a so-called inner crescent in which Georgia held one of the key positions as it formed a land bridge adjacent to the so-called Pivot area. Political geographers such as Sir Halford Mackinder, asserted that control over the inner crescent was strategically decisive for any great power. While Mackinder's ideas can be traced back to 1904, they later inspired the development of geopolitical thought in the entire western hemisphere. Scholars, who took to the geopolitical school of thought, such as Nicholas Spykman, contributed with their writings to shape the post-World War II world order, for example by inspiring thoughts that led to one of the core strategic foundations of Truman's containment policy. After Spykman's considerations were reflected in policy that shaped the post-War era from the onset, geopolitics also remained relevant throughout much of the Cold War.

As a school of thought, however, it suffered a loss in popularity after the Cold War ended. The end of the Cold War was understood as a triumph of soft power embodied in policies such as *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* in various early interpretations.[8] After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, geopolitics consequently remained marginalized from mainstream scholarly discourse for more than a decade. Instead, academic discourse was dominated by new conceptualizations of globalization, at times professed as guarantor for peaceful coexistence through increased interdependence and cooperation. Warnings about the fact that a unipolar moment following the end of a bipolar system would be short-lived and give way to a complex multipolar arrangement, which would raise uncertainties and trigger an increase in conflicts were overshadowed by more optimistic considerations often based on liberal-institutionalist ideas of cooperation and interdependence. Only with political perceptions drastically changing in the wake of 11 September 2001, questions regarding civilizational divides, doubts about the global reach of economic prosperity, and the shift of global conflicts onto regional levels started to gain prominence again. In this atmosphere, geopolitics and its subfields experienced a slow, but gradual comeback, although some of its longstanding advocates, especially along the borders of the Euro-Atlantic community and in the former Soviet entities, had never swayed from their geopolitical convictions. Although the discipline is still considered to be risqué in much of western scholarly discourse, its steady return underlines that while political realities are continuously in transition, geography can be considered as more of a constant. The return to it thus comes as no surprise to those advocating viewing spatial realities in a more political light. To relate these developments back to Georgia, it must be acknowledged that Georgia has long held a prominent position from the point of view of political geography and geopolitics. Thus, the considerations outlined above underline that the country cannot be considered a simple backwater of global politics, but that the conflicts that are

---

[8] Ó Tuathail, Gearóid, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998. 49. Print.

5

played out on Georgian territory have to be evaluated also in the light of considerations that global confrontations would likely not seize but projected onto regional theatres in a post-Soviet age of globalization.

The unique strategic location of Georgia and its function as a land bridge and transit corridor between east and west can hardly be disputed. In the 21st century the country is criss-crossed by oil and gas-pipelines, its support has become sought-after as a transit route for military theatres in the Near and Middle East and a number of important international heavyweights still compete over their military presence, interests and influence in Georgia. Moreover, this seemingly insignificant piece of territory to the untrained eye has historically passed through phases when it was regarded as an important piece of the global balance of power. As a result of its alleged geostrategic potential, its rule has been heavily contested over the course of centuries. A long history of competing and constantly shifting alliances with partners ranging from Imperial Russia to the German Empire, accompanied by great wars and countless conflicts was eventually interrupted by the incorporation of Georgia into the Soviet Union. This signified that the battle for strategic dominance in this area had been settled temporarily once western support for Georgian national forces in the early twentieth century had not been sufficient to preserve the country's independence which only lasted from 1918 until 1921. As a consequence, in the decades prior to the second declaration of independence in 1991 when the country emancipated itself from the Soviet Union, the control over this area remained largely and uncontested in Russian hands. Its direct border with Turkey, a signatory to NATO, however, ensured that it maintained a high degree of importance even throughout the Cold War, due to its function as a buffer, during that time interpreted as a zone of additional security from NATO forces for Russia proper.

The end of the Cold War, among other things, also signified the end of what many scholars in international relations had termed the era of bipolar stability or superpower competition. The standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union had seemingly come to an end. The dawn of a new, yet uncertain, era also witnessed the rise of new conflicts, many of which had at their core intrastate territorial disputes often categorized as ethnic or civil wars. The rise of such disputes in the former Soviet space was of particular importance. These were often attributed to the aftermath of the 'Soviet nationalities policies' or alternatively to the dysfunctional and subsequent collapse of the Soviet system. Advocates of geopolitics called attention to another potential cause for conflicts, namely the demise of the previously existing balance of power in the post-Soviet era. The Cold War's balance of power was overhauled by events in the late 80's. Areas the Soviet Union and its successor Russia were forced to retreat from experienced significant power vacuums. As a logical consequence, numerous stakeholders emerged and internal competition over resources provided a basis for ensuing conflicts.

The competition over "empty" space does not deny the existence of ethnically inspired conflict but instead simply argues it to be a second tier factor. In addition, longstanding tensions among various ethnic groups were also seen as a motivating pretext and method to instigate conflict which would ultimately result in clear winners and losers. Overall, irrespective of its causes, the lack of a coherent, effective post-Soviet infrastructure to deal with these conflicts as well as the uncertainty surrounding the readiness and willingness of the Euro-Atlantic powers to respond to the cataclysm at the end of the Cold War in various locations, inspired fears of far-reaching destabilization effects in the international arena. The subsequent power vacuum, however, eventually incited old geopolitical desires of state actors anew as time passed.

An independent Georgia rose amidst the aftershocks of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union. Due to the particular timing of state formation, young Georgia found itself in the middle of a power struggle and an external power paralysis[9] in the South Caucasus in the early 90's. While its former patron Russia had been forced into an ameliorated retreat from the region, American President George H.W. Bush was successfully fighting a war in the Gulf after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The latter accounts for the fact, that international resources were tied down in the Middle Eastern theatre, while western European powers were concerned first and foremost with their eastern counterparts and stability on their immediate borders. Despite their preoccupation with domestic change and other more urgent theatres, the Euro-Atlantic powers, together with Russia, assisted Georgia in obtaining the status of a sovereign, internationally recognized state. However, their resources remained largely focused on the process of peaceful disintegration of the Soviet Union, especially in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and those parts of the Russian mainland still housing an aging, unmonitored nuclear arsenal. The situation described above, namely an existing power vacuum accompanied by a state of flux in Georgia, functioned as point of departure for a redefinition of power and influence in the area by traditional competitors, mainly Russia, the United States, and later European powers. This situation set the stage for a number of conflicts that ensued in the Caucasus region, such as the conflict in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria across the Black Sea. Viewed from a classical geopolitical perspective, these conflicts were a mere manifestation of a natural redistribution of power and influence in the region. In addition to the classical geopolitical view, this thesis also aims to point to the linkages between domestic turmoil and international developments and adds a critical geopolitical perspective that analyses discursive practices around those conflicts to define the processes and structures of gain and loss which paved the way of geopolitical shifts in power and influence.

---

[9] This meant that neither one of the former superpowers, nor any European actors were in a position to seriously engage in the region, thus unable to guide it through the times of transformation.

More than twenty years after the demise of the Soviet Union, the distribution of power in Georgia and the region often referred to as South Caucasus still remains far from consolidated. The Russo-Georgian War of 2008 highlighted the intensity of an ongoing struggle for power and influence. It also raised the question whether remnants of Cold War politics were still an active part of international diplomacy in places off the beaten track. Most notably, it demonstrated how fragile the recent spread of western ideas and the perception of increased western influence in this small but heavily disputed part of the world still were. Over the course of the past two decades western thought and influence streamed into the Caucasus and saturated the Georgian political scene. Its economic potential as an oil and gas transit route as well as its accommodating policies vis-à-vis western actors, attracted European and American aid and interest alike. Especially after the election of Mikhail Saakashvili, a President with a pro-western reformer image, European and American support infiltrated the country which was hailed as a regional model and a symbol of success on the way to Euro-Atlantic integration and simultaneous emancipation from Russia to other countries extending as far as Ukraine and Central Asien republics.

The approach to Georgia's conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and the panacea offered to end them by the above mentioned new external actors varied. While some viewed the problems as local and likewise contributed to indigenous solutions, others viewed the conflicts from a more global angle and problematized them in a more geopolitical framework. Some experts considered Georgia's conflicts through the looking glass of a Manichean map as a manifestation of the ongoing struggle between the United States and Russia[10], while others pointed to a conflict between Russia and Georgia as the core obstacle to find a peace[11]. The proponents of domestic solutions meanwhile highlighted the malfunctioning relations between the Georgian and Abkhaz leadership[12] and Georgia's failure to act as a model strong enough to entice Abkhazia to return to Georgia proper.

The following thesis argues that while it is important to assess the local aspects of the disputes and its neighbourly dimension, in order to identify domestic solutions, the conflict over Abkhazia and its peace process has to be evaluated in a global context as well in order to understand its complexity. Georgia with a tradition of having been viewed as a buffer state and considered in terms of its strategic potential was confronted with a power vacuum on its territory after the demise of the Soviet Union. This eventually triggered a renewed power struggle over interests and influence in Georgia, which certainly had a domestic dimension to it, but which was at the same time a local manifestation of an

---

[10] See e.g. Ronald D. Asmus. *A Little War that shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.

[11] See e.g. "Report by the Government of Georgia on the Aggression by the Russian Federation against Georgia." Civil, 1 Jan. 2010. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.civil.ge/files/files/GeorgianGovernmentReportWar.pdf>.

[12] See e.g. W. Kaufmann. *Diaspora, Öl und Rosen: Zur innenpolitischen Entwicklung in Armenien, Aserbaidschan und Georgien*. 1st ed. Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2004. 7 ff. Print.

intensifying struggle between great powers such as Russia and Euro-Atlantic states including Turkey. This struggle has been developing since the geopolitical map of this region was shattered by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and further shaken during a multitude of aftershocks. Nevertheless, it would be a failure to ignore the domestic dynamics of this conflict altogether. Instead the domestic and intrastate aspects have to find consideration and be given a place in the assessment of the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process that has unsuccessfully aimed to resolve the standoff between Georgia and its secessionist regions. Critical geopolitics as a discipline within the geopolitical tradition will be an integral part to the discussion in order to accord space for consideration of these factors, without posing a contradiction to the overall geopolitical framework used.

To this day, Georgia remains in a state of flux. The structural causes for continuous uncertainty and lack of stability that remain can in part be found in the unresolved territorial conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, but also accorded to the deteriorating relations with Russia this has contributed to and the continued threat of additional loss of Georgian territory. The ongoing territorial disputes represent the legacy of an era of Russian domination as well as Georgia's and Abkhazia's forced subordination under the Soviet system. Over the course of the past decades these conflicts have been continuously manipulated and used as mechanisms in the ongoing struggle over control in this region, which also has an international dimension to it. They have become the root cause for instability in Georgia and for a myriad of failed attempts to pacify, consolidate and modernize the region. They have also been at the core of numerous unsuccessful attempts to establish a new status quo through closer political, military and normative ties with NATO, the European Union and the United States, which have been widely perceived as attempts to ally against the former Russian patron.

The August War 2008 in Georgia was not only a war between Russia and Georgia, but also a conflict over disputed territories in Georgia which showcased the fact that stability in Georgia remains fragile. It came as a shock to the international community. Insiders, especially those closely affiliated with the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process had sensed that the environment had heated up. An increased shuttle diplomacy of important players to the region, such as Javier Solana or Frank-Walter Steinmeier, had been practiced as a last minute way to avoid escalation of violence. To many others, a war between Russia and Georgia took place rather unexpectedly. The war also dealt a detrimental blow to public and private investors which, in a different scenario, could have functioned as guarantors for stability by providing the resources needed to support the Georgian democratization and modernization process, forming the backbone for an increasingly extensive and networked transit infrastructure stretching from European hubs across the Caspian Sea and into Central Asia. The war also represented

a setback for the public-private stakeholders and those scholars and experts, who had hoped for economic integration through exchange and cooperation often associated with stability and peace.[13]

The profound impact of opposing Russian and Georgian strategic interests as well as a military presence that could be mobilized against liberal ideas, free trade, and information exchange was blatantly underestimated prior to the outbreak of full scale war. Among the strategic infrastructure threatened during the Russo-Georgian war was the pipeline system. This pipeline system running through Georgia westwards has since become symbolic for the vulnerability of the Georgian transit hub and transport infrastructure. But this war had much further reaching consequences than economic losses and continued uncertainties. Moreover, it challenged the existing post-Cold War security structure in Europe based on the Charter of Paris, which rejected spheres of influence and emphasized the right of all countries to choose their alliances. The war also undermined the assumption that no international border should be moved as a result of armed struggle or conquest. As a consequence Ron Asmus posed the question whether these rules of the game still exist after the Russo-Georgian war of 2008.[14] The question carried the weight of a whole range of concerns confronting the Euro-Atlantic security architecture after the August war. Altogether these factors highlight the magnitude of the war that took place in the South Caucasus in August 2008. Yet, the above mentioned facts do not yet shed light on the circumstances that led to the outbreak of this war. As a point of departure, this thesis posits that at the heart of the military confrontation between Russia and Georgia in 2008 lay the unresolved territorial conflicts in Georgia's secessionist regions Abkhazia and to a lesser extend South Ossetia, themselves an expression of unsettled claims and an ongoing struggle over power and influence in the region. The Russo-Georgian war highlighted that as long as these conflicts remain

---

[13] This view reflects a certain Euro-centric argument, which has often been encountered by the author during times when Georgia was regarded as somewhat successful at Europeanization, e.g. reforms that excel European integration. The EU offers its own specific paradigm to countries that are undergoing transition, a model, that given its own achievements – old and more recent -, proposes a viable guideline to modernization, stability, prosperity and peace. This model is based on its own experiences, its self-image and its own success story. This uniquely European experience also shapes the way the EU perceives the way conflicts are to be dealt with. After World War II, Europe lay in shambles. Destroyed and divided, full of hatred and mistrust among the nations of the continent. Through, among others, institution building, democratization, and fostering economic linkages and intensified political cooperation, interdependencies were created and a community of values was built up with the help of political visionaries. Eventually those countries and nations who had become part of the EC were able to overcome fears and hatred even amongst the most bitter of enemies. Not only did cooperation in the most sensitive areas such as defence and military become possible, but the model was so attractive that more and more countries decided to join the Community and the ring of prosperity and peace constantly expanded. These reflections take the functional aspect of economic prosperity for peace and stability into account. Arguments to the end that the EU and other great powers have used Georgia as a staging ground for their own strategies are put forth e.g. by: Stephen Blank, S.E. Cornell, and S.F. Starr. "From Neglect to Duress: The West and the Georgian Crisis Before the 2008 War." *The Guns of August 2008 Russia's War in Georgia*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2009. 110. Print. Also see: Parag Khanna. *The Second World: How Emerging Powers are Redefining Global Competition in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2008. xxiv. Print.
[14] R. Asmus. "A Little War that shook the World." Heinrich Böll Foundation. Tbilisi. 15 Apr. 2010. Panel Discussion.

unresolved, Georgia will indefinitely linger on as a disputed territory. Instead of developing into a nucleus of prosperity, democracy and peace, it risks remaining a hub of instability with global reach with a potential to echo unrest throughout a highly volatile region eventually reaching the European core. The way the Abkhaz conflict was eventually handled and a new status quo temporarily established via Russian occupation bears the risk of being projected onto other theatres of conflicts in areas where Russia claims a right to observe a special role and an exclusive sphere of interest.

Given the extraordinary significance of the secessionist conflicts for Georgia's recent past, its present and future as well as the implications of these conflicts for external actors and local stakeholders alike, this thesis discusses the reasons why Georgia still has not achieved a lasting peace. Given the complexities of the territorial conflicts and a higher strategic significance of Abkhazia, the conflict in Abkhazia has been chosen for analysis. Although the efforts to mediate the conflict in Abkhazia since 1992 do not represent a crucial case[15], they must nevertheless be regarded as an important case study[16], because the attempts to resolve the conflict between Georgia and the Abkhaz in Abkhazia were one of the first mediation efforts undertaken by the Russian Federation (RF/Russia) in a post-Cold War environment and in the space of the former Soviet Union. The conflict in Abkhazia prior to August 2008, sometimes also called the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict refers to the intrastate conflict between Georgians and Abkhaz in and around Georgia's autonomous Republic of Abkhazia. During its peak between 1992 and 1994, it involved a 13-months long war between Georgian government forces and Abkhaz separatists reinforced by elements from the North Caucasus region and other parts from within Russia. Handling the conflict was rendered very difficult by a number of factors, among them the geopolitical uncertainties and conflicting narratives at that particular point in history. At the same time, Georgia was only at the beginning of a long process of state building which was from its onset accompanied by an armed confrontation in South Ossetia, and the simultaneous overthrow of an elected government and a concurrent civil war between followers of the new leader Eduard Shevardnadze and supporters of former president Zviad Gamsakhurdia. It is claimed that between 20,000 to 30,000 Georgians and 2,500 to 4,000 Abkhaz fell victim to the initial fighting. More than 220,000 people were forced to leave their homes and became refugees or Internally Displaced People (IDPs). After the fighting ensued in 1992, the United Nation (UN) soon sanctioned Russia as the primary mediator in the process to find a peaceful settlement of the conflict. As time passed, other international actors, among them the United States and the European states, became increasingly

---

[15] H. Eckstein, F.I. Greenstein, and N.W. Polsby. "Case-Study and the Theory in Political Science." *Handbook of Political Science, Vol. I.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975. 127. Print.
[16] George defines a case as an instance of a class of events of interest to the investigator. See: Alexander L. George and P.G. Lauren. "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structures, Focused Comparison." *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory and Policy*. New York, NY: Free Press, 1979. Print.

interested in the southern Caucasus. As a consequence the conflict environment exhibited a high degree of complexity in terms of multiple actors leaving their mark on the peace process. At the same time, the involvement of additional state-centric organizations such as the CIS, NATO, EU, and OSCE as well as a breadth of civil society actors did nothing to change the intractability of the conflict.

Research Question and Premises

While mediation has been increasingly sought after as a cost-effective way to deal with conflicts in the period after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, almost twenty-five years later its record remains ambiguous with regard to whether it can bring about sustainable conflict settlement or peace. This holds true for the post-Soviet space in general and, in particular, for the region commonly referred to as South Caucasus. Consequently, it still remains unclear what contributes to the success or failure of efforts to peacefully settle conflicts in the South Caucasus and the post-Soviet space more generally. Thus, the main purpose of this thesis is to find out **'Why the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process has not settled the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict by peaceful means and what led to its collapse in 2008?',** in order to develop a deeper understanding of the variety of issues raised above and to close some of the gaps in existing scholarship.

Three working hypotheses are presented for testing in the main chapters of the thesis. They are based on primary research conducted in Georgia and *de facto* Abkhazia and reflect the author's interpretation of scholarly literature on mediation and conflict negotiation. Their aim is to narrow in on what the necessary conditions for success or failure in peace negotiations are in general and the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process in particular.[17] In combination, the hypotheses provide targeted, comprehensive answers to why a successful conflict settlement has not been achieved in the case of the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process.

The first hypothesis posits that 1) **The Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process lacked harmonization and a unified approach.** It tests whether or not the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process is entitled to its name despite a lack of harmonization which, at numerous points in its short history, not only negatively affected the process, but due to a lack of a pursuit of peace, questioned its raison d'être altogether. It furthermore questions how individuals and groups of actors have shaped the process by examining its complexity and multi-sidedness, taking into account top-down and bottom-up approaches to foster a peaceful resolution. Furthermore, it lends complexity to the fact that a number of actors

---

[17] A special influence must be accorded to the findings of the book by Richard N. Haass. *Conflicts Unending: The United States and Regional Disputes*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990. Print. in which Haass concludes that "Whether negotiation will succeed or fail will hinge on [four elements:] the shared perception by the disputants that an accord is desirable, the existence of leadership on all sides that is either sufficiently strong to sustain a compromise or so weak that a compromise cannot be avoided, a formula involving some benefits for all participants, and a commonly accepted diplomatic process."

continued to compete for dominance of the mediation, while second track initiatives were insufficiently integrated into the efforts to bring peace to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

The second hypothesis proposes that 2) **The parties to the conflict (Georgia and Abkhazia) were ill-prepared for compromise**. By way of a nuanced understanding of the in situ process, the often-perceived claim that Georgian politics were conducted in a way contrary to the resolution efforts is evaluated. While this claim is not refuted in its entirety, the research aims to find out whether blaming one or the other party provides a sufficient base to explain and understand the processes that led to circumstances in which the parties were unwilling to compromise, a condition which deprived the peace process of important successes and shut some essential windows of opportunity prematurely. It is posited that both sides were unprepared for compromise and explanatory factors supporting or refuting this claim are presented and discussed.

The third hypothesis suggests that 3) **Georgia and Abkhazia experienced a diminishing ability to compromise due to the externalization of the conflict and the framing of it as a geopolitical struggle**. Among other things, the third hypothesis tests the effects of geopolitical discourse on the peace process, paying particular attention to structures of discourse and also to assumptions about "complex interdependence" and a heightened likelihood of exercising force in its absence.[18] It evaluates whether the prevailing geopolitical discourse accentuated tensions between the parties at conflict, while geopolitical issues of belonging, influence, access, and the pursuit of unitary state interests determined conflict-laden relations between all factions involved domestically and in the international arena. As the environment became characterized by power politics resulting from the externalization and internationalization of the conflict, the prevailing competition was incompatible with, and outranked the importance of, a lasting peace and a stable Georgia. It instead placed the conflict on the level of a great power mêlée, perpetuating a situation in which the Georgian and Abkhaz leaderships' ability to maneuver was significantly reduced. As a result, they took on the mere functions of great power instruments in a geopolitical struggle over Abkhazia that unfolded in front of their eyes.

The inability to successfully settle the conflict by peaceful means represents the dependent variable, while the absence of a harmonized peace process, the unwillingness of the parties to the conflict to compromise, as well as a fading ability to compromise, function as independent variables.

---

[18] See e.g. Robert O. Keohane. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984. Print.; Robert O. Keohane, Joseph S. Nye, G.T. Crane. "Interdependence in World Politics." *The Theoretical Evolution of International Political Economy: A Reader.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1997. Print.; See e.g. Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye. "Power And Interdependence Revisited." *International Organization* 41: 725-753. Print.

The timeframe for analysis is roughly set from 1990 until 2008, prior to the outbreak of the August War. The timeframe has not been chosen arbitrarily, but is supported by the fact that the interstate war between Georgia and Russia in 2008 closely involved Abkhazia as well as South Ossetia. 2008 marked the end of a period of attempts to resolve the conflict by peaceful means which began roughly around 1990. Instead of a peaceful end, the war symbolized the collapse of the peace process and the return to force. The subsequent recognition of an independent Abkhazia and South Ossetia by the Russian Federation and a handful of other sovereign states changed the existing negotiation and mediation framework and severely impacted what remained of a peace process prior to it. The war must be regarded as a paradigm shift which called for an overhaul of old approaches. In other words, the war changed the dynamics of the conflict in question and ushered in a new era which requires new solutions and a revision of existing processes.

Contributions to practical approaches to mediation

In spite of the conflict's changed dynamics, the current situation has to be approached with the past in mind. A great danger exists for new actors who consider current developments to be disconnected from the previous twenty years surrounding the conflict and its peace process. This problem is common to a number of stakeholders. It especially holds true in Georgia where many people lack access to a comprehensive and differentiated analysis of the conflict settlement process and an understanding of developments since the declaration of Georgia's independence in the early 90's. This has often resulted in a loss of know-how, especially among political newcomers. Public servants and the new political elite are constantly confronted with managing a changing administrative and political environment as the holders of public offices, such as ministers, their deputies, high ranking diplomats and others are frequently replaced, rotated to other positions or move on to different jobs. Since the Rose Revolution of 2003, the transition between public and private sector employment is certainly more fluid and can hardly be compared with the common practice in western European states or the US. While flexibility and change can be positive, in the public sector in Georgia it certainly poses challenges in the terms of information flow, its management, and information transfer, as well as cooperation and coordination of processes between state institutions. While they may simply not be able to access this information, much of it has always been passed on as oral history. These circumstances condition the loss of knowledge about the history and continuity of the conflict with Abkhazia and its resolution efforts.[19]

---

[19] This situation was somewhat modified at least in the former Ministry of Reintegration dealing with the conflicts after a new Georgian administration asked Paata Zakareishvili to head the ministry post-Saakashvili. Promoting one of the most prominent participants of second track diplomacy to the top of the main institution dealing with the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, meant that lost know-how was regained. The overall problem described above is, however, not negated by the individual case of Zakareishvili.

In addition, after Mikhail Saakashvili rose to power, the majority of politicians belonging to the old political cadre around Shevardnadze were marginalized or replaced. This also held true for those among them who had been entrusted with important aspects of the peace process. As a result, communication channels ran dry and detailed information about the past process was simply lost or buried. The new faces in the administration, while holding in-depth information about the conflict and proclaiming themselves as experts, often presented a rather single-layered narrative which lacked differentiated analysis of the peace process, or its successes and failures. It has to be added that the highly politicized nature of the Abkhaz situation often also results in opinions largely being driven by propaganda and emotions, which make it even more prone to misinformation. The following thesis aims to offer a remedy by providing in-depth information about a process some parts of which have been suppressed or forgotten due to political circumstances.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to single out Georgian public servants as the only ones unable to obtain a comprehensive picture of the complex and multi-layered Georgian-Abkhaz peace process which has been underway since 1992. External players, including states and international organizations, only obtain information via their representatives, diplomats and other stakeholders who in turn merely have access to what has been recorded over the years. The quality of their information depends in part on the integrity of their informants, records based on their country's interpretation and the time and resources available to reconstruct a rather complex timeline of events from an abundance of official documents. Diplomats and public servants serving state institutions or international organizations involved in the Abkhaz peace process also rotate positions on a regular basis. As a result, just like in the Georgian case discussed above, they are faced with similar challenges regarding sharing information and best practices. Given these constraints they sometimes fall victim to the belief that the peace process they are currently involved in post-2008 is a simple extension of the pre-2008 peace process. This thesis assumes that this postulation is based on a fallacy, given that the nature of the conflict and the approach to mediate it has changed dramatically after the Russo-Georgian war. Furthermore, it is argued that state centric actors have a tendency to emphasize state centric processes. The plethora of activities undertaken by civil society actors as well as the contributions of so-called "one and a half-track" efforts of diplomacy are not necessarily self-evident to key players and as such often insufficiently recorded. Hence, while providing a practical reference for peace processes past and present, the following thesis also intends to illustrate interconnections between first and second track diplomacy.

Last but not least, a startling bias exists in scholarship surrounding the Abkhaz conflict and its peace process which is usually connected to the origins of the scholarly writing. While the majority of experts from the region often view this conflict as a geopolitical power struggle in the broader sense,

many European scholars vehemently refuse to acknowledge any line of argument based on geopolitical approaches, especially before the August 2008 War. Consequently while a geopolitical framework finds consideration in this thesis, the thesis also tests an alternative line of reasoning. The ultimate objective of this thesis is to provide a handbook of the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process offering an overview of developments starting from 1990 and to bridge the spatial divide in scholarship with the findings of the research presented in this thesis.

Contributions to Theory Building

In light of these considerations, this analysis *post factum* intends to scrutinize the processes behind the unsuccessful peaceful settlement process, in order to reveal a variety of obstacles confronting the peace negotiations of the past two decades. It aims to build a deeper understanding of the process, its players and realities, in order to function as a building block for current and future developments. On the basis of this evaluation, it attempts to highlight overall paths to failure as well as success in conflict settlement processes. Lastly, it intends to contribute to existing theory building in the field of international conflicts and their management. While considering various theoretical approaches which are already established in international relations, it also takes a new turn by taking a closer look at the explanatory power of critical geopolitics. Critical geopolitics as a critical subfield within geopolitics may explain the mechanisms at work that can lead to an escalation of conflict in an environment that despite ongoing mediation remains dominated by geopolitical reasoning. In the past, critical geopolitics has rarely been applied to a regional setting and may offer new insights into why a settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia by peaceful means has not been successful. This approach finds further consideration in the subsequent theory chapter.

Modus operandi

As a first step, the analytical framework is specified by outlining geopolitics as a field of study in the *Theory Chapter*. A brief historiography of political geography and geopolitical thought is sketched out in this chapter, ending with recent developments and considerations of the spatial dimension in the subfield of critical geopolitics. To this end, select classical texts from the beginning of the twentieth century as well as developments and directions of this field of study during the time of the Cold War are taken into consideration. Furthermore, the decline in popularity as well as the late interdisciplinary rediscovery of this field of study is examined. In addition, the more classical considerations are contrasted with proposals put forth by critical geopolitical writers. Wherever possible, the abstract theoretical considerations are put into a regional context.

This framework of analysis is interlinked in a thematic fashion with the main chapters of the thesis. It proposes a three-level structure for analysis comprised of an individual level of analysis, furthered by

a study taking into account a state-level and complemented by a systems level analysis. Geopolitics serves as a means to give way to concerns over spatial elements and localities but at the same time tests and where possible falsifies these claims through a critical evaluation. The different levels of analysis as well as the geopolitical framework outlined in the theory chapter combined with the three working hypothesis provide guidelines for analysis which find consideration in the chapters of the *Main Analysis*. Issues under consideration, amongst others, are the relationship of government and its people, the systems level relationship between states in general and the relations of young states with their former patrons, more particularly. Prominent examples include the relationship between Georgians and Abkhaz as well as the relationship of Georgia with its former patron Russia. The key area of interest here is how these relationships have been shaped and developed over time and why. Geography and the way it is mobilized by politics are among the explanatory factors where appropriate. As geography is not static whenever it is politicized, it will be examined how geography can be shaped by projections of internal and external actors. For example, geography can serve to divide or separate actors on the one hand or group them together, on the other. The thesis just attempts to create awareness of the equivocal characteristics of geopolitical arguments and as such runs contrary to a deterministic approach to geography. The discursive process that accompanied the time following Georgian independence – a process of separation from the Soviet space which contributed to a territorial division within the country – shows that the construction of the South Caucasus as an artificial region is a fitting example of geographical categorization. Another example is the conceptualization and attempt to legitimize the need for a Russian sphere of privileged interests in Georgia motivated by spatial concerns. This example is also connected with the thesis' reoccurring themes of borders, their control, their shifting function and the construction and destruction of lines of demarcation in general. Lastly, the influence of power on the definition of geographical space is a topic which figures prominently in the analysis and highlights the critical aspect to the approach taken.

The analytical framework sets the tone and hereby propagates considerations influenced by a realist school of thought. These are contrasted by a more inclusive critical approach which accords importance to additional levels of analysis (see above) which are thus included as complementary, not conflicting aspects. The cognitive approach to the thesis is influenced by some of Alexander Wendt's propositions, among them Wendt's book "Anarchy Is What States Make of It", where it is argued that "if today we find ourselves in a self-help world it is due to process, not structure"[20]. As a result clear emphasis is put on the evaluation of processes, while highlighting the construction of power politics and interests as an additional step next to the considerations based on geopolitical grounds. The

---

[20] Alexander Wendt. "Anarchy Is What States Make Of It: The Social Construction Of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46: 394-395. Print.

analysis of processes are a general and reoccurring theme throughout the dissertation, which is largely aimed at 'Understanding'[21]. Constructing the realities we live in, thus plays a role for the conception of the entire research. This implies that factors influencing political processes are not only exogenously given by structure, but can at times be deconstructed, influenced or changed by actors who are willing, able or ready to empower themselves vis-à-vis some of the facts presented to them during certain windows of opportunities. In other words, it gives importance to agency in world affairs. With its partly critical approach this thesis is post-positivist in a number of ways. It is constructed in an interdisciplinary fashion, borrowing from the humanities and emphasising the value of descriptive aspects for adequate understanding. In addition, it is post-positivist in the sense that it does not believe in an absolute truth but acknowledges that truth often lies in the eyes of the beholder. Hence, findings are presented in a way that reflects their localized context.

The subsequent *Background Chapter* provides an overview of the historical progression of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict as well as its socio-political context and developments leading up to the escalation of tensions and the outbreak of armed hostilities in August 1992. It points to developments during feudal times and the nationalities policies of Stalin and other Soviet leaders, among other things. The chapter provides an account of the formation of a newly independent Georgia and the turmoil that accompanied its early state formation. The *Background Chapter* also examines the role of the legal vacuum that characterized the early relations between Georgia and Abkhazia after Georgia had declared its intention to separate from the Soviet Union and form its own state entity. It briefly considers the role of Georgia's first President Zviad Gamsakhurdia for later developments as well as the effects imported by those who ousted him from power. After a brief period of military rule and early attempts to resolve frictions by peaceful means, it describes Shevardnadze's return to Georgia and subsequent attempts to consolidate power in the domestic and international realm. A domestic power struggle, a dysfunctional state system, civil war and the South Ossetian conflict were among the factors which provided the backdrop in which the conflict in Abkhazia finally escalated into a thirteen months long war, which resulted in consequences still haunting the region today.

The succeeding discussion forms the *Main Analysis* of the thesis. It divides the efforts to resolve the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict peacefully into different phases. This division aims to highlight successes, setbacks and failures over the course of the period from 1992 until 2008 in a systematic fashion based on a prior evaluation of empirical research findings. It remains chronological in order to break down

---

[21] Understanding according to Wendt: "The goal of this story is to recover the individual and shared meanings that motivate actors to do what they did. Known as 'Understanding'." Like Wendt the author views the argument that Explanation and Understanding is equated with science and non science as misleading, which can only lead to, as Wendt put it "the impoverishment of our collective efforts to make sense of international politics…"; Alexander Wendt. "On constitution and Causation in International Relations." *Review of International Studies* 24: 102. Print.

the complexity of the peace process and accord space to the variety of intervening actors (and events) which entered and exited the process at various stages of the process, often leaving their individual traces on particular developments.

The period between 1992 and 2008 also witnessed the rule of two Georgian Presidents, whose styles of leadership differed tremendously and who shaped the foreign and domestic policy of Georgia by putting emphasis on different policy priorities. On the one hand Eduard Shevardnadze, who had spent most of his political career climbing up the ranks of a communist Nomenklatura, but at the same time contributed to a turnaround of that system from within prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union. A pioneer thinker of the post-Soviet era he eventually left the political scene after having presided over his home country Georgia for a second time in order to make room for his successor Michael Saakashvili. Saakashvili's first term in office as Georgian President brought new faces and a new dynamic to the country and the conflict resolution efforts. Over time, however, his domestic and foreign policy priorities shifted and became less flexible and more uncompromising, a development that eventually had detrimental effects for the peace process. The different phases that characterized the peace process thus highlight the developments under the two Presidents and work out similarities and differences in their approach to other actors and a peaceful conflict settlement. The *Main Analysis* thus creates a better understanding of the conflict, an appreciation of its complexities and an overview of the dynamics at work during the period under investigation in partial fulfilment of the aim of this thesis. The descriptive character of parts of the *Main Analysis* also serves the purpose of understanding. At the same time the analysis of the research findings draws on policy analysis to address the three hypotheses outlined above and tests them throughout the *Main Analysis Chapter*. Meanwhile this chapter is embedded in an analytical framework that provides room for classical geopolitical arguments and compares and contrasts these with critical geopolitics.

The *Main Analysis* is subdivided into seven chapters. Chapter I. provides an evaluation of Georgian foreign policy throughout the period 1992 until 1996 with a focus on its mediation diplomacy around the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process. It accords special importance to the question whether enduring structures of domination and dependency forced Georgia into accepting Russia as a primary mediator to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict or whether Georgia deliberately sought Russian assistance to resolve the conflict in its own favour. Furthermore, taking a look at the way Shevardnadze was guiding Georgian post-independence foreign policy, Chapter I. provides a necessary point of departure for being able to compare and contrast it to the foreign policy conduct of Mikhail Saakashvili's Georgia in subsequent chapters. Especially confronting the question of relations with Russia at this defining moment of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and early efforts to resolve it, provides a key to foster an improved understanding regarding claims of Russian neo-imperialism, prevailing asymmetries and

coercive means being applied throughout the peace process. In addition, this part points to the new dynamism in Georgia's external relations in order to illustrate how Georgia employed innovative diplomatic means to achieve its policy objectives in Abkhazia. Meanwhile it investigates whether Georgia's post-Soviet diplomacy and its conduct in the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process were based on novel liberal convictions or simply represented an extension of a geopolitical understanding of itself, a self-help world and its conflicts into a new era.

While Chapter I. also looks into the problem of according space to non-state actors in a state-centric world and subsequent conflicts based on asymmetries and coercion, Chapter II. elaborates on this issue by examining it in the context of the trilateral relationship between Georgia, Abkhazia and Russia. It also highlights changing circumstances from 1996 until 1998 conditioning these relations, including but not limited to a renewed appreciation of Russia's "near abroad", and new geopolitical ambitions of various actors, leading to a changed quality in the Russian-Georgian and Georgian-Abkhaz relationships coined by reactive and defensive coercion.

The following Chapter III. turns to the evolving disconnect between the advances of the formal peace process in international bodies and a deteriorating conflict environment on the ground between 1999 and 2003. It investigates this growing rift between developments at the place of the conflict and diplomatic efforts which left only virtual traces, but were not able to bring about a turn around. In an atmosphere of increased mistrust and a deteriorating security situation, the contributions of the UN Special Representative, a transforming US-Russian relationship and a defective domestic Georgian policy environment are surveyed before turning to a discussion of second track diplomacy in the context of peace processes in general and the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process in particular.

Chapter IV. addresses the changes in leadership in Georgia and Abkhazia during the years 2003 and 2004. It traces unprecedented domestic changes in both entities, their inter-relations with external conduct and impact on the peace process. The chapter also highlights the implications of a multi-facetted dependency on Russia which characterized the peace process and its various domestic and international settings over many years. It examines whether Russia had more to gain from an intractability of the conflict than from its resolution and investigates the question whether Russian mediation diplomacy thus followed an inverted logic of international relations based on fostering instability in order to secure its own relevance.

The subsequent Chapter V. attempts to unravel the puzzle how it was possible that the peace process accelerated and key conflict resolution mechanisms were relaunched in 2005 and 2006 in a situation otherwise marked by intensified geopolitical power competition, a lack of give-and-take and the disappearance of chief proponents from Georgian domestic politics. It evaluates three possible

explanations positing the success of second track confidence building measures, the triumph of uncompromising hardliner politics, or advancing the negotiations half-heartedly as a disguise for expediting diverging interests, respectively. The chapter ends by illustrating how intervening factors marked the beginning of the ultimate collapse of the peace process in a situation which despite the recent steps forward was still characterized by instability and distrust.

Chapter VI. outlines the breakdown of the peace process in 2007 and 2008. It examines factors at the intrastate level, as well as the trilateral relationship between Russia, Georgia and Abkhazia and points out international attempts to halt the escalation of the conflict which were of no avail. Underlying geopolitical issues of belonging, influence and access which expressed themselves in international developments like the Bucharest NATO summit or the recognition of Kosovo are unveiled, critically evaluated and related to the overall acceleration of conflict and eventual descent into war in August 2008.

Chapter VII. poses the question why the EU as a new interested actor was neither able to intervene successfully in the peace process nor to end the crisis leading to the outbreak of war. It outlines the way the EU has been characterised by scholarship, in order to assess how the Union can contribute to conflict mediation efforts in theory. With the EU's foreign policy allegedly being based on soft power, instead of hard power approaches, theory attests it transformative capabilities and a subsequent ability to untangle 'couples fatals', which would have predestined it for successful intervention in the Georgian-Abkhaz case. The findings are then contrasted with notions about the changing nature of the EU from a purely normative organisation to a geopolitical player with global aspirations. The results are applied to the case at hand, in order to illustrate constraints which eventually led to the EU's inability to establish itself as a direct actor to the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process and its failure to avoid the outbreak of war in 2008.

The *Conclusion* relates the findings from the *Main Analysis* to the three working hypothesis in order to explain why it has not been possible to resolve the conflict by peaceful means in the period prior to August 2008. The findings outlined in the thesis and summarized in the conclusion serve as logical point of departure not only for further research, but are also meant to function as assessment tools for the evaluation of current and forthcoming efforts to analyse, transform or resolve the existing conflicts in Georgia and others exhibiting similarities elsewhere.

Methodological considerations

Finally, some remaining methodological questions will be clarified. Apart from the abstract considerations outlined above, process tracing formed an important part of the research which underlies this thesis. Process tracing as a method generates and analyses data "on the causal

mechanisms, or processes, events, actions, expectations, and other intervening variables that link putative causes to observed effects"[22]. Following the suggestion of Andrew Bennett and Alexander George first proposed in a paper presented at the MacArthur Foundation Workshop on Case Study Methods at Harvard University and which later appeared in the book *Case Studies and Theory Development[23]*, the importance of both "arguments and measures on the causal effect of an independent variable and the hypothesized and observed causal mechanisms through which it achieves this effect" are recognized as the bases of an adequate scientific explanation. In other words, not only the question of *why*, i.e. by the working of what structures is a phenomenon produced, but also the question regarding *how* a process works, are important for adequate scientific explanations. Nevertheless, a single research is at liberty to be based on either, according to Bennett and George.

Process tracing exhibits similarities to historical explanations, but adds a causal sequence to an analytical explanation which is in turn usually embedded in theory. The causal mechanism it examines is supposed to show a continuous cause-effect path that links the independent variable to the dependent variable, thus testing the intervening variables. As such it is a way to narrow down potential causes for certain outcomes. While this process certainly involves a loss of information, which researchers have to be aware of, it is described as offering particular advantages relative to other methods in the study of intentional behaviours below the level of the state. Although some critics point out that understandings and intentions have no role in causation, this thesis propagates another point of view, namely that intentions manifest themselves in argument and "the very act of argument expresses a belief that arguments can change ideas and that ideas matter."[24] Intentions turn into arguments and influence ideas which are transformed into decision making, thus conditioning social processes which leave behind evidence - at times incomplete or biased - to be analysed by researchers, such as documents and public communication. For the purpose of this thesis, process tracing has been an important building block below the level of refined research as a method of understanding the complexities of the process through an inductively derived causal path as well as its cause-effect path. It has especially facilitated an improved understanding of the supposed intentions of actors below the

---

[22] Andrew Bennett and Alexander L. George. "Process Tracing in Case Study Research." *Process Tracing*. MacArthur Foundation Workshop on Case Study Methods, October 17-19, 1997, n.d. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://users.polisci.wisc.edu/kritzer/teaching/ps816/ProcessTracing.htm>. Also see: www.georgetown.edu/bennett

[23] See also Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998. Print.

[24] A. Sayer. *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1992. 111. Print., cit.n. Andrew Bennett and Alexander L. George. "Process Tracing in Case Study Research." *Process Tracing*. MacArthur Foundation Workshop on Case Study Methods, October 17-19, 1997, n.d. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://users.polisci.wisc.edu/kritzer/teaching/ps816/ProcessTracing.htm>. Also see: www.georgetown.edu/bennett. 12 July 2012.

level of the state, while acknowledging the difficulties that exist regarding the collection and interpretation of data on cognitions and intentions.

Process tracing was complemented by another key building block in this thesis, namely interviews[25]. Most of the interviews were conducted as structured depth interviews, also commonly referred to as classical depth interviews. These interviews were non-directive and guided by a main connecting theme without a pre-defined structure. The majority of the interviews were carried out during a six-month field research in Georgia and *de facto* Abkhazia and subsequent as well as prior visits to the region. A large number of the interview partners were contemporary witnesses who had been in decision-making or other key positions during relevant phases of the conflict and its settlement process. In addition, representatives of civil society, scholars, experts and journalists were interviewed. These above mentioned interviews within the region were complemented by interviews with other stakeholders, scholars and experts outside of the region.

In addition a thorough survey of primary sources was undertaken. A milestone for this undertaking was achieved by the accessibility of a *Collection of Political Legal Acts 1989-2008,* which has been translated and made publically available by the Regionalism Research Center based in Tbilisi. Furthermore, the bi-annual UN secretary General Reports as well as the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions have been surveyed to gain a better understanding of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and its peace process. Other valuable primary sources at the National Archive of Georgia were more difficult to access, but a number of newspaper articles by Georgian and Abkhaz leaders obtained in the archives yielded valuable additional insights into day to day political discourses and thus supported yet another method used throughout the thesis, namely discourse analysis.

Furthermore, the study of the conflict, its dynamics and settlement process reaches beyond the immediacy of this thesis. Preceding it, observations about Georgia were gathered and developed continuously over the course of the past fourteen years. Respective internships and research stays, for example at the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the reign of President Shevardnadze, at the office in charge of bilateral relations with Georgia at the German Federal Ministry of Defence, and the office of a European Deputy, who was part of the delegation to the southern Caucasus, offered interesting insights over the years and some of them have made their way into this thesis. A general curiosity for the day to day developments in Georgia and its vicinity over the past decade was complemented with a continuous interest in literature related to the southern Caucasus produced

---

[25] Interviews as defined by Scheuch in Andreas Diekmann. *Empirische Sozialforschung: Grundlagen, Methoden, Anwendungen*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1995. 375. Print. The author has tried to reduce problems concerning interview techniques outlined by Diekmann to a minimum and has used a mixed method (more soft than hard questions) for the open interviews conducted.

over the same period of time. As a result, the literature referred to in this thesis only represents a recent review of secondary sources relevant to the topic of this research.

Moreover, a fellowship at a German political foundation in Tbilisi and another at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS) served as logical points of departure for observing the topic of inquiry and the general environment in Georgia from a variety of perspectives. The consistent participation in conferences and working groups with a focus on Georgia as well as conflicts and the South Caucasus more particularly, assured the exchange with experts of all levels. Together with occasional publications it guaranteed continuous stimulation and fostered the integration in a transnational network of scholars and experts from a variety of backgrounds and age groups.

Theoretical Background: Geopolitical thought and its transformation

The origins of Geopolitical Thought

The origins of geopolitical thought can be traced back to the idea of geographic determinism, which posits that all social phenomena are dependent on geographic factors. According to this school of thought, cultural characteristics and human development are similarly shaped by geography. Geography did not appear in the discourse all of a sudden, rather its appearance has to be viewed as a process of slow infiltration from various scholarly discourses. It eventually cumulated in geographical determinism, which not only suggested an influence of geographical factors, but goes further in that it tried to explain history according to geography and attempted to establish this way of thought as a new way of conceptualizing reality.

Ancient Greek philosophers were among the first who undertook the task to establish that geographical factors influence humans and their behaviour.[26] Later on in the 16th century, the political philosopher Jean Bodin cited natural influences as one possible cause for variation and change in the nature of states.[27] Charles-Louis de Montesquieu, likewise a political philosopher, advanced the idea of geographical determinism by causally linking a variety of geographic variables to social developments, among them considerations about the effect of climate on humans and their culture.[28] Johann Gottfried Herder, a contemporary of Wieland, Schiller, and Goethe proposed a more moderate view on the effect of climate, while analysing in-depth the effect of nature on human history.[29] Thereby he underlined that the philosophical discourse about the correlation of geographical and natural factors with human history showed not to be linear.

The German geographer Carl Ritter integrated the findings from the so far largely philosophical debates into his scientific considerations about Earth Science. It was Ritter who coined the term "geographic individual"[30] to describe a uniformly developed geographical space with natural boundaries and an organic natural realm within.[31] The American scholar of geopolitics Edmund Walsh established a link between this idea and the notion of legitimate territorial expansion into a space enclosed by natural boundaries, often referred to by the representatives of the Third Reich to justify

---

[26] See Robert von Pöhlmann. *Hellenische Anschauungen über den Zusammenhang zwischen Natur und Geschichte*. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1879. Print.

[27] Jean Bodin. *Les Six Livres de la Republique*. Paris: 1577. Print., cit.n. Günther Heyden. *Kritik der deutschen Geopolitik: Wesen und soziale Funktion einer reaktionären soziologischen Schule*. Berlin: Dietz, 1958. 18. Print.

[28] See Franz Mehring. *Über den historischen Materialismus, Kleine Bücherei des Marxismus-Leninismus*. Berlin: Dietz, 1950. Print.

[29] Johann Gottfried Herder. *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*. Web. 19 July 2014. <http://odysseetheater.org/goethe/herder/ideen.htm>.

[30] Emil Hözel and A. Hettner. "Das geographische Individuum bei Karl Ritter und seine Bedeutung für den Begriff des Naturgebietes und der Naturgrenze." *Geographische Zeitschrift* 2: 378-444. Print.

[31] Günther Heyden. *Kritik der deutschen Geopolitik: Wesen und soziale Funktion einer reaktionären soziologischen Schule*. Berlin: Dietz, 1958. 29. Print.

their *Lebensraum* policy of expansion[32]. Günter Heyden countered this view by explaining that such a line of argument may have been deduced from Ritter's thoughts but must be considered an "abuse of geographical science for political purposes"[33], which was not intended by Ritter. Needless to say, geographic determinism also faced serious criticism over the course of time which drove its scholarly alteration.

The roots of geographical determinism's transformation into geopolitical thought happened during a time of enormous changes. Sir Halford Mackinder coined it the *post-Columbus age*[34] to pay tribute to the fact that most of the earth's territories had been discovered. The subsequent division of lands under a colonialist umbrella also coincided with another groundbreaking development, namely the industrial revolution that changed the mode of production and conditioned the rising need for new markets. As a spin-off, communist as well as pre-capitalist ideas were on the rise, too. Among the criticism that was advanced during this time, most revolved around the idea that geographical determinism negated any active role for humans in their interaction with nature[35]. Some prominent market economists like Adam Smith, who wrote at the beginning of the industrial revolution, posited a "system of perfect liberty" in sharp contrast to geographic determinism. Others such as David Ricardo viewed "the work [not geography] as the source of all riches"[36]. Thus, both Smith and Ricardo largely ignored any restricting character of natural or geographic influences on human development and emphasised individual contributions instead.

On the other extreme, Marxist critics often viewed nature as a source of trade-in value. While criticising those who overemphasized nature, they at the same time warned about misconceiving the fact that the antagonism between geographic nature and society influences the development of the latter. In some exceptional cases, Marxist thinkers such a Plekhanov, however, accorded a prominent place to geography as the driving force behind societal developments[37]. Nevertheless, most Marxists regarded the later geopolitics as a product of an imperialist trend with revisionist characteristics mainly driven by economic and political interests of imperialistic groups.

Despite objections by its critics, geographical determinism continued to be propagated and integrated into studies by scholars. One prominent representative, who stands in direct line with the notion's eventual breakthrough into mainstream discourse and political practice, was the geographer Friedrich

---

[32] Edmund A. Walsh. *Wahre anstatt falsche Geopolitik für Deutschland*. Frankfurt/Main: G. Schulte-Bulmke, 1946. 8. Print.
[33] Günther Heyden, Kritik der deutschen Geopolitik. 30.
[34] H.J. Mackinder. "The Geographical Pivot of History." *The Geographical Journal* 13: 2. Print.
[35] Günter Heyden. Kritik der Deutschen Geopolitik. 38.
[36] Ibid., 39.
[37] Georgii Plekhanov. *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus*. Stuttgart: J.H.W. Dietz, 1896. 169. Print., cit.n. Günther Heyden. Kritik der Deutschen Geopolitik. 53.

Ratzel. In the 1890s Ratzel published his thoughts about political life, state and territory, and the relations between foreign policy of a state and its geographic space which he viewed in their entirety as subjects of geographic determinism. His works, among them *Anthropogeographie* (1882-1891), *Politische Geographie* (1897) and *Lebensraum* (1901), were influenced by Darwinism and an organic understanding of the state. This understanding was derived from biology and was based upon a view of the state as a constantly growing and developing organism. To underline this fact, he wrote in 'Fundamental Law on Spatial Growth of States': "The state strives in its growth for the enclosure of politically valuable space."[38]

As a child of his time, influenced by the industrial revolution and colonialism, a consequential competition between Germany and Great Britain, and also affected by his contemporaries such as maritime strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan, Ratzel took it for granted that states did not hold static borders and instead would develop in competition with their neighbors. Gains from such competition would be territorial.[39] His ideas developed from a side issue in academia into mainstream discourse only after Germany had lost the First World War and especially became popular during the time of the Third Reich. The foundations for this development had already been laid during the extensive debate about geographical determinism.

Geopolitics as a rising phenomenon 1914-1944

The scholar who coined the term "geopolitics" was the Swede Rudolf Kjellén, who first referred to it in an essay in 1899.[40] Sometimes, it is also attributed to Sir Halford Mackinder, who taught at Oxford and is often considered to be the father of international geopolitical thought due to his essay *The Geographical Pivot of History* published in England in 1904. While the ideas of the political geographer Mackinder did not play much of a role in continental Europe for some time to come, Kjellén's thoughts shaped German geopolitical discourse, which as an academic discipline eventually came to dominate the interwar era. Kjellén was a student of Friedrich Ratzel mentioned above. One of Kjellén's underlying aims was to emancipate political theory from a simple reductionism of an academic discipline to a legal science.[41] Kjellén outlined his ideas for example in his book *The State as a Living Form*[42]. They were clearly influenced by the *Lebensraum* ideas and the organic state theory of Ratzel and can thus be

---

[38] Friedrich Ratzel. *Politische Geographie*. München und Leipzig: R. Oldenbourg, 1897. 191-231. Print. Ratzel's Grundgesetze des räumlichen Wachstums der Staaten were first published under the title „Petermanns Mitteilungen" in 1896.
[39] Ibid., 247.
[40] Rudolf Kjellén. *Studier öfver Sveriges politiska gränser*. Stockholm: 1899. 283-331. Print., cit.n. Rainer Sprengel. *Kritik der Geopolitik: Ein deutscher Diskurs, 1914-1944*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996. 26. Print.
[41] Rainer Sprengel. *Kritik der Geopolitik: Ein deutscher Diskurs, 1914-1944*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996. 29. Print.
[42] Rudolf Kjellén and J. Sandmeier. *Der Staat als Lebensform*. Berlin: K. Vowinckel, 1925. Print.

regarded as a continuum of Ratzel's thoughts. In his writings Kjellén actively merged the two notions of politics and geography into what came to be widely known as geopolitics[43]. Due to his impact on German geopolitics, his ideas will be considered in the following, while Mackinder will be discussed later on.

The germanophile ideas of Rudolf Kjellén were popularized in Germany and echoed by German geopolitical thinkers, "especially during and after the First World War".[44] In 1916, Ernst Jäkh was the first to overcome a passive perception of the term geopolitics according to Sprengler, who regarded earlier works as mere reproductions of Kjellén's thoughts. Unlike Kjellén, Jäkh used the notion of geopolitics as a means to construct an active and independent analysis in his critical evaluation of the notion of a small middle-Europe in favor of the concept of an enlarged middle-Europe.[45] Many adherents of geopolitics, who wrote after the First World War, believed that Germany's defeat resulted from a lack of understanding and appreciation of geography. Haushofer, who openly expressed his disregard of the Versailles Treaty[46], criticized that the diplomats and statesman who had maneuvered Germany into its miserable state had done so because they "lacked geopolitical training"[47]. The ideas of thinkers like Haushofer were deeply rooted in the notions derived from geographic determinism. As one of their most prominent voices he viewed geopolitics as "the doctrine of the geographic conditionality of politics"[48]. Together with his contemporaries, Erich Obst, Otto Maull and Hermann Lautensach, Haushofer stated in a joint publication that geopolitics in its essence depicted all political processes as earthbound[49]. Hence, the development of the state and its politics were said to be brought about by geopolitical causes. The terminology of all three clearly depicts geopolitics' roots in geographic determinism, although Haushofer himself conceded that only one fourth of political processes were earthbound.[50] Nevertheless, German geopolitics shaped by Haushofer was deeply rooted in geographical determinism, an extension of political geography (see above), and viewed as a

[43] Walter Rüegg. *Geschichte der Universität in Europa Band 3: Vom 19. Jahrhundert zum Zweiten Weltkrieg 1800 - 1945*. München: Beck, 2004. 399. Print.

[44] Walther Vogel. "Rudolf Kjellén und seine Bedeutung für die Deutsche Staatslehre." *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 81: 193. Print., cit.n., Rainer Sprengel. Kritik der Geopolitik. 28.

[45] E. Jäckh. *Mitteleuropa als Organismus*. Weimar: Deutsche Politik, 1916. 1065-1071. Print. Also see Rainer Sprengel. Kritik der Geopolitik. 30.

[46] Karl Haushofer, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "In Defense of German Geopolitics, from Total Power; A Footnote to History (1948)." *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998. 40. Print.

[47] Karl Haushofer, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "Why Geopolitik? From The World of General Haushofer." *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998. 33. Print.

[48] Karl Haushofer. *Weltpolitik von heute*. Berlin: Zeitgeschichte Verlag, 1934. 21. Print.

[49] Karl Haushofer et al. *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 1933: 301. Print., cit.n. Günther Heyden. Kritik der Deutschen Geopolitik. 74.

[50] Karl Haushofer et al.. *Bausteine zur Geopolitik*. Berlin-Grunewald: Kurt Vowinckel, 1928. 47. Print., cit.n. Günther Heyden. Kritik der Deutschen Geopolitik. 121.

"valid science"[51] by its representatives. Like its predecessor, i.e. political geography, it analyzed and described political processes but added normative aspects and a dynamic, forward looking analysis to its findings.

Geopolitics, as the German School interpreted it, was explicitly prescriptive with an aim to guide national policy. This explicit normative feature and claim to shape policy and politics is often said to have been rooted in Haushofer's' military career. While serving in the German military, he met Rudolf Heß, who later served as Adolf Hitler's deputy. Due to his relationship and exchanges with Heß, and through him with Hitler directly, Haushofer was accused of a shared responsibility for Nazi policy and crimes after the Second World War had ended. Prior to this turn of events, Haushofer left the army in 1919 in the rank of major general. Shortly thereafter, he started teaching at Munich University and became a full professor in 1933. In 1924 he founded the newspaper *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* together with three other editors, namely Erich Obst, Hermann Lautensach, and Fritz Termer. The journal served as medium to spread his ideas in academic circles. In its early phase, the journal was subdivided into reports about geopolitically relevant developments in the world and debates around the differences between geopolitics and political geography. As time progressed, the publisher Kurt Vowinckel, who entertained close ties to the national socialists, became increasingly involved in shaping the publication. This fact is sometimes referred to as one of the reasons why from 1932 onwards, Karl Haushofer served as the journal's only editor. Especially as the Nazi party consolidated its political grip over Germany after 1933, the journal *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* morphed into a mouthpiece of ideas in line with the party's foreign policy goals.

In Germany the period between 1933 and 1945 was marked by Hitler's expansionist policy and rule. It can be argued that this period, however, has to be regarded in continuum with the colonial era. Germany had lost its colonial territories after the First World War, but this alone did not signify an end of colonialism per se. Rather, German colonies were divided among the victorious powers in the belief that the colonial subjects were not yet mature enough to survive as sovereign entities by themselves. Only after the Second World War, colonialism was eventually phased out. Thus it is legitimate to claim that colonialism and its imperial undertone still influenced this particular period. Great power rivalries and theories about world domination rooted in geography and geographical determinism still prevailed and were merely re-discovered by German geopolitics, especially after the demise of the League of Nation. Some of those theories which German geopolitical thinkers responded to were the notion of "sea power" put forth by the American naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan. Mahan claimed

---

[51] Karl Haushofer, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "In Defense of German Geopolitics. 41.

that the country with the greatest naval power would have the greatest worldwide impact.[52] Ratzel had been mainly concerned with land-based power's worldwide impact and Haushofer eventually combined Mahan's and Ratzel's ideas on the division between sea and land, explaining that a country needed both geographical assets to claim a meaningful impact.[53] Mackinder, another contemporary of Mahan and Ratzel (see above), was the first among the early political geographers who explicitly broached the issue of a single power's quest for domination of the world, or world power. According to him, the most likely candidate to seek domination over the globe was Russia.

Mackinder defined sources of power by geographical means and looked at the way they could be operationalized and cause conflict due to great power rivalry. He also suggested ways to mitigate this dilemma and maintain a peaceful balance. In 1904 he presented his thoughts before the Royal Geographical Society in a study which subdivided the world into three areas: A continental *pivot area* which he later denoted as northern *heartland*, an *inner crescent*, lying around the *heartland* with land-base and access to the sea, and an outer belt of countries, the *outer crescent*, which was set apart from the former two areas by waterways. Mackinder's notion of *heartland* roughly coincided with the territory of the Russian Empire. Both Mahan and Mackinder suggested that an expansive tendency of Russia towards the sea, i.e. a pure continental power with an immense potential resource wealth striving for control of the sea and trading routes, was the essential problem for the balance of power on earth. Those passage ways of the *inner crescent* that would allow Russia access to ice-free ports, such as Eastern Europe or the South Caucasus, thus gained enormous strategic relevance. Therefore, space was regarded not least in military terms and also the ideas of buffer zones became a necessity to protect one's own territory from expansionist powers such as Russia.

This estimation of expansionist Russia as a threat by western European powers had already played a role before the First World War and it prevailed even thereafter. Haushofer, however, viewed the Eastern lands including Russia less as a danger than as a potential ally. His threat perception focused on an Anglo-American policy of encirclement or metaphorically speaking a focus on their so-called "Anakondapolitik".[54] The methaphor of an anaconda, a land-based animal which has to drag its prey into the water to kill, illustrated the post-Versailles German notion of a people in danger of falling prey, either to its foreign enemies or, as previously discussed, to being choked by a lack of space. The latter idea was symbolized by the so-called *Volk ohne Raum* idea. These fears of encroachment once again

---

[52] See e.g. A.T. Mahan. *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*. 12th ed. Boston: Little, Brown, 1918. Print.

[53] See e.g. Andreas Dorpalen. *The World of General Haushofer*. New York, Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1942. 68-69. Print.

[54] Karl Haushofer. *Der Kontinentalblock, Mitteleuropa, Eurasien, Japan*. München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1940. 616. Print.

highlighted the function of other states as buffers to protect the Germanic people from adverse external powers.

In this hostile environment, the main ideas propagated by Haushofer and the German geopolitical school revolved around Autarky, Lebensraum and Pan-Regions. Some of his ideas reflected Thomas Robert Malthus's theory that predicted overpopulation of the earth due to demographic increase and subsequent competition over scarce resources. As a direct consequence, Haushofer suggested autarky or the need for self-sufficiency of the state. At the same time under Malthusian conditions, a state inhabited by a culturally "superior" group was granted the natural ability and right to expand its *Lebensraum,* according to Haushofer. Driven by the idea of *Volk ohne Raum* coined by Hans Grimm,[55] the German geopolitical school led by Haushofer expressed the need for more living space for an ever increasing German population. Thus, Germans had the right and duty to expand and search for more *Lebensraum*, especially eastward in areas culturally similar to their own. Culture was important, since it assisted the spatial expansion. It was considered a most appropriate outline to those 'politically valuable spaces' which should be enclosed in a state, according to Haushofers' predecessor Ratzel. In a way it was viewed as a soft power tool, encompassing new living space which was backed by hard military and commercial power.[56] As a consequence Haushofer regarded borders as fluid entities determined by cultural space, not states. On this note, it may not be surprising that in 1928, the publishers of *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* urged for geopolitics to become the geographical conscience of the state[57], hoping to unite the populace behind these nationalist ideals.

As indicated above, borders[58] and also the related theme of pan-regions were a continuous and evolving theme among German geopolitical thinkers[59]. Haushofer had proposed that "[w]hat seemed most lacking in the resumption of the educational process […] after the war was the capability to think in terms of wide space (in continents!)"[60]. Out of the desire of geopolitics to become "the geographical conscience of the state"[61] and to instill a spatial dimension in the mindset of Germans had developed a field of study that related all politics to the ground and eventually tried to envision the entire world in large spatial constructions. John O'Loughlin and Hermann von der Wusten noted that "German

---

[55] Hans Grimm. *Volk ohne Raum*. München: A. Langen, 1926. Print.
[56] See Andreas Dorpalen. *The World of General Haushofer*. New York, Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1942. 80. Print.
[57] See Karl A. Wittfogel. *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus*. 1929. 21. Print., cit.n. Günther Heyden, Kritik der Deutschen Geopolitik. 147.
[58] Haushofer even called the study of borders or boundaries as one of the most important problems of Geopolitik, see Karl Haushofer, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "Why Geopolitik?" 34.
[59] Karl Haushofer devoted his work Frontiers to the topic of borders, see Karl Haushofer. *Grenzen in ihrer Geographischen und politischen Bedeutung*. Berlin: K. Vowinckel, 1939. Print.
[60] Karl Haushofer, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "In Defense of German Geopolitics." 40.
[61] Karl Haushofer, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "Why Geopolitik?" 33.

geopolitical writers in the 1930s proposed a tripartite division of the world into large pan-regions of American, European and Japanese hegemony".[62] While there were indeed proposals of pan-regions, due to the fact that small states were often regarded as a source of disorder unable to sustain themselves[63], a number of different arrangements were proposed. Erich Obst, for example suggested a division into a Pan-American, a Euro-African, a Sowjet-Russian, an East-Asian, a South-Asian and an Australian-Newsealand Union.[64] According to Haushofer, German Geopolitics had set out from the goal of "excluding disorder in the future". "This presupposed a geographically correct picture of the world"[65] and had incorporated the various concepts mentioned above as means to construct this envisioned world order.

When Haushofer came under interrogation by the Allied Forces after the Second World War and was accused of having shaped and advanced Hitler's policies, he himself claimed that after the Munich conference in 1938, German geopolitics had entered its 'Way of Sorrow', i.e. the divergence from its scholarly origin. He did not characterize it as a functionalist ideology, but instead pointed to those foreign scholars who had allegedly inspired his own thought process, among them "Mahan, Brook Adams, Joe Chamberlain…; Sir Thomas Holdrich […]; Sir Halford Mackinder […]; Lord Kitchener…"[66]. By pointing to foreign influences he aimed to legitimize the German geopolitical school of thought as an academic discipline and to contribute to cleansing it from its stigma of mere Nazi propaganda in an academic sheep's skin. He was not alone in this endeavour. Although the period when geopolitics established itself as a school of thought in the middle of the 20th century can also be regarded as one of its darkest, least scientific and most normative, it eventually overcame this episode. Before the next section inquires into how this was achieved, the following quote may provide an insight into why geopolitics was even given a chance to continue as an academic discipline. Georg Hayden, a fervent critic of geopolitics concluded: "As silly as the geopolitical teachings may be, in applied politics they played and play a large role".[67] In line with Hayden's notion, it is not the aim of this thesis to claim the accuracy of geopolitics, but rather to acknowledge that it exists and continues to shape policy. In order to show its lasting relevance, the next section turns to the role of geopolitics for constructing the post-1945 political era.

---

[62] John O'Loughlin and Herman van der Wusten. "Political Geography of Panregions." *Geographical Review* 80: 1. Print.

[63] See Andreas Dorpalen. *The World of General Haushofer*. New York, Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1942. 205-206. Print.

[64] Erich Obst. "Die Verwaltung." *Geopolitik* 7: 37. Print., cit.n. Günther Heyden. Kritik der Deutschen Geopolitik. 246.

[65] Karl Haushofer, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "In Defense of German Geopolitics. 42.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Günther Heyden. *Kritik der Deutschen Geopolitik.* 119.

Geopolitics after World War II: New Beginnings

The marginalization of German *Geopolitik* after the Second World War can be regarded less as a negation of geopolitical teaching and practice, but rather as the rejection of an influential ideological tool, which had guided Nazi-Germany in its endeavour for what it had defined as its national interest prior to its defeat. The war and subsequent defeat of Germany offered a window of opportunity for American geopolitical thought to develop an alternative to German *Geopolitik*. After the Second World War, the United States gradually advanced as the new centre of geopolitical thought. The call for an increased appreciation of geopolitics from within the US establishment had already existed for decades prior to the end of the war. Geopolitics as a school of thought had gained momentum, especially during the Second World War and an American version of geopolitics, allegedly different from the German *Geopolitik*, was propagated by its representatives. The developments of this American version of geopolitics prior to the end of the Second World War will be briefly discussed below and some of its major findings and propositions listed which will be further discussed in the main body of the thesis.

With scholars such as Mackinder and Mahan having set the stage for international geopolitical thought, it had long been clear that geographical expertise could not be absent at international conferences of the early twentieth century. To this end, President Woodrow Wilson appointed Isaiah Bowman to the US delegation heading for the Versailles Peace Conference as the delegation's chief territorial specialist. The geopolitician Nicholas Spykman remarked in this regard that "the location of boundaries […] remains a task in which the aid of the geographer is indispensable"[68]. The political task at Versailles that entailed re-locating various boundaries in Europe and some of its colonies certainly made the participation of geographers indispensable. Out of the exchanges and discourses about geography and its political tasks at the conference grew an effort by members of the British and US delegations to create an international research body furthering geopolitical dialog, with branches on both sides of the Atlantic.[69]

Aside from these sporadic early attempts to further the interests in and the study of geopolitics in the Anglo-American region, Germany remained the centre for the study of geopolitics in practice. Due to political developments, especially after the Munich conference in 1938 when Hitler's expansionist appetite had manifested itself, scholars of geopolitics in the US increasingly shaped their own profile, mainly through their criticism of the teaching and practice of geopolitics in Germany. The essence of the criticism of the field's developments is captured by a quote about German *Geopolitik* by the above mentioned Isaiah Bowman from the year 1942. Bowman stated: "Its arguments as developed in

---

[68] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Frontiers, Security, and International Organization." *Geographical Review* 32: 444. Print.

[69] Gearóid Ó Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*. London: Routledge, 1996. 151. Print.

Germany are only made up to suit the case for German aggression. It contains therefore, a poisonous self-defeating principle: when international interests conflict or overlap *might* alone shall decide the issue."[70] Bowman captures a commonly held view that *Geopolitik* was the work of ideologues, poorly conceived and hardly a science that could provide differentiated answers to the question of war and peace. He was among the first who emphasized a distinction between geopolitics and *Geopolitik* and he continued to enunciate numerous warnings against the uncritical migration of geopolitics from Germany across the Atlantic. Interestingly, Bowman had formulated his own answer to the territorial notion of *Lebensraum* as early as 1940 and had proposed an "economic Lebensraum for all"[71]. Yet, as much as American geographers and geopoliticians tried to discern their views from the German *Geopolitik*, like the German *Geopolitik* the American school of geopolitics must also be viewed as a child of its time. In order to decipher this notion, i.e. to portray American geopolitics as a field of research and study, the major works of Nicholas John Spykman are discussed in the following section.

The works of the American scholar Nicholas John Spykman, who significantly shaped the course of development of the study of international politics in the 1940s, offer an opportunity to trace then existing scholarly thought rooted in realist assumptions about the world, which were familiar to many entertaining the study of geopolitics at the time. His main works, *America's Strategy* and *Geography of the Peace* put in front of the reader "the structure of the field of international politics as Spykman envisaged it"[72]. It is complemented here by a number of his essays from the late 1930s to provide a more thorough understanding of the essential features of an American school of thought of geopolitics.

Spykman expressed time and time again that he believed only in "a temporary armistice called peace"[73]. In his essay *Frontiers, Security, and International Organisations*, writing about the state as a unique social structure, because it claims not only sovereignty but is also organized territorially, he explicitly mentioned that "[t]he geographic area is the territorial base from which the state operates in times of war and the strategic position which it occupies during the temporary armistice called peace."[74] This quote reveals his classical realist conviction, which gives way to his belief that relations between states at all times remain power relations. Referring to the experience of Versailles and the failure of the League of Nations, Spykman explained that "we can probably do better than last time, but even our best will leave power differentials between individual units, and the problem of territorial

---

[70] Isaiah Bowman. "Geography vs. Geopolitics." *Geographical Review* 32: 646. Print.
[71] Gearóid Ó Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics. 156.*
[72] Edgar S. Furniss. "The Contribution of Nicholas John Spykman to the Study of International Politics." *World Politics* 4: 383. Print.
[73] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Frontiers, Security, and International Organization." 436-437.
[74] Ibid.

34

security will therefore remain"[75]. Thus, in the absence of an effective world governing system, states continue to suffer from insecurity and are left to defend themselves to ensure their survival. In this regard, Spykman provided a survival kit and wrote in his book *The Geography of Peace* that "[f]orce is manifestly an indispensable instrument both for national survival and for the creation of a better world."[76] Answering to those in an idealist camp, who claimed force was an outdated tool, he clarified in February 1938 "[w]ar is [still] an instrument of National Policy..."[77]. From his point of view, idealist visions had little chance of being realized or withstanding the test of time in the political realm if they were not backed by an adequate force, a notion which echoed general political sentiments after the eventual failure of the League of Nations.

Akin to other geopolitical scholars Spykman, too, followed in the tradition of positioning himself as 'advisor to the *Prince*', offering his recommendations on the nature and conduct of foreign policy in a Machiavellian tradition. Given that he was highly sceptical whether a democratic United States would be able to manoeuvre the deep waters of power politics, he pleaded that "a sound foreign policy for the United States must accept this basic reality of international society [the need for power] and develop a grand strategy for both war and peace based on the implications of its geographic position in the world."[78] Due to Spykman's insistence that conflict was the normal state of international politics, while peace seemed to him an abnormal state of affairs, his analysis of foreign policy was preoccupied with the relative power of states, i.e. their 'power position' and balancing behaviour. He viewed the power position of states as not solely depending on military forces, but incorporated various other factors into his considerations, such as "size of territory, nature of frontiers, size of population, absence of presence of raw materials, economic and technological development, financial strength, ethnic homogeneity, effective social integration, political stability, and national spirit."[79] Among them, however, Spykman viewed geography as the most crucial aspect conditioning - not determining - the foreign policy of a state. To underline this conviction, he chose to use the term 'geopolitics' despite the well-known fact that it carried negative connotations in the United States, "where Americans were just learning about a man called Haushofer."[80] In an environment not necessarily prone to readily accept a scholarly concept with a German aftertaste, Spykman faced heavy criticism, among other things for allegedly omitting the variety of factors of which national power was a product in favour of

---

[75] Ibid. 447.
[76] N. Spykman. *The Geography of Peace*, cit.n. Edgar S. Furniss. "The Contribution of Nicholas John Spykman to the Study of International Politics." 383.
[77] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Geography and Foreign Policy, I." *The American Political Science Review* 32: 29. Print.
[78] Edgar S. Furniss. "The Contribution of Nicholas John Spykman to the Study of International Politics." 384.
[79] Ibid. 385. Also see Robert Strausz-Hupe. "Review of Nicholas John Spykman, The Geography of Peace." *Military Affairs* 8: 144. Print.
[80] Edgar S. Furniss. "The Contribution of Nicholas John Spykman to the Study of International Politics." 386.

his own geopolitical analysis. But in his work Spykman himself pointed out that he recognized not only non-geographic components of national power, but also acknowledged the complexity of foreign policy phenomena. "The factors that condition the policy of states are many", he wrote in the first part of the essay *Geography and Foreign Policy* and went on to spell out that "[t]he geography of a state is rather the material for, than the cause of its policy."[81] Nevertheless, in his statements the importance he placed on both power politics and geographic factors above all remained very apparent. Spykman summarized his views by explaining that "a sound foreign policy must not be geared to the realities of power politics, it must also be adjusted to the specific position which a state occupies in the world. It is the geographic location of a country and its relation to centers of military power that define its problem of security."[82]

Spykman did not grow tired of outlining issues arising out of the security problem of states. Instead he described objectives states should pursue and listed tools and techniques of statecraft useful to mitigate the apparent security problems. In his view, statecraft followed three basic processes, namely that of cooperation, accommodation, and opposition, including the sub-categories of persuasion, barter, coercion and subversion.[83] In addition, Spykman explained that states, if given the possibilities, would attempt to pursue expansionist objectives. Accordingly, all man-made political boundaries were the starting point for expansion of offensive powers.[84] Spykman posited that military pressures across frontiers were creating counter-pressures and "if pressures become too unequal, boundaries [separating two political units] will move."[85] Thus, essentially he was writing about balancing and counter-balancing behaviour to maintain a certain order. In *America's Strategy in World Politics* he further noted the persistent changes in the balance of power, which he described as unstable by nature. The balance, according to Spykman, tends to deviate from a state of equilibrium, because its basic units, i.e. states, are in the dark about how much power they are balancing against and thus prefer an excess of power to ensure against a shortage of it. The instability of any balance of power is also determined by the fact that "[i]n a dynamic world in which forces shift and ideas change, no legal structure can remain acceptable for any length of time. Preserving order […] [is] a question to make daily decisions that will adjust human frictions […] deciding ever anew."[86] This ever-changing nature of international affairs was especially apparent at the time during which Spykman wrote his major works from 1938 until 1944. With a vivid memory of the events following World War I and having borne witness to the rise of Hitler and his grab for European lands, the US had started contemplating leaving

---

[81] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Geography and Foreign Policy, I." 28-30.
[82] Edgar S. Furniss. "The Contribution of Nicholas John Spykman to the Study of International Politics." 387.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Nicholas J. Spykman and Abbie A. Rollins. "Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy, I." *The American Political Science Review* 33: 396. Print.
[85] Ibid. 395.
[86] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Frontiers, Security, and International Organization." 447.

its isolationist stance and eventually got involved in a Second World War, albeit hesitantly in the beginning.

Such was the time during which geopolitics as an academic discipline of international politics and geopolitical awareness in the United States grew to eventually become the most powerful force driving US foreign policy. Its success may in part be attributed to the accuracy of Spykman's observations and usefulness as practical guide to international politics. In the condition of a shifting balance of power by a progressing World War, he told of the possibilities and dangers of ongoing developments. Spykman warned that either the Old World would become encircled by a New World or vice versa. In a very rudimentary way, he thereby manifested a threat perception which resounded in later years of the twentieth century as an "us versus them" notion in US politics. More importantly for the time being, however, in Spykman's opinion the US would either channel its efforts to become a meaningful force for balancing action across the oceans in such a manner that it would be able to influence the politics of Europe and Asia. Or alternatively, Americans could wait for the Old World to unite and direct a mass of unbalanced power against the New World and thus encircle it.[87] Such a policy of encirclement or "flanking" can, according to Spykman, be carried out by various means, for example by "actual physical expansion or by the conclusion of treaties or alliances."[88] Thus, in 1944, in reference to the War, he expressed his view of mitigating the potential conflict on the horizon by a sound reorganization of the balance of power: "Balanced power on the Eurasian continent is one of the objectives for which we are fighting and the establishment of such an equilibrium and its preservation will be our objective when the fight is won."[89] But even if such a balance of power would be established in continental Europe, Spykman, paying tribute to the ever changing nature of the international system and the resulting unstable equilibrium of any balance, pointed out the need for a continuous engagement of the US overseas. Calling for an end to a policy of isolationism, he made a plea for more awareness of power politics, geographic location and balance of power, while downplaying other notions like justice or reciprocity in international affairs. Even prior to the attack on Pearl Harbour, Spykman reached three main conclusions: that American isolationism was counterintuitive to attaining security; that sustained political engagement in international politics beyond the great oceans was a necessary prerequisite for an essential creation and maintenance of a balance of power; and that any model of international government was not able to serve as a substitute for an order which would grow out of a delicate and dynamic balance between states.[90] In an attempt to discourage the re-occurrence of isolationism after

---

[87] Edgar S. Furniss. "The Contribution of Nicholas John Spykman to the Study of International Politics." 389.
[88] Nicholas J. Spykman and Abbie A. Rollins. "Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy, I." 394.
[89] N. Spykman. *The Geography of Peace*, cit.n. Edgar S. Furniss. "The Contribution of Nicholas John Spykman to the Study of International Politics." 391.
[90] Edgar S. Furniss. "The Contribution of Nicholas John Spykman to the Study of International Politics." 388-389.

the War, Spykman appealed to the forces shaping statecraft to recognize the diminishing western influence in Asia, to react to a rising Chinese threat and to contemplate the fact that "A Russian state from the Urals to the North Sea […] can be no great improvement over a German state from the North Sea to the Urals"[91]. His panacea for singlehanded Russian domination was to foster US-British-Russian collaboration[92], pleading for counteracting a lone Russian flank through treaties.

Nevertheless, Spykman also considered the world from a perspective larger than only US policy interest. He proclaimed for example that "My interest in a balance of power is not merely inspired by concern for our power position, but also by my conviction that only in a system of approximately balanced power is collective security workable."[93] Hence, contrary to some later sceptics among realist thinkers, he was optimistic that collective security was possible. Qualifying this optimism, Spykman believed that such a system of security was best workable in a regional setting.[94] This may be due to the fact that he generally viewed regional location, i.e. a state's immediate vicinity, as an important conditioning factor of a state's foreign policy.[95] Underlining this conviction and expressing his doubt about the workability of world government once again Spykman noted the "discrepancy between the legal fiction of universality and the political fact of regionalism".[96] In order to maintain relevance in regional collective security structures, the United States would be well advised, according to Spykman, to obtain extra-regional membership in such organizations.[97]

Spykman's focus on regional location and the significance of embedding states in their respective regions, which form part of their geographic location, led him to analyse geopolitics from beyond a US-centric point of view. Although he acknowledged that most great powers are large powers and that size is most often correlated with the strength of a state,[98] Spykman devoted a large part of his work to the study of small states, too. In terms of regional location, he differentiated between landlocked states, island states and states with land and sea frontiers,[99] remarking about the latter, however, that access to "an inland or marginal sea which may be controlled by the sea power of another state is not synonymous with location on the open sea".[100] This regional location, defined by frontiers, mostly

[91] Ibid. 397.
[92] Robert Strausz-Hupe. "Review of Nicholas John Spykman, The Geography of Peace." *Military Affairs* 8: 144-145. Print.
[93] Edgar S. Furniss. "The Contribution of Nicholas John Spykman to the Study of International Politics." 394-395.
[94] Ibid. 395.
[95] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Geography and Foreign Policy, II." *The American Political Science Review* 32: 213. Print.
[96] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Frontiers, Security, and International Organization." 442.
[97] Edgar S. Furniss. "The Contribution of Nicholas John Spykman to the Study of International Politics." 395.
[98] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Geography and Foreign Policy, I." 31ff.
[99] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Geography and Foreign Policy, II." 214.
[100] Nicholas J. Spykman and Abbie A. Rollins. "Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy, II." *The American Political Science Review* 33: 602. Print.

appeared in three types, namely a strong state between two weak neighbours, neighbourly relations of approximately equal strength or a weak state between two strong states.[101] Especially the latter constellation kept Spykman on his toes. Such a constellation, he believed, would give way to the creation, preservation, and destruction of "buffer states as objectives in foreign policy".[102] This very constellation represents the actual situation Georgia found itself in during much of the block confrontation. Being a small state caught between two opposing states then changed into being located between two strong states on opposing sides of the political spectrum, namely Russia and NATO-member Turkey, after the block confrontation had ended. Thus, Spykman's considerations are relevant for the evaluation of the foreign policy conduct of Georgia, Russia and Turkey (to some extend) later on.

The phenomenon of the buffer state fascinated Spykman as it seemed to give a *raison d'être* to small states for which he considered it otherwise to be more logical to be absorbed by their larger neighbours. In his research Spykman pointed out that the buffer state is the most persistent device to increase border security, which existed as early as the 5th century BC and was moreover traceable throughout the ages. The purpose of the buffer state, formerly also known as "march", was to provide peace and security by keeping apart two dynamic powers that might have otherwise ended up in conflict with each other. It functioned like a strip of uninhabited land, which kept the two potential adversaries on either side at a distance.[103] Spykman noted: "Small states have nevertheless survived, in spite of marked differentials in power potential between themselves and their neighbours. The explanation lies in part in the fact that their continued existence is of strategic significance to some larger states and that they are therefore not dependent for their territorial security solely on their own strength. They can count on support from third parties."[104] The third parties Spykman refers to were the previously mentioned neighbours, if they found it safer to preserve a buffer state than entertain a common border, or some extra-regional state willing to serve as a guarantor in due relations to the significance this state was attaching to the region needing to be protected.[105] In all such cases the buffer state displayed "a unique dependence in that it combine[d] protection with a relatively high degree of independence [...] of the buffer states."[106] This unique position, however, also came with some obligations for the small state functioning as a buffer.

Spykman illustrated the way buffer states should align their foreign policy as follows: "A relatively weak state located between two strong states is in the geographic position of a buffer state; whether it will

---

[101] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Geography and Foreign Policy, II." 225.
[102] Nicholas J. Spykman and Abbie A. Rollins. "Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy, I." 404.
[103] Nicholas J. Spykman and Abbie A. Rollins. "Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy, I." 406ff.
[104] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Frontiers, Security, and International Organization." 440.
[105] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Geography and Foreign Policy, II." 228 ff.
[106] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Frontiers, Security, and International Organization." 440.

become so in the political sense of the term will depend on various factors. In any case, such a state will be forced to adopt a very special foreign policy. Its own security depends on the security which its neighbors derive from its continued existence. This means that such a state is forced to pursue a precarious policy of neutrality. Any variations which leave the impression that the bond with one neighbour is becoming stronger may tempt the other neighbour to replace the security obtained from the existence of an independent buffer with a security obtained from actual occupation of the buffer territory."[107] In other words, the buffer state served its protective function only as long as it stayed neutral. In the case of neutrality it held an added value as it was providing protection at a considerable low cost. Therefore, given that it was more desirable for large states to know the border beyond its frontiers in the hands of a small and relatively impotent state than in the hands of a larger, more militarily potent state, they were likely to respect and preserve its territorial integrity as long as the buffer upheld its protective function and vice versa. The story of the buffer state becomes more interesting, however, considering the dynamism of international politics, which Spykman considered to be of an ever-changing nature.

Buffer states undergo a process of evolution that lasts throughout their existence. On the one hand this may be due to a changing external environment. As long as the states on either side remain equally strong, the buffer state (just like a boundary) will remain relatively stable. According to Spykman, "if the pressures become sufficiently unequal, the buffer will crumble and eventually be swallowed by one of its large neighbors"[108]. On the other hand, the buffer states' neighbours may attempt to encroach on the buffer state not only due to their own development, but due to the domestic developments of a buffer state. In general, the ideal buffer is a no-man's land or an approximation to it. Spykman mentioned Albania in 1932 as an example to illustrate that a buffer is especially effective if it lacks technical and infrastructure development and functions as a barrier to communication. As time progresses, however, very few territories fulfil these requirements. The technical transformation of a buffer state also transforms the way its neighbours interact with it. As Spykman notes: "as time goes on, however, systems of communication will develop even in the most backward and most mountainous regions, regardless of attempts to delay progress and preserve the barrier character of the buffer state. When transportation develops both neighbours will immediately attempt to control the system of communication and guide its construction to their own strategic advantage…" The neighbouring powers hence become competitors, not only over the actual space, but also over its key attributes. The desire to control and even incorporate the territory of the buffer state may reach its peak, according to Spykman, if the "…buffer state, instead of being a barrier, becomes a military

---

[107] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Geography and Foreign Policy, II." 227.
[108] Nicholas J. Spykman and Abbie A. Rollins. "Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy, I." 409.

highway held by a weak power".[109] A developed buffer state that reaches security relevance has essentially changed its nature. The buffer transformed itself from a no-man's land into a "two men's land, a zone of intervention, the moment communication becomes feasible. This is inescapable, because the possibility of transportation transforms the territory of these weak states into exposed frontier zones for both the neighbors, and therefore significant elements in the defense systems. As such, they must be secured against penetration by the enemy, and each power concerned is accordingly engaged in strengthening its own political influence in the buffer territory."[110] The interest of external powers in the buffer state thus also changes fundamentally, if it is no longer a low-cost way to maintain their own security, but instead becomes a zone of competition. Lastly, there are moments in the evolution of a buffer state, when pressures on its frontiers become so unequal that boundaries will move. At those moments even third party guarantors may not be able to protect the buffer from break-up, according to Spykman[111].

Despite his early death at age forty-nine, Nicholas John Spykman notably advanced geopolitical thought in the United States at a time when it was still considered the wallflower of international politics. With his analytical method, his timeless insights and desire to make Americans geographically literate and fit for political contest in the world, he contributed to the transformation of the US policy of isolationism. Despite the fact that he was often criticized and even scorned as the American Haushofer, he has been credited, among other things, for masterminding US geostrategy and the policy of containment[112]. The above mentioned works of Spykman stand exemplary for the changing mood in scholarly thought about US foreign policy and the rise of geopolitical ideas which transformed into geopolitically inspired policies that would shape world history over the next decades.

Cold War Geopolitics

While the Cold War is often perceived as an ideological struggle between the two superpowers, it will be argued here that in contrast to the ideological narratives, the underlying causes of the Cold War and its perpetuation over a period of more than 40 years can be found in geopolitical reasoning. After the Second World War, isolationism as practiced by the United States in the interwar years disappeared increasingly from the mainstream political rhetoric (see above). Instead, events in 1946 and 1947 marked the predominance of geopolitical reasoning. As early as February 1946 George Kennan, the *Chargé d'Affaires* at the United States Embassy in Moscow sent a document to Washington, which came to be known as the *Long Telegram*. In its essence it was a warning about the

---

[109] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Frontiers, Security, and International Organization." 440 & 441.
[110] Nicholas J. Spykman and Abbie A. Rollins. "Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy, I." 408.
[111] Ibid.
[112] The related "domino Theory" is often attributed to William Bullit work in the late 1940's; see e.g. Saul Bernard Cohen. *Geopolitics of the World System*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003. 25. Print.

nature of the Soviet regime, which allegedly perceived itself to be in a perpetual war with capitalism and was not to be trusted, according to Kennan. In a general environment of mistrust caused in parts by the violation of clauses in the Yalta Agreement regarding the treatment of the Polish uprising, Kennan, who went on to become the head of the policy planning staff in Washington's State Department, made a significant contribution not only to the negative perception of the Soviet Union, which shaped the Cold War, but also to codifying the Soviet regime as part of "the Other" [113]. The concept of 'the Other', or otherness of powers plays an important role in geopolitical discourse. It draws boundaries, which at first may appear ideological rather than geographical. These boundaries, however, are highly politicized and their geographical location can hardly be denied. During the Cold War they served to portray the Soviet Union and the United States as separated according to the ideals of political democracy and capitalist economics, a separation which clearly manifested itself on the world map.

Only one month after Kennan's *Long Telegram*, Winston Churchill held a speech at Westminster College in Fulton Missouri in March 1946. His words came to be known as the *Iron Curtain Speech*, since he explained that, "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the Continent"[114]. Despite the partly alarming tone of his speech, Churchill contradicted the assessment of a Russia aiming at control over the entire continent with his personal feelings of respect for example for his war counterpart Joseph Stalin. In the end, however, he made it clear that Communism has to be regarded as the biggest threat confronting Europe and the United States as well as the rest of the world. This communist threat was expanding and tightly controlled by Moscow. To this end, Churchill concluded that: "In a great number of countries, far from the Russian frontiers and throughout the world, Communist fifth columns are established and work in complete unity and absolute obedience to the directions they receive from the Communist center [Moscow]. Except in the British Commonwealth and in the United States where Communism is in its infancy, the Communist parties or fifth columns constitute a growing challenge and peril to Christian civilization."[115] Pointing to the threat Communism poses to Christianity seemingly transforms his discourse from a territorial one into one primarily concerned with values. His remarks about the extensive reach of communism steered from Moscow and its expansionist nature covering more and more territory leave little doubt that Churchill's *Iron Curtain Speech* fits the postulates of geopolitics.

By the time President Truman enunciated his *Truman Doctrine* in front of a joint session of Congress roughly a year later in March 1947, the matter of communism had risen in importance and constituted

---

[113] Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. *The Geopolitics Reader*. 47ff.
[114] Winston S. Churchill. "Iron Curtain Speech." Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri. 5 Mar. 1946. Speech. <www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/churchill-iron.html>.
[115] Ibid

an issue of national security, according to Truman. Truman linked the fate of instable and struggling regimes in Greece and Turkey, "threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by Communists"[116] to the overall fate of humankind, which he saw at a crossroad. Peace was once again at stake, according to Truman, because "[a]t the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio; fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms."[117] Skillfully Truman managed to perform a rhetorical leap from the local to the global by emphasizing that the fate of Turkey and Greece were intimately linked to the fate of all free nations. Implicitly the United States as the leader of the free world had to step in to avoid such oppression. This way of thinking and the link established between the particular and the absolute "was to become characteristic of American Cold War geopolitics"[118] All things were to be interpreted in terms of a Manichean map, as either good or evil, light or dark, black or white, involving no shades of gray. Harry Truman's doctrine sounded the bell for the new phase of containment in US foreign policy. Only a few months after he had held his speech before Congress, the magazine Foreign Affairs published an article by George Kennan in July 1947 under the pseudonym Mr. X, entitled "The Sources of Soviet Conduct". In this article, which he had previously submitted to Defense Secretary James Forrestal, Kennan spelled out the Soviet pressures against free institutions. He explained that it was possible to contain such pressures by a counterforce of shifting geographical and political actions, which shadow the movements of Soviet conduct[119]. Hence, the notion of containment necessitated a policy of deterrence, which like containment was aware of shifting geographical realities and would be global in scope. Interestingly, however, while Churchill had upheld in his *Iron Curtain speech* that a balance of power had lost its value for order in a post war political environment, deterrence seemed to picked up political balancing once again.

The subsequent Marshall Plan and its eventual denial by Eastern Europe, as well as the establishment of a system of mutual defence aimed at serving the objectives of an extended deterrence, i.e. NATO and the Mutual Security Treaty with Japan, were direct responses to political developments in the 1940s and the reactions they had evoked on the political stage. Ò Tuathail illustrates this fact by

---

[116] Harry Truman. "The Truman Doctrine." US Department of State. 12 Mar. 1947. Web. 14 May 2010.
<usinfo.org/PUBS/LivingDoc_e/trumandoctrine.htm>.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998. 48. Print.
[119] "X" (George F. Kennan). "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." *Foreign Affairs*: n. pag. Print.

pointing out that "the establishment and modernization of a global system of extended deterrence, by means of NATO in Western Europe and the Mutual Security Treaty with Japan helped incorporate and subordinate the US's major capitalist allies into an American led military system"[120]. This statement illustrates the notion that in the early post-War environment a space had been created to unite the western powers and a counter-space which combined those hostile to American led capitalism and democratization. In addition, Cold War geopolitics was essentially more dynamic than its predecessors and its mainstream narratives closely tied to the phenomenon of communism. The threats emanating from communism to the United States were perceived as manifold. To highlight this point, the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD) was established in the 1950s by influential scholars of statecraft, allegedly as a bipartisan education and advocacy organization to build consensus for the policy of containment, often emphasizing threats and dangers the US was facing. With its television broadcasts, this interest group contributed to the increase of public pressure in favour of government measures, such as those outlined in the NSC-68 agenda, essentially promoting military build-up to counteract the communist threat throughout the world. The activities of the CPD illustrated that geopolitics had a domestic aspect to it. Therefore geopolitical policies cannot be analysed entirely detached from domestic political and social developments.

As the threats US foreign and security policy was dealing with appeared in a large variety of forms and in an unbound geographical theatre, many prominent voices in foreign policy demanded a continued military build-up, arguing that the US had to be utterly prepared militarily. Henry Kissinger was among those who advocated this approach. In the mid-60s, the man who consistently followed a balance of power logic in his writings, stated that "[t]he West [...] ha[d] no recourse but to be as strong as possible in all the elements of military power in order to meet and defeat any type of soviet incursion."[121] In the 60s Kissinger expounded the problem of Russia's overwhelming strategic advantages in Berlin and made clear that the Russians were not to be trusted. He also made it clear that he viewed the ongoing international summitry as "but a piece of Russian gamesmanship"[122]. Kissinger focused on these strategic imbalances and argued that security lied "in the enforced impotence of enemies"[123]. This latter fact may be traced back to the policy of linkage which he promoted together with Richard Nixon. Linkage essentially stated that what happened in one place would affect the equilibrium of the relation

---

[120] Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. *The Geopolitics Reader*. 51.
[121] Edgar S. Furniss. "Discussions and Reviews: A Review: Zbigniew Brzezinski, Alternative to Partition Henry A. Kissinger, The Troubled Partnership Timothy W. Stanley, NATO in Transition: The Future of the Atlantic Alliance." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 9: 533. Print.
[122] Esmond Wright and Henry A. Kissinger. "The Necessity for Choice: Prospects of American Foreign Policy." *International Affairs* 38: 83. Print.
[123] Edgar S. Furniss. "Discussions and Reviews: A Review: Zbigniew Brzezinski, Alternative to Partition Henry A. Kissinger." 533.

of forces elsewhere and thus restricting the enemy's ability to manoeuvre was indispensable.[124] Meanwhile, another key geopolitical thinker, Zbiginiew Brzezinski, took a slightly different approach to address US-Soviet relations. Brzezinski proposed to co-opt Eastern Europe to move closer to the west as a way to gradually transform the confrontational atmosphere in Europe into cooperation.[125] While they differed in their approaches, both Kissinger and Brzezinski exhibited their appreciation of geopolitical concepts, such as the importance of being in command of key geographic locations for strategic purposes and gaining control over space via its inhabitants. In a way their writings resemble a dialog over the shaping of buffer zones as a central objective in foreign policy. At the same time, balancing and for Brzezinski later on "Balanced power on the Eurasian continent"[126], as Spykman had put it, remained one of the key components of their policy advice.

This dialogue was only slightly modified in 1968, when the Soviet Union reached nuclear parity with the United States. In this context, Kissinger requested a major conceptual shift of US foreign policy among other things through reworking the containment doctrine. According to Kissinger the United States had to conceptually come to terms with the limitations it was facing. Consequently new adequate geopolitical responses to the new challenges it was facing in its relations with the Soviet Union had to be found, according to Kissinger. These responses had to be formulated conscious of the principle goal of avoiding an all out nuclear confrontation. Like Brzezinski, Kissinger, too, advocated a NATO that would do more than defend a line of confrontation. The institution was to complement "allied statecraft" with military strategy and a restructured NATO was to contribute to the development of a stable world order by serving as a building block that could help resolve a broad spectrum of East-West issues.[127] Among these issues was the task to reintegrate West-Germany into the alliance in a sustainable fashion. Through NATO integration (the Federal Republic of) Germany, which had played on its *Mittellage* for centuries due to its location between east and west[128], made a lasting decision for the western camp and thus joined it against the otherness of the Soviet space.

In the 1970s US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger helped to revitalize the term of geopolitics for the political mainstream by using it as a synonym for balance of power politics played out across the global political map.[129] The writings of prominent geopoliticians, such as Kissinger and Brzezinski, often resounded of Morgenthau's realism. International politics was portrayed as an "unending struggle for

---

[124] William C. Berman. "Global Games." *Reviews in American History* 8: 561-566. Print.
[125] Edgar S. Furniss. "Discussions and Reviews: A Review: Zbigniew Brzezinski, Alternative to Partition Henry A. Kissinger." 534.
[126] See footnote above: N. Spykman. The Geography of Peace, cit.n. Edgar S. Furniss. "The Contribution of Nicholas John Spykman to the Study of International Politics."
[127] Edgar S. Furniss. "Discussions and Reviews: A Review: Zbigniew Brzezinski, Alternative to Partition Henry A. Kissinger." 535-536.
[128] Henry Kissinger. *Die sechs Säulen der Weltordnung*. Berlin: Siedler, 1992. 43. Print.
[129] Hepple, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. *The Geopolitics Reader*. 1.

survival and power"[130] and any balance of interest can be established only temporarily[131], conditioned by the dynamism of international affairs. Power is viewed as the central category of politics. All matters of politics involved power politics, according to Morgenthau and political wisdom was said to be a central attribute of decision makers to arrive at a temporary state of stability and peace. Stability and peace, however, could not be brought about by political ideals, but fostered with instruments such as national interests, diplomacy and balance of power.[132] The necessary attributes to conduct sound politics were thus restricted to policy elites, while a democratic public was regarded as limited in its ability to derive rational decisions. To illustrate this point of entrusting only a limited number of decision-makers with the possibility to reach meaningful decisions in a dynamic international environment, Brzezinski explained about "the new international system" in the late 70s that "it must be the advanced countries which consult closely and undertake the joint initiatives, enlisting on an ad hoc basis those developing and particularly energy-producing countries which are capable and willing to become partners".[133] On the one hand this statement reiterates the fact that only a select number of privileged countries were fit to rule the international system in what remotely resembles a social Darwinist way of reasoning. The second tiers of countries fit for enrolment in ad hoc alliances had to be carefully chosen according to criteria aligned with the interests of the ruling power(s). In a way Brzezinski's statement appeared like a recipe for manipulating the international system of states according to the needs of the strongest powers. Coincidentally or not, Brzezinski had written extensively about the role of mass manipulation in his earlier works and had made his opinion about the subject widely accessible with statements such as "all modern societies involve mass manipulation"[134]. In general, manipulation has never ceased to be a readily employed tool of power politics, but while manipulation and the way discursive practice is employed are closely linked, manipulation is not the main focus of this thesis. Nevertheless, it comes as no surprise that it reappears in a geopolitical framework. Geopolitics addresses the larger geopolitical map and relates local and regional dynamics to the global system as a whole and as such scholars of geopolitics such as Brzezinski offer advice to statecraft on how to best manoeuvre on the world map. In order to be convincing when deducing strategic policy advice from complex situations, manipulations or (differently put), selective simplifications are entailed by this practice.

---

[130] Christoph Frei. *Hans J. Morgenthau: Eine Intellektuelle Biographie*. Bern: P. Haupt, 1993. 19. Print.

[131] Also see quote by Spykman above: "the temporary armistice called peace".

[132] Gert Krell. *Weltbilder und Weltordnung Einführung in die Theorie der internationalen Beziehungen*. 2nd ed. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2003. 143-147. Print.

[133] Zbigniew Brzesinski. "Tactician for the Establishment." *MERIP Reports* 54: 19. Print.

[134] Zbigniew Brzezinski. "The Nature of the Soviet System." *Slavic Review* 20: 351. Print.

A New Global Order – post 1990 Geopolitics

The events of the late 80s and the demise of the Soviet Union provoked a serious crisis of meaning in world politics. Unexpected by the majority of foreign policy experts, the Cold War order had broken down swiftly and left many scholars of statecraft wondering about their conventional wisdom. Amidst the geopolitical confusion, scholars were faced with the question of how to rethink the world after the end of bipolarity. Meanwhile, the political landscape in the United States was also a stage for enthusiastic optimists such as Francis Fukuyama or John Muller who foresaw the end of war as a human institution, now that the Cold War had ended in favour of the western block. Alternatively, Max Singer proposed the creation of a zone of peace. The following will briefly survey some of the dominant developments in academia and politics at the end of the Cold War to be able to understand how geopolitical thought continued after the demise of the Soviet Union.

In the summer of 1989 Francis Fukuyama wrote an essay, in which he claimed the "end of history" as a struggle over ideas and principles. Fukuyama explained that in the context of modern liberalism all contradictions in human life could be resolved. He clearly illustrated his belief in the power of western political democracy and capitalist, neoliberal ideas as a universal panacea[135]. His optimism was largely echoed in the highest political circles in the US, for example by President Bush's continuous expression of national exceptionalism and triumphalism[136] in the wake of the demise of the Soviet Union. Regarding the latter, some analysts noted that the ideas expressed by Fukuyama "spurred a lot of criticism in the former Soviet region as hegemonic and not sensitive enough toward specific cultures, and seems to have contributed to the rise in rhetoric of nationalism and national interests [in Russia]."[137]

Fukuyama posited that international politics would become more concerned with economics at the expense of strategy and classical politics in the future and predicted a 'common marketization' of international relations. These were among the beginnings of what came to be termed geo-economics later on. A year after Fukuyama, Edward Luttwak published an article in the National Interest entitled "From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics". Drawing on Fukuyama's proposal that economics would dominate international relations, Luttwak argued that the logic of commerce would hypothetically hold the potential to overcome conflicts due to the enormous potential of mutual gains and the logic of interdependence. He refuted this hypothesis later in his writings, explaining that states would continue to exist within their own borders and with their very distinct national interests. They would

[135] Francis Fukuyama. "The End of History." *The National Interest* 16: 8. Print.
[136] Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. *The Geopolitics Reader*. 104.
[137] Andrei Tsygankov and Pavel Tsygankov. "Pluralism or Isolation of Civilisations? Russia's Foreign Policy Discourse and the Reception of Huntington's Paradigm of the Post-Cold War World." *Geopolitics* 4: 49. Print.

not ignore their own boundaries and as a result, the logic of conflict would be a lasting phenomenon even amidst the rise of geo-economics[138].

Meanwhile, speculations about a new direction of US foreign policy and uncertainty about stability and fuzzy threats in the world after the demise of the Soviet system prevailed in US foreign policy discourse until the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait offered an opportunity to re-define the new world during the subsequent Gulf War which lasted from 1990-1991. Some of the reasoning to intervene in the gulf put forth by the Bush administration contained traces of Mackinder's Pivot of History such as Bush's statement that: "An Iraq permitted to swallow Kuwait would have the economic and military power as well as the arrogance, to intimidate and coerce its neighbors – neighbors that control the lion's share of the world's remaining oil reserves".[139] The economic argument is notable in this line of reasoning. In his 1991 speech President Bush voiced a warning that portrayed Iraq as an expansionist power, which if not stopped, would be capable of taking over control of the region's resources and catapult itself into the position of a powerful regional hegemon. This would have the potential to threaten world stability by primarily challenging US primacy through the potential negation of access to oil reserves. Following this line of reasoning it was argued that for modern societies oil represented the most valuable resource. Thus, securing continued access to the world's valuable natural resources, first off oil reserves, was a declared goal by the United States, whose leadership under George Bush has often been depicted as entertaining especially close ties with the oil industry. Aside from the military-industrial line of reasoning, the administration's concern with access to natural resources to a certain extend reflected the increased concern with access and a geo-economization of international politics predicted by Luttwak and others.

In addition, analysing the Gulf war, Timothy Luke argued that "Cold War reasoning continues to dominate US strategic thought […] against any threatening evil otherness".[140] A threatening otherness had indeed been found in the form of Saddam Hussein, who took the place of Hitler, Stalin and other communist leaders after him to fill the post Cold War otherness-void that had previously been occupied by the red Soviet scare. Apart from the dialectics of conflict that returned, more so, it can be argued that the Gulf war represented a turn that eventually led to the return of geopolitical reasoning in general, which had been prevalent over a century in western foreign policy discourse. The early 90s

---

[138] Edward N. Luttwak. "From Geopolitics to Geoeconomics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce." *The National Interest* 20: 17-23. Print.

[139] George H.W. Bush, Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "Public Papers of the President of the United States, Toward a New World Order" *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998. 132. Print.

[140] Timothy Luke, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "The Discipline of Security Studies and the Codes of Containment: Learning from Kuwait, Alternatives: Social Transformation and Humane Governance." *The Geopolitics Reader.* London: Routledge, 1998. 140. Print.

and even parts of the new millennium, however, represented a period of debate over which foreign policy course should be steered by the new captain of the world vessel in stars and stripes.

While the First Gulf War represented a significant step in defining a new threat in a post-Cold War environment, Samuel Huntington questioned the interpretative power of Fukuyama's or President Bush's new world order optimism and outlined a more diffuse and global threat in the journal *Foreign Affairs* in 1993. In his article entitled 'Clash of Civilizations', which was later followed by a book of the same name, he argued that the coming conflict in the modern world would be between civilizations. Space and geography were discussed at length in his article, for example when he spoke of the so-called torn countries, i.e. the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, which he viewed as likely candidates for "dismemberment". With regard to Russia, Huntington explained: "Globally the most important torn country is Russia. The question of whether Russia is part of the West or the leader of a distinct Slavic Orthodox civilization has been a recurring one in Russian history […]. President Yeltsin is adopting Western principles and goals and seeking to make Russia a "normal" country and a part of the West. Yet both the Russian elite and the Russian public are divided over the issue…".[141] This argument was echoed in much of western scholarship on Russia at the time. Huntington explained the process of further defining space as either belonging to the west or the rest. His essay illustrated that once a country is lost for the western orbit, it is much more likely to be defined as a threat. His explicit discourse on Russia portrayed this concern. Russia has been a traditional enemy of the west or at least has been depicted as such in geopolitical thought for quite some time. Martin Smith and Graham Timmins point out that Russia as an alien culture and country was a common theme in geopolitical texts since their inception.[142] Also Christopher S. Browning picked up the theme of the "continued othering" of Russia, as expressed in Huntington's writing above.[143] Citing Jutta Weldes, Browning further elaborated that the west often feels obliged to "intervene in the social development of others and to 'assist' them in finding the true Western path…".[144] While critical of a missionary tendency of western players like the EU, which James Rogers has also detected and described as geopolitical in nature,[145] Browning nevertheless asserted that in the 1990's "at least, some in the Russian establishment appeared happy to adopt the position of Russia as the 'student' and 'apprentice' of the

---

[141] Samuel P. Huntington, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "The Clash of Civilizations, Foreign Affairs, The Council on Foreign Relations" *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998. 166. Print.

[142] Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins. "Russia, NATO and the EU in an Era of Enlargement: Vulnerability or Opportunity?" *Geopolitics* 6: 69. Print.

[143] C.S. Browning. "The Region-Building Approach Revisited: The Continued Othering of Russia in Discourses of Region-Building in the European North." *Geopolitics* 8: 56. Print.

[144] Ibid.

[145] James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power": Explicating the European Union's "Grand Strategy" through the Articulation of Discourse Theory*. Journal of Common Market Studies, 2009. 831-862. Print.

West.[146] What sounds in part patronizing in Browning's article may also be explained by the fact that part of the Russian elite that rang in a new era in the late 80's was said to be inspired by Joseph S. Nye and Robert O. Keohane's *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (1971) and even the political leaders after them applied its basic assumptions of increased cooperation.[147] Calling Russia a torn country, Huntington pointed to the transformation of Russia and the world more generally, rather than stating a *fait accompli* as expressed by Bush and Fukuyama (see above). He was among those scholars who pointed out that the US had a strategic interest in monitoring the ongoing global transformations in order not to let a rising power dominate Eurasia at a point when US primacy could be perpetuated.

Only a few months after Huntington, Brzezinski voiced a similar doubt about the optimistic course of Fukuyama and Bush, but took a different approach to critically evaluate the ongoing political developments than other pessimistic voices such as Huntington, Paul Kennedy or Robert Kaplan. Brzezinski focused on US primacy in world affairs, but the title of his book "Global Turmoil on the eve of the 21st century" was already telling about what kind of world he believed the United States would have to lead. Hence, Brzezinski "identifies 20 urgent problems that need fixing before the United States can regain […] its authority to lead a world spinning out of control…".[148] The depiction of the world in a state of chaos reflected not only the ongoing state of affairs in the early 90s faced with a disintegrating Soviet Union, among other things, but also emphasised worries about the proliferation of conflicts, the future of left-over nuclear stockpiles and a Russia often portrayed as the "new sick man of Europe".[149] Moreover, the general topic of chaos was also reflected in foreign and military strategic thought. Michael T. Klare alluded to this fact in his article *The New Rogue State Doctrine* by explaining in the mid-90s that a large part of the Joint Staff and a group around the US National Security advisor Anthony Lake were working on a new military posture that would define a non-Soviet threat. Klare concluded that this new threat endangering the world was portrayed as rogue states, those which "exhibit a chronic inability to engage constructively with the outside world, as demonstrated most clearly by their support of terrorism and pursuit of nuclear and chemical weapons".[150] It was the declared aim to neutralize and contain the threat emanating from such rogue states, aims which allowed for the observation of certain continuity aspects in policy, if communism would be taken out

---

[146] C.S. Browning. "The Region-Building Approach Revisited." 58.

[147] Andrei Tsygankov and Pavel Tsygankov. "Pluralism or Isolation of Civilisations?." 48.; the particular passage cited above refers to Gorbachev's, Shevardnadze's and Yakovlev's foreign policy advisers, such as Nikolai Kosolapov and Georgi Shakhnazarov

[148] Edward A. Kolodziej. "Review: Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the Twenty-First Century." *Political Science Quarterly* 109: 906. Print.

[149] Timothy Luke, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "The Discipline of Security Studies and the Codes of Containment." 166.

[150] Michael Klare, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "The New Rogue State Doctrine, The Nation" *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998. 156. Print.

of the threat-equation. The vagueness of the defined threat, however, illustrates the uncertainty that was present in foreign policy formulation and execution during this period.

In order to add more clarity to the debate, Brzezinski highlighted the aspect of continuity, rather than a clear break with past practices, even further in his book *The Grand Chessboard, American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*. He explained that anarchy would be the only alternative to American hegemony and thus argued in favour of containing any potential rival power.[151] Again chaos was a theme which was said to potentially come to dominate the world if the US did not steadfastly defend a global order and impose stability against those states not able to act responsibly in the international arena. The state of the world was portrayed as a global competition over power and more so, resources. The vague concept of interests, loosely defined and thus extremely useful for the conduct of a dynamic foreign policy in a changing world, increasingly made its way into foreign policy discourse. Brzezinski, like others before him, considered Eurasia as the often discussed Pivot. It was in Eurasia that America's status as superpower would be tested and further developed. The friends or foes were the remaining five "active geostrategic players […] with a capacity and desire to exercise power and influence beyond their own borders."[152] These, according to Brzezinski, were France, Germany, Russia, China and India. Russia, he explained, must be discouraged from its imperial ambitions by stimulating political pluralism in the post-Soviet space even at the expense of worsening the cooperative relationship with the former. In addition, for the further development of America's role, its goals, and the expansion of its influence, Brzezinski advised for an enlarged NATO as an efficient instrument, despite the fact that this compromised supposed pledges, sometimes referred to as 'gentlemen's agreement', between former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and James Baker III concerning no further eastward extension of NATO in return for Moscow's support of a united Germany and its participation in the transatlantic alliance.[153] John Hillen and Michael Noonan argued that "NATO enlargement is certain to have geopolitical ramifications. This is because 'a military alliance is about lines, lines that demarcate territory which alliance members have taken solemn oaths to protect, as supposed to other lines that identify territory in which they might have an interest but certainly no obligation to defend."[154] Although at the time of Brzezinski's book, the NATO enlargement debate was largely concerned with Eastern Europe, it would soon become relevant for various countries in the so-called 'near-abroad' (see below) among them Georgia in the South Caucasus, too. At this particular point in the late 90s, however, it was still not clear which direction the debate would take. The

[151] Ibid.
[152] Charles Wheeler. "Review: The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives by Zbigniew Brzezinski." *International Affairs* 74: 913. Print.
[153] For further reading see: M.E. Sarotte. *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009. Print.
[154] J. Hillen and M. Noonan. "The Geopolitics of NATO Enlargement." *Parameters* 28: 22. Print., cit.n. Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins. "Russia, NATO and the EU in an Era of Enlargement." 76.

positions had already evolved from President Yeltsin stating in 1993 that enlargement within the process of European integration was tolerable and US President Clinton meanwhile warning his allies against a hastened move eastwards of NATO, to a more rigid exchange of points of view. In Russia, the defence ministry increasingly became involved in the NATO debate and made its concerns about NATO as a threat to Russian territoriality heard. Brzezinski thus wrote at a dynamic time, after the NATO-Russian Founding Act was signed and the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) established as a first attempt to institutionalize the relations between Russia and NATO. Despite these developments, part of the Russian elite still entertained fears of not being treated as equal partners in this relationship. Among them Foreign Minister Primakov who time and again cautioned NATO members against the use of force including peacekeeping missions without a valid mandate from the UN Security Council in which Russia holds a permanent seat.[155] A major showdown between Russia and NATO took place when NATO launched 'Operation Allied Force' in Yugoslavia in March 1999, which led to the temporary suspension of cooperation between Russia and the Alliance and represented a new low-point in the relationship. These developments are highly relevant for this thesis, as relations between Russia and the United States, especially during times of increased competition, were often reflected in the conduct between Russia and its Georgian neighbour.

Brzezinski's book *The Grand Chessboard* also related the ongoing debate to the area of concern in this thesis, namely Eurasia and the Caucasus and will therefore be considered in further detail. He made it clear that "The exercise of American global primacy must be sensitive to the fact that political geography remains a critical consideration in international affairs",[156] expressing his belief that "…geographic location still tends to determine the immediate priorities of a state…".[157] Relating the concerns of primacy back to Mackinder and Mahan's writings from the beginning of the century, Brzezinski paid tribute to technological change and argued that the geopolitical focus had shifted from the regional to the global. To this end, he explained that: "Today, the geopolitical issue is no longer what geographic part of Eurasia is the point of departure for continental domination, nor whether land power is more significant than sea power. Geopolitics has moved from the regional to the global dimension, with preponderance over the entire Eurasian continent serving as the central basis for global primacy…it is on the globe's most important playing field – Eurasia – that a potential rival to America might at some point arise".[158] After pointing out the continued relevance of Eurasia, he also referred to the changed nature of geopolitical pivots, among them notably Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran,

---

[155] "NATO and Russia Discuss Peacekeeping in Bosnia." *RFE/RL Newsline*: n. pag. Print., cit.n., Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins. "Russia, NATO and the EU in an Era of Enlargement." 78.
[156] Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*. New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1997. 37. Print.
[157] Ibid. 38.
[158] Ibid. 39.

which lifted the Caucasus to the status of an important region in a geostrategic sense. Such geopolitical pivots, Brzezinski noted, "are the states whose importance is derived not from their power and motivation but rather form their sensitive location and from the consequences of their potentially vulnerable condition for the behaviour of geostrategic players…."[159] The reason Brzezinski listed Azerbaijan among the important geostrategic players and thereby highlighted the importance of the South Caucasus as a whole, can be found in his views on Russia.

As mentioned above, throughout much of his career Brzezinski had emphasized the possibility to co-opt Russia into making a pro-European choice over an imperial one. In the mid-90s, when he was writing his book, the choice Russia would eventually make was still unknown as the country was domestically torn regarding which path it would choose (also see Huntington above). Brzezinski thus wrote at a point in time, when a lot of pieces to the puzzle where still missing, so that he could merely consider and outline various policy options he believed to be fit to prolong American primacy. His concern was hence geostrategic in nature. One such advise for constraining Russia from developing into a major challenger of the "world's regent" (the United States) was to foster geopolitical pluralism in the pivot areas of the world, among them Azerbaijan. He explained: "An independent Azerbaijan, linked to Western markets by pipelines that do not pass through Russian-controlled territory, also becomes a major avenue of access from the advanced and energy consuming economies to the energy rich Central Asian republics. Almost as much as in the case of Ukraine, the future of Azerbaijan and Central Asia is also crucial in defining what Russia might or might not become."[160] This quote also illustrates that geostrategic and geo-economic concerns were closely related factors in geopolitics, and cannot simply be considered as two separate phenomena, which some liberal scholars tried to do in the early 90s. It also points out that strategies designed for either cooperation or conflict can be regarded as opposite sides of the same coin. As stated above, Brzezinski was hoping for a benevolent payoff of a strategy limiting Russian options, strengthening the pro-western elements within Russia, even if it was due to a lack of alternative choices. Yet, he and other observers of Russian domestic developments were also aware that this could potentially antagonize prominent parts of the Russian political establishment.

Other aspects of his book *The Grand Chessboard* highlighted the shock that many Russians had experienced when their empire collapsed all of a sudden and they "suddenly discovered that they were no longer the masters of a transcontinental empire but that the frontiers of Russia had been rolled back to where they had been in the Caucasus in the early 1800s…"[161] This quote highlights the historic

---

[159] Ibid. 41.
[160] Ibid. 47.
[161] Ibid. 88.

dimension of the geopolitical changes experienced by Russia in the 1990s. During the 1800s, Imperial Russia had expanded into the northern and southern Caucasus. Looking at Georgia in 1800, parts of today's eastern Georgia were incorporated into the Russian Empire to expel Persian invaders. Over the course of a period of 90 years, Russia continued to annex the western kingdom of Imereti and subsequently defeated the Ottoman Empire in the west, thereby recovering formerly lost Georgian territories such as Adjara, Megrelia, Guria and eventually Svaneti's mountainous region. In an article in the Geopolitics Journal entitled "Geopolitics in the South Caucasus" Revaz Gachechiladze described in more detail the early quest for access to the oil fields of Baku during the 19th century, and explains that Georgia was used as a "military beachhead for further advances in the direction of the 'warm seas'.[162] Although the so-called warm sea doctrine is still alive among some more extreme traditionalists such as Aleksandr Dugin[163] today, Gachechiladze's article illustrates that the renewed interest in the South Caucasus and the so-called 'near abroad' (see below) were part of a new Great Game that has historical roots. Since the 1800's, however, imperial Russia and later on the Soviet Union were largely able to hold on to territorial gains and maintain control over these areas until the collapse of the Soviet Union, which underlines Brzezinski's notion of a Russia in distress. To this end Gachechiladze argues that "The emerging new geopolitical geometry in the South Caucasus fosters anxiety and creates a feeling of imperial nostalgia [in post communist Russia]…"[164]

In the 90s, the Russian establishment, still largely composed of former Soviet officials, was faced with a dramatically changed geopolitical environment, indeed. "Russia's loss of its dominant position on the Baltic Sea was replicated on the Black Sea not only because of Ukraine's independence but also because the newly independent Caucasian states […] enhanced the opportunities for Turkey to re-establish its once-lost influence in the region. Prior to 1991, the Black Sea was the point of departure for projections of Russian naval power into the Mediterranean. By the mid-1990s, Russia was left with a small coastal strip on the Black Sea and with an unresolved debate with Ukraine over basing rights in Crimea, for the remnants of the Soviet Black Sea fleet, while observing, with evident irritation, joint NATO-Ukrainian naval and shore-landing manoeuvres and a growing Turkish role in the Black Sea region."[165] Amidst this situation of old rivals such as Turkey and NATO having experienced a disproportional power gain over the course of a fortnight, feelings of resentment grew within Russia, so that Brzezinski came to a conclusion that "[w]ithin the Russian foreign policy establishment […], there still thrives a deeply engrained desire for a special Eurasian role, one that would consequently

---

[162] R. Gachechiladze. "Geopolitics in the South Caucasus: Local and External Players." *Geopolitics* 7: 113. Print.
[163] See R. Gachechiladze. "Geopolitics in the South Caucasus." 129.
[164] Ibid. 128.
[165] Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard. 93.*

entail the subordination to Moscow of the newly independent post-Soviet states."[166] This desire for a special Russian role and its geopolitical nature will be discussed below.

After a period sometimes labelled the Russian-American honeymoon, which referred to the eventually failed attempts to establish a 'mature strategic partnership' and accord a voice to Russia within NATO to convince the latter to look more favourably upon NATO's eastward expansion, the opposition to pro-western reformers within Russia had gained support in Moscow by 1996.[167] Those among them calling for a special Eurasian role for Russia had complemented this idea with a popular geostrategic vision of re-establishing influence over lost territories by emphasizing the "near abroad" foreign policy option. The need to be present and recover lost influence in the so-termed "near abroad" was partly based on a geopolitical view expressed among others by Alexander Rutskoi, who explained in an interview with the Italian newspaper L'Espresso in 1994 that "it is apparent from our country's geopolitical situation that Russia represents the only bridge between Asia and Europe. Whoever becomes the master of this space will become the master of the world."[168] The geopolitical line of reasoning implicit in such statements could not be more pronounced. It was bound to raise conflicts at a point in time when the EU as well as the US had also made it clear that they considered this region called 'near abroad' by Russia part of their vital interests.[169]

Martin Smith and Graham Timmins point out that although geopolitics has long been a western concept to which Russians have contributed relatively little, "geopolitical concepts and ideas have reached a wide constituency amongst opinion-formers and decision-makers in contemporary Russia."[170] They argue that due to the fact that geopolitical thinking long remained an 'external' discipline, Russian analysts regarded geopolitical ideas often as directly threatening Russian interests. Looking at geopolitical thought stemming from the Euro-Atlantic region over the course of the twentieth century, it is clear that the continued othering of Russia, especially prominent in early German geopolitical texts as well as ideas about the domination of the heartland, including those leading to a doctrine of containment, accord some legitimacy to externally produced geopolitical thought being directed mostly against Russia. Smith and Timmins view this development to be at the core of a 'geopolitics of vulnerability', i.e. Russia seeing itself as being located in a geographic location where it is likely to be threatened and its territory encroached upon by foreign powers on the one hand, and the threat of isolation and denial of its 'proper place' on the other. They explain that overcoming this 'geopolitics of vulnerability' and transforming it into a 'geopolitics of opportunities',

---

[166] Ibid. 51.
[167] See e.g. Brzezinski, Z., *The Grand Chessboard*. 100ff.
[168] Alexandre Rutskoi. "Interview with L'Espresso, 15 July 1995." Rome. Print., cit.n. Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard. 111*.
[169] See e.g. R. Gachechiladze. "Geopolitics in the South Caucasus: Local and External Players." 125.
[170] Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins. "Russia, NATO and the EU in an Era of Enlargement." 70-71.

thus turning the perceived weaknesses into strengths via formulation and execution of foreign and domestic policy options, has been a continuous task of parts of the Russian government in recent decades.[171]

A group around former Foreign Minister and later Prime Minister Yevgenii Primakov sometimes referred to as nationalists, argued for example, that "the main threat to the world comes from those states that may be interested in destabilising the world geopolitical equilibrium. In order to maintain the equilibrium, at least in Eurasia, Russia must remain a sovereign state and a great power capable of resisting hegemonic ambitions throughout the world."[172] This statement stands in direct opposition to considerations by Brzezinski (and Kissinger cited below) who argued in favour of fostering pluralism in so-called geopolitical pivot areas in order to limit Russian dominance. Along these lines, various statements by Russian officials underlined the fact that Russia saw its position of power challenged and was ready to answer to any threat to its traditional sphere of influence. Among these officials was the chairman of the Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee, Yevgeny Ambartsumov, who already stated in 1993 that "the former Soviet space was an exclusive Russian sphere of geopolitical influence".[173] Part of this former Soviet space later on came to be known as the 'near abroad'. This statement reminiscent of the US's Monroe doctrine, showed that while the Clinton administration advocated an ambiguous Russia first policy, the revisionist voices in Russia were growing and consolidating under the umbrella of Eurasianism and a new idea which came to be known as the "near abroad" school of thought.

As Brzezinski explained, "the "near abroad" school of thought was a broad umbrella under which several varying geopolitical conceptions could cluster. It embraced not only the economic functionalists and determinists (including some "westernizers") who believed the CIS could evolve into a Moscow-led version of the EU but also others who saw in economic integration merely one of several tools of imperial restoration […] it also included Slavophile romantics […] and, finally, proponents of the somewhat mystical notion of Eurasianism as the substantive definition of Russia's enduring historical mission. […] However, emphasis on the "near abroad" was not merely a politically benign doctrine of regional economic cooperation. Its geopolitical content had imperial overtones […]."[174] As a sort of melting pot for political views, in a situation when the West increasingly came to be regarded as anti-Russian and in the absence of a consolidated domestic approach to foreign affairs, the "near abroad" umbrella even drew former pro-westerners into its orbit as time progressed. Among them Andrei Kozyrev, the Russian Foreign Minister who reasoned in January 1994 along the same lines, in order to put forth an argument for the need to preserve the Russian military presence in those regions

[171] Ibid.
[172] Andrei Tsygankov and Pavel Tsygankov. "Pluralism or Isolation of Civilisations?" 52.
[173] Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard.* 105.
[174] Ibid.

which had been in Russia's traditional sphere of influence.[175] The call for a continued military presence in the "near abroad", the incorporation of the countries belonging to the so-called "near abroad" into the CIS and the rivalry with other great powers in this region soon manifested itself in the political life of the countries in the southern Caucasus. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia were among the southern Caucasus countries Zbigniev Brzezinski had labelled the "Eurasian Balkans" in his book *The Grand Chessboard*. The clear reference to the traditional Balkans meant to highlight that the Eurasian Balkans, just like their European counterpart, represented a "geopolitical prize". This prize was characterized by the domination of an emerging transportation network, security and buffer zones determining the outcome of rekindled historical rivalries between Turkey, Iran and Russia, in addition to large economic gains. This prize if earned by another power than Russia was bound to be translated into access through the same transportation network and thereby potentially link the West to the riches of the Central Asian and Far Eastern regions. If dominated by an outside power it could mean threats to Russia's military position, its economic interests and ideological comfort zones. Related issues that came to play themselves out in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan were conflicts over new pipeline routes bypassing Russia, basing rights of Russian military contingents and membership in the CIS.

In Georgia, Russia backed the secessionist movements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, according to Brzezinski, in order to obtain basing rights and compel Georgia to remain in the CIS, while the need for a continued military presence in Armenia was justified by the war with Azerbaijan over Karabakh.[176] Ruza Gachechiladze elaborates on this point and argued that "…for Russia the manipulation of the ethnic conflicts serves as a good excuse for external meddling, and a way to maintain influence in South Caucasian affairs."[177] Keeping in mind the discussion above, these bilateral moves also have to be viewed as a manifestation of afore-mentioned global geopolitical rivalries. Furthermore, in the southern Caucasus, Russia was aiming at containing Turkish influence by advocating the policies mentioned above. Turkey was not only a member of NATO, regarded as an outpost of the West at the time, and a traditional power rival in the area, but had also made its pan-Turkish ambitions and claims to influence in Azerbaijan rather clear during certain periods in the 1990s. All these factors combined accounted for the fact that the southern Caucasus as part of the Eurasian Balkans represented a "zone of instability" on Brzezinski's map, when he wrote in 1997 about how to maintain and prolong American primacy.[178] Given the post-Soviet interest in the southern Caucasus, partly due to the pivot state Azerbaijan, and partly due to other factors outlined above, a sort of new Great Game came to play itself out in this region. The aim of Russia to maintain its exclusive influence in Georgia, Armenia

---

[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid. 142.
[177] R. Gachechiladze. "Geopolitics in the South Caucasus." 131.
[178] Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard.* 124.

and Azerbaijan was contradicted with the advice by scholars such as Brzezinski to the US political establishment to realize its geopolitical imperatives by fostering geopolitical pluralism in this area. The following citation summarizes his views, relates it to a global geopolitical struggle and highlights once more the importance of the southern Caucasus for the United States as well as its geopolitical friends and foes: "Although distant, the United States, with its stake in maintenance of geopolitical pluralism in post-Soviet Eurasia, looms in the background as an increasingly important if indirect player, clearly interested not only in developing the regions resources but also in preventing Russia from exclusively dominating the region's geopolitical space. In so doing, America is not only pursuing its larger Eurasian geopolitical goals but is also representing its own growing economic interest, as well as that of Europe in the Far East, in gaining unlimited access to this hitherto closed area. Thus, at stake in this conundrum are geopolitical power, access to potential great wealth, the fulfilment of national and/ or religious missions, and security. The particular focus of the contest, however, is on access. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, access to the region was monopolized by Moscow. All rail transport, gas and oil pipelines, and even air travel were channelled through the center. Russian geopoliticians would prefer it to remain so, since they know that whoever either controls or dominates access to the region is the one most likely to win the geopolitical and economic prize. It is this consideration that has made the pipeline issue so central to the future of the Caspian Sea Basin and Central Asia. If the main pipelines to the region continue to pass through Russian territory to the Russian outlet on the Black Sea at Novorossiysk, the political consequences of this condition will make themselves felt, even without any overt Russian power plays. The region will remain a political dependency, with Moscow in a strong position to determine how the region's new wealth is to be shared. Conversely, if another pipeline crosses the Caspian Sea to Azerbaijan and thence to the Mediterranean through Turkey and if one more goes to the Arabian Sea through Afghanistan, no single power will have monopoly over access."[179] Brzezinski's geostrategic considerations outlined above were echoed by a number of political geographers concerned with the transcaspian region. Griffith and McLachlan both emphasised that 'Russian claims to access to the Black Sea keep access corridors a live issue in contemporary international politics'.[180] The former reiterated that "Old-fashioned geopolitics is far from being a dead issue"[181], a notion also expressed by Brzezinski and to a certain extent by Timothy Luke who had pointed to a certain continuity with a Cold War way of conceptualizing international politics post Cold

---

[179] Ibid. 139-140.
[180] Ieuan Ll. Griffiths. "African Land and Access Corridors." *Geopolitics and International Boundaries* 2: 80. Print.; Keith McLachlan. "Introduction." *Geopolitics and International Boundaries*. Routledge, 1997. 6. Print.
[181] Ieuan Ll. Griffiths. "African Land and Access Corridors." 80.; See also Keith McLachlan. "Introduction." Footnote on p.3: "The Russian Ambassador to Iran, Mr Tretiakov, made it clear in a conference address in Teheran on 10 December 1995 (Oil & Gas Prospects in the Caspian Region, Conference, Teheran Institute of Political and International Studies, 11-12 December 1995) that no oil or natural gas would be exported from any of its former possessions without specific Russian approval."

War. Meanwhile, McLachlan referred to Russia's determination to control Azerbaijan and Central Asia and the need of a third party to assist the states in the region with alternative export lines that would free them of the danger of continued dependence on Russia.[182]

The increased relevance of economic factors in geopolitical thought partly expressed in the debate over the importance of access also attracted its critics. In an article describing the transition from geopolitics to geo-economics, Sparke cited Ohmae as a critic of the state-centrism embedded in the line of reasoning detected in Luttwak's as well as Brzezinski's and others texts about the increased concern of geopolitics with marketization. Ohmae, representing neoliberal notions, would critique most of the views considered above as representing an "old cartography, a cartography of states and fixed frontiers that cannot map the globe girdling networks of corporations, trade and communications infrastructure"[183]. His criticism again reflected the ongoing debate between realist geopolitics and liberal considerations of globalization and the unrestricted trans-border flow of capital that was said to be a key factor shaping a new era. Other political geographers, among them John Agnew, expanded this argument to explain that a new ideology of the market spread by 'a powerful constituency of liberal states and institutions' was replacing the hegemonic aspirations of any single nation states.[184] This idea of transnational liberalism as well as Ohmae's argument cited above, although based on relevant observations at the time, did not appropriately reflect the situation in the Transcaucasus, where power rivalries became increasingly defined over the course of the 90s and lasted well into the new millennium. Nevertheless, they highlight the diverging views on developments in international relations at the time and paint a picture of considerations regarding policy advice and options that was far from being consolidated. Not last do they point to the changing nature of hegemony after the Cold War, as well as the argument of economization and common marketization at the expense of strategy and classical politics evident in statements by Fukuyama, Luttwak as well as Agnew and Ohmae which will shortly be taken up below.

Henry Kissinger offered his views on some of the criticism mentioned above and added his own in his work *Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the Twenty-first Century* written in 2002. Kissinger explained that "much remains in limbo about U.S. grand strategy more than a decade after the Cold War".[185] He thereby pointed to the prevailing uncertainty in the policy establishment regarding international developments and a clearly defined threat. Around the same time, two

---

[182] Keith McLachlan. "Introduction." 3-7.

[183] Matthew Sparke. "From Geopolitics to Geoeconomics: Transnational State Effects in the Borderlands." *Geopolitics* 3: 66. Print.

[184] John A. Agnew, and Stuart Corbridge. *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print., cit.n. Richard Grant. "Economic Globalisation: Politics and Trade Policy in Ghana and Kenya." *Geopolitics* 4: 57. Print.

[185] S. W. Hook. "Review of Henry Kissinger: Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the Twenty-first Century." *International Studies Review* 4: 187. Print.

prominent French professors, Bertrand Badie and Marie-Claude Smouts, pointed out that "The current vogue words used to refer to international relations are 'chaos', 'turbulance' and 'islands of stability'. The fact that this vocabulary is borrowed from the physical sciences and mathematics is indicative of the prevailing confusion."[186] Their comment illustrates that the kind of uncertainty Kissinger referred to in order to describe the post-Cold War situation from a US point of view was not only a US phenomenon, but was felt on a transatlantic scale at least. Nevertheless, talking about other areas of international affairs, his French counterparts may not have agreed with Kissinger, for example regarding humanitarian interventions in the 90s, especially in the former Yugoslavia. Kissinger illustrated his disapproval for humanitarian interventions in the 90s and attributed the aimlessness of US foreign policy since the end of the Cold War to domestic partition and diversions. Like Brzezinski, he expressed a continued need for the US to "play a decisive role in maintaining a stable world order in the twenty-first century – if only as an essential means to preserve its own national security."[187] He thus tied US national security to global developments as numerous scholars of geography, among them Spykman, had done. As characteristic for Kissinger he defended balance of power politics and portrayed a "conservative preference for the maintenance of order over the promulgation of justice".[188] He rejected a recent notion of scholars and analysts who "question whether we need any foreign policy at all".[189] He also put in doubt the importance these scholars accorded to economic rather than political activities and thus directly countered certain arguments put forth by (neo) liberal internationalists. Faced by a large array of potential dangers, the essential aim of US policy continued to be the prevention of "any single power, especially an adversial one"[190] from rising to power, according to Kissinger. Power in this sense meant the accumulation of sufficient power to be able to challenge the supremacy of the United States. In his work published after the attacks of September 11, 2001, just as he did in his book *Diplomacy* in 1995, Kissinger made it clear that what in his mind continued to count for diplomacy and international relations, were "the timeless elements of geopolitics, national interests, and balance of power [which] remain central to global stability."[191]

Faced with a new and as time progressed more defined threat after the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Towers in 2001, the subsequent National Security Strategy of the United States, published in September 2002, invoked the principle of balance of power in order to maintain the American position of "unparalleled military strength and great economic and political

---

[186] Bertrand Badie and Marie-Claude Smouts. "The Turnaround of the World." *Geopolitics* 5: 85. Print.
[187] S. W. Hook. "Review of Henry Kissinger: Does America Need a Foreign Policy?" 188.
[188] James Der Derian. "Great Men, Monumental History, and Not-So-Grand Theory: A Meta-Review of Henry Kissinger's Diplomacy." *Mershon International Studies Review* 39: 179. Print.
[189] Henry Kissinger. *Does America need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century*. New York: Touchstone, 2001. 30. Print.
[190] Ibid. 160.
[191] S. W. Hook. "Review of Henry Kissinger: Does America Need a Foreign Policy?" 188.

influence".[192] It, however, added a normative aspect by promoting a "balance of power in favour of freedom"[193] which was aimed at preventing any rival powers from challenging America's position in the world and proposed frequent coalition building with both traditional and non-traditional partners. Some analysts regarded this normative aspect of post-Cold War politics was an expression of the "triumph of an anti-geographical form of reasoning in Cold War geopolitics" that had replaced the "geographical specifity and complexity of particular conflicts".[194] In their place, a struggle between freedom and totalitarianism had shaped the modern geopolitical world map. But although a new normative aspect had entered the more classical geopolitical reasoning, the struggle between freedom and totalitarianism on the one hand, as well as the (neo) liberal versus realist debate on the other hand, all resembled new ideologies and thus brought back old patterns known from a Cold War era. As Grant had remarked "hegemony is no longer based on a single nation-state, but is being replaced by a new ideology of the market (and of market access) which is being embedded in, and reproduced by, a powerful constituency of liberal states and international institutions."[195] The coalition of liberal states he referred to and which was also explicitly mentioned in the 2002 US National Security Strategy was to serve the purpose of protecting US interests. This did not make geography less relevant, but instead added flexibility to US policy in choosing partners within geographical spheres of their interest. An earlier National Security Strategy Paper from the year 1999 had emphasized economic issues and referred specifically to the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline running through Georgia and investment in Caspian energy resources.[196] Thus, these US interests pointed to above were quite prevalent in the South Caucasus and Caspian regions.

Quite contrary to what those arguing in favour of a borderless, more cooperative, globalizing world had in mind, over time the liberal idea morphed into an idea that supported access to trade worldwide and that saw power, even in the form of military dominance, as an important tool to protect the interests of the United States, in an effort to maintain the unipolar moment for as long as possible. This military component inherent in this line of thought was often neglected by those arguing in favour of the globalization of capital. At the same time, military power as a structural component to secure old and new markets underscored the continued relevance of what some critics had labelled an outdated way of thinking previously. To others such as Michael Gerace, the separation between security and economic issues was an unnatural one. He recalled that the basic mercantilist assumption was that trade relations were conflictual, a notion more in line with geopolitical reasoning. Turning to

---

[192] George Bush. "Forward." *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. Washington, DC: 2002. Print.
[193] Ibid. 25.
[194] Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. *The Geopolitics Reader*. 49.
[195] Richard Grant. "Economic Globalisation." 57.
[196] Emre Iseri. *The US Grand Strategy and the Eurasian Heartland in the 21st Century*. Routledge, 2009. 35. Print.

the commercially relevant use of military power, he explained that the military was intended to "provide protective, regulative and punitive functions for the state. The protective function refers to the use of military power to protect trade, shipping trade routes and access through waterways. The protective function also refers to the garrison on land that protects commercial and infrastructural assets from attack and interruption […] The regulative function of military power refers to the ability of major states to control commercial movement over land and sea […] The punitive function of large military power involves the ability of a major state to use force against another to enforce compliance and retaliate against aggression."[197] His explanation put in the context of the need to diversify and control access to trade routes in the Transcaspian (see above) offer a rationalization in part why the issues of military bases and military assistance from Russia and the US to the states of the South Caucasus respectively, kept looming large over countries like Georgia throughout the time under consideration in this thesis.

The modern transformation of Geopolitics

The disquisition on geopolitical thought provided above represents an inquiry into the development of the discipline and the way its ideas have been transported and transformed over the course of time. It portrays aspects of continuity and change in both the academic exercise of geopolitics as well as its variant of political advisory activity. While certain ideas are transported into and shape our modern way of political life and stand for a certain consistency, geopolitics as an academic discipline continuous to undergo substantial changes and currently finds itself in the midst of an ongoing evaluation from within, namely by scholars of critical geopolitics. Critical geopolitics, however, does not negate geopolitics entirely, but attempts to add validity for its use as contemporary method and tool for analysis. Before turning to critical geopolitics, some of the main findings represented above will shortly be recaptured in order to highlight the need to accept critical geopolitics as a valuable addition to geopolitics given the changing nature of the international system and the way we have come to perceive it in the twenty first century.

Interestingly, the rise of geopolitical thought happened at a time of great transformation, the so-called *post-Columbus age*, a time when most landmasses had been discovered, that conditioned a rising competition for new markets. Similarly, the end of the Cold war marked a great transformation in international politics. The end of the bi-polar division of the world and the newly discovered notion of globalization went hand in hand with a turn to new opportunities for market access in politics and related speculations about an unrestricted trans-border flow of capital in the economic realm. During the time of the *post–Columbus age* economists like Smith and Ricardo had denied any limiting factors

---

[197] Michael P. Gerace. "State Interests, Military Power and International Commerce: Some Cross☐National Evidence." *Geopolitics* 5: 107. Print.

of geography on human development. This neglect of natural and geographic factors was to a certain extent mirrored in the arguments of liberal internationalists who ignored the potential for renewed conflict and emphasized universal norms and trans-border cooperation instead during a time when markets were divided anew. Scholars of geopolitics past and present meanwhile emphasized the potential for competition and conflict inherent in the expansion of access to reach new markets. A stark difference to the discredited German arguments put forth under the notion of *Lebensraum*, however, was the fact that states were not regarded as constantly growing organisms with a legitimate right to expand. Economic interests, as an outgrowth of states' interests, however, were not only regarded as a basis for cooperation, but were once again used as a justification for expanding influence beyond state borders during the post-Cold War time of transformation marked by great uncertainty.

Turning to the popularity of geopolitical discourse, it is worth noting that German pre-WWII geopolitics was largely prescriptive and increasingly used as propaganda to justify war and expansion with a Darwinist undertone. The use of easy-to-understand geopolitical arguments as an instrument of politics and a way to win over the general public for complex strategic moves in foreign policy remains a continuous theme connected to geopolitics, despite in a very different form from its Nazi predecessor. Simultaneously to some of the thoughts produced in Germany, some other scholars began to envision the world in large blocks or so-called pan-regions, and Halford Mackinder took up the topic of global hegemony by a single power. The idea of blocks or poles (a more contemporary interpretation of the term) are still much discussed topics in international relations scholarship and Mackinder's thoughts concerning global hegemony are still found prominently in the texts of scholars of geopolitics to this day. Meanwhile the importance not of the *heartland*, but of the so-called *rimlands* surrounding this area, first propagated by Spykman, remains especially relevant for recent geostrategic discourse about the South Caucasus, as expressed by Brzezinski, who refers to geopolitical pivot states as one of the keys for balancing against hegemonic competition, located in what Spykman had referred to as the *rimlands*.

During his time Mackinder suggested that Russia being located in the so-called *heartland* would strive for the sea and eventual domination of the globe. The othering of Russia was a continuous theme in western geopolitical discourse during much of the 20th century and remained persistent throughout the Cold War, especially during the time of the Red Scare, and even beyond. Even during times of intensified cooperation under Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin did it not fade but its representatives eventually gained the upper-hand in the US while Russia reacted by turning to a homegrown version of nationalism rooted in geopolitical thought. As part of this process, Russians themselves often referred to the notions expressed by Mackinder and other western geopoliticians. Extremists like Alexandr Dugin, for example, still propagate the warm sea doctrine which posits that Russia should

strive for access to ice-free ports. While Dugin represents a special case, the turn to geopolitical thought and reasoning in the way Russia perceives itself and positions its foreign policy (in theory and practice) has increasingly taken shape over the period under investigation in this thesis. Due to the lack of a geopolitical tradition within Russia, however, the geopolitical references in Russian policy debates often reflect geopolitical discourse originated in the west, yet from a different angle. One important outgrowth of the continuous othering of Russia in western discourse over the course of time has been a so-called perception within Russia of a Russian geopolitics of vulnerability. Especially during the height of debates about NATO expansion Russian policy makers often referred to what they perceived as a policy of intentional encirclement of Russia, a notion which remotely resembled Karl Haushofer's 'Anakondapolitik' discussed from a German point of view in the last century. In addition Spykman's notion that states, if given the possibility would attempt to pursue expansionist objectives figured prominently for Russia as well as the US and their respective allies. The perception of encirclement was also closely related to the creation and maintenance of buffer states and held special relevance for the South Caucasus, a zone of opposing developments where interests of NATO members and Russia were bound to collide. As Brzezinski noted about geopolitical pivots, 'those were states whose importance was not derived from their power and motivation but rather form their sensitive location and from the consequences of their potentially vulnerable condition for the behaviour of geostrategic players'.

Moving away from some of the aspects of continuity in geopolitics, it is also clear that geopolitics as an academic discipline and political practice changed over the course of time. As outlined above, geopolitical thought was once deeply rooted in geographic determinism, which related all social phenomena to geographic factors. In geopolitical discourse as it is represented today this notion has been revised entirely. A clear break with this notion and the Darwinist line of reasoning often inherent in German Geopolitik took place after WWII. Nicholas Spykman, who was among the first to call on the term geopolitics, despite its disreputability, already viewed geography as conditioning, not determining the foreign policy of a state. This clearly allowed more room for those able to interpret geographical circumstances and relate it to foreign policy.

According to the scholar Yves Lacoste, geopolitics experienced a come back into conventional discourse beginning in the mid-80s. This development, according to Lacoste, could be traced back to the multiplication of problems and conflicts in international affairs that increasingly accelerated with the end of the Cold War and the subsequent time of transformation. Lacoste viewed the return to prominence of the term and its field of study as a result of the fact that "something new is happening in the world".[198] But by the time of its resurfacing in mainstream discourse, geopolitics was already

---

[198] Yves Lacoste. "Rivalries for Territory." *Geopolitics* 5: 129. Print.

regarded as something of a changed nature from its predecessors. Lacoste, referring to various scholars, defined it more along the lines of Spykman as a factor conditioning policy. He noted that scholars were influenced as much by their academic biographies as by geography in their view and interpretation of geopolitics. Citing the works of other scholars he noted that, "'The essence of geopolitics is the study of the relationship which exists between international power politics and the corresponding characteristics of geography [and particularly] those on the basis of which the sources of power develop', Saul Cohen wrote in 1963 in *Geography and Politics in a World Divided*. For Robert E. Hakavy in Great Power *Competition for Overseas Bases: Geopolitics of Access Diplomacy* (1983), 'geopolitics is the cartographic representation of relations between the principle opposing powers'. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, geopolitics is 'the use of geography by governments practicing a policy of power', whereas William T. Fox, […] takes the general view that geopolitics is 'the application of geographical knowledge to world affairs'. This conception is shared by General Pierre Gallois, the author of a work entitled *Géopolitique*: les voies de la puissance (1990):'Geopolitics is the study of relationships which exist between the conduct of a policy of power at an international level and the geographical framework in which it takes place.'"[199] The way Lacoste attempted to define and explain geopolitics painted a picture of a discipline which was no longer a mere subject of Realpolitik. During a period of accelerated globalization following the Cold War, the number of voices laying their claims on and contributing to foreign policy multiplied. Geopolitics long perceived as a kind of Pandoras box, whose mysteries only a few were able to interpret, had been unlocked.

Geopolitics in its modern interpretation ceased to be regarded as an exclusive elite understanding of world politics. Instead other influences became obvious. As Lacoste put it: "Now […] a new type of geopolitical debate is developing. The great multiplicity of claims shows that power-territory arguments do not only come from heads of state and their advisers but also from activists who, through local movements or associations, lead small groups of men and women in defending the environment, safeguarding heritage or controlling the population of some ghettos declared to be 'autonomous'."[200] His quote illustrates that bottom-up influences on the policy debates at hand had reached the geopolitical debate as well. Furthermore, it paid tribute to the fact that international relations were confronted with a variety of often conflicting claims, none of which was univocally accepted as the truth. Instead, multiple interpretations of the truth were regarded as legitimate but at the same time all conflicting theses they generated increasingly perceived as subjective. Geopolitics suffered the same faith. Lacoste summarized this new scepticism by pointing out that, "Each of the geopolitical representations competing for control of the same piece of territory bases its arguments

---

[199] Ibid. 128.
[200] Ibid. 138

on the map which best suits their purpose,…"[201] The emphasis of the human aspect and the representation of individual interests in geopolitical analysis in turn dealt a final blow to geographical determinism. In its place scholars like Lacoste and Michel Foucher pleaded to view geopolitics instead as a method of geographical analysis.

At the core of this way of conceptualizing geopolitics lay the recognition that "The term 'geopolitics' can designate first of all 'schools', 'discourses', more or less theorised constructions […]. We are dealing here with representations, ex post facto rationalisations, perceptions […] such as 'geopolitical discourse' and 'geopolitical image'.[…] It can then describe concrete plans, strategies and actions under way, all of which can be supported, prepared, justified and legitimised by what comes before 'geopolitical practice'."[202] According to Foucher, the influence of theory, discourse and subjective design on the actual execution of geopolitics needed to be accorded more space than provided for in conventional geopolitics. He proposed a new definition of geopolitics as "an overall method of geographical analysis of concrete socio-political situations viewed as localised and the usual representations which describe them. It [geopolitics] determines the geographical coordinates of a situation and socio-political process and deciphers the cartographic discourses and images which 'accompany' them…The coordinates need to be established and this is not always straightforward…This method can be used for the purpose of analysis but also of forecasting and action.."[203] Foucher thus opened the black box of geopolitics as a simple subfield of realism by pointing out that internal dynamics of a state and process would have to necessarily be incorporated into any analysis aimed at understanding the complex realities of geostrategy[204] and geopolitical practice. To elaborate on this notion he explained that "the field of geopolitics cannot simply be reduced to international relations, far less to the strategic rivalry between the actors in the two dominant metasystems…The primary function of the geopolitical process is to analyse, if necessary, the links between the external and internal components of a concrete localised situation…If the need of a multi-dimensional, and thus multi-map and multi-scalar, approach is ignored, there is a danger of confining oneself to monist explanations of the relationship between states, peoples and spaces…"[205] In the post-Cold War time, a more hybrid notion of geopolitics as proposed above thus transcended the notion of conventional geopolitics shaped early on by German Geopolitik as well as scholars like Mahan and

---

[201] Ibid. 156.
[202] Michel Foucher. "The Geopolitics of Front Lines and Borderlines." *Geopolitics* 5: 163. Print.
[203] Ibid.
[204] 'Geostrategy' defined by Foucher as "The assessment of external threats and the balance of power (on both sides of the border), taken into consideration in as far as they can be mapped, is carried out according to the interests of the state and nation concerned, which is of necessity placed 'at the centre'. Geostrategy relates to concrete practices in places that are analysed as theatres of operation, actual and potential…'.", See Michel Foucher. "The Geopolitics of Front Lines and Borderlines." 165.
[205] Michel Foucher. "The Geopolitics of Front Lines and Borderlines." 163.

Mackinder who left a lasting legacy. A multitude of factors shape contemporary geopolitical space today and no longer leave room for monocausal explanations. In order to understand the entire process of geopolitics, from its formulation to its execution, scholars are admonished to dig deeper into the socio-political processes of various actors and combine their knowledge of various disciplines and levels of analysis to do justice to a more complex web of international affairs, which defines a new millennium still affected by a re-definition of norms and increased ambiguity about conventional wisdom.

As a result, the re-conceptualization of geopolitics as exemplified by Lacoste and Foucher above calls into action a more thorough look at an increasingly important subfield of geopolitics, namely critical geopolitics. The critical method of geopolitics complements its more conventional predecessor without questioning its very right to exist. It proposes a new perspective to be added to the method of geographical analysis and figures prominently in this thesis. As such, it will be taken up below in order to introduce the reader to yet another aspect of theory which has influenced the author of this thesis in its approach to the subsequent background and main analysis chapters.

Critical Geopolitics: The development of Counter-Geopolitics

At the time when a new wave of geopolitical thinking reiterating the importance of military might took place towards the end of the Cold War, Gearóid Ó Tuathail wrote his initial work in critical geopolitics entitled *The Language and Nature of the "New" Geopolitics: The Case of US -El Salvador Relations*[206]. Simon Dalby referred to this text by Ó Tuathail as "the first explicit attempt to posit the scholarly agenda which subsequently has become known as critical geopolitics" in a special section on twenty years of critical geopolitics subtitled: *Imperialism, Domination, Culture: The Continued Relevance of Critical Geopolitics* in the Geopolitics Journal in 2008.[207] The article by Ó Tuathail was concerned on the one hand with the discourse about geopolitics and its origins and manifestation in American foreign policy formulation, on the other. Dalby elaborated on the message of Ó Tuathail's paper by explaining that: "(…) Ó Tuathail argued in 1986 that it was necessary to directly tackle geopolitical language, and the practices of foreign policy making that invoke[d] geographical terminology, but that such an analysis must not abstract the language from the context of its production. In short, he suggested the necessity of engaging directly with geopolitical culture, a theme that reflected […]

---

[206] Gearóid Ó Tuathail. "Political Geography of Contemporary Events VIII the Language and Nature of the 'New Geopolitics' - The Case of US-El Salvador Relations." *Political Geography Quarterly* 5: 73-85. Print.
[207] Simon Dalby. "Imperialism, Domination, Culture: The Continued Relevance of Critical Geopolitics." *Geopolitics* 13: 414. Print.

"discourse of dissent" to use [a term by] Rob Walker (…)"[208]. As Walker's "discourse of dissent"[209] was mainly directed against military rhetoric, this first article in critical geopolitics positioned itself as a critic of militarism, its advocates and its underlying rhetoric (see below).

In a subsequent article by Agnew and Ó Tuathail, the authors addressed what they regarded as a major misconception of geopolitics, namely that geopolitics was viewed most commonly as a neutral and detached description of a clear, objective reality on which foreign policy formulations were based. Among others, Ó Thuathail reiterated this point in his later book 'Critical Geopolitics', by stating that "[t]oo often in the past geopolitics has been treated not as a discourse but as detached and objective description of how the world 'really is'".[210] This line of reasoning had developed in a linear fashion since his first article published in 1986. It revealed an important normative concern of critical geopolitics, namely that certain logics applied in geopolitical reasoning were morally flawed and led to political actions that were interpreted as counterproductive[211]. In addition, the turn towards the discursive aspect of traditional geopolitics also reflected a growing trend for a new form of analysis of the Cold War, popular among some political geographers at the time and also taken up by Mary Kaldor who stated in her 1990 book 'The Imaginary War: Understanding the East-West Conflict' that "The Cold War has always been a discourse, a conflict of words […] The way we describe the world, the words we use, shape how we see the world and how we decide to act."[212]

Against this intellectual backdrop, Agnew and Ó Tuathail issued a strong call for the re-conceptualization of geopolitics as a discourse practice by "intellectuals of statecraft" in a subsequent "crucial"[213] article published in a 1992 issue of the Political Geography Quarterly, which shaped the new field of study further. Agnew and Ó Tuathail argued that by means of this discursive practice international politics were "spatialized" and mapped into certain categories of peoples, locations and scenarios in order to give sense to foreign policy actions. Their understanding of critical geopolitics closely involved the study of those emissaries of discursive practice in core states and their 'socio-cultural resources' that led to this spatialization.[214] From the point of view of Felix Ciuta and Ian Klinke

---

[208] Simon Dalby. "Imperialism, Domination, Culture." 416.; In 1996 Ó Tuathail termed it "Discourse of Resistance" cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics.* 11.

[209] R.B.J. Walker. "Contemporary Militarism and the Discourse of Dissent." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 9: 345-364. 1983. Print.

[210] Gearóid Ó Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics.* 11.

[211] John Agnew. "Is Geopolitics a Word that should be Endowed only with the Meaning it Acquired in the Early Twentieth Century?" *Progress in Human Geography* 28: 634-637. Print.

[212] Mary Kaldor. *The Imaginary War: Understanding the East-West Conflict.* Oxford, OX, UK: Blackwell, 1990. Print., cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics.* 78.

[213] Simon Dalby. "Imperialism, Domination, Culture." 418.

[214] Gearóid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew. *Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy.* 1992. 190-204. Print.

the early works in critical geopolitics thereby contributed to "the disciplinary reconstitution of geopolitics as a legitimate topic"[215].

As outlined above, the early works in critical geopolitics, very much in the critical tradition, were concerned with uncovering power relations. In a 2010 publication Agnew summarized the intention of the study of critical geopolitics pointing out that the general aim had undergone little change since its inception in the late eighties. He noted that: "Critical geopolitics intends to understand world politics in terms of the ways in which elites and publics actively construct the spaces of political action that are then the medium for the policies of states and other actors. The tendency has been to see this in largely linguistic and intellectual terms as the construction of the world through conceptions of it."[216] As such the discipline also draws on Paul-Michel Foucault who established the study of discursive practices and is often associated with critical studies. Critical geopolitics draws on Foucault to point out that structures in society perpetuate their own structures of knowledge which in turn substantiate claims by the ruling elite for power and authority over those being ruled. Throughout its existence, critical geopolitics thus positioned itself against the mainstream of geopolitical thought concerned with "spatial fixing associated with the dual geopolitical disciplining and intellectual naturalization of the world political map."[217] Rather than taking geopolitical facts as a given, critical geopolitics sees itself as a progressive field within the geopolitical discipline, attempting to reveal the complexity as well as the multiplicity of actors involved in geopolitical policy formulation and action.

In addition to a multiplicity of actors, critical geopolitics recognizes a variety of geopolitical forms and emphasizes the intersections between formal spheres of government and popular culture.[218] To account for the leakage between the two and its directions, Ciuta and Klinke note that critical geopolitics "has developed a variety of conceptual constructs to account for this phenomenon, in particular the triad of popular, practical and formal geopolitics. Popular geopolitics is understood as the "various manifestations to be found within the visual media, news magazines, radio, novels and the internet"[219]. Practical geopolitics is defined by Ó Tuathail as "how foreign policy decision-makers make sense of international crises, how they construct stories to explain these crises, how they develop strategies for handling these crises as political challenges, and how they conceptualize "solutions" to

---

[215] Felix Ciută and Ian Klinke. "Lost in Conceptualization: Reading the "New Cold War" with Critical Geopolitics." *Political Geography* 29: 323. Print.

[216] John Agnew. "Emerging China and Critical Geopolitics: Between World Politics and Chinese Particularity." *Eurasian Geography and Economics*: 569. Print.; See also Klaus-John Dodds and James Derrick Sidaway. "Locating critical geopolitics." *Environment and Planning: Society and Space* 12: 515-524. Print.

[217] John Agnew. "Emerging China and Critical Geopolitics." 570.

[218] Simon Dalby. "Imperialism, Domination, Culture." 418.; See also: Felix Ciută and Ian Klinke. "Lost in Conceptualization." 327.; See also: Jason Dittmer and Klaus Dodds. "Popular Geopolitics Past and Future: Fandom, Identities and Audiences." *Geopolitics* 13: 437-457. Print.

[219] Jason Dittmer and Klaus Dodds. "Popular Geopolitics Past and Future." 441, cit.n. Felix Ciută and Ian Klinke. "Lost in Conceptualization." 327.

these crises"[220]. Finally, formal geopolitics refers to the "formalized theories and grand strategic visions of geopolitical intellectuals"[221] and the "institutions and forces shaping geopolitical thought in particular places and contexts"[222]. Although these distinctions are not meant to draw clear lines of separation between the different forms of geopolitics, scholars of critical geopolitics have highlighted that 'distinction matters'[223] in order to be able to demonstrate how these forms conspire with each other. It has to be mentioned, however, that the distinction between practical, formal and popular geopolitics as a subject of study for critical geopolitics on the one hand is often difficult due to their overlapping characteristics[224]. On the other, the list above is far from complete. Although the three forms mentioned above shall suffice for the purpose of this thesis, the dynamic field of critical geopolitical study has produced numerous distinctions, among them 'emotional geopolitics'[225], 'everyday geopolitics'[226], 'banal geopolitics'[227], subaltern, feminist, actor-network, embodied, and bio-geopolitics.[228]

The attempt to draw clear distinctions between academy and other forms of geopolitics received some criticism from Ciuta, who asserted that the "continuing sedimentation of "old-style" geopolitics-which, of course, is a key task of critical geopolitics […] may also become a liability"[229]. He refers to the lack of consolidation noticeable in this academic discipline with its continuously expanding forms and analytical frameworks. Thereby Ciuta directly addresses scholars who assert that the major strength of the discipline has been its heterodoxy[230] and that the discipline has no singular identity or meaning. But as criticism along the lines of Ciuta's argument increased, Ó Tuathail, among others, responded to claims that the discipline lacked consolidation and that the rate of expanding concepts in the field was unsustainable by commenting: "[…] it was suggested that political geography is in crisis […]. It no longer has a widely shared vision organizing its identity. Where some find 'incoherence', others, however, see a healthy pluralism and dynamic research agendas and frontiers. Asserting a common theme uniting

---

[220] Gearóid Ó Tuathail. "Theorising Practical Geopolitical Reasoning: The Case of the United States Response to the War in Bosnia." *Political Geography* 21: 603. Print., cit.n. Felix Ciută and Ian Klinke. "Lost in Conceptualization." 327.
[221] Gearóid Ó Tuathail. "Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Society." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22: 113. Print., cit.n. Felix Ciută and Ian Klinke. "Lost in Conceptualization." 327.
[222] Gearóid Ó Tuathail. "Understanding Critical Geopolitics." 109-110., cit.n. Felix Ciută and Ian Klinke. "Lost in Conceptualization." 327.
[223] See e.g. John Agnew. "Emerging China and Critical Geopolitics" 570.
[224] See e.g. Felix Ciută and Ian Klinke. "Lost in Conceptualization." 327.
[225] R. Pain. "Globalized Fear? Towards an Emotional Geopolitics." *Progress in Human Geography* 33: 466-485. Print.
[226] Rachel Pain and S.J. Smith. *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life*. London: Ashgate, 2008. Print.
[227] James D. Sidaway. "Iraq/Yugoslavia: Banal Geopolitics." *Antipode* 33: 601-609. Print.
[228] Felix Ciută. "Déjà vu Geopolitics: Marxism and the Geopolitical Undead." *Geopolitics* 16: 224. Print.
[229] Felix Ciută. "Déjà vu Geopolitics." 223.; See also Felix Ciută and Ian Klinke. "Lost in Conceptualization." 330.
[230] John Agnew. "Contemporary Political Geography: Intellectual Heterodoxy and its Dilemmas." *Political Geography* 22: 603-606. Print.

political geography was hard but we eventually settled on the following common denominator construction: For us, political geography is about how barriers between people and their political communities are put up and come down: how world orders based on different geographical organizing principles (such as empires, state systems, and ideological-materialist relationships) arise and collapse: and how material processes and political movements are re-making how we inhabit and imagine the world political map".[231] Although the expanding nature of political geography and critical geopolitics within it leads to a pluralism of ideas, the field of study still managed to agree on some essential criteria for a common research identity, as Ó Tuathail pointed out above. His response to the criticism is rather optimistic, but he does not clearly address the claim that the field of study lacks consolidation. The ever expanding frontiers scholars of critical geopolitics conquer may be a reason why. This lack of consolidation and a certain absence of self-reflection relatively normal for a young discipline may be the reason that Agnew notes that there is still much room to grow for critical geopolitics, which "is at considerable intellectual distance from the sort of sophisticated political-economic reasoning that can be found, for example, in discussions of the various concepts of Antonio Gramsci (…)"[232]. Agnew's comment does not intend to undermine the importance of the analytical tools critical geopolitics, and political geography more broadly, have to offer. Rather, it must be viewed as an attempt to assess the state of affairs of critical geopolitics with a certain healthy self-criticism, which it has oftentimes fallen short of in its early years. Just as he had noticed eight years earlier, "political geography has been slow to examine the normative aspects of many of the concepts it draws on and uses such as sovereignty, equality, justice, democracy, and citizenship. These tend to be regarded as if they had simple dictionary definitions rather than long and contested histories."[233] This criticism, although directed at political geography as a whole, is especially important for critical geopolitics, which was founded on the normative concerns that certain logics applied in geopolitical reasoning were morally flawed. Thus, it assumed for itself a certain moral high-ground (also see above). In that respect, Agnew's comment is a call for special caution to be applied to the entire spectra of terms which are often regarded as value-laden and may hold contested meanings, in order to reduce critical geopolitics' vulnerability.

Two additional points, which can be interpreted as shortcomings of critical geopolitics are its focus on western powers, most prominently the United States and to a certain extent European powers, as well as the absence of a straightforward methodological approach. To address the former, the overarching concern with North American geopolitics-based foreign policy was characteristic of the Cold War out of which critical geopolitics has drawn its *raison d'être*. Thus, the discipline has been slow to move

[231] Gerard Toal. "Re-Asserting the Regional: Political Geography and Geopolitics in World thinly known." *Political Geography* 22: 653. Print.
[232] John Agnew. "Capitalism, Territory and 'Marxist Geopolitics'." *Geopolitics* 16: 233. Print.
[233] John Agnew. "Contemporary Political Geography." 605.

beyond this US-centric approach. Looking at the status quo to date, "the overwhelming body of work in critical geopolitics has focused on the contemporary United States and the European colonial powers, often as if they were the sole active forces in world politics toying with the docile masses in the rest of the world."[234] But as other global powers emerge and poles in international relations multiply, a certain transformation is underway that will move the discipline to yet new frontiers and re-localize its points of departures for analysis. This may also contribute to the reassertion of the importance of regional knowledge and more systematic regional approaches within critical geopolitics.[235] Critical geopolitics has certainly remained understudied in many locations outside of the United States. New research projects in critical geopolitics outside the United States thus can be regarded as stretching the knowledge about this field of study geographically, which may turn the focus away from US-centric approaches.

Regarding methodological approaches, the discipline has at least not undertaken a consolidated effort to prescribe methods to its scholars and its aspirants. This *laissez faire* autonomy with regard to the methodological can be challenging for those trying to enter the discipline, when looking for guidance. On the other hand, it forces candidates to be creative and to undergo a thorough search, which may end with the awareness that methodological concerns are not, as of yet, at the forefront of what critical geopolitics is trying to convey. It thus allows for more academic freedom regarding research agendas and methodological approaches than some other, more established, disciplines. The above listed challenges critical geopolitics still faces today may therefore be encouraging to researchers in this field to contribute to working on these desiderata.

The innovative and sometimes unconventional approaches employed by critical geopolitics, some of which are listed above, did not develop out of a vacuum. They are rather an important continuation and advancement of a tradition of scholars, who over the course of time, critically evaluated geopolitics. These critics represented scholarship ranging from orthodox Marxist points of view to post-structuralism. One of the earliest recorded criticisms was voiced by Karl August Wittvogel, "who in 1929 wrote the first systematic critique of the practice materializing at that time around the name 'geopolitics'".[236] Others included Yves Lacoste and Richard Ashley. The former is probably best known for his book 'La géographie ça sert d'abord à faire la guerre'[237]. It does not need deep analysis of this title to draw certain parallels between Lacoste and late scholars of critical geopolitics. Possibly influenced by the war in Vietnam and its social impact, Lacoste bemoaned the artificial separation

---

[234] John Agnew. "Emerging China and Critical Geopolitics." 569.
[235] See Gerard Toal. "Re-Asserting the Regional" 653.
[236] Gearóid Ó Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics.* 141.
[237] Yves Lacoste. "La géographie, ça sert, d'abord, à faire la guerre." *François Maspéro/Petite Collection Maspero* 165: n. pag. Print.

between academic disciplines. Among them certain developments in French academia, which according to Lacoste, had led to a scissure between historical understanding and geographical knowledge. He thus raised the question about the state of affairs of geography and its relation with the social order more generally.[238] Richard Ashley's work 'dissident International Relations' produced in the eighties was regarded as "central to the production of post-structuralist or 'dissident' scholarship in International Relations (IR)"[239]. Together with other scholars he was looking for a way to fill the void in IR theory that had resulted from an accumulation of various factors, among them a rising dissatisfaction with positivism, the absence of an answer to the demise of Marxism and a noticeable turn towards neo-realism, which was considered a rather reductionist approach compared to its realist predecessor.[240] Ó Tuathail connected Ashley's dissident IR to developments in critical geopolitics by pointing out various parallels. "The work of dissident IR is to problematize this "territorialisation" of global political life, to question the boundary-producing practices of modern discourse that divide self from other, rationality from irrationality, the inside from the outside, and reasoning man from history".[241] Much like critical geopolitics itself, dissident IR, according to Ó Tuathail, is concerned with the production of the "us" versus "them" and the mapping of the global system in theory and practice.

It would go beyond the means of this theory chapter to go through all the internal criticism (see above) or to provide a comprehensive account of the external criticism critical geopolitics as a field of study within political geography is faced with. It is almost a given that the list of critics includes various representatives of traditional or conventional geopolitics. But as critical geopolitics essentially engages with the geopolitical tradition to foster a different understanding of it, it also has to answer to criticism extended from representatives advocating ideas such as post-nationalism or politics beyond the nation state. Yet others proclaim the "end of geography" mostly in the context of international financial market integration[242], for example. In his article *Borderless Worlds?* Ó Tuathail problematises the notion of de-territorialisation, a world without national interests advocated by scholars such as Kenichi Ohmae[243]. Ó Tuathail explains that there is no "pure transcendence of the existing complex of nationality, territoriality and statism but a rearranging of their practical functioning and meaning in a

---

[238] See also Gearóid Ó Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics*. 160-162.

[239] Mark Laffey. "Things Lost and Found: Richard Ashley and the Silences of Thinking Space." *Review of International Studies* 36: 989. Print.

[240] Roger D. Spegele. *Richard Ashley's Discourse for International Relations*. : Millenium – Journal of International Studies, 1992. 147. Print.

[241] Gearóid Ó Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics*. 171.

[242] See e.g., Richard O'Brien. *Global Financial Integration: The End of Geography*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992. 120. Print.

[243] Ken Ohmae. *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies*. New York: Free Press, 1995. Print. See also Ken Ohmae. *The Borderless World: Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy*. New York: HarperBusiness, 1990. Print. cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail. "Borderless Worlds? Problematising Discourses of Deterritorialisation." *Geopolitics* 4: 141. Print.

globalizing and informationalising capitalist condition."[244] This leads to a "creation of a world political map that is paradoxically more integrated and connected yet also more divided and dislocated as a result of the uneven development of the trends and tendencies associated with informationalisation and globalization."[245]. Thus, Ó Tuathail did not regard current shifts as indicating either an end of geography nor an end to national and individual interest-based politics. Rather, he sees new inequalities arising which are merely disguised in a discourse of de-territorialisation and hence need to be studied in light of the question who the new beneficiaries from these developments are.

The above mentioned examples confirm the continued relevance of studying political geography and its subfields geopolitics and critical geopolitics even in an age often referred to as borderless or global. Critical geopolitics challenges conventions by attempting to go beyond the analytical surface of conventional wisdom presented in popular discourse and mainstream scholarship. It posits itself as a progressive discipline, openly challenging the militarism still present in current international affairs. Its strength and certain shortcomings have been discussed above and complemented with the great spectra of opportunities it offers to scholars, who decide to follow this discipline and work on its present desiderata. Among these, but not aforementioned, is the silence of members of the discipline regarding what can replace force in international relations, or put differently, if there is or can ever be an 'alternative geopolitics of care'[246]? As the discipline is continuing to expand its frontiers and locate new geographical points of departures for its analysis which are less focused on the politics of the hegemons within the western hemisphere, the question of how to posit an alternative mode of operations for conventional geopolitics from within political geography may be a next step on a future research agenda of critical geopolitics.

---

[244] Gearóid Ó Tuathail. "Borderless Worlds?" 143.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Gerard Toal. "Book Forum: Derek Gregory's The Colonial Present." *Political Geography* 27: 342. Print.

Early Peace Initiatives and the Road to War

Introduction

The following chapter aims less at theorizing than at creating a sense in the reader for what was happening in Georgia at the time between 1989 and the final outbreak of the war in Abkhazia on August 14, 1992. Moreover, it tries to show how the overwhelming regional and global changes which simultaneously conditioned and followed the fall of the Iron Curtain found their reflection in the small country between the large and small Caucasus Mountain ranges which is today's modern Georgia. The background chapter is intended to help the reader understand the political, social-economic, and emotional settings against which the conflict in Abkhazia (commonly referred to as the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict) unfolded. In order to do so, it highlights and explains key processes and events which were not only of significance for the time period between 1989 and August 14, 1992, when the guns of war started to become the defining characteristic for the relations between Georgians and Abkhaz for the next decades to come. Instead the significance of events and processes raised in this background chapter - such as Zviad Gamsakhurdia's rule and fall, Eduard Shevardnadze's return to Georgia, civil strife, relations with Russia and their historical context, political dissent in Abkhazia and attempts for keeping the peace amidst crisis - reach beyond the immediacy of the time period described in the following pages. They instead reveal reoccurring narratives, policy trends and emotional stigmatization which are of explicit importance for the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process even up until this day.

One of these precedents is the war in Abkhazia that has impacted the relations between Abkhazia and the modern Georgian state since 1992. A subsequent trend is the militarization of the peace process that tried in vain to resolve the conflict between Georgians and Abkhaz thereafter. Regarding war, Carl von Clausewitz' notes that "war is the very continuation of politics with the inclusion of other means"[247]. His quote has a particular meaning when put in the context of events in Georgia leading up to the beginning of the war in Abkhazia on August 14, 1992. He implicitly states that the military remains subordinate to politics during armed conflict and that politics determines the purpose of a war. Thus, in the case of Georgia, this raises the question of the nature of policies, political figures and the arena in which this war came to be played out. As mentioned above, the background aims to foster an understanding of the context which conditioned the political and social-economic environment and eventually militarized it prior to and during the war. The militarization of the political, social and economic environment outlined in this chapter is an important trend which had far reaching

---

[247] Carl von Clausewitz. *Hinterlassene Werke des Generals Carl von Clausewitz über Krieg und Kriegführung – Vol. I.* Berlin: F. Dümmler, 1832-1834. 24. Print.

consequences for the subsequent Georgian-Abkhaz peace process. Overall, the period outlined in this chapter describes a phase of modern state formation, which in turn coincided with the need of defining the Abkhaz problem and subsequent first policy formulations regarding how to resolve it. In addition, this chapter points to the fact that Georgia found itself not only in the process of state building, but also in the middle of internal struggles and armed conflicts much before the war in Abkhazia had started. It thus underlines the fact that at the point when Georgian troops entered Abkhazia, the country had already long been in a 'fog of war'[248] which ultimately manifested itself as a war in Abkhazia.

The chapter is divided into six subchapters: Part 1 documents the relationship between Georgians and Abkhaz by depicting historical extracts. It does not aim to provide a complete history of this complex relationship, but rather to point out historical periods of proximity and distance between the two groups. The historical background also provides an overview of certain key incidences which have been particular engrained in the collective memory of the respective groups. Part 1 also describes the situation in Georgia and Abkhazia at the dawn of a new era, when the Soviet Union was nearing its end. This time of transition brought about the first serious instances of violence and shaped the relations between Georgia, Abkhazia and also Russia.

Part 2 of this chapter describes the nationalist hype and its effect during the time of Gamsakhurdia's rule after Georgia had regained its independence. It also points to rising ethnic antagonisms and futile attempts to mitigate some consequential conflicts in Abkhazia. It ends with the ousting of Gamsakhurdia and the commencement of civil war in Georgia.

Part 3 outlines the transition phase of power from Gamsakhurdia's elected government to a Military Council and later a State Council, headed by a Chairman, struggling not to become a 'lame swan' in a highly complex and competitive power construct. This part also illustrates early peace initiatives and first attempts of the Georgian state bodies to create structures intended for maintaining peace.

While Part 2 and 3 depict some of the missed opportunities with regards to maintaining peace, Part 4 highlights the importance of relations with Russia for peace in Georgia by discussing the negotiations which led to the Dagomys agreement in June 1992 and its implications. While on the one hand highlighting the disorder and domestic infighting in Georgia, it shows on the other hand that Georgia was also able to reap political successes with regard to peace processes when it was supported by a benevolent Russian President. This first signs of a Russian role in the conflict resolution processes is a common theme throughout subsequent periods. The initial support from Russian President Yeltsin,

---

[248] Carl von Clausewitz. *Hinterlassene Werke des Generals Carl von Clausewitz über Krieg und Kriegführung – Vol. II*. Berlin: F. Dümmler, 1832-1834. Chapter 2. Print.

however, increasingly diminished. The Russian leadership was from the onset starkly divided over how to treat Georgia and its conflicts, and this phenomenon played itself out to Georgia's disadvantage as time passed.

Finally, Part 5 and 6 address the roots of armed conflict in Abkhazia by examining the road to war of a failing state, which had already manoeuvred itself deep into the fog of war. It points to personal networks and connections which often substituted for weak institutions and the absence of rule of law. These personal networks consequently conditioned information flows and decision making procedures, which were closed, rather than open to a democratic process. While this way of dealing with the conflict in Abkhazia (and also South Ossetia) experienced promising instances with regard to maintaining peace amidst crisis, it eventually allowed the militarized elements in the country to gain the upper hand and throw Georgians and Abkhazians into a conflict which conditioned their political futures from that time onwards.

1. The relations of Georgians and Abkhaz: A brief historical background

The history of the relationship between Abkhazia and Georgia is not a bilateral one, but from the 18th century onwards, Russia has always played a role in conditioning the relationship between the Georgians and Abkhaz. Georgian as well as Abkhaz sources confirm this view of history. As Russia plays such an important role that it is often regarded as a third party to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, its relations with Georgia have to be further considered in the following. In "The roots of the Georgian-Russian conflict (1783-1832)"[249] Philipp Ammon elaborates on this Russian factor in the relationship with Georgia and its regions in historical context. He notes that today's tensions between Russia and Georgia cannot be understood without looking at historical sores.[250] These incidents of Russian imperialist *Realpolitik* often at the expense of Georgian interest have shaped the collective Georgian memory of its Russian neighbour. They continue to shape the image of Russia as actor in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and the argument of its neo-imperialist desires vis-à-vis Georgia. The turn to history also explains some of the existentialist fears of Georgia regarding the deprivation of its land and rights which many Georgians still entertain with regard to Russia. Ammon notes that the consequences of the one-sided Georgian call for Russia's protective power and a subsequent lop-sided alliance has caused a trauma in Georgia's collective memory. The three historical incidents which he describes as most critical in this regard are the breach of the Treaty of Giorgievsk of 1783 by which the Russians

---

[249] Philipp Ammon. "Die Wurzeln des georgisch-russischen Konflikts (1783-1832)." N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Jan. 2013. <http://www.conflicts.rem33.com/images/Georgia/wurzeln_1783_1832.pdf>.
[250] Ibid. 2.

had promised protection, the abolition of the Georgian monarchy in 1801, and the loss of Autocephaly of the Georgian Orthodox church in 1811.[251]

However, the historical instances which contributed to the negative perception of Russia were even more frequent. Ammon documents how the king of Kakheti Alexander II. appealed to Czar Fedor as early as 1586 for assistance against the Turks. Although the promised assistance never materialized, "the descendants of Fedor titled themselves sovereign over Iberian lands and the Georgian kings."[252] What he views as the first claim to power over feudal Georgia repeated itself in later centuries. Another example was a secret agreement for common battle against Persia between king Vakhtang VI and Czar Peter the Great in 1720.[253] The Russians made this pact with Georgia in order to realize the larger goal of asserting their control over Persia and controlling the trade routes extending as far India. Georgia was regarded as a strategic cornerstone to control these access routes. [254] Yet again in the Russian-Turkish war of 1768 until 1774, Georgia sided with Russia but the alliance was of no avail. In the Peace Treaty with Turkey Russia affirmed Turkish sovereignty over western Georgia in 1774. In his despair, king Erekle II. ruler over eastern Georgia turned to Gregory Potemkin a close advisor of Catherine the Great, who hedged plans to expand Russia southwards. Ammon explains that "In his courtship with Russia…Erekle…did not recognize that the king of Kartli and Kakheti (eastern Georgia) was not regarded as an equal sovereign by Russian monarchs. He understood even less the imperial dynamic in Russia by which his own country was a mere gaming piece"[255], while a strong, united Georgia "was not in the long-term interest of Russia", according to Degoev.[256]

The Treaty of Giorgievsk of 1783 and its adverse fate again made the point that Russia did not take the binding force of written agreements too literal, but always considered its own interests before its alliance. Yet, the Treaty of Giorgievsk is especially noteworthy as it reveals some historical parallels to the way the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict was dealt with later on. In both instances, Georgia sought an alliance with Russia, hoping Russia would safeguard Georgian territorial interests. Reportedly, the alliance concluded at Giorgievsk in July 1783 was to be permanent and Russia would be deployed as the mediator in case of disputes[257]. Moreover, Russian military troops would be stationed in Georgia. Most importantly, Russia was supposed to make diplomatic or military efforts to regain Georgian lost

[251] Ibid.
[252] Ibid. 7.
[253] G. Anchabadze. "Georgia in the Beginning of Feudal Decomposition." Archive of the Republic of Georgia, n.d. Web. 26 Mar. 2012. <www.parliament.ge/pages/archive_en/history/his8.html>.
[254] Philipp Ammon. "Die Wurzeln des georgisch-russischen Konflikts (1783-1832)."
[255] Ibid. Translation from German, 11.
[256] V. Degoev, Bol saja igra na Kavkaz: istorija I sovremennost, Moskva 2001, cit.n. Philipp Ammon. "Die Wurzeln des georgisch-russischen Konflikts (1783-1832)" 12.
[257] See The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Treaty of Georgievsk." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 15 Mar. 2013. Web. 20 March 2013. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/230341/Treaty-of-Georgievsk>.

territories.[258] The agreements contained in the treaty resemble the Georgian approach to solving the threat to its territorial integrity in the late 20th century by appealing to Russia to intervene in its favour (see Dagomys Agreement below). Periodically, these alliances with Russia ended in tragedy as was the case in 1795 when thousands of Georgians were killed during the battle of Krcanisi. Georgian troops had not yielded to the Persians, having been assured of Russian military reinforcement. The promised troops arrived in Tbilisi only when the city had long fallen under Persian control.

Shortly thereafter, under Czar Paul I. Russian policy shifted from alliance to annexation. After the assassination of the Czar in 1801 this policy was carried out by his son Alexander I. Unlike his grandmother Catherine the Great, Alexander deprived the Georgian royalty of any recognition and occupied large parts of Georgia[259]. Initially, some of the Georgian regions successfully appealed for various degrees of autonomy, but the practice of Russia granting autonomy was progressively abolished. The core of the trauma, however, was reached when the Georgian patriarch was first exiled and then replaced by a Russian[260]. By this means Georgian autocephaly found an abrupt end. The Georgian Orthodox Church which had safeguarded Georgia's cultural and linguistic traditions for centuries of hostile invasions and foreign rule was officially deprived of its status, order and role as guardian of the Georgian people and their interests. The recurrence of Georgian rulers turning to Russia despite Russia not honouring its side of agreements repeatedly also reveals that the Georgians had nowhere else to turn to. Nevertheless, Georgia had fallen victim to its naïve belief that its powerful neighbour would take up its cause for free. Too often it paid a very high price without receiving what it paid for in the end. By 1801 Russia had successfully advanced into eastern Georgia and abolished the Kartli-Kakhetian kingdom, greatly strengthening its position in the Caucasus and positioning itself as a rival power to Great Britain[261] and an actual competitor to the East India Company.

In light of a strengthened Russia, Prince Keleshbei Chachba-Shervashidze was among the first Abkhaz rulers who tried to rid Abkhazia of its Turkish protectorate by commencing a path of rapproachement with Russia. In 1806 Chachba-Shervashidze demanded that Abkhazia would be adopted as a subject of Russia. After him, his son George Shervashidze appealed again to Russia on August 12th, 1808,

---

[258] "Treaty of Georgievsk." Wikisource, 3 Feb. 2013. Web. 1 June 2014.
<http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Georgievsk>.; Philipp Ammon. "Die Wurzeln des georgisch-russischen Konflikts (1783-1832)." 12-13., See also David Marshall Lang. *The Last Years of the Georgian Monarchy, 1658-1832*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1957. 184. Print., cit.n. Philipp Ammon. "Die Wurzeln des georgisch-russischen Konflikts (1783-1832)."
[259] David Marshall Lang. "Georgia under Russian Imperial Rule (Excerpts)." *A Modern History of Soviet Georgia*. New York: Grove Press, 1962. Web. 1 June 2014.
<www.conflicts.rem33.com/images/Georgia/Lang_3.htm>.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Czar Paul I had manoeuvred Russia into an unofficial war with Great Britain according to The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Paul." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d. Web. 29 Mar. 2013. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/446907/Paul>.

requesting that Russia establish a protectorate over Abkhazia. While these appeals remained unanswered at first, Tsar Alexander I. sent a note to the Abkhaz Prince on February 17th 1810, which confirmed Russian adherence to the "Supreme patronage, power and protection [for Abkhazia] of the Russian empire"[262]. The sheer attestation of this intend did not change the fact that Abkhazia remained a Turkish protectorate while the struggle between the two empires over influence in the South Caucasus continued for more than fifty years.

Both Abkhaz and Georgian scholars view their common history as having been conditioned by the geopolitical aims of superpowers. To this end, the Abkhaz politician Sergei Shamba in his role as historian explains that "This region had always been strategically significant. It is known that the Great Silk Route passed through here and it was important to Turkey to cut the communications connecting Russia with the southern Caucasus, and also with the west."[263] The former Personal Representative of President Eduard Shevardnadze for the conflict in Abkhazia expresses this view about the geopolitical importance Russia attached to the region in similar terms. He however, does not accord any importance to the early calls of Abkhaz Princes to maneuver out of an environment of Ottoman domination through closer alliance with Russia. Lordkipanidze states that "Russia was aware of the silk road, which extended from the Far East throughout the Caucasus. Russia wanted to control all of its parts and knew that the most important territory in this endeavor was the Caucasus. The key to the Caucasus is Georgia…[b]ecause Abkhazia is the gate to Georgia, Russia started conquering Abkhazia.[264]

Throughout the period of Russian conquest of the Caucasus, the relations between Russia and Abkhazia remained ambiguous. At the time questions of war and peace were decided not by the ordinary people but by noblemen and high society, but "princes and noblemen were divided in their opinion" about Russia[265]. While Shamba tries to explain the hardship of the Abkhaz people by a great power competition over spheres of influence and territorial domination, which took the population hostage, the Georgian scholar Archil Gegeshidze puts forth the view that the roots of the conflict between Georgians and Abkhaz can be traced to the point in history when Russia began to expand to the south to conquer the Caucasus. "Russia would seek loyal communities and people throughout the Caucasus. They (the Russians) would use their loyalty and fight those who were disloyal. So divide and

---

[262] Michael Shervashidze. *Materials and Notes on Possession and Property Rights of Descendants of his Highness Prince Michael Shervashidze, Last Possessor of Abkhazia*. Verdun: 1913. 5-7. Print. Document obtained from the personal archive of Prime Minister of Abkhazia, 2010.
[263] Sergey Shamba. *Russia-Abkhazia: History and the Present*. 1. Print. Document obtained from the personal archive of the Prime Minister of Abkhazia, 2010.
[264] Vasha Lordkipanidze. Former personal representative of the Georgian President for the conflict in Abkhazia. Personal Interview. 2010.
[265] Sergey Shamba. *Russia-Abkhazia*. 2.

rule was the primary principle of Russian policy."[266] The theme of *divide et impera* is commonly referred to as a Russian strategy to gain and maintain power. In this context it means that imperial Russia was trying to prevent small ethnic groups from accumulating power by actively trying to foster dissent among them and not allowing them to link up. Due to the division of the political elite the Abkhaz scholar refers to above, imperial Russia was at various times confronted with a unified struggle of Abkhaz and Georgians against the advancing Russian Empire. As Georgian scholar Gegeshidze confirms, "at one point in late 19th century the Abkhaz were regarded as one of the most disloyal to the czarist regime and actually among the very first who revolted against it in 1864 and 1867"[267]. Shamba in his analysis of historical relations between Abkhazia and Russia also alludes to this fact by noting that "For thirty years, from 1877 to 1907, Abkhazians because of numerous perturbations and revolts were considered in imperial Russia as "the guilty population"."[268] As a consequence of Abkhaz disobedience, Russia exiled the last Abkhaz leader in the mid-19th century and a guilt clause was put on the Abkhaz nation. The latter was used as a justification for the punitive measure of "Mukhajiroba", which meant "exile" and constituted of a large number of Abkhazian people being displaced from their homeland. Following this first wave of resettlement Abkhazia underwent colonisation encouraged by the Russian empire during the second half of the 19th century. The practice of settling and resettling people in Russian history as in the Soviet period later on was a common means to maintain control over an ethnically diverse empire. By this practice, the ruling power was capable of oppressing nationalist movements and able to foster loyalty among the remaining population by awarding favours to them vis-à-vis the new settlers. What can be viewed as a simple, yet cruel means to maintain order or as an insurance against the rise of a new majority of dissidents would be considered ethnic manipulation by others. The new settlers that arrived in Abkhazia were not only Russians, but also Kossaks, Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, Germans, Estonians and others who settled in Abkhazia. The bulk of the settlers in absolute terms, however, came from the adjacent regions of Georgia. Especially Georgian scholars view this period as the cradle of negative sentiments of the Abkhaz population towards Georgians, many of which settled the land and took over the property of those who had been forced to leave. As a result, Georgians were viewed as having reaped the gains from a common struggle against the Russian Empire which was lost when the Ottoman troops had fled Sukhumi in 1877 and Russia had proclaimed its final victory over the Caucasus.[269] The following quote by a member of the Abkhaz leadership reads as if the Georgians had only waited for their chance to assert control over Abkhazia: "Kartvelian colonisation of Abkhazia was so swift that the Imperial authorities were on their

---

[266] Archil Gegeshidze. Senior Fellow Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies Personal Interview. 2010.

[267] Ibid.

[268] Sergey Shamba. *Russia-Abkhazia.* 2.

[269] Gábor Ágoston. *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*. New York, NY: Facts On File, 2008. 125. Print.

guard. Russian interests in Abkhazia directly clashed with those of Georgia, which had taken advantage of the results of the war for the achievement of its own interests."[270]

If such negative sentiments are a sufficient explanation for the subsequent move of the Abkhaz closer to Russia remains dubious. What is clear, however, is that Russians and Abkhaz rectified their spoiled relations over the course of subsequent decades. In 1907 the guilt clause was removed in connection to the Abkhaz by special decree of Tsar Nicholas II. Abkhaz troops were singled out as heroic fighters for the Russian cause during World War I.[271] After the Russian Revolution and the take-over of power by the Bolsheviks in Moscow, ethnic and ideological divides congealed. Georgia had declared independence in 1918 and considered Abkhazia part of its territory according to its 1921 constitution. During the time of fighting of the red against the white armies throughout the territory of the later Soviet Union, Abkhaz identified more openly with the Soviet Bolsheviks against a central state they regarded as an oppressive Georgian ethnocracy aligned to foreign powers like Germany as well as Turkey and Great Britain; "After the disintegration of the Russian Empire, Turkey and Germany supported the occupation of Abkhazia by Georgian troops. This led to a national liberation war of the people of Abkhazia against Menshevist Georgia."[272] During the time following the Russian Revolution, Georgian and Abkhaz found themselves supporting opposing sides. After independent Georgia was subdued by the Bolshevik forces and stripped of its independence in favour of becoming a Socialist Soviet Republic, Abkhazia was awarded the status of *Dagovornaya* or Treaty Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic within Georgia in 1921.

The way the Abkhaz and Georgian relations were shaped during Soviet times is inextricably linked to the Soviet policy regarding the so-called nationalities question. Before coming to power in 1917, Lenin had outlined the Bolshevik nationality policy in his 1916 work *The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, granting all nations the right to self-determination. In this spirit, although not propagating secession, the Bolsheviks, too, proclaimed the right of nations to self-determination. For example, at the end of 1917, the Bolsheviks called on the right to self-determination and by it justified the independence of Finland. Thereafter, the right to self-determination continued to dominate discussions about the nationalities question at Bolshevik party gatherings until 1921, but after the Finish precedent no longer found any practical application. Regarding the inner party debate about this issue, it is not clear how much support Lenin enjoyed for his policy within the party, but over time self-determination lost its original meaning as the internationalist argument around a group of Bolsheviks led by Bukharin gained prominence.

[270] Sergey Shamba. *Russia-Abkhazia.* 3.
[271] Aguazhba. "Abkhazians in the First World War." *The Abaza Magazine* 26: 30-32. Print., cit.n. Sergey Shamba. *Russia-Abkhazia.* 3.
[272] Sergey Shamba. *Russia-Abkhazia.* 3.

Early on the *Narkomnats* Commissariat of Nationality Affairs had been established under Stalin's leadership. Although the Transcaucasus was not under the *Narkomnat*'s jurisdiction, it is important to note that Stalin expressed his centralist views already at this time, advocating the incorporation of the Autonomous Republics into the Russian Socialist Soviet Republic. When the Soviet Union was formed in 1924, a number of policies aimed at strengthening the economic, cultural and even national advancement of the non-Russians were implemented throughout the 1920's to raise the general level of development[273]. Among these policies known as *korenizatsiya* was a priority given to the study and application of local languages.

When Stalin came to power he began his reign with show trials and purges attacking numerous beneficiaries of the earlier policy of *korenizatsiya* on the charge of fuelling anti-Soviet nationalism. These early signs of restricting the originally proclaimed right to self-determination manifested themselves in Abkhazia when its status was reduced to an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) in 1931 under Stalin's rule. This can be regarded as one of the moves linked to a redefined Soviet Nationalities Policy, which was driven by a belief that granting extensive rights to each minority would threaten the federation. During the time of Stalin's rule, Abkhaz were not deported like Tatars or Tschetschens. Nevertheless, according to Soviet policy under Stalin schools and cultural institutions were closed. Many Abkhaz perceived these policies as a threat to their ethnic survival. In addition, the forties and early fifties migration to Abkhazia was artificially stimulated with various incentive structures. Due to plans to develop Abkhazia as a recreational zone, public discourse about a lack of population in Abkhazia or a lack of labour force to cultivate the land was popularized and Georgian migration stimulated in turn. This drastically changed the demographic situation in Abkhazia. Consequently Abkhaz found themselves in the minority in their homeland with a feeling of losing not only their cultural heritage but also their land. Although this was not a Georgian but a Soviet policy, the latter was run by two Georgians at the time, Joseph Stalin and Lavrenti Beria. Especially Beria, chief

of Soviet security and secret police and later Deputy Premier, was often viewed as harbouring Georgian nationalist sentiments. As a result, the above mentioned policies and the resulting aggravation of existentialist fears among the Abkhaz were to a large extend projected onto the Georgians. Georgians became viewed as assimilators trying to impose
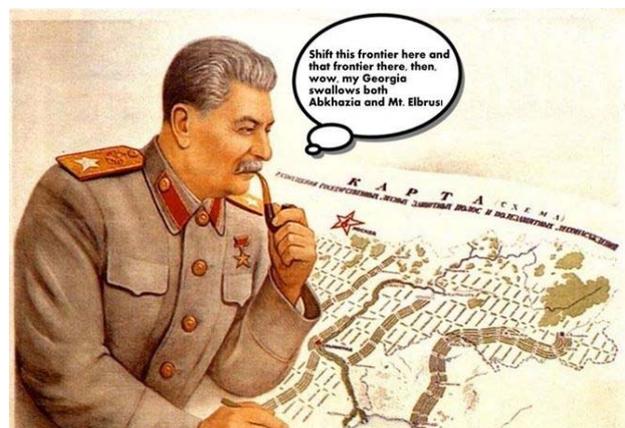
Cartoon illustrating Abkhaz stereotype
Source: www.abkhazworld.com

---

[273] The policy of rooting or *korenizatsiya* was in part a result of the discussions at the 12th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in April 1923.

a sort of 'Georgification'. Starting from the time of Stalin's rule, Georgian-Abkhaz relations never found an amiable balance again.

After Stalin's death, the Soviet Nationalities policies shifted. Krushchev and Suslov entertained a policy referred to as the "Merger of Nations" and in its context tried to reduce the dominance of each republic nationalities. A systematic Russification took place which in Abkhazia disadvantaged the Georgians (who at the time constituted the majority population) vis-à-vis the Abkhaz this time around. Compared to earlier periods, now the Abkhaz gained privileges in Abkhazia. Their living conditions improved and they were awarded more post in the administration, while the Georgian population faced an opposite trend. The balance had turned in favour of the Abkhaz and many Georgians regarded this development like an 'Abkhaz revenge'. Although such a view is certainly subjective and may not have been entertained by the majority of Georgians at the time it is part of a historical narrative about Georgian-Abkhaz relations. These narratives express emotional realities characterizing the relations between the two groups, which shape the way the historical context of the conflict is remembered by both sides. Thus these memories are selective ones based on subjective perceptions of the situation. Objectively it remains clear, however, that there certainly remained a misbalance. While Georgians had been advantaged in earlier periods, under Krushchev Abkhaz, who formed the minority were represented equally to the Georgian population in public offices. The new realities did not help to rid the region of a certain sentiment of being disadvantaged, this time around entertained by the Georgians in Abkhazia. Once again it had not been intended to balance the relations between the two groups, but to manipulate them and turn them against each in order to prevent them from jointly turning against the Russian patron. To illustrate the effectiveness of such social-regulative policies, it can be mentioned that in 1957, 1967 and 1978 significant manifestations were held by the Abkhaz demanding secession from the Georgian SSR and inclusion in the Russian SSSR.

As during the time of Ottoman rule, the Abkhaz had started once again to look to Moscow to rid themselves of their immediate patron Georgia. The fact that Eduard Shevardnadze came to power in Georgia and ran the country from 1972 until 1985 did not change these sentiments. Although Shevardnadze's famous words at the 25th Party Congress that "for Georgians, the sun rises not in the east, but in the north - in Russia"[274] clearly indicated his negative sentiments towards national favoritism, more than 130 Abkhaz intellectuals wrote a letter to Leonid Breshnev demanding their secession from Georgia in 1978. Moscow sought to head off Abkhaz demands by allocating to them the majority of party and government positions in a disproportionate fashion to their actual demographic representation. Shevardnadze meanwhile tried to calm Abkhaz sentiments by

---

[274] Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl and Melvin A. Goodman. *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*. Dulles: Brassey's Inc., 2001. 22-23. Print.

implementing policies that increased cultural and linguistic representation through the media and learning institutions. These policies encouraged nationalist elements within Abkhazia.

The years under Gorbachev conditioned the rise of popular 'People Fronts' in a number of Soviet republics, among them Georgia. Gorbachev had initially declared the nationalities question as resolved at the onset of his Chairmanship. But sensitivities among the nationalities were far from resolved, which Gorbachev swiftly learnt after uprisings in Alma Ata. In the late 80's the Georgian Popular Front had won spectacular successes in the Soviet elections and came to dominate the government. Many Abkhaz felt uneasy about a renewed Georgian call for independence. There was a great uncertainty about what independence would mean for Georgian-Abkhaz relations, given the hardline nationalist rhetoric of some Georgian leaders. While this 'Georgian option' represented uncertainty, ethnic fears were further exacerbated by the events that took place in Abkhazia in late spring and summer of 1989.

In light of the increasing popularity of national movements in Georgia, the Abkhaz nationalists, who perceived their rights of a titular minority threatened by the Georgian call for independence, signed a petition to the Soviet authorities in Moscow at Lykhny on March 18, 1989, demanding their right to secede once again. This caused an outcry among the Georgian population in Abkhazia which at this point constituted the largest single ethnic group with over 45%. The Georgians were opposed to any diminution of ties between Abkhazia and Georgia. Both sides reacted with rival mass protests both inside Abkhazia and in Georgia. The developments in Abkhazia provided additional fuel to the pro-independence movements in Tbilisi. In this highly emotional atmosphere a pro-independence rally took place in Tbilisi on April 9, 1989. Soviet tanks and troops of the interior ministry violently dispersed the rally causing death and injuries among the protestors. This tragedy represented a point of no return in Georgia's relations with Russia and fuelled national sentiments in direct opposition to the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, Abkhaz with their own interest and cause in mind remained largely loyal to the Soviet system.

Amidst this critical constellation, in Sokhumi Abkhaz nationalists led by the national Aydgylara movement attacked the office of the local Georgian-language newspaper on July 12, 1989. The demonstrators went on to besiege the building destined to house the new Georgian University in Sokhumi. In this critical situation, the local police acted as mere bystanders. Part of the Georgian population in Abkhazia gathered for a counter-demonstration. Eventually the situation escalated into open fighting and a surge into the university building. With hindsight, Georgian and Abkhaz observers of the events note that Russian provocateurs were among the protestors and actively encouraged their violent escalation. It goes beyond this brief historical account to assess all claims to who started the violence. The fighting commonly referred to as the 'Sokhumi riots' continued for days, however, and

marked a final rift between the Abkhaz and Georgian population in Abkhazia. It also set off violent outbursts in other parts of Georgia.

"The Georgians suspected the attack on their university was intentionally staged by the Abkhaz nationalists and Russian special services in order to provoke a large-scale violence that would prompt Moscow to declare a martial law in the region, thus depriving the government in Tbilisi of any control over the autonomous structures in Abkhazia."[275] This suspicion again reveals the narrative of existential threats entertained by both sides to the conflict. In this instance the suspicion of Russia trying to deprive Georgians of their control over Abkhazia was based on historical experiences as outlined above. Abkhazia's experience with Georgia was almost a mirror image of that between Georgia and Russia. These suspicions from the Georgian side were not least rooted in the fact that Moscow had not shied away from openly manipulating ethnic issues in the past. High Georgian officials had also received threats over the past decades that the rise of the independence movements in Georgia would cause negative repercussions in regard to Abkhazia[276]. In the minds of many Georgians, the Russian factor loomed large, especially after their experiences with Russia in the recent past (for example on April 9). Yet, at the same time little importance was usually accorded to any genuine Abkhaz desire for independence or reduced dependence on Georgia.

Throughout the year 1990 street violence in Abkhazia subsided and discord moved to the legislature. Georgian nationalist holding the majority of power in Tbilisi enacted a variety of cultural and linguistic laws, while the Abkhaz side responded with declaring a state of sovereignty of the Abkhaz SSR in the absence of the Georgian delegation in the Supreme Soviet on August 25, 1990. The Georgian Supreme Soviet subsequently annulled the decision and the stage was set for a lengthy legislative struggle. During the next months, Georgia held multi-party elections. An alliance of parties called "Roundtable-Free Georgia" won the elections in October and the nationalist and former dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia came to power. Two months later, in December 1990, the nationalist and former Abkhaz dissident Vladislav Ardzinba was voted into the position of the new Chairman of the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet. With this constellation frictions between Georgian and Abkhaz lawmakers were further accentuated. The all-Union referendum on the renewal of the Soviet Union on March 17, 1991, as well as the referendum on Georgia's independence on March 31, 1991, both underlined the division that had solidified in Abkhazia. Georgians boycotted the all-Union referendum while in Abkhazia the polls showed an overwhelming majority in favour of preservation of and alliance with the Soviet Union.

---

[275] G. Nikoladze. *The War in Abkhazia*. Abkhazia Institute for Social and Economic Research, 2007. Print.
[276] Vasha Lordkipanidze. Personal Interview. 2010., Irakli Menagarishvili. Former Georgian Foreign Minister. Personal Interview. 2010., Alexander Rondeli. Co-Founder and President Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. Personal Interview. 2010.

Likewise the Abkhaz population declined its participation in the referendum on Georgian independence and subsequently regarded the outcome in favour of independence as unlawful.

Two years after the Soviets had turned tanks against a peaceful Georgian demonstration, Georgia declared its independence from the Soviet Union on April 9, 1991. Zviad Gamsakhurdia was elected President of Georgia on 26th of May. Amid the ongoing disputes Abkhaz dissidents aspiring to their own national cause continued their search for allies elsewhere. They had already reached out to the Congress of Peoples of the Caucasus and in their quest for allies they mobilized personal networks formed in the years of Soviet rule as well as supporters with vested self-interests for their cause.

While the road to war is outlined below, the brief historical extracts mentioned above aim to set the stage for the following analysis pointing to the fact that Georgian-Abkhaz relations did not develop in a vacuum over the course of time. Instead, they were conditioned and shaped by the relations both groups entertained with its neighbour Russia and as such particular prone to Russian manoeuvring. As mentioned before, the history of Georgian-Abkhaz relations would not be complete without considering the trilateral history of Georgian-Abkhaz-Russian relations which continued to shape this complex relationship until this day.

2. Gamsakhurdia: Early attempts for keeping the Peace

The events that led to the war in Abkhazia, which started on August 14, 1992, after Georgia had declared its independence for the second time on April 9, 1991, resemble aspects of an ancient Greek tragedy. As at the beginning of every such tragedy stands the question of being. In this context it was the definition and formation of a Georgian nation out of a dying Soviet Union. In the course of modern state formation, rising Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia inspired his compatriots with conflagrant speeches, powerful rhetoric and national myths and narratives. He managed to unite the Georgian nation behind the goal of becoming an independent country once again. Georgian Parliamentarian Guguli Magradze, chairman of Georgia's Women Party and an expert on minority influence on social conflict explains Gamsakhurdia's rhetoric by stating that on the way to independence it was perceived as normal to emphasize self-determination and that "in this situation some of his more nationalist slogans [seemed] justified. We needed to make it clear that Georgia was no longer a part of the Soviet Union. In such a situation when nobody recognizes that a certain minority [referring to the Georgians within the Soviet Union] exists, this minority needs to be very radical. When there are people -some group or some country- that are the underdog this is necessary to become visible. But once this is achieved you need to change your strategy and become less radical"[277]. Magradze posits that in the Soviet construct Georgia was the underdog and that its cause to be

---

[277] Guguli Magradze. Faculty Tbilisi State University. Personal Interview. 2010.

recognized justified more radical means. This description and classification of Gamsakhurdia's rhetoric is telling about the prevailing atmosphere at the time. It however, also seems ironic, given that what is said to hold true for Georgia, could have as easily be true for another minority group, that yearned for recognition –the Abkhaz within Georgia. On a larger scale, the Georgian-Soviet relation on a smaller scale is a mirror image of the Georgian-Abkhaz relationship. Meanwhile, Georgian scholar Ghia Nodia also points to the importance of nation-building for Georgia throughout its early years[278], but in his explanation the necessity to do so at the expense of another nation which is intended to become an integral part of this new state is hardly traceable.

Georgian political expert Archil Gegeshidze points to Gamsakhurdia's inexperience in the political sphere[279] to explain his pursuit of a policy that led to confrontations between Georgians and some of their national minorities. But rather than being an action by a single individual, actions to limit rather than encourage minorities can be regarded as a common theme at the time. In December 1990, the Georgian Supreme Soviet had cancelled the autonomy of the South Ossetian Oblast after the Oblast had declared its independence from Georgia and boycotted the Georgian elections together with Abkhazians[280]. The environment of national enthusiasm led Zviad Gamsakhurdia to not shy away from the goal of independence even in light of external threats that this independence would come at a cost[281]. Moreover, Gamsakhurdia did not even spare the most sensitive topics such as hinting at abandoning the autonomy of Abkhazia in his nationalist speeches [282]. Taking into account the above mentioned views expressed by Ghia Nodia and Guguli Magradze, it can be restated that times of nation building can certainly necessitate some extremes. However, Gamsakhurdia's nationalistic speeches prior to independence with slogans like "Georgia for Georgians" appear rather counterproductive for uniting a country with a large minority population. These slogans resounded in the ears of Georgia's minorities throughout his brief leadership. They also influenced the perceptions of Georgians by its minorities well beyond. According to George Khutsishvili, a conflictologist based in Tbilisi, this slogan even "played a decisive role" in what he describes as an ensuing situation of hatred between Georgians and Abkhaz which he regards as similar to "ethnic antagonisms in Bosnia."[283] It can be debated to what extend Gamsakhurdia's slogans played a decisive role in bringing about such sentiments or whether these slogans were merely welcomed and instrumentalized by those forces on both sides already

[278] B. Coppieters, G. Nodia, and Y. Anchabadze. *Georgians and Abkhazians: The Search for a Peace Settlement.* Belgium: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1998. Chapter 2. Print.

[279] Archil Gegeshidze. Personal Interview. 2010.

[280] Nikola Cvetkovski. "Appendix 1: Chronicle of Events of the Conflict 1989-1992." *The Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict - Dissertation Aalborg University*. Danish Association for Research on the Caucasus. 1999. Web. 15.3.2002 <http://www.caucasus.dk/publication5.htm>.

[281] See reference of Guguli Magradze below.

[282] Vasha Lordkipanidze. Personal Interview. 2010.

[283] George Khutsishvili. "Intervention in Transcaucasus." *Perspective* 4: n. pag. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.bu.edu/iscip/vol4/Khutsishvili.html>.

harboring such sentiments prior to it[284]. It cannot be disputed, however, that such slogans not only heightened ethnic fears but also put oil in the fires of those formations, which had aspired to secessionist sentiments for many decades already. They were witnesses of a period packed with emotions at the closing stages of an old system and the transition to something new. In Georgia many had waited for a second chance to become independent since 1921. But what many Georgians regarded as gains was connected with fears of loss in the minds of many Abkhaz. Both, fears and hopes were rooted in their historical experiences and memory thereof. Thus in many ways, the conflicts in Georgia were children of their own time, instigated by a minority of militarized extremists and played out on the backs of the majority of the population, who had longed for independence and an end to Soviet rule.

Eventually, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the former dissident and son of a famous Georgian writer, led Georgia to independence against a looming antagonist[285], which would soon come to be called the Russian Federation. And as the tragedy unfolded, the same Gamsakhurdia who advocated nationalist rhetoric before, now struck some less radical notes. Faced with disarray and armed conflict in South Ossetia, he offered some conciliatory legislative approaches to the Abkhaz to calm the heated situation in Georgia's north-western region. Gamsakhurdia thereby acknowledged the fact that legal relations had become increasingly distorted in the years prior to independence and thus tried to address the existing legal vacuum: Between 1989 and 1990 the Supreme Council of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic adopted several documents that started to indicate Georgia's intention of leaving the Soviet Union. Among them were the resolutions of the Supreme Council of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic of 18th November 1989, 9th March and 20th June 1990. By these documents the structures of Georgia, created since the proclamation of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic on 25th February 1921, and all the state and legal acts adopted by the power of these structures, were called into question. These declarations naturally affected the relations with Georgia's autonomous republic of Abkhazia, which had been defined during this time. As a consequence on 25th August 1990, when the Soviet Union was still in existence, the Supreme Council of Abkhazia adopted a *Declaration on State sovereignty of the Abkhazian Soviet Socialist Republic* and a *Resolution On Legal Guarantees for the Protection of the Statehood of Abkhazia*. The Abkhaz side justified these acts due to a fear of "the encroachment upon

---

[284] Violent clashes between Georgians and Abkhaz have a longstanding history. One of the events most commonly referred to during the time period discussed above are the clashes or sometimes called 'Sukhumi riots' between Georgians and Abkhaz in July 1989 about the issue of opening a Georgian University branch in Sukhumi. This event is sometimes depicted as the beginning of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

[285] Mikhail Gorbachov had allegedly threatened Gamsakhurdia over the phone in the presence of Vice Speaker of Parliament Akaki Asatiani that if Gamsakhurdia would insist to be independent from the Soviet Union, this independence would come at the expense of Abkhazia. See: Guguli Magradze. Personal Interview. 2010.

Abkhazia's statehood" underlining Abkhazia's right to self-determination[286]. But only after the Georgian Military Council had reinstated the Constitution of 1921 in which the status of Abkhazia had not yet been determined, the Supreme Council of Abkhazia restored the 1925 Constitution of Abkhazia, according to which Abkhazia was a sovereign state.

According to Vladislav Ardzinba, the most vocal proponent of the Abkhaz secessionist cause and later first President of *de facto* Abkhazia who had worked for eighteen years under Yevgeniy Primakov in Moscow and who was elected as a deputy to the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet in 1989 and assumed its leadership in December 1990, "The Declaration established that only it is a basis for the new Constitution of Abkhazia and defines the position of the Republic while [awaiting] conclusion of the Union Treaty with the Georgian SSR."[287] These early legal developments show that Georgia and Abkhazia were finding themselves in the middle of a period of voluntarily or involuntarily having to re-define legal relations. The re-definition of legal relations followed the so-called 'Sukhumi riots' of July 1989 between Georgians and Abkhaz that erupted over the issue of opening a Georgian University branch (also see above). The Abkhaz protest against the opening stood symbolically for an Abkhaz desire of increased independence from Tbilisi. The increasing frictions over legal issues thus have to be regarded within the context of the national aspirations of both sides. Abkhazia had begun its existence under Soviet rule as a Soviet Socialist Republic, yet as a treaty republic associated with the Georgian SSR. During the reign of Stalin, its status was reduced to an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1931. Issues of sovereignty, control, and shifts of borders were thus implicit in the conflict over legislation. This legal war encompassed not only the large issues of law making, but spread to almost every legal issue regarding competencies, which until then had governed the relations between Abkhaz and Georgians. The situation has been described as a constant back and forth which was complicated by the fact that within the Abkhaz ruling bodies Georgians and Abkhaz (as well as other minority groups caught in the middle) were represented. As a result authority was increasingly paralysed in Abkhazia as well as in Tbilisi on all issues regarding Abkhazia.

In 1991 during the rule of Gamsakhurdia an agreement was reached between the Supreme Council of Georgia and the Supreme Council of Abkhazia, commonly referred to as 'LAW 28-26-11'[288]. It is

---

[286] S. Jinjolia. "On Condemnation of Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing and other Crimes committed by the Military-Political Authorities of Georgia against the Population of Abkhazia during the Georgian-Abkhazian War of 1992-1993." *Resolution of the People's Assembly – The Parliament of the Republic of Abkhazia.* 1997. Print., Also see *Respublika Abkhazia* 109: 5-6 November 1997. Print.

[287] V. Ardzinba, U.N. Voronov, P.V. Florensky, and T.A. Shutova. "Appeal of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Abkhazia to the State Council of Georgia, 12 August 1992." *White Book of Abkhazia - 1992-1993 Documents, Materials, Evidences.* 1993. 86-88. Print. Translated from Russian. cit.n. Tamaz Diasamidze. *Regional Conflicts in Georgia: The Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia, the Autonomous SSR of Abkhazia (1989-2005) - Collection of Political Legal Acts.* 2nd ed. Tbilisi: Regionalism Research Centre, 2005. 139. Print.

[288] See e.g.: Eduard Shevardnadze. *Als der Eiserne Vorhang zerriss: Begegnungen und Erinnerungen.* Duisburg: Peter W. Metzler Verlag, 2007. 295ff. Print.

noteworthy that this time signified a kind of in-between period. Independence had been declared in Georgia in April, but the Soviet Union was only officially dissolved in December. At this particular moment, the agreement concerning 'LAW 28-26-11' signified the first legislative deal negotiated between Gamsakhurdia and the Abkhaz leadership in an atmosphere of uncertainty. This law represented a first step to formulating a policy to resolve existing legal issues between Georgians and Abkhaz. Its subject was the distribution of seats in the Supreme Council of Abkhazia. To this end it prescribed the voting districts in a way that it was clear that 28 Abkhaz deputies, 26 Georgian and 11 deputies of other minority groups would be elected. Although criticizing this arrangement for its undemocratic nature, given that 44% of the population in Abkhazia was Georgian and only 18% of Abkhaz origin at the time, Ivlian Haindrava, Director of the South Caucasus Study Programme at the Republican Institute, views these developments as "an important step"[289] towards a peaceful settlement of this deadlock. He explains that "the cornerstone of the agreement was that all important decisions had to be taken with 2/3 majority. Thus, the deal was targeted at finding common language and common positions."[290] Also Stanislav Lakoba, a well-known Abkhaz historian and member of Abkhazia's first Parliament after communist rule, notes that "Gamsakhurdia wanted to deescalate this situation"[291], and hence proposed these legislative arrangements. The conditions agreed upon prescribed that the Chairman of the Council was to be Abkhaz, the deputy Chairman was to be Georgian and this bi-section would be implemented as such for all significant government posts. Nevertheless, after the ballots were cast and Ardzinba had been re-elected, the Georgian and Abkhaz deputies could not agree on the composition of the cabinet. "To overcome the subsequent deadlock, Abkhaz deputies introduced the practice of appointing a kind of interim Prime Minister. This signified a breach of the agreement."[292] In an atmosphere where emotions ran high, this move caused great mistrust and a sense of disloyalty in Tbilisi. From that moment onwards a battle of decrees started. Ardzinba would pass a decree in Abkhazia and Gamsakhurdia would declare it as illegal in Tbilisi and vice versa. The time signified the height of the so-called "Legislative War" in Georgia and contributed further to rising tensions between Georgians and Abkhaz. Subsequent governments inherited the problems associated wit this "Legislative War" and even intensified it. The interim Military Council which overthrew Gamsakhurdia exacerbated the situation in February 1992 by re-adopting the Constitution of the Georgian Democratic Republic of 1921, in which an Abkhazian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic as a subject of state-legal relations was (logically) not yet foreseen. Failure to fill this

---

[289] Ivlian Haindrava. Director South Caucasus Studies Program Republican Institute. Personal Interview. 2010.
[290] Ibid.
[291] Stanislav Lakoba. Former Secretary Security Council of Abkhazia. Personal Interview. 2010.
[292] Ivlian Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010.

legal vacuum at an early point conditioned the fact that the legal relations between Georgia and Abkhazia remained undefined until 2008.

From September 1991 onwards, the political situation also deteriorated in Tbilisi. Before both sides could recover from the setback associated with Law 28-26-11, propose new initiatives or address legal shortcomings, Gamsakhurdia was ousted on January 6, 1992, and left Tbilisi via Armenia to Chechnya as a result of a struggle[293] between opposition forces and Gamsakhurdia supporters which had started on December 22, 1991. For the following eighteen months, Gamsakhurdia and members of his ousted government convened a government in exile in Chechnya. Many of his followers (commonly referred to as Zviadist) gathered in the western Georgian region of Megrelia to continue the fight against the new regime in Tbilisi. This situation constituted an escalating civil war in Georgia which lasted until 1993.

3. The Interim Government: Missed Opportunities for Peace

In the meantime the Military Council was instituted in Tbilisi as an interim governing body. It was headed by a triumvirate made up of Tengiz Kitovani, Dzhaba Ioseliani and Tengiz Sigua.[294] In addition, a Political Consultative Council formed to take over the functions of a replacement Parliament. This Political Consultative Council was not a legitimately elected body, but it was nevertheless "regarded as a kind of representation"[295]. It, however, only possessed the power to issue recommendations to those who held the reins of power in their hands. The Political Consultative Council was comprised of about ten political parties[296] and around forty individuals, mostly intellectuals and select opposition figures. Some of the figures represented in the Political Consultative Council were instrumental for bringing back Eduard Shevardnadze to Georgia. Those opposed to his return, among them the aforementioned Kitovani and Ioseliani, eventually bent under the pressure from members of the Intelligenzia and called on Eduard Shevardnadze to return to Georgia. In order not to overemphasize the role of the Intelligenzia regarding Shevardnadze's return, it has to be acknowledged that Shevardnadze also catered to the personal interests of those already in power. They regarded him as a means to consolidate and prolong their own rule. Shevardnadze was an internationally known and well-received politician with political experience which many Georgian politicians lacked. He also had

---

[293] Some sources mention the involvement and support of Soviet troops for the opposition, referring to the fact that former Vice-Commander of the Trans-Caucasian Military District, Colonel General Sufian Bepaev allegedly had sent a subdivision to assist the armed opposition. The decisiveness of this support for the removal of Gamsakhurdia from power and whether this can be interpreted as a coordinated move from Moscow remains disputed.

[294] Sigua had been Prime Minister in Gamsakhurdia's government and kept this post until 1993. Kitovani had been a close associate to Gamsakhurdia and the Head of the National Guard since its creation in late 1990.

[295] Ivlian Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010.

[296] See: G.E. Curtis. *A Country Study: Georgia*. Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1994. 102 & 137. Print.

political friends around the world, not least in Russia. Russia had at numerous occasions openly voiced its disapproval over political developments in Georgia and contested its independence. Shevardnadze thus represented a strong card in the deck for maintaining independence and gaining international recognition as a sovereign state, which was still lacking at this point.

Yet, even prior to Shevardnadze's return in March 1992 first initiatives for maintaining peace were undertaken. A loose delegation of concerned members formed in the Political Consultative Council and went to Sukhumi for talks with members of the Supreme Council. Although documentation about this visit remains scarce, according to accounts of participants, this was not a coordinated government effort, but rather a step undertaken by those who deemed that the leadership was not paying enough attention to it and saw the situation with regard to Abkhazia spinning out of control. Nevertheless, the delegation was received by high representatives in Sukhumi and returned to Tbilisi with an outline - a framework for a possible agreement about division of powers between Sukhumi and Tbilisi - which divided competencies without denying autonomy to Abkhazia. In Tbilisi, however, nobody was ready to consider this agreement seriously.[297] Thus, while the delegation can be said to have been very successful on its self-made mission, its success also meant that disproportional expectations had been put on it. At a time when official policy remained silent regarding Abkhazia, the group had conducted talks in a very constructive spirit. Yet, the follow-up both sides had hoped for never took place, partly because the delegation had not been equipped with sufficient authority to negotiate. For both sides, this caused disappointment and left behind a sense of vagueness with regard to the intentions of official Georgian policy regarding Abkhazia.

On March 7, 1992 Shevardnadze returned to Georgia upon the request of the Military Council. The situation in Georgia at the time is described by Peter Mamradze, Shevardnadze's former Chief of Staff (who later also served President Saakashvili as Head of the State Chancery) as "lawless and chaotic"[298]. He emphasizes the role of disorder to understand the situation in Georgia at the time of Shevardnadze's return. In order to illustrate the situation, he points to ongoing clashes between paramilitary troops like the Mkhedrioni, under Dzhaba Ioseliani's command and Gamsakhurdia supporters even in Tbilisi: "No police, no security was working here. You could hear shootings of automatic rifles every night."[299] Others, such as Irakli Menagarishvili, former Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1995 until 2003, confirm this view of events by pointing to the state of flux: "Until 1994 or 1995 it was really difficult to characterize what was going on here in Georgia – it was real chaos."[300] At the

---

[297] Ivlian Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010., Archil Gegeshidze. Personal Interview. 2010. and others.
[298] Peter Mamradze. Former Chief of Staff Georgian Chancellery. Personal Interview. 2010.; Peter Mamradze started his work for the government in 1992 as a member of the Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations and Security of Human Rights, the only state body Shevardnadze created for Conflicts after his return in 1992
[299] Peter Mamradze. Personal Interview. 2010.
[300] Irakli Menagarishvili. Personal Interview. 2010.

time of Shevardnadze's arrival in March 1992, Georgia was characterized by an absence of functioning institutions, severe deficits with regard to legitimate rule and rule of law. A state monopoly on the use of force. All in all, the country showed many attributes symptomatic for a failing state. Consequently, attempts to overcome these deficits and to foster institution and state building were launched immediately after the former Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, Eduard Shevardnadze, had returned to his home country Georgia.

Three days after Shevardnadze had arrived in Georgia, on March 10, 1992 the Military Council put down its mandate. It was replaced by a State Council, a legislative parliamentary organ with a self-proclaimed task to govern the country until the subsequent elections. The State Council was made up of representatives of thirty seven[301] political parties, and social movements which had opposed Gamsakhurdia[302]. Ethnic minorities were likewise represented in the State Council, but notably no representatives from Abkhazia or South Ossetia took part in it. The State Council was headed by the same triumvirate which had previously run the Military Council with the addition of newly returned Eduard Shevardnadze. Kitovani, Ioseliani and Sigua made up the Presidium of the State Council together with Shevardnadze, who was also appointed as its Chairman.

Shevardnadze's post as Chairman of the State Council necessitates an explanation in some more detail. Until October 1992 when elections were held in Georgia, Shevardnadze was not a democratically elected leader. Rather, his Chairmanship can be regarded as a figurehead to internationally and domestically legitimize and consolidate the rule of those who had overthrown Gamsakhurdia. A close associate of Shevardnadze claimed that "Shevardnadze had no power whatsoever. They [Kitovani, Ioseliani, Sigua] planned to use him only as a décor. He had no force under his control, just a few bodyguards, who had come with him from Moscow."[303] The associate refers to the fact that although Shevardnadze held the highest post of the state, he shared his power with the other members of the State Council Presidium and did not have any armed men under his direct command. All four members of the Presidium held the right to veto State Council decisions. Furthermore, Shevardnadze experienced serious challenges to his rule stemming from the three other members of the Presidium. Although Shevardnadze was an essential building block to their own power and Georgia's international recognition, especially Kitovani and Ioseliani were reportedly reluctant to concede power to Shevardnadze. Instead, they continued to conduct numerous acts of governance unilaterally. Additionally, as a consequence of an arrangement between Ioseliani, Kitovani, Prime Minister Sigua

---

[301] See: J.P. Hardt and R.F. Kaufman. *The Former Soviet Union in Transition*. New York, NY: Joint Economic Committee, The Congress of the United States, M.E. Sharpe, 1993. 987. Print.
[302] Some sources put membership in the State Council at sixty four, others at up to ninety two representatives. The likely explanation is that membership increased steadily from May until October 1992, when elections were held in Georgia.
[303] Undisclosed Interview Partners. Personal Interview. 2010.

and Shevardnadze to share responsibilities in the government, Kitovani retained the post of Commander of the National Guard and was appointed Minister of Defense by Shevardnadze in May 1992 in an attempt to bring the National Guard under central control[304]. The other of Shevardnadze's 'companions', Dzhaba Ioselinai, headed the paramilitary Mkhedrioni and due to the lack of an effective regular army, Shevardnadze was heavily reliant on him in his early years, too. Only in October 1992, after the war in Abkhazia had already begun, Shevardnadze was democratically legitimized as Georgia's Head of State. He was voted into the post of Chairman of the Parliament and formally elected as Head of Government by Parliament after the Law of State Power had been passed on November 6. This new law gave the new head of state wide ranging competencies even beyond the executive functions of the presidential office, which later on helped him to consolidate his power. Overall, neither division of competences nor criteria for decision making were steadfast at the time, and a subliminal and continuous power struggle[305] which came into the open later on led to enormous shortcomings regarding coordination in times of crisis (see below).

There are analysts who claim that Shevardnadze intentionally started the war in Abkhazia to move from the position of political outsider to consolidate his own rule. They argue along the line that for the "new opposition he was a former opponent, a stranger; he was still a Russian citizen with a Moscow residence; his strength was the support he received from Moscow, but he could never achieve the admiration among the Georgian people that Gamsakhurdia enjoyed. For Shevardnadze therefore a war in Abkhazia was absolutely necessary without it, the consolidation of his personal power and defeat of his political opponents were inconceivable. In fact it was the war in Abkhazia that allowed him to put down public discontent in Megrelia, to strengthen his own position in Tbilisi, and to dismiss and then arrest those who had overthrown Gamsakhurdia and invited Shevardnadze himself to Georgia''[306] This account is an example of how the events leading up to the Georgian-Abkhaz war can be misconstrued by selective and undifferentiated accounts. At best it is reductionist and must be considered as flawed. To ascribe the outbreak of the Georgian-Abkhaz war to Shevardnadze single-handedly does not take the general political environment of the time into account. It also seems to disregard the fact that war in South Ossetia was already ongoing, which leaves the question why

---

[304] Jonathan Wheatley. *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union*. Surrey: Ashgate, 2005. 65ff. Print.
[305] Bruce Parrott. *State Building and Military Power in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995. 6. Print.; Also see D. Darchiashvili and B. Coppieters. "Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform." *Statehood and Security: Georgia After the Rose Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005. 216. Print.; See also: R. Bonner. "Georgian Fighter Wields Guns, Money and Charme." *The New York Times* 16 Dec. 1993: n. pag. Print.
[306] S. Zhidkov. *Brosok Malov Imperil (The Spurt of a Small Empire)*. Maikop: Adygeya, 1996. Print., cit.n. Alexander Krylov. "The Security of the Caspian Sea Region - The Georgian-Abkhazian Conflict." Abkhaz World, 15 Oct. 2008. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://abkhazworld.com/aw/conflict/739-the-security-of-the-caspian-sea-region>.

Shevardnadze aimed at ending one war in the Dagomys negotiations in 1992 (see below)only to start another. It is true however, that Shevardnadze was considered a political outsider in Georgia upon his return. Among certain groups in Georgia he was never able to shed the image of Russia's man. He has been accused of an alleged lack of patriotism and especially in the beginning, when he had not been publically confirmed in office, his legitimacy to rule the country stood on feet of clay. But Shevardnadze was certainly no newcomer to Georgian politics. On the contrary, he was an extremely experienced politician, commonly referred to as the "Georgian White Fox", alluding to his cleverness and ability to manoeuvre great political challenges. He had risen amidst the Soviet cadres, a fact that cannot be attributed to luck but only to political skill. It would thus be very surprising if Shevardnadze in a situation of unconsolidated power and without being fully in control of Georgia's armed forces would have started a war to overcome internal power rivalries. Furthermore, public discontent in Megrelia was not put to rest by the war in Abkhazia. There were indeed times when the Zviadists operating from Megrelia kept a gentlemens' agreement and held fire, but they did not abandon their claim to power for long and consequently when fighting in Megrelia erupted again later on, Georgia had to fight at two fronts. The Zviadist forces could eventually be defeated only with Russian support, which came at a price, namely Georgia's entry to the CIS.

The above mentioned, however, is not to be mistaken for an argument that does not accord any responsibility to the outbreak of the war in Abkhazia to Shevardnadze. During key moments leading up to the conflict he did not assess the situation in its full gravity. For example did he not follow a call of Ardzinba to Sukhumi in the early days of August. In addition to that, when it was clear that the military had blatantly disregarded previously reached agreements, he did not call things by their name, but instead went along with them which suggests a certain degree of political opportunism. Even at the time there were alternatives to covering up what was happening in Abkhazia in the early days. Among other things, Shevardnadze could have distanced himself from the events or resigned to stand for election later on. But as this chapter reveals history took another path, which is described below.

Unrest was already developing in the conflict zones. In South Ossetia an armed conflict had been underway since early 1991. "Almost every day there were news about murders and raids and killings"[307]. Thus, Shevardnadze asked Prime Minister Sigua to create the State Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations and Security of Human Rights, which was formed as the only state body for conflict resolution in 1992. Although Sigua "was reluctant"[308], he eventually came to terms with the idea. As a result, the post of head of that Committee was offered to a man who had been a young general of the Soviet police in Georgia and a previous member of the Politbureau – meaning a high level member of

---

[307] Peter Mamradze. Personal Interview. 2010.
[308] Ibid.

the communist party – Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Kavsadze. Although this Committee is rarely mentioned in the existing literature, it would be wrong to dismiss it altogether for at least two reasons. First of all, due to the fact that a young graduate from the faculty of International Relations from Kiev University was brought to Kavsadze's office upon recommendation in the summer of 1992[309]. This young man was Mikhail Saakashvili, who started his government career in the legal department of the State Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations and Security of Human Rights. Secondly, because it is widely held that Kitovani precipitated fighting in Abkhazia when he moved toward West Georgia with a contingent of thousands of fighters under the pretext of trying to liberate Interior Minister, Roman Guentsadze, who had been taken hostage by Zviadists in Megrelia. Notably, the reason Guentsadze had been dispatched as head of a 12-men delegation to Megrelia was in an effort to negotiate the release of Alexander Kavsadze. Kavsadze had been taken hostage by Gocha Bakhia[310], the former head of Gamsakhurdia's personal guards on July 9, 1992[311] during a trip to Megrelia for investigation of Human Rights violations[312]. Guentadze was in turn kidnapped and the Zviadists were accused of holding him in Kochara on Abkhaz territory, which is often referred to as one of the pretext under which Kitovani entered Abkhazia in mid-August.

Before the road from Tbilisi finally led to war in Abkhazia in August 1992, several attempts were undertaken on the political level - formally and informally - to prevent an escalation to war. In May 1992 another delegation from the State Council visited Abkhazia[313]. This time around the delegation had more of a formal character than the ad-hoc group that visited Abkhazia prior to Shevardnadze's return. Ivlian Haindrava, who had taken part in both delegations, noted that, "A kind of official negotiation took place in the Supreme Council. It was characterized very much by hard talk as almost a year had passed since the LAW 28-26-11, during which almost no negotiations had taken place. Several serious issues were discussed, but in the end the Georgian delegation did not have the mandate to agree on issues."[314] His account highlights that while the problem had been recognized on the political level, it had not yet reached the stage of policy formulation. The delegation returned to Tbilisi to initiate follow-up and substantiate the arrangements on the way to real agreements and

---

[309] During the Period when M. Saakashvili began his studies at Kyiev University, the limited places of the university were distributed by the Union of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Union Republics. For example, Georgia had two places during the period when Saakashvili was registering at the university in 1984/ 1985 students were only accepted with an official recommendation from the State. Saakashvili received his recommendation from Vasha Lordkipanidze, who deemed him loyal to the regime due to his unambigious past.
See: "Michail Saakaschwili." Council of Europe, n.d. Web. 1 June 2014.
<http://www.coe.int/T/d/Com/Dossiers/PV-Sitzungen/2004-01/CV-Saakashvili-de.asp>.
[310] Vicken Cheterian. *War and Peace in the Caucasus: Ethnic Conflict and the New Geopolitics*. New York: Columbia University, 2008. 186. Print.
[311] Edward F. Mickolus, and Susan L. Simmons. *Terrorism, 1992-1995 a chronology of events and a selectively annotated bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997. 185. Print.
[312] Peter Mamradze. Personal Interview. 2010.
[313] Stanislav Lakoba. Personal Interview. 2010.
[314] Ivlian Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010.

signatures. But they were unable to direct the attention of the close circle that was able to initiate policy formulation to the urgency of continuing this dialogue. In mid-June members of the delegation met with Shevardnadze to urge for the necessity to carry on the dialogue and negotiations with the Abkhaz. In the end, however, neither Sukhumi nor Tbilisi initiated a formal follow-up. The dialogue thus experienced no further high-level exploration at this point. However, Shevardnadze and the exclusive circle that was able to move policy forward had not failed to recognize the problem. But their definition of the problem differed from the assessment of the delegation. Unlike the delegation, the members of the Presidium did not approach the Abkhaz directly. The problem was thus not defined as a problem on the level of Georgian-Abkhaz relations. Rather than approaching the Abkhaz, the members of the Presidium preferred a process that was based on a close alliance with Russia. This points to a belief that this problem could be solved between the Russian and the Georgian leadership. Thus, while the members of the delegation tried to initiate a more open process, Shevardnadze and the members of the Presidium did not support these efforts. Instead they initiated a more closed process that was exclusively controlled by them and focussed on Russia instead of the Abkhaz leadership as the primary partner for negotiations.

4. Of Russians and Dagomys

The reasons for the lack of a follow-up or the absence of an overall coordinated institutional response to the delegation's initiative were multisided. Institutional overload can be regarded as one of the core problems the administration was dealing with at the time. The sheer number of hot spots which needed attention - the war in South-Ossetia, the civil war and a brewing war in Abkhazia, to name just a few - put high demands on the leadership, especially given the hostile intra-administrative environment prone to mismanagement, where power had not yet been consolidated, but was still in a state of flux.

Many scholars and experts view the crisis in South Ossetia as inextricably linked to the conflict in Abkhazia[315]. Without going into details about how the war in South Osssetia ensued and the way the conflict took its course, it must be mentioned that both conflicts exhibit a large number of similarities and intersections. During the later phases of the conflicts, transborder contacts between leaders in South Ossetia and Abkhazia increased up to a point when decisions regarding *de facto* foreign policy issues are nowadays often reached in a synchronized fashion. Keeping this linkage in mind, the case of the *Agreement on the Settlement of the South Ossetian Conflict* in 1992, also commonly referred to as the Dagomys or sometimes Sochi agreement, can provide insights into some important developments

---

[315] Oliver Reisner. European Commission Delegation to Georgia. Personal Interview. Irakli Alasania. Former personal representative of the Georgian President for the Georgian-Abkhaz talks. Personal Interview. 2010., Ivlian Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010., Paata Zakareishvili. Georgian State Minister of Reconciliation. Personal Interview. 2007. 2010., among others.

at the time, especially the correlation between domestic power struggle and the secessionist movements as well as the attitude of the Russian leadership regarding Georgia.

On the morning of June 24 before Shevardnadze was leaving with a delegation to Dagomys for a Russian-led negotiation on a conflict settlement agreement with South Ossetian leaders, armed Zviadists took over the state television center in the Georgian capital. They entered the television station and came on air claiming that Gamsakhurdia's government had been reinstated. Simultaneously, the Abkhaz National Guard stormed the Interior Ministry office in Sokhumi and stripped the ethnic Georgian Minister of his post. Meanwhile, prior to his departure for Dagomys, Shevardnadze had to go around Tbilisi "making speeches in the middle of the shootings"[316] in order to reassure the stirred up citizens of order. After the Zviadists in Tbilisi were defeated and ruffled feathers were smoothed, the delegation around Shevardnadze left for Dagomys to negotiate a peace agreement regarding South Ossetia. As illustrated by this example, domestic infighting appeared as an obstacle to crisis management. The fact that events took place simultaneously regarding South Ossetia, Abkhazia and the Zviadist insurgents strengthens the argument that no single event can be evaluated completely detached from the other.

In Dagomys the Georgian delegation met with a Russian delegation headed by Boris Yeltsin and a delegation from South Ossetia. Eyewitness reports shed light on the attitude of the Russian leader at the time: "After speaking to Shevardnadze for an hour tête à tête, Yeltsin made a strong gesture. He ordered all the South Ossetian leaders to sit next to Shevardnadze. So we [the Georgian and Ossetian delegations] were all sitting in a row across from Yeltsin and he told all of us "This is Georgia…" pointing his finger at the row of men sitting down across from him. "…and we speak about peace in Georgia." His statement really shocked the South Ossetian leaders present because they all had aimed to sit down together with Yeltsin figuratively against the Georgian delegation."[317] Thus, symbolically speaking Yeltsin had made it clear that he supported his old compatriot Shevardnadze, who had put his weight behind Yeltsin during the August putsch in Moscow in 1991, and that he viewed Georgia under Shevardnadze's leadership as the sovereign over South Ossetia. After this strong gesture, Yeltsin approved the treaty and rushed from the meeting to leave for Ankara. Alexander Rutskoi, the Vice President of Russia stayed behind. What took place at Dagomys following Yeltsin's departure clearly points to existing divergence in views that led to a power struggle between Yeltsin and Rutskoi which came into the open in late 1992 when Rutskoi openly declared his opposition to Yeltsin and which reached its peak in the 1993 Constitutional Crisis in Russia.

---

[316] Peter Mamradze. Personal Interview. 2010.
[317] Undisclosed Interview Partners. Personal Interview. 2010., among them eyewitnesses of the events described.

Rutskoi and Yeltsin were already not on good terms at Dagomys. Upon arrival in separate cars, they entered the Dagomys villa from different sides. Neither shaking hands nor exchanging a greeting to one another, they merely sat in silence next to each other during the negotiations. Once Yeltsin had left, the full extent of how Rutskoi disagreed with the policies and visions of the Russian President manifested itself. Yeltsin had spoken in favour of a united Georgia. Rutskoi ordered to see the paper version of the agreement again and explained that some technical aspects in the text would have to be revisited and reworked. The main changes proposed concerned checkpoints north of the Roki tunnel, which Rutskoi wanted to see under Russian control. The Georgian delegation grew uneasy and members of the delegation nervously burst out in protest. After one hour of quarrelling, Shevardnadze, who had observed the situation quietly for most of this time, stood up and said: "I cannot understand it. The President of Russia and the President of Georgia reached and agreement. Now if somebody from the Russian side is not interested in having this document, well, we Georgians are even less interested to have it"[318]. With these words he passed the document to Rutskoi's side and the entire Georgian delegation stood up to leave. Now it was Rutskoi who in turn grew uneasy. He pleaded with Shevardnadze, who had just been bluffing, and was not even the elected President of Georgia, yet. In the end the document remained just as Yeltsin had left it.

This account based on an eyewitness report points to several important facts. It underlines the close relationship of the Russian President Yeltsin with the designated Georgian President. Shevardnadze himself remembers about Dagomys that "Russia seemed to be playing a clean game back then".[319] The account also indicates power divisions within the Russian leadership and already looming substantive disagreement of how to deal with the Georgian question which will be discussed further in the following chapters. In addition, it is also noteworthy that the role of the South Ossetian delegation is downplayed as that of mere bystanders, both in the eyewitness account and in Shevardnadze's own writing. While having been present at Dagomys, at least the accounts of the negotiations portray them as onlookers of a process which was decided mainly over their heads by those deemed to be the most powerful. In 1992, although the Soviet Union had collapsed, the most powerful regional player and certainly the most powerful part of the previously mentioned constellation was Russia. The example above demonstrates to what extend it was decisive, who was on better terms with those who made decisions within the Russian ruling elite. Thus, the above mentioned example also reveals that in a sense Georgia was competing with its territorial entities Abkhazia and South Ossetia for Russia's favour.

---

[318] Ibid.
[319] Eduard Shevardnadze. *Als der Eiserne Vorhang zerriss.* 299. (Translated from German by author)

It has to be reiterated that Eduard Shevardnadze and Boris Yeltsin were clearly on favourable terms on 24 June 1992. The Georgian leader even used his leverage with the Russian President to issue a Joint Communiqué to the international community after the Dagomys meeting. This Communiqué addressed not only the issue of South Ossetia, but clearly stated that "the entire set of Georgian-Russian relations, paying due attention to issues that could cause complications between the Republic of Georgia and the Russian Federation"[320] had been discussed. The issue of Abkhazia had clearly been raised between them and both state leaders had alluded to each others sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders.[321] This can be taken as an unambiguous indication of where the Russian Federation stood on this issue. In addition, the Communiqué stated: "The law enforcement bodies of Georgia and Russia will resolutely stop the activities of unlawful military, paramilitary and unauthorized units and groups in the territories under their jurisdiction."[322] This statement not only made it clear who was viewed by Russia as holding the right to legitimately use force in Abkhazia, but it also strengthened Shevardnadze's stance vis-à-vis separatist ambitions in all regions of Georgia, dealing a blow to secessionist movements. At the same time, it was a warning to those groupings within Georgia that contemplated to use the situation of disarray and lawlessness to venture out on their own and thus an early building block on the way to centralizing the monopoly on force. It may also be interpreted as a signal to elements from within Russia below the level of the state that stood ready to assist the Abkhaz cause. Overall the Dagomys agreement clearly points to the fact that Yeltsin supported Shevardnadze and that both conflicts, especially in their early phase, were inextricably linked.

The aforementioned good personal relations between Eduard Shevardnadze and Boris Yeltsin in 1992, which later on deteriorated, can be regarded as an important building block for understanding and tracing Georgian-Russian relations with respect to Abkhazia throughout the nineties. The heavy reliance on Russia to solve the conflict in Abkhazia in the early nineties was thus not solely due to Russian geopolitical preordination, but can in part be explained by the fact that experiences such as the Dagomys agreement[323], had validated the belief that good relations with Russia would translate into a payoff for Georgia. The way the negotiations were conducted at Dagomys also shows that Shevardnadze, like king Erekle before him, regarded himself as an equal vis-à-vis the Russian

---

[320] Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze. *Diplomatic Internal Report about Communiqué jointly issued by Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze about the Dagomys Meeting on June 24, 1992*. 1992. Print. Personal Archive of author. Also Stanislav Lakoba. Personal Interview. 2010.

[321] Parliament of Georgia. "Appeal of the Georgian Parliament to the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, To President of the Russian Federation Mr. Boris Yeltsin." *Bulletins of the Parliament of Georgia*. 1991. 102. Print., cit.n. Tamaz Diasamidze. *Regional Conflicts in Georgia*. 158.

[322] Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze. *Diplomatic Internal Report about Communiqué jointly issued by Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze*.; Also: Stanislav Lakoba. Personal Interview. 2010.

[323] For full text of the Dagomys agreement see: *Svobodnaya Gruzia* 27 June 1992: 82. Print.

leadership. Yet, both leaders, Shevardnadze and Yeltsin, were contested at home and among other things faced rigorous criticism for the way they conducted relations with each other as events took their course later on.

5. Information flows amidst Crisis

Institutional overload due to a large number of overlapping hot spots and a belief that the strong man in the region would assist Georgia in resolving the threats to its territorial integrity must be considered as some of the reason why certain initiatives for maintaining peace did not receive due attention by the Georgian leadership. But problems arising from sub-optimal and incomplete information flows also contributed to the way crisis were handled in Tbilisi. In reference to the quote "if past events leave traces, future events must have roots"[324], this section aims to better understand these roots, i.e. the process that led to the outbreak of the armed conflict on August 14, 1992.

It has often been argued by Georgian experts questioned in the course of this research that scholars trying to understand the conflict tend to put too much emphasis on official papers and documents, but that these papers can hardly reflect the prevailing atmosphere or provide an understanding of "the real situation"[325]. This argument is partly rooted in historical memory of Russia repeatedly failing to comply with written agreements. In modern days, too, a proliferation of contracts and agreements were concluded to regulate the conflict. The enforcement of these agreements was often either disregarded completely or compliance with the agreements was interpreted by its subjects in a very flexible and selective manner according to what was regarded as beneficial. This notion is substantiated by the frequency of violations of agreements concluded, which will be discussed below. Additionally, the general environment was characterized by an absence of rule of law[326]. Notably, the situation regarding Georgian statehood, including the rule of law issues was so dire that after Georgia had declared its independence on 9th April 1991, it took almost a year before Germany as the first western power recognized the states' independence. This first recognition only took place after Shevardnadze had returned to Georgia on 22nd March 1992. While the United States and Britain followed suit, many other states were still hesitant to recognize Georgia. This reluctance clearly indicates that many nations still did not see Georgia as a country which fulfilled minimum requirements essential to be recognized as a sovereign state, such as rule of law, functioning state structures or a state monopoly on violence. A number of countries only established diplomatic relations with Georgia

---

[324] Quote cit.n. Eduard Shevardnadze. "Speech of Eduard Shevardnadze before the 47th session of the General Assembly." 2 Oct. 1992. Speech.
[325] Respondents who have made statements to this effect include Alexander Rondeli, Irakli Menagarishvili, Peter Mamradze, Eldar Kvernadze, Giorgi Haindrava, Ivliane Haindrava, Temur Iakobashvili and Vasha Lordkipanidze.
[326] This estimation is based on oral accounts rather than quantitative data. The World Bank only started collecting statistical data on the rule of law in Georgia 1996.

shortly before UN membership was granted in July 1992. Others, such as France waited until after the outbreak of the August war in 1992 and Azerbaijan diplomatically recognized Georgia only in November of that year. In such an environment of transition and both domestic and international uncertainty, informal contracts based on personal trust and relationships often took prevalence over more formal agreements. Thus, it is essential to point out the importance of personal networks and relationships of the time, because they influenced the way information was provided and processed and consequently provide insights into how the Georgian government was dealing with the ensuing crisis in Abkhazia.

The months and weeks before August 14 were characterized by a kind of domestic shuttle diplomacy between Sukhumi and Tbilisi. People were coming to and from Abkhazia equipped with partly conflicting information. On the one hand, Prime Minister Sigua received and spread a series of intelligence reports within government circles that in Abkhazia preparations were underway aimed at armed conflict and that targeted killing of Georgians was taking place. Behind those reports, which contributed to a tense and polarized atmosphere, was the Georgian State Intelligence Service Chief, Irakli Batiashvili. The kind of information Batiashvili provided fed the notions of those elements within the State Council which pushed for taking action against disobedient forces in Abkhazia. The pressure to take action had been building up over time and reached substantial levels long before the August events. Batiashvili, himself a young philosopher by training, had entertained close ties with Dzhaba Ioseliani, head of the Mkhedrioni paramilitary and member of the Presidium of the State Council. The Mkhedrioni which were considered part of the state forces at this point had a vested interest in an escalation of violence as they were the likely beneficiaries of conflict. These personal ties were viewed by some as the reason why Batiashvili had been awarded the post of State Intelligence Chief. This type of political patronage was, however, not regarded as something out of the ordinary at the time. Nevertheless, these ties may have also been the reason for a certain exaggeration in the reports issued by his office. All in all, it is reasonable to enquire whether a young appointee without a proven field record was able to author such reports with the adequate distance and foresight that an intelligence analysis would have required in this situation. This doubt remains, especially when considering conflicting assessments by Avtandil Ioseliani, a longstanding KGB officer who headed the Abkhaz section of the KGB in Sukhumi at the time. Avto Ioseliani, a Georgian who obtained the post as Chief of State Security Services in the mid-nineties, visited Shevardnadze every third day to discuss the situation in Abkhazia with him[327]. On numerous occasions he cautioned Shevardnadze not to give in to existing pressures which called for armed response to the events in Abkhazia. He pleaded with him

---

[327] Undisclosed Interview Partners. Personal Interview. 2010.

and warned of losing Abkhazia if those voices urging for violent action in Abkhazia would not be suppressed.

The prominent Georgian scholar Ghia Nodia notes that "There were some attempts of Georgian and Abkhaz, who spoke on behalf of the two communities to avoid conflict and find other ways. But in the end it was basically a failure to prevent conflict."[328] This statement, although capturing the essence of what was going on in the last months prior to the outbreak of war in Abkhazia, is not able to provide the full picture of informal attempts that were undertaken to prevent armed hostilities. The Soviet regime and the communist Nomenclature had left behind a cobweb-like network of contacts which were still very much intact at the time of Shevardnadze's return to Georgia. One outstanding example of such contacts was Alexander Ankvab, a prominent Abkhaz who over the course of time held the posts of Interior Minister, Prime Minister, Vice President and President of *de facto* Abkhazia. In 1981 Ankvab had joined the executive of the Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party and was promoted to the post of Deputy Interior Minister of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1984. In the early nineties he continued to entertain close relations with Tbilisi, among others with Alexander Kavsadze, the head of the State Committee on Inter-ethnic Relations and Security of Human Rights as well as with Vasha Lordkipanidze, Eduard Shevardnadze's Chief of Staff and later Ambassador to Moscow with special decrees as Special Representative for the Resolution of the Abkhaz conflict. Another prominent Abkhaz, Sergey Bagapsh, the late President of *de facto* Abkhazia had resided in Tbilisi in the eighties as well and kept close ties to elements of the Georgian leadership well beyond the outbreak of hostilities. These two prominent cases are just two out of a plethora of good private and professional informal and grassroot relations that had not yet experienced any serious disruptions by 1992. While the political propaganda machines on both sides already ran at full speed, behind closed doors concerned members of both communities were still pleading to find a peaceful way. Among them prominent members of the Abkhaz separatist movement, who came to Tbilisi week after week during the months of May, June and prior to July 9, when a sense of gunpowder was already in the air. Many of them met with Kavsadze at his chambers in the State Chancery for frank and open discussions about the situation. Concerns were voiced about external proposals for military support Abkhaz separatists had received, about war and its disastrous consequences for Georgia and Abkhazia alike. Most of these meetings ended with a plea for Shevardnadze to turn around ongoing developments.[329]

---

[328] Ghia Nodia. Director International School for Caucasus Studies at Ilia Chavchavadze State University. Personal Interview.
[329] Peter Mamradze. Personal Interview. 2010.

But Shevardnadze was unable to receive many of those who came to Tbilisi to plead with him. This may have been due in part to a kind of gate-keeper mechanism that filtered information which was let through to the President. A close associate at the time assesses this information inhibition in negative terms explaining about Shevardnadze: "He was sitting as a hostage in a marble building and the third floor was occupied by Mkhedrioni troops. Everything was checked before it was going on the fourth floor where he had his office."[330] The marble building referred to was Georgia's State Chancery. By making a reference to the Mkhedrioni troops under Dhzaba Ioseliani's command this former associate illustrates whose hands the means of physical power and control over information flows lay in. This account points to classical patron-agent problems, in which the agent holds an excess of information which is not disclosed to the patron. It has to be mentioned that this lack of information flow was partly forced. Shevardnadze is portrayed as a figure who resides at the top of a power structure dependent on other elements within that structure – some benevolent, some hostile - and without any real authority to make and enforce decisions. This assessment stands in contrast to those who argue that Shevardnadze started the Abkhaz war deliberately and single-handedly. In reality, Shevardnadze was neither a victim, nor a sole perpetrator. This notion regarding how the conflict in Abkhazia eventually turned violent will be further explored below.

6. A State failing on the Road to War

Maybe it would be wrong to talk about a failing state in the case of Georgia as the state was still prior to full consolidation. However, for the development of the young state, the incidents around the entry of Kitovani's forces into Abkhazia after August 12, 1992 signified a severe setback in the process of state building and consolidation. The failure to prevent war in Abkhazia and the entry of armed forces into Abkhaz territory, which Shevardnadze himself calls "the biggest mistake"[331] of the Georgian leadership, are decisive illustrations of the militarization of politics in an environment of absence of a state monopoly on the use of force, a blurred division of competences, weak state institutions and a severe internal power struggle. Last but not least, the way the conflict erupted shows that the leadership as a whole was not pursuing an active policy with regard to Abkhazia, but struggled through a reactive series of uncoordinated ad-hoc responses.

By mid-1992 Georgia was dealing with a grave socio-economic crisis due to the aftermath of the breakdown of the economy after the demise of the Soviet system. The situation was aggravated when the railway conductors went on strike, due to a frequency of attacks on the trains. They protested not without reason: In the first half of 1992 1,142 attacks and explosions had been registered on the

---

[330] Ibid.
[331] Eduard Shevardnadze. Former President of Georgia. Personal Interview. 2011.

Georgian part of the Transcaucasus railway line[332], which connected Russia with Georgia via Abkhazia and continued until Armenia. While this part of the so called *Eurasian transport corridor*, sometimes also referred to as the *Historic Silk Road*, *Great Silk Road*, *Eurasian Thoroughfare* or *Eurasian Transport Bridge*, has traditionally been regarded as having special importance for West-East and East-West transit, its vulnerability in times of crisis has been an inheritance even to its modern counterparts such as the '*New Silk Road*'[333]. In 1992, too, the issue of disruption of the Transcaucasus railway transit routes in times of crisis was not a new phenomenon in Georgia. In July 1989 during the Sukhumi riots Gorbachov had to decree "the immediate restoration of traffic along the Transcaucasus railway in order to remove critical conditions hampering supply of the population, sustainable operation of enterprises and institutions and delivery of tourists to the holiday centers"[334]. Gamsakhurdia was equally concerned with railway issues[335] at the time of armed conflict in South Ossetia. The disruption of railway lines has historically been linked with conflict as a signal of desired change of the existing power balance. Nicholas Spykman writes that "the railroad…made possible effective integration over wide areas. Before its development, few states located in conflict areas were able to maintain control over territories lying more than three hundred miles from the center of government."[336] The railway was thus regarded as a means to maintain control over space. Otto Maull goes further in suggesting that "Bahnen in Verwaltung nehmen, was gleichbedeutend mit dem Verlust der Selbständigkeit gewesen wäre…Der Griff nach den Bahnen ist darum bei jeder politischen Eroberung der erste"[337]. As Maull explains, any attempt to control the railroad can be considered as an impugnment of sovereignty. He deduces that railways are the first target in any struggle. It follows that the attacks on the railway in Abkhazia must be viewed as indicators that a serious crisis was on the way. The way the railway issue was dealt with thus yields important insights into the overall management of the increasing tensions between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides. To this end it is noteworthy that the attacks on the railway in 1992 did not only interrupt the delivery of goods to and from Georgia, but blocked the transit hub Georgia in its entirety. North-South transit destined for Armenia, Azerbaijan and back to Russia was interrupted by those hoping to benefit economically or politically from the escalation of the crisis. This underlines the sensitivity of transit routes through Georgia. In late spring

---

[332] Eduard Shevardnadze. *Als der Eiserne Vorhang zerriss.* 301.

[333] See e.g. Archil Gegeshidze. "The New Silk Road: A Georgian Perspective." *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 5: n. pag. Print.

[334] Mikhail Gorbachev. "Decree issued by the Supreme Council of the USSR on Events in the Abkhaz ASSR, 17 July 1989." *Bulletins of the Peoples' Deputies Congress of the USSR and the Supreme Council of the USSR* 7: 257. Print. Translated from Russian. cit.n. Tamaz Diasamidze. *Regional Conflicts in Georgia.* 6.

[335] See: Z. Gamsakhurdia. "Decree issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia on introduction of state of emergency on the territory of town of Tskhinvali and the Java District, 12 December." *Bulletins of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia* 12: 20-23. Print. Translated from Georgian. cit.n. Tamaz Diasamidze. *Regional Conflicts in Georgia.* 42.

[336] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Geography and Foreign Policy, I." 36.

[337] Otto Maull. *Politische Geographie*. Berlin: 1925. 498-499. Print. cit.n. Nicholas J. Spykman. "Geography and Foreign Policy, I." 37.

of 1992, neighbouring countries had already expressed their displeasure with this state of affairs, but the sensitivities regarding Abkhazia handicapped Georgian law enforcement as any strong move ran the risk of provoking a fatal response.

Most of the attacks on the railway happened in West Georgia. Zviadists and criminals who manipulated the situation for their own good, often sought refuge on Abkhaz territory before the Georgian law enforcement, which did not hold the competencies to operate on Abkhaz territory, had a chance to intervene. Meanwhile, Ardzinba, as the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Abkhazia had decreed on 24 January 1992 to "…subordinate the Line Division of the Interior of Sukhumi Railway Station to the Ministry of Interior of Abkhazia."[338], thus bringing the relevant forces to protect the railway in Abkhazia under Abkhaz jurisdiction. In light of the above mentioned role of railways, this can be considered an attempt to further assert control in Abkhazia. This could have been yet another point of contention, but given the existing tensions, it had been loosely agreed that only guards from Abkhazia (regarded as Georgian territory) would deal with violations of the rail transport on the territory of Abkhazia. As external complaints were mounting and the inflicted damage reached more than 11 million rubbles, Shevardnadze agreed with Vladislav Ardzinba over the phone[339] on jointly guarding the trains from Samtredia to Lesselidze in Abkhazia. The key condition was that internal troops should only be placed near the railway and not advance to or enter Sukhumi. Ardzinba had specifically warned Shevardnadze of the consequences of breaching this condition and extended a request for someone to come to Sukhumi to work out the details of the arrangement.

Instead of departing for Sukhumi himself, Shevardnadze requested Kitovani and Sigua to finalize these negotiations in Sukhumi. While Ardzinba was kept waiting for three days in Sukhumi, because neither Kitovani nor Sigua followed the call of the Chairman of the State Council, Shevardnadze decreed a State of Emergency on Railway Transport in the name of the State Council Presidium on August 10, 1992. He entrusted "the Armed Forces of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Georgia and units of militarized protection of the Georgian Railway Department with a task of implementation of the State of Emergency.[340]" Under point 4 the decree states that "Those armed forces authorized to implement the State of Emergency on the Georgian Railway, shall secure protection of trains, bridges, tunnels and other communications and objects, and accompany

---

[338] V. Ardzinba. "Decree issued by the Supreme Council of the Republic of Abkhazia on Transferring of the Agencies of Procuracy and the Ministry of Interior under the Jurisdiction of Abkhazia, Sokhumi, 24 January 1992." n. pag. Print. From the personal archive of Tamaz Diasamidze., cit.n. Tamaz Diasamidze. *Regional Conflicts in Georgia.* 101.

[339] See Eduard Shevardnadze. *Als der Eiserne Vorhang zerriss.* 308; Also: Vasha Lordkipanidze. Personal Interview. 2010. Peter Mamradze. Personal Interview. 2010., Archil Gegeshidze. Personal Interview. 2010.

[340] Eduard Shevardnadze. "Decree issued by the Presidium of the State Council of the Republic of Georgia on Introduction of the State of Emergency on the Railway Transport, 10 August 1992." n. pag. Print., cit.n. Tamaz Diasamidze. *Regional Conflicts in Georgia.* 137-138.

passenger and cargo vehicles. They shall preclude and root out attacks and other criminal activities directed against the railway transport."[341] The decree issued by Shevardnadze in the name of the Presidium of the State Council reflects his agreement with Ardzinba. By power of this decree he handed over the responsibilities to handle the situation on the ground to Tengiz Kitovani in his role as head of the Ministry of Defense. Shevardnadze himself emphasized at numerous occasions that while he was Chairman of the State Council, he was not Commander in Chief of the armed forces at the time[342], thus highlighting once again the relative autonomy and far reaching capacity of Kitovani to make decisions. In the end, uncoordinated acts of governance would finally lead Georgia to war in Abkhazia as discussed below.

While Sigua arrived only three days after Ardzinba's request, Kitovani, entrusted with defense issues, did not follow the call to Sukhumi at all. Instead he spent time in Akhaltsikhe in South Georgia to assist at a hand-over of weapons and armed vehicles from the 16th Russian Division stationed there. These arms were part of the military equipment that was to be transferred to Georgia under the Taskhent Agreement of May 15, 1992, which allocated responsibility for the former Soviet military equipment among the USSR's successor states[343]. The timing of this transfer and the course of events thereafter remains peculiar. Some compatriots point out the enormous internal pressure for action which had been building up among the armed forces, which at the time in part resembled a large group of bandits rather than a state force. In fact, a large part of those 8000 criminals which had been released from prison as a result of an amnesty in January 1992 had joined those forces, while Mkhedrioni groups were also considered authorized by the state and counted as state forces. Not all of them joined the military groups with the ideal to save the nation only, but the economy of conflicts and possibility to amass personal riches under the umbrella of legality, too, offered some promising incentives. In addition, the ongoing conflicts and nationalist patriotic sentiments had created a generally expectant atmosphere which also resounded among the army ranks. Equipped with a weapons stockpile, tanks, and basically a blank check to enter Abkhazia under the State of Emergency a trigger-happy troop of armed men made their way from Akhaltsikhe westwards. Some contemporaries have speculated that their original plan led them to Adjara, home to Aslan Abashidze, in order to teach him a lesson for trying to run his own politics in that region. But Abashidze with his excellent relationship to the Russian forces and especially the Commander of the Russian troops in Batumi, General Borisov, remained an

---

[341] Ibid.

[342] See e.g. Eduard Shevardnadze. *Als der Eiserne Vorhang zerriss*. 307.

[343] For the full text of the Tashkent Agreement see: "Tashkent Agreement, 15 May 1992." *Tashkent Agreement, 15 May 1992*. Federation of American Scientists, 15 May 1992. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/cfe/text/tashka.htm>.

unattainable target. "When they could not enter Adjara they decided to go to Abkhazia. They started to move."[344] From Akhaltsikhe via Adjara began the march on Abkhazia.

When troop movement was registered in Tbilisi in the night from 12th to 13th of August, it was speculated that Kitovani, who was not directly subordinate to Shevardnadze but an equal member of the ruling Presidium, had ordered the army to move into Abkhazia. The existing decree as well as the recently kidnapped minister allegedly held in Abkhazia (discussed above) had given him already two possible pretexts to do so. Although this troop movement was registered as irregular in Tbilisi and despite the fact that it was a clear breach of Shevardnadze's agreement with Ardzinba, Shevardnadze appealed almost immediately to the public and explained the move and troops entering Abkhazia as a simple security operation jointly beneficial for Abkhazians and Georgians alike and coordinated with Ardzinba[345]. He tactically hid the real reasons and magnitude under the umbrella of legality. Goga Haindrava, who served both Shevardnadze and Saakashvili as State Minister of Conflicts, points out that it "was clear from the start that any engagement in Abkhazia would end in a tragedy."[346] He explains Shevardnadze's reluctance to immediately rise in protest against the ongoing events by the fact that confronted with a sort of *fait accompli,* "He thought he could catch two birds with one stone: Unite Georgia by protecting Abkhazia and at the same time root out Abkhaz separatism."[347] While Haindrava portrays the events as having been conceived like an opportunity to consolidate power, it is also possible that at this early point Shevardnadze was simply trying to buy time, maintain an image of being in control in an attempt to counteract the approaching wave of speculations, which travelled fast not only in Georgia.

It did not take long before President Yeltsin learnt of the ongoing developments and called from his vacation home in Sochi on the Russian part of the Black Sea not far from the Abkhaz border. According to Shevardnadze, he again warned against advancing the army to Sokhumi, of falling into a trap and of clashes with the Russian military unit stationed near the Abkhaz capital[348]. When Shevardnadze finally got through to Kitovani over the phone after numerous unanswered attempts, the latter only explained that troop movements had been unsystematic. Even thereafter, instructions by the State Council were still being ignored[349]. On August 14, 1992 the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the

---

[344] Undisclosed Interview Partners. Personal Interview. 2010.
[345] Ibid.
[346] Goga Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010.
[347] Ibid.
[348] Eduard Shevardnadze. *Als der Eiserne Vorhang zerriss.* 308-309.
[349] Ibid.

Republic of Abkhazia issued the decree on mobilization of adult citizens and distribution of arms to the regiment of the internal troops of Abkhazia[350]. War had officially begun.

Whoever fired the first shot that sparked a conflagration which has not been fully extinct until this day is the topic of another research and for another researcher. It is clear that the Georgian army soon advanced further than had originally been agreed and eventually encountered Abkhaz forces that were duly prepared for confrontation. But why this war started cannot be explained by referring to the events of 1992 alone. The roots and causes of the conflict must be traced back to the common history of the Georgians and Abkhaz, their traditions, culture, personalities and networks on both sides. This chapter simply aims to sketch out initiatives for peace between Georgians and Abkhaz and the reasons for their lack of success shortly after the demise of the Soviet Union. It also tries to highlight that war was not a necessary condition, but a process shaped by many factors. Finally, this last point becomes even more vivid, when considering an appeal of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Abkhazia to the State Council of Georgia from August 12, 1992, which reads like an appeal for reciprocal understanding:

"…[T]o the Georgian people, we are declaring: The Abkhazian people are not striving towards self-isolation from the Georgian people, we are for the establishment of qualitatively new civilized relations between us. You can imagine the historic memory of the Abkhazian people, relating to experience of Menshevik riots of 1918-1921 and the genocide policy that were conducted by the Georgian authorities in 30s-50s against Abkhazs. Historic memory of the Abkhazian people is disturbed, starting from the second half of the 1988 many new generation politicians, who are obsessed by the idea of creation of mono-ethnic Georgian state, for achievement of which were proposed different options, starting from deportation till impeding […] reproduction of the non-Georgian population. All this generated absolute mistrust of Abkhazs towards the policy of the Georgian authorities and in the relations between the two peoples originated alienation and our top priority is to overcome it. Conclusion of the Union treaty between Abkhazia and Georgia is an essential measure to overcome mistrust and alienation between our peoples. We, deputies of the Supreme Council of the republic of Abkhazia, declare that our part of the way in direction of revival of good relations between the Abkhazian and the Georgian peoples, we

---

[350] A. Ardzinba, G. Amkuab, and T. Illarionova. "Decree issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Abkhazia on Mobilization of Adult Citizens and Distribution of Arms to the Regiment of the Internal Troops of Abkhazia, 14 August 1992." *Chronicle of the Undeclared War, Part I, 14 August-14 September*. Moscow: 1992. Print. Translated from Russian. cit.n. Tamaz Diasamidze. *Regional Conflicts in Georgia*. 140.

will go straightforward. At the same time we hope that our welcoming and friendly gesture will not be left unanswered."[351]

This Appeal can be regarded as a logical political move in the administrative process of re-defining legal relations which had become increasingly distorted since 1989. After the interim Military Council in February 1992 had reinstated the Georgian Constitution of 1921, which did not yet consider an Autonomous Abkhaz republic, the Abkhaz had reinstated the Constitution of the Abkhaz Socialist Republic of 1925[352]. Simultaneously a working group on elaboration of agreement between Abkhazia and Georgia had been established to help overcome the existing legal vacuum. On 14th August 1992, the day war started, the Supreme Council of Abkhazia had to discuss the draft of an Agreement with the Republic of Georgia presented by the working group[353]. The above cited appeal was to pave the way for these developments. Although it was aimed at establishing a Union Treaty, not acceptable for Georgia at the time, it points to a perception of the crisis as mainly one of state and legal relations and exhibits a continued willingness to overcome the impasses and solve the crisis at the negotiation table on 12th August 1992, only two days before the war began. These sentiments were largely echoed in Tbilisi. In the end, however, disorder, arbitrariness and the actions of an extremist minority against the will of the majority destroyed the last hopes for solving the crisis in Abkhazia by peaceful means.

Closing Remarks

The chapter above aimed to illustrate the historical background, as well as the political, social-economic, and emotional settings prior to and leading up to the outbreak of war in Abkhazia in 1992. It pointed to the highly emotional state Georgians found themselves in at the end of 1989, when the Soviet Union gradually collapsed. With independence in sight, long harboured national sentiments turned extreme and radical rhetoric caused anxiety among Georgia's minorities. The Abkhaz elements in disagreement with Georgia's call for independence continued to look to Soviet Russia as its protector against a movement led by a hot-headed Georgian nationalist by the name of Zviad Gamsakhurdia. The Russian leadership did not put its weight behind Gamsakhurdia, who represented one of the main driving forces for independence, even when the latter became Georgia's first President. In turn, self-confident Gamsakhurdia made no secret of his disdain for the old patron and his desire for a sovereign Georgia with the ability to pursue policies independently. In this spirit, the first attempts to resolve the legal vacuum between Georgia and its regions, among them Abkhazia, can be accorded to

---

[351] V. Ardzinba, U.N. Voronov, P.V. Florensky, and T.A. Shutova. "Appeal of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Abkhazia to the State Council of Georgia" 86-88. cit.n. Tamaz Diasamidze. *Regional Conflicts in Georgia.* 138-140.

[352] Abkhazia had been a Union Republic until it became an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in Federative Union with Georgia during the time of Stalin.

[353] Stanislav Lakoba. Personal Interview. 2010.

Gamsakhurdia. Unlike his successors, Gamsakhurdia attempted to negotiate eye-to-eye with the Abkhaz legislative powers. Despite the fact that important opening initiatives failed and could not be continued due to his displacement, his style of negotiation directly addressing the Abkhaz and essentially regarding them as primary negotiation partners remained unique.

Gamsakhurdia's successor Eduard Shevardnadze appeared as a more rational policy maker. Unlike Gamsakhurdia and his compatriots he was much less driven by emotional considerations surrounding the process of national consolidation and independence. His calculating policy style represented a clear break with main stream political sentiments in Georgia and left him a sort of outsider in Georgian politics. While his powers were hampered domestically by other members in the Presidium of the State Council, his high international profile also greatly aided Georgia to consolidate its independence. With regards to Abkhazia, he preferred a more closed policy environment with only a few voices determining the debate and policy actions. Disregarding alternative initiatives, Shevardnadze re-defined the Georgian-Abkhaz problem as one to be solved on the level of Georgian-Russian relations. Unlike his predecessor Gamsakhurdia, who had a very different political biography, Shevardnadze had made a political career in Russia, was familiar with its policy style and close to its leadership. Consequently, he looked to the latter as primary negotiation partner to resolve Georgia's problems with Abkhazia and other insurgent regions such as South Ossetia.

Shevardnadze was not the first leader in Georgia's history to look to Russia for recognition of Georgia's sovereignty and assistance against those forces who worked against state consolidation. Erekle II had done the same in the Treaty of Giorgievsk in 1783. Due to the breach of the treaty obligations by Russia, the eventual loss of sovereignty and occupation of Georgia by Russia, many Georgians still remember this historical instance as a warning against close alliance with its neighbour to the north. Shevardnadze disregarded these considerations based on a historical perception, which he did not share in many ways. Yet, Shevardnadze as former Soviet foreign minister was not blind to Russian geopolitical interests in the region. Like Erekle before him, however, he misjudged the competing internal Russian dynamics regarding agenda setting, problem definition and policy as will be shown in subsequent chapters. In 1992, Shevardnadze put all his eggs in the Russian basket, partly due to a lack of viable alternatives and his disregard for a domestic or "Georgian" solution to the ongoing conflicts. At Dagomys just like at Giorgievsk, Georgia negotiated as sovereign, recognized by Russia only to see its sovereignty contested later on. The Georgian leadership looked to Russia to protect and restore its territorial integrity in both instances. The two negotiations illustrated the closed character of the policy environment as policy making was the business of a very restricted group. In the case of Dagomys and the Abkhaz peace process, this also meant that no broader constituency for peace was fostered among the public. While the Treaty of Giorgievsk required Georgia to renounce the relations with western

powers, the Dagomys negotiations took place at a time when modern Georgia's relations with Russia had to be newly defined. The provisions of the treaty, especially the terms regarding military deployment and withdrawal were in fact exaggeratedly in favour of Georgia in order to produce closer ties to Russia at a point when new foreign policy options appeared feasible for the first time since 1921.

The alliance at Dagomys, just like the Treaty of Giorgievsk, did not protect Georgia from an escalation of conflict, violent confrontations and war. The escalation of the conflict into a full-fledged war is explained above by the domestic political situation characterized as one close to state failure in the early 1990s. It is not accorded to a single individual or the interference of an external power, although both aspects find consideration in the explanation presented. The beginning of war finally silenced all early attempts for peace between Georgians and Abkhaz. The course of the war also changed Georgia's relationship with Russia. The losses arising from the Georgian-Abkhaz war would change the quality of the peace process permanently which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

I.

The First Phase of the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process: 1992-1996

Georgian Diplomacy: A Russian-centric approach to the new market for mediation

The "market for mediation", a market model idea of mediation based on the supply of and demand for mediators, was significantly expanded after the end of the Cold War, due to the fact that there were many more potential conflict mediators to choose from after the block confrontation. Thus, in the 1990's and after Georgia's acceptance to the United Nations, the country theoretically had the opportunity to solicit a variety of states for assistance as mediators to resolve the problems in Abkhazia. It is posited in this chapter that Georgia followed a Russian-centric approach to choosing a mediator. Evidence is presented that points to the fact that Russia was in fact Georgia's first choice as mediator for the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. This Russian-centric approach held true despite the fact that Georgia began to conduct a very active and multi-vector foreign policy under its new President Eduard Shevardnadze. It is argued that the relations with Russia and the focus on the former patron were a strong driver for the way Georgia fostered its relations to other regional actors, western powers as well as international organisations. Contrary to periods of Russian and Soviet domination earlier, however, Georgian foreign policy, as epitomised by the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, was much more dynamic and innovative as prior to the end of the Cold War. Like during former decades though, it continued to be based on a logic of realpolitik embedded in a geopolitical understanding of politics, which eventually negatively affected Georgia's relations to the Abkhaz as will be argued below.

Russia was the first power Georgia turned to, to mediate its conflict in Abkhazia. This fact bears testimonial to the notion that Georgia believed in Russia's ability to resolve the conflict in Georgia's favour and through a logic of power politics. Russian authority as the highest instance of jurisdiction was a remnant of the past, yet to the small nations in its vicinity Russian might and influence still represented the most likely resolution to problems such as the one in Abkhazia. Russia on the other hand had a keen interest in consolidating its ties with the newly independent states, portray its strength in the region and contribute to stability, especially in its border regions. At the same time, this continued reliance on Russia and belief in its ultimate authority stemmed from a lack of alternative options for young Georgia which was not yet an established member of the international community. It found itself at a critical crossroad when the fate of its sovereignty was still fragile, especially due to the fact that the issue of granting sovereignty to Georgia was still a matter of intense debate in Moscow. Georgia had been independent before and had lost this independence to Soviet Russia in 1921. At the dawn of this new era, with the remaining uncertainties about which

way the Russian leadership would eventually lean, Shevardnadze thus positioned Georgia according to his geopolitical understanding of its location as a bridge between East and West. Aware of Georgia's importance for Russia and Russian importance for Georgia, he initiated a Georgian diplomacy characterized by careful balancing. On the one hand he reassured Moscow of its status as primary partner through initiatives such as the Abkhaz mediation and almost complete transparency of his political moves as Georgian President. On the other hand he actively fostered Georgia's relations with the United States, and European powers as well as regional actors such as Azerbaijan. This multi-vector diplomacy was not least a means to keep Moscow on its toes by fostering alternative alliances which could be strengthened or expanded in case Russia would revert to an unfavourable policy or lose its motivation to assist Georgia on its path to sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The way Georgia positioned itself in the 1990s was evocative of the way Spykman discussed buffer states in international relations. Georgia had been somewhat of a buffer between Soviet Russia and NATO-state Turkey during the Cold War. With the almost full political retreat of Russia and the envisioned retreat of its military from Georgia, a power vacuum came to exist which temporarily characterized Georgia as a type of no-man's land, a relatively neutral territory, in the 1990's. The notion of Georgia as a buffer is clarified by Spykman: "A relatively weak state located between two strong states is in the geographic position of a buffer state; whether it will become so in the political sense of the term will depend on various factors. In any case, such a state will be forced to adopt a very special foreign policy. Its own security depends on the security which its neighbors derive from its continued existence. This means that such a state is forced to pursue a precarious policy of neutrality. Any variations which leave the impression that the bond with one neighbour is becoming stronger may tempt the other neighbour to replace the security obtained from the existence of an independent buffer with a security obtained from actual occupation of the buffer territory".[354] While Spykman described a theoretical ideal, Shevardnadze's careful policy of balancing Georgia's diplomacy points to the fact that Georgia exhibited many of the characteristics of a buffer state. Within these limitations Georgia developed into an active player in various fora, such as the United Nations, the CSCE/ OSCE but also the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). It also fostered regional and international partnerships. While a certain independence in the way a buffer conducts its affairs is anticipated, Spykman emphasized that as time goes on these developments may reach a tipping point and adjacent powers consequently develop an interest in controlling developments within the buffer and eventually become competitors over the space and its key attributes. The desire to control and even incorporate the territory of the buffer state may reach its peak, according

---

[354] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Geography and Foreign Policy, II." 227.

to Spykman, if the "…buffer state, instead of being a barrier, becomes a military highway held by a weak power".[355] Spykman thus outlined the dangers for a small power and a framework within which it was safe to manoeuvre. From his analysis it also follows that for Georgia a certain degree of competition between Russia and western powers was desirable in order to push for its interests being supported by its stronger neighbours.

Shevardnadze's government was the first sovereign Georgian government to revert to a multi-vector foreign policy in order to see its interests served in Abkhazia. Due to the nature of the international system and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the modern Georgian state was presented with an extensive market for mediation. Yet, despite its very active role in putting the Abkhaz question and its interests on the agenda and lobbying for involvement of various actors in a number of forums available, the overarching goal under Shevardnadze, it is argued here, was that Russia would solve Georgia's problem in Abkhazia. By mobilizing other actors, rallying international support for the Georgian position and raising awareness that Russia was in fact committed to a solution to the problem, Georgia pushed Russia into internationally sanctioned commitments and thus into a position of being held accountable by actors other than Georgia for the development of the conflict in Abkhazia and progress on the way to resolve it. In part, this was possible due to the almost complete disregard for non-state actors in state-centric formations at the time, which often took the integrity of states for granted. The reliance on geopolitical constructs often left no room for non-state actors. Furthermore, the consequential efforts to reach progress in the mediation by putting pressure on Abkhazia (the non-state actor), greatly harmed any basis for cooperation. The accentuated asymmetries led to Abkhazia taking on the role of a spoiler in the mediation. This harmed the peace process and led to a boycott of it at key crossroads. As time passed, attempts were undertaken by individuals to overcome the asymmetries and lack of cooperation. But their more inclusive approaches were undercut by pressures, threats and a logic of military might innate in an overall approach rooted in classical realism and geopolitical claims.

The Introduction of Mediators: A choice based on interests

It is a widely held assumption that mediators are apolitical, impartial, or disinterested entities who enter conflicts only to facilitate their solution. Mitchell and Banks point out that this is a false perception of mediators[356]. It is rooted in a rather modern view of mediation which has its origin in the rise of international organisations. These organisations have often been regarded as acting to fulfil higher and more universal aspirations than interests. Contradictory to this more recent

---

[355] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Frontiers, Security, and International Organization." 440-441.
[356] M. Banks and C.R. Mitchell. "Third Parties: Principals and Neutrals." *In Handbook of Conflict Resolution.* London: Pinter, 1996. Print.

perception, throughout history it was most frequently the great powers who have taken on roles as mediators and as such led the advance or regress of peace processes. As the process of mediation offers various types of reward structures and opportunities for the realisation of interests[357], mediators rather seldom enter into a mediation process without being keen on serving their own interests[358]. This is also the notion that Kleiboer puts forth in the "Mediation as Power brokerage" approach, inspired by ideas of scholars such as Waltz[359], Keohane[360], Krasner[361], and Gilpin[362]. According to Kleiboer it holds that "major powers tend to intervene to advocate their own national interests"[363]. The example of the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process is a case in point. Interests played an important role for the Russian decision to get involved as mediators in the conflict between Georgia and the autonomous republic of Abkhazia. The conflict played itself out on its southern borders and drew Russian regions into it, thus threatening the overall stability of a state which found itself in a phase of transition and consolidation. Historically Russia held an interest to maintain a presence in neighbouring Georgia, be it by way of its military or political influence. Without exhausting the plethora of different interests and reward structures due to which Russia got involved as mediator, it is also important to note that Shevardnadze had supported Yeltsin's course at a time when the former aimed to seize political power in Moscow. Due to these recent political circumstances both men were tied by personal bonds as well. The experience of Dagomys (see above) at least hinted at the fact that with Yeltsin leading the Russian Federation, the signs for Georgia getting its way in the conflict with Abkhazia through Russian help were promising. Meanwhile, another point is often forgotten. Interests also conditioned the acceptability of Russia as a mediator to the Georgian and Abkhaz sides. Both sides to the conflict have fought not only for territory but also battled for Russian preferential treatment over the course of time. This was especially noticeable in what is here labelled the *First Phase of the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process* which started in 1992 and continued until late 1995. This period will be discussed below and yield

---

[357] C.R. Mitchell. "Motives for Mediation." *New Approaches to International Mediation*. New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1988. Print.; See also: I. Peters and A. Krohn. "The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe." *The Baltic Sea Region: National and International Security Perspectives*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1996. Print.

[358] Sydney D. Bailey. "Non-Official Mediation in Disputes: Reflections on Quaker Experience." *International Affairs* 61: 210. Print.

[359] Kenneth N. Waltz. *Theory of international politics*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1979. Print.

[360] Robert O. Keohane. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984. Print.; See also: Robert O. Keohane. *Neorealism and its Critics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. Print.

[361] Stephen D. Krasner. *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979. Print.

[362] Robert G. Gilpin. "The Richness Of The Tradition Of Political Realism." *International Organization* 38: 287-304. Print.

[363] M. Kleiboer. "Understanding Success And Failure Of International Mediation." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40: 381. Print.

important insights into modern Georgia's new course of diplomacy, and the way Abkhazia as a non-state actor was for his part struggling to attain a voice in the international system of states.

Shortly after fighting had ensued in Abkhazia came the first attempts to establish a cease fire. A little over two weeks after the first shot had been fired the Georgian and Abkhaz sides met in Sochi for ceasefire negotiations on August 29, 1992. Russian representatives were acting as the intermediaries to the meeting. After negotiations had taken place a *Protocol of Consultations on the Regulation of the Conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia[364]* was signed by all sides. Overall, the composition of the group that met in Sochi on August 29 was peculiar. While for the Georgian side, only Kitovani is listed as a participant to the consultations in the official documents, the Abkhaz side had brought Ardzinba and Konstantin Ozgan, a member of the People's Assembly of Abkhazia, to the table. The Russian side, however, was comprised of six people, among them Boris Pastukhov, the minister in charge of relations with the former Soviet Republics and a Chairman of the Committee of Emergency Situations and the Liquidation of Natural Disasters, as well as Sergei Shoigu, who would later chair the Russian part of the *Joint Commission on Regulation of Conflict in Abkhazia*. Notably, the protocol explicitly mentioned that "[t]he representatives of the Russian federation reaffirmed their readiness to carry out the role of mediator in the conflict settlement"[365], thereby attesting to the fact that Russia was the first mediator in the search to settle the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.[366] The protocol justified the involvement of Russia by the fact that "The situation has become complicated in the south of Russia."[367] This point reaffirms the notion that Russia had increasingly become concerned about the stability on its southern borders.

The reasons for Russian involvement as a mediator are numerous and will be discussed in detail later on. At this point, it is nevertheless useful to foster some basic understanding of this point. The conflict in Abkhazia had right away drawn the North Caucasus Republics into the fighting. It also threatened the overall stability in Russia. Abkhazia's desire for independence was about to set a dangerous precedent in a situation when centralization of power in Russia was still in the fledgling stages. For those reasons, among others, the Russian President expressed an interest in settling the conflict at this point. This notion is echoed by former President Shevardnadze who – alluding to Yeltsin – explained that "in the beginning, the Russian's played quite a positive role…".[368] Shevardnadze, who to this day

---

[364] G. Amkuab and T. Illarionova. *Chronicle of the Undeclared War, Part I, 14 August-14 September*. Moscow: 1992. 167-168. Print. Translated from Russian. cit.n. Tamaz Diasamidze. *Regional Conflicts in Georgia.* 141.
[365] Ibid.
[366] This point is oftentimes omitted in the sources about the conflict, only listing the UN and western powers as mediators
[367] G. Amkuab and T. Illarionova. *Chronicle of the Undeclared War, Part I, 14 August-14 September*. Moscow: 1992. Print. Translated from Russian.
[368] Eduard Shevardnadze. Personal Interview. 2011.

holds that the key to solving this conflict lies "Only in Russia"[369] entertained rather good relations with Yeltsin even after the conflict had started. He remembered that after the above mentioned protocol was signed by Kitovani in Sochi, Yeltsin called him in early September to suggest a meeting to settle the conflict to be held in Moscow. Yeltsin had invited not only the Georgian and Abkhaz sides, but also the leaders of the north Caucasus republics on his own initiative to take part in this meeting. Shevardnadze recalls that: "We held the meeting, everybody agreed to stop the confrontation - only Ardzinba was against it. Yeltsin took Ardzinba aside, they talked for about twenty minutes and when they came back Yeltsin said that Vladislav Gregorevich [Ardzinba] also agrees."[370] Yeltsin had personally intervened to convince the Abkhaz leader to agree to sign the Moscow document and had thereby illustrated Russia's strength as a mediator. Although the specifics of the discussions between Yeltsin and Ardzinba remain unknown, the fact that Ardzinba agreed also showed the leverage Russia had over the Abkhaz leader.

Under these conditions, the *Final Document of the Moscow Meeting* was signed in the capital of the Russian Federation on September 3, 1992. Looking at the introductory statement, it comes as no surprise that Ardzinba, who was a fervent advocator of Abkhaz independence, had voiced his apprehension to signing the document, which reads: "The President of the Russian Federation and the Chairman of the State Council of the Republic of Georgia having discussed the situation established in Abkhazia with participation of the leaders of Abkhazia, the North-Caucasus Republics, Regions and Districts of the Russian Federation, […] considering inadmissible any violation of universal principles of territorial integrity of the states and inviolability of their frontiers, respecting the rights and freedoms of individuals, as well as the minority's rights"[371]. By signing this document Ardzinba implicitly recognized the territorial integrity of Georgia which was explicitly mentioned. In addition, the participants of the meeting agreed upon 12 Articles, among other things to introduce a ceasefire and regulation of the separation of conflicting forces, return of refugees, restauration of transport and infrastructure links and other issues. The text, however, stated that the meeting was held between Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze while the other participants, among them the Abkhaz and leaders of the North Caucasus Republics, some of whose citizens had fought alongside the Abkhaz in the war, merely had to agree to what the state leaders had signed. Thus, this first document is an early indication of existing asymmetries in the peace process. In addition, it clearly acknowledged the involvement of elements from the North Caucasus and called them to order in Article 11 by stating that "The organs of power and management of the republics, regions and districts of the North

---

[369] Ibid.
[370] Ibid.
[371] T. Diasamnidze. "Final Document of the Moscow Meeting" *Regional Conflicts in Georgia: The Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia, the Autonomous SSR of Abkhazia (1989-2005) - Collection of Political Legal Acts*. 2nd ed. Tbilisi: Regionalism Research Centre, 2005. 144-145. Print.

Caucasus that are under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation will take effective measures to prevent and avoid any acts from their respective territories that contravene the provisions of this Agreement. They will facilitate the activities aimed at achieving peace in the region. They will exert every effort to explain the population the provisions of this Agreement."[372] This reiterates the point that Russia was interested in the stability in its own regions which had become intrinsically tied to the ongoing conflict in Abkhazia. It also shows that Russia was in the process to consolidate its own rule and establish itself as a power center in the space under its official jurisdiction.

The Moscow document represents the first serious ceasefire agreement, a form of temporary conflict settlement, between Georgia and the Abkhaz breakaway republic. The phrasing of the document clearly points to the fact that it was also an agreement largely aimed at securing the achievements of the Georgian army, which had gained a stronghold in Abkhazia at the time. Bercovitch and Wille argue that the stronger party will use the mediator as an instrument to facilitate surrender.[373] This substantiates the claim made above that a mediator also has to be acceptable to the parties to a conflict. As Georgia was clearly the stronger party at this time of the conflict, it follows that it, too, had the intention to see its national interests being served by this mediation process and notably through the choice of Russia as mediator. From a Georgian perspective, this choice has fluctuated over the years according to the likelihood of Georgia obtaining a specific favourable settlement through Russian mediation. This fluctuation again underlines the idea that Georgia had the intention of serving its interests and influence the settlement through the choice of a mediator. It has to be noted, however, that not only Georgian interests in Russian mediation shifted, but that shifting interests were an interactive phenomenon and could also be observed for the Russian side. Only Abkhazia, due to its isolation from international developments discussed further below, maintained a steady interest in Russian mediation. Overall, regarding this early phase of the conflict it is worth noting that Russia secured its seniority as mediator at a very early point in the conflict, and that it did so with the consent of Georgia, who expected a favourable settlement by means of a Russian mediation. Russia was in so far acceptable as a mediator as Russian strategic interest in the region seemed to militate against recognition of Abkhaz independence, as this could mean the loss of influence in Georgia and the creation of a precedent of independence for its own federal subjects[374].

---

[372] Ibid.
[373] J. Bercovitch, J. T. Anagnoson, and D. L. Wille. "Some Conceptual Issues and Empirical Trends in the Study of Successful Mediation in International Relations." *Journal of Peace Research* 28: 11. Print.
[374] L. Kvarchelia. "An Abkhaz Perspective." *Accord: A question of sovereignty, The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process*. London: Conciliation Resources, 1999. 30. Print.

Bercovitch and Schneider's findings concerning what they call the 'market for mediation', essentially assessing what leads to acceptability of a mediator illustrate certain points implied by the discussion above. They explain the shifting interests to see a process mediated by a certain actor by referring to the fact that ideological factors play very limited roles in the choice of a mediator. More importantly they highlight the fact that power and influence are essential for the acceptability of a mediator. They note "The market for mediation follows certain fashions which promote some states for a certain period of time until they are no longer considered to be important actors. Yet, this short-term demand is a function of a state's power and influence at the time, and not of its effectiveness in the mediation market"[375] Russia did possess the political leverage and operational capabilities to be accepted as mediator by the parties in the early 1990's as illustrated by the events above. Its resources for mediation were even recognized by external players, as noted by Gousseinova, who explains that "the UN and the US […] consider[ed] Russia to be the major force for stability in this region"[376], a point which will be discussed in further detail below. In addition, many of the new nation states were faced with a lack of alternatives at a time when their sovereignty was still contested and the relations to their own minorities still unsettled.

The promising part Russia played as mediator of the 1992 ceasefire was put into doubt by the resumption of fighting shortly thereafter. When fighting continued and the Georgian army was pushed back from its strongholds, Georgia actively tried to foster the involvement of the United Nations. Almost two decades later Shevardnadze confirmed this policy move at the time during an interview by noting that "I tried to involve in the conflict resolution not only Russia but the UN."[377] This simple statement illustrates his aim to balance Georgia's foreign policy. Shevardnadze indicated that the search for new allies was part of Georgia's new diplomatic self-image, especially when faced with a Russia still in transition. He had come to power firmly believing that 'history has nailed Georgia to the geopolitical cross' and that 'from time immemorial his country had served as a buffer zone'[378], which needs to take great care to balance its policy accordingly. As a result, even the documents signed in Moscow on September 3, 1992 had contained a call on the UN and OSCE for involvement by all sides: "The Sides appeal to the UN and the OSCE with request to support aforementioned principles of regulation and render assistance in their implementation, including detaching the mission on fact-

---

[375] J. Bercovitch and G. Schneider. "Who Mediates? The Political Economy Of International Conflict Management." *Journal of Peace Research* 37: 162. Print.; For a list of what constitutes a mediation success, i.e. what determines effectiveness see for example K. Barseghyan and Z. Karaev. "Playing Cat and Mouse: Conflict and Third Party Mediation in Post-Soviet Space." *The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution*: 195. Print.
[376] M. Gusseinova. "Russian Interest in the Abkhazian Conflict and the Position of the USA." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 8:3. 1995. Print.
[377] Eduard Shevardnadze. Personal Interview. 2011. 474.
[378] Eduard Shevardnadze. "Address by Mr. Eduard A. Shevardnadze."

finding and observers."[379] Consequently, when it became increasingly clear that the ceasefire was failing despite the Russian intervention, Shevardnadze took up Georgia's Abkhaz case in a speech in front of the UN General Assembly on September 25, 1992. It was the first time that he appeared in front of the rostrum as the Chairman of the Georgian State Council, but due to his previous professional path he was no newcomer to it. Shevardnadze's speech provides great insight into the political atmosphere at the time. He addressed the conflict in Abkhazia, relations with Russia and provided a general geopolitical outlook for global developments, in order to rally support for his country.

The concerted use of geopolitical rhetoric in front of the UN rostrum highlights Shevardnadze's intention to put the problem on the UN's agenda. In conjunction with the conflict in Abkhazia, Shevardnadze voiced that the roots of this conflict had been laid during Tsarist and Soviet times when "the bombs were planted for our future"[380]. Making the most of his opportunity to address a multitude of high ranking state officials, he verbally criticised minority forces that drive a process of undermining the rights of majorities in any given country through separatism, fascism and terrorism. Speaking in general terms, this comment was directed at militant elements within the Abkhaz community, which itself had been a minority in Abkhazia and Georgia and was now trying to hold the majority of the population hostage with their desire for independence, according to Shevardnadze. With the same breath Shevardnadze clarified that he believed in upholding minority and ethnic rights, but that minorities were obliged to use their rights responsibly, in the spirit of good citizens. Furthermore, he expressed his firm belief that the conflict and the hardships of Georgia must be tended to by the international community, due to the geopolitical relevance of "that tiny part of Earth called Georgia which history has nailed to the geopolitical cross".[381] The reference to a cross resembles an ambiguity in that it refers to Georgia having to carry the burden of a cross because of its location as a regional hub, or a strategic crossing, where various interests intersect. He also notes that Georgia was an example of broader developments and responding to its case meant to be better prepared for the conflicts that the international community would likely face in the near future: "I consider it my duty to draw your attention to the Caucasus region, as, here and now a new and serious hotbed of interethnic, regional and international tension is emerging. This new source of shockwaves is within the mainstream of contemporary geopolitical trends: The displacement of a global confrontation onto regional levels". Shevardnadze predicted that the conflict in Abkhazia, although small in scale, would draw international attention to it. To this end, he invited European powers, world organizations and less directly the United States to assist his country in resolving its problems, among them the Abkhaz conflict and the "merciless economic crisis" facing many of the former Soviet republics. He thereby

---

[379] T. Diasamnidze. "Final Document of the Moscow Meeting."
[380] Eduard Shevardnadze. "Address by Mr. Eduard A. Shevardnadze."
[381] Ibid.

once more illustrated Georgia's attempt to shape a multi-vector foreign policy in the early 90's. The economic crisis Shevardnadze referred to was viewed by him as a threat to stability in the region and most notably to Russia. Turning to Russia, Shevardnadze acknowledged Russia's important role for Georgia and the amicable relations Georgia entertained with the country. Nevertheless he also enunciated a warning about what he saw as the effects of the economic crisis in Russia and its impact on the world community and his own country: "A stable, prosperous and democratic Russia is a factor on a global scale and of global significance. A threat to Russia from the forces of totalitarian revanchism is a threat to us all. In the conspiracy against Georgia which is now coming out into the open, Russia's red-brown reactionaries are standing shoulder to shoulder with the extreme fundamentalists, home-grown fascists and separatists."[382] Shevardnadze was alluding to ongoing domestic developments in Russia. Weakened by economic crisis, Russia's pro-western reformers had come under attack from the communist and extreme right wing factions in Russia, elements of which had also openly acted against Georgia's interest in the conflict in Abkhazia, according to Shevardnadze. By his words, Shevardnadze indirectly pointed to the ongoing constitutional crisis in Russia which had reached a tipping point on September 21, when Yeltsin had dissolved the country's legislature and in turn was impeached by the Parliament which named Alexander Rutskoi acting President, who had previously accused Yeltsin of 'economic genocide'. Although Rutskoi and Khasbulatov were temporarily imprisoned after the crisis, the elections that followed in December 1993 ended in favour of ultra-nationalists and communists. To a certain extend Shevardnadze had outlined these developments in his UN speech. They naturally posed a great threat to Georgia, since Rutskoi especially had advocated what can be regarded as anti-Georgian policies, such as including South Ossetia into Russia by unifying it with its North Ossetian neighbour.[383] The Georgians were well aware of the opposing positions Rutskoi and Yeltsin represented with regard to the Georgian issue from the time of the meeting at Dagomys (see above). Shevardnadze's speech at the UN set the tone for a more widespread international understanding of the conflict in Abkhazia as a geopolitical struggle, a notion often cited in subsequent years. While he may have been correct in pointing to Georgia's unique geographic location, it is clear that he evoked the concept of geopolitics also as a way to internationalize the conflict and rally interest and support for his country in front of the world audience through selective discursive practice. At the dawn of a new era after the imminent East-West confrontation had subsided, Shevardnadze's rhetoric showed that geopolitics was still the modus vivendi in international affairs. It had been the common language of the mainstream during the time of the Cold War and its norms were deeply engrained into the way international affairs were run. That was why he drew on these notions in order to convince the

---

[382] Ibid.
[383] Eduard Shevardnadze. "Open Letter by Shevardnadze to the Russian Vice-President Alexandre Rutskoi." *Republic of Georgia newspaper* 21 June 1992: n. pag. Print. Translated.

international community to put Abkhazia on the agenda. His speech had a second purpose, however. By addressing the UN General Assembly and finding frank words about ongoing developments in Russia, he also addressed a third listener, namely Russia. The Georgian President made it clear that Georgia would not cooperate with Russia unconditionally. Rather, he alluded to the fact that close ties to its neighbour were contingent on Russian benevolence towards Georgia. By positioning Georgia as a self-confident player amidst the international community, he set out a strategy of fostering competition between Russia and other possible mediators in an enlarged market for mediation.

Amidst the chaos underway in Russia, the ceasefire agreement reached in Moscow in 1992 did not hold for long. Zartman and Aurik point out that mediation success is determined by resources available[384]. Despite the economic crisis Russia had been regarded as a strong power holding the resources necessary to mediate in the conflict. They add, however, that the skills with which such resources are used are a determining factor of mediation success. The call for western assistance to Georgia, for example in the form of UN monitoring missions briefly pointed to above, has to be regarded in this light, too. The Russian ceasefire monitoring commission had been unable to enforce the withdrawal of heavy Abkhaz weaponry. In addition growing evidence surfaced that members of the Russian forces channeled aid to the Abkhaz side[385]. The call for extra-Russian mediation can thus be also regarded in light of Kleiboer's explanation that parties accept mediators in order to obtain a better settlement,[386] or in the words of Zartman, "The reason to accept mediation is the expectation that a certain mediator will help to promote a more favorable settlement to the conflict than otherwise possible".[387] Russia was crisis-ridden and Shevardnadze knew the ins and outs of the Russian government. While it would go beyond the means of this paper to analyse the extent to which the Russian actions in Abkhazia which were perceived as anti-Georgian, were a coordinated effort versus sporadic actions of groups or individuals inside the Federation, it was clear that the Russian government stood divided on the issue of Abkhazia. The fact that certain high-level elements of the military complex and inside the GRU (Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation) harbored negative sentiments towards Shevardnadze and sided with the Abkhaz as a way of revenge for the dissolution of the Soviet Union is a common narrative in Georgia which has been time and again encountered throughout the research.

---

[384] I.W. Zartman, J. Aurik, L. Kriesberg, S.J. Thompson. "Power Strategies in De-Escalation." *Timing the De-Escalation of International Conflict*. New York, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991. Print.
[385] S.N. MacFarlane, A. Schnabel, H.-G. Ehrhart, and D. Haglund. "Russian Approaches to Peacekeeping." *The "New Peacekeeping" and European Security: German and Canadian Interests and Issues*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1995. Print.
[386] M. Kleiboer. "Understanding Success And Failure Of International Mediation." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40: 381. Print.
[387] I. William Zartman. *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. 9-10. Print.

In this context it is important, however, to note that Abkhazia did not stand aside as a mere onlooker of this conflict. Raul Khajimba, a former Presidential candidate formerly closely associated with Russia proclaimed that "Abkhazia did have a foreign policy during this period. Even much earlier, but people [outsiders] did not want to recognize it. I would say that the active phase for the development of a foreign policy of Abkhazia started before the war of 1992 and continued even during the war […]We had an active foreign policy with regard to the Russian Federation."[388] Although Khajimba, like most other interview subjects in Abkhazia, shied away from explicitly naming supporters in the institutions of the Russian government, and only made it clear that support under Yeltsin had been meager compared to the Putin years, he illustrated that the Abkhaz were mobilizing their networks within Russia throughout the war. This approach might explain assistance stemming from inside Russia to Abkhaz insurgents. Some evidence of an Abkhaz *de facto* foreign policy is given by the fact that in August 1992 the "Confederation of Mountain Peoples" endorsed actions against Georgia and declared their support against the Georgian presence in Abkhazia in July 1993[389]. In addition, Abkhazia signed numerous treaties of friendship and cooperation with single Russian republics, for example Tartastan and Kabadino-Balkaria in 1994 but also with Transdnistria.[390] It is clear that with rising evidence of actions such as those mentioned above, and Russia's *laissez faire* attitude, Georgia began its search for additional resources and support in the form of a further mediator elsewhere, in an effort to obtain a more favorable settlement as predicted by Kleiboer and Zartman (see above). Under these circumstances it actively fostered the involvement of the UN in the peace process as outlined by Shevardnadze's speech in front of the UN General Assembly.

State Centrism in Mediation Processes

While the Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze pointed the world's attention to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, the Abkhaz were faced with the problem of asymmetry caused by state-centrism in an international system, which had just born witness to the destruction of bi-polarity. This state-centrism also manifested itself in state-centric mediation processes and geopolitical rhetoric which favoured state subjects. The world did not naturally recognize the Abkhaz side as legitimate players due to their nature as non-state actors. But even their supposed kin, be it Russia or Georgia, merely listed them as participants in negotiations which officially took place only between state actors as exemplified by the Moscow agreement of September 3, 1992[391]. To their detriment, the international system, especially right after the Cold War, was based on the fundamental precept that states are the highest and most

---

[388] Raul Khajimba. Former Vice President Abkhazia. Personal Interview. 2010.
[389] Ibid.
[390] See Diasamnidze, T. "Resolution #286". Regional Conflicts in Georgia – Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia, Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia (1989-2005). Tbilisi: Regionalism Research Centre, 2005. 154. Print.
[391] Abkhazia was not asked to put its signature under the agreement

important actors. As a result of this existing high regard for state actors, Richmond argues that the international system of states functions on a logic of state-centric security and consequently, any mediator will tend to support the integrity of the state[392]. Aggravating this fact, third party involvement will usually be derived from within the state system[393], and thus often carries an implicit bias for the status quo of state integrity and against non-state actors. This bias is illustrated by Mitchell, who argues that "Incumbents are legally entitled to impose embargos, to take action against insurgents' patrons and supporters in other countries, to import arms and counterinsurgency equipment, to institute conscription, to levy increased taxes, to seek support for their positions and policies in international forums, to declare states of siege, to introduce and enforce emergency legislation of all types, and to behave in a manner consonant with the conception of internal sovereignty. Insurgents are not"[394]. These legal asymmetries have raised substantial doubt whether the international community is fit to accommodate minority groups in situations of intrastate conflicts with their governments[395]. The Abkhaz side has criticized these asymmetries from the onset of the efforts to resolve the conflict. Meanwhile this sort of criticism, namely that interstate organisations comprised of state actors have limited abilities to manage anything but interstate conflicts have inspired some attempts to address these shortcomings. The goal of the Abkhaz was from the onset to fight these seemingly superior institutions and their norms. Assessing their success in reaching this goal in this dissertation, it is puzzling that they succeeded in overcoming these limitations and disadvantages raised by existing asymmetries to a large extend. The way this was approached will be discussed in the following.

At the Forty-eight session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1992, a draft was approved on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities[396] which for the first time gave special status to such groups under international law. Some analysts have viewed this critically as an attempt to place ethnic groups in a Westphalian framework, which has "only strengthened the role of states which were identified as responsible to protecting those rights"[397]. Following this line of argument it becomes clear that the persistence of a state-centric logic intensifies the propensity of externalisation of conflicts, as only state actors are viewed as the appropriate problem solvers in mediation processes. Home-grown negotiations between state and non-state conflicting parties are likely to remain a side-show or to be skirted entirely. This "distract[s] attention from serious discussions of the difficulties in overcoming the antagonistic relations that both

---

[392] O.P. Richmond. "Mediating Ethnic Conflicts: A Task for Sisyphus?" *Global Society* 13: 189-190. Print.
[393] Ibid. 187., See also J. Bercovitch and G. Schneider. "Who Mediates?" 145-165.
[394] C.R. Mitchell. "Classifying Conflicts: Asymmetry and Resolution." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 518: 31. Print.
[395] These have on a case by case softened in the recent past, especially after the appearance of the concept of Responsibility to Protect short R2P
[396] United Nations. *A/47/49*. New York: United Nations, 1992. Print.
[397] O.P. Richmond. "Mediating Ethnic Conflicts." 187.

communities have been building", according to scholar Bruno Coppieters[398]. In a way this lack of serious commitment by both parties on the ground can perpetuate a sort of outsourcing of the conflict to third parties residing outside of the country. In short, state-centrism likewise echoed in an approach to mediation based on the determining factors of realism, has often conditioned mediator's inability to offer much more "than expertise on power sharing arrangements"[399]. This argument highlights the difficulties of states as third party mediators to relate to sub-state actors. As a result, oftentimes, discussions between the conflicting parties are held under the implication of insurgents' illegitimacy implying their need to return to legitimacy[400], i.e. to re-integrate themselves into the state system. Even attempts of the international community to introduce more equal terms for ethnic minorities (see example above) have failed to address the asymmetries inherent in ethnic conflicts seriously.

Given the perpetuation of asymmetries in the 90's, the state party to a given conflict is encouraged by a state-centric approach to mediation to remain concerned only with its own goals of territorial integrity and other state actors' conduct, while the non-state actor is forced to be highly concerned about his own goals and the adversary's[401]. Consequently, the preservation or destruction of the asymmetry becomes a leading issue in the conflict, and simultaneously discursive practice becomes an important tool. Overall, this results in a peculiar situation. While the international community isolates the minority and merely stabilizes the situation, the mediator will tend to maintain the integrity of the state, "the government party will strive to deny the ethnic level of conflict [...] and the rebel party will claim self-determination"[402], as a last resort to induce an additional measure of equality. As a result, greater harmonization of the conflict falls victim to, often, irreconcilable positions.

The search for a peaceful settlement to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict largely followed the logic described above. Especially in the beginning, the Abkhaz and Georgians were mainly concerned with rallying support for their narrative of the conflict. Much of the problem of preservation or destruction of asymmetries is inherent in the issue whether self-determination or sovereignty should have priority in international law. Needless to say, the former was advocated by the Abkhaz side while Georgia adheres to the latter. Furthermore, the UN due to concerns about its neutrality and political costs actually perceives itself as a stabilizer, rather than an actor (or mediator) with the power to impose solutions[403]. In addition, the official line of the Georgian government indeed denied the ethnic aspect

---

[398] B. Coppieters and J. Cohen. "The Roots of the Conflict." *Accord: A Question of Sovereignty, The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process*. London: Conciliation Resources, 1999. 18. Print.
[399] O.P. Richmond. "Mediating Ethnic Conflicts." 197.
[400] C.R. Mitchell. "Classifying Conflicts." 31.
[401] This constitutes an asymmetric structure of a conflict according to Mitchell (C.R. Mitchell. "Classifying Conflicts." 26.)
[402] O.P. Richmond. "Mediating Ethnic Conflicts." 189-190.
[403] See e.g. H. Tagliavini, A. Menger, and V. Mauer. "Edouard Brunner's Mandate in Georgia." *Edouard Brunner ou la diplomatie du possible*. Zürich: ETH Zürich, 2001. 88. Print.

in the confrontations with Abkhazia to a large extend and presented it as a political struggle[404]. This point as well as the Abkhaz claim for self-determination, which increased over time, will be discussed in more detail below. Lastly, one anecdote about the inaugural peace process meeting in Geneva from the former Prime Minister of Abkhazia illustrates how such theoretical considerations about asymmetry in state-centric negotiations came to be played out in practice. Sokrat Jinjolia recalled that "it was […] 1993 when the first Geneva meeting took place. Prior to the meeting, we even did not know the list of people who would participate from the Georgian side. There were three to four people in the Abkhaz delegation. When we asked Edouard Brunner [the acting UN chairman] to tell us who was part of the delegation of Georgia, he answered not to worry, we would find out in the morning. When we entered the room where the negotiation took place [the next morning], we were around four people and there were around fifteen people from the Georgian side. There was a Russian delegation headed by Pastukhov and Brunner was the acting chairman [of the meeting]. Brunner gave us the list of people with the names and positions from the Georgian side. At that time I was holding the position of the Prime Minister of Abkhazia and additionally the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs. And when I read through the list of positions of people, I saw that a person who was sitting opposite from me was holding the same position just as myself. He was the Prime Minister of Abkhazia from the government-in-exile. As the Georgian side proposed it, this was the legitimate government of Abkhazia. And I said to the chairman 'if you are going to resolve this issue with the "legitimate government" then our presence is not necessary here' and we left the room."[405] Although the issue was resolved later and the Abkhaz delegation returned to negotiate in the frame of the UN Geneva meetings, incidents in which the non-state actors were not received as equal parties to the negotiation were numerous. This illustrates that international organisations such as the UN were not used to dealing with non-state actors and as a result handled the situation clumsily. At the same time, the narrative is an indication of the power the Abkhaz government-in-exile held in Georgia as their members had insisted on being part to this high-level negotiations. In the collective memory of the Abkhaz leadership the experienced inequality still looms large and has fuelled feelings of mistrust between the parties, according to interviews conducted in Abkhazia. Overall the majority of Abkhaz respondents found much more benign words for non-state-centric or second-track initiatives for discussing peace and conflict transformation, such as the Schlaininingen process (discussed below), than for their official diplomatic counterparts.[406] It has to be mentioned, however, that as time progressed the UN or better some of its representatives, embraced such formats often called second or one-and-a-half track diplomacy to help overcome the lack of empathy for the other side inherent in state centric

---

[404] E.g. Temur Iakobashvili. Former Georgian Minister of Conflicts. Personal Interview. 2010.
[405] Sokrat Jinjolia. Second Prime Minister Abkhazia. Personal Interview. 2010.
[406] Stanislav Lakoba. Personal Interview. 2010.

forms of mediation. In addition, the efforts by individual diplomats, such as UN Special Envoy Edouard Brunner and his successors to create the conditions for negotiations on more equal grounds also have to be mentioned in this regard.

Edouard Brunner, the first Special Envoy of the General Secretary of the United Nations for the Abkhaz conflict, was one of the key individuals who decreased the existing mistrust to a level that allowed for the first Geneva meeting mentioned by Jinjolia above to take place. The role of individuals, i.e. an individual level of analysis is often ignored by geopolitical reasoning. For peace processes, however, individuals can make decisive differences, especially by reducing mistrust and helping to de-escalate the relations between conflicting factions. The Geneva meetings were aimed at discussing the conflict under UN auspices and developed from an idea into an institution, which was named the Geneva Process. The Geneva Process was the leading forum for peace talks between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides until 2008. Brunner's appointment had followed a UN Fact Finding Mission to Abkhazia as a response to the documents signed in Moscow as well as additional appeals to the UN for further involvement. While the United States as well as European powers remained cautious to interfere in the conflict directly and rather assisted Georgia with much needed development aid, the UN took up the call. The relative absence of the US from the conflict resolution efforts can be accounted for by several factors. After the Cold War and the abrupt discontinuation of the block confrontation, the United States, itself in a process of policy re-orientation, shifted its geopolitical focus to Iraq and its region. Especially its President George Bush viewed the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to represent the kind of evil otherness previously characteristic for the Soviet Union.[407] While Iraq and the centrality of oil in political and military reasoning already pointed to the beginnings of a geo-economization of geopolitics,[408] the US administration did not yet connect its efforts in Iraq with the transit countries in the South Caucasus in a cohesive fashion. Additionally, President Yeltsin of Russia represented a white hope for US interests at the time. Yeltsin and his circles had demonstrated an openness for western principles, ideas and goals. As a result the once mighty superpower Russia was at times belittled and regarded as a mere "apprentice" of the West.[409] Overall the signs pointed to cooperation with a certain inclination of Russia accepting even an enlarged NATO at its peak. This optimism with regard to Russia was early on cautioned by scholars such as Huntington who clearly described Russia as a torn country[410] for which it was yet unclear which way it would eventually lean. Brzezinski later on elaborated on the state of shock the Russian establishment found itself in at this point of history being faced with a

---

[407] See Timothy Luke, Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "The Discipline of Security Studies and the Codes of Containment." 140.

[408] George H.W. Bush, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "Public Papers of the President of the United States." 132.

[409] See above: C.S. Browning. "The Region-Building Approach Revisited." 58.

[410] See above: Samuel P. Huntington, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "The Clash of Civilizations." 166.

dramatically changed geopolitical environment.[411] Amidst this chaotic state of affairs Russia was neither friend nor foe yet, and hopes for an extended cooperation would eventually proof premature. But the fact was that the US found itself in a phase of rapprochement with Russia in the early 1990's. Interference in a conflict in Russia's immediate neighbourhood at this point could have been very expensive in terms of political costs, given the risk of it triggering renewed antagonisms. Evidence for US-Russian rapprochement is given by Gusseinova, who points to a statement by the US ambassador to Russia in the early 1990's, Thomas Pickering, who put in plain words that the West was very interested for Russia to conduct her policy for keeping unity and territorial integrity within the CIS countries[412]. This notion supports the idea, that the US, too, viewed the conflict and the region through geopolitical spectacles, but that the emphasis was laid on stability. Stability was so paramount due to the prevailing state of limbo and uncertainty of the international system in which the demise of the Soviet Union had raised fears of violent disintegration, which no country was prepared to deal with at this point.[413]

Involvement by the UN did not face the same constraints as US policy at the time. Nevertheless, the organization always prudently mentioned Russia's role as mediator or facilitator of the conflict thereby implicitly acknowledging Russian special interests and leverage in the region. The result of UN involvement through its Fact Finding Mission, personal attention from the Secretary General in form of a Special Envoy and the resolutions that followed was a duality in the peace process. On various occasions this duality complicated it, due to the two official mediators, namely Russia and the UN, failing to coordinate their efforts or even entering into either open, or at times more subtle competition. The UN had paid a number of visits to Georgia in late 1992 and had established an "initial presence" in the area. In May 1993, Edouard Brunner was appointed as Special Envoy to Georgia by the Secretary General of the UN Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Brunner was the first high-ranking diplomat assigned to the conflict and his appointment signified an increased involvement of the organisation. In early 1994 Brunner was able to achieve some major milestones for the peace process by chairing negotiations that produced documents "that remained as the basis for further discussions of a settlement"[414] throughout the process. Among other successes Edouard Brunner facilitated *The Declaration on Political Principles*, the *Quadripartite Agreement on the Return of Refugees,* and the *Moscow Agreement on Ceasefire and Separation of Forces* of May 14, 1994. Given the developments in the peace process up to that point the question remains how such stunning advances were possible? Up until this point in 1994, Georgia and Russia had signed another ceasefire on May 14 1993, exactly

---

[411] Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard.* 88.
[412] M. Gusseinova. "Russian Interest in the Abkhazian Conflict and the Position of the USA." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 8:3. 474. 1995. Print.
[413] See above: S. W. Hook. "Review of Henry Kissinger." 187.
[414] H. Tagliavini, A. Menger, and V. Mauer. "Edouard Brunner's Mandate in Georgia." 87.

a year prior to the 1994 declaration (see above). According to UNHCR sources these prior negotiations had also included a provision in which "Georgia and Russia agree that all Russian military forces will withdraw from Georgia by the end of 1995."[415] Any agreement in which Russia would consent to the withdrawal of its military forces from Georgia is startling, given that even the withdrawal of Russian military units from Abkhazia had caused disagreements even prior to the talks in May 1993. During a meeting from April 6-9 1993 between Georgian Prime Minister Sigua and Russian Defense Minister Grachev in Sochi, the issue of Russian troops stationed in Abkhazia had remained unresolved as no common ground was found.[416] The calls from within the Georgian Parliament for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Abkhazia and Georgia proper meanwhile became louder.[417] Voices from within the Russian Supreme Council had in turn demanded that any weapons transfer to Georgia should be stopped as the country was seen as the root cause for signs of destabilization in the North Caucasus stemming from Abkhazia.[418] The documents and statements mentioned here are only illustrations of the fact that while the negotiation of a peaceful settlement was underway, military issues became an accessory phenomenon to these talks.

In early May 1993 "Carrying out the functions of mediator, the delegation of the Russian Federation informed the representatives of Abkhazia about results of negotiations between the representatives of Russian and Georgian delegations that took place on 6-9 April in the city of Sochi."[419] The wording used in this communiqué illustrates once again that the Abkhaz were not accorded an equal part in the negotiations at this point, but that instead major components of the mediation took place without their involvement. In the case mentioned here, they were merely informed about decisions that had been reached in high-level meetings between Russian and Georgian representatives. Given the military component of the May 14, 1993 ceasefire agreement and the lack of involvement of the Abkhaz side

[415] Minorities at Risk Project. "Chronology for Abkhazians in Georgia." N.p., 2004. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,CHRON,GEO,,469f388ca,0.html>.

[416] T. Diasamnidze. "Protocol of Negotiations Between the Governmental Delegations of the Republic of Georgia and the Russian Federation, 9.April 1993." *Regional Conflicts in Georgia – Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia, Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia (1989-2005).* Tbilisi: Regionalism Research Centre, 2005. 161. Print.

[417] T. Diasamnidze. "Decree Issued by the Parliament of Georgia on Withdrawal of Russian Military Units from the Conflict Zone in Abkhazia, 27. April 1993." *Regional Conflicts in Georgia – Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia, Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia (1989-2005).* Tbilisi: Regionalism Research Centre, 2005. 162. Print.

[418] DECREE ISSUED BY THE COUNCIL OF NATIONALITIES OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION on implementation of the decree issued by the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation "On the situation in the North Caucasus in connection with the events in Abkhazia" of 25 September 1992 and "On implementation of the Decree issued by the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation "On the situation in the North Caucasus in connection with the events in Abkhazia of 25 September 1992" of 25 December 1992, Bulletins of the Peaple's Deputies Congress of the RF and the Supreme Council of the RF, 1993, # 20, p. 1214-1215/Translation from Russian, cit.n. Diasamnidze, op.cit, p. 163

[419] T. Diasamnidze. "Communique on Russian-Abkhaz Consultations, 6 May 1993." *Regional Conflicts in Georgia: The Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia, the Autonomous SSR of Abkhazia (1989-2005) - Collection of Political Legal Acts.* 2nd ed. Tbilisi: Regionalism Research Centre, 2005. 164. Print.

prior to the agreement, it comes as no surprise that the agreement was violated only shortly after it had been concluded. As in Geneva, the Abkhaz party to the conflict reacted to being ignored by acting as a spoiler to the peace process. Thus, two ceasefire agreements had been violated and the fighting in Abkhazia continued. Given these developments, the 1994 declaration on ceasefire and separation of forces can be regarded as a milestone in the peace process.

With a Special Envoy already in place the UN stepped in to smooth the waters. Security Council Resolutions 849 and 858 of July and August 1993 affirmed its commitment in the form of a Special Representative and authorized the establishment of a UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). The decision to dispatch UNOMIG only came after another ceasefire agreement had been signed in Sochi mediated by Russia. The Sochi agreement provided for a Joint Controlling Mechanism to monitor the ceasefire and established that Abkhaz and Georgian armed forces were to retreat. Furthermore, it was concluded with Russian guarantees. The government of the Russian Federation appointed Sergei Shoigu to chair the Russian part of the Joint Commission on Regulation of Conflict in Abkhazia. Shoigu was later on accused of having carried out his duties one-sidedly. His failure to disarm the Abkhaz militias even though it had been envisaged by the Agreement stood exemplary for this notion. On the Georgian side, despite the failures of previous ceasefire agreements, Shevardnadze had put his eggs in the Russian basket again. Goga Haindrava, whom Shevardnadze had named State Minister of Conflicts during the Georgian-Abkhaz war, resigned out of protest on 27 July 1993 after a third ceasefire treaty had been signed in Sochi. He explained that there had been clear signs that the Russian side would not abide by this agreement again. The numerous ceasefire agreements had become a farce and according to Haindrava, like all others, Shevardnadze was well aware of it. He concluded that the President was under serious pressure in Tbilisi to lay results on the table.[420] In the capital the public opinion was turning increasingly against the President, who faced some fierce opposition to his course. In addition anti-Russian sentiments were already on the rise as many Georgians did not differentiate much between the support Abkhazia had been provided with from elements within Russia and the Russian government. The Georgian Parliament later on even appealed to the UN in an open letter to remind Russia of the obligations it had undertaken with regards to Georgia and in this situation Shevardnadze desperately embraced any even unlikely possibility to show progress at home.[421] This can be regarded as a political move motivated by domestic considerations. The short-term benefits for individuals and their public offices mattered more than long-term substance in such instances.

---

[420] Goga Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010.
[421] See reference cit.n. "Resolution 876, Adopted by the UN Security Council 19 October 1993 to Letter of 12 October 1993 by the Chairman of the Georgian Parliament, UN Document S/26576." United Nations Security Council, October 1999. Print.

The surprise attack on Sukhumi that followed on September 16, 1993 was the final violation to the *Agreement on ceasefire and the mechanisms of its implementation in Abkhazia* that had been negotiated in Sochi in July 1993. The violation was documented by the UN observers and the main guarantor and mediator Boris Pastukhov, the Representative of the Russian President and then deputy Foreign Minister of Russia. Shevardnadze rushed to Sukhumi and engaged with the troops in the fighting for the city. Alexander Rondeli, the director of the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, who previously served as a high-ranking diplomat of Georgia, recalled a meeting with Shevardnadze during which the head of state had made his sentiments clear that losing Sukhumi meant the final loss of Abkhazia.[422] Thus, Shevardnadze remained among the last men standing in Sukhumi, so that the Parliament had to urge him to return to Tbilisi in an emotional statement on September 27 which reads: "Chairman of the Georgian Parliament, Head of the State Eduard Shevardnadze is now on the frontline, in Sukhumi that is razed to the ground by Abkhaz separatists and by hired murderers. The courage and self-sacrifice of the head of the State is known worldwide, yet taking into account the complicated situation in the country, we believe that Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze's further stay in the city of Sukhumi would be dangerous not only for his own life and personal safety but also for Georgia's statehood, and that fatal development of events could trigger larger bloodshed and an outbreak of a civil war. The Parliament of Georgia categorically demands that Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze would immediately return to the capital and would start fulfilling his duty. A new stage of the struggle for Georgia's independence and territorial integrity starts today."[423] The city fell only hours after the Georgian leader had left it by helicopter. In its statement, the Georgian Parliament highlighted the present dangers posed to Georgia by the Zviadist insurgents that were still operating out of western Georgia and the adjacent territories. It also correctly noted that the fall of Sukhumi represented a strategic shift of events. Georgia had been defeated in Abkhazia. Almost certain of defeat, the Georgian Parliament had issued a statement urging the government to refocus its strength on the ongoing civil struggle in order not to be confronted with further losses.

Meanwhile, the supporters of former President Zviad Gamsakhurdia had exploited the fighting in Abkhazia to strengthen their own position against the Georgian government. On October 1, 1993, Poti and its industrial harbor were conquered by pro-Gamsakhurdia forces. Russia had made it clear to Shevardnadze that further support in Abkhazia and to the Georgian government for the purpose of domestic defense would be conditional on Georgia joining the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Consequently, Shevardnadze accused Russia of master minding the events.[424] But with his hands

---

[422] Alexander Rondeli. Personal Interview. 2010.
[423] "Statement of the Georgian Parliament." *Bulletins of the Parliament of Georgia #9-12*. 27 Sept. 1993. 127. Print., cit.n. Tamaz Diasamidze. *Regional Conflicts in Georgia*. 173.
[424] See Minorities at Risk Project. "Chronology for Abkhazians in Georgia."

tied, on October 8 Shevardnadze announced Georgia's intention to join the CIS. In turn Georgia allegedly received military equipment from Russia vital for defeating the Zviadists later on.[425]

After the fall of Sukhumi it became clear that neither the Russian Federation, nor the UN had been instrumental in pushing for Georgian interests with regards to a political settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia. Both mediators had disappointed Georgian hopes for a swift end to the Abkhaz insurgence. While the chaos in Russia also manifested itself in the way the Abkhaz issue and its mediation was handled, Russia had eventually given priority to the pursuit of its own interest of including Georgia into the CIS.

Regarding the UN Heidi Tagliavini, who served as UN Special Representative for Abkhazia in later years, clarified that the successes achieved up to that point on UN level, for example agenda-setting and the deployment of UNOMIG, were not initiated to simply serve state-centric interests. Tagliavini stated that "UNOMIG can be only as strong as the contributing states that give it political guidance."[426] She further explained that "The UN and UNOMIG [...] are present in that conflict neither to impose on anyone Georgia's aspiration for sovereignty, nor to offer the Abkhaz separatists a protective shield and an international platform."[427] Her statements portray the UN as a nearly neutral forum and deal a countermand to those portraying the UN as an organization, which favors state-centric solutions to problems (see above). It also tended to criticism to the effect that in certain forums the majority population of one state was discriminated when minority rights were overemphasized. The point that a majority had to endure disproportional suffering in order to uphold minority rights had been taken up by Shevardnadze in his UN Speech cited above. Tagliavini's statement, however, lists intentions, rather than facts. For a long time, the Geneva negotiations under UN auspices, for example, evolved around Georgian territorial integrity. Not only such negotiations but also UN documents exhibit a bias for state-centrism or sovereign states. Nevertheless, it is also explained that the UN is often only able to act as a composition of its parts, which are essentially state-centric. On the other hand, it is true that individual negotiators have attempted to bridge this gap. Heidi Tagliavini herself and also other Special Representatives, among them Dieter Boden, were often mentioned by respondents on the ground as outstanding individuals who greatly contributed to moving the peace process forward despite only limited attention to it by the state members of the UN. Edouard Brunner, the first Special Envoy to the conflict is a telling example of how an individual can attempt to build a bridge, narrowing the gap between a state centric organization and the non-state actors it negotiates with.

---

[425] Ibid.
[426] H. Tagliavini, A. Menger, and V. Mauer. "Edouard Brunner's Mandate in Georgia." 88.
[427] Ibid. 89.

Individuals often had large shoes to fill in this regard. They carried the task of creating the conditions for negotiations to take place in an atmosphere otherwise often shaped by hostilities. Sergey Shamba, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister of *de facto Abkhazia*, remembers one such individual, Edouard Brunner, as an empathetic diplomat who made an enormous effort to understand the complexity of the situation. "Brunner had an understanding of the fact that the relations between the sides could not be re-established on the basis of a hierarchical submission of Abkhazia under Georgia,"[428] Shamba notes. He goes on to state that Brunner established a relationship of trust with representatives of both sides and that only under those circumstances was a continuation of any negotiations possible. In other words, he introduced an aspect of equality, at least on a psychological level. Shamba's statement highlights once again the importance of personal aspects in peace process negotiations, which were often dominated by state-centrism and left little to no room for the non-state parties to a conflict. In Geneva the first round of negotiations on a comprehensive settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict took place from November 30 until December 1, 1993. These negations were held under the aegis of the United Nations, chaired by Brunner with the Russian Federation in the person of Boris Pastukhov as facilitator and Vincenzo Manno as representative of the CSCE.[429] The parties reached a *Memorandum of Understanding*, agreed to take responsibility for the non-resumption of fire and the immediate resolution of issues related to the IDPs and refugees and set a schedule for further meetings. Expert groups met again on various occasions in Moscow until the second round of talks was held from January 11 to 13, 1994. The sides agreed on the deployment of UNOMIG in their zones of conflict and it was affirmed that works were on the way for negotiating a political status of Abkhazia.[430] While experts worked on the details of such arrangement the first setback to the Geneva meetings came in 1994 when the Abkhaz declined to agree to a document that mentioned the territorial integrity of Georgia. Implicitly this denial meant a claim for self-determination. The meeting was postponed and continued at the UN headquarters in New York in March. The active mediation of Brunner nevertheless led to breakthrough in early April 1994, when on April 4 the above mentioned *Declarations on measures for a Political Settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict* as well as the *Quadripartite Agreement on voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons* were signed. These documents formed the foundation of the subsequent process and where followed by a proposal for a Coordinating Commission and the *Moscow Agreement* of 14 May 1994, which established a lasting ceasefire. For the first time, only the Georgian and Abkhaz side were signatories to the agreement.

---

[428] Ibid. 90-91.
[429] MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING between the Georgian and the Abkhaz sides at the negotiations in Geneva, Diasamnidze, op.cit. 180.
[430] COMMUNIQUE on the second round of negotiations between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides in Geneva, cit.n. Diasamnidze, op.cit., 182.

Although Edouard Brunner facilitated some stunning advances, the main issue of political status remained unresolved. In addition, Brunner was not able to secure the UN's position as a leading force in the peace process. During his time as Special Envoy the mediation of major agreements moved back to Moscow, insinuating Russian primacy over the mediation. Heidi Tagliavini explained that Brunner was holding a dual mandate of Special Envoy of the Secretary General on the one hand and Swiss Ambassador on the other. This meant that Brunner had to spent substantial time away from the conflict zone.[431] It may offer an explanation why he, despite being able to overcome impasses throughout the mediation, was not able to establish a leading role for the UN as mediator. Although Tagliavini points to Brunner's dual-role and its impact, it is not clear whether more time spent in the region would have prevented the observed shift away from the UN as other forces were also at work which will be elaborated below.

As a new member to the CIS, Georgia was leveraging its case also within this forum. Georgia's actions follow the logic of the market of mediation outlined above and its interest to secure the most favorable settlement to the conflict. Only shortly after Abkhaz representatives had rejected to sign an agreement at the Geneva meetings, which mentioned territorial integrity, the CIS passed a document entitled *Declaration on observing sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders of the CIS member-states*[432]. As an example of Georgia's multi-vector diplomacy this headway for Georgia within the frame of the CIS highlights that the state-actor to a conflict had various possibilities for taking actions which remained closed for non-state parties. The CIS document above underlines the notion of the Georgian Parliament (see above) that the fight for Abkhazia had "entered a new phase" and had transformed into a battle of maintaining the territorial integrity of Georgia. In this battle Georgia once again sought after rapprochement with Russia. As part of this attempt, Russian-Georgian relations with regard to Abkhazia seemed to continue on the bases of Tit-4-Tat. In the summer of 1994 a CIS Peacekeeping Force, which was essentially comprised of Russians, was stationed in Abkhazia. Tbilisi's "Tit" came in form of support for the Russians in the first Chechen war, which officially began on December 19, 1994. Soon thereafter, a plan (said to have been drawn up by Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev[433]) established a special regime of economic and political relations with Abkhazia which was regarded as no less than a blockade of Abkhazia. Krylov summarized a sentiment which was repeatedly encountered during the research phase for this thesis in Abkhazia. He explained that "The purpose of Russian diplomacy at that time was to force the Abkhazian government to accept such conditions as

---

[431] H. Tagliavini, A. Menger, and V. Mauer. "Edouard Brunner's Mandate in Georgia." 88.

[432] "Declaration on Observing Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity and Inviolability of Borders of the CIS Member-State." *Svobodnaya Gruzia* 19 Apr. 1994, 62: n. pag. Print. Translated from Russian. cit.n. Tamaz Diasamidze. *Regional Conflicts in Georgia.* 194.

[433] Various interview partners mentioned Kozyrev as having been the driving force behind this course of action, among them Vasha Lordkipanidze. Personal Interview. 2010. and Peter Mamradze. Personal Interview. 2010.

would mean full capitulation to Tbilisi. However, the economic and political blockade of Abkhazia not only did not help resolve the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict; it strengthened the animosity of the population of Abkhazia towards Georgia. It did not, however, result in anti-Russian feelings: both the Abkhazian authorities and the general public viewed it as the result of diplomatic intrigues by Tbilisi with the Georgian lobby in Moscow and of Western pressure on Russia."[434] Russia found itself in a win-win situation in Abkhazia. Any negative course of action was perceived by the Abkhaz as originating from Georgia while Russia was immediately awarded credit for positive developments from the Abkhaz side. The new regime imposed on Abkhazia included travel restrictions for males from 15 years until 65 years of age and together with import and export limitations, for example the interceptions of cargo ships en route to Abkhazia, meant increased economic hardship for the population. This first round of sanctions, which is often omitted by scholars who only consider the CIS sanctions imposed later on, have to be viewed also in the context of the developments at the time. Abkhazia held elections in 1994 and issued a new draft constitution which did not explicitly but implicitly stipulated that it was a sovereign state. This naturally alarmed Tbilisi. Estimating the severity of the situation Shevardnadze had sent his close associate Vasha Lordkipanidze, the former Prime Minister and head of his staff, who was in charge of the Abkhaz portfolio as Ambassador to Moscow in 1995. Lordkipanidze was the Personal Representative of the Georgian President for Abkhaz issues and his assignment to the post of ambassador to Moscow clearly underlined the fact that Georgia firmly believed that a resolution to the Abkhaz issue was to be found in Moscow. Lordkipanidze, who had passed through the ranks of the Soviet Nomenklatura, still possessed an extensive network of personal ties to high-ranking Russian (and Abkhaz) officials. He knew how to maneuver in Moscow. According to Lordkipanidze he spent much of his time in Moscow between the Kreml, the Duma and foreign embassies to lobby for the Georgian view of the Abkhaz issue.[435] He also undertook a sort of shuttle diplomacy to Abkhazia where much of the new leadership was made up of his old compatriots, friends and colleagues from communist times. Given that Lordkipanidze like Shevardnadze believed that the key to settling the Abkhaz issue lay in Moscow, he suggested to the Russians to openly negotiate bilaterally about what kind of Georgia they needed. He recalled that the Russians proposed for Georgia to change from a unitary state into a federation, an issue the Georgian side agreed to only after lengthy discussions over the course of weeks. This new rudimentary appreciation of federalism was the bases for Russian led attempts to mediate a protocol to settle the outstanding political status of Abkhazia further discussed below.

---

[434] Alexander Krylov. "The Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict; The Security of the Caspian Sea Region." Oxford University Press, 4 July 2013. Web. 1 June 2014.
<http://books.sipri.org/files/books/SIPRI01Chufrin/SIPRI01Chufrin16.pdf>.
[435] Vasha Lordkipanidze. Personal Interview. 2010.

Meanwhile, although Lordkipanidze did not openly mention having talked directly about military issues with Moscow, it is noteworthy that in the time of his ambassadorship in Moscow fell a trip of Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin on September 15, 1995 to Georgia's capital Tbilisi, where the Russian delegation enthusiastically signed a draft agreement about a 25 year long lease of military bases in Georgia. This agreement entitled *Russian-Georgian Agreement on Deployment of Russian military stations in Georgia*[436] was signed after months of negotiations, at a point when according to previous demands put forth in the CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) Treaty as well as sentiments expressed by the Georgian Parliament, Russia should have finished the withdrawal of its troops from Georgia (see above). The discrepancy may be found in the fact that the Chernomyrdin agreement was signed at a point when Georgia was in need for Russian support once again for the ongoing new attempt to find a political settlement on the status of Abkhazia. Peter Mamradze, who served as chief of staff for Shevardnadze as well as Saakashvili later on, recalled that Russian pressure on Georgia to sign this treaty had been building up. He remembered that it was clearly communicated to Georgia via informal channels that "if we [Georgians] want Russians to be facilitators in the conflict and have normal relations with them and if we want to receive our quota of arms, this treaty about Russian bases was absolutely necessary. If it was not signed, it would have been taken as proof by the Russian side that we are enemies."[437] Shevardnadze justified this move on television to the Georgian people as the lesser of two evils.[438] At a meeting of the Defense Ministry Commission on October 31, 1995, Shevardnadze explained the move by noting that "without Russian assistance Georgia would not be able to create an efficient national army"[439]. However, he also questioned whether the bilateral agreement on deployment of Russian military bases in Georgia would be ratified by the new Georgian parliament in the absence of further Russian help in regaining break-away territories."[440] As it turned out later on, the Military Bases treaty was not ratified.

By this treaty, however, Shevardnadze once again exhibited his pursuit of a balance of power policy for Georgia. In August 1995 he survived an assassination attempt the author of which was then evacuated by helicopter to Russia. Konstantin Zatulin, who led the hardliners in the State Duma in Russia, was among those high-ranking individuals openly stating that Igor Giorgadze, the mastermind behind the attack was not to be extradited to Georgia. But personal grudges were out of place in the pursuit of a balance of power for Georgia. Political life continued. On the one hand it was characterized by cooperation with Russia. On the other hand it was emphasized by diplomatic actions that an

---

[436] "The Georgian Chronicle, Monthly Bulletin." *The Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development* 4:10. Oct. 1995. Print.
[437] Peter Mamradze. Personal Interview. 2010.
[438] Ibid.
[439] "The Georgian Chronicle, Monthly Bulletin." Op.cit.
[440] Ibid. 4.

unconditional compliance with Russian interests was out of the question for Georgia. Instead, Shevardnadze extended the circle of partners. The new Georgian multi-vector diplomacy was marked by a success for Georgia when on October 9, the Azerbaijan Oil International Consortium (AOIC) decided for seconding the pipeline route through Russia with one passing through Georgia for transporting Caspian oil from Azerbaijan to the Black Sea. Some associates of Shevardnadze attributed these developments to the outstanding relations Shevardnadze entertained with Aliev dating back to their time in the communist party[441]. But the official line of argument was that the Russian pipeline, although needing only relatively small adjustments[442], ran through war-ridden Chechnya, while the route through Georgian would pass through a more stable territory. The interim port of destination was said to be Suspa, but it soon became clear that the oil would continue its flow through Georgia to Turkey to be delivered to European markets. This decision came as a blow in the face to many Russians and the same Zatulin sharply criticized Shevardnadze for following a western course and a plan which had been advocated by US President Clinton. This accusation may seem exaggerated considering the Clinton Administration's usual careful handling of Russia, its previous 'Russia first' policy in many instances, and its warning against swift NATO expansion. In addition, US sanctions against Azerbaijan for its conflict with Armenia, ran contradictory to sudden US-Azeri cooperation. Yet, certain evidence points in the direction that the Clinton administration had started to change its course and that the decision for Baku-Suspa was based not solely on decades of friendship between the Georgian and Azeri leadership but that larger geostrategic considerations started to weigh in to the decision.

The Bush administration had defined the access to the world's oil as a national US interest. The Clinton administration decided for an end to dependence on oil from the Persian Gulf as one of its strategic goals and a consequence of the recent Gulf wars. Instead diversification of pipelines was the new catch phrase the administration had publically committed to by 1995. With regards to the Baku-Supsa pipeline, a Princeton case study examines in detail how the Clinton administration "deployed a comprehensive package of inducements to persuade Azerbaijan to endorse only those pipeline routes which ran through friendly, U.S. allied states [...] and avoided transit through Russia and Iran".[443] The time period prior to October 9th, when the AIOC announced its decision in favour of Baku-Supsa, endorsed by the omnipresent Azeri President Aliev, is of special interest for the above mentioned argument. The US approach illustrates the complex web of private and public relations to realize a decision in favour of Baku-Supsa. It is noted that Sandy Berger who headed the U.S. Deputies

---

[441] E.g. Peter Mamradze. Personal Interview. 2010., Irakli Menagarishvili. Personal Interview. 2010.
[442] To recondition the existing pipeline via Russia to the Black Sea port of Novorossissk would have cost a mere 50 million US dollars according to estimates, see J. Joseph. *Pipeline Diplomacy: The Clinton Administration's Fight for Baku-Ceyhan (WWS Case Study)*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Web. November 2012. <wws.princeton.edu/research/cases.xml>.
[443] Ibid. 2.

committee, which had raised the need for close attention to the pipelines running from Azerbaijan as an issue in Washington, met with Terry Adams, British Petroleum executive and head of the AIOC. Meanwhile NSC Advisor Tony Lake prepped Zbginiev Brzezinski and asked him to carry a personal letter to Aliev during his trip to Baku in September 1995.[444] According to Josi Joseph, a researcher at Princeton University, Brzezinski held intense talks with Aliev followed by personal calls from President Clinton and promises of intensified military, economic and political cooperation. Finally "the AIOC with Aliyevs blessing announced its plans to use both the Novorossissk and the Supsa routes to export initial oil volumes from the three main Azerbajani oil fields."[445] While US pressure and assurances for closer US-Azeri relations were important for Alievs endorsement of Baku-Supsa, they do not negate the fact that his close relationship with Shevardnadze and the latter's counsel to the same effect played an equally important role. At the same time, although the decision for Baku-Supsa certainly showed that the geopolitical struggle had entered a phase when economic interests had openly become part of the 'Tit-4-Tat' in Georgian-Russian relations and geo-economic concerns started to surface more clearly, the Clinton administration seemed to entertain hopes that a multiple pipelines approach would not end in a Great (zero-sum) Game. To this end Joseph quotes former US Deputy Secretary of State, who noted in July 1997 at John Hopkins University that: "In pondering and practicing the geopolitics of oil, let's make sure that we are thinking in terms appropriate to the 21st century and not the 19th. The Great Game....was very much of the zero-sum variety. What we want to help bring about is just the opposite: We want to see all responsible players in the Caucasus and Central Asia be winners....."[446] His statement points to the fact that elements within the Clinton administration believed cooperation and subsequent win-win situations would be possible, despite practicing policy in accordance with geopolitical concerns. This modern interpretation of geopolitics mingled with liberal beliefs of mutual benefits derived from cooperation would not withstand the test of time as will be discussed later on. The above discussion, however, showed that Georgia maneuvered between US and Russian interests in order to raise its own importance and diplomatic weight, also for the negotiations around Abkhazia.

Meanwhile, during the same year, Vasha Lordkipnaidze had contributed to convince a group around Yeltsin comprised of Vice Prime Minister Aleksey Bolshakov, Andrey Kozyrev, Pastukhov and the Chairman of the Frontier Armies Andrey Nikolayev to start working out a draft document about the political status of Abkhazia within Georgia. Lordkipanidze practiced shuttle diplomacy, bringing relevant individuals to Tbilisi to meet with Shevardnadze and meeting himself with Ardzinba and others on numerous occasions in Abkhazia. The 1995 Protocol that was worked out and in the end initialed by both sides before Ardzinba withdrew from the negotiations was the closest both sides ever came

[444] Ibid. 16.
[445] Ibid. 17.
[446] Ibid. 15.

to the regulation of the status to the conflict. "The Abkhazians wanted a confederation. And this was unacceptable for Georgians. By July, the Abkhazians had agreed to a federal organization and we met in Moscow. We started negotiations again and we adopted a document on 22 July, 1995. Bolshakov, Anri Jergenia and I signed it. Previously we had made some remarks on the document. On 25 July, we adopted a new corrected version of the document. The document outlined that both sides would live together in a unified federal state and that the relations between the two sides would be regulated by constitutional law. The authorities of each federal side were clearly defined and included important posts to be held by the Abkhaz leadership."[447] According to another source, "In 1995 the parties initialled a protocol about the political status of Abkhazia. Ardzinba initialled but later on withdrew his signature because at home he faced violent criticism from the political elite and the population."[448] Many observers to the developments considered the Abkhaz withdrawal from the initialled protocol as "a major failure [in the negotiations] because everything was moving towards compromise, this federal arrangement document was there, facilitated by Russia and initialled. And at the last point the Abkhaz withdrew from it."[449] While Georgia's course of diplomacy seemed to have paid off regarding Russian support, the problem of not finding appropriate measures to include the Abkhaz had once again led to a major setback in the mediation process.

The reasons the Abkhaz withdrew from the protocol after months of work and more than 25 drafts having been written and discussed may be found in domestic developments in Abkhazia. According to Stanislav Lakoba, Ardzinba had negotiated this protocol without due involvement of the Parliament, which in the end turned against it.[450] While Abkhaz respondents usually take this protocol as an expression of the fact that official Moscow had more and more distanced itself from Abkhazia, numerous Georgian respondents, among them the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Irakli Menagarishvili,[451] attribute the failure of the protocol not to an Abkhaz choice but to Russia. They considered Russian elements disinterest in reaching a settlement behind the events of 1995. This common narrative for Georgians illustrates, among other things, the continued Georgian focus on state-centric actors and their power. Nevertheless, the Kreml, especially those individuals having driven this process forward, was disgruntled by these developments as it had lost face not only in front of Georgia but in front of the entire UN community and suffered a blow to its credibility at a time when Georgia was increasingly looking westward.

---

[447] Vasha Lordkipanidze. Personal Interview. 2010.
[448] Ivlian Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010.
[449] For example Archil Gegeshidze. Personal Interview. 2010.
[450] Stanislav Lakoba. Personal Interview. 2010.
[451] Irakli Menagarishvili. Former Georgian Foreign Minister. Personal Interview. 2010.

The Second Phase of the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process: 1996-1998

Russian Domination and an Asymmetric Mediation

The period between 1996 and 1998 was an important one for the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process. Within this time period fell the first and only face-to-face meeting of Georgian President Shevardnadze and Abkhaz *de facto* President Ardzinba. High hopes were entertained for this meeting as it marked an attempt to conclude an agreement leading to peace mainly negotiated in Moscow entitled "Protocol on a Georgian-Abkhaz settlement". The same period also witnessed a continuation of the mediation by coercive means. This time around, Georgia which itself advocated a process based on asymmetry and coercion in a state-centric environment, too, was confronted by a coercive strategy from the primary mediator Russia.

Russia had intensified its role in the mediation process. This can be regarded as a response to the Georgian strategy of diversifying its own diplomatic efforts which was meant to put pressure on Russia, on the one hand. On the other hand it must be accorded to domestic developments in Russia and a political elite which increasingly came together in support of a new "near abroad" school of thought. Political interest in Russia turned to the newly independent states, an area traditionally regarded as situated within the sphere of influence of Russia and over which it entertained renewed geopolitical ambitions. In this context, mediation was subordinated to the overall policy goal of strengthening Russian international standing and diplomacy. Increasingly under pressure to deliver results, in order not to have its role undermined by other actors, Russia reportedly did not stop short of using pressure in its role as a mediator, nor shied away from coercing the parties into accepting its proposals.[452] The increasing turn to coercive or manipulative methods of mediation marks an important deviation from the understanding of mediation proposed by international organisations such as the UN and OSCE, which see mediators as facilitators. As Charles Tenenbaum points out, there is a difference between problem solving approaches to mediation like those developed by Burton[453], Fisher[454] and Kelman[455], where the focus is put on informal exchanges and the mediator often sees himself as a facilitator, and bargaining approaches where the mediator, as a sort of manipulator, negotiates with the parties until they find some common ground[456]. As the mediation process unfolded and actors other than Russia

---

[452] See D. Danilov and J. Cohen. "Russia's Role." *Accord: A Question of Sovereignty, The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process*. London: Conciliation Resources, 1999. 45. Print.

[453] John Wear Burton. *Conflict and Communication: The Use of Controlled Communication in International Relations*. London: MacMillan, 1969. Print.

[454] Roger Fisher, William Ury, and B. Patten. *Getting to Yes*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1991. Print.

[455] Herbert C. Kelman. *International Behaviour: A Social Psychological Analysis*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965. Print.

[456] Charles Tenenbaum. Researcher Institute d'Etudes Politiques Paris. Personal Interview. 2004.

strengthened their own facilitative role, Russia increasingly seemed to opt for a more forward and manipulative strategy to mediation, increasingly contradictory to ideals of the UN. These developments also meant that renewed attention from Russia to the mediation process were not as benevolent towards Georgia, as the latter had previously expected. At the same time, the honeymoon period between the United States and Russia began to phase out, and US optimism about cooperation with its former adversary progressively gave way to a relationship characterized by reintroduced geopolitical competition.

As a consequence of Russia's coercive mediation strategy, Georgia increased its own efforts to equalize Russian influence over the mediation process by reinvigorating UN mechanisms and empowering Georgian-Abkhaz initiatives. Meanwhile, the Abkhaz political establishment entered a learning process at the end of which stood a response marked by reactive and defensive coercion. In this atmosphere hardliners on all sides developed a separate conflict culture which was less interested in a resolution to the conflict than in political or private gains from its continuation. The full details of the second phase of the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process will be disclosed below.

Mediation by way of Asymmetries and Coercion

While active fighting had largely subsided, this second phase of the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process marks its continuation by coercive means and thus without the complete seizure of force. In early January 1996, the Georgian side had ratified a Georgian-Russian Friendship Treaty which affirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both sides. Shortly thereafter Shevardnadze was heading to Moscow to participate in the CIS Moscow Meeting on 19th January 1996. According to the former Georgian Chief of Staff, Shevardnadze had been hesitant about whether to attend this meeting and had even contemplated to boycott it altogether in a move to protest Russia's refusal to extradite Igor Giorgadze, the former Georgian head of State Security, who was accused of having masterminded an assassination attempt against him. In the end, however, Shevardnadze made the choice to attend the Moscow meeting, where Georgia successfully pushed for the imposition of sanctions on Abkhazia by the CIS.[457] Not only the fact that the CIS heads of state reached this decision, but also the uncompromising wording towards Abkhazia were without precedent and stood in contrast to the cautious treatment of the issue at the UN.

In the second paragraph of the Decision of the heads of state of the CIS reached on January 19 in Moscow, the Georgian territorial integrity was affirmed by referring to Abkhazia as "the zone of conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia". Calling on previous decisions, for example the decision about maintaining peace

---

[457] The support of the Georgian position at the CIS meeting stood almost contradictory to the fact that high level Russian politicians boycotted the demand by Shevardnadze to extradite Igor Giorgadze and reveal the ambiguity of Russian policy vis-à-vis Georgia once again

and stability in the CIS reached on 10 February 1995 in Almaty, it was outlined as the obligation of the CIS members "not to support the separatist regimes, not to establish political, economic and other links, not to support them in economic, financial, military and other term".[458] Point one stated that the heads of state decided "to condemn [the] destructive position of the Abkhaz side setting obstacles to achieving mutually acceptable agreements on political settlement of the conflict, secure dignified return of the refugees and IDPs to places of their permanent residence."[459] This statement illustrates that solely the Abkhaz side was blamed for the failure to find a peaceful resolution, underlining the attitude of the ten state signatories to the document. The second point outlined the future course of action expected from the conflicting sides. "The Council of the Heads of States expects from the sides to achieve, as soon as possible, considerable results in talks with mediation of the Russian Federation, especially in political matters and in finding solution to the problem of refugees and IDPs."[460] To support this ruling, a long list of sanctions against Abkhazia and a call by the CIS to the UN for all countries to adhere to these sanctions completed the document.

The sanctions imposed on Abkhazia in January 1996 by the CIS were largely aimed at forcing Abkhazia to turn to Georgia, thereby recognizing it as their legal entity. Vasha Lordkipanidze, the personal representative of the Georgian President for the Abkhaz conflict, regarded the decision of the heads of states as the "most important" decision reached. He viewed it as a way to "force Abkhazians to act constructively."[461] The key idea behind it was to apply economic pressure on Abkhazia and further Georgia's economic influence over Abkhazia. Business relations as well as contacts with Abkhaz officials were prohibited without the explicit consent of Georgia. "The Abkhazians called this document a blockade. I think that it was not any blockade. The document outlined that all sides could have relations but with agreement from Georgia. We defined what Abkhazians needed for living [...]. We calculated the quantities together with the ministry of economy of Russia. We decided that we will grant the rights of importing these products, but everything else that was necessary for the development of the business environment was a matter of prior negotiation with us. It was done in a way that no ship could go to Abkhazia if it would not pass Poti first. We had to inspect what the ships were carrying and after that, they could continue to Abkhazia. Otherwise, the ships would be intercepted."[462] The government of Georgia thus introduced a sort of linkage-system, whereby every issue of concern had to pass through Georgia, physically or by way of prior agreement. Thus a link was

---

[458] "Full Text: 1996 CIS Treaty on Abkhaz Sanctions." Civil Georgia, 7 March 2008. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=17293>.
[459] Ibid.
[460] Ibid.
[461] Vasha Lordkipanidze. Personal Interview. 2010.
[462] Ibid.

maintained between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides. In various aspects this link created a structural dependency, for example when considering travel arrangements.

The majority of Abkhaz were still holding Soviet passports as many among them had refused to apply for Georgian passports. This complicated travel issues, especially the question who should grant visa's to the Abkhaz. Georgia cooperated with Russia in an attempt to solve the matter. It was agreed that Abkhaz who wanted to travel abroad would address Russia as the first point of contact. The Russians would then send a note about the request to Vasha Lordkipanidze's office, which was to grant or deny the request. Although this system became functional, this research concludes that it remained a small-scale operation which could only cater to the needs of a certain elite. In addition, it functioned in a very selective manner being exposed to the subjective views of a small number of individuals, who had the power to decide whether a certain applicant had exhibited good enough conduct in the ongoing negotiations to be granted a leave. Nevertheless, despite its flaws, it was an attempt to address the issue of travel constraints, which remains largely unresolved to this day notably under incorporation of Russia.

Georgia had successfully tried to uphold existing asymmetries by turning to the 'market of mediation' and exploring the options available for pushing for their preferred outcome to the peace process. However, by pursuing this course it severely compromised impartiality, regarded as an essential ingredient for successful mediation by a variety of scholars.[463] Isolating the Abkhaz side was an obvious breach with impartiality, as the bargain between Russia and Georgia clearly favoured the Georgian party to the mediation. Neglecting impartiality poses a problem from the traditional points of view of mediation literature, as it is regarded as an essential ingredient for successful mediation.[464] It should be pointed out, however, that despite the fact that impartiality can be viewed as essential in the context of mediation, it has frequently been abandoned by political actors in international relations. Looking at the events of 1993-1995 in their historical context, it has often been pointed out that during the Yugoslav dispute the EU, UN and NATO, too, abandoned impartiality and replaced it with an obvious and active anti-Serb approach instead. The literature continuously emphasizes the impact these events in the Balkans had on the Russian approach to international relations in the 1990's. With

---

[463] See e.g. Oran R. Young. *Intermediaries: Third parties in International Crisis*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967. 81. Print.; Cameron R. Hume. *Ending Mozambique's War: the Role of Mediation and Good Offices*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1994. Print.; Saadia Touval. "Biased Intermediaries: Theoretical and Historical Considerations." *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations* 1: 51-69. Print.
[464] See: E. Jackson. *Meeting of Minds*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1952. 125-129. Print.; Oran R. Young. *Intermediaries*. 81.; F.S. Northedge and Michael D. Donelan. *International Disputes: The Political Aspects*. London: Europa, 1971. 299. Print.; Hizkias Assefa. *Mediation of Civil Wars: Approaches and Strategies - The Sudan Conflict*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987. 22. Print.; Hugh Miall. *The Peacemakers: Peaceful Settlements of Disputes since 1945*. London: Macmillan, 1992. 62. Print.; Cameron R. Hume. *Ending Mozambique's War*.

regard to an impartial approach to the mediation of the Abkhaz conflict, it must therefore be noted that Russia did not pioneer a partial approach to conflict resolution, but that it acted in accordance with prominent international precedents.[465] Given these precedents, it is legitimate to wonder to what extend impartiality was a necessary ingredient to resolve the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict?

While some scholars have at times come to consider impartiality as not decisive,[466] its role cannot be ignored when considering that impartiality is based on and consequently influences parties' perception throughout the mediation process.[467] Compromising impartiality depleted confidence and among other things contributed to the Abkhaz side viewing the Georgians as "colonisers".[468] One additional reason conform with the traditional view which confirms the importance of impartiality, is pointed out by scholars who explain that third-party mediation is supposed to have a power-balancing role,[469] in order to facilitate the negotiation process.[470] In an inherently "asymmetric mediation"[471] as was the case for the Georgian-Abkhaz – state versus non-state – conflict, balancing against the weaker party through a partial stance, obviously infringed upon this power-balancing role as it exacerbated inequality rather than adding equality. Finally, impartiality is related to disputants' confidence in the mediator. It influences the mediator's and his proposal's acceptability, and consequently is a critical quality for a mediator in terms of achieving success. Consequently, when the peace process remained stagnant later on, the previously exhibited lack of impartiality by the Russian mediator contributed to a situation in which Georgia no longer perceived Russia as a mediator, but as a party to the conflict. This was in part due to its own experience with Russia taking sides early on.

Abandoning impartiality in favour of imposing a settlement on the weaker party is problematic, due to the fact that any third party mediation without the compliance of one conflicting party is doomed to failure. Reagan argued that it may even condition the prolongation of the conflict.[472] In this context it

---

[465] S.N. MacFarlane, A. Schnabel, H.-G. Ehrhart, and D. Haglund. "Russian Approaches to Peacekeeping." 76.
[466] See: Saadia Touval. "Biased Intermediaries." 67.; T.A. Kochan. "Step-by-Step in the Middle East from the Perspective of the Labor Mediation Process." *Dynamics of Third Party Intervention: Kissinger in the Middle East*. New York: Praeger, 1981. 133. Print.; John D. Orme. "U.S. Mediation in Revolutionary Conflicts, 1944–1986." *Mediation Quarterly* 7: 60. Print.
[467] Saadia Touval. "Biased Intermediaries." 55.; C.H. Yarrow. *Quaker Experience in International Conciliation*. Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1987. 164. Print.; Sydney D. Bailey. "Non-Official Mediation in Disputes." 209-210.
[468] Giorgi Khutsishvili. Founder International Center of Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN). Personal Interview. 2007.
[469] In the sense of introducing an additional measure of equality
[470] See: Louis Kriesberg. *Social Conflicts*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982. 274. Print.; Saadia Touval. *The Peace Brokers: Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982. 9. Print.; Saadia Touval and I.W. Zartman. "*International Mediation in Theory and Practice*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985. Print.; Oran R. Young. *Intermediaries*. 43-44. ; I.W. Zartman and J.Z. Rubin. "Explaining Disengagement." *Dynamics of Third Party Intervention: Kissinger in the Middle East*. New York: Praeger, 1981. 150. Print.
[471] See C.R. Mitchell. "Classifying Conflicts." 26-31.
[472] P.M. Reagan. "Third Party Intervention and the Duration of Intrastate Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46: n. pag. Print.

is noteworthy that even a strong and well-connected mediator such as Russia was not able to impose a solution - neither on Abkhazia, nor on Georgia - after it had jeopardized its credibility and acceptability by sanctioning a partial approach. In addition, Mitchell posited that when the non-state actor in an asymmetric conflict pattern, finds its problem solving effort met by coercion, it will enter a learning process with the result of reactive and defensive coercion.[473] This learning process took place in the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process. The combination of impartiality and coercion led to a learning process and thus triggered a response from the Abkhaz side. This is for example illustrated by the fact that after the CIS decision, the Abkhaz authorities rejected any spatial expansion of the CIS Peacekeeping Mandate, recalling that any decisions concerning the peacekeeping force had to be taken with the consent of all parties to the conflict. Demonstrating the type of reactive coercion mentioned by Mitchell, they invoked the rights accorded to them as a party to the conflict and withheld agreement to a variety of proposals that fell short of their demands in later years. The Abkhaz side also ignored calls by the UN and EU to cancel the parliamentary elections scheduled for November 23, 1996 proving to the world their determination to insist on their right to self-determination. As Georgia was pursuing a more coercive strategy of mediation, the Abkhaz side reacted with an insistence on their status as an independent state. As a result, the also official negotiations in Geneva stagnated. The developments confirm a point made by Richmond who elucidated that the way the mediation was conducted "may actually lead to escalation because of the tendency for local ethno-political entrepreneurs to drive conflict based on what they see to be a legitimate understanding of what the international system offers for such groups, namely oppressive constitutional structures".[474] Both sides had adapted to the coercive environment and as a result their stance had progressively hardened.

Russian Mediation and a new geopolitical Focus on its "Near Abroad"

The sanctions of 1996 were not the only new aspect in the conflict during the second phase of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. In Russia the post of Foreign minister had been awarded to Yevgenij Primakov, known in the west as a hardliner. He had replaced Kozyrev, who until that point steered a pro-western course in Russia together with Yeltsin. Primakov was a more uncompromising, outspoken, yet pragmatic supporter of what he considered Russia's interests. He authored a Russian policy of multilateralism openly aimed at increasingly balancing Russia's power between east and west, thereby containing the global hegemony of the United States.[475] On the same lines, Primakov was a fervent opponent of NATO's eastward expansion. The former foreign minister of Georgia tells

---

[473] See C.R. Mitchell. "Classifying Conflicts." 28.
[474] O.P. Richmond. "Mediating Ethnic Conflicts." 185.
[475] See Uwe Halbach. "Ein Jahr Primakow: Bilanzen russischer Außenpolitik 1996." Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, 19 Feb. 1997. Web. 1 June 2014.
<http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/4674>.; Also see Andrei Tsygankov and Pavel Tsygankov. "Pluralism or Isolation of Civilisations." 52.

in an anecdote that Primakov, who was born in Tbilisi, entertained quite close relations with many Georgians and had also worked for eight years together with Ardzinba in Moscow during his tenure as the head of the Institute for Oriental Studies: "I remember his words very well: "Please remember: No! Never will any NATO soldier step on Georgian soil. We won't allow that. Never!"[476] After a period sometimes labelled the Russian-American honeymoon, which referred to the eventually failed attempts to establish a 'mature strategic partnership' and to convince Russia to look more favourably upon NATO's eastward expansion, Primakov's taking office reflected the fact that those opposed to Russia's pro-western course had gained the upper hand in Moscow by 1996.[477] Influential voices were advocating not noly a special role for Russia in Eurasia but combined this idea with a popular geostrategic vision of re-establishing influence over lost territories by emphasizing the "near abroad" foreign policy option. Among them Alexander Rutskoi, who believed that whoever will be the master of the land bridge between Asia and Europe, i.e. Russian lands, "will become the master of the world."[478] His statements resonate notions of scholars such as Alfred Thayer Mahan, Nicholas Spykman and Sir Halford Mackinder and reveal the kind of geopolitical importance he accorded to Russia mastering its own house. Shortly after Primakov took office as Foreign Minister he took up this cause[479] and called for a Russian foreign policy based on the "Primakov Doctrine" of low-cost mediation[480], in order to expand Russia's influence towards the former Soviet republics. This included regulation of regional conflicts especially within the space in the CIS in order for Russia not to let control over these hotspots slip out of Russian hands. Thus, conflict mediation designed as a foreign policy tool was subordinated to a broader geopolitical agenda. Hence, the taking office of Primakov directly affected the peace process.

Already a few months later, between September 10th and 12th, 1996 during Georgian-Abkhazian negotiations in Moscow, the Abkhaz side suggested a contractual basis for possible participation of both parties in international affairs in the capacity of a single entity. This signified an important move in the negotiations. Despite the fact that the key issues of future status and return of IDPs and refugees remained unresolved[481], the period between 1996 and 1998 witnessed a sharp increase in diplomatic efforts, which are meticulously recorded in the UN Secretary General's Report of July 18, 1997.[482] As

---

[476] Irakli Menagarishvili. Personal Interview. 2010.
[477] See e.g. Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard.* 100ff.
[478] Alexandre Rutskoi. "Interview with L'Espresso, 15 July 1995.", cit.n. Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard.* 111.; Also see Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard.* 139-140.
[479] Kozyrev had argued in a similar fashion in January 1994 in order to put forth an argument for the need to preserve the Russian military presence in those regions which had been in Russia's traditional sphere of influence. See Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard.* 105.
[480] Mediation was regarded as a low-cost tool of foreign policy relative to other foreign policy tools
[481] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/1997/558.* New York: United Nations, 18 July 1997. Print.
[482] Ibid.

can be expected from the new Primakov doctrine, Russian delegations were especially active as is revealed by a quote from the above mentioned report: "In early May 1997, a delegation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, headed by Ambassador Gennadi Ilitchev, visited Sukhumi and met with the Abkhaz leaders. In June, the Russian Federation hosted intensive Georgian-Abkhaz consultations in Moscow on a draft document prepared by the Russian facilitators and entitled "Protocol on a Georgian-Abkhaz settlement", which contains basic principles for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Irakli Menagarishvili and the Abkhaz leader, Mr. Vladislav Ardzinba, took part in the consultations. The delegations left Moscow on 20 June 1997 without reaching an agreement on the text of the Protocol, though some rapprochement between the positions of the two parties was recorded. Further unofficial contacts and discussions on the issue continued afterwards. In early July, the Deputy Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, Boris Beresovsky, visited Tbilisi and Sukhumi twice […] in another attempt to move the peace process forward. Mr. Berezovsky paid his second visit jointly with the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, Mr. Zurab Zhvania, and the Special Representation of the President of Georgia to the Peace Process, Ambassador Vazha Lordkipanidze."[483] It was also noted that the Abkhaz side suggested signing a document for the renunciation of the use of force, which the Georgian side rejected. As illustrated by the quote from the Secretary General's Report, the intensification of meetings facilitated by the Russian mediator was unprecedented.

In various aspects the Russians pushed their part to the mediation and even sidelined the UN's efforts. After a subsequent meeting at the end of July in Geneva, the next Geneva Talks were scheduled for 13 October 1997. On October 8 Ardzinba informed the Secretary General that the Abkhaz side would not participate at the meeting under the pretext of needing additional preparatory time. At the same time, the Russian side also sent a notification that it would welcome the postponement of the Geneva meeting as it had scheduled negotiations on the Protocol with both sides in Moscow during the same period.[484] The situation highlights the competing agenda of Russia and the UN and illustrates a rising competition for setting and shaping the agenda of the peace process.

The activated Russian role also led to an invitation which Yeltsin extended on August 1 to both the Georgian and Abkhaz leader during the same period, to come to Moscow to advance the peace process. In his invitation Yeltsin affirmed Georgian territorial integrity as well as Abkhaz autonomy and proposed that a regulation to the conflict should follow the model of Federal Russia with its regions. Ardzinba and Shevardnadze had not encountered each other face to face since the conflict had started

---

[483] Ibid.
[484] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/1997/827.* New York: United Nations, 28 October 1997. Print.

and eventually declined their attendance again citing the need for additional preparatory work.[485] The events that followed underline that Russia was not ready to accept a no as an answer from its former subjects. On the symbolic date of August 14, 1997, five years after the fighting had ensued, Primakov brought Ardzinba to Tbilisi. Shevardnadze recalls that "He [Primakov] just suddenly, without any warning, brought Ardzinba to Tbilisi."[486] According to Stanislav Lakoba who had accompanied the Abkhaz leader in prior meetings and to Tbilisi, "Primakov put a lot of pressure on us [the Abkhaz side] at that time. Before that, Berezovski had put a lot of pressure on us."[487] Lakoba again highlighted the aspect of coercion readily embraced to drive the peace process forward. Russia had desired a meeting between the two leaders and a meeting was produced with or without the explicit consent of the leaders. According to the English idiom, "You can lead a horse to the water, but you cannot make it drink" the meeting between Ardzinba and Shevardnadze that took place in Tbilisi was knotty. Its specifics are outlined below.

Head to Head: High level Attempts to strengthen Georgian-Abkhaz initiatives

Upon arrival, Ardzinba told Peter Mamradze, a close associate to Shevardnadze, who picked him up from the airport a few words, which carried symbolic meaning. He simply stated, "I have arrived to Tbilisi".[488] In doing so, Ardzinba referred to the ruler of the Georgian region Adjara, Aslan Abashidze, who until that day had refused to come to Tbilisi and award the government even this small symbol of legitimacy. After a nine hour long tête-à-tête meeting with Shevardnadze Ardzinba met with other representative from the Georgian government and Parliament. At the end of his visit both leaders had confirmed their determination to put an end to the conflict and reaffirmed their commitment to the non-use of force. Some substantial disagreements remained, however. A Protocol, which had previously been drafted and negotiated in Moscow and no longer foresaw a unitary state but proposed a common state with two separate constitutions, could not be agreed upon. One important point of contention was that the Georgian side considered its terms incompatible with its own constitution. Yeltsin and Primakov had led the horses to the water but had been unable to force them to drink. The Georgian and Abkhaz leader did, however, agree to maintain constant contact in order to facilitate problem solving.[489]

In the spirit of the Tbilisi meeting, Georgian-Abkhaz relations were formally intensified thereafter. A delegation of the Georgian government visited Sukhumi in the following week and met with the Abkhaz

---

[485] Ibid.
[486] Eduard Shevardnadze. Personal Interview. 2011.
[487] Stanislav Lakoba. Personal Interview. 2010.
[488] Peter Mamradze. Personal Interview. 2010.
[489] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/1997/827.*

leadership to address the problems of energy and communication.[490] It was agreed to establish a Bilateral Joint Coordinating Commission, not to be confused with the subsequent Coordinating Council, which was a UN initiative. The Bilateral Joint Coordinating Commission, which has been headed by Zura Lakerbaia since its inception, was a mechanism to solve "a large variety of practical matters"[491] in an unbureaucratic fashion. Its members would meet on a regular basis in Georgia and Abkhazia. The Commission was a first attempt by Georgians and Abkhazians to emancipate themselves in the peace process from external powers and their interests by empowering bilateral mechanisms. There were first signs that communication would replace the coercive environment. Sergey Shamba, praised the "positive dynamics in the negotiation process"[492] of the time. At the subsequent meeting in Geneva on 19 November 1997, Georgians and Abkhaz issued a joint statement on settlement of the conflict, a ban on the resumption of combat activities, the return of refugees and displaced people to their homes, and the settlement of economic and social issues. In a Concluding Statement, they also embraced a proposal by the Secretary General for strengthening the involvement of the United Nations in the peace process. A mechanism for the implementation of UN actions was set up in the form of a Coordinating Council, comprised of three working groups responsible for 1) the non-resumption of hostilities; 2) refugees and internally displaced persons and 3) economic and social issues.[493] The Coordinating Council assumed its work on 18 December 1997 in Sukhumi with the next session being held the following February in Tbilisi. The sessions were chaired by the UN Special Representative and the Russian facilitator and attended by the OSCE and members of The Group of Friends of the Secretary General.[494] Alongside the meetings of the Coordinating Council, the new dynamic in the negotiations expressed itself in the form of the continuation of bilateral formal and informal meetings between the two sides and the active work of the Bilateral Joint Coordinating Commission.

The dynamic process that had been developed around the "Protocol on a Georgian-Abkhaz settlement", which the Georgian government had declined to sign earlier on, however, slowly lost

---

[490] Georgia had previously agreed with Russia that Abkhaz telephone connections would be provided via Georgian territory. The subsequent refusal by the Abkhaz to use these lines meant that Abkhazia was without communication links for a number of months. As an act of retaliation, the Abkhaz government had reduced the amount of energy flowing into Georgia from the Inguri Hydropower dam.

[491] Zurab Lakerbaia. Georgian-Abkhaz Coordinating Commission. Personal Interview. 2010.

[492] Sergey Shamba. "Substantiation of Illegality of Proceeding Regime of Sanctions against Abkhazia." Print. Personal files of Sergey Shamba, Sukhumi, 1. 2008.

[493] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/1998/51.* New York: United Nations, 19 January 1998. Print.

[494] A Group of Friends of Georgia consisting of Germany, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and the United States, "states considered to have a "direct concern" in Georgia... [It[was formed in 1993 on the initiative of France…with clearly opposed positions on Abkhazia's conflict, as well as quite distinct interest in its outcome…The group was renamed the Friends of the Secretary-General for Georgia in 1997 and was more engaged from 1998 on than in the early years of its existence…" Teresa Whitfield. *Friends Indeed? The United Nations, Groups of Friends, and the Resolution of Conflict.* United States Institute of Peace. 2007. 135-142. Print. Also see Whitfield for a discussion of effectiveness of and contradictions within the Group of Friends.

momentum in the following months. The second assassination attempt on Shevardnadze in February 1998 and some open threats he allegedly received from high-ranking members of the Russian government regarding his pro-western course after it,[495] ushered in a change in the existing positive dynamics. According to Svante Cornell, "[t]he latest attempt to solve the conflict took place in April 1998. A draft agreement was elaborated under the auspices of the CIS, which provided for […] the establishment in the Gali region of a joint Georgian-Abkhaz administration, with repatriation of Georgian refugees, which in turn would give way to the lifting of Georgian economic sanctions on Abkhazia. As for the status of Abkhazia, Georgia would be restructured as an asymmetric federation, with Abkhazia as a constituent part. An Abkhaz would be the head of the Federal Senate […]. Abkhaz [.....] immediately ruled out this solution […]. Abkhazia also demanded the withdrawal of CIS peacekeepers and the end of Russian mediation."[496] Both sides were discontent with the Russian style of mediation. Meanwhile, the small window of opportunity that had opened after the personal meeting between Ardzinba and Shevardnadze was gradually closing. Shortly thereafter hostilities broke out in the Gali-district in Abkhazia inhabited by a majority of ethnic Georgians.

The fighting that ensued in May 1998, sometimes referred by the Abkhaz side as 'Abkhazia's six-day-war', had been underway since provocations had started in earlier months. Among the 'terrorist acts' reported by both sides over the course of the previous months, a particular incident raised the level of existing tensions significantly. During a horse competition called Marula members of the Abkhaz government-in-exile raised the Georgian flag in the Gali district.[497] This was regarded as a provocation by the Abkhaz side. Additionally, soon after the Marula incident, the government-in-exile moved its headquarters from Tbilisi to Zugdidi, the capital of Mengrelia bordering the Gali district of Abkhazia. It openly proclaimed its intention to create a "liberated zone" in Gali. The tensions escalated when Georgian partisans, among them militia groupings calling themselves the 'White Legion' and 'Forest Brothers' started conducting violent operations in Gali.[498] According to historian Giorgi Anchabadze it is no secret that government forces were linked to these "partisans".[499] The same is revealed by Kupatadze in a 2005 assessment of trans-border smuggling activities[500]. The militia groups in turn controlled much of the illicit trafficking of legal and illegal goods among them drugs, petrol and tobacco.[501] While some Georgian respondents view the fighting

[495] Peter Mamradze. Personal Interview. 2010.
[496] Svante E. Cornell. *Small Nations and Great Powers a Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus.* Taylor and Francis, Inc., 2000. 192. Print.
[497] Guguli Magradze. Personal Interview. 2010.
[498] Manana Gurgulia. President Sukhum Media Club. Personal Interview. 2010.
[499] Giorgi Anchabadze. Historian. Personal Interview. 2010.
[500] A. Kupatadze. "The Impact of the Rose Revolution on Smuggling through Abkhazia and South Ossetia." *Insight Turkey* 7: 67-77. Print.
[501] For a more detailed discussion please see: Gotsiridze. "Economic and Social Consequences of the International Conflicts in Georgia." *Parliament Budget Office of Georgia*: n. pag. 2003. Print.; Svante E.

as a result of Abkhaz aggressions, the majority of Abkhaz as well as some Georgian respondents regarded the Gali incidents as an event instigated by elements from the Georgian side. Some respondents close to the political establishment of the time even conclude that amidst the first signs of escalation, Shevardnadze was coopted into consenting to the insurgency by reports of members of the Abkhaz government-in-exile and politicians linked to the partisans that they had accumulated sufficient resources and fighting force to reconquer Gali and then the rest of Abkhazia.[502] Others suggest that Shevardnadze fell victim to those forces inside of Georgia with an interest in the prolongation of the conflict from which they were reaping large benefits.[503] Overall, the Marula incident and the violence that followed illustrated the position of political importance, strength and influence the Abkhaz government-in-exile had risen to in Georgia. It also leads into a discussion of the harm structures controlling a shadow economy can cause on peace processes.

With regards to those who profited from the conflict, it is legitimate to argue that an entire net of shadow-economy activities was established and nurtured by the conflict. As the NGO International Alert points out: "People need to trade – and will do so, no matter what the political situation."[504] People have to meet their elementary needs even in situations of conflict or embargo. Consequently, attempts of economic and political isolation trigger unregulated trading patters. As the 'Economy and Peace Research Group of the South Caucasus' explains, "Unregulated, informal economic relations are important coping mechanisms for those caught up in conflict zones."[505] Meanwhile, everybody who continued to trade across borders under the terms of the imposed sanctions crossed the boundary into illegality, disregarding of the type of merchandise. Nevertheless, a major obstacle to mediation was not posed by the habitual traders of fruits and corn, but by those who exploited the unregulated environment to make huge profits by not only smuggling essentials such as petrol, and tobacco, but also weapons, and drugs. With respect to the latter goods, an extensive illegal network including elements of border guards, troops and militia members benefited from an unregulated economy. With smuggling being the norm, rather than deviant behaviour that could be proscribed by society, those reaping huge benefits from the situation were not likely to cede their behaviour in order to support a peace process which would deprive them of their gains. Actors, benefiting from a shadow economy were rather unlikely to promote an end to conflicts or put their support behind mediation initiatives in the absence of any compensation for their potential losses.

Cornell. "The Growing Threat of Transnational Crime." *The South Caucasus: A Challenge for the EU*. Paris: Institute for Security Studies, European Union, 2003. 23-39. Print.

[502] Undisclosed Interview Partners. Personal Interview. 2010.

[503] Ibid.

[504] "Economy and Peace Research Group of the South Caucasus." *From War Economies to Peace Economies in the South Caucasus*. London: International Alert, 2004. Web. 17 June 2007. <www.international-alert.org/publications/181>.

[505] Ibid.

Hence, Wennmann notes that profits derived from the shadow economy encourage a status quo of frozen conflicts.[506] Contradictorily, these problems caused by sub-state actors cannot be addressed by approaches to mediation focused exclusively on states. As a result, the danger posed to the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process by hardliners and the shadow economy was severely underestimated until the events of May 1998 reduced the laborious work and the successes achieved in the peace process until that point to next to nothing.

Although large scale fighting subsided after an agreement was signed on 28 May, 1998, the "events lend credence to the opinion of UN representative Liviu Bota that neither side wants peace."[507] This assessment by an experienced expert of the conflict could not be more explicit. It hints at the malfunctioning of the Russian mediation which was competing with the UN approach and undermined it at certain junctions. In addition, the Russians' coercive tactic had alienated both Georgians and Abkhaz. Finally, the lack of a comprehensive approach, especially the lack of accommodation of domestic hardliners by neither the mediator, nor the Abkhaz or Georgian governments were all contributing factors to the negative assessment by Liviu Bota cited above. Nevertheless, a number of confidence building initiatives, which had been proposed at the third meeting of the Coordinating Council earlier on 31 March, 1998 were still conducted in Athens in October of that year encouraged by Special Representative Liviu Bota and organized under UN auspices. The official negotiations also continued but the atmosphere had clearly been poisoned by the violence and was clouded by mistrust on both sides. Under these circumstances the efforts undertaken in Athens were nothing more than a drop in the ocean. The second phase of the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process began with coercion and ended in full-fledged warfare in Gali in 1998.

---

[506] A. Wennmann. "The Political Economy of Transnational Crime and its Implication for Armed Violence in Georgia." N.p., 1 Jan. 2004. Web. 7 July 2012. <http://www.cimera.org/sources/105_117.pdf>.
[507] Svante E. Cornell. *Small Nations and Great Powers a Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus.* 192.

III.

The Third Phase of the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process: 1999 – 2003

Introduction

The following chapter turns to the evolving disconnect between the deteriorating situation on the ground and the continued negotiations in international fora in an atmosphere of increased mistrust and a worsening security environment. It also highlights the process of coalition building as the Abkhaz moved closer to Russia and Georgians grew increasingly critical of Russia, which they accused to act as a party to the conflict. These developments again diverged from shifts in international relations, increased multilateral cooperation and renewed initiatives with regard to conflict resolution on the highest political levels. The following will highlight these developments and eventually turn to discuss second track initiatives as possible bridge to close the growing divide.

The chapter begins with a discussion of various factors that led to the unilateral Abkhaz declaration of independence in 1999. It concludes that this move was partly due to a growing siege mentality intensified by state centrism and coercive means of negotiation, including the imposition of sanctions and the financial and economic isolation of Abkhazia. This conditioned a tendency to advocate and endorse more extreme point of views in an environment where the Abkhaz perceived themselves as fighting for survival and the cost of suffering became a value in itself.

The effect on the peace process of increased mistrust and hardening positions is then illustrated by introducing the difficulties this tense atmosphere caused for a new UN Special Representative, who was mandated to work out a document assisting a comprehensive political settlement. Turning to the work of the UN Special Representative highlights the importance of timing for mediating peaceful settlements and shows that in a deteriorating security environment domestic considerations were often a spoiler to initiatives previously agreed upon in international bodies. It concludes that the Dieter Boden, the new Special Representative of the UN Secretary General had to devote much of his time in office to crisis management rather than working on conflict settlement.

The period under consideration also marked a new dynamic in US-Russian relations which directly affected the peace process. US-Russian relations began to play a more important role after the change in leadership in both countries and subsequent rapprochement. These, too, were characterized by discrepancies. Russian desire to be accepted as a member of the western club, and a blank check for fighting domestic extremism was contrasted with Russia's goal to keep the US out of its backyard and reassert influence over an area it considered it "near abroad". The new cooperative dynamic took place in an atmosphere of revived geopolitical competition and often represented a kind of diplomatic showcase, while both powers continued to advance their respective interests. While the US began to

155

move closer to regional pivot state Azerbaijan and also to Georgia, Russian advances towards Abkhazia became less subtle, for example, by openly endorsing a policy of passportization and reacting candidly to Abkhaz call for Russian protection[508]. Overall, a stronghold on Abkhazia incrementally became an insurance against Georgia slipping out of the Russian orbit as the US advanced its interests in the Caucasus.

Georgia for its part was caught in a defective domestic policy environment where existing networks had been overhauled. Meanwhile, the dichotomy between continued negotiations with the new US ally Russia and the domestic antagonism against Russian policies underpinned by concrete steps against continued Russian presence marked day-to-day politics. In its relations with Russia, Georgia, too, had turned to defensive coercion, a fact that illustrates how the relations between the Georgian and Abkhaz and Georgian-Russian relations were often mirror images of each other.

As the official peace process reached an impasse in the period under consideration and growing mistrust conditioned a downward security spiral, civil society rose in importance. Second track initiatives eventually established themselves as an additional pillar in the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process, complementing the official structures and mechanisms. Their role, contributions and shortcomings will be addressed in the last part of the chapter before turning to the changed dynamics in the post-Shevardnadze and –Ardzinba eras.

Settling the Status Issue

Despite the events in Gali, which had dealt a severe blow to the ongoing peace process, the UN hailed the Athens confidence building meeting and even entertained far reaching hopes for the conclusion of a high-level agreement on two draft documents to be signed by Shevardnadze and Ardzinba. The documents contained regulations for settling the problem of security and non-use of force, the return of refugees and displaced persons to the Gali district, as well as measures for the economic rehabilitation of Abkhazia. But the full extend of the consequences of the Gali incidents in 1998 only slowly unfolded. Incidents of low level violence continued and quenched any revival of the previous dynamics in the peace process. Hence, unlike the high expectations regarding the conclusion of the above mentioned agreement between the two leaders, the UN Security General had to report on 20 January 1999 that "the talks suddenly and unexpectedly broke down, reportedly over misunderstandings, and the Abkhaz side stated that it would no longer engage in direct contacts with the Georgian side. The stalemate in the peace talks was accompanied by a sudden and rapid

---

[508] See "Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia." IIFFMCG-CEIIG. September 2009. Web. 4 Sept 2010. <http://www.ceiig.ch/Report.html>.

deterioration of the security situation in the zone of conflict."[509] The report reaffirmed the growing suspiciousness which the violent clashes of 1998 had left behind. This increased mutual distrust which manifested itself on the highest political level expressed itself also on the ground through the continuance of occasional violent incidents which destabilized the situation further. As an early sign of increased tensions, the previous sixth session of the Coordinating Council scheduled for 17th and 18th December 1998 had already been moved from its original location Tbilisi to Geneva as the Abkhaz participants were refusing to travel to the Georgian capital. The sides subsequently hardened their stance to such an extent that the 9th session of the Coordinating Council planned for July 30 was postponed indefinitely.

While UN-led initiatives experienced a severe setback, negotiations continued in Moscow. Despite the previous announcement by the Abkhaz side, negotiations between the Georgian and Abkhaz presidential Special Representatives Vasha Lordkipanidze and Anri Jergenia reportedly continued in the Russian capital. This may be accorded to the fact that the political situation in the Russian capital was caught amidst a power transition during which neither side could afford to stay away from the political developments. For both sides it was important to be present in Moscow to get a feel for how the transition of power from Boris Yeltsin to Vladmir Putin and a new war in Chechnya would affect the role of a Russia, which perceived itself as the mediator and which was continuously accorded the status of facilitator of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict by the UN. Although not enough data was collected in the course of this research to make any decisive claims about how these months of transition in Russia effected the Abkhaz position, it is clear that against this background the Abkhaz side reached some decisions which lastingly changed the mediation environment.

On October 3, 1999 only two days after the Russian decision to enter Chechnya, the Abkhaz held a referendum on the Abkhaz Constitution. It was stated by Abkhaz sources that 58,5% of the pre-war number of electors took part in this referendum. 97,7% of the voters voted in favour of the Constitution thereby affirming their desire for a sovereign Abkhaz state. At the same time presidential elections were held in Abkhazia in which Ardzinba ran unopposed. Within less than ten days, the Abkhaz adopted an Act of State on 12th October 1999, entitled *Act on the national independence of the Republic of Abkhazia* declaring Abkhazia a sovereign state and appealing "to the UN, the OSCE, and to all States of the world to recognize the independent State established by the people of Abkhazia on the basis of the right of nations to free self-determination."[510] With this Act of State, the Abkhaz presented the world with a *fait accompli*. They had turned the tables and underwent an extreme form

---

[509] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/1999/60.* New York: United Nations, 20 January 1999. Print.
[510] ACT on the national independence of the Republic of Abkhazia, 12 October 1999, Source: Apsny Press, cit.n., Diasamnidze, T., op.cit., 388.

of defensive coercion. At the same time, they signalled their disregard for the ongoing negotiations about a comprehensive settlement of the political status of Abkhazia within Georgia. However, the declaration of independence of *de facto* dwarf state Abkhazia was hardly taken serious within the frameworks of the ongoing mediation, where business continued as usual and the new incumbent Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Abkhazia, Ambassador Dieter Boden, had only just begun to work on a draft paper entitled *Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi*, which was commonly referred to later on as the "Boden-Paper". Before further elaborating on the development of the Boden-Paper, it will briefly be discussed what led to the declaration of independence by the Abkhaz in 1999.

The CIS sanctions imposed on Abkhazia had contributed to widen the economic rift between the two conflicting parties. While Georgia was able to appeal for international investment, mostly in the form of development and humanitarian aid, this was not the case for Abkhazia.[511] Gennady Gugulia, Prime Minister of Abkhazia between 1995 and 1997, explained that "when we got out of the war, we were faced with a struggle for existence. We could not provide people with salaries, we provided them with bread."[512] He summarized the position of numerous Abkhaz respondents, who expressed the same feeling of hardship during the years when the sanctions were strictly abided by. Although the fertile Abkhaz land provided many of its residents with a level of subsistence, economic activity or the development thereof was almost nonexistent. The Abkhaz civil society representative Manana Gurgulia commented about the sanctions that even where certain sympathies for the Georgian side had still existed after the war, the sanctions erased them.[513] As previously mentioned, the sanctions had been planned in a way that economic developments were possible only by turning to Georgia. Thus, they represented an attempt to extract concessions from the Abkhaz in terms of reintegration by intensifying the existing asymmetric structures. Instead public opinion turned against Georgia as an unintended consequence. Noticeably Russia's image was much less affected by this downturn in public opinion, a development that is largely ascribed to the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Abkhaz by the Russian Federation during this period. Overall, the sanctioned largely failed to produce the desired effect, because the cost-benefit analysis undertaken by the non-state party was not primarily economic in its nature. Instead, costs of suffering came to represent values in themselves, which were used as a founding myth for legitimizing Abkhaz state formation.[514] Part of this myth was the notion that the legal patron Georgia was not providing for its population and instead caused it tremendous

---

[511] J. Cohen. "Incentive or Obstacle." *Accord: A Question of Sovereignty, The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process.* London: Conciliation Resources, 1999. Print.

[512] Gennady Gugulia. Businessmen Sukhum. Personal Interview. 2010.

[513] Manana Gurgulia. Personal Interview. 2010.

[514] Uwe Halbach. "Kleinkriege im Südkaukasus: Ein Beispiel für asymmetrische Gewalt?" *Asymmetrische Kriegsführung - ein neues Phänomen der Internationalen Politik?* Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2004. 188. Print.

harm. At the same time, narratives of bravery and notions such as that a real Abkhaz would rather die of hunger than accept a piece of bread from Georgia supported more uncompromising views. "Trade restriction caused much hardship in Abkhazia, but instead of forcing the Abkhaz to make political concessions, isolation generates a siege mentality that reduces the propensity to compromise".[515] This unwillingness to compromise goes hand in hand with an increased inclination towards more extreme points of views of the population in unrecognized entities, i.e. what Cohen calls a siege mentality. Consequently, in unrecognized entities that have meanwhile been recognized as states by their citizens, extremism rests on the mass support of the citizens and any mediation initiative must take this extremism into account.[516] Ardna Inal-Ipa, a well-established media representative and analyst from Abkhazia, confirmed that in the post war period the common bond established by the externally imposed privation silenced much internal criticism on domestic developments. The Abkhaz people were moving closer together, and rallying around the flag, a natural reaction of any in-group who feels its existence threatened by an external force. This resulted in the leadership being able to exercise its power almost uncontested. She reported that in the first years, even the media hardly reported on domestic divisions in order not to portray a picture of disunity to the outside.[517] Furthermore, the prolongation of such a siege mentality was a direct result of the sanctions and the incidents of coercion and force. According to Gennady Gugulia, Abkhaz society was in the infant stages of a transition from war to peace: "[T]hey [the Abkhaz people] knew that we were fighting for survival. It was a very difficult time. All men had weapons in Abkhazia. These people were fighting in the war; they used to defend their homeland. It was difficult to come back to normal life for them after the phase of active fighting. Our [the government of Abkhazia's] main task was to create a structure of management for the country, a structure for civil life. A legal environment which would provide guidance to the population on how to behave in times of war and in times of peace. [...] Our task was to lift people psychological out of the war mentality and to help them to live in peace."[518] In a situation of lasting traumatization like the one described by Gugulia any renewed outbreak of violence represented the danger of tipping the balance in favour of a war mentality again. The Gali incidents are a case in point which underline how delicate the balance between conflict and peaceful coexistence still was.

Zurab Lakerbaia the Executive Secretary of the Bilateral Joint Georgian-Abkhaz Coordinating Commission also confirmed that the year 1999 was a watershed in terms of relations between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides: "Until 1999 there existed real good negotiations between the two sides.

---

[515] J. Cohen. "Incentive or Obstacle." 34.

[516] S. Markedonov. "Unrecognized Geopolitics." *Russia in Global Affairs* 1: n. pag. Web. 4 January 2012. <*http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_6186*>.

[517] Arda Inal-Ipa. Deputy Director Center for Humanitarian Programs. Personal Interview. 2010.

[518] Gennady Gugulia. Personal Interview. 2010.

But the violence had very bad results."[519] Ardna Inal-Ipa explained that all subsequent negotiations took place in an atmosphere characterized by an accelerated level of mistrust.[520] In addition to the violence and consequential rise in tensions and mistrust, another factor contributed to the hardening of the Abkhaz position and the declaration of independence according to Abkhaz politician Sergey Shamba. Shamba elaborates on the consecutive decrease in willingness to accept Georgian demands without concessions after each military victory by the Abkhaz side. He explained that prior to the outbreak of the war, the Abkhaz had been discussing a federal arrangement in their Parliamentary Assembly on the very day when the fighting erupted (see above). After the war and the Georgian retreat, federalism was not an option for a majority of the Abkhaz any longer as they now favoured a confederation. But despite the losses incurred, Georgia was not ready for concessions and only proposed a federal arrangement when it was reportedly too late. After the "six-day-war" in Gali, which ended with another Georgian retreat and continued unwillingness to lower demands, the Abkhaz finally resolved the status issue unilaterally, Shamba explains.[521] The unilateral declaration of independence thus also signalled a stark decrease in the willingness of both sides to search for a mutual acceptable compromise.

Dieter Boden, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, who succeeded Liviu Bota in office, thus assumed his post amidst the newly evolving low point in Abkhaz-Georgian relations, shortly after the Abkhaz side had declared their independence on 24 Nov 1999. Like Bota before him, Boden was also the assigned head of UNOMIG. Due to prior obligations, Boden had not been able to assume his post earlier and critical developments had taken place between July and November 1999 with no permanent Special Representative in place. During this time the Security Council had issued Resolution 1255, adopted on July 30 1999. The document envisioned "for the parties to achieve an early and comprehensive political settlement, which includes a settlement on the political status of Abkhazia within the State of Georgia, which fully respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders, and supports the intention of the Secretary General and his Special Representative, in close cooperation with the Russian Federation, in its capacity as facilitator, the OSCE and the Group of Friends of the Secretary General, to continue to submit proposals for the consideration of the parties on the distribution of constitutional competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi as part of a comprehensive settlement…".[522] As outlined in this resolution it was the task

---

[519] Zurab Lakerbaia. Georgian-Abkhaz Coordinating Commission. Personal Interview. 2010., When Lakerbaia talks about "good elations" he primarily refers to lower level contacts such as people to people contacts and working relations to solve low level practical problems.
[520] Arda Inal-Ipa. Personal Interview. 2010.
[521] Sergey Shamba. Former Prime Minister Abkhazia. Personal Interview. 2010.
[522] "Resolution 1255 (1999) Adopted by the Security Council at its 4029th meeting on 30 July 1999." United Nations Security Council, 30 July 1999. Web. 1 June 2014.
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3b00f1b472.html>.

of the Special Representative to work out a draft document all members of the UN Group of Friends of Georgia would consent to as a basis for subsequent negotiations with the Georgian and Abkhaz parties. The difficulty of the task at this particular moment in the mediation process, following a power transition in Russia, a destabilized security environment on the ground, the Abkhaz declaration of independence in 1999, and defective domestic environments little prone to compromise in both Abkhazia and Georgia, highlights the importance of timing in mediation processes described by scholars such as Kleiboer, t'Hart or Thornson.[523] The Special Representative had to simultaneously work out a document acceptable to all parties and at the same time try to revive the Coordinating Council's working groups on all issues, who had ceased to meet on a regular basis. Moreover, the Abkhaz side had made it clear that it was not open to discuss any document regarding the status from the moment Ambassador Boden had taken office. Despite this depreciative attitude vis-à-vis the process, the Secretary General's Report of 19th January 2000 indicated that a draft document entitled "Basic Principles for the distribution of constitutional competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi" had been submitted for comments to the representatives of the Russian Federation, the OSCE and the group of Friends of the Secretary General.[524] After the submission of the above mentioned draft, it still took almost two years until a final text and a transmittal letter was agreed upon in the winter of 2002. One reason for this lengthy interim period were ongoing discussions among the members of the Group of Friends, some of whom were in disagreement about the phrasing and the supposed content of the paper.

In the meantime, essential political work within the mechanisms of the Geneva process and the Coordinating Council stagnated.[525] A UN report on the situation in Abkhazia in July 2001 stressed that with regard to the Georgian and Abkhaz parties to the conflict, no meaningful negotiations on the future political status of Abkhazia had begun and that the entire peace process thus remained in jeopardy. Additionally, the obligations undertaken in the Quadripartite Agreement of 4 April 1994, regarding the return of the refugees to the Gali district "still awaited realization".[526] In the meantime, the security situation in the conflict zone deteriorated further as increased incidents of hostage takings as well as activity of illegal armed groups in the Gali district were reported, reaching their height in April and May 2002. As a consequence the Abkhaz side again suspended talks of the Coordinating

[523] See: M. Kleiboer and P.'t Hart. "Time to Talk? Multiple Perspectives on Timing of International Mediation." *Cooperation and Conflict* 30: 307-348. Print.; See also: Louis Kriesberg. *Timing the De-Escalation of International Conflicts*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991. Print.
[524] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2000/39*. New York: United Nations, 19 January 2000. Print.
[525] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2001/1008*. New York: United Nations, 24 October 2001. Print.
[526] "Georgia - UNOMIG - Background." United Nations Observer Mission to Georgia, n.d. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unomig/background.html>.

Council. Once more this incident illustrated that the fragile security environment hampered the peace process. In combination with the siege mentality and war traumas elaborated above, any new incident of violence always ran a risk of letting the situation spin out of control and developing into a downward security spiral. After the April and May events the violence spread to the Kodori valley, where on July 8th and 9th, six people were killed and two taken hostage, respectively. On July 12th the Abkhaz side issued an official statement accusing Georgia of having instigated the events and cancelled its participation in the Coordinating Council. In the absence of functioning political mechanisms to address the downward spiral of violence, a major crisis developed after a group of Georgian and Chechen fighters entered the Kodori valley on October 4th from the Georgian-controlled upper part and proceeded on their way to the Abkhaz-controlled lower part of the valley. The subsequent hostilities led to a flare-up of violence and a stream of refugees. On October 8th 2001, the violence directly affected the UN mission in Georgia when a UNOMIG helicopter with 9 passengers was shot down over the Kodori valley. After the Kodori incidents the Abkhaz abandoned their participation in the Coordinating Council completely. A report issued by the UN Secretary General shortly after the events noted that the peace process found itself at a new six-month low point with "[d]irect political contacts […] reduced to a minimum".[527] In this situation the Special Representative Dieter Boden devoted much of his time to "crisis management"[528] in addition to the promotion of a comprehensive political settlement. Regarding the latter the Abkhaz reiterated their position that there would not be any negotiations on the bases of the Boden document even after the document entitled "Basic Principles for the distribution of constitutional competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi" was finalized in early 2002 and approved by all members of the Group of Friends, most notably Russia, and the OSCE. The Abkhaz refusal to negotiate was underlined by a vehement unwillingness to accept the transmittal letter containing the official text. Furthermore, for the first time international delegations to Abkhazia with a mandate to foster an environment more conducive to the reception and subsequent discussion of the Boden Paper were not received in Sukhumi. Even a meeting in Moscow proposed by Russia to acquaint the Abkhaz side with the document without a formal commitment to receiving it was cancelled on short-notice by *de facto* Prime Minister Anri Jergenia who opposed the participation of the UN Special Representative in that meeting.[529] Georgia, too, reportedly took on a rather disadvantageous stance vis-à-vis the Boden Paper before eventually endorsing it only after valuable

---

[527] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2001/1008.*
[528] Ibid.
[529] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2002/742.* New York: United Nations, 10 July 2002. Print. See also: "Abkhazia: Ways Forward." International Crisis Group, 18 Jan. 2007. Web. 1 June 2007. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/caucasus/georgia/179-abkhazia-ways-forward.aspx>.

time was lost and the Abkhaz had "realigned powerful allies in Moscow for their cause".[530] UN Special Representative Dieter Boden explained the initial Georgian failure to speak out positively on behalf of the document and even discrediting it publically as a consequence of the Georgian government's subjection to interests groups in a defective domestic environment. He noted that:"Very obviously assurances had been given to the so-called "Abkhaz Government in Exile", led by Tamaz Nadeirishvili, that the Document would pass only with their express consent."[531] As the situation remained stagnant and another promising window of opportunity was closing, it is important to look more broadly at political developments and the relationship of powers such as Russia and the United States with Georgia and with each other during this period to get a more comprehensive idea about the complexity of this peace process and obstacles in its path.

Political Developments

What state actors were concerned with during this phase of the Georgian Abkhaz peace process was the changing political environment. 1999 represented an important year not only because of the Abkhaz declaration of independence but also because the Russian leadership changed. At the same time 1999 has often been described as a watershed in Georgian politics. Domestically the year divided the periods of effective policy decision-making and the time of defective policy making, which followed. In Georgia two political forces collided. On the one side stood pro-western reformers and on the other side forces with vested interests in corruption and nepotism. The collision was caused by the fact that Georgia had been steadily advancing towards economic reforms prior to that moment and was second only to some eastern European countries in terms of GDP development and reforms. When these two forces collided, Shevardnadze abandoned his reform oriented path. Some of his former employees explained this choice by the President's personal conviction that the stability in Georgia was so fragile that a real fight against corruption would have destabilized the country.[532] With hindsight it is possible to assert that the developments in 1999 signalled the beginning of the end of Shevardnadze's rule over Georgia almost four years later when he was replaced by a revolution of roses.[533] The domestic developments also affected the peace process as new forces entered the scene. In 2000 Vasha Lordkipanidze was replaced as longstanding Special Representative of the President for Abkhazia by Malkhaz Kakabadze, which represented a change with regards to existing networks and channels of communication on the highest level.

---

[530] Dieter Boden, "10 years after the peace plan", Democracy and Freedom Watch. 20 October 2011. Web 1 May 2015, <http://dfwatch.net/10-years-after-the-peace-plan-95247-894>
[531] Ibid
[532] Undisclosed Interview Partners. Personal Interview. 2010.
[533] The IMF suspended lending to Georgia in summer 2003 due to excessive tax evasion and corruption, See:

While the domestic environment was undergoing transformation, Georgia was able to internationally advance a topic which had been discussed within the Georgian governmental structures since the beginning of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, namely the removal of Russian troops and military bases from Georgian territory. As early as 1993, the Georgian Parliament had accused the Russian armed forces of involvement in the conflict. A Statement of the Georgian Parliament from 1993 noted that "The government of the Republic of Georgia has more than once censored the participation of Russian armed forces in the conflict in Abkhazia. In his letter to UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali, President Eduard Shevardnadze underlined that Russia became a side in the armed conflict.[…] Russian media outlets have quoted representatives of Russian military command as saying that they "bombed Sokhumi" and "destroyed [Georgia's] weapon emplacements" in response to the bombing of a Russian military facility in Eshera by the Georgian side. […] military operations conducted by Russian armed forces stationed in Abkhazia can be regarded only as an open aggression".[534] Thus, Georgia had accorded an important role in the conflict to the Russian military. After the outbreak of violent clashes in the Gali district in May 1998, the Georgian Parliament accused the Russian peace-keeping forces, present in the region under the auspices of the CIS, of having failed to put an end to the military confrontations. To the contrary, it was noted that "moreover, in some cases they were helping separatists to conduct punitive operation against peaceful dwellers."[535] After lengthy debates about Russian military on Georgian soil, Georgia was able to extract concessions from Russia regarding the withdrawal of its bases from Georgian territory in 1999. On 17 November 1999, shortly after Russia had entered Chechnya, Russia committed itself in a Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and Georgia concluded at the CSCE/ OSCE Istanbul summit to "withdraw its military equipment and weaponry from the Russian military bases deployed in Vaziani, Gudauta and repair utilities located in Tbilisi […] no later than July 1, 2001 [and] shall complete the negotiation process on time-terms of withdrawal and pattern of functioning of military bases located in Batumi and Akhalkalaki and other military utilities on the territory of Georgia."[536] The agreement reached between Georgia and Russia at the Istanbul summit was a landmark victory for Georgia and its desire to rid its territory of Russian troops. It has to be regarded as a process which started many years prior to the Istanbul summit in the context of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and was pushed along by continuous diplomatic efforts by the Georgian side. The year 1999 thus also was an important year of Russian concessions to Georgia, which

---

[534] STATEMENT OF THE PARLIAMENT OF GEORGIA, Bulletins of the Parliament of Georgia; 1992-1993, # 1-4, p. 364-365/Translation from Georgian, cit.n. Diasamnidze, T., op.cit., 157

[535] STATEMENT OF THE PARLIAMENT OF GEORGIA, Bulletins of the Parliament of Georgia, Tbilisi, 1997, # # 23-24, 30 June 1998, p. 4/Translation from Georgia, cit.n., Diasamnidze, T., op.cit., 343

[536] JOINT STATEMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND GEORGIA, Istanbul, 17 November 1999, cit.n., Diasamnidze, op.cit., 388

indicated a growing self-confidence of Georgia in the international arena, but also an increased scepticism vis-à-vis a constructive Russian role in the mediation.

The scholars Young[537], Zartman[538], Kriesberg[539], and Touval[540] indicated that a marked power disparity will strengthen the stronger party to view the mediator as a stumbling block toward the achievement of total victory in a mediation process. While there was a clear power disparity between Georgia and Abkhazia in which Georgia represented the stronger party, the patron-client relationship between Russia and Georgia also represented an inherently asymmetric structure, in which Georgia represented the less powerful part. As time passed without a resolution to the conflict, Georgia increasingly viewed Russia as a stumbling block for achieving its goals and grew more critical of the mediator and his initiatives. This became visible on numerous levels some of which are pointed out above. It also effected Russian-led alliances such as the CIS. Former foreign Minister Irakli Menagarishvili provided a fitting example for the assertiveness of the Georgian criticism stating that "We Georgians already doubt the effectiveness of the CIS though we still hope it will eventually accomplish its peace mission and help Georgia restore its territorial integrity. Should this not be accomplished, Georgia will leave the CIS."[541] In addition to statements by the Georgian Parliament accusing Russia of accompliceship with Abkhazia, Georgia repeatedly exploited the threat of departing from the CIS, and made use of CIS Heads of State Summit Meetings to publicly voice concern about Russian policies.[542] The firm rhetoric exemplified above was accompanied by mutual accusations of smuggling and obstructing trade[543] as well as accusations from Russia that Georgia was harbouring terrorists. These actions pointed to an ongoing Georgian renunciation of Russia and an overall tense Georgian-Russian relationship.

After the Joint Statement had been issued at Istanbul (see above), the relations regarding security issues between Russia and Georgia grew increasingly worse. In December Russia accused Georgia of harbouring terrorists on its territory, among them Chechens and international terrorists belonging to the Bin Laden circle operating against Russia from Georgian territory. The parliament of Georgia expressed its anger over a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia made on December 21, 1999, in which Moscow officially accused Georgia of equipping the Chechen side with weapons and financial aid, which the Georgian Parliament considered it regarded as unsubstantiated. A further statement issued by the Georgian Parliament illustrated the tense situation which developed between Russia and Georgia on the eve of the new millennium: "The Parliament of Georgia considers

---

[537] Oran R. Young. *Intermediaries.* 43-44.
[538] I.W. Zartman and J.Z. Rubin. "Explaining Disengagement." 150.
[539] Louis Kriesberg. *Social Conflicts.* 274.
[540] Saadia Touval. *The Peace Brokers.* 9.
[541] Dov Lynch. *The Conflict in Abkhazia: Dilemmas in Russian 'Peacekeeping' Policy.* London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, 1998. 36. Print.
[542] Ibid.
[543] Ibid., 34.

that the groundless mentioning of the name of the international terrorist Bin Laden in the context of Georgia is meant to mislead the world society and to create a negative public opinion about Georgia seem embarrassing, whereas Russia protects Igor Giorgadze, suspect in the terrorist attack on the President of Georgia, and systematically offers him the different means of media. The aforementioned is one more vivid confirmation of double standards of Russian policy towards Georgia though Georgia is committed to its consistent policy towards the Russian Federation. The creation and inspiration, as well as political-military support of aggressive separatism in Abkhazia is the 'best' example of double standard Russian policy."[544] Despite this outcry, Georgia had indeed allowed Chechen refugees on its territory and provided for them, well aware of the fact that this move would anger the Russian side.[545] The accusations directed at Georgia, however, failed to be substantiated by international observers, while Russia did not accept a Georgian offer to send additional observers to the Chechen stretch of the Russian-Georgian border. The mutual accusations that followed the Pankisi valley issue, where Russia accused Georgia of harbouring terrorists, developed into two opposing narratives over time. On the one hand, Russia was portraying Georgia as an unstable country unable to assure its own security and thus destabilizing the neighbouring territories. This narrative was then used as a pretext for numerous recorded breaches of Georgia's sovereign borders, for example by violating its airspace. In the context of the "near abroad" foreign policy, according to which Russia was trying to pull the countries of the neighbouring regions back into its orbit, Russia was staking out a claim over Georgia by rhetorically insinuating that Georgia was unable to manage its domestic affairs responsibly. This argument is reminiscent of the rogue state line of argument referring to states which "exhibit a chronic inability to engage constructively with the outside world, as demonstrated most clearly by their support of terrorism…",[546] according to Klare. The vague US concept of rogue states is applied by Russia to portray Georgia as a threat to global stability. According to this line of reasoning, Russian violation of Georgian territorial sovereignty were thus an act to contain this threat, justified by a self-serving bias. While this point was intended to quiet international critics of Russian moves against Georgia, the Russian show of force can be taken as a warning to Georgia and a call for a return to subordination to Moscow.[547] It has to be regarded within the larger context of military bases and pipeline politics which were signs for renewed competition over controlling emerging transport and security infrastructure in Georgia. Georgia had undergone transition from a no-man's land into a "two men's land, a zone of intervention,

---

[544] STATEMENT OF THE PARLIAMENT OF GEORGIA, 24 December 1999, Archive of the Parliament of Georgia/Translation from Georgian, cit.n., Diasamnidze, T., op.cit., 390
[545] Eduard Shevardnadze. Personal Interview. 2011.
[546] Michael Klare, Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "The New Rogue State Doctrine, The Nation" 156.
[547] Brzezinski outlined a Russian desire for a special Eurasian role and subordination to Moscow of the newly independent Soviet states as important goals of the Eurasian turn in Russian politics, See Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard.* 51.

[…], because the possibility of transportation transforms the territory of these weak states into exposed frontier zones […]. As such, they must be secured against penetration by the enemy, and each power concerned is accordingly engaged in strengthening its own political influence in the buffer territory."[548] This quotation illustrates the traditional view by Spykman and manifested itself in modern times as the phenomenon of the new Great Game in Georgia and the Caucasus region. Russian action and rhetoric must consequently be viewed as an attempt to maintain its military position, economic interest and ideological influence over its former subject in a situation when the latter was in danger of going astray. The Russian conduct also confirmed an argument put forth by Michael Gerace referred to earlier, who noted that security and economic issues are inseparable.[549] Georgia on the other hand, used defensive coercion by portraying Russia as an aggressor and accused it of purposely destabilizing its security environment and compromising its sovereignty in order to maintain control and influence over a geopolitically important space. Interestingly, these narratives were as much directed at each other and the respective domestic observers as toward the international arena. The Russian use of the concept of rogue states originated in the US policy community and the narrative of an alleged connection between Georgia and the Bin Laden group underscores this point. These allegation were especially directed at the United States at a time of policy reformulation under a new US President George W. Bush, who took office in January 2001. Georgia responded by defensive coercion, reprimanding Russia and intensifying its efforts to draw the international community into the efforts to resolve the conflict. Shortly after the occurrence of another security incident, namely the Kodori events of 2001 mentioned above, Georgia's parliament issued a call to replace the CIS peacekeeping forces with international observers on 11th October 2001 thus signalling to Russia that it was serious about counterbalance and diversify the Russian role due to prevailing Russian policy.

Meanwhile, Abkhazia made more aggressive public attempts to move closer to Russia, amidst the height of the political crisis when direct political contacts between Georgians and Abkhaz had been reduced to a minimum. On October 18, 2001 *de facto* Prime Minister Jergenia publically advocated a "closer association with the Russian Federation."[550] In the absence of dialogue, inflammatory statements from all sides increased, some openly referring to renewed warfare as a way to resolve the existing conflict. The UN Secretary General attributed the intractable situation that followed to internal developments on both sides. In Georgia, the government had been dismissed on November 1, while Jergenia, who headed the affairs of the *de facto* Abkhaz state due to Ardzinba being incapacitated by illness, had received a no-confidence vote in Parliament on October 31.[551] Amidst these domestic

---

[548] Nicholas J. Spykman and Abbie A. Rollins. "Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy, I." 408.
[549] Michael P. Gerace. "State Interests, Military Power and International Commerce." 107.
[550] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2001/1008.*
[551] Ibid.

political upheavals, the Russian Federation began issuing passports to Abkhaz citizens citing a law that every citizen of the former Soviet Union was eligible to obtain a Russian passport. Around the same time when the so-called "passportization" started in Abkhazia, Georgia reaped the fruits of yet another international relations success following the Istanbul summit in 1999, which was equally regarded as problematic by Russia. In the middle of Russian accusations against Georgia of not being able to secure its territory, which had started after the Pankisi gorge incidents, Georgia had successfully appealed to the US for a 64 million dollar investment in its military. The US-sponsored 'Train and Equip Program' was aimed at enhancing Georgia's counter-terrorism capabilities and was met by Russian protest when it became public in the early spring of 2002. Georgia had turned the tables on Russia by using its accusations as a point of departure to appeal for US support in fixing the supposed problem. Regarding the Russian wave of protest, Shevardnadze appealed directly to Russian President Putin to endorse the program at an Informal CIS summit in Almaty. President Shevardnadze recalled that Putin had listened to him but had withheld a final answer. Thus, after their meeting Shevardnadze was listening to a press conference following the official meetings to find out President Putin's public position on the issue. When asked by a young Georgian journalist what he had to say about the 'Train and Equip Program', "Putin answered that Georgia is an independent state, which can decide independently to whom it consigns the training of its own troops."[552] Russia had pushed its view about terrorism which had backfired against its own interests. Publically, however, the Russian President did not lower his guard but remained rational and calm, despite the obvious setback. The cautious official Russian reaction to the 'Train and Equip Program' does not represent a sudden turn-around of Russian policy towards Georgia. Rather it confirms a point made earlier that the relations between Russia and Georgia often reflected the current state of relations between the United States and Georgia. As such, both Shevardnadze's direct approach to Putin as well as Putin's conservative response were elements of diplomatic manoeuvring. Shevardnadze was well aware that Putin and Bush were on their way to an improved US-Russian relationship and Putin knew that western eyes were set on Russia and his public demeanour. Yet, the Almaty meeting represented a temporary turn-around in Georgian-Russian relations, which can be explained by a new quality in the US-Russian relationship.

In his book about George W. Bush entitled *The Right Man: An Inside Account of the Bush White House*, David Frum states that "In Bush's first six months in office, he had executed the most ambitious reorientation of America's grand strategy since Nixon's time - away from China and toward Russia."[553] During the early months of his Presidency George Bush had approached Russia with hopes to integrate

---

[552] Eduard Shevardnadze. Former President of Georgia. Personal Interview. 2011.
[553] David Frum. *The Right Man: The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush*. New York: Random House, 2003. 90-91. Print.

it into the 'western family' making claims such as "Russia is part of Europe"[554]. Under what later came to be known as the 'Bush Doctrine'[555], Bush exercised a more flexible (and sometimes short-lived) coalition building than his predecessors tailored to current US interests, which he saw at the time in an improved US-Russian relationship. This positive trend in US-Russian relations even intensified following the attacks on the World Trade Towers in 2001. Only a few months after the Almaty summit, Presidents George W. Bush and Putin met in Moscow from 21st until 24th of May 2002. "In a joint declaration on new strategic relations and a joint statement on anti-terrorism, the Presidents expressed their readiness to cooperate in conflict settlement efforts in the South Caucasus, including in Abkhazia…"[556] These new developments and the temporary thawing of relations thus impacted the Georgian-Russian relationship. Essentially they helped to move the Georgian Abkhaz peace process out of its state of dead-lock in the short run, though once again without assuring the consent of the Abkhaz side prior to it. The pivotal point for a new initiative was reached at the CIS heads of State summit in January 2003 in Kiev. Within the framework of the summit, Presidents Putin and Shevardnadze discussed the reconstruction of the railway link between Sochi and Tbilisi. In a subsequent meeting between the Presidents on March 6 to 7 in Sochi, an agreement was concluded and working groups for its implementation formed. Both parties had a vested interest in the Sochi agreements. The missing link between Russia and Armenia via railway was costing the Russian state billions of Rubels each year. As mentioned above, railway links can be regarded as important geopolitical means for exercising influence. Brzezinski noted that railway links as a way of access are a favoured means by Russian scholars of geopolitics to ensure the control over territories in the Eurasian corridor[557]. Russia had been deprived of using the railway link in their interest since the war in Abkhazia. At the same time, Shevardnadze had struck a deal that for every section of the tracks constructed an agreed number of refugees would have to be returned to Abkhazia for the project to continue. The idea was to create a linkage between economic and political interests of Russia and the emotional topic of refugee return in order to create a larger possibility for the initiative to be

---

[554] Ibid.

[555] The Bush Doctrine evolved over the course of President Bush's term in office and essentially referred to a series of foreign policy principles intended to maintain US dominance abroad. Policies to achieve this goal included the promotion of democratic values and the support and cooperation with like-minded states, more flexible coalition building and increased US unilateralism in pursuit of US interests. See e.g. "Bush Doctrine." Princeton University, n.d. Web. 1 June 2014.
<http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Bush_Doctrine.html>. For origin of and influences on the Bush Doctrine: J. Monten. "The Roots of the Bush Doctrine: Power, Nationalism and Democracy Promotion in US Strategy." *International Security* 29: 112-156. Print.

[556] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2002/742.*

[557] See Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard.* 139-140.; Danilov also pointed to a Russian preoccupation with strategically important transport infrastructure e.g. railway links from Russia through Abkhazia connecting it with Armenia via the only non-mountainous passage available. See D. Danilov and J. Cohen. "Russia's Role." 42.; Mackinder also emphasized the importance of railways (as a new technological development) for strategic dominance. See H.J. Mackinder. "The Geographical Pivot of History." 150.

acceptable domestically. Advancing the refugee portfolio would have also relieved Shevardnadze of pressures from the powerful refugee interests groups back home and won him important support prior to the next elections. In addition, Putin had pledged to the Georgian leader to support a program of joint economic projects to bring the Georgian and Abkhaz sides' closer together.[558] While these initiatives were also met by more critical voices in Georgia, renewed Georgian-Russian cooperation on the Abkhaz issue was also directed at the third voice, namely the United States, with which Russia had agreed on taking steps to resolve the conflict.

The new Sochi agreements were hailed by the UN and the Group of Friends as a positive contribution to the implementation of its own recommendations. UNOMIG readily participated in the meetings to provide additional expertise. Some Georgian analysts, however, were more cautious. They warned that throughout Russian history, including during the Soviet era, the railway had always played an important part for Russia's imperial policy. Wherever the railway would go, Russian influence also could reach. Archil Gegeshidze explained that "Psychologically, economically and politically the railway was very important for them [Russia]. That is why Russians have always tried to ensure the restoration of this railway."[559] Some political observers from the Abkhaz side were equally uneasy about these developments. As one Georgian civil society representative recalled from a second track meeting held in London around the same time: "I was already out of the government taking part in Georgian-Abkhaz meetings facilitated by international organisations. At one of these meetings in London I met with […] a former Abkhaz national security advisor who told me personally 'Why do you advocate opening a railway? Is it in your interest? Do you want to facilitate the advance of Russian influence in the Caucasus? We do not want it, but we cannot say it loudly. Why are you advocating it?'"[560] This anecdote, if correctly recited, highlights a development which was taking place in both Abkhazia and Georgia at the same time, yet to varying degrees. The domestic political arena increasingly stood divided over the degree of cooperation their political leadership should entertain with Russia. The Abkhaz side officially embraced an increasingly all-out pro-Russian position, while parts of the leadership exemplified by the former national security advisor struck a more cautious tone behind closed doors and allegedly hinted at the fact that Abkhazia was slipping into a situation of limited political flexibility. This situation of limited control translated into a loss of sovereignty to many ordinary Abkhaz. Although generally pro-Russian, Abkhaz had fought hard for their independence and to this day portray a decisive uneasiness about a dependency on Russia. Yet, on 18 March, 2002 the Abkhaz parliament had issued an appeal to the Russian Duma outlining concrete terms for an association with Russia, stating: "We consider Russia the sole guarantor of security and economic

[558] Eduard Shevardnadze. Personal Interview. 2011.
[559] Archil Gegeshidze. Personal Interview. 2010.
[560] Undisclosed Interview Partners. Personal Interview. 2010.

welfare of Abkhazia. This is why, on March 1, 2002, the President of the Republic of Abkhazia appealed to the President of the Russian Federation and the leaderships of both Houses of the Federal Council of Russia with the request to consider the possibility of establishing associated relations between the Republic of Abkhazia and Russia, which in fact would mean legalization of the Russian patronage over Abkhazia."[561] This appeal reveals a certain estrangement between official politics and the narrative of hard-won independence used for the purpose of state formation in Abkhazia. It also highlights that Russia was indeed successful in advancing their dominance over part of the adjacent territories. In terms of the "near abroad" policy of extending Russia's orbit, Abkhazia would have been a successful case. It represented the worst case scenario for analysts such as Kissinger and Brzezinski who had continuously warned against continued dependency of regional players on Russia and advocated pluralism in so-called geopolitical pivot areas to limit Russian influence. As such, the Abkhaz case underlined that policies influenced by geopolitical considerations were shaping day-to-day political developments in the Caucasus and provided additional credibility to those analysts and politicians advocating policies along these lines.

Meanwhile, the improved relationship between Putin and Shevardnadze and the renewed initiative to move forward in the peace process was hardly echoed within the Georgian parliament which continued to issue statements reprimanding Russia for not fulfilling its obligations as mediator and appealing for the internationalization of the peace-keepers. Despite the ongoing Sochi process, a resolution of the Georgian Parliament issued on 16 July 2003 and signed by the Chairperson Nino Burjanadze resolved "To appeal to the UN Security Council with the request of enacting Chapter VII of the UN Charter"[562] implying it would consider military and non-military actions to restore peace if the Abkhaz continued 'ignoring the international efforts' to settle the conflict. This statement highlights that suspicion about Russia and its motives was still high in the summer of 2003. The full extent to which the Georgian government and its President stood divided on these and many other issues was only fully understood after the November elections in Georgia. The elections wound up in a political crisis that led to Shevardnadze's resignation on 23 November 2003 in what came to be known as the Rose Revolution which marked the rise of Mikhail Saakashvili as Georgia's next President and a new phase in the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process. Before moving on to the post-Shevardnadze era, it is

---

[561] APPEAL OF THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY-PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ABKHAZIA TO THE COUNCIL OF FEDERATION AND THE STATE DUMA OF THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, RESPECTED SENATORS OF THE COUNCIL OF FEDERATION AND MEMBERS OF THE STATE DUMA, Newspaper "Respublika Abkhazia", # 28, 20-21 March 2003/Translation from Russian, cit.n., Diasamnidze, T., op.cit., 503.
[562] RESOLUTION OF THE PARLIAMENT OF GEORGIA on the remedies of ensuring the implementation of Chapter VII of the UN Charter, 16 July 2003, Archive of the Parliament of Georgia/Translation from Georgian, cit.n., Diasamnidze, T., op.cit., 520.

important to turn to another institution that became increasingly sought after as the official peace process stagnated, namely second track or civil society initiatives.

Second Track Initiatives

Overall, the mediation environment had developed from bad to worse especially during the period from 1999 to 2002. Georgia seemed more occupied with its relationship to Russia than with finding a new way to continue negotiations with the Abkhaz side. Even though some initiatives were agreed upon between Putin and Shevardnadze (discussed above) by 2003, the Georgian mainstream remained hostile towards Russian politics. The new US government had brought an additional dynamic to the negotiation environment, but agreements about constructive joint conflict resolution efforts by the US and Russia largely remained lip service. The situation of stagnation in the period under assessment above conditioned the rise of civil society initiatives which over the course of time established itself as another pillar of the peace process. Their added value was not a new mechanism to resolve the conflict. Yet, they represented an important means to complement the process, supplement a different approach and to be deposited where official negotiations' concern with high politics stood in the way of continued discussions. Their role, contributions and shortcomings will be discussed below before turning to the post-Shevardnadze period in the subsequent chapter.

While official first track negotiations remained dead-locked, work continued on the lower levels of practical cooperation, in the field of functional cooperation as well as with regards to confidence building measures, all of which represent important additional aspects of the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process. These measures became a substitute for the absence of success on the high-level political process, especially during this third phase of the peace process. Many of them were aimed at overcoming the psychological consequences of the conflict, while others attempted to foster incentives for reconciliation. Among them the Bilateral Joint Coordinating Commission in place to resolve practical problems had an outstanding role. It had been provided for already in the 1994 documents and under its Executive Secretary Zurab Lakerbaia developed into an essential mechanism for resolving practical issues ranging from prisoner exchanges, to burial issues, or the implementation of low-level ideas aimed at supporting economic and social development, just to name a few. According to Lakerbaia, "every issue was in the portfolio" [563] of the Commission, which functioned as a second, complementary mechanism to the official UN mediation. Among other things, Lakerbaia was "instrumental in fostering economic cooperation."[564] Not only had the UN Secretary General praised the work of the Commission and the relentless efforts by Lakerbaia. Like him, a number of Special

---

[563] Zurab Lakerbaia. Personal Interview. 2010.
[564] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/1999/805.* New York: United Nations, 20 July 1999. Print.

Representatives and Georgian respondents have stressed his outstanding role. Sokrat Jinjolia, the second *de facto* Abkhaz Prime Minister, who later on also held the position of Foreign Minister, underlined that "Lakerbaia […] enjoyed the trust of both sides […] He did a lot of helpful work."[565] In addition to the work of the Commission headed by Lakerbaia, further confidence building measures were undertaken. In June 1999, the director of the Georgian National Library, Levan Berdzenishvili, agreed with the Abkhaz side on a delivery of books to compensate in part for the materials destroyed when the Abkhaz Archives fell victim to the 1992-1993 war. Other measures in the framework of confidence building included a meeting from 16th to 19th May 2000 in Sochi, of Georgian and Abkhaz non-governmental organizations whose members were elders and war veterans, exchanges of journalists, joint capacity building workshops, restoration of Georgian-Abkhaz movies and a summer camp in the United States for 20 Georgian and 20 Abkhaz youths. Many of these and other second track initiatives had been agreed upon at the Athens and Istanbul Confidence building meetings held under the umbrella of the United Nations (mentioned above). The confidence building also included areas of functional integration which touched upon second order security issues. In 2000, for example, a group of Russian experts met with their Georgian and Abkhazian counterparts to find a solution to the safe storage of radioactive materials, remnants from Soviet times, leftover at the laboratories nearby Sukhumi. Furthermore, the initiative to repair the Inguri dam and to find an agreement for its operation can be traced back to another such initiative.

Concerning second-track initiatives (used here as a synonym for both second and one-and-a-half-track initiatives), Sergei Mikhailov warns that it will not do to overestimate their role in solving the problems of the "so-called *de facto* territories."[566] Following these words of caution, it should be clear from the onset that these initiatives cannot replace the mediation by state actors. On the other hand they can make valuable contributions to ameliorate the conditions under which the mediation takes place. As Nan confirmed "Civic Initiatives offer space for dialogue and analysis which official negotiations seldom do, especially when one party [like Abkhazia] is not internationally recognized."[567] Thus, second-track initiatives can help to break the silence between conflicting parties, for example by fostering dialogue and by offering neutral venues. Moreover, NGO's implementing such initiatives are often more flexible than international organisations or states, because they are not bound by underlying geopolitical considerations or predetermined goals of territorial integrity, but work for reconciliation with an open ended approach.[568] This has been the basis of much enthusiasm about second track initiatives

[565] Sokrat Jinjolia. Personal Interview. 2010.
[566] S. Mikhailov. "Why have Regional Conflicts Become a Business Of an Extremely Limited Number of People?" *Press Club* 18: n. pag. Print.
[567] S.A. Nan. "Civic initiatives." *Accord: A Question of Sovereignty, The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process.* London: Conciliation Resources, 1999. Print.
[568] Oliver Wolleh. Berghof Conflict Research. Personal Interview. 2006.

contributing to the transformation of conflicts especially during times when first-track peace processes increasingly became stagnant.

The role of economic cooperation and incentives for the peaceful settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, for example, began to be discussed more seriously in 1996 in a non-state, informal framework, at a time when there was little public discussion about these topics elsewhere. In 1997 some Georgian participants of NGO initiatives openly called for the consideration of economic incentives as a way forward. Subsequently, a UNDP Needs Assessment Mission promoted this idea as one of the most promising areas of progress. At the confidence building meetings in Athens in 1998 and in Istanbul in 1999, delegations of businessmen, journalists, politicians and members of the cultural elite of both sides met under the auspices of the UN as briefly mentioned above. This was an opportunity for informal negotiations. According to Nan "generating ideas is often easier in an informal civic environment. Transmitting these ideas upward […] is not an easy task".[569] Thus, civic initiatives raised the issues of economic cooperation publicly, which had previously been linked directly to the settling of the status question. Due to the forum provided by the meetings in Athens and Istanbul, these proposals found consideration on higher political levels. Given that a mechanism had been established for their implementation in the form of the Bilateral Joint Coordinating Commission even partial realization was possible at times. This example highlights how ideas generated in more informal settings were fed into negotiations, if the proper mechanism for 'upward movement' of such ideas was provided, i.e. if the political environment was conducive to accept them. Within the second track community, much of the 1990's was devoted to developing such mechanisms from scratch.

When the importance of the contribution of civil society and the non-governmental sector was increasingly recognized in the mid-90's, most international NGO's and research institutes focused on conflict transformation and peace-building, among them International Alert, Conciliation Resources, Berghof Research Center, the University of California Irvine, Vrije University Brussels, George Mason University, as well as the German Heinrich-Böll Foundation. These were increasingly sought after. Actors from within these institutions assisted local actors to overcome psychological and logistical difficulties by providing neutral forums for exchanges, offering training and capacity building to empower local stakeholders, thereby strengthening a peace constituency *sur place*. According to Nan, these organizations successfully helped participants to overcome their apprehension to meeting and working together because "[t]hese initiatives are not about the exercise of power"[570] in stark contrast to the official negotiations. Thus the theoretical contribution of non-governmental actors by fostering an environment more open for de-escalation, communication, generating ideas and developing a more

---

[569] S.A. Nan. "Civic initiatives." 53.
[570] Ibid. 52.

peaceful environment among its participants, extending to society as a whole was confirmed by experiences on the ground. The questions remains, however, how effective second-track initiatives can be in promoting their ideas and extending their insights in scope and how relevant they prove for high-politics.

The economic as well as confidence building initiatives fostered by civil actors, independently or under the auspices of the UN, failed to become a strong enough counterpoise for balancing the deteriorating situation on the ground. As discussed above, these initiatives were still in their infant stages and while small scale projects were supported financially and politically and improved the lives of a number of people, the majority of people remained unaware of the ongoing projects. Nan pointed out that "[t]he relatively small politically active communities in Georgia and […] Abkhazia create a closely interconnected environment of civil and political actors and give non-official initiatives, potentially, great influence."[571] This assessment reflects the belief that even small initiatives could receive a large echo, due to the limited size of the recipient communities. On the other hand, many initiatives aimed at transforming conflicts through dialogue relied on a limited and rather regular number of participants as they became more institutionalized. This can be regarded as a problem, when these people start acting as gatekeepers to enlarging the process. According to Giorgi Khutsishvili: "[t]he problem of Abkhaz and Georgians have boiled down to one thing. On the Georgian side there was readiness to enlarge the dialogue, to take a more public diplomacy approach that involves multiple levels. The Abkhaz side stayed with a very narrow group that had the trust from the Abkhaz government and Russian backing. So the whole framework was limited to a group of sanctioned people."[572] Paata Zakareishvili, a prominent member of Georgian civil society, added that on both sides the difficulty has lied with decision makers, who often vow to support these initiatives, but avoid taking on responsibility by sending only their spokesperson to the unofficial meetings.[573] Rather than according responsibility solely to Georgian or Abkhaz civil society, he once again raises the problem of upward promotion. These problems suggest that when leaders remain reluctant to mobilize support for compromise, they create obstacles for the formation of peace constituencies.

In addition to political obstacles, also bureaucratic obstacles to fostering a peace constituency have to be mentioned when talking about overcoming conflicts in non-recognized entities on a large scale. The first obvious obstacle to such an endeavour were the travel restrictions imposed on the Abkhaz side. Both sides had been unable to table an acceptable solution. The initial travel regime governed by Vasha Lordkipanidze had failed in practice. Abkhaz who held Soviet passports were obliged to apply for

---

[571] Ibid.
[572] Giorgi Khutsishvili. Personal Interview. 2007.
[573] Paata Zakareishvili. Personal Interview. 2007. 2010.

Georgian passports in order to travel freely and be able to participate in workshops abroad. Given the siege mentality discussed above, the willingness to do so was extremely low, as this would have come close to an indirect recognition of Georgia as their legal place of residence. At the same time, while a number of experts taking part in civil initiatives felt comfortable travelling to Sukhumi in the 90's, this did not hold true for the majority of the society which felt more cautious due to the directly or indirectly experienced violence. People were still moving freely from and to the Gali district, but these people to people contacts were largely between Georgians from Mengrelia and the Gali district, who did not feel separated by ethnic divides and who did not entertain the same ethnic fears as a majority of the populations on both sides of the Inguri river. But also external actors felt restrictions at times.

Oliver Wolleh of the Berghof Research Center and Wulf Lapins of the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation both confirmed the logistical problems caused by the absence of a recognized legal status with regards to their work as second track facilitators. Wolleh explained that, before Russia began to issue passports to the Abkhaz in 2001, they were not able to travel outside of Abkhazia with their internationally non-recognized Abkhaz passports. Thus, organising and holding workshops in neutral venues was complicated by logistical problems connected to a missing legal status.[574] Wulf Lapins observed that being forcibly restricted from travel induced a change in the Abkhaz perception. He had undertaken research about Abkhaz' attitude towards Russia in the early 1990's, which did not show a pro-Russian attitude per se. As time passed, the Abkhaz "enforcedly" looked to Russia for support and as their spokesperson in the international arena, which Lapins related back to the restriction of movement imposed on them.[575] Another administrative problem existed with regard to obtaining financial resources for the activities of local NGO's. As Georgia and the international community did not legally recognize any banking system in place in Abkhazia, money destined for NGO's activities within Georgia had to be channelled through Tbilisi instead. Given the conflicts this practice created for many actors in Abkhazia, many NGO's refused funding that had passed through Georgia altogether.

The same problem, namely that when recognition is not granted to a non-state party to a conflict, not losing the autonomy gained through fighting and endured hardship will be even more crucial to this party, complicated the financing of civil initiatives by international donors. Hence, while donors, who often finance civic activities, attached importance to 'joint projects' involving Abkhaz and Georgians, these projects were frequently rejected by Abkhaz, who preferred 'parallel projects' in order to prevent infiltration by the opponent in an effort to uphold their autonomy. A related phenomena, namely 'donor biases' – the fact that international financing offered to and applied by some NGO's needed to either directly or indirectly pass through Georgian government agencies or was specifically

---

[574] Oliver Wolleh. Personal Interview. 2006.
[575] Wulf Lapins Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Personal Interview. 2007.

targeted at bringing about territorial integrity by official sources - equally hindered progress. This posed a dilemma for NGO's, who depended on resources from states or interstate organisations. They were at times denied access to the Abkhaz community and decision makers, if they accepted funding tied to conditionality or directly channelled through the Georgian government. Ardna Inal-Ipa recalls that for these reasons Abkhaz NGO's faced difficulties at the onset: "First we worked only with private funds.[…] It was very difficult to find money to run some projects. The potential donors told us "yes your project is excellent, we want to sponsor this project but you have to register in Tbilisi".[576] Her statement not only highlights the problems posed to Abkhaz civil society, but also the lack of experience and inability of international donors to deal independently with Abkhaz civil society. As a way to address this problem, Oliver Wolleh urged that the phenomenon of biased financing needed to be taken into account by state actors involved in a mediation process. "They [the state actors] need to consider that by accepting resources with 'donor biases', NGO's will often not be able to engage their own constituencies and construct meaningful networks. 'Neutral' sponsoring would allow for the construction of such a structure, which would then lead to more openness within the Abkhaz community and foster an environment more favourable for reconciliation."[577] The inability to address some of these problems thus hampered the development of a large scale peace constituency and inhibited the practical work of non-governmental actors. This can be accounted for by the fact that state actors and high-politics, as mentioned above, often have problems to relate to sub-state actors or at times have diverging interests when conducting the mediation. In addition, it has to be mentioned that despite the positive contributions civil society initiatives made in the context of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict when they were accorded a voice by state actors, additional caution needs to be applied when weighing the contributions of local NGO's. This is due to the fact that they take on a variety of forms and pursue a large spectrum of interests and goals, some even disadvantageous to an ongoing peace process. Western NGO's have long advocated the development of civil society - ill defined as an antidote to ethnic nationalism and aid to democratization - as a way to promote social readiness for settlement. Contrary to this belief, it is clear that many NGO's in Abkhazia and Georgia alike, conditioned by years of violent conflict, antagonism, poverty and social-class struggle, echo diverse extremist points of view ranging from closer ties with Russia to national révanche or a forceful resolution of the conflict, respectively. This, too, must be regarded as a form of development of civil society. Therefore, Nan concluded that in open-ended processes, there is "no causal connection" between fostering civil society and obtaining openness for reconciliation.[578]

---

[576] Arda Inal-Ipa. Personal Interview. 2010.
[577] Oliver Wolleh. Personal Interview. 2006.
[578] S.A. Nan. "Civic initiatives."

On a different note, a positive contribution of NGO's is their ability to provide an individual level of analysis that often led to an accurate assessment of existing problems on the ground, due to their access to the population that official actors remained deprived of. As such they can function as important early warning mechanisms, a function state actors often cannot fulfil as they are bound by the code of conduct of diplomacy and remain concerned with day to day events in the political arena. Valuing these contributions, some UN agencies provided logistical support and frequent briefings to NGO's operating in the conflict zone starting from the mid-90's. The UN Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs even opened a mail service between Tbilisi and Sukhumi, in order to facilitate communication between NGO's from both sides. The recognition of non-governmental actors as important vehicles for providing a picture of the state of the relations and potential for conflict was also illustrated by the fact that UN Volunteers (UNV) field commander Martin Schümer participated in an array of confidence and capacity building workshops throughout his period of duty.[579] Channels of communications established by the second track, although often limited in scope as discussed above, can also fulfil the same early warning function as NGO's operating in conflict districts. Ardna Inal-Ipa motions that "we cannot say that this non-official second track diplomacy process is not successful […] we have established the dialogue process. It is a space for asking questions, explaining positions and understanding a lot about our conflicts. […] I think this channel of exchanging information and points of views is very important when there is a new conflict. For me this is a part of the peace process. The civil society dialogue is a successful process because of this channel. It was working even during the escalation of the conflict in Kodori in 2001 […]. We established channels to exchange our views in an atmosphere of confidence and tolerance. I think it was the best thing that we have had in a situation when we did not have sufficient means to influence official policy."[580] Many of the Abkhaz and Georgian participants hold a similar view of second track initiatives and recall instances of early warning they provided to each other in situations when escalation of violence seemed likely.[581] These channels of communications were established as early as when the first second track initiatives were undertaken in 1996 and subsequent years. Although limited in scope those belonging to an Abkhaz-Georgian network of civil society actors are not only highly dedicated to it over a number of years. They also devote much of their professional and personal time to it. They have withstood the test of time and continue their work despite occasional outbursts of violence and hostilities.[582]

Overall, ways to engage non-state actors in a state-centric environment were in demand, in order to slow down the deterioration of actors' willingness to cooperate and the general weakening of the

---

[579] S.A. Nan. "Civic initiatives." 54.
[580] Arda Inal-Ipa. Personal Interview. 2010.
[581] This notion was confirmed by Manana Gurgulia, Ardna-Inal-Ipa, Ivliane Haindrava, among others
[582] It has to be mentioned that some of the members derive a substantial part of their salaries from activities sponsored by international donors, which may be an additional fat

mediation environment. NGO's as less interested actors became involved to complement the work of state-centric approaches to mediation by offering neutral forums for dialogue, generating ideas, room for discussion and building trust. Meanwhile, it is clear that "change does not come from creating trusting relationships alone"[583], but also from recognising and trading benefits, susceptibility to compromise, as well as from finding and discussing legal frameworks that accommodate conflicting relationships. According to Zakareishvili, "Lasting resolution of this conflict can only be based on the willingness of Georgians and Abkhaz to come to terms with the political and social trauma that both have experienced. This requires greater awareness and to date it is predominantly civic peace initiatives that have tried to address these questions."[584] Therefore, one of the main contributions of NGO's to the mediation processes is to compensate for the lack of analysis concerning the deeper causes of estrangement of the Abkhaz and other minorities from Georgia and vice versa[585], which state-centric actors are often insufficiently concerned with.

---

[583] S.A. Nan. "Civic initiatives."

[584] P. Zakareishvili. "A Georgian View." *Accord: A Question of Sovereignty, The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process*. London: Conciliation Resources, 1999. Print.

[585] D. Berdzenischwili and W. Kaufmann. "Georgiens Größtes Innenpolitisches Problem." *Diaspora, Öl und Rosen: Zur innenpolitischen Entwicklung in Armenien, Aserbaidschan und Georgien*. Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2004. 45. Print.

IV.

The Fourth Phase in the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process: 2003 and 2004

Introduction

The fourth phase of the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process witnessed important changes in the leadership structure of both Georgia and Abkhazia. In Georgia, a young and dynamic President Saakashvili took office with the set goals of sweeping reforms, re-establishing territorial integrity, and reshaping Georgian diplomacy. Due to the peaceful domestic transition of power, Georgia was positioned as a beacon of democracy and a white hope for the region. The Georgian leadership actively fostered this image in order to appeal for support to Euro-Atlantic states and to promote itself as a reliable partner to the west. Saakashvili radically shifted Georgia's diplomacy westward, even philandering with NATO aspirations, which presented a major change from the Shevardnadze era, when Georgia had often adopted a more neutral position, eager to keep Russian and western interests at a sensitive equilibrium.

While an overwhelming majority of Georgians supported Saakashvili's foreign policy course, the conflict resolution portfolio in the domestic arena was noticeably split. On the one hand, Prime Minister Zhvania led the efforts to peacefully resolve the conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia through dialogue and rebuilding an atmosphere of trust from the bottom up. He was supported in this endeavour by a tandem comprised of Minister of Conflicts Goga Haindrava and Irakli Alasania, the Special Representative of the Georgian President for Abkhazia. On the other hand, especially President Saakashvili and his close associates Vano Merabishvili and Irakli Okruashvili, who oversaw Georgia's security apparatus, favoured a top-down carrot-and-stick approach built on offering incentives while emphasising military capabilities and portraying an image of strength in order to persuade the *de facto* authorities to subordinate themselves to Tbilisi's control. Over the course of time, these opposed positions developed into what became commonly referred to as the "doves" and "hawks" in Georgian politics. The former were committed to a long-term strategy, while the latter focused on short-term payoffs, not least to maintain high popular support. Before long, their conflicting visions collided over official policy endorsing coercive means, which time and again threatened to reverse progress in the fields of trust building and reinvigorating informal dialogue and official negotiations.

The conflicting image of Georgia's domestic politics was not the only factor hampering immediate progress in the peace process in the early months after the Rose Revolution. Abkhazia's own efforts to strike the iron while it was hot, meant that it was strengthening its own partnerships, thereby advancing its *de facto* foreign policy, while Georgia was still caught in the uncertainties of its political transition. South Ossetia, but also Russia were among those susceptible for closer and improved relations with Abkhazia. Yet, Abkhaz society also experienced a severe shock when it became clear

during the subsequent Presidential elections that the prize for closer relations with Russia was a limited ability to manoeuvre domestically, which came to be regarded as an infringement on their *de facto* independence.

The dynamics of the peace process certainly changed in the post-Shevardnadze and Ardzinba eras. While Georgia moved westward and Georgian-Russian relations progressively deteriorated, Russia increasingly gained leverage over an otherwise isolated Abkhazia. Meanwhile, the more intractable the peace process, the less likely it was to move out of a situation of deadlock without the collaboration of Russia. Even the UN recognized Russian leverage over Abkhazia as a prerequisite for bringing both sides back to the negotiating table. Thus, the way Russia conducted its mediation diplomacy with regard to Georgia and Abkhazia suggested that it followed an inverted logic to secure its own relevance in international relations. Instead of fostering stability and cooperation in its neighbourhood, Russia gained prominence and was increasingly able to pursue its own interests and goals in situations of prevailing conflict and instability.[586] Consequently, the resolution of the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict became a conundrum, given a situation in which an actor essential for finding a remedy simultaneously posed as the most important spoiler of progress. Yet, unexpected developments in both Georgia and Abkhazia eventually lowered the resistance to restarting the negotiations, albeit in limited issue areas only.

New beginnings - New uncertainties

After Shevardnadze had been forced to hand-over power in Georgia in November 2003, the Georgian government was led by the Speaker of Parliament Nino Burjanadze for an interim period prior to the elections scheduled for January 2004. While the Georgian leadership was busy reorganizing itself and managing the domestic political transformation peacefully, the Abkhaz side announced that it would not engage in a dialogue with the Georgian leadership prior to the elections.[587] The United Nations observers and the Secretary General concluded that the Abkhaz position regarding negotiations with a new Georgian leadership prior to January 2004 can be traced back to two factors. First of, a fear of increased instability in Georgia after the November events, which called for the need to focus on domestic developments in case this instability would infect the regions bordering with Georgia. Second, uncertainties about whether the elections would end in favour of a hardliner coming to power in Tbilisi.[588] As a result, only low-level work in the field of practical cooperation continued. It is

---

[586] See S. Markedonov. "Unrecognized Geopolitics." K. Barseghyan and Z. Karaev. "Playing Cat and Mouse.";
S.N. MacFarlane, A. Schnabel, H.-G. Ehrhart, and D. Haglund. "Russian Approaches to Peacekeeping.";
Mikhail Delyagin. "From Global Controversies to Regional Conflicts." Russia in Global Affairs, 8 Feb. 2005.
Web. 18 Feb. 2012. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_4410>.
[587] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2004/26.*
New York: United Nations, 14 January 2004. Print.
[588] Ibid.

important to add to the assessment by the UN. In historical perspective, the Abkhaz had negotiated with various delegations from Tbilisi prior to a stable government being in office following the break-up of the Soviet Union and again before Shevardnadze had settled in political Tbilisi. Both times, they experienced that previous processes and agreements were not followed through by the new leadership. Thus, the Abkhaz were certainly in a wait-and-see position. As Sergey Shamba explained, however, this wait-and-see position was gradually becoming part of the official Abkhaz strategy with regard to the mediation process. The reason behind it was that as long as the process was either underway or dragging on, guns remained silent.[589] Thus, prolonging this situation and even the participation in the mediation itself later on, became regarded as a way to buy time to develop projects on other fronts, such as improving the economic situation or easing the isolation of Abkhazia by developing an international network, according to Shamba.[590] Thus, while there were certainly uncertainties on the Abkhaz side, while the central government in Tbilisi was undergoing transformation, the Abkhaz did not simply remain passive. To the contrary, the Abkhaz leadership together with South Ossetian leaders and the *de facto* ruler of the Georgian western region Adjara, Aslan Abashidze, all followed an invitation to Moscow at the end of November. This assembly of Georgian regional leaders with secessionist interests in the Russian capital was a dangerous signal to Tbilisi. It showed that the Abkhaz, too, were ready to take advantage of Georgian weaknesses and highlighted that the Abkhaz position at this point was as much conditioned by its relations with Moscow as by its relations with Georgia.

As the Abkhaz drew closer to Russia the interim Georgian leadership began to position itself against issues it considered provocations. Among them the visa-free travel regime for residents of Abkhazia to Russia as well as increasing evidence that an organized campaign of *passportization* was underway in Abkhazia. The issue of *passportization*, i.e. the act of issuing Russian passports to Abkhaz citizens, was in the meantime regarded as legal practice by Russian authorities who, when asked, recall the stated right of all former citizens of the Soviet Union to exercise their choice to become holders of Russian passports after the break-up of the Soviet Union. An increase in the activities to issue passports to Abkhaz citizens had been recorded since the first Chechen war, which had temporarily soured Georgian-Russian relations (see above). The Georgian side regarded the act of *passportization* as a way to increase Russian influence in the breakaway republics under the pretext of protecting Russian citizens abroad. By issuing Russian passports to Abkhaz the notion of protecting Russian citizen abroad became a self-fulfilling prophecy as there were more and more citizens with Russian papers to protect.

---

[589] Sergey Shamba. Personal Interview. 2010.
[590] Ibid. International networks refers to other non-state entities, Russian bordering regions, international and non-governmental organizations.

This issue coupled with the expressed Abkhaz interest of associated relations with Russia[591] remained highly controversial from its onset. In addition, engagement with Aslan Abashidze triggered fears of destabilization inside Georgia, which were only eased months later, when Russia facilitated the end of the Abashidze-reign in Adjara. Overall, the invitation to Moscow set the tone of the Russian authorities towards Sukhumi at an early stage of the transformation process underway in Georgia and initially triggered a negative response from the Georgian authorities' obverse Russia.

The lack of coordination and insufficient constructive communication, as well as the generally uneasy relations between Tbilisi and Moscow in the winter of 2003/2004, complicated advances in the peace process. This notion is substantiated by the fact that while relations with Moscow grew increasingly tense from the point of view of Tbilisi, the UN made it clear that its stated aims in the peace process relied on Russian support. The Secretary General noted in his January 2004 Report on Abkhazia that "the framework […]agreed to in Sochi by the President of Georgia and the President of the Russian Federation in March 2003 […] remained key vehicles for building common ground between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides and, ultimately, for initiating meaningful negotiations on a comprehensive political settlement based on the paper entitled "Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi" and its transmittal letter."[592] This statement highlighted that even the UN believed that Russian leverage over the parties, which implicitly meant leverage on Abkhazia to return to the negotiating table, was seen as essential for future progress. It can be taken as a subtle assessment of the fact that Russian-Abkhaz relations had improved over the past years and that Russian-led initiatives were regarded as a key as well as a preliminary condition for settling the conflict. This heavy reliance on the Russian mediator as well as the UN's dependence on CIS peacekeeping forces to ensure safety for UNOMIG operations, represented an inadequacy of the UN structures and a catch-22 for Georgia, whose relations with Russia were unsettled. As time progressed the heavy reliance on Russia came to be viewed as a factor unbalancing the peace process by Georgia. Consequently, the new Georgian government initiated various policies in order to offset Russia's position of power in the existing mediation framework, which will be discussed below.

Mikhail Saakashvili: Re-positioning Georgia

In 2006, Tracey German of the IFRI Research Centre added an additional perspective about the ongoing situation. German concluded that the resolution of "both the South Ossetian and Abkhazian disputes

---

[591] See United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2003/412.* New York: United Nations, March 2003. Print.
[592] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2004/26.*

depends on the attitude that Russia takes and its role as a mediator…"[593] She thus pointed to the importance of the state of Russian-Georgian relations for the peace process, as well as to the role Russia was assigned to and established for itself as a mediator in it. After a political event with the scope of the Rose Revolution, relations between the two states were naturally to be re-defined. The following section therefore evaluates the process of re-defining the Russo-Georgian relationship in the first months and years after Saakashvili was voted into office in Georgia with respect to their impact on the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process.

In January 2004, an overwhelming majority of Georgians voted for Mikhail Saakashvili in the Presidential elections which took place in Georgia. The presidential, parliamentary and regional elections which took place in 2004 were all judged as democratic by the international governing bodies. Due to the momentum that had been created by the 'people's revolution of roses', the international community closely followed developments in Georgia, of which democratic elections were a first milestone. Prior to his inauguration in January, President Saakashvili reiterated his main domestic priority, namely to restore the country's territorial integrity and consolidate Georgia by resolving its frozen conflicts. Hence, Abkhazia loomed large on his agenda. Furthermore, the new Georgian government's goal was to position the country as a modern and democratic state in the international arena. This goal kept policy makers busy with overhauling old stereotypes which had long been predominant among observers of the region. Among them, a geopolitical stigma of being stuck in Russia's backyard, political zero-sum games, as well as a lack of rule of law, economic modernization and legitimate democratic rule as well as omnipresent corruption. During this time of national awakening and pride in the achievements brought about by a peaceful revolution Georgia's self-perception had transformed. This new image was now stressed internationally. Perceiving itself as a once more responsible and modern member state of the community of "civilized nations of the world"[594], and a pioneer of democratic change in the region, Georgia made it clear that its democratic achievements entitled it to speak as equal to other nations, among them the Russian Federation.

Turning to Georgian-Russian relations under the reign of Georgian President Saakashvili, it is a commonly held notion that relations between President Putin and President Saakashvili were tense from the start. This view is often simply deducted from the fact that both leaders at one point no longer spoke to each other, and openly expressed distrust and personal dislike for one another. This has taken on various forms and has lastingly affected Georgian-Russian relations since late 2004. What many

---

[593] Tracey German. "Abkhazia and South Ossetia: Collision of Georgian and Russian Interests." *Russie.Nei.Visions* 11: 16. Print.; Most interview partners questioned in the course of the thesis in Georgia and Abkhazia would confirm that Russia plays an essential role in the mediation.
[594] Mikheil Saakashvili. "Remarks On the Occasion of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly." United Nations, 21 Sept. 2004. Web. 1 June 2014. < http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/59/statements/geoeng040921.pdf>.

analysts and media representatives disregard, however, is that developments in relations between the two heads of state seemed "fruitful"[595] in the beginning, according to many of Saakashvili's former associates, who closely followed these developments (further discussed below). Initially, the two leaders shared many commonalities and even a seemingly common set of interests. According to George Kennan and Steve Sestanovich, renowned American Russia experts, Putin and Saakashvili were "the two most innovative politicians of the former Soviet Union [...] Both Mr. Putin and Mr. Saakashvili have a supreme goal of rebuilding the central government's power. Though Russia is huge and Georgia tiny, each president considers his country especially susceptible to break-up and disorder - hence their efforts to reel back semi-sovereign regional leaders. Messrs. Putin and Saakashvili have also focused on making state institutions work. They know that a government that can't collect taxes can't do its many other jobs. And each president has zeroed in on corruption, launching highly publicized campaigns that have included arrests even of members of a predecessor's entourage."[596] Following this line of argument expressed by Kennan and Sestanovich put forth in summer 2004, the Georgian and Russian leaders had similar political goals and faced a common threat in separatism. Their article in the Wall Street Journal also went on to list their differences, especially their different approaches to solving the problems listed above, but for the moment, this brief insight may feed the argument that cooperation and a re-shaping of Georgian-Russian relations seemed possible, even likely after the Rose Revolution. Not least, because it had been Putin, who contributed to engineer the peaceful transition of power by sending his foreign minister Ivanov to Tbilisi to watch over the transition. Although Putin had been openly critical of the early phase of the post-revolution period, it was the Kreml, which announced after a first meeting between Putin and Saakashvili in Moscow in February 2004 that this apprehension about the Rose Revolution was past. Despite the fact that Saakashvili reportedly arrived thirty minutes late for his first meeting with the Russian leader[597], dynamics were promising after their personal encounter. Erosi Kitsmarishvili, who had been responsible for preparing this meeting and was later sent to Moscow as Georgian Ambassador by Saakashvili, recalled that the goal of the Georgian side was to create a favourable environment for new dynamics to unfold in the relationship and for the creation of mutual trust.[598] He remembered that "The first thing Russians told us was that they were starting relations with the new authorities in Tbilisi with an empty paper, because it was [a] totally new government, which came into power through the peaceful revolution; so Russians were

---

[595] Goga Haindrava. Former Georgian State Minister of Conflicts. Personal Interview. 2010., See also: Peter Mamradze. Personal Interview. 2010. Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010.

[596] G. Kennan, and S. Sestanovich. "A Tale of Two Post-Soviet Presidents." *The Wall Street Journal* 30 July 2004: n. pag. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.cfr.org/foreign-policy-history/tale-two-post-soviet-presidents/p7230>.

[597] C.J. Levy. "The Georgian and Putin: A Hate Story." *The New York Times* 18 Apr. 2009: n. pag. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.nytimes.com/2009/04/19/weekinreview/19levy.html>.

[598] "Ex-Envoy's Hearing at War Commission end in Brawl." Civil Georgia, 25 November 2008. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=20026>.

telling us that they wanted to build formats for resolving [the] problems, which [had] existed between the two countries for years…".[599] The German Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung also reported on the first meeting between the two heads of states. According to the news outlet, the Kreml had made a public statement to the effect that Russia finally had a "responsible partner" in Saakashvili.[600] The American New York Times, reviewing the relations between the two in 2009 came to a similar conclusion, noting that "[d]espite the initial awkwardness, the two men actually had a good start at that 2004 meeting. There were many sources of tensions, especially over Russia's support for separatist Georgian regions and Mr. Saakashvili's desire for Georgia to join NATO, but they agreed to try to ease them."[601] The signs were clearly pointing towards cooperation.

With regard to Abkhazia "Putin said that he was not ready for talks on the Abkhaz issues, but he was ready to launch talks over resolution of the South Ossetian problem"[602], according to Kitsmarishvili, who claimed to have obtained the information directly from Saakashvili and Irakli Okruashvili, then General Prosecutor of Georgia, who was also present at the initial meeting. Also Goga Haindrava, the reinstated State Minister of Conflicts in the new government[603] called to mind that a sort of "common project" was suggested by the Russian side to resolve the South Ossetian conflict.[604] Putin thus suggested his active support for resolving the South Ossetian issue while exhibiting apprehension to change the status quo regarding Abkhazia. While Putin's conduct pointed to vested Russian interests in Abkhazia, even the common project to bring South Ossetia back under central control, referred to but not specifically outlined by Haindrava above, which was largely based on creating economic incentives, never went beyond an infancy stage, however, as relations between Putin and Saakashvili quickly cooled down.

Various sources, however, report that Putin felt he could not trust Saakashvili as time progressed, "reportedly on the ground that Mr. Saakashvili did not keep promises, a criticism that his Georgian opponents also voice."[605] Whether trust was the issue, as the New York Times reported or whether the denial to consider Russian interests and demands more seriously was the root cause of relations growing tenser can be debated. It was speculated that Putin had urged Saakashvili to keep an unnamed senior Georgian security official in place in Moscow, which Saakashvili later withdrew despite having previously granted the request. In certain policy circles in Tbilisi another rumour circulated, namely that the Russian leadership had suggested a trade-off to Saakashvili: support for his regime and the

[599] Ibid.
[600] "Treffen Putins mit Saakaschwili." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 12 Feb. 2004, 36: 7. Print.
[601] C.J. Levy. "The Georgian and Putin: A Hate Story."
[602] "Ex-Envoy's Hearing at War Commission end in Brawl." Civil Georgia.
[603] Haindrava held this post during the Georgian-Abkhaz war in the 90's as outlined above
[604] Goga Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010.
[605] C.J. Levy. "The Georgian and Putin: A Hate Story."

resolution of Georgia's conflicts in return for providing Russia with leverage over key security institutions and renouncing the Georgian ambition to join NATO. A stern advocate of Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration, Saakashvili allegedly refused the request without considering it twice. It seemed that Saakashvili, strengthened by domestic and international support, did not consider himself obliged to offer Russia any payoff in return for its support. Aside from this hear-say, however, certain developments speak for themselves and provide a less speculative account.

In May 2004, various leading Russian individuals, successfully mediated the stand-off between the Georgian leader and his regional opponent, the autocratic Adjarian leader Aslan Abashidze, in favour of Saakashvili. Notably, the Russian military stationed in Adjara's capital Batumi, some of whose commanders entertained close relations with Abashidze, was ordered not to interfere in the ongoing crisis with Tbilisi. In the end, Abashidze was quietly flown to Moscow by his friend Igor Ivanov, the secretary of the Russian Defense Council, and thus the crisis was resolved. Only thereafter was Tbilisi able to re-establish its authority over Adjara on Georgia's Black Sea coast. The successful management of the Adjarian crisis was a first triumph essential to establish the credibility of the new government and its leader Mikhail Saakashvili. Russia, still concerned over the consecutive colour revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine and their aftermath, waited in vain for any quid pro quo, either in the form of Georgia easing its stance on the withdrawal of Russian bases from Georgian territory or the reduction of the vocal aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration of its little neighbour in the south. Instead, encouraged by his success in Adjara, Mikhail Saakashvili, together with his closest compatriots - then Secretary of the Georgian National Council Vano Merabishvili, who later became Minister of Security and subsequently Minister of Interior, and Irakli Okruashvili, the acting Interior Minister and later Defence Minister – unilaterally turned to South Ossetia.

As outlined earlier on, the separatist conflicts in Georgia did not develop completely independent of each other. Instead, developments in South Ossetia always had a signalling function for Abkhazia and vice versa. They also certainly played a role for the Georgian-Russian relationship, so vitally important for the peace process in Abkhazia. The latter point was supported by the war between Georgia and Russia in 2008 over South Ossetia, and also underlined by an earlier statement of Saakashvili regarding the conflict with Tskhinvali, who openly declared in 2005 that there is "no Ossetian problem in Georgia", but merely "a problem in Georgian-Russian relations with respect to certain territories".[606] The President of Georgia, like many Georgian politicians and analysts before and after him[607], thus viewed the conflict with South Ossetia as a mere reflection of the state of

---

[606] Imedi TV, Tbilisi, 16:02GMT, 9 September 2005, BBC Monitoring Online.
[607] These include e.g. MEP Eldar Kvernadze, former Minister of Integration Temur Iakobashvili, both interviewed in 2010 and can also be deducted from Tornike Sharashenidze. Researcher Georgian Institute for Public Affairs. Personal Talk. 2010.

relations with Russia and even went so far as to deny the internal dimension and dynamics of the conflict. Despite this, when the Georgian government turned towards South Ossetia in 2004 after the May events in Adjara, it did so with high hopes of being able to substantially advance the issue with or without Russia. South Ossetia had long been regarded as the less intractable and thus more solvable conflict compared to Abkhazia. The dividing lines were porous, intermarriages high, regular contacts were a part of daily life in Georgia with cross-border trading and regular bus services from the South Ossetian capital Tskhinvali to Gori, Tbilisi and other major Georgian cities. What happened then seems peculiar in hindsight, especially to many civil society organizations, which strongly advocated cross-border people-to-people contacts as a first step towards a lasting peace.

Over the years and in the absence of central control, black market activities, including the trade of smuggled goods had flourished in South Ossetia. The profit from these unregulated activities filled not only the pockets of secessionist leader Eduard Kokoity and his clan, but also meant financial gain for various elements on the Russian side of the border in the North. Due to this profitable conflict economy, Tbilisi lost millions of Georgian Lari in tax revenues, while for Kokoity and his regime in South Ossetia it meant an important source of revenue. The hub of these activities was the Ergneti market outside of Tskhinvali. The shadow economy became a scorn in the eyes of political leaders in Tbilisi who were in the process of strengthening central institutions and root out corruption in Georgia. Yet, apart from its economic dimension, another aspect of this illegal trade hub was its value in terms of peaceful exchange between opponents. Thousands of Georgians, Russians and Ossets intermingled at Ergneti every day to exchange the latest news about political and social developments while trading goods and services out of the central government's reach. Considerations of keeping things as they were because of the positive value of increased cooperation through exchanges at Ergneti, however, proved incompatible with the overall government strategy. Hence, one of the Georgian government's first moves in office was to close the Ergneti market in mid-June 2004. It enforced the closure by a show of force, installing so-called anti-smuggling checkpoints[608], in an effort to demonstrate its newly gained strength. As a second step, even sidelining the official negotiation formats led by Minister of Conflicts Goga Hanidrava, Okruashvili started informal negotiations with the Kokoity regime during private meetings, excluding the Russians, which were part to the official peace process between Georgia and South Ossetia led by the OSCE. The informal efforts ended in harsh disagreements, while the Georgian solo-attempt was ill-received by Moscow. In addition, the closure of Ergneti and the presence of armed Georgian state forces on South Ossetian territory had raised the level of tensions. South Ossetians responded by a

---

[608] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2004/570.* New York: United Nations, 14 July 2004. Print.

temporary closure of the connecting route between Russia and Georgia. Soon thereafter, Georgians intercepted a Russian convoy allegedly carrying arms. Saakashvili publically stated that this was a 'less than friendly move', thus rhetorically drawing Russia into the conflict to underline his position that Russia could no longer be regarded as a neutral mediator. In a downward tit-4-tat spiral of hostilities, Georgian guards were detained in South Ossetia, Saakashvili refused to attend peace talks and the situation deteriorated to a point when it was considered to be on the brink of an all-out war in August 2004. Although war was averted - mainly due to high-level domestic and foreign opposition to a military option - the developments in South Ossetia left deep and lasting scars in the Georgian-South Ossetian and the Georgian-Russian relationships. The extent, to which Russia was unwilling to reconsider its previous offer for a cooperative partnership and would proceed in the dealing with Georgia and its conflicts on its own terms, became fully evident only later on. Nevertheless, a first glimpse of the change in attitude could be observed in the international arena during the CIS heads of states meeting in Astana in mid-September, discussed in more detail below. At the same time, however, the developments in Adjara and South Ossetia also indirectly affected the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process.

The events in Georgia, especially the removal of Aslan Abashidze were closely followed in Abkhazia. Abashidze did not enjoy any special sympathies in Abkhazia. Although he was undermining Georgian central authority, his disagreements with first Shevardnadze and later Saakashvili were of a different nature than the conflict in Abkhazia. To compare the quality of the conflict with Adjara with either South Ossetia or Abkhazia, as has occasionally been the case in the international press, is nothing more than a mistake. Saakashvili and his government were able to demonstrate their strength in Adjara and make it a show case of success, bringing it back under the central control of Tbilisi. It was important domestically, to rally support behind the leader who had openly proclaimed territorial integrity as his utmost priority. Adjara signalled to the Georgian people that Saakashvili was a man of action, not only words. To the Abkhaz, Adjara turned out to be a disappointment, however, due to the fact that soon after the elections in Adjara, which followed the removal of Abashidze and in which the Georgian ruling party won, the constitution of Adjara was changed and by it, its autonomy reduced to a mere symbolic status. This dealt a blow to those in Abkhazia who had nurtured hopes for a new and more constructive dialogue with the new Georgian administration.

In addition, the timing of the incidents in South Ossetia were especially sensitive given that the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process after the Rose Revolution – apart from the meetings of the Sochi working group - had mainly focused on advancing the process of security guarantees to address the concerns about an outstanding non-use of force agreement after Shevardnadze had resigned.

According to the UN Secretary General's report the Abkhaz appeared anxious[609] about the vocal statements from within Georgia's administration about reintegrating the Georgian state. Uncertainty whether Saakashvili would revert to a military option remained. Hence, the UN-led process stayed concentrated on security guarantees during much of 2004. The UN and the Secretary General's Special Representatives had tried to address the problematic security environment for a number of years. Most notably Special Representative Dieter Boden had attempted to reinvigorate confidence buildinging measures at a conference held March 15 and 16 2001 in Yalta which yielded unexpected positive results.[610] Despite the fact that the conference did not unfold its promising potential entirely afterwards, the continued emphasis on the importance of confidence building measures and security guarantees had been in part conditioned by the 2001 Yalta declaration following the above mentioned conference.[611] In this context and on the insistence of Heidi Tagliavini, the UN Special Representative to Georgia a meeting had already taken place on 15th of July 2003. The events in South Ossetia heightened already existing concerns. After the November events and in light of the political changes, Under-Secretary of Peacekeeping Jean-Marie Guéhenno had taken up the issue anew and pushed the Georgian and Abkhaz leaders to advance the portfolio on security issues, given the prevailing uncertainties on both sides. Guéhenno visited the region and a second meeting on security guarantees took place in February 2004. Sergey Shamba represented the Abkhaz side in the meetings, and led the process together with the Georgian State Minister for Conflicts Goga Haindrava. After the second meeting, both sides decided for an informal meeting at the Geneva Center for Security Policy on 22nd and 23rd of April, in order to discuss their views in a less politically constraint atmosphere. The informal meetings were followed by a third held in Sukhumi on 20 May 2004. These meetings accompanied the transition phase in Georgia and helped to bridge the existing uncertainties and ease tensions on various occasions.

After the events in Adjara, the Georgian President had incorporated the issue of security in his address to the nation on May 26, in which he appealed to the Abkhaz and Ossets in their native languages to engage in dialogue and promised the reunification with both regions by peaceful means only.[612] The

---

[609] Ibid.

[610] The results of the Yalta conference were hailed as „a qualitatively new stage in the confidence-building component of the peace process", Report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia (S/2001/401), Web. 6 May 2015, <http://reliefweb.int/report/georgia/report-secretary-general-concerning-situation-abkhazia-georgia-s2001401>.

[611] "In the signed Yalta statement, the sides reaffirmed the pledge they made in the Moscow Agreement of 14 May 1994 and the concluding statements of the first and second Geneva meetings, concerning the non-use of force. In the same document, they restated, after a long silence on the matter, their commitment to creating the necessary conditions for the safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons, first of all to the Gali district within its old borders." Report of the Secretary-General (S/2001/401), op.cit.

[612] At a meeting with representatives of the Abkhaz Supreme Council on 10 September 2004 the Georgian President reiterated that "We will return to Abkhazia with love, not with war". Mikheil Saakashvili. "Speech Delivered by the Georgian President Saakashvili at the Meeting with Members of Supreme Council of Abkhazia." The Administration of the President of Georgia, 10 Sept. 2004. Web. 11 Mar. 2010.

meaning of these promises of peace, however, increasingly faded as the situation in South Ossetia grew increasingly tense. In addition, Georgia opened fire on a cargo ship destined for Abkhazia on July 30th. The issue of intercepting ships heading for Abkhazia had been a longstanding source of dispute between the two parties and consequently, the Abkhaz announced their withdrawal from all negotiation formats thereafter. Subsequently, during the events in South Ossetia, including armed skirmishes, missile launches and deaths on both sides, Abkhazia declared that it would support South Ossetia in case of an all-out war. Thereafter, Saakashvili increasingly came to be regarded as a war monger, an image the traumatized population in Abkhazia still under siege mentality was susceptible to and which was also actively fostered in the secessionist regions as well as in Russia proper by the Russian side, including by the media and in official statements.

The War of Words

The incidents of armed conflict in South Ossetia and Abkhazia further manifested themselves in the Georgian-Russian relationship. The first meeting between the two heads of states after the events took place during a CIS heads of state summit in Astana in mid-September. Putin hinted at the incidents during the summit, scolding the Georgian leadership by explaining "that he is certain that economic and military pressure will not resolve the situation in Abkhazia".[613] In the usual game of tit-4-tat, Saakashvili after voicing his condemnation for recent events in Beslan, "later accused Moscow of maintaining double-standards, saying Moscow's ties with two breakaway regions in Georgia contradicts Putin's tough policies on separatism in Russia."[614] In a press briefing he used the CIS forum to complain about the Russian support for reopening the Sochi-Sukhumi part of the Trans-Caucasian railroad on September 10th, which Georgia regarded as "inadmissible" [615] and as "violations of Georgia's sovereignty, international law and existing bilateral agreements".[616] President Putin responded that the resumption of the rail link was based on prior agreements with Eduard Shevardnadze dating March 6 and 7, 2003. He thus, referred to the still somewhat ongoing Sochi process,[617] i.e. the Sochi working group format previously hailed by the UN as a beacon of hope for the peace process with Abkhazia. The re-opening of the Sochi-Tbilisi railway link had been an integral

<http://www.president.gov.ge/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?a=200409>., Mikheil Saakashvili. "Remarks by President Mikheil Saakashvili at the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly." The Administration of the President of Georgia, 15 Sept. 2006. Web. 30 July 2011. <www.president.gov.ge/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2731&i=1>.

[613] "Putin, Saakashvili Meet At CIS Summit." Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 16 Sept. 2004. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1054877.html>.

[614] Ibid.

[615] "Putin Saakashvili Spar at CIS Press Conference." Asbarez Armenian News, 17 Sept. 2004. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://asbarez.com/50704/putin-saakashvili-spar-at-cis-press-conference/>.

[616] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2004/822.* New York: United Nations, 18 October 2004. Print.

[617] "Putin Saakashvili Spar at CIS Press Conference." Asbarez Armenian News.

part of the Sochi process, notable in return for refugees and internally displaced persons being able to go back to their homes in Abkhazia. By opening the railway Putin had unilaterally presented a *fait accompli*, allegedly under the assumption that a sufficient number of returns had been facilitated by Russia for a corresponding part of the tracks to be re-opened. A technical survey to substantiate any such claims was only conducted in the summer of 2005, almost a year later.

After the showdown at Astana, Saakashvili and Putin continued to make use of the regional and international platforms at hand to define Georgian interests vis-à-vis Russia and vice versa and publically slug it out with each other. Less than two weeks after the CIS summit at Astana, Saakashvili, the more vocal one on the international stage, spoke at the 59th session of the UN General Assembly on 21 September 2004.[618] His speech represented an emotional appeal to the Euro-Atlantic community for recognizing Georgia's achievements and receiving it in their midst as a friend and partner. Meanwhile the Georgian President was calling on Russia to accept a position as equal companion, and to shed its "outdated politics of domination"[619], so that its "zero-sum thinking"[620] could be replaced by policies of win-win. Saakashvili also actively positioned Georgia as a "test case [for a] revised formula of international relations"[621]. In a post-9/11 world, in which the phrase of high ranking US politicians -"you are either with us or you are against us"[622]- still loomed large, Saakashvili made it clear that he was with the west, while playing on the traditional image of Russia as a dangerously backward and alien nation.[623] Saakashvili also highlighted Georgia's engagement in Kosovo and Afghanistan and announced his intention to replenish the troop contingent in Iraq with Georgian soldiers to substantiate Georgia's commitment.[624] This military pledge a signal to demonstrate that western and Georgian security concerns were interconnected. Leading into an account about Georgia's secessionist conflicts and how to solve them, Saakashvili took up Russian criticism of earlier years. He publically voiced solidarity with Russia, as both countries were facing a common threat in terrorism. In the spirit of the ongoing war on terror and reminiscent of the concerns regarding rogue states first voiced by US National Security Advisor Anthony Lake in the 90's[625], Saakashvili turned the tables when he referred to Abkhazia and South Ossetia as "black holes [...] uncontrollable zones [which] breed crime, drug trafficking, arms trading

---

[618] Mikheil Saakashvili. "Verbatim Record of the 59th Session of the General Assembly, Remarks On the Occasion of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly." United Nations, 21 Sept. 2004. Web. 6 Oct 2009. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/516/10/PDF/N0451610.pdf?OpenElement>.
[619] Mikheil Saakashvili. "Verbatim Record of the 59th Session of the General Assembly." 12.
[620] Ibid.
[621] Ibid. 2.
[622] The phrase was employed among others by George W. Bush during a Joint Session of Congress on September 20, 2001
[623] See e.g. Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins. "Russia, NATO and the EU in an Era of Enlargement." 69.
[624] Mikheil Saakashvili. "Verbatim Record of the 59th Session of the General Assembly." 6.
[625] Russian officials had accused Georgia of turning into a failing state prior to Saakashvili's speech (see above).

and most notable, terrorism"[626]. He concluded that "neither Georgia nor the rest of the international community, can afford to look the other way".[627] Saakashvili also lobbied for his view of a stage by stage settlement plan, including "the possibility of stationing UN monitors on the Abkhazian portion of the Russian-Georgian border."[628] With his statements, the Georgian President indirectly addressed what was considered as an overwhelming Russian role in the peace process, which his government was insistent on changing. By stating that the "international community must do more to provide the necessary resources, leadership and hope",[629] he directly stated his desire to diversify Russian dominance. Directly turning to the topic of Russia, Saakashvili announced that "It is our moral obligation to put an end to the unilateral practice of reaching out to separatists without the consent or knowledge of the authorities in Tbilisi". With the same breath he underscored his desire "to work more closely with President Putin and the Russian Federation to combat and remove this common threat [...] in Tskhinvali, Grozny or Sukhumi."[630] On the way to closer cooperation with Russia, however, "Cooperation between the US, the EU, Russia and the countries of the Caucasus has to become the litmus test for a new relationship" which, according to Saakashvili, Georgia was pioneering with its engagement in GUUAM and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) – two organisations notably founded with the explicit aim to counterbalance Russian influence in the region. In his concluding words, Saakashvili left no doubt that "Georgia will continue to move forward down the gradual BUT steady path of Euro-Atlantic integration..."[631]

Saakashvili's first speech in front of the General Assembly of the UN can be regarded as a key document to understand how he defined Georgia's interest on two levels. Regarding the domestic arena, he had stated his aim of territorial reunion clearly after the elections. Thus, he devoted his time to rally support for the reintegration and maintenance of the territorial integrity of his country in the international arena. He fostered Georgia's image by highlighting, for example, progress in the field of democracy, the fight against corruption and the first-time-ever civil control of the armed forces. He thereby underscored his peaceful intentions to resolve the conflicts - even stating that "a democracy cannot go to war with its own people" - to an audience who in part may have known little about recent events in the *de facto* micro-sates Abkhazia or South Ossetia. Thus, the Georgian

---

[626] Mikheil Saakashvili. "Verbatim Record of the 59th Session of the General Assembly." 6.

[627] Ibid. Notably around the same time reports about stolen uranium from Abkhazia started re-surfacing in US policy circles. The organization NTI led by the distinguished former Senator Sam Nunn e.g. reported on the issue and cited speculations that part of the uranium may have been sold to terrorists destined for Iraq. See: "Uranium Stored in Abkhazia Might Have Been Sold to Terrorists." The Nuclear Threat Initiative, 29 June 2002. Web. Aug. 2012. <http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/uranium-stored-abkhazia-might-have-been-sold-terrorists/>.

[628] Ibid. 9.

[629] Ibid.

[630] Ibid. 11.

[631] Ibid. 14.

President tried to appeal through congenialness to a broad audience, but also specifically targeted a western audience by rhetorical references to democracy, civil control of military power, and peace, just to name a few. Without the intention to provide a full analysis of these key expressions, it is noteworthy that powerful European states had long underscored the importance of civil control of the armed forces, and that the United States' leadership tried to rally support for a coalition of democratic states to fight global terror as outlined by the Bush Doctrine[632]. Saakashvili positioned Georgia as a likeminded state, particularly appealing to a neo-conservative worldview present in US foreign policy with his reference to a democratic peace theory. The neo-conservative interpretation of Kant's historical text 'Perpetual Peace' which influenced George Bush was later published by Israeli Author Natan Scharansky in his book 'The Case for Democracy'[633]. The book argues in favour of expanding democratic regimes and fostering a moral foreign policy based on what the Bush administration perceived to be universal values such as freedom and human rights. Bush later explained the influence of this book on his own view of foreign policy in an interview to the Washington Times by stating: "If you want a glimpse of how I think about foreign policy read Natan Sharansky's book 'The Case for Democracy'."[634] Throughout his Presidency, Saakashvili rhetorically highlighted catch phrases like the above mentioned, freedom, democracy and human rights in order to portray himself and Georgia as ideal partners for a western alliance led by the United States. In addition, during his UN speech, the Georgian President provided a formula for resolution of the conflicts and re-establishing Georgia's territorial integrity. He also appealed to the international community to get involved in rebuilding Georgia in its entirety, not least with financial support.

A further interest which can be clearly deducted from the speech at the 59th session of the General Assembly concerns the way Saakashvili rhetorically anchored Georgia geopolitically westward. His choice of rhetoric as well as the image he created of his country speak a clear language about the fact that Saakashvili was trying to place Georgia amidst the western states, clearly expressed at the end of his speech as Georgia's path to Euro-Atlantic integration. In doing so, he distanced himself from Russia, which was portrayed by Georgia as dominance-seeking and adhering to old, outdated models of international relations, namely favouring conflict over cooperation, realpolitik and zero-sum power struggles. Meanwhile, Georgia was presented as a state conducting a revised and implicitly improved form of international relations. It was portrayed as modern and prepared to carry its share of the burden of being a responsible member of the international community, e.g. by

---

[632] Influential analysts such as Philip D. Zelikow continue to deny the existence of a coherent Bush Doctrine
[633] Natan Sharansky and Ron Dermer. *The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to overcome Tyranny and Terror*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2004. Print.
[634] "Excerpts: Bush to Remain 'Committed' to War on Terror." The Washington Times, 11 Jan. 2005. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2005/jan/11/20050111-114349-9789r/?page=all#pagebreak>.

engaging in European and NATO theatres of conflict. Saakashvili clearly expressed the wish for a stronger linkage with the west, and called for acceptance and support on the way to emancipate Georgia from Russia. His statement went hand in hand with similar policy advice of scholars who had long advocated assisting the states of the South Caucasus to free them of their dependence on Russia.[635] More prominent voices such as Brzezinski had emphasized the fact that maintaining pluralism in the region would not only prevent Russia from exclusive domination of this geopolitically increasingly important space. Moreover, he alluded to the payoffs for the west, namely access to places far beyond the region itself. According to Brzezinski, "at stake in this conundrum are geopolitical power, access to potential great wealth, the fulfilment of national and/ or religious missions, and security. The particular focus of the contest, however, is on access."[636] Saakashvili's call for support and his invitation to western states to get involved in Georgia, politically, financially and regarding security issues, was supported by arguments such as the ones cited above. Furthermore, the Georgian President was so convinced of the rising importance of his country as an access corridor to the west and a general openness to make the Georgian case a successful litmus test for democratization, that he openly advocated this agenda, not shying away from upsetting Russia with his western course and critical assessment of the state of affairs of Russian politics. His offer to Russia for more cooperation, therefore, was controversial given his subliminal, yet unambiguous play on long-standing Russian notions of a geopolitics of vulnerability and concerns of western encirclement.[637] Clearly, Saakashvili's primary interest was not intensified cooperation with Russia, but closer association with the west by simultaneous emancipation from Russia. In addition, he aimed to appear as a strong and successful leader domestically who put the Georgian house in order and provided a democratic breeding ground which external actors were welcomed to plant their seeds on and reap the fruits of their engagement together with Georgia. Last but not least, he also called for an internationalization of the conflict and its mediation efforts, a demand which was also directed against Russia's prominent role in the mediation. Overall, Saakashvili's openness and his vocal desire for closer association with the west highlighted that he believed Georgia to be at a critical turning point which demanded pronounced rhetoric.

It is important to note that the above mentioned examples represent cases of rhetorical conflict. Saakashvili's speech cannot be regarded as an emotional response, caused by personal animosities of both state leaders. Rather, their rhetoric and the mutual spirals of hostilities Saakashvili and Putin were expressing, were provoked responses aimed at communicating messages of belonging and

---

[635] See e.g. Keith McLachlan. "Introduction." 3-7.
[636] Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard.* 139-140.
[637] See e.g. Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins. "Russia, NATO and the EU in an Era of Enlargement." 70-71.

195

loyalty. The words and play on words expressed by both, Saakashvili and Putin, carry meanings and behind these meaning lie concrete interests. These can for example be found in formulations that allude to the war on terror, the promotion of democracy worldwide, to concerns about grey zones of statelessness with a weak or failing statehood or a stable neighbourhood promoted by an expanding European Union. The meaning of those phrases is also transported in the messages by locations such as Afghanistan, Iraq or Kosovo theatres of war and conflict for a coalition of the willing and a NATO, which perceived itself as holding a more global mandate.

Meanwhile, while Saakashvili was very vocal, loud, and outspoken publically, Putin was more subtle and cautious in expressing his views in international fora. He often refrained from letting down his guard in public and instead focused more on his domestic audience and the way Russian policies and statements were received in the non-state entities than Saakashvili. This sent a strong signal about the fact that building his relations with domestic and non-western allies through channels less visible for western observers, weighted stronger for him. Domestically, he pushed the image of Saakashvili as an "American stooge"[638], an aggressor and warmonger, which created loyalty through a picture of a common enemy and consequently induced the Abkhaz and South Ossetian populations to move closer to Russia. Yet, as reporting and research on the internationally isolated secessionist regions remained limited, Russian moves to discredit Georgia in its non-state entities were often ambiguous and not qualified as official provocations. Consequently they either passed completely under the radar screen of international observers or were not picked out as central themes for public discussions.[639] At the same time, Saakashvili, especially during his first term in office, embraced international platforms to express his demands and interests in the public sphere. Both leaders used various stages, illustrated by only two examples above, to address not only each other, but also their audiences of choice; Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Russia, Georgia and the Euro-Atlantic powers. Domestically, their aims were similar, namely to appear as strong leaders with regards to their respective conflicts in the North Caucasus as well as in Abkhazia and South Ossetia vis-à-vis their domestic audiences. Despite exhibiting various similarities as mentioned by Kennan and Sestanovich above, both moved further and further away from each other. Their opposition to working with each other, the incompatibility of their respective foreign policy aims, and their efforts to discredit each

---

[638] US Embassy. *Cable, 06Almaty211, Secretary Johanns' January 11, 2006 Meeting With Georgian President Saakashvili.* Almaty: US Embassy, 23 January 2006. Print.

[639] As time passed, Saakashvili and his government found allies e.g. in the New Group of Friends of Georgia, comprised of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania. Those sympathetic to the Saakashvili government and comparatively critical of Russia increasingly tried to broach the issue of Russian interference in what was *de jure* Georgian internal affairs. In addition, the US government and President Bush underlined their support for Georgia and disregard for Russian interference e.g. by personal visits. Putin in turn accused the Bush administration of meddling in Georgia's internal affairs. See e.g. E. Bumiller. "Bush Tells Putin Not to Interfere with Democracy in Former Soviet Republics." *The New York Times* 8 May 2005: n. pag. Web. 30 May 2013. <www.nytimes.com/2005/05/08/international/europe/08prexy.html?pagewanted=print&_r=0>.

other in public and behind the scenes, made the resolution of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict more intractable.

The increased intractability of the conflict as a direct consequence of worsening Georgian-Russian relations only manifested itself at a later point, however. In the interim, the animosities between Georgia and the Russian Federation did not cause a complete standstill. They simply highlighted the fact that Russia and its relations with Georgia and Abkhazia were interrelated, and that alliances were shifting more decisively after the Rose Revolution. Shevardnadze had positioned Georgia as a neutral player and aimed at carefully balancing relations between the West and Russia. While he did entertain good relations with both, Russia and western powers, he also granted special privileges to Russia as he deemed necessary, in order not to jeopardize Georgian independence. The time of his Presidency represented a critical moment in Georgian history and his policies vis-à-vis Russia reflected an appreciation of Russia's continuous pertinence over its former subjects. Safeguarding Georgian independence, however, did not exclude decisive policy moves away from Russia, such as insistence on the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline or pushing for the removal of Russian troops internationally. Yet, according to Shevardnadze, he made sure to keep the Russian elite informed about his moves, in order to avoid unexpected surprises and be perceived as unreliable and erratic.[640] Saakashvili, on the other hand, more reassured of Georgian independence, was focused on reorienting the country westward, despite Putin's warning to do so. He was neither willing to grant special privileges to Russia nor did he see the need to talk to Russia directly. Rather he discredited its leadership and policies publically at every occasion which presented itself. While this move can be viewed as overly imbalanced, pro-western, and even provocative vis-à-vis Russia by some analysts[641], domestically it appealed to the prevailing Georgian mood after the Revolution. Internationally, his fervent monologues and accusations of Russia's imperial intentions, always went hand in hand with a call for increased western assistance and involvement in the conflict resolution efforts, clearly to counterbalance the overwhelming Russian presence. While Russia discredited Georgia in the eyes of the Abkhaz population, Georgia fostered an image of Russia as a threat to common western norms and standards, against which it was necessary for western powers to stand united with Georgia. The fact that the peace process continued and even accelerated during the year 2005, as discussed further below, is not necessarily a contradiction to the assessment provided above. Rather, it illustrates once more the complexity of the peace process and the fact that it would be oversimplified to regard this process as linear. To fully appreciate the advances made in 2005, mainly

---

[640] Eduard Shevardnadze, Personal Interview, 2011
[641] See e.g. Johannes Wetzinger. "Georgiens Außenpolitik unter Michail Saakaschwili: Ein riskantes Spiel im Spannungsfeld zwischen Washington und Moskau." *FES-Analysen* 1:2011. Print.

by Georgian negotiators Goga Haindrava and Irakli Alasania, it is important to first turn to domestic developments in Georgia, especially the political environment after the Rose Revolution.

The Domestic Arena

In the domestic arena Saakashvili and Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania were the two leading forces driving politics. Zhvania was often considered as the more moderate of the two. Both men also differed in their views and strategy how to resolve the conflicts. In brief, Saakashvili undervalued the need for modest and gradual changes, often expressing a hope for quick returns and immediate payoffs. His characteristic carrot and stick approach, often featured an oversize stick, while Zhvania and the Minister of Conflicts, Goga Haindrava, whom Zhvania had promoted back into office, were responsible for maintaining the appeal of the carrot and downsizing the stick through dialogue and personal appeals. While this is a very abstract conception of the domestic situation in Georgia, it is an attempt to point to the fact that two opposing political forces came to dominate the Georgian political landscape over time. This does not mean that no other forces were at work, but the notion to divide political camps into "hawks" and "doves" - while certainly exaggerated - still accurately summarized the developments in the political arena in the period that began after the elections in January 2004 up to yet another violent incident in the Kodori gorge in 2006 (discussed below). Nevertheless, to a certain degree, the same period marked a very dynamic time in Georgian-Abkhaz relations. After a time of silence and consecutive low-points in the peace process, stunning advances (within the realms of the possible) were made with regard to dialogue and direct talks, especially on the informal level. These developments must at least in part be accorded to the "party of peace" in domestic politics, a term which came to be used to describe those forces around Zhvania, Goga Haindrava and the incoming Special Representative of the Georgian President for Abkhazia, Irakli Alasania. Haindrava explained that Zhvania enjoyed broad authority over the conflict portfolio. While informing Saakashvili on a regular basis about the overall strategy and ongoing developments, he and his team set the agenda, decided on policies and drove the peace process forward, largely without interference from other departments.[642] This fact accounts for a certain duality in domestic politics regarding the peace process. On the one hand, there was a group advocating the transformation of the conflict through dialogue and confidence building measures. The other side viewed a resolution of the conflict via military build-up and portraying Georgian strength as a way to coerce the opponents to agree to a peace-deal. Nevertheless, both "hawks" and "doves" held legitimate claims for their position and the label "hawks" cited above is not meant to imply that one camp's tough stance on certain issues and the desire to strengthen Georgia militarily was irrational. Rather it was rooted in a different view regarding which strategy was most promising to lead Georgia to achieve the set goals of reunification

---

[642] Goga Haindrava. .Personal Interview. 2010.

198

and peace. While one camp promoted a bottom-up approach for lasting peace with Abkhazia, which they believed would lead to reunification in the long-run, the other camp continued to adhere to an essentially top-down solution, which would bring peace through reintegration and could be applied as a short-term strategy. In the end, the "doves" found themselves isolated in the domestic arena, while the "hawk's" strategy proved itself unfit to resolve the conflict (discussed further below).

After the January elections in 2004, however, the political environment was not yet as polarized as it would appear in 2006. During the height of enthusiasm after the revolution, when Saakashvili and Zhvania had been affirmed in office, Prime Minister Zhvania pushed for the appointment of Goga Haindrava as Minister of Conflicts, responsible for conflict resolution in both South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Haindrava, a prominent filmmaker, who had previously resigned from this post during the war with Abkhazia, remembers that he was hesitant to accept at first.[643] But Zhvania's argument to the end that before them lay an unprecedented window of opportunity to re-shape the process finally led Haindrava to agree, albeit with reservations. "In return for agreeing to my appointment, I demanded that Georgia would initial an official apology and acknowledge mistakes made in the past. I was promised that this would happen, but it was but another promise to be broken," Haindrava explained in 2010.[644] In 2004, however, Zhvania as well as Haindrava considered the time ripe for reviving the peace process, and saw room for change.

The appointment of Haindrava was received with mixed feelings on the Abkhaz side. He was well known as a person, who had shown his benevolence towards the Abkhaz during the war and had made a pro-Abkhaz statement with his first film documentary about the Georgian-Abkhaz war. On the other hand, Haindrava had made headlines in Abkhazia after an interview, which was published in Le Monde Diplomatique, which cited Haindrava as stating: "There are only 80,000 Abkhazians, which means that we can easily and completely destroy the genetic stock of their nation by killing 15,000 of their youth. And we are perfectly capable of doing this."[645] Haindrava himself strongly denied having ever made a statement to this affect. He stated that the journalist manipulated the interview for self-serving purposes, a point which is supported not only by his suspicion of people who try to interview him to this day, his sensitivity regarding professional translation, but also by his pro-Abkhaz film about the war published later on as well as by his continued dedication to the process after the Rose Revolution.

---

[643] Ibid.

[644] Ibid.

[645] Karel Bartak. "Désengagement ou Nouvelle Colonisation? Moscou dans le Bourbier Caucasien." Le Monde Diplomatique, 1 Apr. 1993. Web. 1 Aug. 2013. <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1993/04/BARTAK/10493>. "Dans cette atmosphère de haine réciproque, on entend parfois les pires horreurs dites sur le ton le plus banal: «Les Abkhazes ont intérêt à finir rapidement cette guerre, affirme à Soukhoumi M. Goga Khaindrava, ministre géorgien chargé de la région. Ils ne sont que 80 000, c'est-à-dire que nous pouvons facilement et complètement détruire le fonds génétique de leur nation en tuant 15 000 de leurs jeunes. Et nous en sommes parfaitement capables.»,

The unfortunate truth remains that this supposed statement had left its mark. During interviews with Sergey Shamba and other high-ranking Abkhaz politicians in 2010, it was time and again cited to support the point that not even the appointment of Haindrava was able to completely bridge the atmosphere of mistrust, although it was regarded as a contributing factor for progress.

Another political player which was promoted to an influential position in 2004 did also not seem trustworthy in the eyes of the Abkhaz leadership at first. Curiously, this broadly held view of Irakli Alasania by members of the Abkhaz leading elite, whose father was killed during the Georgian-Abkhaz war, changed over the course of time. Alasania considered himself as more of a hardliner at the time when Saakashvili approached him to lead the so-called "Legitimate Abkhaz government-in-exile", a post which he accepted on September 28, 2004 and held until 24 April 2006. He had been working on hard security issues and belonged to the camp, which regarded strengthening Georgia militarily as one of the country's top priorities. In his own words, Alasania explained the situation as follows: "My background at the time was more in security policy and I was acting Deputy Minister of Defense dealing among other issues with the National Security Council. I told them [referring to Saakashvili and Zhvania] that I had my doubts and that I may not be the right person to serve in this position, not least because of my personal tragedy. I also felt that appointing me was already precluding substantial progress in the negotiations to a certain extent, because the Abkhaz side did not recognize the government-in-exile as we did not recognize theirs. I also thought that the Abkhaz side was not ready to move forward on the issues of IDP's and that they would not work with us to achieve any progress. In addition, I believed that one of the main fundamentals at the time was to raise Georgia's military capabilities to then start negotiations from a position of strength. I saw the need to complement our diplomacy with military strength."[646] Alasania's statement stands exemplary for important domestic considerations about strategy influencing the peace process. While there were actors emphasizing the need to activate the dialogue and make this the highest priority, central elements within the Georgian government and its administration propagated the view that military preparedness was a precondition for success in the peace talks. The ongoing modernization of Georgia's armed forces must therefore also be regarded in this context, although this fact alone does not support the view that Georgia was arming to go to war with Abkhazia. Improving military capabilities coupled with the fact that certain members of the administration, for example the above mentioned Okruashvili and various hardliners in the government, were openly gloating about Georgia's military strength and patriotism[647], however, stirred uneasy sentiments in the conflict zones.

---

[646] Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010.
[647] See e.g. US Embassy. *Cable, 06Moscow7863, Georgia-Russia: Putin-Saakashvili Meeting off, Leaving Little Clarity and Much Suspicion.* Moscow: US Embassy, 21 July 2006. Print.

In September 2004, after the incidents in South Ossetia had occured, it was not so much Haindrava's and Alasania's appointment, which sent positive signals to the Abkhaz. Rather, the first important change had occurred in March of that year when an institution of the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict by the name of Tamaz Nadareishvili was removed from the post of head of the Abkhaz government-in-exile, which he had held for more than a decade since September 1993. Nadareishvili had gained enormous influence under Shevardnadze, among other things, due to his dubious ties to the Gali-region and his leverage on events there. He was certainly regarded as a hardliner, an "unofficial leader of Georgian hawks, which insisted that wartime losses could not be recovered through peaceful negotiations".[648] His temporary replacement by Londer Tsaava, who held the post for less than six months prior to Alasania, was considered in Abkhazia as one of the more positive moves by Saakashvili. Furthermore, the new Georgian Parliament "terminated the term of the so-called Abkhaz-faction in Parliament."[649] These were deputies which had been elected in 1992 in Abkhazia, and whose terms had been continuously extended, for the simple reason that no recognized elections were held after 1992 in Abkhazia. During the Shevardnadze era, they too, had been an influential voice and often an obstacle to compromise with Abkhazia. According to Ivlian Haindrava, "The Abkhaz had always been very unhappy about this misrepresentation."[650] The domestic picture was thus full of conflicting messages. Positive signals with the appointment of Haindrava and the limitations placed on parts of the hawkish veterans from the time of a more active phase of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, followed by the plea for reconciliation and normalization of the new President on 26 May 2004, when Saakashvili addressed the Abkhaz in their own language. Meanwhile, the irritations with Russia, domestic hard talk, and the incidents in South Ossetia painted another picture regarding the intentions of the new administration. Alasania's promotion to office in September, however, turned out to be an important move in favour of strengthening the voices calling for reconciliation within the Georgian government.

Following his appointment, Irakli Alasania completely overhauled his approach to the peace process. He became a firm advocate of a negotiated solution, an essential part to the Haindrava-Alasania "tandem"[651], representing the official lead to the Georgian doves. His path highlights the importance of informal gatherings and second track initiatives, discussed in more detail above. Alasania had been rejected as *persona non grata* by the Abkhaz side, which excluded dialog with him after his coming to office. The first contacts between Abkhaz representatives and Alasania had been facilitated by international civil society organisations such as Conciliation Resources, the Berghof Center and the like.

---

[648] I. Haindrava and A. Gegeshidze. "Transformation of the Georgian–Abkhaz Conflict: Rethinking the Paradigm (Georgian Perspective)." Conciliation Resources, Feb. 2011. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.c-r.org/resources/transformation-georgian%E2%80%93abkhaz-conflict-rethinking-paradigm-georgian-perspective>.

[649] Ibid. 15.

[650] Ivlian Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010.

[651] I. Haindrava and A. Gegeshidze. "Transformation of the Georgian–Abkhaz Conflict." 15.

These organizations established unofficial dialogue platforms, such as the Schlaining process in Austria[652], meetings in London, Berlin and other European cities, where Abkhaz and Georgian stakeholders could meet far away from the constraints of their respective domestic politics. Alasania concluded that these meetings helped him to transform his attitude: "These rounds of informal meetings prepared me for official negotiations. They helped me to transform my approach. These were very tough meetings in the beginning. Both sides had not only been confronted with atrocities during the time of war, but we also had our personal grief. After a few meetings we opened up to each other and finally agreed that we need to focus on the future to avoid similar tragedies for the time to come."[653] His personal account yields a strong argument in favour of second track initiatives viewed as instruments with the ability to constructively support a first track peace process. Not least, because the Abkhaz side decided to accept Alasania as a negotiation partner. Together, both sides discussed how this would be possible, given his post as Chairman of the government-in-exile. Alasania summarized how both sides found a solution by explaining that "During these meetings we also openly spoke about how to solve the impasse we were facing due to the fact that I was wearing the hat of Chairman of the government of Abkhazia in exile. We jointly came up with the idea of the personal representative and agreed that this would be the only hat I would officially wear during any consecutive meetings."[654] Alasania further established a basis for a constructive relationship with his Abkhaz counterparts by publically stating the need to let bygones be bygones and focus on future developments. He was named the Special Representative of the Georgian President for Abkhazia on 15 February 2005 in accordance with what had been agreed with Abkhaz representatives.

The ambiguous messages of the new Georgian government with regards to Abkhazia had been temporarily tilted in favour of mistrust and escalation by events in South Ossetia in the late summer of 2004. Nevertheless, Haindrava's ongoing efforts in the conflict zones, Alasania's promotion to a post previously held by a vocal hawk, hand in hand with an active behind-the-scenes informal, second-track diplomacy supported by international NGOs, contributed to the overall domestic climate remaining inclined for the continuation of the dialogue. The domestic incidents in Abkhazia, the Presidential elections and the subsequent rise to power of Sergey Bagapsh eventually set the stage for the year 2005, when the Georgian-Abkhaz dialogue as well as the official UN-led negotiations experienced a peak in activities.

---

[652] For more information about the Schlaining Process see: "Schlaining Process." Conciliation Resources, n.d. Web. 7 Mar 2010. <www.c-r.org/our-work/caucasus/schlaining.php>.
[653] Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010.
[654] Ibid.

Elections in Abkhazia – A turning point?

The Presidential elections in Abkhazia on 3 October 2004 can be regarded as an important turning point in the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process. They revealed an open desire of the Russian Federation to directly influence political processes in Abkhazia, the fragility of the domestic environment in Abkhazia and eventually provided new impetus for dialogue after the more-unlikely candidate, Sergey Bagapsh, was finally elected in a second round.

The elections in Abkhazia were an especially painful experience for the Abkhaz, because for the first time the Abkhaz public openly felt the grip of Russia, i.e. a Russian desire to influence domestic Abkhaz affairs, which temporarily divided society.[655] During the run-up to the elections two candidates dominated the political scene in Abkhazia. On the one hand Raul Khajimba, a former Russian colonel and head of the Abkhaz Security Services with alleged ties to the KGB.[656] He made a political career in Abkhazia holding posts such as Minister of Defence and Prime Minister before striving to become President. Khajimba was at the time closely associated with a pro-Russian line of politics, not least because Putin strongly endorsed his candidacy during the 2004 fall election campaign. As a candidate, however, he was also strongly favoured by outgoing President Vladislav Ardzinba, and early polling suggested his electoral victory over the less likely opposition candidate Sergey Bagapsh. Khajimba and Bagapsh represented different clans in Abkhaz politics. The former was associated with the so-called Gudauta-clan, named after a northern city in Abkhazia, while the latter was tied to the Ochamchire-clan, a city near the Gali region, which used to be largely inhabited by ethnic Georgians. Their belonging, as well as the fact that Bagapsh was married to an ethnically Georgian wife, raised concerns in Russia that if elected, Bagapsh would push for a pro-Georgian turn in Abkhaz politics. The political expert Manana Gurgulia explained that even at the time, this fear was unsubstantiated. She noted that while a more or less pro-Russian attitude was a possible feature for both candidates, a pro-Georgian attitude *per se* was politically not supportable within Abkhazia even at the time.[657] Nevertheless, Russia certainly felt the need to push for one candidate, namely Raul Khajimba.

Khajimba's views regarding policy were those of a political realist with a Manichean map in mind. During an interview in 2010 he elaborated his understandings on Abkhazia's role in international politics, the region and the conflicting interests of western powers and Russia by illustrating: "If there would not have been a war in 1992-1993, cooperation with NATO would have increased to a point when now there would be NATO bases on Georgian and Abkhaz territory. Of course this would not have made Russia happy. It is in Russia's interest to promote its geopolitical interests in Abkhazia. And

---

[655] Archil Gegeshidze. Personal Interview. 2010.
[656] Jonathan Wheatley. *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution.*
[657] Manana Gurgulia. Personal Interview. 2010.

in this regard, Abkhaz and Russian strategic interests coincide."[658] Khajimba accounted for Russian interest in Abkhazia by alluding to an uninterrupted East-West rivalry, reminiscent of a mentality predominant during Cold War times. This is not surprising, considering that Abkhazia remained relatively isolated from international developments after the end of the block confrontation. In addition, its unique development never suggested a clear break from a past of great power rivalries which also highlights that the international isolation also manifested itself on an ideological level. In his quote, he also referred to continued Russian concerns about NATO enlargement and limitations this may have put on Russia's scope of action[659], if the Georgian-Abkhaz war had never happened. Different from some international observers, who explain that Russia has an interest in stability in its neighbourhood, Khajimba's emphasis on the Georgian-Abkhaz war implied that Russia followed an inverted logic regarding securing its interests. Russian mediation diplomacy is a case in point. Whereas stability would have negated the need for outside intervention, instability in its neighbourhood called Russia to the table, assured its place as a stakeholder, created dependencies on continued Russian involvement and served as a pretext for keeping opposing powers at bay. He further noted that he believed Abkhazia had a choice between a path that would lead closer to independence and one that strayed away from it. From his point of view, Abkhazia's goal to gain *de jure* independence was only attainable by closer association with Russia. Russia in turn had a slightly different agenda, but its interests overlapped with an Abkhaz desire for independence. According to Khajimba, "it is the desire of Russia as well as western powers to create conditions under which they can influence the Caucasian countries. This competition between Russia and western countries at times even became very obvious during active phases of the negotiation process."[660] Khajimba's second statement underlines the notion that the South Caucasus was a geopolitically relevant space where interests were bound to collide. Both, Russia and the US viewed the South Caucasus as a gateway to the energy and resource riches of Central Asia and the Far East. This substantiates the claim of Georgian political analysts like Alexander Rondeli, who pointed out that "whoever controls Georgia, controls the Caucasus"[661]. While this sentence is cliché-ridden in the geopolitical sense, it simply summarizes that access to pivot states such as Azerbaijan and theatres of economic, political and military relevance beyond it, were greatly facilitated by way of Georgia. While the US intended to ensure its influence by fostering pluralism and alliances with democratic regimes, Russia had a continued interest in maintaining a monopolistic position in the region. Its desire not to lose its stronghold on the region was expressed in its 'Near Abroad' policy. Given these opposing policy priorities, conflict was bound to arise. Faced with a fading

---

[658] Raul Khajimba. Personal Interview. 2010.
[659] See e.g. J. Hillen and M. Noonan. "The Geopolitics of NATO Enlargement." *Parameters* 28: 22. 1998. Print., cit.n. Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins. "Russia, NATO and the EU in an Era of Enlargement." 76.
[660] Ibid.
[661] Alexander Rondeli. Personal Interview. 2010.

power monopoly in the region, Russia looked for new ways to safeguard its interests. Consequently, the conflict in Abkhazia increasingly became a policy tool. This notion is also supported by Khajimba's remark that great power rivalry was reflected in the negotiation process.

Russia had a well-grounded interest to maintain influence in the Caucasus region. Meanwhile, Abkhazia was caught between Russia and a western coalition which largely failed to acknowledge its existence. As a small nation it was only able to take advantage of rare windows of opportunities to actually shape policy. That is why the importance of the strategic coincidence of Russian and Abkhazian interests were viewed by Khajimba as significant for advancing the goals of the country, among them first and foremost independence. Due to his belief that the Russian-way was most promising, Khajimba wore his pro-Russian attitude openly on his sleeve in 2004. As a result, he received public support from Moscow which culminated in a meeting between him and Putin on August 29 in the Russian Black Sea town Sochi, exchanging friendly gestures in front of the media.[662] Russian support was vividly expressed in the Abkhaz media throughout Khajimba's campaign, which depicted him often alongside Putin as a friend of Russia, seeking closer relations with the neighbour to the North. Khajimba certainly played the Russian card during the Abkhaz election campaign, and few analysts doubted that he would win the elections.

Given the developments in Abkhazia, Georgian politicians such as Nino Burjanadze openly protested the attempts of Russia to meddle in the domestic affairs of Abkhazia. Other than that, however, the Georgian government largely abstained from trying to exert any pressure or publically supporting one or the other candidate. On Election Day, to the surprise of most observers, the ballot came in slightly in favour of Bagapsh. This was taken as a sign that the close association with Russia had backfired. It can be accounted for by the fact that the Abkhaz public, which had fought for their independence for more than a decade, viewed Russian efforts to influence the vote as overstepping an invisible line, i.e. as an infringement on their desired sovereignty. When Khajimba and his supporters did not accept the results of the elections, a domestic power struggle ensued in which the old Abkhaz ruling elite supported by Russia tried to forcibly and clumsily twist the result of the elections in their favour. The political tensions also expressed themselves on the level of society and the developments that followed the elections temporarily changed the domestic face of Abkhazia, which up until that point had appeared to most outside observers more or less united and even streamlined.[663]

As mentioned above, Khajimba and the Russian Federation did not accept the official results of the elections. They contested the vote and even went so far as to publically declare that Khajimba had won

---

[662] G. Sepashvili and T. Gularidze "Putin Meddles in Abkhazia Presidential Race." Civil Georgia, 31 August 2004. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=7721>.
[663] Suggested by numerous interview partners, among them Dato Darchiashvili. Member of Georgian Parliament. Personal Interview. 2011.

the ballot. Khajimba called for a recount of the ballot from the Gali region. He proceeded to demand court hearings, which were postponed after key members from the Central Election Commission resigned citing excessive pressure after having announced Bagapsh's victory as a reason for this move. Meanwhile, the Russian Deputy General Prosecutor personally appeared in Abkhazia to declare Khajimba's victory, while the governor of the neighbouring Russian Krasnodar region threatened to impose an import embargo on Abkhaz produce as long as Khajimba's election remained contested. In light of these developments and the external pressure, a National Convent of around 15000 people took to the streets in Sukhumi to protest the outside interference and speak out in favour of Bagapsh. The situation grew even tenser when independent newspapers, known for their proximity to the opposition, i.e. Bagapsh, reported that they had come under pressure and that they were unable to go to print, as the print shops refused to take their orders. The acting Prime Minister Nodar Khashba was named as responsible for the factual media boycott.[664]

The events around the elections can be regarded as highly unusual and a shock for Abkhaz society, which is often characterized by outside observers as highly streamlined. Khajimba himself even explained that in 2004 he perceived the Abkhaz society on the brink of a civil war. Further escalation was only avoided when the two candidates agreed on a compromise, namely to re-run on a single ticket. Khajimba described this move as necessary for demonstrating national unity, thus again highlighting the severity of the situation in 2004: "Although it was very, very tough, both fronts united and in doing so we avoided a situation that could have led to civil war."[665] In the end an escalation of domestic tension was avoided in Abkhazia. On December 6, both contenders Khajimba and Bagapsh signed an agreement to run on a single ticket. The agreement was underwritten by Russian officials.[666] Russia was thus serving as guarantor for the domestic peace, demonstrating its weight in Abkhaz domestic politics. The December 6 deal highlighted that Russia could not be left aside, but that it had to be taken into account even regarding matters concerned with domestic politics. Russia appeared as an active stakeholder with vested interests in domestic developments in Abkhazia, whose interests and need to appear strong even in light of the unfavourable results had to be factored in. The agreement reached on December 6 can thus be regarded as a compromise on all fronts. Yet, Russia had also experienced a severe setback, when "its" candidate failed during the first round of the elections. Moreover, Russia's increasingly exposed involvement represented a new truth which could hardly be overlooked. By bluntly supporting the candidate less amicable towards Georgia Russia had positioned itself clearly against Georgia in the conflict resolution efforts. While this was regarded as an

[664] "Editors: Independent Newspapers not going to Print in Abkhazia." Civil Georgia, 18 October 2004. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=8103>.
[665] Raul Khajimba. Personal Interview. 2010.
[666] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/32.* New York: United Nations, 17 January 2005. Print.

unambiguous provocation by Georgian officials, it also supports the argument made above that Russia progressively followed its own logic to achieve its policy aims. Influence over Abkhazia had become an important component to maintain a position of strength in the region and not to be discounted by Georgia, which otherwise followed a steady path westward.

In Georgia, the events in Abkhazia and the active Russian role confirmed the perception held by a majority of Georgians that Abkhaz politics were increasingly tied to Russia, which caused serious protest. It also supported the notion that Russia's mediation diplomacy increasingly followed a self-serving logic instead of promoting a lasting peace between the conflicting parties. At the same time, for Georgia and especially the Georgian negotiators, the outcome of the elections was nevertheless decisive. It determined the partners Georgia would have to deal with in the future. Vladislav Ardzinba had led the country since the 1992 war with Georgia. Both he and Shevardnadze had actively taken part in the war. After Shevardnadze had been ousted, the fact that Ardzinba was parting from his post created a window of opportunity for a fresh start. This moment was historic and of all candidates, Bagapsh, who had prevailed in troubled times, seemed like the most promising candidate for a restart in Georgian-Abkhaz relations. In addition, Georgia's policy of prudence with regard to domestic developments in *de facto* Abkhazia, created an atmosphere conducive for the re-opening of talks.

Beyond Elections in Abkhazia: Renewed hope for Non-Resumption of Hostilities

The Abkhaz side had signalled a readiness to discuss the non-resumption of hostilities as early as May 2004. A number of formal and informal meetings on security guarantees had preceded this statement in 2004. It was voiced univocally, however, that status questions were not up for discussions. The time after Saakashvili's Independence Day Speech on May 26 had been marked by a domestic zigzag course in Georgia, which sent mixed signals and left the mediation on hold after a cargo ship en route to Abkhazia had been detained and tension had heightened during violent events in South Ossetia. The latter caused a decent amount of frictions also within Georgian politics. It was an open secret that Minister of Conflict Goga Haindrava was on very bad terms with both Minister of Interior Vano Merabishvili and Minister of Defence Irakli Okruahsvili, both close allies of Saakashvili, because he felt their moves were undermining his own efforts. The men, whose portfolios certainly overlapped, even refused to meet face to face.[667] This caused a number of irritations, especially when efforts to increase dialogue fell victim to actions under the jurisdiction of the two ministries mentioned above. This for example, pertained to incidents related to maritime security or the use of forces under the command of the Ministry of Interior in trouble spots like Kodori or the Tskhinvali region. The uncoordinated and untimely fashion in which these forces were deployed often discredited simultaneous efforts by

---

[667] Goga Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010.

Haindrava and his team. Nevertheless, supported by Prime Minister Zhvania, Haindrava, advanced his portfolio regarding the peace process. Both men regarded the elections in Abkhazia as an important window of opportunity, as did many experts and observers.

The UN Group of Friends had also eagerly awaited the outcome of the elections in order to make its next move. Heidi Tagliavini, whose impressive record in international diplomacy speaks for itself and whose contributions and personal commitment to the peace process were underlined by high-level negotiators in Georgia and Abkhazia as remarkable and out of the ordinary,[668] conducted an active shuttle diplomacy to prepare the ground for the first Group of Friends meeting after the Abkhaz election results had taken shape. After the Coordinating Council had been suspended in 2001, the Group of Friends' meetings were the only non-technical forum during which Abkhaz and Georgian representatives had agreed to meet in the past, when invited to attend as guests. They had thus gained significance for the peace process over the years and the Group of Friends had increasingly strengthened its profile in the conflict resolution efforts, although their impact remained limited. At their subsequent meeting in Geneva they discussed the state of affairs of the conflict as expected and "stressed the need to prepare carefully for another Geneva meeting with the parties, tentatively planned for the spring of 2005"[669]

After December 6, the Abkhaz side had signalled a certain willingness to re-negotiate negotiation. A first such sign came with the agreement to continue participation in the quadripartite meetings on December 16.[670] The quadripartite meetings also referred to as "Chuburkhindji sessions" were first established after a meeting to discuss issues of security in Gali between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides on 3 May 2000. The meeting was chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary General Dieter Boden and attended by the Commander-in-Chief of the CIS Peacekeeping forces, Sergey Korobko, as well as the Chief Observer of UNOMIG, Anis Badjwa.[671] The idea of regular working level contacts was then taken up by the Coordinating Council and referred to its Working Group I on security issues. During its fourth session, Working Group I called on the parties to appoint representatives for the regular participation in the Gali meetings starting on 24 August 2000 and for the legalization of these meetings[672]. The Quadripartite meetings had developed into weekly working-level meetings in the city

---

[668] Among others, Sergey Shamba. Personal Interview. 2010., Goga Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010., and Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010.
[669] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/32.*
[670] Ibid.
[671] PROTOCOL OF THE GALI MEETING BETWEEN THE GEORGIAN AND ABKHAZ SIDES on the issues of stabilization of the situation in the security, 3 May 2000; Archive of the Office of the Minister of Georgia for Reintegration/Translation from Russian, cit.n. Diasamnidze, T., op.cit., p. 398/399 AND JOINT STATEMENT OF THE FORTH SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP I, Sukhum, 20 August 2000, Archive of the Office of the Minister of Georgia for Reintegration/Translation from Russian cit.n. Diasamnidze, T., op.cit., 405.
[672] Ibid.

of Chuburkhinji in the Gali-district, used especially to discuss security in the conflict zone. The Abkhaz had suspended even working-level contacts after the maritime incident in July 2004 and thus also these meetings. The agreement to resume the quadripartite meetings on December 16, 2004 was thus regarded as a first success. Although the quadripartite meetings did not represent political negotiations, their resumption also fit the scheme of a general willingness to discuss security issues and measures for a non-resumption of hostilities agreement expressed previously. At the end of 2004, progress remained limited, yet the prevailing signals gave reason for cautious optimism that the mediation process would move out of its position of standstill. The possibility of resolving security concerns through renewed negotiations about non-resumption of hostilities gave reasons to entertain hopes that this matter which had been unresolved in the past and greatly damaged the advance of the peace process would now be dealt with and give way to more comprehensive talks if resolved successfully.

V.

The Fifth Phase of the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process: 2005 until 2007

Introduction

Overshadowed by Prime Minister Zhvania's death, the peace process gained unlikely momentum. During the same period, chief negotiators Irakli Alasania and Goga Haindrava worked hand in hand with international bodies and civil society representatives to drive important aspects of the negotiations forward. Major achievements during this period between 2005 and 2007 were the revival of the Coordinating Council and its three working groups, the reinstatement of the Georgian-Abkhaz Joint Bilateral Commission, the intensification of the dialogue in formal and informal settings and the use of the Georgian 'Road Map' and the Abkhaz 'Key to the Future' peace plans as basis for new discussions. In addition, efforts to advance the issue of security guarantees and conclude a new non-resumption of hostilities agreement were deepened.

Three explanations are offered in the following chapter for the intensification of the peace process, which initially seemed less likely after the passing of Zurab Zhvania, who had been a powerful advocate of the dialogue process and the peaceful mediation of the conflict at the top of Georgian politics. First of all, the advocates of peaceful dialogue and negotiations from first and second track environments assessed the progress in terms of success of their measures including confidence building measures, formal and informal discussions. The hardliners in Georgian politics, on the other hand, regarded the achievements as a sign that their uncompromising show of force had compelled the Abkhaz to return to the negotiation table. Contrary to the belief that either the strategy of the negotiators or the hardliner's policy were the reason for the new impetus in the peace negotiations, a closer look at the strategy of the Abkhaz government with regard to the mediation is also evaluated in the subsequent chapter to see whether it offers a different explanatory framework.

The rift in Georgian politics became increasingly apparent by 2005 and even more so in the subsequent years. The two camps promoting different and at times opposing set of priorities clearly exhibited a lack of policy coordination and communication. On the one hand, President Saakashvili and members of his cabinet had defined Georgia's problem as hegemonic Russian meddling in Georgian affairs and put their efforts into working out a policy to dilute Russian weight in the peace process and limit its influence in Georgia. Key components of this policy included fostering alliances which were often based on geopolitical reasoning such as attracting partners by linking assistance to Georgia to opposing Russia in a struggle over access to oil and gas reserves of the Greater Caspian Basin and beyond. Furthermore, Georgia's declared goal of NATO membership was another key component. While upsetting Russia, a secondary issue was that it was not distinguishable from Georgian conduct whether

the goal to join NATO was rooted in defensive or offensive intentions. This consequently contributed to intensifying the existing security dilemma.[673] In addition, the Georgian policy aimed to limit Russia militarily in Georgia by winding up the removal of Russian military bases and replace CIS peacekeepers stationed in Abkhazia. The latter aim went hand in hand with a general effort to internationalise the peace process as another important component of the policy. Russia considered the Georgian policy hostile and responded accordingly.

In the second camp Irakli Alasania and Goga Haindrava were driving the peace process negotiations forward. As time passed it became more and more evident that their strategy was no longer based on a government consensus but that progress largely relied on the efforts of the two individuals and their teams. Part of their strategy coincided with the official government policy to limit Russian influence. Examples included efforts to increase direct talks to avoid Russian interference and involve international partners. At the same time, initiatives which did not represent subordinate efforts and thus did not complement the official policy were often not supported by top officials. The strategy to resolve the Abkhaz conflict by peaceful means thus ceased to be a policy in its own right. After Zhvania's death it increasingly became regarded as a building block to fulfil the policy goals largely dictated by the Georgian President. On the ground the downgrading of the Abkhazia policy by those sceptical of soft power approaches expressed itself in a lack of communication and coordination between departments to the point when the President and members of his cabinet boycotted milestone achievements. Eventually the simmering conflict between the two camps came out into the open, when strong disagreement over the way security guarantees would be enforced caused a public clash. Overall, the negotiators advocating confidence and trust building, who envisioned a long-term peaceful settlement to the conflict were increasingly powerless obverse militant rhetoric and incidences of state sponsored use of force, e.g. in the Kodori gorge. In the end, the Georgian President and his close allies set up parallel governance structures in conflict hot spots. While this represented their own interpretation of coming closer to settling the conflict, these actions contributed to the ultimate break down of the peace process.

Meanwhile the Abkhaz were the real beneficiaries of the prevailing disunity in Georgia, exploiting the domestic weaknesses of their opponent. In an opportunistic fashion, the new Abkhaz government took advantage of the peace process in order to advance developments in the field of state building and strengthening their economy. While participating actively in negotiations, they did so to uphold an

---

[673] See Robert Jervis. "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma." *World Politics* 30: 167-174. Print.; and Robert Jervis. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978. Print.

environment conducive to expediting their own policy goals at the expense of real progress in the peace process.

New Momentum

Before the new momentum discussed above could be realized, the death of Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania on 3 February 2005 under circumstances which many in Georgia and Abkhazia still question, meant a severe setback for the peace process, since one of its most fervent supporters had passed away. Shortly thereafter, the political transition in Abkhazia was concluded when Sergey Bagapsh was inaugurated to the Presidential office on February 12 in Sukhumi. Only three days after his inauguration, Irakli Alasania was officially named Special Representative of the Georgian President for Abkhazia on 15 February 2005. His appointment was in part the outcome of informal negotiations with the Abkhaz side, and took the form of a compromise designed to make official meetings between Alasania and the Abkhaz side possible by downplaying Alasania's post as head of the Abkhaz government-in-exile. At the same time, in early 2005, Alasania was politically closely allied with President Saakashvili. His appointment to the post of Special Representative in a way sidelined the existing post of Minister of Conflicts held by Goga Haindrava. Haindrava and Zhvania had enjoyed wide-ranging autonomy with regards to the conflict portfolio and the creation of a parallel structure for Abkhazia in form of a Special Representative was a first step to limit this autonomy after Zhvania's death. Haindrava was on bad terms with Saakashvili's closest allies and although both, Alasania and Haindrava, described their working relations as very constructive and cooperative and expressed a sense of complementing each other to an extent, Haindrava also noted that Alasania's appointment was a principal move by the Georgian President on a path aimed at sidelining him, which eventually led to Haindrava leaving his post in the summer of 2006.[674]

On another note, Alasania's appointment also coincided with a visit of the United Nation's Undersecretary for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno to the region from 14 to 17 of February.[675] During his visit the Undersecretary for Peacekeeping Operations convinced both sides to participate in the upcoming Group of Friends meeting in Geneva scheduled for April 7 and 8. The idea to invite the conflicting parties to participate in the Group of Friends meetings in Geneva was relatively young. A first such invitation had been issued in February 2003. Acting out of necessity, these meetings were regarded as a sort of substitute for the former Geneva meetings of the Coordinating Council, which had been suspended since 2001. The more active role of the Group of Friends also pointed to the fact that the Sochi process, i.e. the regular meetings of the Sochi Working Groups, had fallen short

---

[674] Goga Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010.
[675] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/269.* New York: United Nations, 25 April 2005. Print.

of the expectations put in them only a year earlier, largely because of the existing tensions in the Georgian-Russian relationship.

The participation of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides at the Geneva Meeting of the Group of Friends was received enthusiastically in 2005. The UN Secretary General wrote to this end that "The participation of the Georgian and Abkhaz side in the United Nations chaired meeting of the Group of Friends on 7 and 8 April in Geneva signalled the resumption of the United Nations-led peace process after over eight months of suspended contacts."[676] The meeting was regarded as a break-through on the path to revive other "relevant task forces and working groups established in the three priority areas."[677] The statement above also illustrated the unbroken optimism of UN representatives at least regarding what they referred to as 'UN-led process'. On a practical level, however, the meeting highlighted the existing differences between the sides, especially "different priorities of the two sides and the importance of building trust".[678] At the meeting the sides stressed security concerns and apprehension about ongoing militant rhetoric. As a consequence, Heidi Tagliavini intervened directly to foster trust among the parties by inviting senior representatives from both sides to South Tirol in Italy following the meeting in Geneva "to study the successful experience in the field of institution-building and economic development in the autonomous region of Trentino".[679] While this trip scheduled from 9 to 13 April was meant to illustrate autonomy at work, it also gave participants a chance to discuss their views in a more informal and less binding setting, practically without outside interference.

With hindsight it is clear that especially the Georgians engaged in the peace process now led by Haindrava and Alasania pursued a policy of engaging the Abkhaz side in direct talks, and hence welcomed the informal gatherings.[680] Over the years, the Georgian side in particular had expressed the notion that the pressure created by formal meetings and their reporting schemes was counterproductive to progress in the peace process. Between the lines these statements clearly pointed to an alleged dependency of the Abkhaz side on the Russian facilitator, insinuating that the Abkhaz could neither act independently nor speak freely in formal settings. It has to be questioned, however, to what extend it is possible to prove a dependency of the one on the other. What seems evident is that there was a convergence of Russian and Abkhaz views, strategic congruence as well as increased mutual support over time. Nevertheless, the criticism regarding formal meetings remained legitimate simply due to the fact that they left little room for non-conformist views or even brainstorming about innovative processes as long as they were not complemented with less formal

---

[676] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/453.* New York: United Nations, 13 July 2005. Print.
[677] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/269.*
[678] Ibid.
[679] Ibid.
[680] Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010. And Goga Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010.

formats. This is due to the fact that real-time diplomatic alliances also cast their shadow on peace processes, which essentially are an additional aspect of diplomatic life. This appears logical and it would therefore be more surprising if otherwise existing alliances would be null and void within the space of the negotiations. Instead, official statements, or more specifically, statements issued in formal settings have an impact on diplomacy and diplomatic alliances. As such, they always have a potential to create a political backlash, in the positive or negative sense of the word. Any country's room for manoeuvre is therefore limited or empowered in the negotiations by the structure of its alliances and the rigidity of its prior coordination with its partners. This also holds true for the formal meetings which made up part of the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process. Both sides were thus not able to act entirely independent, although the degree of their non-independence may have varied with the choice of their alliances and in accordance with the attitude of their partners. On a less abstract level, some eyewitness accounts substantiate the notion that during the time following the elections in Abkhazia, which gave rise to a candidate who had been suspected to hold a pro-Georgian attitude by Russia, the Abkhaz conduct in the formal negotiations was monitored especially close by its Russian ally. Georgian representatives hoped to avoid such limitations by way of direct engagement with the Abkhaz. The otherwise constricting environment led to conflicting statements, for example the notion voiced by the Abkhaz side during the Geneva meeting on April 7 and 8 that reopening the Sochi-Tbilisi railway could assist the goal of building confidence. At the informal meetings in Italy, high-level Abkhaz participant distanced themselves from this statement and behind closed doors even wondered why the Georgian side was still working on this project which was essentially only serving Russian interests.[681] This example lends additional credence to the notion that informal meetings are an important addition to any conflict mediated by a third or more parties. On another note, the fact that both parties were able to participate in informal exchanges negates the fact that their every move was controlled by any external player. In the case of Abkhazia it at least supports the idea that although bound by their increasingly important and friendly relations with Russia, such meetings were possible at the time.

In this context, it must be noted that as time passed, especially during the year 2006 the participation of both sides in informal meetings became increasingly more restricted. This held true on the Georgian side for the Presidential chief negotiator Irakli Alasania, who had received a strong recommendation by the President to stay away from informal meetings such as the Schlaining process.[682] While the impact on the Georgian side was more immediate and did not affect all participants or all informal fora, on the Abkhaz side, especially after violent events in Kodori in 2006 (mentioned further below),

---

[681] Undisclosed Interview Partners. Personal Interview. 2010.; Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010.
[682] Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010.

the socio-political pressure Abkhaz participants encountered upon their return from such meetings steadily increased.[683] It ceased to be part of the good tone to associate with the enemy even in such meetings. In 2005, however, the Geneva Meeting as well as the direct informal contacts fostered by Heidi Tagliavini led to some immediate results upon return. In mid-May, Haindrava and Shamba reconvened in Gali to discuss ways to improve the security situation. The main outcome of the meeting was a commitment to strengthen the implementation of the 1994 Moscow agreement and to increase transparency through the exchange of information in order to build confidence.[684] To add to these positive developments, a subsequent meeting on security guarantees was scheduled for 20th of July.

The July meeting on security guarantees with high-level participation did not take place as scheduled. The reason was the cancellation of the Abkhaz delegation in protest of another maritime incident, namely the detention of a cargo ship en route to Sukhumi by the Georgian coast guard.[685] The incident demonstrated the alarming extent of the lack of policy coordination and insufficient communication between departments in Tbilisi. Key members of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, responsible for intercepting the vessel, were on non-speaking terms with the State Minister of Conflicts. The latter regarded the incident as a further sign that the President himself fostered a desire to undermine recent advances by himself and Alasania. Following this logic, internal discord over which policy initiatives should take precedence with regard to Abkhazia – dialogue or a hard line approach – continued to hamper progress in the peace process.[686] Notably, the irritations in the Georgian-Abkhaz relations by the renewed maritime incident did not cause the suspension of all talks. Consecutive expert level meetings of the Sochi working group took place on July 2, 11 and 19 in order to prepare a technical survey regarding the reopening of the Sochi-Tbilisi railway agreed upon in mid-June.[687] Thus, the incident did not leave a trace which would be considered out of the ordinary. To explain the continuation of dialogue, various participants of second track formats pointed at the openness with which the dichotomy in Georgian domestic politics was discussed between Georgian and Abkhaz representatives. This may offer an explanation why talks did not break down altogether. The inconsistency of Georgian policy was already well known among Abkhaz representatives. Especially second track meetings had contributed to establish a functioning dialogue platform which also functioned as an early warning mechanism and thus the incident did not appear out of thin air.[688]

---

[683] Irakli Khintba. Deputy Foreign Minister Abkhazia. Personal Interview. 2010.
[684] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/453.*
[685] Ibid.
[686] Similar views were also expressed by Giorgi Haindrava and Paata Zakareishvili during interviews in 2010.
[687] Some observers explain that during the time of Heidi Tagliavini it had been communicated to the Russian side that the Sochi process was no longer regarded as an autonomous structure but was summoned under the umbrella of the UN-led peace process.
[688] This notion has been elaborated further above. It is based on interviews with second track representatives, among them Manana Gurgulia, Ardna Inal-Ipa and Ivliane Haindrava.

Consequently it did not shake the entire process. Yet, another explanation focuses less on the benefit of open dialogue and more on the pursuit of rational interest by the Abkhaz side. Under the new Abkhaz administration led by President Sergey Bagapsh and Vice President Raul Khajimba, the political strategy to deal with Georgia shifted. Domestically, the Abkhaz had overcome the crisis following the 2004 elections by way of this power sharing agreement, brokered by Russia. More important for shaping the new strategy was a novel self-conception based on a different understanding of how important Abkhazia was for Russia. Russian determination to push its own candidate Raul Khajimba into office, its subsequent interference in Abkhaz domestic politics, and its focus on a compromise which was sure not to sidestep Russian interests in a new Abkhaz administration were signs of an enhanced status of Abkhazia for Russian politics. From all this it was clear that Abkhazia mattered. If not in its own right, then certainly as an important piece in the Russian strategic puzzle. The underlined value for Russia opened a window of opportunity regarding advancing the development of the country with Russian backing as a trailblazer. Yet, experience had clearly illustrated the devastating effect of conflict on developments in the socio-economic sphere.[689] The Georgian-Abkhaz war had thrown the once prosperous strip of land into poverty, caused lasting destruction and left large part of the population traumatized. Sergey Shamba elaborated on the strategy of the new Abkhaz administration. He explained that the goal was to maintain a relatively peaceful environment in order to prolong stability, create a sense of security and advance state building activities.[690] He also expressed a disregard for the activities in the framework of the peace process, noted an inherent bias in its structures and mechanism and referred to the prevailing general distrust of Georgia's peaceful intentions and the negotiators. When asked why Abkhazia was nevertheless participating in the peace process, Shamba answered in a frank and unprecedented fashion. He explained: "We were participating in the negotiations to prolong time. As it is said, while people are talking, guns are silent. We hoped that we would improve our economic system and would get more international support for our position. […] We derived most benefits for us from this situation. Our state became stronger. We managed to overcome all difficult situations, sanctions and blockades, and still were developing. We increased the power of our army…"[691] Shamba further noted that this strategy eventually led to the recognition of the Abkhaz independence after the Russo-Georgian war in 2008. His account of the official Abkhaz strategy offers an explanation why the Abkhaz had a vested interest in not letting talks break down entirely. Instead, it follows that it was in their interest to signal willingness to advance the ongoing negotiations and blame Georgia's militant rhetoric and hard line policy approaches for setbacks in the process to distract from their own lacking earnestness. Notably, while 'guns remained

---

[689] Gennady Gugulia. Businessmen Sukhum. Personal Interview. 2010.
[690] Sergey Shamba. Personal Interview. 2010.
[691] Ibid.

silent' the Abkhaz were not only fostering civil developments but were advancing their own military preparedness as well. Overall, it cannot be negated that the openness and effective channels of dialogue at times functioned as an early warning system and may have helped absorb some of the shocks created by otherwise unexpected Georgian moves. Yet, on the downside, the Abkhaz including parts of the Abkhaz administration were reading Georgia, its policies and internal weaknesses like an open book, while political developments in Abkhazia often remained foggy to outsiders. Consequently the Abkhaz had the advantage to shape their political strategies accordingly, while those advocating the maintenance of open dialogue, who were at the same time often critical of the Georgian government's militant course, naively turned a blind eye to the fact that the information provided was used for the rational pursuit of interests by the Abkhaz.

By August, the long-awaited meeting on security guarantees was rescheduled. The parties to the conflict led by Goga Haindrava and Sergey Shamba as well as representatives of the Group of Friends and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) met in Tbilisi on August 4.[692] The Abkhaz side had once again raised concerns prior to the meeting about Georgia's peaceful intentions to resolve the conflict in light of Georgia's rising military expenditure and the re-occurring maritime incidents. Thus, at the meeting on August 4, both sides identified a need to renew their "commitment to the non-resumption of hostilities and for the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees",[693] especially due to the fact that the leadership of both entities had recently changed. They focused their work on a package of joint draft documents regarding the non-use of force which formed the basis of the ongoing discussions even after the meeting.

The relative success with regards to the concerted opinion and the non-resumption of hostilities draft documents was overshadowed by ongoing tensions on other fronts. In the Sochi process mentioned, a technical survey was intended to commence on August 10 with the participation of Georgian and Abkhaz specialists. The preparatory work had been completed and the expectations were high that substantive progress would follow. "However, contrary to what had been agreed, Georgian experts were not able to join as the Abkhaz side denied clearance for their participation on the ground that some of them were internally displaced persons."[694] This setback in the efforts to reconstruct the tracks through Abkhazia and reconnect the Russian and *de jure* Georgian territories marked the beginning of the end of attempts to re-join this part of the tracks of the Transcaucasus railway. Given the important

---

[692] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/453.*
[693] Ibid.; On August 25 2005 the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia published the results of a recent study which established that the number of internally displaced persons in Georgia had decreased since November 2004 from 241,032 to 214,018, with 201,634 of them being from Abkhazia, Georgia cit. n., United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/657.* New York: United Nations, 19 October 2005. Print.
[694] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/453.*

role that railways play for the control of a territory, i.e. as a form of modern technology to exploit and develop space, according to geopolitical reasoning[695], the failure of the project has to be considered also in the context of the lacking interest from both Abkhazia and Georgia in the project. The rehabilitation of the railway was a remnant from the Shevardnadze era, when the relationship with Russia was still of a different quality and when Georgia had hoped to make an important gain by exchanging railroad rehabilitation for the return of refugees (see above). In the meantime, both Georgian and Abkhaz participants had raised their doubts in formal and informal meetings respectively, whether this project continued to serve their respective interests. Georgia was not satisfied with the returns of refugees. More importantly concerns about a neo-imperial Russian foreign policy were on the rise in Georgia and the costs of such a project were far outweighing the potential benefits in the prevailing environment of distrust. The Abkhaz' interests were arguably of a different nature. Given their new self-image and keen awareness of being a key component of Russian policy in the South Caucasus,[696] seeing the Russian desire for control over infrastructure satisfied by a intact railroad eventually covering the entire South Caucasus, raised concerns regarding a risk of diminishing the overall importance of Abkhazia, which Russia needed for a perceived divide and rule strategy. The project thus also ran contrary to Abkhaz interests and a desire to continue to extract benefits from its current relationship with the powerful neighbour. The problems which the Georgian specialists encountered on August 10, namely their denial to enter Abkhazia on the grounds that some among them were IDPs, must therefore be assessed not only in the immediate context, but also within the overall suspicion that this project would first and foremost serve Russian interests by strengthening its influence throughout the South Caucasus. The process was eventually discontinued, after it became increasingly clear that neither Georgian nor Abkhaz guards would monitor the railway construction, but that elements from within Russia envisioned pushing the process forward by sending their own railroad security personal to watch over the reconstruction.

The decreased interest of the Georgian and the Abkhaz side in the Sochi process and its instruments was only one element in a chain of diplomatic setbacks experienced by the Russians in the context of their relationship with Georgia and Abkhazia throughout 2004 and 2005. Other such elements were the victory of Sergey Bagapsh over the candidate favoured by Russia Raul Khajimba. Meanwhile, their open interference in the Abkhaz elections did not go unnoticed internationally. It lent credence to Georgian claims of neo-imperialist ambitions harboured by Moscow in its 'Near Abroad', a term used by the latter to describe the post-Soviet space which it laid claim to as an area of special Russian interest. Furthermore, Russia's weight in the peace process was increasingly diluted by an extremely

---

[695] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Frontiers, Security, and International Organization." 440-441.
[696] See e.g. Raul Khajimba's statements to this effect cited above, Raul Khajimba. Personal Interview. 2010.

active Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and the intensified involvement of the Group of Friends. The fact that the Russian role was watered down by other players stepping on the scene of the peace process may be considered a partial success for Georgian diplomacy, which had actively advocated a less prominent part for Russia.

The Georgian demand that Russia should lose its privileged position as primary mediator was rooted in the notion that Russia was not an impartial mediator, but was increasingly siding with the Abkhaz, thereby undermining Georgian sovereignty. Georgian diplomats as well as members of the Georgian government and parliament publically propagated this view at nearly all public international appearances. Given the vast support Georgia enjoyed as a leading reformer, a modernizer and aspirant of a democratic development in the region - an image it actively fostered in the international arena[697] - its accounts of Russian politics coupled with reporting one-sided facts from incidents such as the Abkhaz elections were often compelling. The Georgian-Russian conflict, which in part had intensified due to the countries' respective involvement in the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process and eventually became an integral part to it, thus also took place on the level of rhetoric. This rhetoric expressed a conflict over geopolitical belonging, which effected political decision-making and policy development on the ground. In the rhetorical battle, Georgia and especially its charismatic pro-western leader Mikhail Saakashvili often credited for his power of persuasion kept audiences on tenterhooks. As a result, the EU signalled an increased interest in Georgia's conflicts towards the end of 2004 by pledging four million Euros destined for measures undertaken in the UNDP's rehabilitation programme in Abkhazia, American interest in Georgia was also on the rise. Many of those persuaded of Georgia's democratic potential were found in the US administration. Almost by nature, various US experts and established politicians still maintained a less benevolent view of Russia and hence Georgian apprehensions regarding its northern neighbour were shared by a variety of political stakeholders in Washington.[698] United in a common vision of its enemies, such as terrorism or at times even Russia,

---

[697] See e.g. Mikheil Saakashvili. "Speech delivered by Mikheil Saakashvili at Johns Hopkins University." The Administration of the President of Georgia, 4 Feb. 2004. Web. 28 Feb 2011. <http://www.president.gov.ge/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2779&i=1>.; See Mikheil Saakashvili. "Remarks by President Mikheil Saakashvili at the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly."; "Georgia and the people of my nation are proud to be a part of the international community of democratic nations and we are eager and ready to increase our contributions to Europe's lasting security and prosperity. For in today`s increasingly interdependent world, our security is your security." Cit.n. Mikheil Saakashvili. "Remarks by the Georgian President Saakashvili at the Dinner Dedicated to the 42nd International (Security) Conference in Munich." The Administration of the President of Georgia, 3 Feb. 2006. Web. 2 May 2011. <http://www.president.gov.ge/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2687&i=1>.

[698] "So that Georgia will always be welcomed in Washington with the words told to me this morning at the US Senate by Senator Nelson - That Georgia is a Breath of Fresh Air for All Freedom Loving People...." cit.n. Mikheil Saakashvili. "Speech delivered by Mikheil Saakashvili at Johns Hopkins University."; Chairman of the US Foreign Relations Committee Richard Lugar supported Georgia by his presence at the inauguration of the Sakchere Military Base on 22.August 2006, Also see e.g. A.E. Stent, "The Munich Speech". *The Limits of Partnership, U.S.-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, 2014. Princeton University Press. 137. Print.. Also see M. Cooper. "McCain Calls for Halt of Violence in Georgia." *The Caucus, The Politics and Government*

Saakashvili was able to foster his relations with US think tanks and the administration to an extent that President George W. Bush paid an official visit to Tbilisi in May 2005. Never before had an acting US President affirmed his support for Georgia with such insistence.

The combination of these factors contributed to Russia temporarily seeking and maintaining a lower profile in the formal negotiations throughout much of 2005. In formal discussions, Russian diplomats were even acting supportive, letting initiatives through on the nod, thus not appearing as if standing in the way of progress. In bilateral meetings on the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Russians affirmed their support for a peaceful settlement of the conflict and followed the prescribed modalities for the withdrawal of their own bases from Georgia without causing a fuzz. Georgian diplomacy had underscored that soft power mattered, at least as a temporary rhetorical weapon. Officially, Russia thus remained in a standby position well aware that in an environment shaped by geopolitics, realpolitik would gain the upper hand again eventually. After all, Russian bilateral diplomacy with Abkhazia was not limited to gestures and rhetoric in the international arena, but was distributed throughout many channels, some below the radar of formal conduct.

A case in point which highlighted the limits of soft power and peaceful official rhetoric designed for an international audience was a large-scale military exercise in Abkhazia from 15 to 19 August, less than two weeks after the meeting on security guarantees and only days after the Sochi process had started to deviate from its designated path. The Abkhaz side justified its show of force by pointing once again to its doubt about Tbilisi's peaceful intentions, meanwhile highlighting a continued desire to seek closer alliance with Russia.[699] In the eyes of Tbilisi, the Abkhaz military exercise substantiated claims of outside interference by Russia. The Georgian government thus drew international attention to "what it called the militarization of [...] conflict-ridden regions of Georgia."[700] In a statement in front of the UN General Assembly on September 15, President Saakashvili openly protested the "forcible annexation of Abkhazia"[701] by Russia. The international conduct of Georgia with regards to its relations with Russia reflected the domestic irritation with Russian actions. Led by Nino Burjanadze, the Georgian Parliament adopted a resolution regarding the situation in the conflict regions and on-going peace operations. The document outlined a long list of acts by Russia regarded as counterproductive for the peace process. It suggested that Russia contributed to "inspiring and maintaining these conflicts" and eventually called for the withdrawal of CIS peacekeeping forces from Georgia.[702] At the

Blog of the Times – The New York Times 11 Aug. 2008: n. pag. Web. 20 September 2010.
<thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/08/11/mccain-calls-for-halt-of-violence-in-georgia/?_r=0>.
[699] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/657.*
[700] Ibid.
[701] Ibid.
[702] <u>RESOLUTION</u> OF THE PARLIAMENT OF GEORGIA the Parliament of Georgia regarding the current situation in the conflict regions on the territory of Georgia and on-going peace operations, 11 October 2005, Archive of the Parliament of Georgia/Translation from Georgian, cit.n. Diasamnidze, T., op.cit, 584.

same time, Georgia steadfastly followed its policy goal of replacing CIS forces with western counterparts and removing Russian troops from Georgian soil. Georgia's NATO aspirations manifested itself in November 2005, when Georgia's President attended a ceremony to commemorate the opening of a new military unit in western Georgia, laying the cornerstone for the first military base "equipped in accordance with NATO standards."[703] While Russia was asked to withdraw what was left of its once mighty military presence, Georgia advanced on its path towards NATO. Georgia's stance with regard to NATO was known to exacerbate the simmering conflict with Russia. Georgia was located in a sensitive environment[704], at a geopolitical fault line where interests of opposing geopolitical actors were bound to collide. NATO aspirations meant that the Georgian buffer between NATO and Russia would enter a final phase of losing its neutrality[705]. Combined with a consistent Georgian strategy of 'othering'[706] of Russia domestically and internationally, the invitation to NATO consequently strengthened the perception of western encirclement of Russia reminiscent of what Haushofer had termed "Anakondapolitik",[707] and aggravated a sense of Russian vulnerability in its southern neighbourhood[708]. Yet, despite the awareness of its own vulnerabilities, Russian foreign policy cannot be considered weak. Instead it had been undergoing transformation and under Putin Russia was increasingly acting self-confident.[709] The process of identity formation which also led to a more self-assured foreign policy especially in the years after 2006, went hand in hand, however, with making a bogyman out of western actors, especially the United States[710], thus accentuating an existing threat emanating from external players. The way Russia responded illustrated that it transformed its "geopolitics of vulnerability" into a "geopolitics of opportunity".[711] Emphasising its distinctiveness from western players thus served to highlight Russia's unique features, and its distinct location as neither having to belong to Europe and the western camp, nor being part of the East.

The demand by the Georgian Parliament to withdraw CIS peacekeepers as well as Georgia's move closer to NATO also heightened actual concerns in Abkhazia about Georgian intentions to use force to settle the conflicts. These developments underscored the meaning of a swift conclusion of a non-resumption of hostilities agreement. This substantiates the point that the Abkhaz were keenly aware that any renewed outbreak of violence would throw them back in their own development. The

---

[703] "Georgia Sets up 'NATO Standard' Military Base in Senaki." Civil Georgia, 19 November 2005. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=11173>.
[704] Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The Grand Chessboard.* 41.
[705] See e.g. Nicholas J. Spykman. "Geography and Foreign Policy, II." 227.
[706] See C.S. Browning. "The Region-Building Approach Revisited." 56.
[707] Karl Haushofer. *Der Kontinentalblock, Mitteleuropa, Eurasien, Japan.* 616.
[708] See Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins. "Russia, NATO and the EU in an Era of Enlargement." 70-71.
[709] S. Stewart. *Die Konstruktion des Feindbildes Westen im heutigen Russland.* Berlin: SWP Studie, 2008. 5. Print.; As one of the reasons for an invigorated foreign policy, the improvement of the Russian economy, largely based on the rising crude oil and natural gas prices, is often cited.
[710] S. Stewart. *Die Konstruktion des Feindbildes Westen im heutigen Russland.* 14.
[711] Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins. "Russia, NATO and the EU in an Era of Enlargement" 70ff.

uncertainty Saakashvili and some of the hawks in his team had created concerning Georgia's peaceful intentions can be viewed as one of the forces driving this development which continued to speedily take shape. On 7 December 2005 another meeting between Shamba and Haindrava took place in Sukhumi. The meeting carried special significance since both representatives reached an understanding on the draft documents and agreed to "seek higher approval of the draft texts with a possible follow-on initialling and signature of the negotiated package of documents. Subsequently, the Georgian side reiterated President Saakashvili's readiness for a Georgian-Abkhaz meeting at the highest level to discuss without preconditions economic, humanitarian, confidence-building and security issues and possibly to sign joint documents. The *de facto* Abkhaz President Sergei Bagapsh did not exclude the possibility of such a meeting after a document on the non-resumption of hostilities had been initialled by the sides."[712] The meeting illustrated that the non-resumption of hostilities agreement held the potential to develop into a broader process. During the talks in Sukhumi, the *de facto* Abkhaz President communicated that he would not exclude a meeting on the highest level if such an agreement was signed. Considering that the face to face meeting between Shevardnadze and Ardzinba in the 90s had been followed by an unprecedented, temporary improvement in bilateral contacts (see above), the importance of this statement and consequently the conclusion of the non-resumption of hostility document was enormous. Accordingly, the team of negotiators, namely Haindrava and Alasania, worked hand-in-hand to maintain the momentum of the Sukhumi meeting and convince sceptics on both sides to support this historic opportunity.

One such sceptic on the Abkhaz side was Stanislav Lakoba, the Secretary of the Security Council of Abkhazia. According to Alasania, he was the gatekeeper to obtaining Bagapsh's approval and signature of the package of draft documents.[713] Lakoba was reportedly not yet convinced that the agreement should contain various clauses referring to the return of refugees.[714] The intense negotiations that followed the meeting in Sukhumi went beyond the conventional negotiation formats. Instead, informal gatherings organized by civil society groups and meetings on the fringes of debates held in academic think-tanks were once again sought after to provide additional impetus for the negotiations. Those heading the negotiations understood the developments as a window of opportunity. As a result, they mobilized existing networks aiming for the largest impact by combining formal and informal negotiations. Alasania representing the President in such negotiations, who was outspokenly sceptical of second track formats, illustrated in one of his accounts how the high hopes invested in the conclusion of documents were shattered by Saakashvili's diverging views regarding their importance:

---

[712] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2006/19.* New York: United Nations, 13 January 2006. Print.
[713] Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010.
[714] Ibid.

"Towards the end of 2005 we held many meetings. There was a great expectation on the part of the Abkhaz side that under the new Georgian leadership something would change. The document we had worked on was ready by December 2005. I was in London at the time talking to Stanislav Lakoba on the sidelines of an informal meeting. We had already secured an agreement from Sergey Shamba. Needless to say, however, that also within the *de facto* Abkhaz government there were divergent views. Sergey Bagapsh had been informed and had already signalled his consent, but Stanislav Lakoba was still against the mentioning of IDP's. Our discussions were ongoing and we were close to reaching an agreement. To my surprise, the President called me and criticized the current state of the draft document, although I had kept him informed about the process throughout the entire negotiations. Not only him, but also Burjanadze and other members of the government."[715] On the verge of having reached a breakthrough, Saakashvili instructed Alasania to change the course of the ongoing negotiations. The main reason why the President opposed the text of the draft document and asked for its re-negotiation was a clause about the enforcement mechanisms of the agreement. The envisioned mechanisms were provided by the UN as well as the CIS peacekeepers. The President raised concerns that this would legitimize the CIS peacekeepers, an act contrary to the notion against CIS peacekeepers on Georgian soil expressed by the Georgian parliament in a resolution dated November 19. Involving the CIS also ran contrary to the Georgian government's efforts to internationalize the process, remove Russian troops from Georgia and limit Russian influence. On the verge of realizing important progress Saakashvili thus withdrew his support. This incident illustrated again how animosities between Russia and Georgia, which expressed themselves in an unwillingness to endorse the CIS peacekeepers, hampered progress. Internal Georgian dynamics increasingly contributed to making any headway less likely. As a consequence of Saakashvili's ad-hoc boycott of the ongoing negotiation package, an internal struggle also ensued between the President and his chief negotiator, which peaked in an open quarrel in front of the National Security Council. Alasania recalled that "I explained that I would leave the negotiations if we would not continue on the course of removing the fear aspect from the negotiations."[716] He thus expressed his disapproval for the lack of continuity between the government's hard-line approach and efforts of the sanctioned Georgian negotiators to build trust and increase confidence. Without support from the cabinet for his position, Alasania eventually had to return to the negotiation table to renegotiate the CIS clause. Despite frank discussions, both sides could only agree to disagree and not to denounce the package of draft documents in public, but wait for a more opportune moment to continue talks. The internal disagreements, however, had underlined the rigidity of the government's agenda and the determination to limit Russian influence in the peace process even at the cost of jeopardizing progress

---

[715] Ibid.
[716] Ibid.

in the Georgian-Abkhaz dimension. This also highlighted to all stakeholders that a different set of priorities had emerged within the Georgian administration and that an invisible divide had become an insurmountable barrier between the so-called "hawks" and "doves" in the Georgian administration.

The First Steps on the Path to War

The division in Georgian politics with regard to the peace process had surfaced. In order to forgo the impression that his own house stood divided, Saakashvili eventually felt compelled to remove disruptive elements and streamline Georgia's Abkhazia policy. Only days after the dispute with Saakashvili, Alasania was asked whether he would agree to be reassigned to the post of UN Ambassador in New York the following summer. Alasania agreed. Prior to his reassignment, he and Haindrava, who was in turn pushed out of office and resigned on 24 July 2006, made their last advances in support of the peace process. Among these advances were the revival of the Georgian-Abkhaz Joint Bilateral Commission headed by Zura Lakerbaia, which had moved out of the administration's sight after the Rose Revolution.[717] The most significant move, however, namely the resumption of the Coordinating Council and its three working groups and task forces, took place against the background of an increasingly complex sequence of security-related incidents. Killings in the Gali district, a new law on Abkhaz citizenship and the forceful conscription of ethnic Georgians into the Abkhaz military were just some points of contention voiced by the Georgian side. The Abkhaz in turn continued to criticize the militant rhetoric from within the Georgian administration and expressed their concerns about the ongoing construction of the military base in Senaki, near the Zugdidi restricted weapons zone.[718] The continuous portrayal of Georgia as an aggressor had become an integral part of the Abkhaz position. It served to reinforce the image of Georgia not desiring peace internationally and at the same time shame the dove fraction in Georgian politics and instil a sense of guilt among the proponents of a peaceful resolution for what were considered ruthless Georgian actions. While contributing to an inward focus of the doves and furthering the domestic struggle between Georgian policy makers, the Abkhaz gained time to advance their own portfolio against these accusations. They thus used Saakashvili's and part of his administration's focus on military capabilities and outspoken aggressive rhetoric as a means to muzzle the Georgian negotiators and make mischief. Meanwhile, officially the offer about a meeting on the highest level was still a point of discussion as well as the negotiations about the non-resumption of hostilities agreement, which continued despite the irritations caused by the recent decision in Tbilisi to demand the removal of CIS peacekeepers as enforcement mechanisms from the documents. A ministerial-level meeting regarding security on 24 January 2006 in Gali aimed to intensify cooperation in order to improve the situation on the ground, while the parties also

---

[717] Ibid.

[718] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2006/19.*

convened in Geneva during a meeting of the Group of Friends on 2 and 3 February, where the Group urged for tangible progress.[719] The members of the Group of Friends also called for a meeting between the respective Presidents to be realized. To address this demand, Irakli Alasania parted for Sukhumi shortly thereafter for direct talks with key officials and the *de facto* President Sergey Bagapsh. Alasania and Bagapsh agreed to reinstate the Coordinating Council,[720] which had been founded in 1997 but remained suspended since 2001. The first meeting was scheduled to take place on 15 May 2006 in Tbilisi. Despite their personal difficulties with the President, Alasania as well as Haindrava still harboured the hope that Saakashvili would reciprocate the Alasania-Bagapsh meeting in Sukhumi by inviting the Abkhaz chief negotiator Sergey Shamba to a private meeting, in order to set the course for the long awaited meeting on the highest level.

According to Irakli Alasania, the President had informally consented to meeting Shamba when the latter arrived to Tbilisi for the first session of the reinstated Coordinating Council on May 15[721]. As in previous meetings of the Coordinating Council, this meeting was chaired by the UN Special Representative, while the Georgian and Abkhaz sides participated and the Russian side was represented as facilitator. In addition, representatives of the OSCE, UNHCR, UNDP and the Group of Friends took part in the meeting. The meeting signified an unexpected breakthrough, although hopes for such a meeting had been harboured since the first gathering of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides had taken place in April 2005 on the sidelines of the Group of Friends Meeting in Geneva. The meeting in Tbilisi produced concrete outcomes, namely an agenda and a schedule for further meetings, the next of which was scheduled for mid-July.[722] Furthermore, the Abkhaz side presented its plan for a resolution to the conflict entitled "Key to the Future" to the Georgian side.[723] The hopes for a face-to-face meeting between Saakashvili and Shamba, however, remained unfulfilled. The President could not be reached by Alasania on May 15 and his office finally reported that he was out of town. Only later it became clear that the Georgian President was not only out of town, but that the reason for his absence was a visit to the military base in Senaki, from where he appealed on Georgian television to report on the progress of the Georgian armed forces on their way to modernization and NATO interoperability. This gesture around the day of another potential breakthrough of the peace negotiations was received with cynicism. For the Abkhaz side, it heightened the suspicions that the peaceful gatherings were just a disguise, while decision-makers in Tbilisi were preparing for military

---

[719] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2006/173.* New York: United Nations, 17 March 2006. Print.
[720] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2006/435.* New York: United Nations, 26 June 2006. Print.
[721] Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010.
[722] Ibid.
[723] "Abkhazia: Ways Forward." International Crisis Group, 18 Jan. 2007. Web. 1 June 2007.
<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/caucasus/georgia/179-abkhazia-ways-forward.aspx>.

actions. Loud criticism was raised regarding the "continued militarization of Georgia",[724] which lessened the recent success in the UN-led process, i.e. the Coordinating Council Meeting in Tbilisi. From the point of view of domestic politics, the particular reason for Saakashvili's absence was regarded as a direct move against Haindrava and especially Alasania, who had openly declared their disagreement with the more hard-line course of the President and the majority of his cabinet during internal political gatherings.[725]

Amidst rising domestic tensions, the Russian-Georgian relationship also continued to deteriorate. Georgia's open accusation of Russian "annexation" of its territory, calls by the Georgian Parliament for withdrawal of the CIS peacekeeping forces, as well as the establishment of a "Georgian governmental commission to assess the implications of a Georgian withdrawal from the CIS"[726] were met by a Russian-imposed import ban on agricultural products and shortly thereafter by a ban on Georgian wines and mineral water.[727] The official reasoning did not suggest any connection to the prior political decision making in Tbilisi. Rather, low hygienic standards were cited as the basis for the ban on Georgia's most important exports to Russia. A further survey of the existing documents suggested that both leaders were actively working behind the scenes to undermine each other. An internal US embassy cable published in the course of the 2010 WikiLeaks scandal dated 23 January 2006 elaborated the Georgian President's effort to this end. The cable reads like a document from the time of the Great Game and substantiates those geopolitical lines of thought which depict the region as a "geopolitical fault line"[728] where Russian and US interest collide. The point of contention in the new Great Game according to the Manichean map of geopolitics was the control over oil and gas in the broader Central Asian region. Following this line of argument, the irritations between Saakashvili and Putin were therefore caused by Saakashvili's efforts to facilitate US and western access to the raw material markets in Central Asia and offering his own country as a hub for transit from this region to western markets. Since the early nineties, Georgia had alerted its partners that Russia used its gas as a diplomatic tool to exert pressure on its neighbours which were largely dependent on Russian gas. This point of view remained largely ignored until the Russo-Ukrainian gas dispute reached its climax in

---

[724] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2006/435.*
[725] Despite the internal disagreements, the concerns regarding CIS peacekeepers were taken seriously by Alasania and Haindrava. At a Group of Friends Meeting from 23-25 May 2006 a possible enlargement of the existing structure in the form of adding a police component was discussed. The Abkhaz strongly opposed an added police component (E.g. Raul Khajimba. Personal Interview. 2010.).
[726] Ibid.
[727] See: Eric Livny, Karine Torosyan, and Mack Ott. "The Economic Impact of the Russian Trade Embargo on Georgia." International School of Economics at Tbilisi University, n.d. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.iset.ge/index.php?article_id=251&clang=0>.
[728] See e.g. Uwe Halbach. "Russland und Georgien: Konfrontationen im Umfeld Europas." *SWP-Aktuell* 32: 1. 2007. Print.

January 2006, when Russia cut off Ukraine from its gas supply[729]. The event caused an outcry in Europe and the US alike. It also conditioned a turn in the way the western world looked at Russia's domination of the gas supply to the region. The US embassy cable highlighted this new thinking and outlined Saakashvili's ongoing efforts to convince the western countries of the need to diversify their energy supplies away from Russia. Saakashvili reportedly explained his aims to spearhead a seven-country 'Energy Declaration', "criticising Russia's non-market behaviour and calling for a new "energy corridor"."[730] This once more highlighted Saakashvili's active role in uniting countries critical of Russian policy in the region.[731] During his meeting with US Agricultural Secretary Mike Johanns, Saakashvili explained the urgency to dissuade Turkmen President "Niyazov from committing Turkmenistan's gas supplies to Russia".[732] The cable also noted that "both sides agreed on the importance of diversifying European gas supplies away from Gazprom's monopoly control."[733] Saakashvili also stated his hope that the US would help "inducing the Europeans, to develop alternate supply sources and routes to get gas and oil to Europe".[734] Interestingly, efforts to diversify European energy supply did increase after the Ukrainian crisis. Whether this can in part be attributed to Saakashvili's active promotion of the idea, which also served Georgia's interest as a transit route, are beside the point. The more important notion to take away from the report issued by the US Embassy in Almaty is the fact that the attitude of Russia in the resolution of the Georgian conflicts may have depended on factors far beyond the immediacy of the Georgian-Russian relationship. It clearly highlights that Saakashvili used his diplomatic proximity to western leaders to stand in the way of the realization of Russian interests in the region. The zero-sum mentality he had criticised in his first appearance before the UN in 2004 seemed to have caught up with him. In the meantime, his position suggested that he envisioned the realization of Georgia's interests only at the expense of Russian interests, a situation which can certainly not be considered win-win. This account showed that the Russian-Georgian feud existed on many fronts. To Russia, Georgia had become a major spoiler of its interests. Russia in turn worked actively to undermine Georgian interests with regard to NATO, while constantly improving its own relations with Abkhazia, which had the signalling effect that Georgian disobedience would not go unpunished. Under those circumstances which characterized much of 2006, it comes as no surprise

---

[729] Russian-Ukrainian relations remained tense after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine which had followed the Georgian Rose Revolution. See e.g. Clifford G. Gaddy. "The Russia-Ukraine Natural Gas Battle." The Brookings Institution, 7 Jan. 2009. Web. 3 Sept. 2013.
<http://www.brookings.edu/research/interviews/2009/01/07-russia-natural-gas-gaddy>.; Rainer Lindner. "Das Ende von Orange: Die Ukraine in der Transformationskrise." SWP Studie, Aug. 2006. Web. 29 Aug. 2012. <http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/studien/2006_S20_ldr_ks.pdf>.

[730] US Embassy. *Cable, 06Almaty211, Secretary Johanns' January 11, 2006 Meeting With Georgian President Saakashvili.*

[731] Among these actions must be counted the close cooperation with Orange Ukraine, the interaction with the new Group of Friends of Georgia critical of Russia and regional organisations like GUAM.

[732] Ibid.

[733] Ibid.

[734] Ibid.

that a meeting of the Russian and Georgian leader in St. Petersburg in June, was characterized as a "PR-only-meeting" even before it became clear that the atmosphere between the two Presidents would remain tense.[735]

The topics subject to discussion at the Petersburg meeting were Georgian-Russian trade relations, most importantly the recent ban on Georgian agricultural products as well as Russian support for Georgia's recent 'Road Map' for Peace, which Alasania had presented at a parliamentary session on June 9 in Tbilisi. The 'Road Map' was in part regarded as the Georgian answer to the Abkhaz "Key to the Future" document delivered to Georgia in May. Upon presenting the 'Road Map' Alasania had acknowledged that the Abkhaz side "has already voiced discontent towards these principles"[736] and noted in turn that the Abkhaz "Key to the Futue" cannot be acceptable to the Georgian side, mainly because "The document is based on the principle that Abkhazia should be an independent and sovereign state."[737] Despite the mutual denunciation of the peace plans, it was duly noted in Georgia that the Abkhaz plan did not focus heavily on a Russian component, but instead voiced a clear desire for increased links to European structures. The presentation of both plans also meant that there was a new basis for discussion, which had been absent in the years prior to that. It underlined the generally positive dynamic on the surface of the dialogue process, which was aimed to be enhanced through confidence building measures until both sides were ready to tackle political issues.[738]

The overall positive trend in the peace process was abruptly halted by events at the end of July 2006. A local militia group in the Georgian controlled upper-Kodori gorge (valley) by the name of Monadir (Hunters), headed by Emzar Kvitsiani, a former representative of Eduard Shevardnadze in the gorge[739], had allegedly re-armed in defiance of the central government in Tbilisi. The crisis which started to heat up on July 22 developed into all out fighting after Kvitsiani ignored an ultimatum set by Tbilisi to lay down his arms. The Georgian government dispatched what it called a law enforcement operation to the gorge and fighting ensued on July 25. The operation was only first confirmed by Minister of Education Kakha Lomaia, who explained that "a police operation is underway with the aim to restore constitutional order".[740] The valley remained sealed off for journalists and the lack of information was one aspect which raised suspicion in Abkhazia. This suspicion was expressed among others by Artur A.

---

[735] Molly Corso. "Saakashvili Travels to St. Petersburg for PR Meeting with Putin." Eurasianet, 12 June 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav061306.shtml>.

[736] "Tbilisi Unveils Principles for Abkhazia Peace Plan." Civil Georgia, 9 June 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/_print.php?id=12789>.

[737] Ibid.

[738] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2006/435.* ; See also: "Tbilisi Unveils Principles for Abkhazia Peace Plan." Civil Georgia.

[739] "News in Brief." The Moscow Times, 10 June 2003. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/news-in-brief/237916.html>.

[740] "Conflicting Reports Prevail over Ongoing Kodori Operation." Civil Georgia, 26 July 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=13166>.

Mikvabiya, an adviser to Sergei Bagapsh. He commented that "There is the impression that under the guise of an operation against a group of criminals, they [referring to the Georgian government] are trying to bring in troops and start a large-scale operation there".[741] Suspicions that Georgia was putting into jeopardy existing agreements with Abkhazia, including the cease-fire agreements, by introducing armed forces to the gorge in order to extend the military operation to Abkhaz *de facto* territory after successful conclusion of the ongoing operation in the upper-gorge were also fuelled by reports that Georgian Defense Minister Okruashvili was allegedly present in the gorge.[742] Furthermore, the Chairman of the Defence and Security Committee of the Georgian Parliament Givi Targamadze, a hard-liner, "stated publicly that the operation would establish control over an "extremely important strategic base ... a place from which one can reach Sukhumi by air in just five minutes"."[743] Overall, the incidents in Kodori were overshadowed by conflicting reports and hard-line rhetoric from within parts of the Georgian administration. Statements from the Russian sides added to the uncertainties. Russian deputy Prime Minister Sergey B. Ivanov for example raised Russian concerns about a serious deterioration in Kodori.[744] Meanwhile the Georgian foreign minister Gela Bezhuashvili responded by reminding critics that the UN monitors had not been able to patrol the gorge for several years due to a deteriorating security situation. It followed from his line of reasoning that Georgia was conducting a law enforcement operation in order to make the gorge safe for UN patrols,[745] and was hence rendering a service to the international community, according to this logic. From the Georgian point of view, renewed patrols of UNOMIG would erase the necessity for the presence of CIS peacekeepers in the gorge. The incident must thus also be seen in the context of reducing the presence of CIS troops, dominated by Russian forces, on Georgian soil.

Overall, the Kodori events were regarded by Abkhaz officials as an act of aggression and a final proof that Saakashvili and his team –with a few exceptions- was not interested in a peaceful settlement.[746] Saakashvili himself added to the prevailing uncertainties by announcing the re-location of the Abkhaz government-in-exile to the upper-Kodori gorge after the active fighting had ceased. He explained that the decision was "a first important step towards extending Georgia's jurisdiction in the region".[747] While certainly ill-received in Abkhazia, the move to relocate the government-in-exile to Kodori must

[741] C.J. Chivers. "Georgian Forces Persist in Attacks on Militia." *The New York Times* 27 July 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.nytimes.com/2006/07/27/world/asia/27georgia.html?scp=6&sq=Kodori&st=nyt>.

[742] Nino Khutsidze. "Military Expert on Kodori Operation." Civil Georgia, 26 July 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=13170>.

[743] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2006/771.* New York: United Nations, 28 September 2006. Print.

[744] C.J. Chivers. "Georgian Forces Persist in Attacks on Militia."

[745] "Foreign Minister Comments on Abkhazia, Russia's Role." Civil Georgia, 4 August 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=13250>.

[746] Stanislav Lakoba. Personal Interview. 2010., Sergey Shamba. Personal Interview. 2010., Raul Khajimba. Personal Interview. 2010.

[747] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2006/771.*

be assessed in the context of the Georgian government's policy to create parallel administrative structures within the secessionist entities. The creation of parallel administrative structures in Abkhazia and later that year in South Ossetia, too, was part of the self-declared "soft power" strategy of the Georgian government. It entailed setting up Georgian-controlled enclaves inside the secessionist regions and subsequently channelling financial and infrastructure support to these areas. The modernization of and increased prosperity in the enclaves was intended to highlight Georgia's renewed economic strength and ability to provide for its citizens. The strategy was meant to create models which had the purpose to cause a change of heart, i.e. persuade the population in the other parts of the secessionist regions to look more favourable onto closer relations with the central administration.[748] The Georgian think-tank Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development also pointed out that the efforts by the central government were meant to illustrate that the conflicts are not clearly divided along ethnic lines.[749] The design of the campaign to create parallel structures can also be regarded as a superficial understanding of a Euopean model of conflict resolution. While the EU self-concept and the implication for conflict resolution are explained further below, the argument above alludes to its success which is based in part on the power of persuasion of its own model. It convinces others to change in accordance with this model, which is regarded to be more attractive not least by way of its prosperity and peace. The attempt of President Saakashvili to create prosperous enclaves which function as a model and persuade the opponents of a better life in a united Georgia is thus an abstraction of the EU idea and illustrated a misconstrued understanding of being able to achieve immediate payoffs through short-term policy initiatives.

Undermining the *de facto* authorities also entailed risks, which negatively affected the dialogue process. As it turned out later in the case of South Ossetia for example, the lack of communication between the alternate and the *de facto* authorities, unwilling to engage with their alternate counterparts, caused severe practical problems on the ground. Infrastructure which criss-crossed both parts of the territory, such as gas or water pipelines, were temporarily immobilized, which suggests that the strategy was poorly thought through. In the case of Abkhazia, the violent incidents in the upper-Kodori gorge followed by the Georgian attempt to set up parallel structures immediately created a backlash. The Abkhaz side declared its withdrawal from the peace process, including all non-technical issues. The Georgian central government meanwhile encouraged the interaction of international organizations and diplomats with the Kodori-installed administrative structures. Later on, Georgia justified its continued military presence in Kodori by referring to the developments in Kosovo.

---

[748] "Sanakoev Appointed as Head of S. Ossetian Government." Civil Georgia, 10 May 2007. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=15089>.
[749] D. Darchiashvili. "Policy Brief # 2, The President's New Initiative for South Ossetia: What will it bring about for Georgia in the Future." Caucasus Institute for Peace Democracy and Development, 19 Apr. 2007. Web. 1 Sept. 2007. <http://www.cipdd.org/files/44_146_593118_CIPDDpolicybrief2Eng.pdf>.

The Georgian position was outlined in a report by the UN Secretary General on Abkhazia as follows: "while this presence within the boundaries of Abkhazia, Georgia, may be unacceptable to the Abkhaz side, it is necessary in order to forestall any recognition of Abkhazia, particularly in the context of ongoing status talks on Kosovo."[750] The evolving statements about the reasons for conducting the operation in Kodori suggested that the outcome of the law enforcement operation, namely extending the control of the central government, at least encouraged the Georgian authorities to hold this newly gained strategic location and contemplate about its further use in the context of extending the aim to reunite the Georgian state, if necessary by forceful means.

As outlined above, the violent clashes in the Kodori gorge had a devastating effect on the peace process. While this process was following a positive trend after the election of President Bagapsh, which reached its peak in the resumption of the Coordinating Council and its working groups in May, this positive dynamic was abruptly halted by the Kodori events. The damage inflicted on the peace process, partly by Georgian actions and partly by an unwillingness of the Abkhaz administration to continue negotiations due to their interpretation of the Kodori incidents, lasted until the Georgian-Russian war in August 2008. The dialogue forums largely remained suspended and informal contacts even down to the level of people-to-people contacts were increasingly restricted. The Georgian-Abkhaz peace process had finally lost its momentum and any hopes for even marginal successes had grown dim. The hawks in Georgian politics had gained the upper hand and demonstrated that 'bullets speak louder than words'. The process that continued did so in a more or less unilateral fashion, overshadowed by political developments such as Kosovo, NATO enlargement and the Georgian-Russian relationship, which were interpreted in a geopolitical fashion, until the outbreak of the all-out war in 2008.

---

[750] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2007/15.* New York: United Nations, 11 January 2007. Print.

VI.

The Final Phase leading up to the collapse of the Peace Process

Introduction

Without any higher instance able to meaningfully intervene to halt the escalation of the conflict or even create an environment more conducive for continued talks or compromise, the atmosphere increasingly deteriorated. Georgia released its longstanding State Minister of Conflicts Goga Haindrava of his responsibilities and sent Irakli Alasania, another key figure, to serve as Ambassador to the United Nations in New York, far from the scenes of the ongoing conflict. Removing two critical voices from their position and thus depriving them of influencing policy in Tbilisi was part of an effort by the Georgian government to streamline the Abkhazia policy and control the conflict portfolio more tightly without detractors in the own camp. It was also a sign that the peace process became more marginal as other battlefields moved to the forefront. In this regard, during this final phase of the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process both Georgians and Abkhaz retracted their efforts and mainly pushed their own portfolios, while occasionally announcing expectations of the other side rather than communicating with each other.

The other battlefields that moved to the foreground and came to dominate the mediation environment were rooted in intensifying conflicts on various fronts, including domestic turmoil in Georgia but more so the ongoing struggle between Georgia and Russia. They expressed themselves as geopolitical issues of belonging, influence and access, ranging from NATO membership, to trade issues and the recognition of Kosovo. Against this background, conflict rather than cooperation prevailed as the dominant modus vivendi and suffocated any progress towards peace. Instead the situation increasingly worsened especially after the Bucharest NATO summit when the alliance did not exclude Georgian NATO membership at a future date and the recognition of Kosovo, which Russia regarded as an entitlement to officially recognize Abkhaz sovereignty in turn.

As the once frozen conflict heated up, hectic last minute efforts to avoid the outbreak of violent conflict by the EU and Germany as the Chair of the UN Group of Friends of Georgia were just a drop in the bucket. Too little, came too late, namely at a point when no side was willing to turn around on the path towards war. When the guns of August 2008 which turned into a five-day Russo-Georgian war began to unsettle the lives of citizens in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Georgia, there remained no doubt that the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process had finally collapsed.

Nearing the end of a long and winding road

The Kodori event went hand in hand with the replacement of key players. Among the new faces was Jean Arnault who took over the office of UN Special Representative from Heidi Tagliavini in July 2007. While this can be regarded as a regular shift, the changes in the composition of the Georgian negotiators were more severe. Goga Haindrava was replaced shortly before the Kodori events by Merab Antadze, who had previously held the post of deputy foreign minister. Antadze only stayed in office for one year. In July 2007 he left the post to David Bakradze, a member of Parliament from the majority United National Movement, who had chaired the Parliamentary Committee on Euro-Atlantic integration. Bakradze's turn in office was even shorter. He left office in January 2008 and was succeeded by Temuri Iakobashvili, who held this post until November 2010. This list of Ministers is a vivid illustration of the high degree of fluctuation the office of State Minister for Conflicts was subject to in the years after 2006. The high degree of fluctuation and the lack of continuity regarding the office of State Minister made progress difficult to achieve. In addition, it illustrated that the President desired tighter control over the portfolio and the staff overseeing the conflict issue. The removal of Haindrava was a signal that the Abkhaz portfolio was to be streamlined according to the overarching goals of Georgian policy. Non-conformist views and actions were decreasingly tolerated as politics became increasingly polarized. In this context, Irakli Alasania was sent to New York to serve as Ambassor of Georgia to the United Nations. He kept his position as Special Presidential Envoy for Abkhazia, but the increased distance from the Caucasus also decreased his level of direct involvement. His work at the UN, however, remained connected to the conflict in that it was part of his portfolio to make Georgia's view of the state of affairs and the way forward known to the diplomats present at the UN.[751]

The shift in human resources meant that the Abkhaz side had lost its negotiation partners on the Georgian side, while both were also dealing with a new UN Special Representative. This situation added to the general climate of uncertainty, mistrust and the deterioration of the situation on the ground in the subsequent months. A series of arrests was followed by the temporary closure of the border crossing at the Inguri bridge, which developed into an occasional closure of all crossing points as the situation remained tense over a number of months. These travel restrictions seriously limited the freedom of movement of ordinary citizens from the area and interrupted every day life for citizens from both sides. They also illustrated how far the Abkhaz had come in their efforts to centralize the use of force and exercise control over their territory.[752] In December the tensions reached a peak when a number of killings were reported from the Abkhaz side, while Georgian authorities registered a

---

[751] Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010.
[752] It is noteworthy that the border crossings are in part controlled by Russian speaking troops, not an innate Abkhaz contingent at least this was deduced from the border crossing experience of the author in 2010/2011.

number of explosions. A flare up of tensions took place shortly before the New Year, followed by Abkhaz allegations that Georgia had been planning a military strike.[753]

Although the outbreak of violence in the Gali district in December 2006 quieted down in early January 2007, low level harassment continued. In this environment, initiatives taken in the context of the peace process remained marginal. During a Group of Friends meeting in mid-February in Geneva the Abkhaz side issued a statement that it would be unwilling to meet its counterparts before the Georgian authorities removed all of its forces and the Abkhaz government-in-exile from the upper-Kodori valley.[754] The uncompromising attitude of both sides contributed to the peace process experience a lingering deadlock. The Georgian side for its part continued to drive the controversy over the change in format of the peacekeeping forces, while ruling out leaving Kodori, meanwhile having come under criticism for a recorded "22 overflights above the security zone".[755] Alasania, who served as Ambassador of Georgia to the UN at the time, noted that the airing of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) over the conflict zone, earned Georgia a lot of criticism at the UN and undermined his own efforts to build international coalitions for Georgia's positions in the General Assembly.[756] With little progress to be recorded the only positive developments elaborated in the consecutive Reports of the UN Secretary General were news about the ongoing rehabilitation activities funded by the European Commission.

Aside from the rehabilitation activities, Georgia followed a path of trying to advance the peace process unilaterally, while the Abkhaz continued to refuse to consider Georgian proposals. In May, the Georgian government presented a document outlining its approach to the resolution of its conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Among other things, it advocated direct dialogue as well as a "revision of the legal framework for conflict resolution".[757] This call for the revision of the entire framework and the expressed need for impartial mediators was clearly not aimed at coming to terms with the Abkhaz side, which opposed any modification of the established format. It was a metaphor of discontent with the entire process and a way of unilaterally moving forward in the hope of being able to build sufficient support to revamp the process in its entirety by presenting facts undermining the legitimacy of Russian mediation and increasing international pressures on Russia. In light of the serious deteriorations, the Tbilisi-based Group of Friends, i.e. the Ambassadors of the countries making up the Group of Friends serving in Tbilisi, met with Georgian and Abkhaz representatives throughout June 2007 in order to help to deescalate rising tensions and to convince the two sides to participate in a joint meeting. In late

---

[753] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2007/15.*
[754] See also: United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2007/439.* New York: United Nations, 18 July 2007. Print.
[755] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2007/182.* New York: United Nations, 3 April 2007. Print.
[756] Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010.
[757] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2007/439.*

June, the parties finally agreed to a meeting hosted in Bonn by the coordinator of the Group of Friends, Germany. The meeting held from 27 until 28 of June brought the sides minimally closer to each other. They agreed on a Joint Fact Finding Mission, the Resumption of the Quadripartide Meetings as well as to improve maritime communications,[758] which had long been an issue exacerbating tensions. A meeting on the highest political level was mentioned, but its realization was conditioned by demands for a guarantee that such a meeting would produce concrete results such as the signature of a non-resumption of hostilities agreement. The Abkhaz side repeated its concerns over Georgia's military presence in the Kodori gorge and its general militaristic demeanour.[759] Although not producing any concrete results but rather remaining on the level of rhetoric, the meeting in Bonn nevertheless paved the way for a second meeting of the Steering Committee for the EU-funded rehabilitation program on July 4 in Zugdidi. While these consecutive meetings pointed to at least a limited willingness to take up talks again, a subsequent meeting of senior representatives of the Group of Friends on 20 September in Berlin already took place in front of the background of a series of security related incidents on the ground. The incident with the most wide-ranging consequences was not directly related to Abkhazia, but rather South Ossetia. This incident discussed below as well as the international reaction to it nevertheless shed light on the way the peace process became increasingly a side issue as other battlefields moved to the forefront of the ongoing negotiations.

On August 6 an air-to-surface missile allegedly stemming from a Russian plane struck down but failed to detonate near a Georgian radar station in close proximity of South Ossetia. Two groups of independent experts, commissioned by the EU and US respectively, confirmed the Georgian suspicion that the aircraft as well as the explosive device had approached Georgia from within the Russian Federation. Another group comprised of only Russian experts refuted the findings, eventually claiming no Russian involvement. Meanwhile, the official Russian version put forth purported that Georgia had bombed itself, in order to blame Russia. In light of the diplomatic sensitivities, multilateral organisations like the OSCE as well as the EU did not conclusively condemn the missile incident in the end. Cornell, Starr and Smith, all longstanding experts on the region, found the international reaction to the incident seriously inadequate and warned that Russia's increasingly aggressive behaviour was systematically undermining Georgia's western orientation. They tried to alarm the international community about the consequences for Euro-Atlantic security if such incidents would not receive an adequate response.[760] Their report illustrated that the augmented level of tension between Georgia and Russia did not pass unnoticed, but that the international community was not able to come up with

---

[758] Maritime incidents had time and again jeopardized the peace process and caused serious interruptions, due to raised level of tensions

[759] Ibid.

[760] Svante E. Cornell, David J. Smith, and F. Starr. *The August 2007 Bombing Incident in Georgia: Implications for the Euro-Atlantic Region.* Silk Road Paper, 2007. Print.

an adequate response. It thus underlined how the Russian-Georgian aspect to the ongoing conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia increasingly incapacitated other countries to intervene.

In light of these missing interventions, the Abkhaz conducted military exercises from 20-24th of August. These military exercises were regarded as Russian provocations, especially by the Georgian side, given that the Abkhaz had no access to trade, including markets for arms, except via the Russian Federation. The situation reached a critical dimension when on September 20, two former Russian officers were killed and seven Abkhaz apprehended during clashes in Abkhazia.[761] Both sides blamed the other for causing the violence. Overall, the UN Secretary General concluded in an assessment in his October Report that "while a certain degree of progress was made in the dialogue on technical and humanitarian issues, the gap between the two sides on political issues remained."[762] While the rise in tensions between Georgia and Abkhazia continued to be mentioned, the Georgian-Russian dimension of the conflict and its impact on the peace process largely remained understated. To understand why the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process ended abruptly with the Russo-Georgian war in 2008, however, it is important to discuss the deterioration of Georgian-Russian relations starting from 2006. The severe Russo-Georgian tensions[763] began to dominate the process and in a way displaced the peace process or at least politicized it to an extent that it became increasingly hard for Georgia's allies to continue their support without simultaneously being regarded as positioning themselves very uncomfortably against Russia.

The peace process became increasingly centred on the tension in Georgian-Russian relations, which reached a tipping point in 2006. Russia had issued a ban on Georgian wine and mineral water in May further contributing to the frosty atmosphere between the two countries. President Saakashvili continued to travel extensively westward to gather support for Georgia's NATO aspirations, especially with the new eastern members of the European Union. On such occasions Saakashvili vividly described his notion of the main obstacle to the resolution of Georgia's problems – a Russian Federation having become an active part to Georgia's secessionist conflicts in order to extend its influence throughout the Caucasus in the pursuit of "narrow special interests".[764] On September 22, the Georgian President reiterated this point in front of the UN General Assembly. He issued a warning to the world that if the problems of Georgia would not be addressed soon, the entire region would plunge into "darkness and

[761] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2007/588.* New York: United Nations, 3 October 2007. Print.
[762] Ibid.
[763] Svante E. Cornell, David J. Smith, and F. Starr. *The August 2007 Bombing Incident in Georgia.* 7., already regarded the missile incident in Tsitelubani on August 6 as nothing less than an „act of war"against Georgia
[764] Mikheil Saakashvili. "Statement by his Excellency Mr. Mikheil Saakashvili President of Georgia at the 61st Session of the United Nations General Assembly." United Nations General Assembly, 22 Sept. 2006. Web. 8 June 2014. <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/61/pdfs/georgia-e.pdf>.

conflict".[765] The new sense of urgency in Saakashvili's remarks points to another interrelated phenomenon, namely Kosovo. Saakashvili's statements throughout 2006 were already driven by the ongoing discussions about the future status of Kosovo. During the G8 summit in St. Petersburg, Russian President Putin had issued a public warning in front of journalists on June 1 that "there are no arguments in favour of a position that the Kosovo case differs from the situations in South Ossetia, Abkhazia or Transdnestria".[766] The Russian position that Kosovo would set a precedent was effectively re-emphasized by Putin and added fuel to the international discussion about the future status of Kosovo. According to Robert Parsons, an editor for news channel French 24, the Georgian President felt as if he was running out of time,[767] which explains his sense of urgency. In front of the UN, Saakashvili reiterated that even the hint of Kosovo as a "precedent for Abkhazia and South Ossetia is […] both inappropriate and reckless."[768] Consequently, he urged for acceptance of an image of Russia, which "perpetuate[s] rather than resolve[s] the conflict".[769] To this end, Saakashvili proposed a new course for the peace process consisting of direct talks, a demilitarization of Abkhazia, and increased international involvement, for example through the deployment of an international police force in Abkhazia. Cutting out Russia as intermediary from the process and making sure Russian arms were removed from Abkhazia, would have left Abkhazia with a security void Georgia was keen on filling in one way or another. Furthermore, open criticism of Russia and the demands for re-shuffling the peace process underlined the Georgian attempt to limit Russian influence in the conflict resolution process and Georgian affairs more generally.

Only days after Saakashvili's appeal in front of the UN on September 22, a spy scandal further ruptured the relationship between Russia and its southern neighbour. Four Russian officers were detained in Georgia on the charges of espionage. What was unusual about this episode was less the fact that countries occasional encounter cases of espionage, or accuse each other thereof, but more that the dispute was not resolved quietly behind the scenes.[770] Instead, the Georgian leadership went public, scathing about Russia. Within days Russia recalled its Ambassador from Georgia as well as a number of its embassy staff. Reverting to this means of diplomatic protest underlined the severity of the affront. Yet, Saakashvili did not back down. Parsons was among those who explained that Saakashvili intended to show to the world the "real face" of Russia to substantiate his claim for a change of the

---

[765] "Saakashvili Unveils 'Fresh Roadmap' in UN Speech." Civil Georgia, 22 September 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=13621>.

[766] "Saakashvili Upbeat after Talks with Putin." Civil Georgia, 10 June 2007. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=15251>.

[767] Robert Parsons. "Russia and Georgia: A Lover's Revenge." Open Democracy, 5 Oct. 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-caucasus/georgia_russia_3972.jsp>.

[768] Mikheil Saakashvili. "Statement by his Excellency Mr. Mikheil Saakashvili President of Georgia at the 61st Session of the United Nations General Assembly."

[769] Ibid.

[770] Robert Parsons. "Russia and Georgia."

peacekeeping format and to rally support for his Kosovo-related concerns.[771] The fact that the event was staged, in the sense that it was delivered in the public sphere in front of the media, while such incidents are usually handled behind the scenes of international diplomacy, gives some legitimacy to those who prompt that there was some sort of calculation associated with it. Saakashvili chose the public path in order to hamstring Russian provocations, given his believe in some form of western backing, if push would have come to shove. In line with this belief, the draft resolution Russia put forth to the UN Security Council after the incident had become public, sharply condemning Georgian actions, was rejected by the United States only a few days later, so that Russia was forced to withdraw it. Consequently Russia abstained from taking up the issue at the organization again and instead reverted to taking more direct retaliatory actions against Georgia.

Despite the fact that the immediate problems of the four officers being held by Georgia on the charges of espionage were eventually resolved by the OSCE, which stepped in to hand over the detainees, communication, postal- and transport links between Georgia and Russia were suspended after the incident. Furthermore, Putin welcomed the Abkhaz leader Bagapsh as well as South Ossetian leader Kokoity as "Presidents" during a meeting entitled "Economic Development of Southern Russia" in Sochi on September 29.[772] Again the Russian-Georgian tensions were projected onto the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The Georgian defiance of Russia had led into a strong man competition between the two in which it was yet to see who would have more pull. On the international stage, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov proclaimed in front of the Council of Europe that Georgia's action had violated important international norms.[773] Putin struck a harsher tone when he warned Georgia not to provoke Russia and later compared Saakashvili to Lavrenti Beria.[774] The comparison to a mass murderer of Georgian origin also carried an aspect relevant to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, since Beria and Stalin were regarded as the key (Georgian) figures responsible for instigating a conflict between the two peoples at an earlier stage of Georgian-Abkhaz tensions. Thus, Putin's statement was meant to provoke an emotional response and heat up the atmosphere even more. As the rhetoric between Georgia and Russia became progressively irritated, the Russian government also started to target the Georgian diaspora living in Moscow. From early October 2007 onwards, numerous Georgian businesses were raided and closed down in Russia. These raids came in addition to crack downs against Georgians living in Russia, followed by numerous deportations of alleged illegal aliens.[775] A simultaneous anti-Georgian campaign in the Russian press expressed itself in the form of violent excesses against Georgians on the

[771] Ibid.
[772] "Kokoity, Bagapsh among Participants of Roundtable Discussion with Putin." Civil Georgia, 29 September 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=13712>.
[773] Robert Parsons. "Russia and Georgia."
[774] "Putin says Georgia acts like Stalin's Henchman." *Reuters* 2 Oct. 2006: n. pag. Print.
[775] T. Parfit. "Kremlin Targets Georgians after Spy Row." *The Guardian* 6 Oct. 2006: n. pag. Print.

streets and xenophobic debates beyond the Russian capital targeted against Caucasians.[776] This stood symbolically for the fact that within Russia, the Russian-Georgian conflict no longer remained an issue of high politics but had reached the level of ordinary citizens. Meanwhile, after a meeting between President Putin and leading legislators in the Kreml, a resolution was passed by the State Duma condemning Georgia's "anti-Russian and anti-democratic" demeanour.[777] The prolonged tense atmosphere between the two countries and the aggressive rhetoric occasionally raised suspicions about an imminent escalation into armed conflict. While these suspicions remained unconfirmed for the time being, the eyes were set on Kosovo's independence as well as Georgia's NATO aspirations, conflict-prone geopolitical debates with a potential to shape future developments in Georgian-Russian relations and consequently also in the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process.[778]

2006 was an important year regarding Georgia's expressed aim to join NATO, which it had continuously promoted since the Rose Revolution.[779] Even prior to the Rose Revolution, Georgia had tried to take a multi-vector approach and diversify its security architecture away from sole dependence on Russia. On its path to intensifying its ties with NATO, regional initiatives had played an important role. One example was the regional group GUUAM[780], which had been founded in 1996 with the explicit goal of restricting Russian geopolitical influence in the region and organizing 'joint resistance' through new geopolitical ties.[781] Its stated aim was regional security cooperation[782] and to conduct joint exercises in preparation for membership in western organizations. As a related event, Georgia began its participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace Program (PfP), thus making the first steps towards joining NATO itself. The GUUAM, as well as Georgia's move towards NATO through the framework of PfP, were public statements about the waning Russian geopolitical influence in the Caucasus. Different from reactions in the years leading up to 2008, however, in the late 90s the expected diplomatic outcry from the Russian side did not occur. Some political analysts argue that at this point, Russia remained silent, so as not to admit its geopolitical weakness through protest.[783] Others, such as Brzezinski proposed that Russia's only option to be accepted into and respected by the international community would be through expressing a friendly attitude toward the West, a line of reasoning which also offered

---

[776] Uwe Halbach. "Russland und Georgien." op.cit.
[777] J. Ingram. "Putin warns Georgia: Don't provoke Russia any further." *The Seattle Times* 5 Oct. 2006: n. pag. Print.
[778] For a brief overview of the Kosovo debate visit: "Kosovo: International Law and Recognition." Chatham House, 22 Apr. 2008. Web. 1 June 2014.
<http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/International%20Law/il220408.pdf>.; Also see: United Nations. *Security Council Report, Extraordinary Meeting of the Security Council after the Declaration of Independence of Kosovo, S/ PV.5839.* New York: United Nations. Print.
[779] Initiatives for closer ties with NATO date back to the early years of Shevardnadze's presidency.
[780] Named after its members Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova
[781] M. Ashot. *Sicherheitspolitik im Kaukasus (Security Policy in the Caucasus).* Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2002. Print. Obtained from the Bundesministerium der Verteidigung in 2002.
[782] Among other things to ensure the security of oil pipelines
[783] M. Ashot. *Sicherheitspolitik im Kaukasus.*

an explanation for the moderate response to Georgia's moves in the nineties. In 2000, Brzezinski even claimed to have detected a new trend in Russia toward the West, which according to his view was nurtured "beneath the existing political surface."[784] He hypothesized that this trend would provide the critical mass support needed for a break with the past. This revolution from below, coupled with the incentives provided by NATO enlargement, the EU and US foreign aid were said to "create a geostrategic setting in which Russian elite itself comes to realize that Russia's only option is its best option: to become genuinely 'engaged' to the West."[785] This brief excursion to the turn of the millennium illustrates that for Georgia convergence with NATO had been an ongoing process over the course of many years. It also shows that key figures in the American elite believed NATO expansion was one of the ingredients to entice Russia to move closer to the West, even as a last resort. While Russia had contained its criticism to a certain extend in earlier periods, partly due to internal weakness, it is also important to note that during the years 2006 and thereafter, Georgia's NATO aspirations came increasingly close to reaching a tipping point. Accordingly, Russian apprehension and a sense of urgency to intervene grew in the Russian camp and replaced the earlier policy of restraint.[786]

In September 2006 Georgia "was granted an Intensified Dialogue on membership aspirations".[787] This new dynamic on its path of aspirations for membership formed part of the background to the above mentioned Russo-Georgian tensions. It also prompted Russia to urge Georgia for neutrality in February 2007 through its Ambassador Vyacheslav Kovalenko. Kovalenko sounded a note of caution to the effect that neutrality would be a precondition for improving the bilateral relationship.[788] In his prompt response, Saakashvili rejected this not so subtle offer and instead once again left no doubt that Georgia would not stray from its path of Euro-Atlantic integration.[789] Instead of balancing Georgian policy, Saakashvili took a firm stand. Kovalenko's message underlined that NATO integration of Georgia was a thorn in the eye of Russia and that Russia desired for Georgia to remain an impartial buffer territory. For obvious reasons, among them the nature of the Alliance, which had been founded with the explicit purpose of holding Russia in check and was often viewed by Russians as carrying out a policy of

---

[784]Zbigniew Brzezinski. "Living with Russia." *National Interest Fall 2000*:6. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://nationalinterest.org/article/living-with-russia-919>.; Others such as Stephen Sestanovich refuted the claim of a growing Russian awareness of belonging to the west; see: Stephen Sestanovich. "Where does Russia Belong?" The National Interest, US Department of State, Center for Defense Information, 1 Dec. 2000. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://nationalinterest.org/article/where-does-russia-belong-629>.

[785] Ibid., 9.

[786] See also Ronald D. Asmus. *A Little War that shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.

[787] "NATO's Relations with Georgia." North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 31 Mar. 2014. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_38988.htm?selectedLocale=en>.

[788] "Saakashvili Upbeat after Talks with Putin." Civil Georgia.

[789] "Saakashvili Speaks of Russia, Hails Putin as 'Historic Figure'." Civil Georgia, 23 February 2007. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=14683>.

encirclement. By expanding east, the Alliance was also violating (a gentlemen's) agreements forged in the early 90's between Gorbachev and his western counterparts, according to the Russian view.[790]

Apart from alleged agreements on NATO expansion fostered at the end of the Cold War, NATO ties had an important Turkish dimension to it, when being examined in their regional context. Since the nineties, the Russian military was once again concerned over Turkey's role in a fragmented Caucasus, where among other factors Islam seemed to be growing as a political force. Feeding these fears, the United States supported the ambitions of its NATO partner Turkey in the region, among other things by facilitating and supporting contacts between Baku, Tbilisi and Ankara. Georgian-Turkish regional ties also meant financial losses for Moscow, as Ankara was suspected of aspiring to become the principal trade partner for former Soviet countries in the region.[791] The opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline corridor in July 2006 was a case in point. Thus, embedding Georgia into the alliance also implied a stronger drift of Georgia towards Turkey, and according to some analysts, "The long standing geopolitical competition between the two empires, which had been forgotten due to the different dimensions of the USSR and Turkey, is being rejuvenated."[792] NATO aspirations, which were reconfirmed by an agreement dated September 2006 on holding talks on closer relations and eventually Membership Action Plan (MAP) membership, thus signaled the desire for a move without return away from neutrality into the NATO camp, not only rhetorically, but in practice.

The brief discussion about the state of affairs in Georgian-Russian relations highlights once more that larger geopolitical consideration came to bear on the peace process. As a consequence, conflict rather than cooperation asserted itself as the normal modus operandi. The above mentioned developments in the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process up to October 2007 happened at a point when Georgian-Russian relations had shifted to a long time low. In addition, since the invasion of the Kodori gorge in 2006, which caused a severe worsening in Georgian-Abkhaz relations, the issue of moving forward in the peace process became increasingly intertwined with developments in a broader context of international relations, namely the discussion of the future status of Kosovo and membership in NATO's MAP for Georgia and Ukraine. These issues framed and stifled the ongoing efforts to move forward in the Georgian-Abkhaz negotiations, in which Russia was still the primary mediator. Additionally, positioning the debate about the Kosovo case as a precedent for Abkhazia and South Ossetia clearly posed a threat to Georgia by questioning an internationally accepted status quo, which to date implied Georgia's right to territorial integrity, at least in theory. As such, these issues also

---

[790] See M.E. Sarotte. *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009. Print. Former US Secretary of State James Baker strongly refuted the existence of any such agreement at the 2014 Henry A. Kissinger Prize ceremony at the American Academy in Berlin, Oct.7, 2014.
[791] S. Kondrashov. "The Caspian Sea as a Mixture of Economics and Geopolitics." *What the Papers Say* 1 Jan. 1997: 3. Print.
[792] Ibid. 5.

conditioned Georgian efforts at international coalition building in order to gain sympathy and support for the Georgian position, which it had done with remarkable success until this point by emphasizing its achievements, despite being faced with external and internal threats. In late 2007, domestic political developments in Georgia signified a severe setback in these efforts and conditioned a loss of credibility for a country which had come to be regarded internationally as the beacon of democracy in an extremely difficult region.

The fall of the White Horse: Domestic turmoil in Georgia

As the fight for making headway on the way towards resolution of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict had largely moved from the domestic to the international arena after 2006, the attitude of different countries and their perception of Georgia had been raised in importance. In part, Georgia was able to make swift progress in the field of EU and NATO integration, because for nearly four years since the Rose Revolution, Georgia had occupied the moral high-grounds on the international stage. Its achievements in the field of democracy promotion, rule of law and modernization through economic reforms had been hailed as unprecedented by European and American leaders alike.[793] Even other regional players could not turn a blind eye to the apparent improvements of an economic nature and in the field of public order that had overhauled this small country in the Caucasus.[794] Georgia had made many friends internationally. Apart from the United States, whose President had underlined the support of its country by a visit of the highest level to Georgia; some newcomers to the EU had united to form the so-called "New Group of Friends of Georgia" in February 2005. This group comprised of Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Bulgaria and Poland, was founded in reference to the old Group of Friends, but with a different portfolio and notably without Russian membership. It explicitly stated that it intended to assist Georgia in its reform efforts, on its path to NATO membership through implementation of its Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP), with the implementation of the withdrawal of Russian bases from its territory as well as with its European integration strategy including pushing for a European Action Plan and gathering support for the resolution of its internal conflicts.[795] This New Group of Friends thus served as an example of Georgian alliance and coalition building in the international arena. The notion that Georgia was rather successful at advocating and finding support for its positions was also confirmed by Irakli Alasania, who recalled that during the time

---

[793] The IMF e.g. praised Georgia's exceptional economic performance due to successful reform efforts, see "Statement of an IMF Staff Mission at the Conclusion of a Visit to Georgia." International Monetary Fund, 7 Mar. 2008. Web. June 2010. <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2008/pr0846.htm>. See also: "Text: Bush's speech in Georgia." BBC News, 10 May 2005. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4534267.stm>.

[794] The author encountered various officials in Azerbaijan who in their private capacity expressed their respect for Georgia regarding the successful police and anti-corruption reforms

[795] Vladimir Socor. "New Group of Georgia's Friends Founded." *Eurasian Daily Monitor* 6 February 2005: 2:26. Print.

of his Ambassadorship at the UN, Georgia's efforts at generating support at the level of the UN General Assembly were unexpectedly effective.[796] At the same time, EU integration moved forward with the first European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) Action Plan being agreed upon and entering its first phase of implementation throughout the years 2006 and 2007.[797]

Starting in September 2007, however, domestic political developments in Georgia put the support and sympathy the country had gained internationally in jeopardy. Almost a year after President Saakashvili had dismissed his hawkish Defence Minister Irakli Okruahvili in November 2006 several former associates of Okruashvili experienced a wave of dismissals and arrests in September 2007. Almost immediately following these moves, Okruashvili announced that he would form a political party and stated that Saakashvili had engaged in steps counterproductive for the Georgian state, eventually accusing him of having plotted a murder scheme against the business and media tycoon Badri Patarkatsishvili, who hedged political ambitions. Following these statements, Okruashvili was arrested on September 27 and charged for extortion, money laundering, misuse of power and negligence in office. After a recorded confession, in which the former Minister of Defence retracted his accusations against Saakashvili, he was released on bail. His arrest and accusations against the President, however, sparked mass protests all over the country. Many Georgians regarded Okruashvili as a former confidant of the President and his accusations referring to previously confidential matters carried a large weight. As protests continued, a ten party opposition coalition put forth demands for early elections. Okruashvili himself was forced to leave Georgia and made a media appearance from Germany on November 5 in which he stated that his earlier confession had been extracted under pressure from the government. He later was granted political asylum in France instead of being extradited to Georgia. In Georgia, the situation reached a tipping point on November 7, when the domestic protests turned violent and images of Georgian police using unprecedented force against unarmed protesters went around the world. Instead of dying down in light of an imposed state of emergency, the protests continued to flare up in additional cities around Georgia such as Batumi. In a televised statement on November 8, 2007 President Saakashvili finally gave in to demands of the opposition and announced that he would schedule snap elections on the 5th of January. He also communicated that on the same day, Georgia would hold a referendum on NATO membership.

This episode in Georgian politics is especially relevant to the assessment of the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process, because some observers claimed that the waning public support of the President at home and

---

[796] Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010., who also described setbacks, e.g. the criticism Georgia earned for airing UAV's over the security zones (discussed above)

[797] "European Neighbourhood Policy Reference Documents, EU/ Georgia Action Plan, ENP Action Plans and Country Reports." European Union External Action, n.d. Web. 21 July 2009.
<ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/georgia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf>.

abroad made him more susceptible to take political risks thereafter, out of a belief that his popularity would benefit from it. Some high-level foreign observers even speculated in private that the President used the war in 2008 to raise his own popularity counting on payoffs from a rally around the flag effect of war.[798] As after August 2008, the official Georgian narrative behind the unrest in fall 2007 and winter 2008 was that Russia was trying to infiltrate Georgia through Russian-sponsored political groups ("Russian puppets") which were trying to internally weaken the country by creating friction and disunity based on slander. Disregarding this narrative, the episode also represented the first mass uprising against a President, whose international image had remained spotless to a large extend until that point. Saakashvili had been elected with a landslide victory in 2004 and the creeping dissatisfaction within the country went largely unnoticed outside of Georgia, partly due to a weak and divided opposition. The outburst of dissatisfaction and the subsequent display of violence against its own people were important incidents that contributed to discredit Georgia's carefully managed image as a beacon of democracy. Further steps were the way the election campaign was managed and events on the day of the snap elections on 5 January 2008.

The snap elections took place under suboptimal conditions. Among them a short preparation time for the opposition, a highly polarized political environment, a looming threat of the conflict with Russia turning violent, speculations about post-election violence, and the recent serious police violence and the imposition of a state of emergency created an environment of mistrust and uncertainty.[799] While not all international monitoring groups were in unison regarding their assessment of the elections, the International Election Observer Mission (IEOM) comprised of OSCE/ODIHR (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) observers, delegations of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the European Parliament had issued a statement of preliminary findings and conclusions on January 6 in which it was stated that the election was in essence consistent with most OSCE and Council of Europe commitments and standards for democratic elections.[800] This statement was seen by many observers having worked within the IEOM as a political compromise between the different stakeholders making up the IEOM in order to appear capable, more than it was a detailed assessment of the actual facts.[801] Thus, it was in part a political

---

[798] Unnamed representatives. Personal Interview. 2010. Among them a member from a foreign diplomatic mission to Georgia, a member of the OSCE election observer mission, a member of UNICEF Georgia, a member of a foreign delegation to Georgia in the context of the peace process 2008; all in their private capacity.
[799] See: "Georgia, Extraordinary Presidential Election, 5 January 2008: Final Report." Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 4 Mar. 2008. Web. 1 June 2014.
<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/georgia/30959>.; In addition, the opposition was constantly discredited as Russian puppets
[800] Ibid. 1.
[801] Unnamed high-level member of the IEOM to Georgia. Personal Interview. 2010.

compromise. It did mention "severe shortcomings",[802] but the overall impression of the assessment was seen as a success for Saakashvili, who won the ballot. Only in the final report dated March 4 and thus published months later in Warsaw, the OSCE/ODIHR observers were able to be more nuanced about these severe shortcomings, which they reiterated "need to be addressed urgently".[803] Some of the findings are worth being reconsidered in order to understand that the elections of January 5 were in fact problematic and that labelling them as satisfactory may have been a political compromise in order to maintain order in Georgia. The summary of the final OSCE/ ODIHR report noted that "The campaign was overshadowed by widespread allegations of intimidation and pressure, among others on public-sector employees and opposition activists, some of which were verified by the OSCE/ODIHR IEOM. The distinction between state activities and the campaign of the ruling United National Movement (UNM) party candidate, Mr. Mikheil Saakashvili, was blurred",[804] for example "when government distribution of social welfare vouchers overlapped with Saakashvili's campaign".[805] In addition, the tabulation and election count was observed to be "slow and often chaotic", voter lists were "tempered with" and many protocols "incomplete or inconsistent" while there was a recorded lack of public scrutiny and suspicion about widespread manipulation of voter turn-out.[806] Furthermore, in the run-up to the elections, the media coverage lacked balance, the most popular pro-opposition TV station IMEDI-TV was taken off the air after the November events and assumed broadcasting only briefly in December before being taking off the air again.[807] Its co-owner was Arkadi (Badri) Patarkatsishvili (mentioned above), who had earned his wealth in Russia and had announced his candidacy in the elections. He was later accused of a post-election coup plot and found dead in his British countryside residence on February 12, 2008. Like with former Prime Minister Zhvania, the circumstances of his death remain a subject of debate within Georgia.

Another issue during the elections remained unmentioned by the report, but has been raised by numerous political observers from within Georgia. When Saakashvili agreed to early elections, the government set the date for a plebiscite on Georgia's NATO ambitions on the same day. The linkage was at least misleading and although the NATO ballot was a rather self-explanatory 'yes' or 'no' answer, establishing a link between the question of voting for or against the acting President with the question of being for or against NATO caused some additional criticism. Nevertheless, the outcome of the plebiscite was clear: 1355328 people voted in favor of NATO membership and only 404943

---

[802] "Georgia, Extraordinary Presidential Election, 5 January 2008: Final Report." Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. 1.
[803] Ibid.
[804] Ibid.
[805] Ibid.
[806] Ibid. 2.
[807] Ibid. 12ff.

against.[808] Overall, the elections in Georgia were flawed, badly managed and exhibited a clear democratic deficit, which did not pass unnoticed internationally. It did much to disrepute Georgia's leadership and discredit its claim of Caucasian exceptionalism as well as its scolding of Russia for its undemocratic behaviour.

In the context of the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process, NATO membership raised a number of questions. On the one hand, the path to NATO membership had been one of modernizing Georgia's armed forces and essentially militarizing. This process was accompanied with increased militant rhetoric in the public sphere. Meanwhile, NATO membership was discussed as a way to resolve the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia quickly and to Georgia's benefit. "Mentioning both together in one sentence [NATO membership and resolving the secessionist conflicts] greatly confused people and at the same time unfoundedly raised their expectations", Irakli Alasania stated.[809] He noted that meanwhile the public was ill-informed about Georgia's peaceful efforts to resolve the conflict. The importance of military preparedness thus appeared paramount in the public sphere. Numerous experts and members of civil society groups participating in efforts to peacefully resolve the conflict agree that their efforts and public knowledge thereof, remained limited to a small circle of people. Some even considered it a failure not to "go public" with many of the initiatives in order to shape public opinion, strengthen a "peace constituency" or at least counteract the ongoing militant rhetoric in the public sphere.[810] As a consequence, the peaceful resolution of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict "remained a taboo in the public sphere. There was a great deficit of information about this approach and the fact that we did not address the public sent mixed signals."[811] These mixed signals stemmed in part from the way the NATO issue was pushed by government representatives and broadcasted in the media. Notably, the President never publically stated directly that NATO forces were going to assist bringing Abkhazia back to Georgia. But the issue was framed in such a way that the commitment of NATO to resolve the conflicts stated in the IPAP documents was taken as a point of departure for reiterating that the imminent NATO membership would help Georgia regain its security and help solve its conflicts. That the NATO commitment translated into confidence building measures in order to strengthen initiatives aimed at a peaceful resolution was hardly mentioned. Thus, in the ears of the Georgian public this resounded as if Georgia would soon become a part of NATO and subsequently its conflicts were to be resolved.[812] The question how the conflict would be resolved through NATO even if the answer was

---

[808] "Plebiscite on NATO Integration; Official Results from the Ministry of NATO Integration." CEC Election Administration of Georgia, 2008. Web. 1 December 2010.
<www.cec.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=14&info_id=3698>.
[809] Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010.
[810] Paata Zakareishvili e.g. made a statement to this effect during an interview with the author in 2010.
[811] Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010.
[812] Ivlian Haindrava. Personal Interview. 2010.

left blank, naturally triggered associations of a military option, i.e. an intervention, when framed in this way.

Hence, it came as no surprise that the NATO debate also raised apprehensions in Abkhazia which were exaggerated after the plebiscite in January 2008. In Abkhazia, ordinary people harbored fears about Georgia's NATO integration. Not least, because the alliance was viewed by the majority of Abkhaz as a biased and steadfast supporter of the Georgian position favoring territorial integrity over self-determination. Thus, its military, political and economic might raised concerns in this context.[813] Differently from Georgia, the issue of a military option connected with NATO membership was discussed as a rather likely event in the highest circles of Abkhaz politics.[814] The debate was not only focused on Georgia's aim of restoring its territorial integrity and the aggressive nature and potential role of NATO, but it rather also highlighted the existing sensitivities between Russia and NATO and the likely consequences for an Abkhazia who found itself squeezed in the middle of opposing camps.

A New Option: War

After the January election, Georgia continued its course under President Saakashvili, whose ambitions to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization had been strengthened by the outcome of the election and the simultaneous plebiscite. The developments exacerbated the already problematic relationship with Russia and Abkhazia, instead of allowing for a new government to introduce a fresh dynamic into the dead-locked process. The declaration of independence of Kosovo on February 17 widened the gap between the opponents and contributed to heighten fears in Abkhazia and Georgia. Kosovo's recognition by a number of western states was regarded as a provocation in Moscow and Russian political leaders, including Putin himself had since the onset of the discussion in 2005 and 2006 announced that in their eyes the fate of Kosovo and Abkhazia were closely linked (e.g. see above). Thus, while the United Nations Peace Process convened in Geneva only a day after Kosovo had declared its independence, the outcomes of that meeting in the framework of the Group of Friends remained illusive. Georgia emphasized a willingness to introduce a new quality of economic cooperation, including the lifting of sanctions in case Abkhazia would be willing to address a long list of preconditions. The proposal at this particular low point of the peace process was nothing more than a farce. The shift in focus to economic cooperation as a way out of the crisis was everything but new. Rather it was an old proposal which in the past had never come to fruition, partly because of an inability to broaden its scope to a sufficient extend. As a result of the confidence building through humanitarian assistance sponsored generously by the European Commission, however, the focus had increasingly

---

[813] "Conference Report, Aspects of the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict." 14th Conference, Heinrich-Böll-Foundation & Center for Citizen Peacebuilding at the University of California, Irvine. Istanbul: 14-15 June 2007. Print.
[814] Sergey Shamba. *Russia-Abkhazia: History and the Present.*; Also Raul Khajimba. Personal Interview. 2010.

shifted to providing economic incentives for cooperation and people-to-people rapprochement. In addition, although the Saakashvili government continued to champion its prior policies regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia, it had also become clear at this point that the closure of South Ossetia's Ergneti market had deprived an entire region of low level people-to-people contacts, which previously served to maintain a certain degree of normality between the conflicting sides in those parts of Georgia. Within the Group of Friends first recommendations had been issued at the previous meeting in Bonn regarding maritime communications, which essentially also had an economic aspect to it. The willingness of the Georgian government to embrace these initiatives thus was rooted in an ongoing international debate and to a large extend paid tribute to Georgia's partners and their demands. It was aimed at maintaining external support and coalition building rather than at realistically improving the chances for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Furthermore, Georgia put forth "unilateral proactive communications strategies" in order to "decrease tensions and foster reconciliation".[815] This move was two-fold. On the one hand it was aimed at diffusing claims about militant rhetoric and show that in the post-Okruashvili period things would be different. On the other hand, it addressed a communication and information deficit which certainly provided the Russian and Abkhaz media in Abkhazia with an uncontested space for reporting about Georgia without the need for verification or the possibility of bringing in another point of view. These minor moves, mostly addressing the mediators rather than the other conflicting party did not change the minds of the Abkhaz, who clearly stated that the process was deadlocked from their point of view. They once more called for the 'Key to the Future' document to replace the Basic Principles Paper as basis for further discussions.[816]

The hardened stance of the Abkhaz position after Kosovo also expressed itself in calls by the Abkhaz Parliament in early March to suspend the negotiations in their entirety and a subsequent demand to take measures to regain "jurisdiction" over the upper Kodori valley.[817] This highlights that while Georgia was acting more cautious, Abkhazia pressed forward with its demands not shying away from a renewed confrontation. These moves must in part be assessed in the framework of developments in Russia following the Kosovo decision. The initial reaction of Russia is best illustrated by referring to the record of the UN Security Council meeting convened on February 18 at the United Nations Headquarter in New York at three in the afternoon. The meeting had been called in order to address two letters condemning the developments in Kosovo, the first by the Permanent Representatives from Serbia and the second by representatives from Russia. In his statement, the Russian representative Churkin demanded a revision of the notion to grant state independence to Kosovo. He warned that the Kosovo

---

[815] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2008/219.* New York: United Nations, 2 April 2008. Print.
[816] Ibid.
[817] Ibid.

decision represented "a blatant breach of the norms and principles of international law"[818] in the eyes of Russia. He also issued a warning that if the decision was maintained this would have grave consequences for international principles put forth in the Helsinki Act which "allow changes in state frontiers only in accordance with international law and by peaceful means and by agreement".[819] While during the aforementioned debate, Russia did not mention Abkhazia specifically, viewed in the context of earlier statements above linking Abkhazia to Kosovo, it still follows that the recognition of Kosovo in spite of the Russian protest created a sense of entitlement in the eyes of Russia to change the course with regard to Abkhazia as previously announced by its leadership.[820] The statement by Churkin also contained an unambiguous threat regarding the forceful change of frontiers. On March 6, the Russian Federation declared itself to be no longer bound by the Decision of the CIS Council of Heads of State on measures to settle the conflict in Abkhazia dated 19 January 1996,[821] "due to changed circumstances".[822] As a response to the developments in Abkhazia and Russia, Georgia publically distanced itself from the possibility of signing any non-use of force documents. Being caught in what appeared like a new downward spiral of hostilities, the Russian State Duma "deemed necessary an adjustment in the policy of the Russian Federation, in light of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence" and called "on the executive branch to strengthen its assistance to and protection of Russian citizens living in Abkhazia, particularly in view of the bid by Georgia to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization".[823] In this context, the passportization of Abkhaz citizens, i.e. the policy of encouraging Abkhaz citizens to hold dual Abkhaz and Russian citizenship illustrates that the meaning of the phrase 'protecting Russian citizens in Abkhazia' had become increasingly blurred since the initiative had gained speed after 2001. Most Abkhaz citizens for reason of travel or being allocated pensions had chosen to acquire a Russian passport in addition to their own national passport by 2008 and had thus consented to Russian protection as new "Russian citizens living abroad".

In this tense situation the Georgian President issued yet another proposal for a peaceful resolution of the heating conflict on March 28. The initiatives outlined by President Saakashvili largely reflected previous proposals, for example from the year 2006. What was different, however, was the elevated focus on economic initiatives in line with the ongoing debate within the framework of the Group of Friends. Among the economic proposals was the "creation of a joint Georgian-Abkhaz free economic

---

[818] United Nations. *Security Council Debate, Security Council 5839th* Meeting S/PV.5839. New York: United Nations, 18 February 2008. Print.
[819] Ibid.
[820] See also: "Kosovo Precedent 'Terrifying': Putin." The Star, 22 Feb. 2008. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.thestar.com/article/306151>.
[821] DECISION TAKEN BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CIS HEADS OF STATES on measures for settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, 19 January 1996, cit.n. Newspaper Svobodnaya Gruzia, No. 8, 29 January 1996 (Translation from Russian) cit.n. Diasamnidze, T., op.cit. 258-260.
[822] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2008/219.*
[823] Ibid.

zone in the breakaway region's Ochamchire and Gali districts."[824] The President's initiative, while proposing far-reaching autonomy and power sharing arrangements, remained vague, however, concerning security guarantees.[825] In any event, the statement was hardly realistic, given the state of affairs. It also illustrates the zig zag course of the Georgian President. The Abkhaz side rejected the proposals stating that it was only prepared to resume relations with Georgia on an equal basis.

Leading up to the Bucharest NATO summit which took place from April 2 to 4, the security situation on the ground further deteriorated. At the summit itself, Georgia's bid for membership was postponed, while a commitment to eventually accept the country as a member in the future was still undertaken. The decision came as a heavy blow to Tbilisi, which had put high hopes on the Bucharest summit, as a successful outcome for Georgia would have been regarded as a security guarantee for Georgia amidst a constantly deteriorating security environment in the region.[826] In 2007, President Saakashvili had campaigned on an expedient NATO membership for the country. The disappointment among the Georgian leadership was noticable. The Georgian State Minister of Conflict Temuraz Iakobashvili in his function as representative of the Georgian government noted that the failure to provide Georgia with the option of NATO membership sent a green light to Russia to go ahead with its plans for annexing parts of the country (Georgia). Like many other representatives of the government, he claimed that only a strong sign would have been able to halt the Russian advance which was aimed at a renewed outbreak of war in Georgia.[827] While Iakobashvili dismissed the many missed opportunities for advancing a peaceful process in their entirety, a German diplomat closely following the developments in Georgia from the Office of the Federal Chancellor explained in his private capacity and under Chattamhouse rules that for the first time following February 17 and then after the Bucharest summit, the provocations aimed at Georgia from the Russian side notably increased. He confirmed that the threat from Russia facing Georgia was real, but in part due to the fact that NATO membership had not been ruled out, but simply postponed.[828] This account confirms some of Iakobashvili's points mentioned above. Yet, various international partners remained critical of developments in Georgia and its conduct vis-à-vis Russia,[829] partly due to the fact that Georgia no longer held the moral high grounds, given developments in 2007 and 2008. The above mentioned account, however, affirms that Russia

---

[824] "Saakashvili Outlines Tbilisi's Abkhaz Initiatives." Civil Georgia, 28 Mar. 2008. Web. 13 Nov 2011. <www.civil.ge/eng/print.php?id=17473>.
[825] Ibid. See also: United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2008/219.*
[826] For further information on the Bucharest summit see: "Bucharest Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on 3 April 2008." Bucharest NATO Summit, 3 Apr. 2008. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.summitbucharest.ro/en/doc_201.html>.
[827] Temur Iakobashvili. Personal Interview. 2010.
[828] Unnamed German diplomat. Personal Interview. 2010.
[829] The German government (especially the Foreign Office) was among those who were often critical of Georgia's attitude vis-à-vis Russia.

became more and more pro-active in order to show to the world that Georgia was too unstable to be reconsidered for a security alliance, which obliges its members to mutual assistance in case of a military attack.

The reason to refer to a German diplomat is rooted in the fact that as coordinator of the Group of Friends, Germany followed the developments with respect to Georgia and Abkhazia closely. During the winter of 2007 and spring of 2008 it was an open secret to those foreign powers involved as mediators that the once so-called frozen conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia were heating up. Prior to the Bucharest summit a rumour persisted in Abkhazian and Russian circles that Georgia would revert to a military attack in the case of being admitted to NATO. According to leading Abkhaz officials, they had been warned about plans of such an attack which were supposedly drawn up for May and April 2008 and were to be executed regardless of NATO membership.[830] These speculations remained on the level of rumours. Yet they triggered a response. In March, the Duma issued a call for reinforcing peacekeepers in Abkhazia under the pretext of protecting Russian citizens referring to an imminent attack: "The State Duma appeals to the Government of the Russian Federation with a proposal to activate efforts on guaranteeing security of the citizens of the Russian Federation, residing on the territory of Abkhazia and of the South Ossetia and to discuss an issue of possibility to enhance potential of peacekeeping forces in the zones of the Georgian-Abkhazian and the Georgian-South Ossetian conflicts and also to consider the other measures for guaranteeing peace and stability in this region. In accordance with opinion of the deputies of the State Duma, in case of possible armed attack of Georgia on Abkhazia and South Ossetia or accession of Georgia to NATO, it is necessary to take all means for protection of the citizens of the Russian Federation, residing on the territory of Abkhazia and of South Ossetia and to review the possibility of acceleration of the objective process of sovereignization of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, to the extent of recognition of their independence in accordance with the expression of the will of population."[831] In this statement not only Georgian aggression but also NATO aspirations were clearly depicted as a threat by the Russian Duma, which also referred to the "possibility" of armed attack by Georgia. Furthermore, not only did the Duma in its statement change the meaning of peacekeeping from its originally intended context, i.e. the separation of forces and peacekeeping mandate in accordance with the Moscow Agreement of 1994. It also clearly instrumentalized the fact that after passportization almost all Abkhaz citizens were also holders of Russian passports as a pretext for its own obligations to get involved to "protect its citizen" in Abkhazia. Overall, the above mentioned statement illustrates the shift in thinking about Russia's role in the peacekeeping process, i.e. having sided much more definitely with the Abkhaz side, and

---

[830] Members of the Abkhaz leadership in Sukhumi. Personal Interview. 2010.
[831] STATEMENT OF THE STATE DUMA on policy of the Russian Federation regarding Abkhazia, the South Ossetia and Transdnistria, www.duma.gov.ru/ Translation from Russia, cit.n. Diasamnidze, T., op.cit. 645ff.

underlines the ongoing crisis of confidence and the deteriorating security situation in an environment of uncertainty prior to the Bucharest summit. Shortly after Bucharest, on April 16, President Putin of the Russian Federation issued an instruction authorizing direct relations with the Abkhaz and South Ossetian *de facto* authorities in a number of fields.[832] Once again, the official reasoning behind these steps were named as supporting Russian citizens and the people living in Abkhazia in light of Georgia's aggressive intentions. Yet, such a move cannot appear out of thin air but points to the fact that Russia had long fortified its presence in Abkhazia. To substantiate its rhetoric, an airborne battalion was stationed just outside the security zone.

Alarmed by the ongoing developments senior representatives of the Group of Friends met in Berlin on 30 June 2008.[833] Germany took the lead as a pathfinder to a new peace deal, which later came to be known as the so-called 'Steinmeier Plan' named after then German Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Aspects of this plan had been discussed in various Group of Friends meetings, but in the summer of 2008 Germany took the initiative to conceptualise and summarize these findings and draw up a proposal. Thus, with its three phased approach which put the political status issue as a last step,[834] Germany was the first to put forth a document offering concrete steps. Within the Group of Friends Germany was considered to be better able to do so than other members of the Group, according to Irakli Alasania.[835] The United States, for example, were dealing with their own irritations vis-à-vis Russia and would have hardly been considered an acceptable bearer of such a plan, even within the Group of Friends.

A follow-up Group of Friends meeting to the Berlin meeting and the proposed plan to resolve the conflict in three phases was set for September. The September meeting was scheduled to take place on the level of ministers with Condolezza Rice, Sergey Lavrov and the respective ministers from the other members convening in Berlin. The increased focus on Georgia's conflict and the subsequent visit of Minister Steinmeier and the EU's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, to Georgia and Abkhazia encouraged Georgian representatives, that the European involvement and the interest from the Group of Friends would send an unambiguous signal to Russia

---

[832] INFORMATION for the means of mass media on assignments of the President of Russia to the Government of the Russian Federation in relation with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, 16 April 2008, www.mid.ru/ Translation from Russian, cit.n. Diasamnidze, T., op.cit. 649.

[833] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2008/480.* New York: United Nations, 23 July 2008. Print.

[834] "It contemplated a three-phase process: the first phase envisaged agreements on security measures, including a declaration on the non-use of force, and on the principle of, and modalities for, the return of internally displaced persons and refugees; the second phase envisaged economic rehabilitation and a broad array of confidence-building measures; and the third and final phase envisaged discussions on the political status of Abkhazia." cit.n. United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2008/631.* New York: United Nations, 3 October 2008. Print.

[835] Irakli Alasania. Personal Interview. 2010.

and create a more level playing field.[836] To others, including the Abkhaz delegation which travelled to Gali to meet with German Minister Steinmeier and his team in July 2008,[837] the increased diplomatic activity signalled that an outbreak of large scale hostilities was close. Stanislav Lakoba who travelled with Abkhaz *de facto* President Bagapsh to Gali to meet Steinmeier, after heavy fog had prevented a meeting in Sukhumi, recounted that "Steinmeier was assuring us that Saakashvili was not going to start a war. He told us he had spoken with him personally…I believe that Steinmeier believed what Saakashvili had been telling him. But Bagapsh and I later agreed that Solana and Steinmeier were coming here because they knew something that they did not want to share with us and that war was going to start here. When I had dinner with Solana I told him frankly that something must be about to happen because otherwise he would not have come here."[838] The Abkhaz delegation was under the impression that the European intelligence sources believed the war was imminent and that it was going to start in Abkhazia. The facts at least could have suggested an outbreak of war in Abkhazia, rather than in South Ossetia. The Secretary General of the United Nations had noted a "dramatic increase in violence"[839] in the months preceding the August events. The extensive troop movements into the region, violent escalations including "indiscriminate bombings of public places in Gagra, Sukhumi and Gali on the Abkhaz-controlled side of the ceasefire line, as well as roadside explosions on the Georgian-controlled side of the ceasefire line",[840] drone incidents and the demand of the Abkhaz Parliament to re-establish jurisdiction over the Kodori gorge were among those facts suggesting Abkhazia as the more likely trouble spot.

Although the Abkhaz side rejected Frank-Walter Steinmeier's proposal, they were impressed by the fact that the Germans had been able to table such a plan without mentioning the phrase 'territorial integrity'.[841] Their stance remained uncompromising nevertheless. They were not prepared to take part in a Group of Friends meeting at the end of July, much less in any high-level meeting in Berlin and suggested that these meetings would have to be postponed to a later date. Meanwhile, Abkhaz and Russian representatives stressed the absence of a non-use of force commitment from Georgia, but at the same time set prerequisites for even beginning to negotiate anew. As tensions also flared up in South Ossetia, the Russians again strongly recommended signing a non-use of force agreement with both, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in order to diffuse the acute tension on the ground.[842] Georgian

---

[836] Ibid.
[837] See e.g. "Abkhazia's Separatists Reject German Plan to Prevent Conflict with Georgia." *The New York Times* 18 July 2008: n. pag. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.nytimes.com/2008/07/18/world/europe/18iht-georgia.4.14615798.html>. or United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2008/631.*
[838] Stanislav Lakoba. Personal Interview. 2010.
[839] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2008/480.*
[840] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2008/631.*
[841] Stanislav Lakoba. Personal Interview. 2010.
[842] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2008/631.*

officials, however, were not ready to move back the issue of internally displaced persons on the agenda and did not trust that signing a non-use of force agreement would not be used against them in this situation on the brink of war. They instead continued to insist on the internationalization of the peace process and accused Russia of attempting to annex Georgian territory[843] under the cloak of protecting its citizen abroad and redefining peace as Georgia having to surrender Abkhazia and South Ossetia entirely. Thus, tensions continued to rise and as regular exchanges of fire occurred in South Ossetia in early August, Abkhaz representatives first announced a deferral to participate in upcoming peace talks and then noted that "if Georgia starts fighting against South Ossetia, Abkhazia will open a second front."[844]

As the fighting in South Ossetia did not seize but developed into an all-out war between Russia and Georgia, Abkhazia introduced heavy weapons into the restricted weapons zone on August 8, after bombing the upper-Kodori valley. On August 12 it launched a ground attack, establishing its jurisdiction over Kodori.[845] On 26 August, Russia recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. Georgia responded by declaring the two territories occupied by Russian forces and severed diplomatic ties with Russia. On 29 August, the Georgian government declared the 1994 Moscow Agreement null and void and communicated its decision to terminate the CIS peacekeeping operation in Abkhazia. Eleven days later, Russia and Abkhazia established formal diplomatic relations on 9 September. On 17 September, Abkhazia and Russia concluded their first bilateral agreement on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance in Moscow, providing for cooperation in the economic, legal and security fields, including the construction and use of military bases.[846] The five-day Russo-Georgian war that had wide ranging consequences not only for Georgia, Abkhazia and Russia but for the entire international community and for existing norms in international law which are worth discussing at length in another paper, also marked the final collapse of the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process.

---

[843] Ibid.
[844] Ibid.
[845] Ibid.
[846] Ibid.

No Knight in Shining Armour: The EU and the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process

Introduction

In early June 2008, only two month before the outbreak of the August War between Russia and Georgia the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana visited Tbilisi and Abkhazia announcing that the EU "wants to participate more deeply in settling the conflict." This move was interpreted to the avail that the EU no longer excluded the possibility to become a more direct part to the mediation process between Georgia and Abkhazia. It was a landmark announcement as the Georgian government had been calling for the internationalization of the conflict resolution formats and the direct involvement of the EU in the negotiations since August 2006.[847] With the outbreak of the Russo-Georgian war shortly thereafter, the existing parameters were completely overhauled and as a result, the EU never succeeded in realizing its new ambitions with regard to the peace process. But even if the war would not have broken out, a big question mark remains whether the various existing stakeholders, including Russia and Abkhazia, would have accepted a more direct role for the EU in the mediation.

Consequently, the EU has never been a direct actor to the peace process, but it has nevertheless been an important actor in Georgia with an increasing weight on the international stage. The EU has continuously voiced its support for a peaceful resolution of the conflicts on Georgian soil. In practical terms it has devised mechanisms to support this aim over the course of the past decades and can therefore be regarded as an indirect actor with regard to the peace process, i.e. a player whose actions support the mediation efforts. The ways in which the EU has attempted to support the peace process are numerous and will be evaluated in this chapter. As a first step, the characteristics of the EU and the way it can conduct its foreign policy must be considered. To this end, the scholarly literature about the EU will be surveyed, in order to show that the EU possesses a certain transformative power vis-à-vis third countries in theory, which is described to be one of the most notable qualities of the Union's foreign policy. With regard to conflicts, this transformative quality of EU foreign policy is said to enable the EU to induce domestic changes in third countries, which could positively influence conflict environments, and thus create conditions favourable for a successful mediation. The question remains how these aims can be achieved, meaning what incentives does a third country have to change its ways? In other words, where does the EU derive its convening power from? After this introduction will

---

[847] See: Government of Georgia. "Memorandum: Basic Principles on Conflict Resolution." A Non-Paper circulated by the Georgian Government: August 2006. Print.

provide some general remarks with regard to the questions here raised, the following chapter will present answers to these questions in further detail and depth.

Given that the EU's foreign policy has been said to be based on soft power, instead of hard power approaches, the way it can transform countries or induce change depends on the attractiveness of the model it proposes. The EU offers its own specific paradigm to countries that are undergoing transition, a model that given its own achievements – old and more recent - proposes a viable guideline to modernization, stability, prosperity and peace. This model is based on its own experiences, its self-image and its own success story. It will be argued that this unique European experience also shapes the way the EU perceives the way conflicts are to be dealt with. After World War II, Europe lay in shambles. Destroyed and divided, full of hatred and mistrust among the nations of the continent. Through, among others, institution building, democratization, and economic followed by intensified political cooperation, interdependencies were created and a community of values was built up with the help of visionaries. Eventually those countries and nations who had become part of the EC (European Communities) were able to overcome fears and hatred even amongst the most bitter of enemies. Not only did cooperation in the most sensitive areas such as defence and military become possible, but the model was so attractive that more and more countries decided to join the Community and the ring of prosperity and peace constantly expanded. This official narrative about the EU must be kept in mind when evaluating the contribution the EU can make to conflict mediation in its periphery.

As mentioned above, with regard to the resolution of conflicts, the EU offers a model that is largely based on its own experiences. It proposes long-term structural changes and offers economic and political incentives as a way to foster domestic transformation. It thus supports and builds indigenous capacities for the resolution of conflicts, largely based on its own model and its self-image. In other words, it offers incentives and the attractiveness of its norms to induce change. In Georgia, however, this approach faced several limitations. First, the time dimension must be kept in mind. The EU is a young actor on the international policy floor. As will be outlined below, it is a living and breathing organisation undergoing learning processes, constant evolution and transformation itself. This posits difficulties when trying to capture the nature of the institution: While a certain capture may be correct for one moment in time, the EU itself may have already developed away from this theoretical perception empirically. Thus, the image accorded to it must be carefully weighted against the empirical background, especially when looking at the EU's actions in its periphery. In this regard, it is also noteworthy that the EU was entering relative unknown waters, when it first got involved in Georgia in the early 1990's and that this initiated an institutional learning process. Second, when the EU entered new terrain, it exhibited hesitation and ambiguity regarding the weight it attached to the conflict resolution efforts as reflected by its engagement. Thirdly, due to various domestic constraints in

Georgia, the EU experienced difficulties to anchor its own vision in the country. Lastly, the EU was confronted with a new predicament in Georgia, namely one between the promotion of its norms and its interests. Operating in Russia's immediate neighbourhood necessarily aroused suspicion from Georgia's powerful neighbour and called for explicit justification of why the EU needed to be involved in this region of the world. As the Union transformed its own image and mission over the years, this justification came to be increasingly defined by interests, such as energy security, and security of its borders by means of stability on the EU's periphery. It cast a shadow over the EU's normative motivations to be involved and support Georgia and undermined its own soft power paradigm, consequently undermining its credibility and convening power.

The following chapter will discuss the way the EU has been characterised by scholarship, which offers insights into the way the EU is able to contribute to conflict mediation efforts in theory. As a next step, EU initiatives with respect to Georgia will be listed and evaluated. Thereafter, the changing nature of the EU from a purely normative organisation to a geopolitical player with global aspirations will be discussed. The notion of changing EU ambitions will be reinforced by applying it to the Georgian case. The chapter ends by pointing out the constraints that eventually led to the EU's inability to establish itself as a direct player to the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process and avoid the outbreak of war in 2008.

The EU as foreign policy actor

The EU's image has partly been determined by scholarship that distinguishes the EU from other actors in the international system. This image has also undergone changes over time, as the EC and later the EU has been evolving unceasingly since its inception. The institution we know as EU today has not always carried the same power and meaning as it does today. In the early 1980's for example, Hedley Bull exclaimed that: "Europe is not an actor in international affairs, and does not seem likely to become one…"[848] The EC gradually asserted itself as an actor on the international stage. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the changes brought about by the breakup of the Soviet Union, perpetuated these developments and amidst the shambles of an old world order, i.e. the Cold War, a new institution was brought into being, namely the EU. It was only around the time when the Abkhaz Georgian conflict was in full heat, that the European Union was established with the Treaty of Maastricht (1992). Bull's argument dismissing Europe as an actor in international politics, which had once been put forth as a criticism to Duchêne's concept of civilian power Europe, increasingly paled in comparison to new notions that attempted to explain this new type of institution in international affairs and its foreign policy conduct. One of the notions that require consideration is Duchêne's view of the EU as a civilian power, which has as its mission to domesticate international relations, and thus also conflicts. The

---

[848] Hedley Bull. "Civilian Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 21: 151. Print.

ultimate aim of the EU according to this approach is to emphasise equality, institutions and peace[849]. Manners, passed criticism on this approach for its continued reliance on the state system, which is essentially viewed as static and not capturing the unique contribution the EU has induced as a different form of organisation away from traditional state-centric thought. He prefers to refer to the EU as "normative power Europe"[850] and explains this differing connotation by his attempt to "capture the movement away from the Cold War (and neo-colonial) approaches to the EU".[851] He notes that what is important is not to remain focused on practical capabilities, as e.g. military power approaches often do, but to emphasise the change the EU can contribute to the Westphalian frame of reference by "EU cosmopolitics"[852], i.e. its inclusive ideals. Or as Sjursen puts it, the EU is "a 'post-Westphalian' entity in which there is no single authority, where territorial sovereignty is no longer crucial, and where borders are 'fuzzy'".[853] While these latter views emphasize the novelty of the EU as an institution in international affairs, they also point to the fact that it is a hybrid. In order to further clarify the concept of normative power that holds explanatory power with regard to the type of institution the EU is said to be and its foreign policy, this concept needs further specification.

Manners illustrates his view of normative powers by stating: "Normative power [...] is a power that is able to 'shape conceptions of the 'normal'".[854] While both concepts are closely related, the civilian power concept emphasizes the importance of international society, while the normative power theory puts the focus on a normalization of world politics. Ian Manners proclaimed that normative power is "the ability to shape or change what passes for normal in international relations, and which will [...] have utilitarian, social, moral, and narrative dimensions to it".[855] The capacity to define the 'normal' in international relations is thus a powerful political asset. In this context, however, it is important to note that normative power is not meant to be used as a means to achieve national interests and goals. This notion will become an important one when discussing EU foreign policy conduct in Georgia later on in the chapter. Meanwhile, criticism of the normative power theory also exists. Johansson-Nogues, argues that the EU may act normative out of self-interest and evokes the European Neighborhood

---

[849] François Duchêne. *Jean Monnet: The First Statesman of Interdependence*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994. 400. Print.

[850] Ian Manners. "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction In Terms?" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40: 235-258. Print.

[851] Ian Manners. "Normative Power Europe Reconsidered." CIDEL Workshop. Oslo 22-23 October 2004. From civilian to military power: the European Union at a crossroads?, 22-23 Oct. 2004. 2. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.sv.uio.no/arena/english/research/projects/cidel/old/WorkshopOsloSecurity/Manners.pdf>.

[852] Ibid. 3.

[853] Helene Sjursen. "What Kind of Power?" *Journal of European Public Policy* 13: 172. Print.

[854] T. Diez, I. Manners, F. Berenskoetter, and M.J. Williams. "Reflecting on Normative Power Europe." *Power in World Politics*. London: Routledge, 2007. 175. Print.

[855] Ian Manners. "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" Roskilde University Digital Archive, 2002. 33. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://rudar.ruc.dk:8080/bitstream/1800/8930/1/Ian_Manners_Normative_Power_Europe_A_Contradiction_in_Terms_COPRI_38_2000.pdf>.

Policy as an example to show that this policy serves the EU as it creates stability in its neighbourhood. She also raises the possibility that the EU, given its aim to spread values and norms (which are essentially its own), is regarded by other actors as Eurocentric or even neo-imperialist in a worst case scenario.[856] Not only are some aspects about the concept criticised, but Sjursen even argues that the normative power theory cannot be viewed as a consolidated theoretical approach as it lacks tools to evaluate this approach critically.[857] It shows that even this theory is but another attempt of comprehending the EU and its foreign policy conduct. It highlights once more that to capture the nature of the EU and its foreign policy is a complex task as the Union is constantly developing, changing and exposing itself to new experiences which shape its self-image and the way it is perceived by other actors. Given these views about the EU as a hybrid and continuously evolving governing body with a certain convening power vis-à-vis third parties, it is important to evaluate two related approaches to the EU, namely social constructivism and Europeanization. While they do not necessarily contradict the normative and civilian power approaches, they provide more clarity on how the EU is said to be able to induce change in other actors' behaviour. They are therefore important to be considered, when looking at the EU's impact with regard to conflict mediation.

The structure-agency relationship lies at the core of social constructivism in international politics. Thomas Risse explains that "human agents do not exist independently from their social environment and its collectively shared systems of meanings [...]".[858] As a result, while structures constrain actors, they also provide opportunities to them. In this regard, agency means that actors also have the opportunity to be rule makers as well as rule shapers. Social constructivism thus focuses on the mutual constitutiveness of structure and agency. Alexander Wendt elaborates on how social structures impact agents and influence their behaviour by noting that "Intersubjective structures give meaning to material ones, and it is in terms of meanings that actors act".[859] Institutions as social structures in turn influence actors according to Hyde-Price as they "play a key role in the process of integration and identity formation".[860] It follows that the EU, at least according to social constructivist theory, is able to shape third parties behaviour through interaction and institution building, i.e. an interactive process of engagement with partner countries based on European norms, which may lead to value and norm formation on the side of the partner.

[856] Elisabeth Johansson-Nogues. "The (Non-)Normative Power EU and the European Neighbourhood Policy: An exceptional policy for an exceptional actor?" *European Political Economy Review* 7: 185. Print.

[857] See Helene Sjursen. "What Kind of Power?"

[858] T. Risse, A. Wiener, and T. Diez. "Social Constructivism and European Integration." *European Integration Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. 160. Print.

[859] Alexander Wendt, C. Bretherton, and J. Vogler. *The European Union as a Global Actor*. London/New York: Routledge, 1999. 28. Print.

[860] A. Hyde-Price and B. Tonra. "Interests, Institutions, and Identities in the Study of European Foreign Policy." *Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004. 104. Print.

Looking at the social constructivist argument and the basic notion that the EU as an institution can stipulate change, the concept of Europeanization needs to be elaborated in order to clarify what kind of domestic changes can be brought about by European integration. As in the previous paragraphs, this venture into Europeanization is not intended to provide a comprehensive picture of the scholarly debate, as the literature is increasingly abundant.[861] Instead, the rather general definition by Radaelli will be used to highlight some of the most important aspects of Europeanization. Radaelli posits that Europeanization refers to a "process of a) construction, b) diffusion, and c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ways of doing things and shared beliefs and norms, which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourses, identities, political structures, and public policies."[862] Radaelli also notes that convergence and harmonization with rules, etc... on a domestic level may be outcomes of Europeanization, but are not equal to it. Moreover, it is important to note that the above mentioned view and definition for the most part conceptualizes Europeanization in the EU context, where member states are at the same time shaping the policies by which they are later on affected in an interactive process. Thus, although only slightly dissenting from the above mentioned, Europeanization has to be more narrowly defined for the particular context of conflict resolution in the EU's periphery.

Coppieters puts forth that Europeanization in the context of conflict resolution can be defined as "a mechanism and a process at the same time which is activated and encouraged by European institutions by linking the final outcome of the conflict with the degree of integration or association of conflict parties with European structures. This link is made operational by means of specific conditionality and socialization mechanisms, which are built into the process of Europeanization".[863] Coppieters point about linking the final outcome of a conflict with the degree of integration or association of the conflicting parties with European structures is a decisive point of departure for this research. On the one hand it carries a very positive self-image on the part of the EU, i.e. a belief that the EU model can prevent or alleviate conflicts. On the other hand, this statement proposes to look at how successful the EU was at Europeanization in Georgia in order to explain the outcome of the process of conflict

[861] See for example Simon Hix and Klaus H. Goetz. "Introduction: European Integration And National Political Systems." *West European Politics* 23: 1-26. Print.; Tanja A. Börzel. "Towards Convergence in Europe? Institutional Adaptation to Europeanization in Germany and Spain." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 37: 573-596. 1999. Print.; Robert Ladrech. "Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 32: 69-88. Print.; J.T. Checkel, M. Green Cowles, J. Caporaso, and T. Risse. "The Europeanization of Citizenship?." *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001. 180-197. Print.

[862] Claudio M. Radaelli. "Whither Europeanization? Concept Stretching and Substantive Change." European Integration Online Papers, 17 July 2000. 4. Web. 20 Sept. 2013. <eiop.or.at./eiop/texte/2000-008a.htm>.

[863] Bruno Coppieters et al.. *Europeanization and Conflict Resolution: Case Studies from the European Periphery*. Gent, Belgium: Academia Press, 2004. 7. Print.

resolution and thus the related concept of conflict mediation. As Europeanization is a process that needs to be activated, it is important to examine as a next step how Europeanization works.

The way Europeanization can be achieved is twofold and consists of conditionality and socialization as pointed out by Coppieters. Conditionality is "a strategy whereby a reward is granted or withheld depending on the fulfilment of an attached condition".[864] In the context of conflicts, conditionality can either be applied directly, or in a way to alter domestic opportunity structures. The receptivity of actors for domestic changes thereby largely depends on the commitment to European integration and the value different societal groups attach to the benefits proposed. Socialization on the other hand is the ability to influence elites and initiate social learning processes for society as a whole, in order to encourage for example changes in beliefs, values and purposes. When looking at conditionality, but especially when conceptualizing socialization, it becomes apparent that both concepts carry specific time dimensions. Socialization, for example, cannot be achieved in a fortnight, but takes time and often only generates payoffs in the long run. The mere fact that the principle ways in which the EU can influence the conflict mediation efforts are long-term policies, the success of which depends on the commitment of domestic groups, suggests that perception of the EU over time also plays an important role. Thus, the recipients' perception about the EU's credibility regarding its capacity and willingness to carry out declared commitments must be regarded as a decisive contributing factor when assessing conditionality and social learning.[865]

It has been shown that there exist theories about the European Union characterizing it as a civilian or normative actor in the world. Social constructivism and Europeanization have been evaluated in this regard to demonstrate how EU foreign policy can impact third parties and to further explain how this foreign policy approach fosters normalization of world politics, instead of being used as a means to achieve national interests and goals. It has also been mentioned that the EU is a hybrid institution that adapts and changes over time. In addition, the section above established that the EU has a certain view about how to resolve conflicts which is closely interrelated to its own experiences. In order to promote this view in its relations with Georgia, conditionality and socialization have been raised as two principle ways to do so. As a result, the convening power of the EU also rests on its own credibility and consistency with regard to the values it preaches and the image it portrays.

The discussion above unambiguously portrays the paradigm under which the EU operates as a very different one to the realist approach discussed earlier. The notion put forth by Manners and Sjursen

---

[864] Nathalie Tocci. *The EU and Conflict Resolution: Promoting Peace in the Backyard*. London: Routledge, 2007. 10. Print.

[865] See Nathalie Tocci, M. Keating, and J. McGarry. "EU Accession and Conflict Resolution in Theory and Practice: The Case of Cyprus." *European Integration and the Nationalities Question*. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.

above that the EU is a new type of institution beyond the strictly Westphalian system runs contrary to the notions of a realist approach to mediation, which is inherently state-centric. The latter leads to an emphasis on exclusiveness and military power[866], which essentially leaves the mediation efforts trapped in spirals of hostilities and security dilemmas. Thus, the role of the EU in changing the frame of reference and the paradigm which dominated the mediation is a well justified research topic as the EU have held a key to transforming the structures conditioning the conflict. This fits with Mark Leonard's notion of the EU as a "transformative power"[867] that can induce significant normative change in the long-term, without the need of military capabilities.[868] Long-term conciliation of conflicts, i.e. changing the destructive environment of conflicts through a "structural foreign policy"[869], is a clearly different approach than the realist approach to mediation and its consequences outlined above.

Peck explains that sustainable peace involves both, short-term problem solving and long-term structural solutions to conflict prevention through the incorporation of human security concerns, as well as good governance.[870] Thus, in order for conflicts to be resolved short- and long-term approaches need to complement each other. The incorporation of human security and good governance as norms of conduct seem to be key for Peck's analysis and point to the role the EU could play by promoting these values. Peck also highlights that only a long-term strategy of structural change can induce change in the normative framework of approaching problems and thus highlights the possibility that an "indigenous capacity for resolving internal tensions before they lead to violent conflict"[871] could be constructed. This would encourage a durable consolidation of peace. It follows that ontologically, the EU can be conceptualized as a changer of the normative framework under which conflicts take place, and thus has transformative power to change these conflicts to attain peace. Whether these theoretical considerations hold true in practice will be examined in the next section by looking at the initiatives taken by the EU with respect to Georgia, and evaluating the EU's contribution with respect to bringing normative change to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

---

[866] See also John Agnew. "The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory." *Review of International Political Economy* 1: 53-80. Print.

[867] Mark Leonard. "Europe's Transformative Power." Centre for European Reform, 1 February 2005. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.cer.org.uk/publications/archive/bulletin-article/2005/europes-transformative-power>.

[868] Karen Elizabeth Smith and J. Zielonka. "The Instruments of European Union Foreign Policy." *Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy*. The Hague, The Netherlands: Kluwer Law International, 1998. Print.

[869] Stephan Keukeleire. *The European Union as a Diplomatic Actor*. Leicester, England: University of Leicester, Centre for the Study of Diplomacy, 2000. Print.

[870] Connie Peck. *Sustainable Peace: The Role of the UN and Regional Organizations in Preventing Conflict*. Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998. 15-16. Print.

[871] M. Brown. "Democratic Governance: Towards a Framework for Sustainable Peace." *Global Governance* 9: 141-146. Print.

Early EU initiatives with respect to Georgia

The normative aspects of the EU, which form the basis of its transformative power are affirmed in §6 of the Treaty of the European Union, stating that the EU seeks to promote liberty, democracy, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. Despite these normative aspirations some political analysts argue that the European Union has been 'the great absentee from the economical, political, and security affairs of the [Caucasian] region'[872], and consequently from the conflict resolution and mediation efforts of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. Nevertheless, while the EU might conduct less visible policies in Georgia than Russia or the United States, it does not hold true that it has been absent, but it has rather continuously strengthened its presence and increased its foreign policy initiatives at least vis-à-vis Georgia.

Georgia was recognized by the EU in 1992. During the 'hot phase' of the conflicts with South Ossetia and Abkhazia after 1992, the EU provided humanitarian financial assistance through the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and food aid through its Food Security Program (FSP).[873] In addition, in 1992 Georgia became a partner country to the EU's 'Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States' program (TACIS later Tacis). TACIS' activities were concentrated in six main areas: institutional, legal, and administrative reforms; private sector and economic development; the consequences of change in society and infrastructure networks; environmental protection; the rural economy; and nuclear safety. Its main contribution to mitigating the conflicts was promoting regional cooperation and attempting to link assistance levels to progress in conflict resolution. While TACIS and the fulfilment of its activities catalogue only developed over time, it first and foremost has to be understood in its context in the early 90's. In an official evaluation of the TACIS program "The European Commission's Tacis Program 1991-2006: A Success Story"[874], it is clearly pointed out that the Tacis program started in a rush, with a lack of information and knowledge about the countries in need of assistance. Political structures, institutions and partners were largely unknown, while the EU only had a delegation in place in Moscow out of all the CIS countries. While faced with a constantly changing institutional landscape in the partner countries, "[i]nternally no adequate procedures, no adequate rules and regulations, no common corporate culture were in place".[875] From its inception, given the various challenges, TACIS was thus oriented towards

---

[872] See e.g. Vladimir Socor. "NATO Prospects in the South Caucasus." *IASPS Policy Briefings*: 26 April 2004. Print.

[873] Dov Lynch. *Why Georgia Matters*. Paris: Institute for Security Studies, 2006. Print.

[874] Alexander Frenz. "The European Commission's Tacis Programme 1991-2006: A Success Story." European Commission, n.d. Web. 25 Sept. 2013. <ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/regional-cooperation/enpi-east/documents/annual_programmes/tacis_success_story_final_en.pdf>.

[875] Ibid.

implementing single small-scale projects on a demand-driven basis. The TACIS program provides a telling example of early EU involvement in Georgia.

From the onset the EU had the aim to assist the transformation process underway in Georgia after the break down of the Soviet Union. But prior to the realization of this goal, external challenges and internal limitations necessitated a learning process on the way to become a meaningful actor in Georgia. As a result, theoretical aims instrumental in transforming the conflicts, such as peacebuilding measures and changing the destructive environment with institution building and good governance as well as assisting the development of indigenous capacities for resolving internal tensions, could only be achieved gradual and with a view to long-term payoffs.

Political Dialogue cum Interests

As mentioned, the stabilization effort through humanitarian aid in the framework of ECHO, the FSP and technical assistance by TACIS dominated the EU engagement, during the 'hot' phase of regional conflicts. Following the phase of stabilization and a (more or less) stable peace agreement brokered and guaranteed by Russia, the EU's main focus gradually shifted to the political dimension of the relations. In 1996 the EU and Georgia signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which entered into force in 1999. Its purpose was to strengthen political dialogue and relations, support Georgia's democratic development and transition to a market economy as well as to foster economic relations including trade and investment en route to a sustainable economic development. The PCA was intended to "provide a basis for legislative, economic, social, financial, civil scientific, technological and cultural cooperation".[876]

Before putting in place the preconditions for intensified political relations in form of the PCA, the EU can generally be characterized as an important financial donor to the southern Caucasus. Economics overshadowed the concern for the stagnant political development for some time, as the EU was in the process of finding and devising adequate mechanisms to approach more political aspects of the transformation. Meanwhile, the development of the Transcaucasus as a transit route, intended to contribute to the diversification of energy supplies to Europe via Turkey and the Black Sea, took precedence. This can be regarded as an effort to link the region closer to Europe in an attempt of de-isolation and building institutions, thus fostering cooperation. On the other hand, it also raises issues about whether the EU's policies were solely norm driven, as it is hard to deny that this project served the interests of Europe with regard to what would later become a common term in EU vocabulary, namely energy security. To substantiate this point, the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia

---

[876] Andina Lazdaja, Inga Munteanu, and Burmaa Nyamaa. "EU in Conflict Resolution in Georgia." Roskilde University, 1 Jan. 2007. 45. Web. 22 Sept. 2013. <rudar.ruc.dk/bitstream/1800/3965/3/zGeorgia.pdf>.

(TRACECA) and the Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe (INOGATE) weighted heavily in the more than 1 billion Euro of technical and humanitarian aid channelled to the region between 1992 and 2000[877]. This macro-focus on technical and large infrastructure development experienced a shift, concurrent with a change in paradigms related to the international security environment after September 11th.

Hence, before 2001, the EU can be viewed as a financial donor of Georgia, offering support structures for privatization (TACIS) and macro-economic development in the spirit of drawing Georgia closer to the single European market.[878] While economic stabilization of the region, with a special focus on energy, took place hand in hand with the promotion of European norms such as market economy, rule of law, etc, political dialogue only progressed sluggishly. September 11th contributed to the EU's deeper appreciation of the notion that without an increased focus on improving the political and social conditions, aggravated by the enduring ethno-territorial conflicts, stabilization of the region was illusive and could at any time turn to reverse the progress realized in Georgia since the early 1990's. This was in part a consequence of heightened awareness of asymmetric threats to international security in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York, after which an enlarged notion of security (e.g. human security) was accepted and more attention was paid to black holes in the international system of nation states such as Abkhazia. The subsequent increasing concern with failing and failed states was also reflected in the European Security Strategy which accentuated the importance of an enlarged concept of security and noted that the EU, "should take a stronger interest in the problems of the Southern Caucasus, which will in due course also be a neighbouring region".[879] As reflected in this quote from the EU's Security Strategy, the EU began to be concerned with the security in its periphery as this came to be regarded to potentially having a direct impact on its own security, especially in light of the imminent eastward expansion.

Contrary to Russian and American perceptions of markets and security in the Caucasus, which were often conditioned by realist rationales and ended in zero-sum games, the EU took a more inclusive approach. Conditioned by the 'European experience' of peaceful co-existence, which has induced the EU to appreciate the payoffs of cooperation in a variety of areas, the EU emphasises mutual payoffs from stability[880] and to date shows no interest to repress the activities of other state actors in

[877] Since 1999 the EU Commission had recommended a concerted approach to the region, proposing the development of a regional strategy, which was also reflected in the Joint Luxembourg Declaration signed by the EU and the three regional heads of state in June 1999

[878] See Sascha Müller-Kraenner. *Die Europäische Nachbarschaftspolitik*. Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2004. 1. Print.

[879] Javier Solana. "A Secure Europe in a Better World." Consilium, 13 Dec. 2003. Web. 1 Mar. 2013. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>.

[880] Uwe Halbach. SWP Berlin. Personal Interview. February 2006.

Georgia.[881] This inclusive approach is also extended to the security realm. While the EU emphasised security risks emanating from unconsolidated nation-states (such as Georgia after the Soviet disintegration),[882] after September 11th, the European Security Strategy stressed multilateralism and the importance of involving other actors[883] in order to face these new challenges. This can be explained by the fact that the "EU risk perception is dominated by a structure-centred approach" - risks emanating from weak economies, institutions, and governance structures[884] - as opposed to an actor centred approach, as has also been implied by Keukleire's notion of structural foreign policy[885] mentioned above. Cooperation in multilateral frameworks was viewed to reduce these risks most effectively.

The EU Special Representative to the South Caucasus

The above mentioned approach to security risks was also evident in other EU initiatives. In July 2003, the Council appointed the Finish diplomat Heikki Talvitie as the first Special Representative of the EU (EUSR) to the South Caucasus with a mandate to draw up a strategy to guide EU policy in the region.[886] Vladmir Socor went as far as to claim that this move "demonstrated the EU's commitment to become a direct actor in the conflict resolution process".[887] Nevertheless, when the second EUSR Peter Semneby took over the office in 2006, the EUSR was still not authorised to act as mediator between the conflict parties. "His main role has been to act as the local relay of EU messages designed to moderate the conflictual behaviour of the parties and to persuade them to reinvigorate their search for a negotiated settlement."[888] The EUSR was thus another means for stimulating political dialogue and a way to keep the EU informed about developments on the ground, not only with regards to the conflicting parties but also other interested actors such as the UN, the OSCE and the members of the UN Group of Friends. When Peter Semneby turned out to be more active than his predecessor it was argued that the EU tried to find itself a niche in resolving Georgia's conflicts through his post.[889] He and

[881] Bruno Coppieters, Tamara Kovziridze, and Uwe Leonardy. "Federalization of Foreign Relations: Discussing Alternatives For the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict." *Working Paper 2, Caspian Studies Program, Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government*: 13. Print.; Also Sascha Müller-Kraenner. Former Heinrich Böll Foundation Director for Europe and North America. Personal Interview. 2006.
[882] Ingo Peters and Jan Bittner. "EU-US Risk Policy in the European Neighbourhood: The Cases of Moldova and Georgia." *Transatlantic Relations and Global Governance*. Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins University, SAIS, Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2006. 3. Print.
[883] Ibid. 6.
[884] Ibid. 7.
[885] Stephan Keukeleire. *The European Union as a Diplomatic Actor*.
[886] Dov Lynch. "Security Sector Governance in the Southern Caucasus – Towards an EU strategy." Österreichs Bundesheer, 2004. Web. 2 Sept. 2013. <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/10_ssg_04_lyn.pdf>.
[887] Vladimir Socor. "Ashton's Office Proposes Abolishing EU's Special Representatives for Moldova and South Caucasus." *Eurasian Daily Monitor* 4 June 2010: n. pag. Print.
[888] Michael Merlingen and R. Ostrauskaite. *EU Peacebuilding in Georgia: Limits and Achievements*. The Hague: Cleer Working Papers, 2009. 18. Print.
[889] J. Devdiarini and B. Hancilova. "EU Broaches Peacekeeping Possibility in Georgia." *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst* 7 Mar. 2007: n. pag. Print.

his team developed numerous small-scale peacebuilding projects with the EU Institute for Security Studies in Paris and initiated a number of dialogue forums on the conflicts for experts, civil society and other stakeholders from Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The EUSR also set up a Border Support Team (BST), assisting Georgia to implement security sector reform in the area of border management. This has been labelled as a contribution to peacebuilding, but despite the fact that the appointment of a EUSR to the South Caucasus was hailed as a milestone in EU-Georgian relations, especially with regard to the conflict at the onset of the mandate, critics argue to the effect that "The EU's appointment of a Special Representative for South Caucasus […] so far failed to bring the EU a role [...]".[890] Part of this criticism alludes to the failure of the EU to match the EUSR's political role with financial means. In addition, no strategy for the South Caucasus was drawn up to guide EU policy, one of the main goals when assigning the first EUSR to the region. Yet, overall it may also be deduced from aforementioned arguments that there was no opening to be filled without first having to remove the current placeholder.

In light of this criticism and given the fact that there were certainly ambiguities about how much of a role the EUSR should play as well as obvious shortcomings with regard to contributing to conflict resolution, this post, as all other EU initiatives, needs to be evaluated in the context of its time. As a learning institution, the EU may have realized these shortcomings as time progressed; at least this is what the empirical evidence points to. In early 2007, a fact finding mission was organized by the EUSR together with the EU Commission, in order to search for concrete peacebuilding measures that the EU could apply to create conditions conducive to finding a political settlement. A joint policy paper was drawn up and the suggested measures where approved in September 2007 by the EU member states. "Among the envisaged activities were economic projects such as the reconstruction of infrastructure connecting Georgia and the break-away republics, for instance, the rehabilitation of the Black Sea Railway through Abkhazia; people-to-people contacts; education and information projects, including the opening of EU information centres in Abkhazia […]; and cooperation in the field of law enforcement.".[891] As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, this approach coincided with the new ambitions of the EU to get more directly involved in the mediation process, i.e. a new activism on the part of the EU. This development can be traced back to an increased recognition on the part of the EU about Russia's partial and at times destructive role in the mediation. Georgia had been lobbying this notion at length in previous years, but only the direct involvement, contacts and experience on the ground that the EUSR maintained finally led to the EU to credit this point. In October 2006, Semneby

---

[890] Stephen Blank, S.E. Cornell, and S.F. Starr. "From Neglect to Duress: The West and the Georgian Crisis Before the 2008 War." *The Guns of August 2008 Russia's War in Georgia.* Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2009. 113. Print.
[891] Michael Merlingen and R. Ostrauskaite. *EU Peacebuilding in Georgia.* 12.

gave an official comment noting that "Recent events have added weight to the Georgian argument that Russia is not a neutral participant in the peacekeeping arrangements and negotiation formats [for Georgian separatist regions]…that the current status quo is not tenable, that in fact it is not a status quo but is gradually deteriorating".[892] This outspokenness on the part of the EU set into motion a new series of statements to the avail that the EU was seriously considering sending EU peacekeepers to Georgia to monitor the conflicts. During a meeting with President Saakashvili in Brussels on February 28, 2007 Javier Solana explained that the EU was ready to participate in missions after a EU Commission Communiqué about strengthening ENP had taken up the possibility of participating in civil, military monitoring or peacekeeping operations.[893]

Seeking a more direct role in the conflict resolution efforts via the EUSR, peacekeeping and the desire for direct involvement in the mediation certainly signified a change. The EU had grown more assertive with regard to its role in the South Caucasus and Georgia in particular. The outbreak of the war at a point when most of these initiatives had not surpassed a preparatory phase undercut these new desires.

European Neighbourhood Policy

Despite the fact that the mandate of the EUSR was logistically hard to fulfil, it raised awareness and functioned as an additional link to the events taking place on the ground in the region. It also contributed to the extension of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) into the southern Caucasus, due to an increased consciousness of the region and a more differentiated way to assess its conflicts. It coincided with two important developments: The termination of the EU's Eastern Enlargement and Georgia's Rose Revolution at the end of 2003. These must be regarded as a decisive development that led the EU to overhaul its initial policy of not including the region into the ENP. At a point when the EU had grown weary of the developments and political mismanagement in Georgia under President Eduard Shevardnadze, the country sent a strong signal, namely the Rose Revolution, about its desire to belong to the EU and the community of values and norms it represented.[894] At the same time the EU's eastern enlargement "redistributed power among existing camps within the Union"[895] A number of the new Central and Eastern European accession states took on the role as advocates for Georgia. Their view of and experience with Russia was a very different one from that of the old EU members and led them to lobby for greater inclusion and support of Georgia and its independence. They were

[892] Semneby, P., cit.n. A. Rettman. "Russia is not Neutral in Black Sea Conflict, EU says." *EUOBSERVER* 12 Oct. 2006: n. pag. Print.
[893] Solana, J., cit.n. J. Devdiarini and B. Hancilova. "EU Broaches Peacekeeping Possibility in Georgia."
[894] See Walter Kaufmann. "A European Path for Abkhazia: Yesterday's Pipe Dreams?" *Caucasus Analytical Digest (CAD)* 2009.7: 2-6. Print.
[895] Michael Merlingen and R. Ostrauskaite. *EU Peacebuilding in Georgia*. 11.

also instrumental in initiating the deployment of EUJUST THEMIS to Georgia, the first rule of law mission launched by the EU in the context of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).[896]

In a way, the European Neighbourhood Policy of 2004/2005 was designed to assure the external security of the Union by accentuating non-military aspects of security such as social, economical and political security in the Union's periphery.[897] To this end, the EU Commissions' 'A wider Europe' communiqué of march 2003 outlines as the policy's core to foster political and economic interdependence, in order to nurture stability, security and sustainable development inside, as well as outside the Union.[898] While the ENP embraced an enlarged concept of security, it must also be considered in the framework of analysis of the EU as a normative actor. The 2004 ENP Strategy Paper clearly highlighted the "commitment to specific actions which confirm or reinforce the adherence to shared values".[899] Democratisation, respect for human rights, the development of civil society, cooperation with the International Criminal Court and the EU's external actions are how these shared values are deciphered at a latter point in the document.[900] The Country reports that followed still contained these values rather specifically. These reports served as starting points for the Action Plans negotiated between Georgia and the EU. In his research about the ENP and democratisation, Rommens notes "value gaps" in the process that led from Strategy via Country Reports to Action Plans. He for example points out that while the Action Plans contain eight priority areas, they "only list democratisation as a complementary action".[901] Thus, while norms certainly continued to play a role, ENP must also be regarded in a way that takes into account the EU's increasing appreciation for its own interests in the region.

It can be argued that the rationale behind this policy was the attempt to avoid new dividing lines in Europe at a time when the enlargement process essentially came to a halt for an unspecified time period after the 2004 and 2007 enlargements had been decided upon. The EU thus tried to bridge a gap between excluding membership for countries such as Georgia and its continued desire to diffuse its policies in those countries although the membership prospect had vanished. This can be viewed in terms of trying to maintain them in the 'ring of friends', a concept outlined in its Security Strategy in

---

[896] See *Council Joint Action 2004/523/CFSP*. Brussels: European Union, 28 June 2004. Print.
[897] This makes sense when looking at Collier et al, who emphasise that countries with extremely low incomes, poor policies, weak institutions and bad governance are most at risk for conflict; See Paul Collier et al.. *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*. Washington, DC: World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2003. 176. Print.
[898] Commission of the European Union. *COM 2003/104:4*. Brussels: European Union, 2003. Print.
[899] "Communication from the Commission, European Neighborhood Stragegy Paper, COM 2004/373." European Union External Action, 12 May 2004. 9. Web. 12 Sept. 2009.
<ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/strategy/strategy_paper_en.pdf>.
[900] Ibid. 13.
[901] Thijs Rommens. *The Impact of the European Neighborhood Policy on Democratisation in the South Caucasus (Paper Presented at the Changing Europe Summer School 2008)*. Bremen: Central and Eastern Europe in a Changing World - University of Bremen, 2008. Print.

2003.[902] Rommens neatly summarizes the changing relationship between the South Caucasus and the EU by stating that "In the early nineties, this region was seen as a conflict-prone zone riddled with failed states in need of humanitarian aid. Now, however, the EU perceives the area as an important source for energy, a growing economic market, a strategically located area between Russia and the Middle East and a bridgehead for democratisation in the region."[903] Notably, as also pointed out by Rommens, the ENP mixes the divergent interests of the EU clearly for the first time, as norms and values are mentioned with more material interest in one and the same breath. In addition, while ENP certainly depreciates the importance of coercive means to attain security, its own security certainly still looms large. This point is highlighted by the fact that the vision of the European Neighbourhood Strategy was to create a zone of security, prosperity and stability together with those countries that share common values and goals of the EU.[904] It thus emphasises shared norms, among others, as a way to attain this security.

In terms of contributing to conflict resolution, the ENP set as its goals to strengthen existing forms of regional and sub-regional cooperation, political dialogue as well as to contribute to conflict resolution. Notably "the ENP should reinforce the EU's contribution to promoting the settlement of regional conflicts".[905] This does not mean, however that the European Union was ready to assume an active role in the resolution of regional conflicts like Abkhazia. As Sascha Mueller-Kraenner notes, the key element of the European Neighbourhood Policy was the economic integration of these countries into the single European market.[906] Instead of a landmark change in its structural approach to risks and conflicts in the region, the Commission merely demanded of its new neighbours to strengthen the rule of law and the resolution of conflicts, so that the EU will be able to support the measures taken by the individual countries in the region[907] through a bilateral approach, open coordination and the formulation of Action Plans. This indicates EU efforts to foster indigenous capacities and initiatives for resolving internal tensions. It also highlights the EU's appreciation for non-military factors, especially dialogue, to attain security which it also clearly communicates to its neighbours. It also shows, however, that the EU has not developed a readiness to act as short-term contributor to operational conflict resolution, such as mediation, but rather aims to support domestic and international strategies

---

[902] See Javier Solana. "A Secure Europe in a Better World."

[903] Thijs Rommens. *The Impact of the European Neighborhood Policy on Democratisation in the South Caucasus.* 5.

[904] "Communication from the Commission: Paving the way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument." Commission of the European Communities, 1 July 2003. Web. 6 July 2012. <http://ec.eurhttp://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/wider/wider_en.pdfopa.eu/>.

[905] "Communication from the Commission, European Neighborhood Stragegy Paper, COM 2004/373." European Union External Action.

[906] Sascha Müller-Kraenner. *Die Europäische Nachbarschaftspolitik.* 1.

[907] "Communication from the Commission, European Neighborhood Stragegy Paper, COM 2004/373." European Union External Action. 11.

and mechanisms already in place. It is nevertheless noteworthy that "[i]n the ENP Action Plan that Georgia negotiated with the EU, conflict resolution occupied a prominent place",[908] especially when comparing it to the Action Plans drawn up between the EU with those in existence between the EU and Armenia and Azerbaijan respectively. As a next step, the expectations extended to the EU will be considered before looking at the constraints the EU faced with regards to contributing to a normative shift of the conflict structure.

Normative Power with global ambitions: A Contradiction in Terms?

Notions about the EU's normative[909] and civilian power,[910] its non-military convening power through socialization and Europeanization have certainly shaped the scholarly literature about the Union. In this respect, Orbie[911] points out, that the civilian power theory 'has dominated the debate on Europe's role for several decades'. However, there are also alternative views about the EU, which have only sporadically surfaced in the mainstream discourse. Those views stretch from characterizing the EU as a power with aspirations for global reach to new millennial imperialist ambitions. They highlight the increased appreciation of and call for the EU's global role, for geopolitical factors, geopolitical space, geo-economics and its self-interest. They offer a different way of looking at the EU in an attempt to stipulate thought about the fact that the same concept or institution may look very different when taking into account another point of references. These views are discussed in the following in order to show that first, the nature and aims of the EU have changed over time. Second, this change explains the evolution in EU-Georgian relations, which will be argued cumulated in the EU's offer to become involved directly in the peacekeeping and mediation formats in 2007/2008. Third, possible effects of this trend and its implementation in the EU's periphery through EU policies will be discussed with a view to answering the question whether this has positively or negatively influenced the EU's contribution to the mediation process.

Scholars who systematically evaluate the trend away from "normative power" to "global power" EU are still rare. James Rogers' article "From 'Civilian Power' to 'Global Power': Explicating the European Union's 'Grand Strategy' Through the Articulation of Discourse Theory" published in 2009 in the Journal of Common Market studies is a noteworthy example of this novel notion. Rogers claims that it is possible to identify the "gradual sedimentation of a new European grand strategy, one which is both

---

[908] Magdalena Frichova Grono. *Georgia's Conflicts: What Role for the EU as Mediator.* London: International Alert, 2008. 12. Print.
[909] Ian Manners. "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?"
[910] François Duchêne. "A New European Defense Community." *Foreign Affairs* 50: 69-82. Print.; François Duchêne, and R. Mayne. "Europe's Role in World Peace." *Europe Tomorrow: Sixteen Europeans Look Ahead.* London: Fontana, 1972. Print.
[911] J. Orbie. "Civilian Power Europe: Review of the Original and Current Debates." *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic Studies Association* 41: 123. Print.

geopolitical in focus, and hegemonic in ambition".[912] His work will be discussed at length, before complementing it with others to complete the picture.

Rogers uses discourse theory originated from the Essex School to show that the EU has developed a new Grand Strategy that has emerged and taken effect, and has changed, altered and reproduced the EU's discursive polity as a renewed political community since 1999, when the previously existing Grand Strategy was crushed by the atrocities of the Yugoslav war.[913] He notes that this represents a paradigm shift in how the EU is perceived and perceives itself. He also points to the consequence for a "new vision of security within the enlarged European community".[914] In order to make his claim, he uses Posen's definition of Grand Strategy: "A grand strategy can be best conceived as a theory about how to achieve security. Security as a concept encompasses the safety, sovereignty, territorial integrity and power position of states. A grand strategy identifies and prioritizes threats to a state's security, and similarly identifies appropriate political and military remedies. These remedies consist of chains of inter-connected political and military means and ends – including military forces, intelligence capabilities, alliances, defence industry, foreign aid programmes, etc".[915]

In line with the EU's model for conflict resolution that sprang from the EU's unique post-WWII experience, roughly elaborated above, Rogers sees the previous Grand Strategy of the European Union as "the peace project, the 'civilian power'"[916] and claims that François Duchêne,[917] a close friend of Jean Monnet, was instrumental in the formation of this Grand Strategy after he first coined the term 'civilian power' during his time as Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Accordingly, "the European Community's grand strategy should concentrate on 'domesticating' [...[918]] or 'civilianizing'[...[919]] relations between its component Member States, as well as those on its immediate periphery, especially those under Soviet domination".[920] It was constructed in opposition to Europe's bellicose history, a geopolitical great power struggle that had dominated Europe's past and led it into two World Wars.

---

[912] See James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 831–862, especially 852.
[913] Ibid.
[914] Ibid. 832.
[915] B. Posen. "The European Security Strategy: Practical Implications." *Oxford Journal on Good Governance* 1: 33-34. Print.; James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 836.
[916] James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 841.
[917] See François Duchêne, and R. Mayne. "Europe's Role in World Peace."; François Duchêne, M. Kohnstamm, and W. Hager. "The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence." *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign-Policy Problems before the European Community*. London: Macmillan, 1973. Print.
[918] François Duchêne, M. Kohnstamm, and W. Hager. "The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence." 19-20., cit.n. James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 841.
[919] François Duchêne. *Jean Monnet.* 401. cit.n. James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 841.
[920] James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 840-841.

Rogers argues that this grand strategy was delegitimized by the Yugoslav war. Unable to offer a 'civilian power' solution to the atrocities committed in Yugoslavia, Europeans came to realize that their expectations had surpassed their means and that territorial security was an outdated Cold War concept, not sufficient to guarantee the security of Europe and its nations. A "discourse coalition" of euro-strategists evolved to fill the void after the experience of the Yugoslav war had put into question the "civilian power identity".[921] In this traumatized environment, a securitization debate took hold[922], broaching the issue of "security culture", "strategic culture" and "military culture", sub sum arum a debate about a new Grand strategy ensued. Contributors were among others Cornish and Edwards[923] with their respective analyses on the creation of a European-level strategic culture, "Giegerich (2006), Matlary (2006), Meyer (2004,[...]) and Howorth (2007)"[924], who analysed the development of a European-level security culture. This debate was furthered by important elements within the EU; powerful advocates for a more global role of the EU in line with its global power quest.

The Treaty of Lisbon represents the most obvious push for a global power role. Rogers traces the developments from what he terms a "chronopolitical approach to the geopolitical approach"[925] back to an article by Robert Cooper published by Demos in London shortly after the peak of the Bosnian war. *The Post Modern State and the World Order* outlines a more interventionist European approach to foreign and security policy.[926] In addition to individual policy makers from within the EU, such as Robert Cooper, the 'discourse coalition' expressing similar notions is described to encompass scholars, researchers, experts and insiders of European Institutions. As its reach and makeup is too broad to be explicitly explained in the framework of this chapter, some examples are listed below to reflect the geopolitical, global power approach of the EU since 1999.[927]

After the wars in Yugoslavia, international events such as September 11th and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan contributed further to the securitization of Europe. In this regard, Luiza Bialasiewicz

---

[921] Ibid. 844.
[922] See Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and J. de Wilde. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Rienner, 1998. 23. Print., on a more detailed description of such processes
[923] Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards. "Beyond the EU/NATO Dichotomy: The Beginnings of a European Strategic Culture." *International Affairs* 77: 587-603. Print.
[924] Bastian Giegerich. *European Security and Strategic Culture: National Responses to the EU's Security and Defence Policy*. Berlin: Nomos, 2006. Print.; J.H. Matlary. "When Soft Power Turns Hard: Is an EU Strategic Culture Possible?" *Security Dialogue* 37: 105-121. Print.; Christoph Meyer. "Theorizing European Strategic Culture: Between Convergence and the Persistence of National Diversity." *Centre for European Policy Studies Working Document* 204. 2004. Print.; Jolyon Howorth. *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.; all cit.n. James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 833.
[925] James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 847.
[926] Ibid.
[927] Although not explicitly mentioned by Rogers, the discourse coalition does not remain contained to Brussels. Moreover, it is a transnational phenomenon and advocates or followers of the global power notion can be found in every European capital and beyond.

recounts the importance of the "explicit recognition of the Union's international role – at the institutional level, but also within the popular recognition that the EU can be "a 'force for good' (to use Romano Prodi's expression)" and Jürgen Habermas' interpretation of the Europe-wide mobilisation against the war in Iraq as the first crystallisation of a European public opinion, of a European "public sphere".[928] These statements highlight the call and the public approval of a more global role for the EU as a consequence of those events. By 2005, José Manuel Barroso called for a more active, global and influential Europe in a lecture at the London School of Economics.[929] In the following year, Javier Solana exclaimed: "Where did we start? As a peace project among adversaries. What is our greatest accomplishment? The spread of stability and democracy across the continent. And what is our task for the future? To make Europe a global power; a force for good in the world".[930]

Meanwhile, on the way from a soft to a more hard power approach suitable for a global power, the call to advance the EU's capabilities became louder.[931] The Director of General Political Questions in the General Secretariat of the Council, Jim Cloos even voiced the need for the Union to become "a bit more Machiavellian [. . .]".[932] Evoking Machiavelli amounts to a call for interest formulation and their promotion on the international diplomatic stage. Commissioner for Trade, Peter Mandelson put it even more explicitly in a 2007 pamphlet, stating: "Europeans need the EU now as much as in 1957, but for different reasons. It is the multiplier that will enable us to turn our national ambitions into credible global influence to shape the international system [. . .]".[933] As Roger's assessment shows, interests and Influence certainly entered the way many policy makers and shapers started thinking and talking about the EU.

The transformation from a 'civilian power' to a geopolitically minded 'global power' is of course not a linear one. The Union's transformation is often sporadic and slow and faced at times severe internal resistance. Van Ham's quote about Cooper illustrates this point: "Robert Cooper – the most prominent

---

[928] Leonhardt van Efferink. "The European Union: Geographical Imaginations - Interview with Luiza Bialasiewicz." September 2009. Exploring Geopolitics. Web. 17 October 2011. <http://www.exploringgeopolitics.org/Interview_Bialasiewicz_Luiza_European_Union_Geographical_Imaginations_Self_Representation_Border_Security_Mediterranean_Black_Sea_Global_South.html>.

[929] José Manuel Barroso. "Response and Responsibility: The European Partnership for Aid and Development." European Commission. London School of Economics, London. 20 May 2005. Speech. <europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-05-291_en.htm>. 6 August 2013.

[930] Javier Solana. *Speech by Javier Solana, The Sound of Europe Conference.* S030/06, Salzburg, 27 January 2006, cit.n. James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 851.

[931] See e.g. Daniel Keohane and Tomas Valasek. *Willing and Able? EU Defence in 2020.* London: Centre for European Reform, 2008. Print.; Nicholas K.J. Witney. *Re-Energising Europe's Security and Defence Policy.* London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2008. Print., both cit.n. James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 849.

[932] J. Cloos, A. Wenger, and V. Mauer. "EU Foreign Policy: Where Next after the European Security Strategy?" *Securing Europe? Implementing the European Security Strategy.* Zürich: Center for Security Studies, 2006. Print., cit.n. James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 850.

[933] Peter Mandelson. *The European Union in the Global Age.* London: Policy Network, 2007. 10. Print., cit.n. James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 853.

strategic thinker within the European Council – [states that] the EU Strategy now aims to go beyond mere 'soft power' and 'get real.'[...]. Obviously, Cooper's ideas have provoked heated debates within the EU, ruffling feathers of all kinds, especially those Member States who cling to the obsolete *Zivilmacht* [civilian power] model".[934] Despite such internal divisions and reoccurring opposition, the Union has managed to put together an impressive "institutional apparatus in Brussels geared towards dealing with geopolitical issues; the mobilization of European armed forces and battle groups and their deployment overseas; and the constant calls for more European action beyond the European homeland. The Brussels-based apparatus includes the High Representative, the Military Staff, Policy Unit, Joint Situation Centre, the Special Representatives, as well as the General Secretariat of the Council, the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management and the European Defence Agency."[935] This highlights that the institutional framework to put the global power aspirations into action has largely moved from the theoretical to the real and has been established already.

While the notion of the EU as a global power traced by Rogers has to be understood in the previously mentioned sense of fluidity that determines the Unions evolution, it simply depicts a current trend that remains subject to change. At the same time, some of the views reflected by Rogers have been seconded by others. Parag Khanna argues bluntly that the EU "[…] is an empire […]"[936], one of three superpowers in the world today that "use their military, economic, and political power to build spheres of influence [and notably] competing to mediate conflicts […]".[937] Although not in agreement with Khanna, Bordonaro lends credence to Khanna's and Rogers' claims by stating that "Khanna's point of view has been heard many times in the last two decades. Many scholars, observers, and decision-makers have called the EU a rising world power […]"[938]. Khanna also highlights that from a certain point of view, the EU may be regarded as expansionist and he explains this point as follows: "Europe has expanded by one country per year, not just deepening its ties, but actually making members out of former Soviet Republics and Warsaw Pact countries-one per year, on average, since the collapse of the Soviet Union."[939] Khanna who has devoted much of his research to trying to understand the world from the perspective of non-Western powers thus tries to show that the way the EU perceives its growth

---

[934] Peter van Ham. "Europe Gets Real: The New Security Strategy Shows the EU's." *American Institute for Contemporary German Studies (AICGS)*: 9 January 2004. Print., cit.n. James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 845.

[935] James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 852.

[936] Parag Khanna. *The Second World: How Emerging Powers are Redefining Global Competition in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2008. xiii. Print.

[937] Ibid., xvi.

[938] Leonhardt van Efferink. "Global Position and Political Integration - Interview with Federico Bordonaro." March 2009. Exploring Geopolitics. Web. 1 February 2010. <http://www.exploringgeopolitics.org/Interview_Bordonaro_Federico_European_Union_Global_Power_Positio n_Political_Integration_Relationship_Russia_Geopolitics_Geopolitical_Briefing.html>.; also see Jan Zielonka. *Europe as Empire: The Nature of the Enlarged European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Print.

[939] Parag Khanna. "In conversation with Joanna J. Myers." *Carnegie Council*: 16 April 2008. Print.

from within, may be perceived very differently by powers that do not belong to the EU or are not part of the western orbit.

Before testing the above mentioned against the empirical evidence and scholarly research about the EU in Georgia, the 'normative power' idea expressed by Manners and Sjursen must be supplemented to the idea of 'civilian power' when discussing the EU as a rising global power center in the world. It has been mentioned that Manners has emphasized the inclusive ideals of the EU. Sjursen has added to this point that the EU is a 'post-Westphalian' entity with fuzzy borders. In addition, as a 'normative power', the promotion of norms is not to be regarded as means to achieve national interests and aims. To depart from the latter point, in the ongoing debate - scholarly or political - this point is increasingly misconstrued. Khanna speaking to the Carnegie Council on April 16, 2008 expressed a view that echoed a common standpoint of a large number of American policy makers and shapers, when he claimed the legitimacy of the EU "spreading values and using culture and so forth to increase influence".[940] The same has been expressed by Ambassador David Smith, the director of the Georgian Security Analysis Center, namely that the promotion of norms and interests go hand in hand.[941] Interestingly, all these observers do not deny the Union of its normative qualities, but see them as a means to achieve specific ends. Gernot Erler, the former State Secretary in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who coined the German suggestion for a Stability Pact for the South Caucasus, articulated the notion that "European market interests demand political stability as a prerequisite".[942] Although he does not specify how political stability can be brought about, the EU is rather specific on how this goal can be achieved, i.e. through a largely normative policy. This would infer that the normative work the EU does in its periphery can from this point of view be regarded as a means to an end, defined here as European economic interests. In addition, Ghazaryan, a scholar specialized on geopolitical and geo-strategic perspectives of the EU observes the 'use of socio and cultural models' by the EU, which can be interpreted as a rather utilitarian approach to norms, that does not fit with the 'normative power' theory.[943]

Furthermore, especially given late developments with regard to the Lisbon Treaty, the EU shows a certain trend to be converging toward the currently predominant Westphalian model instead of moving away from it or questioning it altogether. A single currency, a more unified foreign policy and the acquisition of hard power capabilities are all cases to support this point. This is not to argue that

---

[940] Ibid.
[941] David Smith. Lecturer Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. Personal Interview. 2010.
[942] G. Erler, F. Mueller, D. Dettke. "Region of the Future: The Caspian Sea. German Interests in European Politics in the Trans-Caucasus and Central Asian Republics." *A Great Game No More: Oil, Gas and Stability in the Caspian Sea Region*. Washington, DC: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1999. 93. Print.
[943] S. Ghazaryan. "A Geopolitical and Geo-Strategic Perspective of Post-Modern Politics in the EU and its Borders: Europeanization as a Cultural Phenomenon in Transcaucasia." *University of Trieste, Italy*: 2006. *Open Starts*. Web. 27 Sept. 2013. <www.openstarts.units.it/dspace/bitstream/10077/877/1/g7sarkis.pdf>.

the EU is in fact a Westphalian state, which in the first place would have to be defined in the environment of a globalising and increasingly transnational world. But the consolidation of its power and the new role of territoriality substantiate the point that it increasingly acquires attributes which do not make its appearance as extraordinary as once exclaimed. In this context, it is important to look at territoriality and at borders, which remain the main crossing lines within geopolitics. Fuzzy borders were once the trademark of the Union, remarked among others by Sjursen, mentioned above. Such a post-modern political and territorial model would be expected to shift away from a strong emphasis on bounded territory as it develops further.[944] But as the EU underwent the process of renewed self-definition and increased securitization (see above), its borders have become increasingly distinct. The amplified preoccupation with and definition of threats accompanied this development. Threats have been articulated among others as Islamist extremism, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, weak governance, failing and failed states, global warming, the current state and developments in world order, Russia, the existing state of American Power, the rise of China, rampant immigration, the vulnerability of the Unions' extended borders, etc..[945] Bialasiewicz confirms this notion and argues that "the past decade has been marked by an increasing preoccupation with the control and policing of the EU's borders against a series of new "threats" […]."[946]

This preoccupation with threats that necessitates the debate about borders is the key in Ghazaryan's geopolitical perspective of post-national politics of the EU and its border. He evaluates four geo-strategic models of borders, namely networked (porous) borders, march, colonial borders and limes. He explains that after eastward enlargement the states of Central and Eastern Europe ceased to function as a march for the EU, an archaic term he uses to describe "a neutral belt or strip of severance" or "an interzone between powers".[947] Thus, while a kind of de-territorialization occurs within the borders of the EU's Schengenland, a new territorialisation has been said to take place in the EU's outside, i.e. its periphery. With regard to Eastern and Central Europe which have long been regarded as a kind of natural march by scholars of geopolitics, the May 2004 Enlargement meant a shift away from associating this space with its former function. As Ghazaryan posits: The May 1st enlargement

---

[944] See B. Axford, R. Huggins, D. Smith, and S. Wright. "Towards a Post-National Polity: The Emergence of the Network Society in Europe." *Whose Europe? The Turn Towards Democracy*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. Print.

[945] Venusberg Group. *Enhancing the European Union as an International Security Actor: A Strategy for Action*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2000. Print.; Venusberg Group. *A European Defence Strategy*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2004. Print.; Venusberg Group. *Why the World Needs a Strong Europe (...) and Europe Needs to be Strong: Ten Messages to the European Council*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2005. Print.; Venusberg Group. *Beyond 2010: European Grand Strategy in the Global Age*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2007. Print.; "Text of the Berlin Declaration." BBC News, 25 Mar. 2007. Web. 26 Sept. 2011. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6491487.stm>.

[946] Leonhardt van Efferink. "The European Union: Geographical Imaginations - Interview with Luiza Bialasiewicz."

[947] S. Ghazaryan. "A Geopolitical and Geo-Strategic Perspective of Post-Modern Politics in the EU and its Borders." 442.

touches most states of Central and Eastern Europe […] this geopolitical area cease[s] to function as a buffer zone. However the EU needs a belt of states insulating it from direct exposition to the above mentioned threats. So, the […] march is likely to move eastwards".[948] After the accession of Rumania and Bulgaria to the EU, the idea of a march now encompasses the states of the South Caucasus, particularly Georgia, which now entertains a sea border with the EU. Merlingen and Ostrauskaite add that "the eastward enlargement of the EU brought the problems and conflicts of Eastern Europe right up to the borders of the EU".[949] Although not phrased as explicitly, this statement illustrates that the conflicts of Eastern Europe where those in the periphery of Eastern Europe. This eastern European periphery has now moved to become the periphery of the EU. The threats that were formerly filtered through the Eastern European buffer, have now become direct threats to the EU. Due to these developments, i.e. new threat perceptions and a subsequent focus on territorialization, Rogers argues that "new and harder external common European borders" are in the process of being established.[950]

In line with the argument about a harder border goes the following proposal by Diez. He argues that against the ideal of an inclusive polity, the EU has increasingly defined itself against a "geopolitical othering"[951], an outside for which it has currently excluded any membership options and which it even posits to be the emissary of a variety of threats and against which it may need protection. This seems to contradict the idea of an entity moving further and further away from a territorialized concept of statehood. It also poses a fundamental challenge as Bialasiewicz rightly points out: "How can the Union reconcile its self-representation as a unique space of social and human solidarity, as a unique space of "freedom, security and justice", with the need to delimit – and defend – the borders of that space; with the need to decide who can – and who cannot – share in the 'European Dream'?".[952] The answer may lie in the fact that the EU has undergone a change and is currently in the process of establishing itself as a global power. This does not deny the Union of its normative qualities, but as it has surpassed the idea of 'civilian' or 'normative power', it may face these contradictions between norms and interests outlined by Bialasiewics. It may also be confronted with criticism such that it uses its norms to achieve European interests and goals or in the worst case accusations of hypocrisy, due to a lack of consistency and credibility. Whether the EU can consolidate its new grand strategy with its value and norm laden foreign policy is a topic to be elaborated in another research. For the purpose of this research it is time to turn to EU foreign policy in Georgia and the South Caucasus to evaluate whether the geopolitical shift in outlook within the EU manifested itself in its policies and discourse about those

---

[948] Ibid.
[949] Michael Merlingen and R. Ostrauskaite. *EU Peacebuilding in Georgia.* 11.
[950] James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 852-853.
[951] T. Diez. "Europe's Others and the Return of Geopolitics." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 7: 319-335. Print., cit.n. James Rogers. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power."* 847.
[952] Leonhardt van Efferink. "The European Union: Geographical Imaginations - Interview with Luiza Bialasiewicz."

policies in its exterior. Georgia will thus function as a mini-case study in the following sub-chapter, which will be essential to explain the statement by the EU in 2008 that the Union would be ready to get involved more directly in the mediation of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

The EU in Georgia: From Newcomer to Global Actor

It has been demonstrated that conceptions about the nature of the EU have been shifting and that different point of views have to be considered when thinking about EU policies and their impact. The following section will show how the EU's aspirations for global power manifested itself in its policies towards Georgia over the course of time. Looking at some empirical evidence, the arguments outlined above should be tested. In addition, a more geopolitical and interest driven foreign policy in Georgia allows to trace and better understand why the EU was ready to take on a more active role in both peacekeeping and mediation formats.

The EU's role in Georgia has often been characterized as insufficient and not matching its aspirations regarding a global role. Eberhardt Sandschneider, the research director of one of Germany's most established think tanks, the German Council on Foreign Relations, has characterized the EU foreign policy in Georgia as "reactive at most".[953] With regard to the conflicts, the expert Uwe Halbach working at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs has described the EU's action with regard to the conflict in Abkhazia as "working around the conflict", describing them as evasive.[954] Although these views echo some of the views earlier listed about a certain passivity of the EU in Georgia, Halbach clearly points out a shift that has been taking place with regard to the conflicts over the course of time. He explains that over the course of the past years, the regional conflicts in the common neighbourhood with Russia have been increasingly characterized and perceived as European conflicts. This marks a shift as especially during the 1990's Europe was focused on the Balkans.[955] This change in perception correlates with the events noted above, among them the faltering of the old grand strategy, a call for more global action, a new de-territorialized perception of threats which went hand in hand with the securitization of politics and the EU neighbourhood after events such as September 11th and also the European Union's Security Strategy, which clearly pointed to Georgia as one of those areas that needed stabilization. Needless to mention, it also coincided with EU enlargement and a generally increased preoccupation with borderization[956] as the EU borders gradually moved closer to Georgia.

---

[953] S. Meister. "Recalibrating Germany's and EU's Policy in the South Caucasus." *DGAP Analyse* 2: 4. Print.
[954] Uwe Halbach. *Ungelöste Regionalkonflikte im Südkaukasus*. Berlin: SWP, 2010. Print.
[955] Ibid. 30-31., see also Ronald D. Asmus. *A Little War that shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 12. Print.
[956] Leonhardt van Efferink. "The European Union: Geographical Imaginations - Interview with Luiza Bialasiewicz."

The EU has intensified its relations with Georgia in the years following 2001 in accordance with its new global power aspirations noted above and in order to avoid threats and promote interests. These relations were characterized by policies such as the EUSR, EUJUST THEMIS and ENP. Security loomed large on the agenda as did stability. The EUSR entertained a border mission in line with the EU's rising preoccupation with borders. EUJUST THEMIS was the first mission of its kind deployed under the ESDP, thus clearly hinting at security interests that were to be served with this rule of law mission. Sascha Müller-Kraenner was previously quoted as pointing out the EU's interest in drawing Georgia closer to the European market and both Meister and Erler cited above have made statements to elaborate the EU's economic interests and the discovery of new post-Soviet markets. ENP has served this purpose by drawing Georgia closer to the EU in terms of Georgia's legislative and regulatory alignment with the *Acquis Communautaire* as well as in terms of its foreign policy alignment with the CFSP. Stefan Meister even argues that over the course of time, "energy and investments have become the main drivers of engagement between Europe and the broader Caspian region".[957] These observations will be complemented by scholarly debate about the EU engagement in Georgia below to assess whether it can be argued that the EU's geopolitical interests and aspirations to be a global player in Georgia have taken precedence over normative power considerations and have stood in the way of the EU becoming a meaningful player in the process to resolve Georgia's conflicts.

Halbach argues to the effect that the economic weight of the South Caucasus and its politico-economic importance have only gradually been rediscovered. He notes that only in the new millennium the "kaukasische Landbrücke" has gained importance alongside the European discourse about oil and gas diversification.[958] It will be demonstrated below that economic considerations surpassed oil and gas to include resources in general. Nevertheless energy resources played a vital role in the rediscovery of the South Caucasus and Georgia. Stephen Blank also argues that "[…] Georgia mattered by virtue of its location along key energy […] corridors".[959] The extent to which energy interests came to be played out can be understood when taking into consideration the infamous concept of energy security and why it has risen to become such a key European policy in recent years. As Rainer Lindner explains about the concept: "energy security is access to resources and a strategy, or an instrument to prepare for a situation when the market is not functioning".[960] Merlingen and Ostrauskaite emphasize the growing awareness of Europe's dependency on Russia with regard to, oil and gas, which they note as amounting to 50 per cent and 30 per cent respectively. Thus, "[…] there has been the growing salience of energy security.[…] These concerns, in turn, have increased the geo-economic salience of Georgia as an energy

[957] S. Meister. "Recalibrating Germany's and EU's Policy in the South Caucasus." 7.
[958] Uwe Halbach. *Ungelöste Regionalkonflikte im Südkaukasus*. 31.
[959] Stephen Blank, S.E. Cornell, and S.F. Starr. "From Neglect to Duress." 110.
[960] Rainer Lindner. "The Pursuit of Energy Security. Quixotic Search or Heroic Quest." *Schlossplatz* 2:21. 2007. 21. Print.

corridor linking the EU to Caspian oil and gas while bypassing Russia."[961] But energy dependency on Russia can hardly be listed as the only reason to diversify the EU's energy supply. Unrest in the Near and Middle East, rising oil and gas prices partially as a result of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, and an energy hungry rising China represent just a few additional considerations. Meanwhile, Stefan Meister tailors the concept of energy security to the South Caucasus: "The South Caucasus touches a number of European key energy routes, and is integrated in several Eastern policy initiatives including the European Neighborhood Policy, the eastern Partnership, and the European Black Sea Synergy. It is part of the Southern Energy Corridor and the Trans Caspian strategy. The Southern Corridor has become a priority energy project for Brussels, and is outlined in the Second Strategic Energy Review published in November 2008."[962]

Selected Oil and Gas Pipeline Infrastructure in the former Soviet Union

Undoubtedly, Georgia was regarded as a key factor contributing to the EU's energy security and diversification of its supply. This view is echoed in the European Parliament's resolution of 20 May

[961] Michael Merlingen and R. Ostrauskaite. *EU Peacebuilding in Georgia.* 11.
[962] S. Meister. "Recalibrating Germany's and EU's Policy in the South Caucasus." 11.; also see RAPID. "Press Release, EU Energy Security and Solidarity Action Plan: 2nd Strategic Energy Review." N.p., 13 Nov. 2008. Web. 4 Apr. 2010. <europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction. do?reference=MEMO/08/format=HTML&aged=0〈 uage=en&guiLanguage=en>.

2010 on the need for an EU strategy for the South Caucasus.[963] It states "the significance of the region for the EU's energy cooperation and energy security […] and "[n]otes the strategic geopolitical location of the South Caucasus and its increasing importance as an energy, transport and communications corridor connecting the Caspian region and Central Asia with Europe: considers it of the utmost importance therefore that the EU cooperation with the South Caucasus be given high priority not least in matters relating to energy; emphasizes the role of these three countries as essential for the transit of energy resources, as well as for the diversification of the EU's energy supply and routes: in light of this recalls once again that the Union should take concrete steps to ensure the political stability of the region."[964]The choice of language and framing the need for the EU's involvement in geopolitical and strategic terms confirms the developments within the EU that have been outlined previously. But it is also noteworthy that the need to bring stability to the region is framed like a logical consequence following the list of interests the EU has in the region. In accordance with this point of view, Meister notes that "Conflict resolution is deeply connected with bringing comprehensive stability to the broader Caspian region and instigating future economic development in the three South Caucasus countries."[965] Apart from that, this statement points to the fact that energy resources are not the only reason to be involved in the region. It also urges for the transformation of this involvement into a more comprehensive strategy, a call that has been heard for almost a decade as well.

Just like the importance of the entire region noted in the statement quoted above, the importance of Georgia to the EU is manifold. Blank provides a telling summary when he lists its importance as an energy and transport corridor, the direct access for allied forces to bases and operational theatres in the Greater Middle East and Central Asia via Georgian territory, and notes its location connecting the Black Sea with routes to the Caspian basins. He also explains that it "comprise[s] a functional aggregate" and characterizes it as a "rear area or staging ground in terms of projecting Western power and values".[966] In his latter argument seems to lie a kind of agreement with more radical statements put forth by Khanna to the effect that the "[…] second-world states are the premier arena for comparing the superpowers' strategies to expand their global power […]".[967] Both argue that western power is to be projected into the South Caucasus, as it is an area of extensive interest to the west. Similar to old geopolitical arguments about the South Caucasus as an important land bridge to control

[963] European Parliament. "EU Strategy for the South Caucasus." *Procedure File: 2009/2216(INI).* N.p., n.d. Web. 26 Sept. 2013. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?id=583055>.
[964] European Parliament. "European Parliament Resolution of 20 May 2010 on the need for an EU Strategy for the South Caucasus (2009/2216(INI))." N.p., 20 May 2010. Web. 26 Sept. 2013. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0193+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>.
[965] S. Meister. "Recalibrating Germany's and EU's Policy in the South Caucasus." 7.
[966] Stephen Blank, S.E. Cornell, and S.F. Starr. "From Neglect to Duress." 110.
[967] P. Khanna, 2008, op.cit., xxiv.

the heartland, Meister argues that it is a "landbridge to the energy resources of the Caspian Sea and a gateway to Central Asia and China."[968] While Meister points to reviving the old silk road, he goes further by stating that "Without a solid presence and position in the South Caucasus, Europe's role in central Asia will continue to be very limited [...]".[969] He clearly points to European aspirations to be a global power, which in the first century of the new millennium is closely intertwined to being able to project power onto the rising continent which is Asia. Being the home of energy hungry states rising from second world status and being most adequately characterized as rapidly developing states, among them India or China, Central Asia with its massive natural resources has risen to global importance. A new great game for the natural resources is under way in Central Asia and whoever takes a hold on them first, will shape the centuries to come. Geopolitical theory holds that control of the South Caucasus or the 'Caspian Corridor' is key to become a meaningful actor in Central Asia. But Meister does not only allude to natural resource control, but also points to new markets when he alerts that a "lack of [EU] influence means limited European access to Caspian energy resources, and the broader Central Asia market...".[970] Meanwhile, access to markets and trade is also facilitated by an adherence to common rules and institutions. The latter can offer a level of security needed to attract foreign direct investment, for example. This is why some scholars of geopolitics have in the past argued that the Caspian transport corridor, which includes Georgia, would not only transport goods and commodities, but it would also serve as a conduit for spreading ideas, values and norms and thus also serves to conquer the region beyond the Caucasus with soft power. This notion is implicit in the arguments of policy advisers like Brzezinski who have argued in favour of fostering pluralism in order to limit Russian domination in these regions.[971]

Most scholars of geopolitics, however, also emphasized the competition and struggle for setting the dominant norms, which is currently reappearing in places such as the Caucasus and Central Asia in particular. Trenin highlights this fact by illustrating it with an example from the realm of energy related to the South Caucasus and regarding Russian-EU relations. He notes: "What is at stake in this intense rivalry is, for Gazprom, its share of the lucrative EU market, and for the EU [...] the degree of its dependence on Russian-delivered gas."[972] He thus highlights an ongoing struggle that is often a natural outcome when interests of powers collide. Blank also alludes to a competition or struggle, both ideological and economic, when he explains that the EU "defends specific European economic interests and general ('universal') Western values throughout the Transcaucasus region".[973] Regarding struggles

---

[968] S. Meister. "Recalibrating Germany's and EU's Policy in the South Caucasus." 7.
[969] Ibid.
[970] Ibid., 4.
[971] See e.g. Charles Wheeler. "Review: The Grand Chessboard." 913.
[972] D. Trenin. "Russia's Sphere of Interest, not Influence." *The Washington Quarterly*: 16. Print. 16.
[973] Stephen Blank, S.E. Cornell, and S.F. Starr. "From Neglect to Duress." 113.

and competition, Khanna argues that the "[...] West's new gamble is to make the Caucasus part of Europe's "Near Abroad" rather than Russia's."[974] All three previous statements transcribe a situation that has already gone beyond simply defining a new Grand Strategy. They are concerned with the implementation of such a new strategy and the consequences thereof. From their study of Georgia they seem to take the EU aspiration to be a meaningful power in Georgia almost for granted and outline interests and challenges. When what Russia terms its 'Near Abroad' is gradually redefined as Europe's Neighborhood, and the EU's need for influence and access to resources in and beyond the Caucasus is highlighted, it cannot be denied that a geopolitical focus has entered the discourse about EU foreign policy action in Georgia. Related to that is Blank's notion that "security threats to the South Caucasus countries and the undermining of their sovereignty run counter to major Euro-Atlantic interests".[975] With this statement he seconds an argument by Halbach who explains that together with the renewed appreciation of Georgia and the South Caucasus, the awareness for a new approach to security policy in the region has risen over time.[976] Undoubtedly, interests also play an increasing role in the EU's relations with Georgia which have shifted over time to be described in highly geopoliticized terms. But Rogers did not only argue for a geopolitical focus when describing the EU's 'global power' aspiration. He also remarked the struggle for hegemony. Thus, with due attention to the geopolitical reasoning and arguments about Georgia from the realm of security policy, it is important to keep in mind that this new and progressively more assertive role of the EU in Georgia did not occur in a vacuum. Competition and struggle for the domination over a space have to be kept in mind when taking on geopolitical rhetoric and lines of argument. To this end, Bialasiewicz notes that "we cannot understand the EU's global role without taking into account the broader geopolitical context within which it attempts to exercise its influence. The role of the United States and Russia remains crucial to understanding the political geographies of European power, for as much as the EU may define its geopolitical "difference" and its role in the world in opposition to its two key "geopolitical others", these latter in many ways still determine what I would term the conditions of possibility for EU action."[977]. In Georgia, the role of Russia and the United States are key when attempting to understand EU foreign policy. Especially Russia, whose interests collide rather than coincide with the EU much more than those of the United States will be discussed below. It will be argued that Russia is a key limiting factor to autonomous EU foreign policy in Georgia and must thus be considered when evaluating the EU's contribution to the mediation process of the Georgian Abkhaz conflict.

---

[974] P. Khanna, 2008, op.cit., 48
[975] Stephen Blank, S.E. Cornell, and S.F. Starr. "From Neglect to Duress." 110.
[976] Uwe Halbach. *Ungelöste Regionalkonflikte im Südkaukasus.*
[977] Leonhardt van Efferink. "The European Union: Geographical Imaginations - Interview with Luiza Bialasiewicz."

Constraints for the EU

In the eyes of the Georgian ruling elite, the EU was long regarded as a mere supplier of humanitarian and technical aid. Amidst a blatant lack of political reforms, as well as insufficient monitoring and a certain naïveté on the part of the EU, large sums of money disappeared in the pockets of corrupt ruling elites in the 1990's and early phase of the new millennium. These ruling elites in Georgia -including but not limited to some members of Shevardnadze's ruling circle - created an entire web of informal mechanisms, using pseudo-democratic structures to attain financial assistance from the EU. Bertrand Badie evoked the idea of a "cunning state"[978] to describe this Georgian policy of reaping benefits, while regarding the EU as a provider of means for short-term self-enrichment of elites, rather than as a means of fostering sustainable development and prosperity for a broader part of the population.

As time passed the EU began to be concerned about this mismatch between the desire for long-term structural change and immediate payoffs. This is illustrated by a statement of William Boe Pedersen who explained that, "Because of internal instability, political actors in the Caucasus pursue short-term objectives, insisting on short, quick and profitable cooperation projects. European interlocutors want to contribute to long-term and sustainable improvement of the political and economic situation requiring lasting commitments from both sides. The mismatch between short- and long-term perspectives needs to be taken into account as it often generates problems of cooperation."[979] The discrepancy between long and short-term goals have been a constant companion of Georgian-EU relations. The focus on short-term payoffs by official institutions in Georgia has often undermined the internalisation and spread of normative change, and this lack of progress coupled with an underdeveloped ability to build indigenous capacities for change have also been projected onto the conflict structures. With most aid from the EU being extended to Georgia as a form of assistance to self-empowerment, but without domestic willingness to sustainably implement policies designed for long-term change, Georgia long remained resilient to normative change. As a result of the gap between the expectations of both sides, the EU entered a learning process and developed a more cautious attitude by the year 2003.[980]

The EU's move away from engagement with Georgia by 2003, however, coincided with a political turnaround that affected the entire region, namely the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003, as a result of which the new Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili revitalized the reform efforts of the country.

---

[978] This information was obtained during a talk with B. Badie (Bertrand Badie. Faculty Institute d'Etudes Politiques Paris. Personal Conversation, 2006.)

[979] Pedersen, W.B., cit.n. W.B. Dekanozishvili. *Regional Preconditions for the Development of an Integrated European Policy towards the South Caucasus.* Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2004. 8. Print.

[980] The South Caucasus was originally not considered for the ENP. After the Rose Revolution the EU was urged to reconsider a ENP for the South Caucasus.

Konstantin Saldastanischwili noted that the Euro-Atlantic orientation of Georgia increased since the revolution,[981] pointing to renewed expectations for support from the EU after the political changes of 2003. Meanwhile, the advances and occasional setbacks in the Georgian reform efforts that followed were again no guarantee for a change in accordance with European norms. While political willingness for such a change temporarily increased in Georgia, the EU's major policy instrument, namely the ENP, did not provide for sufficient enforcement mechanisms with respect to inducing such change. Thus, the Georgian reform efforts often lacked depth and remained superficial, while reporting schemes attested to sufficient efforts to continue the process. Meanwhile, the ENP did not foresee a membership perspective as a 'carrot' for compliance, while opposition to the application of any form of strict conditionality persisted within the EU, due to a fear of isolating instead of stabilizing the new neighbours. The EU continued to rely heavily on its 'soft power',[982] such as economic incentives and the attractiveness of its norms, to induce change. As a result, it was neither able to enforce nor monitor the desired long-term changes adequately. Thus, its contribution to sustainable democratization, development and improvement of Georgia's socio-economic situation remained short of expectations set in 2003.

Over the course of time, new expectations and renewed calls for increased EU involvement in Georgia's conflicts[983] paid tribute to the geopolitical appreciation of the EU by regional actors, but were long met with ambiguity. On the one hand, the EU demonstrated a certain willingness to get involved in the conflict resolution efforts in South Ossetia, while in Abkhazia the United Nations, and hence Russia, were still accorded precedence. This resulted in a lack of clarity which was pointed out by Dov Lynch, who criticised in 2004 that the EU had issued no official statements on its role in conflict resolution in Abkhazia. This silence was taken as an indication of an EU policy of deciding not to decide.[984] Such a policy was strategically well placed, given the sensibilities of actors involved in these conflicts. Yet, at first it was incoherent with the EU's new geopolitical ambitions discussed above. The lack of a more assertive and consolidated EU approach regarding involvement in Georgia's conflicts can in part be accounted for by differing levels of importance various state actors within the EU (but also different EU agencies and individuals) attached to increased engagement in Georgia.[985] Not only this multi-layer

---

[981] K. Saldastanischwili and B. Schröder. "Georgien auf dem Weg in die Europäische Union." *Georgien-Gesellschaft und Religion an der schwelle Europas*. St. Ingberg: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2005. Print.

[982] See Joseph S. Nye. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs, 2004. Print.

[983] J. Devdariani. "Pulling back Troops, Georgia calls for European Help." *Civil Georgia*: n. pag. 31 August 2004. Web. 5 Apr. 2009. <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=7722>.

[984] C. Chauffour, and F. Gremy. "Interview with Dov Lynch, Berg Karabakh, Südossetien, Abkhasien: Einblicke ins Innere der europäischen Politik im Südkaukasus, 28 November 2004." Caucaz. Web. 2 December 2006. <www.caucaz.com>.

[985] Ibid.; also see Damien Gremy. "Interview: Die EU und der Kaukasus – ein Gespräch mit Damien Helly, 2 November 2004." Caucaz. Web. 2 December 2006. <www.caucaz.com>.

complexity of the EU itself but also the prominent 'Russian factor' figuring in Georgian politics and conflicts, which will be taken up below, played a role for a certain hesitation up until 2008. Lastly, simple coordination problems also posed an obstacle for speeding up EU involvement, given that the ENP was coordinated by the European Commission, while European Security Policy was largely the competence of the European Council. Generally, a more assertive role in Georgia's conflicts, possibly even necessitating the use of military means to unfreeze the conflicts even if theoretically imaginable, always implied a deterioration of the positive image of the EU as a civilian or normative actor in the Caucasus, which at least distinguishes it from the United States and Russia in this region.[986] It would have also directly impacted EU-Russian relations negatively and created tensions the EU was keen on avoiding.[987] Despite the lack of direct engagement, LeGloannec outlined that the European strength lied in the fact that it can offer a neutral forum and possibly resolve deadlocked situations between "couples fatales".[988]

In the course of 2007 and 2008 when the frozen conflict in Abkhazia was heating up, it may have been this line of reasoning that drove the EU and Germany as one of its strongest members to step up and propose increased EU involvement to resolve the conflict with Abkhazia. The diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the crisis between Georgia and Russia but also the proposal to provide policing and monitoring capabilities in Abkhazia, however, sent mixed signals. The EU had transformed over the course of time and had taken on a more global role with outspoken geopolitical objectives. The Georgian calls for increased EU involvement were based on this new appreciation of the EU as a geopolitical player with global reach. At the same time, the Union still propagated an attractive soft power ideology of peace and prosperity, which competed with a Russian vision for the region. Thus, it is argued here that the EU had ceased to be a mere provider of a neutral forum. Instead its geopolitical ambitions, despite still uncoordinated in its execution had reached a tipping point at which the Union indeed came to be regarded as a potential competitor to Russian interests, albeit not alone but in conjunction with its US partner.[989] As a result, by 2008 the EU was unable to unlock the conflict between Russia and Georgia

---

[986] Karen Elizabeth Smith. *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World.* Oxford, UK: Polity, 2003. 261. Print.

[987] One example of a more assertive EU policy impacting EU-Russian relations is outlined below when a more active ENP was perceived as a threat to Russian interests in the region. The EU invested intense efforts to avoid a conflict based on this perception, which attests to the fact that it was not ready (strong enough) to take on conflicts which resulted from its more assertive geopolitical ambitions. Consequently, it executed a zig-zag course in the Caucasus, aiming at maintaining a harmonious, cooperative environment with Russia.

[988] LeGloannec evokes this idea in connection to the role the EU played as facilitator between Ireland and Great Britain.

[989] During an interview in 2010 Alexander Rondeli noted that a number of Russian sources from within the political establishment in Moscow had spoken to him and the researchers at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies about the fact that the EU was increasingly perceived as a threat in political Moscow, due to its geopolitical ambitions coupled with a soft power approach which was regarded to have much more substance to it than the "empty" democratization policy of the United States.

and thus failed in its attempt to manage the crisis.[990] Due to its outspoken geopolitical orientation it was also not an acceptable negotiation partner to the Abkhaz, who refused to consider new peace plans of EU origin as a consequence.

Limits to an autonomous EU foreign policy in Georgia

An important limit to the effectiveness of the EU as an actor in Georgia's conflicts was due to the fact that EU cooperation with Russia was essential to this end, but remained underdeveloped. Russia still largely considered the Caucasian region even beyond its national borders as its exclusive sphere of influence, where it cited vested national interests. This often led to conflicts with Georgia who felt that it sovereignty was breached by its northern neighbour and that Russia was focused on neo-imperial zero-sum games and military power in the Caucasus. Here the EU could have intervened in theory. As a supposed normative actor offering a neutral forum it could have deciphered win-win payoffs from cooperation and guided both parties to transform their conflicts in order to realize common interests and goals. In practice, however, major obstacles to untangling the couple fatale, Georgia and Russia, were posed by the fact that Russia did not openly and clearly communicated what constituted its national interests, or a threat thereof, in the Caucasus (despite constantly calling on these national interests as a means to justify its involvement). Meanwhile, the EU was unwilling or unable to push for such a concretion because contrary to the description of a purely normative and neutral actor it did develop a hierarchy in its relations with other powers according to its geopolitical interests and estimation of its own strength. With consideration for Russian sensitivities figuring large, it remained a lame duck in crisis management. With the issues remaining unclear, EU-Russia cooperation was consequently unable to tackle the problems of Georgian-Russian antagonism.

Due to the present uncertainties, the EU remained hesitant for too long. As a result, Gernot Erler's proposal for a Caucasian Sability Pact[991] and a similar initiative suggested to the EU by Bruno Coppieters were not considered seriously by the EU. The EU remained far from empowering itself or speaking with one voice[992] vis-à-vis Russia. Meanwhile, the Caucasus to some highlighted its Russia-first policy, and illustrated its reluctance even to constructively criticise Russia.[993] These European sensitivities with regards to Russia, were clearly demonstrated in 2004 and 2005, when EU-Europe was increasingly perceived as competing with Russia in the region[994], due to the New Neighbourhood Initiatives (ENP),

---

[990] Yet, during the August war the EU intervened and successfully brokered a peace agreement, thus sicceeding in managing the crisis.

[991] Dietmar Neuerer. "Erler fordert Stabilitätspakt für den Kaukasus." *Netzeitung* 9 Sept. 2004: n. pag. Web. 5 July 2006. <http://www.netzeitung.de/>.

[992] D. Dartschiaschwili and W. Kaufmann. "Georgien und die euroatlantischen Sicherheitsstrukturen." *Diaspora, Öl und Rosen: Zur innenpolitischen Entwicklung in Armenien, Aserbaidschan und Georgien*. Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2004. 54. Print.

[993] Sascha Müller-Kraenner. Personal Interview. 2006.

[994] Kossatschow, K.. "Europa ohne Trennlinien." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 13 Dec. 2004: n. pag. Print.

as well as the augmented support by some new EU members for the "Forum of Democratic Choice" comprising Georgia, which received negative reviews from the Russian press and officials.[995] The EU's Special Representative, Heikkie Talvitie invested great efforts to conciliate Russia and correct this new Russian perception of the EU. Subsequently, ENP was no longer viewed as a serious challenger to Russian interests, largely because of Moscow's understanding of its soft geopolitical profile.[996] Nevertheless, this impression was temporary and did not exclude the prospect that a more active ENP (or other EU initiatives in the region) could be regarded as problematic by Moscow thereafter.[997] Therefore, in order not to compromise its image as a normative actor[998] in the eyes of the international community, but foremost in the eyes of Russia, the European Union has always balanced its involvement in Georgia carefully with its involvement with Russia. The EU's desire for Russian approval of its Caucasian initiatives again highlighted the hierarchy of its own interests and partnerships and created a certain dependency on consultations with Russia on issues concerning the region.

With respect to Russia, it is also noteworthy that any concrete power sharing or division of labour arrangements between Russia and the EU were hard to be realised. Both countries often remained focused on the process of producing bureaucratic paper loads rather than clearly defining agreements or putting them into practice. LeGloannec noted that the agreements and accords reached with Russia appeared more like a catalogue of potential actions than a coherent strategy. This notion of lack of strategic content was illustrated for example by the outcome of the EU Russia summit in May 2005 where both agreed that "they will cooperate to promote resolution of frozen conflicts", such as Abkhazia. Meanwhile, the elements agreed upon at the summit were said to disqualify as a strategy, similar to the argument put forth by LeGloannec above.[999] Similar to LeGloannec, Halbach argued that the problem lied not in the creation, but in the respect of agreements reached. While the willingness of Russia to cooperate with the EU was frequently testified in official documents, it was often disregarded in practice. According to Arbatov, the Soviet Union and subsequently Russia have never developed a tradition of accepting the supremacy of foreign institutions when national interests are at stake.[1000] This also manifests itself in a general scepticism towards the value of keeping agreements

[995] J.C. Peuch. *Ukraine: Regional Leaders set up Community of Democratic Choice.* Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty. 2 Dec. 2005. Web. 8 July 2006. Transcript. <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1063461.html>.
[996] A. Zagorsky and Dov Lynch. "Russia and the Shared Neighbourhood." *What Russia Sees*. Paris: Institute for Security Studies, 2005. Print.
[997] Ibid., also Wulf Lapins Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Personal Interview. 2006.
[998] F. Duchêne. 1972. op.cit.; Ian Manners. "Normative Power Europe. 235-258.; Karen Elizabeth Smith. *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World.*
[999] Uwe Halbach. *Der Kaukasus in neuem Licht: Die EU und Russland in ihrer schwierigsten Nachbarschaftsregion*. SWP-Studie, 2005. Print.
[1000] A. Arbatov. "Russia: A Special Imperial Way?" Russia in Global Affairs, 8 Feb. 2006. Web. 29 May 2014. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_6199>.

that are not viewed to be serving Russia's self-interest.[1001] Nevertheless, analysts still expressed that the EU can influence Russia and have continuously demanded a more assertive EU approach with regards to Russian conduct. While the International Crisis Group advised the EU that addressing antagonisms between Russia and Georgia was in its own interest, Halbach stated that the least Europe should do is to demand of Russia to clearly decipher its national interests in the southern Caucasus.[1002] He also explained that critical engagement with Russia would only signal that the EU takes Russia serious as a partner,[1003] substantiating the call for constructive criticism. Despite the fact that the EU was painfully aware of (diffuse) Russian interests in the region and especially cautious not to taint its own image in Russia's eyes, the Georgian-Russian relationship has, however, been set on the agenda of the EU. In 2006, the EU Special Representative, Peter Semneby, vowed for a more active engagement of the EU with regards to the conflicts.[1004] This signalled a more confident EU approach to Georgia and a certain willingness to halt the European Union's regional dependency on Russia, thus easing the restraint on its foreign policy's autonomy with regards to Akhazia. The Union's increasingly self-confident appearance in the region after 2006 was in agreement with the overall transformation of the EU's self-perception, its preoccupation with a secure and stable neighbourhood and a more global mission. Yet, it had not been able to foster consent among the parties for taking on a more active role. Thus, as it hardened its soft geopolitical profile, its new activism in Georgia was eventually met with Russian resistance as has been mentioned above and will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Due to the above mentioned resistance, the EU has never become a direct actor to the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process in the period until August 2008. Although the literature surveyed attests to the fact that the EU is theoretically able to positively influence conflict environments, its impact in Georgia has been limited. The model it offers based on its own experiences of long-term structural change facilitated through economic and political incentives remained an ideal and was accepted only on a selective, self-serving basis. Without enforcement mechanisms and insufficient incentives, the structural change the Union was able to bring to Georgia remained marginal. In addition, its image of normative, civilian power and consequently the model it aimed to project was increasingly undermined by its own transformation and calls for a more global role in line with its geopolitical interests. While the ambitions of the EU matured, the image it preached was increasingly coined by a conflict between norms and interests which also expressed itself in its cautious attitude vis-à-vis Russia. Its calls for

---

[1001] Andranik Migranyan. "Georgia Propelling its Disintegration." Russia in Global Affairs, 9 Nov. 2004. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_3878>.
[1002] Uwe Halbach. *Der Kaukasus in neuem Licht.*
[1003] Uwe Halbach. Personal Interview. February 2006.
[1004] "EU Signals Plans to Engage More in Conflict Resolution." Civil Georgia, 22 Mar. 2006. Web. 27 September 2013. <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=12143&search>.

change were thus perceived as paternalism by an organization enamoured with its own success, ignoring its own rigidity and unable to submit to self-reflection. While Georgia was expected to transform itself in the image of the EU, it was increasingly unclear which image it was to model itself after. In addition, in the absence of an external security guarantor, Georgia never achieved a situation of stability that would have allowed for the implementation of the changes put forth by the EU. Instead its situation remained precarious, preoccupied with a socio-economic struggle, internal conflicts and an asymmetric conflict with its Russian neighbour, in which the EU was unable to meaningfully intervene.

Conclusion

The conclusion summarizes the findings from the *Main Analysis* Chapters in accordance with the hypothesis presented at the beginning of the thesis in order to explain why the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process has not settled the conflict in Abkhazia by peaceful means and to explain what led to its collapse in 2008. It supports the notion that the peace process was not successful due to the absence of a harmonized process that had been accepted by all parties, an unpreparedness of the parties to the conflict to find sustainable compromises, and a gradually diminishing ability to compromise due to the externalization of the conflict and the framing of it as a geopolitical struggle that perpetuated a situation in which the Georgian and Abkhaz leadership took on the roles of mere instruments in a geopolitical competition that unfolded in front of their eyes.

1. A flawed process

The absence of a harmonized peace process

The main topic of this dissertation has been the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process. However, the initial hypothesis contains the question whether or not the peace process even existed in the first place. This may seem contradictory at first, but deconstructing the term leads to an understanding that a pursuit of peace should be at its core. If examined this way, it can be claimed that peace itself has often not been the primary goal of the peace process. Due to this deficit, it becomes a legitimate argument to claim that the process has strayed from its traditional meaning and, if taken in this literal fashion, has been non-existent throughout certain periods under investigation above. To substantiate this claim, it is derived from the analysis above that peace was interpreted not as the absence of violence and conflict, but was linked with settling the status of Abkhazia from the onset of the process. In this context, peace meant reintegration of Abkhazia to Georgia, while for the Abkhaz it was equated with state sovereignty. This qualification present in the peace process caused an inherent contradiction that deprived the process and the conflicting parties of an important basis for negotiations from its onset. This especially affected the Abkhaz party during the peace process, whose demands were often ignored and to whom this very process often remained elusive as a result.

One significant factor feeding this perception of illusiveness was the continued dominance of state centrism. The resulting asymmetries were accentuated from the very beginning of the peace process by an almost complete disregard of the non-state party to the conflict. Although the state-centric institutions involved in the peace process entered a learning phase and found ways to integrate the Abkhaz party into the negotiations, the structures and mechanisms were set up to cater to a state-centric world and its traditional actors. Consequently, the asymmetries were never fully cleared out and continued to characterize the process. The outcome was a process rooted in repeating cycles of

coercion which manifested itself as an interplay between offensive and defensive coercion. This led to the boycott of milestones of the negotiations and the institutionalization of spoilers that undermined any serious progress toward peace.

Looking at the peace process from yet another vantage point, little doubt remains regarding its existence. A plethora of official documents, reports, domestic and international political as well as economic initiatives, and large financial aid contributions, attest to its existence. Nevertheless, even on this official level, the process was so multi-facetted that the complexity of it remained hard to grasp. This circumstance was an essential driving force in undertaking the research for this dissertation aimed at reconstructing a comprehensive picture of the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process in order to close this gap. The process has thus been presented in its complexity and multi-sidedness. The many layers and numerous actors involved were so abundant, however, it can be concluded that a peace process in the sense of a singular, unified process ceased to exist at various moments under investigation above. There seemed to be a number of peace processes at work instead. Alternatively, the lack of a harmonized process and the involvement of a myriad of actors brought a range of divergent special interests and visions to the negotiation table that overburdened its mechanisms and eventually overpowered the entire process.

Competing for mediation

From 1994 onwards, it became increasingly clear that Russian and Western objectives underlying the desire for conflict resolution were diverging. On the one hand, western powers defined the goal of the peace process as a resolution to the conflict, Georgian territorial integrity, and the consolidation of stability for a region that was to be incorporated into the community of nations and a globalizing, capitalist economy. At the same time, Russia developed a mediation diplomacy to maintain its privileged position in the region and as a means to realize very different, and increasingly opposing, interests to those of western powers. In this context, it has been argued that Russia was not seeking western induced stability, but was instead boosting its own position by working according to an inverted logic that was centered on reaping benefits from a situation of continued instability in order to remain relevant to the process. With the demise of the Soviet Union, Russia not only lost its superpower status. Its influence in various former Soviet states continuously eroded, posing the danger of being entirely replaced by other powers promising support for countries like Georgia if these would manage to transform their systems towards more stability, democracy, and rule of law. In a situation of incompatible approaches of external powers to Georgia and its development, under a situation of limited policy options due to its weakened position internationally, Russia came to regard continued instability in the south Caucasus as a second-best, yet feasible policy option, beneficial for the realization of its own interest of upholding its power and influence. Due to colliding visions and

diverging interests, the mediation effort increasingly became the focus of a power struggle between Russia and other interested parties. Yet, until 2003 this competition had been downplayed in official statements that often focused on synergies, negating the prominence of infighting behind the scenes of international diplomacy.

The establishment of the Geneva Process - an intense series of meetings between the conflicting parties and other interested states and organizations - by the SRSG Liviu Bota, who assumed a more permanent presence in the conflict zone (unlike his predecessor Eduard Brunner, see above), was counterintuitive for the realization of Russian mediation diplomacy. It highlighted Russia's inability to assert itself as an effective mediator and paved the way for the involvement of more and more actors alongside Russia. The participation of additional interested parties meant that new actors were able to take on prominent roles for the resolution of the conflict, thus threatening to marginalize Russia's role. By the end of 1997, the Geneva Process had led to the formation of a number of working groups and an agreement to establish a Coordinating Council for the peace process that institutionalized the role of the Group of Friends of the Secretary General of Georgia made up of Germany, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States. While Russia always made sure to take part in such initiatives, its strength was clearly diluted in multilateral settings. This stood in sharp contrast to the goals of Russia's mediation diplomacy, which focused on strengthening its own position and maintaining an uncontested monopolistic status in the region for as long as possible. Contributing to the competitive environment was the fact that around the same time influential American geopolitical scholars recommended curtailing Russian dominance by stimulating political pluralism in the post-Soviet space. Looking at the developments after 1994 in the light of such contradicting ambitions, the increased activities of the UN and the incorporation of western powers in the peace process were only possible at the expense of Russia's monopoly over the mediation process. Given the new competitive environment, in order for Russia to remain a visible player in the game, it had to put forth amplified efforts.

Subsequently, increased UN activities were paralleled by a more active engagement of Russian diplomacy. Acting on its own, Russia convened separate and joint meetings with the parties, often to develop proposals that could later be tabled or adopted by the UN negotiating process. Meanwhile, Russia played an instrumental role in almost all multilateral forums, the UN Security Council, and as a member of the UN Seretary General's Group of Friends of Georgia. In addition, the years 1997 and 1998 were marked by an intense shuttle diplomacy of the Russian Prime Minister Primakov, which underlines the importance Russia attached to its special mediation status in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. Concerned with relative gains, Russia was not willing to cede its domination of the process to other actors. Instead, in its role as third party mediator, and increasingly under pressure to deliver

results, Russia turned away from a facilitative approach towards a more coercive and manipulative mediation approach, increasingly contradictory to the ideals of the UN, which was committed to a primacy of values, not interests. As a consequence of clashing approaches by the parallel mediation channels, the conflicting parties to the mediation were left without central guidance.

Russia's concern with relative gains from mediation, which left it unwilling to give up its dominant role in the process, was illustrated in the late 1990s. In 1997, bilateral meetings between the Georgian and Abkhaz leaders Shevardnadze and Ardzinba were facilitated by the resolute efforts of Russian Prime Minister Primakov. Yet officially under the auspices of the UN process, these advances were hailed as a breakthrough of the UN's mediation efforts by a number of western powers. The US and the European Union were quick to pledge their support and financial assistance in case of a settlement. This optimism ceased, however, when a subsequent meeting between Shevardnadze and Ardzinba in fall of 1998 never took place. The renewed outbreak of violence in Abkhazia throughout 1998 shattered the expectations for peace of the international community. The violent incidents of 1998 also put into question the effectiveness of UN leadership and the credibility of its mediation role, as the organization remained unable to exert control over the situation on the ground.

Given the inverted logic of Russian mediation diplomacy, which accorded precedence to instability, a settlement of the conflict facilitated by Russia, but credited to the UN, would have been counterintuitive. A robust UN role would have compromised Russia's realpolitik goals of power and prestige in the region. Thus, Russia was not ready to sanction a settlement of the conflict proposed by the UN which would have meant increased involvement of international actors, and would have also granted western powers an unprecedented opportunity to consolidate their influence in the region. While not adjusting its public position, Russia gradually shifted its ambiguous policy towards fostering a closer alliance and more decisive support for Abkhazia on various levels after 1998. Closer alliance with Russia, coupled with lower-intensity efforts by Russia to broker meaningful advances, strengthened the Abkhaz position and encouraged them to stand firm against an unfavorable settlement.

The findings summarized above highlight that the existence of parallel channels of mediation did not allow the peace process to conclude meaningful progress towards a final settlement of the conflict. Due to resource constraints during the phase of transformation in the post-Cold War era, the UN and its members had opted for order and stability enforced through a mediation process dominated by the Russian Federation, which longed to prove its continued validity as a great power to the international community. In theory, and according to the UN's 'Agenda for Peace', a power-sharing agreement between the UN and some of its member states or subordinate regional organizations was thought to render the UN more effective given the historical context of change. In practice, however, the idea of

this kind of cooperation and power-sharing clashed with the Russian policy towards the southern Caucasus, which was heavily influenced by geopolitical considerations of relative gains and prolongation of spheres of influence.

Russia had unmistakably signaled its interest in becoming the principal mediator of the conflict from its onset and never left a doubt about its desire to remain indispensable throughout the entire process. It had strategically incorporated these aims in its 'mediation diplomacy,' devised to fulfill an agenda that can be explained by a geopolitical understanding of the conflict embedded in the South Caucasus and outlined in a Russian "Near Abroad" school of thought. As a result, when the UN and other parties stepped up their efforts to become facilitators, this threatened to diminish Russia's relative gains from mediation and its influence in the region. Consequently, all efforts to render the mediation process multilateral led to an environment in which multiple parties seemingly competed for leadership of the mediation. This environment not only made it easier for the parties to the conflict to resist concessions, but it also introduced more assertive methods of mediation on the part of Russia, which was not willing to see its influence over the region diminished by a resolution brokered by western powers, whose interests clashed with Russia's regional interests.

Second Track Diplomacy – A process within the process

The thesis describes second track diplomacy as important for complementing first track diplomatic initiatives that made up the official peace process. The question about its effectiveness, however, remained paramount during the assessment of the second track. The effectiveness was found to greatly depend on the degree of integration in its respective constituencies as well as in the official structures. In the Georgian case, the participants and spokespersons of the second track civil society initiatives never managed to extend the scope of that process adequately. As a result, no formation of a 'constituency for peace' occurred and the civil society movement in support of an open-ended peace process remained weak. The participants to the second track dedicated great personal resources to relatively narrow projects as well as the maintenance of their networks in Abkhazia and within the international community. Nevertheless, they often resigned in front of the mammoth task to address the polarization and militarization of the peace process back home. As a result, they were only able to alleviate tensions and overcome barriers to progress in few instances and under specific circumstances.

In the case of Abkhazia, domestic constraints were equally important to understanding the inability of the second track to unfold further potential in its limited scope. However, the point of departure of Abkhaz civil society and the reasons for the limitations on the second track process differed from the Georgian case. Anti-Georgian sentiments dominated the domestic environment and their

296

incorporation into a myth of state formation made up the self-image of large parts of the Abkhaz population. Coupled with post-war sentiments of suffering, they constituted a distinctive in-group, out-group thinking and a sensitive external threat perception which was met by excessive patriotism in a situation of unconsolidated statehood. The limited number of people who engaged in open-ended second track initiatives conducive for peace in spite of these constraints were confronted with a variety of limiting factors, the nature and degree of which fluctuated over time. These included social ostracism, lack of governmental consent, and practical problems such as travel restrictions or the inability to accept biased funding.

A further factor limiting the effectiveness of second track initiatives can be found in its status. Second track diplomacy can only achieve limited success when it remains disconnected from official structures. Even to this day, and despite the collapse of the peace process in 2008, a plethora of second track initiatives operate in Georgia and to some extent in Abkhazia. Apart from forthcoming international funding that propels the existence of international and local not-for-profit organizations, to many the driving force for continuing their work is an idealistic concept of community and a view of their work as an act of humanity, disregarding its scope or impact. Nonetheless, it is argued above that second track initiatives in the framework of the Georgian-Abkhaz Peace Process worked most effectively when they were acceptable to, and anchored in, first track diplomatic structures and processes. In such cases they were able to complement first track initiatives and compensate for constraints present in official diplomacy. Among other things, the second track offered alternatives to an often-limited ability to maneuver, which often charcterizes official settings. It also helped to overcome the limits imposed by restrictive official rhetoric by providing space for unceremonious dialogue and frank, open-ended exchanges, which facilitates the search for constructive compromise. Networks rooted in the second track functioned as early warning mechanisms and even helped improve the overall environment of mistrust conducive to finding peaceful solutions to conflict prone issues when they were adequately linked to other relevant actors in the peace process. In this context, the international isolation of Abkhazia posed a serious problem regarding sustainably integrating the Abkhaz initiatives and participants into other ongoing processes and thus hampered with the effectiveness and scope of these initiatives.

Second track diplomacy formed a complex web of interactions with the official process over time. Whenever implemented properly it was a valuable asset to the peace process. It never managed to become the driver of an alternate peace process from the bottom-up, though, and thus it is concluded that its effectiveness remained underutilized. Despite the fact that it cannot be regarded as an additional peace process in its own right, the second track contributed to the complexity of the peace process by representing one of its layers. One of the main aims of this dissertation has been to

contribute to an understanding of the peace process in its complexity and as such, the understanding of the workings of the second track and its functions of being a distinct process working in conjunction with first track initiatives are essential in this regard.

2. Parties to the conflict unprepared for compromise

The thesis also points out that there were many missed opportunities for advancing a peaceful solution. Among these were legislative initiatives boycotted by hardliners, agreements which were renounced, protocols proposing federal structures which were revoked, and negotiations on the highest level which only brought incremental changes representing the least common denominator, if any. The ever so slight willingness to compromise between the two parties that entered into conflict in the early 90s increasingly eroded over time until a mutual basis for discussion ceased to exist. As a result, the negotiations experienced phases when they were discontinued altogether over extended periods of time. The conclusion drawn here is that both sides came to the negotiation table ill prepared for compromise. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that Abkhazia's concerns were often brushed aside by Georgia, which did not consider them significant enough for a state-centric solution to the conflict imposed by external powers. The lack of concern for Abkhaz demands and their points of view due to being regarded as inferior, stateless actors had detrimental effects on the peace process. It not only shut a number of windows of opportunity during times when the fronts between Georgia and Abkhazia were not yet as callous as in later years, it also encouraged the Abkhaz to search for alternative strategies to make their demands heard, circumventing official, state-centric structures. They developed an alternate *de facto* foreign policy, and the more it bore fruits, the less eager they were to sign on to a solution which would have represented a compromise between independence and full integration into Georgia.

In 1991 Abkhazia had communicated a desire to remain within the Soviet system by way of a large turnout in favor of the New Union Treaty referendum while boycotting a subsequent referendum on Georgian independence. Thereafter, the two entities found themselves in the middle of a legislative war over competencies and sovereignty issues. Although compromises were presented to overcome the legislative war that preceded the first Georgian-Abkhaz war in the early 90s, the efforts to find a lasting solution for the apparent inability to transition peacefully from communist rule to a unified Georgian state were hazardous, ad-hoc, and often short-lived due to a lack of follow-up. While Abkhaz hardliners were disinterested by nature, Georgian officials were busily seeking remedies for a plethora of other domestic problems that appeared more urgent at the time. While this certainly represented a missed opportunity, the dominant modus vivendi was also not conducive for a give-and-take framework. In stark contrast to a willingness to compromise, a traditional scheme of domination and imposing solutions from the top-down without addressing fundamental problems in Georgian-Abkhaz

relations became characteristic of the entire peace process. During the Georgian-Abkhaz war, Georgia deliberately courted Russia with the goal of obtaining Russian guarantees for a state-centric solution in Georgia's favor. The top-down approach also continued once the UN became involved in the conflict resolution efforts. As a result, the Abkhaz role was often limited to only standing on the sidelines of international diplomatic processes, unable to penetrate official channels or add their points of view to ongoing discussions. As a consequence of being silenced that way, and without the ability to seek allies among the state actors in the international community, Abkhazia had little other opportunity than to turn to the only power willing to receive it and listen to its concerns - Russia. As a function of a lack of international exposure, isolation, sanctions, severe hardship among the population, and Georgian unwillingness to neither receive Abkhazia as a serious partner, nor consider compromises earnestly, Abkhazia's initial apprehensions against becoming part of a unified Georgian state were not only confirmed, but its stance also hardened. Simultaneously, public support for its policies aimed at independence from Georgia grew increasingly uncontested domestically. An alternate Abkhaz strategy became first and foremost based on appealing to Russia for support. Abkhazian officials mobilized existing networks and penetrated the Russian ruling circles, initially by intensifying relations with Russian regions on a case-by-case basis. The growing intensity of contact between Abkhazian and Russian subjects that began as a spawn of the rising nationalism, and the threat to Abkhazia's autonomous status, were propelled forward during the Georgian-Abkhaz war. After the war they were increasingly perceived as an act of necessity and a matter of survival for the Abkhaz nation by a major part of the remaining Abkhaz population, which felt deeply entrenched in an intense in-group out-group struggle for existence. Eventually, a more experienced Abkhaz political elite turned the initial contacts and networks into the centerpiece of a fully functional *de facto* Abkhaz foreign policy.

A number of aspects explaining Georgia's unpreparedness to compromise have also been subject to evaluation in the thesis. Georgian history and the way it has been interpreted to this day form part of an explanation. At numerous periods in its history Georgia was fighting against all odds for its survival against the Ottoman, Persian, and Russian empires. The survival of the Georgian nation has often been attributed to Georgia's steadfastness. The determination of its church, the loyalty of its believers, the sacrifices undertaken to protect its traditions and language are examples of this. The emotional period of national self-determination that followed the breakdown of the Soviet Union caused an effervescence of nationalism coupled with the feeling of victory at last. Simultaneously, it conditioned a heightened sensitivity for renewed betrayal by outside powers and anxiety of repeated loss of territory, which it had experienced at various points in its history, especially during times of Russian imperial as well as the Soviet rule. When faith in a Russian-induced solution to the conflict in Abkhazia faded, Georgia looked westward to broaden its bases of supporters. Georgia's gradual turn westward experienced periods of strong support by Euro-Atlantic powers, during both the Shevardnadze and

Saakashvili reign of power, which (specifically after the Rose Revolution) led a political elite relatively inexperienced in statehood and international diplomacy to overestimate its own capabilities in a regional context, and towards its powerful neighbor Russia. This harmed the peace process in two major ways. First, conclusively framing the conflict in Abkhazia as an exclusively geopolitical struggle and insisting on a solution by way of great power intervention was among the root causes for Georgia's negligence in searching for viable alternatives such as federal arrangements or fostering domestic constituencies for peace. This in part explains why, despite continuously being faced by defeat, the first gestures towards concessions extended by Georgia towards Abkhazia represented too little and came much too late. The windows of opportunity had been missed and the threshold for compromise had been raised to practically unreachable levels. Second, the distrust innate to a realist and hence a geopolitical way of framing the world stood as a central gatekeeper at the doorstep of accomplishment for the peace process. It not only affected the Georgian-Abkhaz relationship, but also created a downward spiral of hostility between Georgia and Russia. The Georgian-Abkhaz-Russian triangle became an important aspect of the conflict itself to the point that Russia came to be considered as not only the primary mediator, but also as an active party to the conflict. The Russian factor eventually became a major driving force for the parties' inability to compromise.

3. A fading ability to compromise

The inability to find a solution to the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict must in part be attributed to the fact that conflicting parties were no longer able to seek a compromise. This inability to compromise has been described as a function of the negation of the internal dimension of the struggle, the externalization of the conflict, as well as the framing of it as a geopolitical struggle and a new great game in which the interests of Euro-Atlantic powers and Georgia were bound to clash with a Russian vision of its own great power status and its 'Near Abroad'. In this scenario, the Abkhaz party to the conflict grew stronger over the course of time by aligning its foreign policy with Russia's, while Georgia positioned itself as the United States' most loyal ally in the region looking to Euro-Atlantic powers to take on the role of guarantors of its territorial integrity and sovereignty, a strategy without success with regard to solving the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict in the end.

In order to explain the mechanisms at work that led to an intensification of the conflict instead of de-escalation, a critical evaluation was employed to point out that the mediation environment around the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict was dominated by geopolitical reasoning. In the spirit of John Agnew, critical geopolitics was used to "understand world politics in terms of the ways in which elites and publics actively construct the spaces of political action that are then the medium for the policies of states and

other actors..."[1005] Hence, the practice of construction and demarcation of space by way of geopolitical reasoning was an integral part of the above analysis. After the end of the Cold War, the entire Eastern bloc found itself in a phase of transformation and redefinition of its own space. This included places like Georgia, Abkhazia, and Russia. Based mostly on the concept of practical geopolitics, the thesis conveys "how foreign policy decision-makers make sense of international crises, how they construct stories to explain these crises, how they develop strategies for handling these crises as political challenges, and how they conceptualize "solutions" to these crises"[1006]. In other words, it has not only been shown how the conflict in Abkhazia was transformed from a domestic struggle into an internationalized conflict, but also how externalizing and internationalizing the conflict effected the peace process. Furthermore, an alternate purpose has been noted, namely how the framing of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict as a geopolitical struggle provided legitimacy to the policy moves of the respective rulers of the Georgian, *de facto* Abkhaz, and Russian territories. Spatializing the conflict[1007], meaning locating it in Russia's sphere of influence as was the case for Abkhazia, or contesting this practice by constructing Georgia as a hub of western values confined from Russia and claiming it as a natural ally for the West as was the case for Georgia, concurrently became the basis of legitimacy for its rulers and a point of departure for the respective narratives about state construction[1008]. This in turn affected the way the conflict was conceptualized and the type of strategies that were devised for its solution as has been argued by Kaldor[1009]. The argument put forth here is that the practice of externalization led to dogmatic actions that were counterproductive with respect to finding a lasting solution to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and harmed the peace process[1010]. While both Abkhazia and Georgia succeeded in obtaining powerful advocates internationally, during the process they weakened their own ability to act independently to a point that autonomous decision-making was reduced to a minimum. Instead, their fate was entrusted in the care of third parties with their own, partially inconsistent agendas, while Georgia's and Abkhazia's role was reduced to that of a sideshow, incapacitated and unable to pursue home-grown compromises.

To this end the thesis contains a disquisition on the developments that maneuvered Georgia and Abkhazia into the situation noted above and which led to the practical manifestation of the initially

---

[1005] John Agnew. "Emerging China and Critical Geopolitics." 569.; See also Klaus-John Dodds and James Derrick Sidaway. "Locating critical geopolitics." 515-524.

[1006] Gearóid Ó Tuathail. "Theorising Practical Geopolitical Reasoning." 603, cit.n. Felix Ciută and Ian Klinke. "Lost in Conceptualization." Ibid.

[1007] Gearóid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew. *Geopolitics and Discourse*. 190-204.

[1008] State leaders who have been interviewed for this thesis and who proved fervent advocators of the geopolitical nature of the conflict included but are not limited to Eduard Shevardnadze, Sergey Shamba, Sokrat Jinjolia, Vasha Lordkipanidze and Irakli Menagarishvili

[1009] Mary Kaldor. *The Imaginary War.* cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics.* 78.

[1010] John Agnew. "Is Geopolitics a Word that should be Endowed only with the Meaning it Acquired in the Early Twentieth Century?" 634-637.

just conceptual separation in the minds of people over the years. It points to an alternative *de facto* Abkhaz foreign policy that was born out of a realization that Abkhazia would not be treated as an equal subject under international law and therefore no longer felt dependent on, or bound by, decisions reached via the official channels of international diplomacy. By 1999 the Abkhaz leadership had their own networks, rules, and strategies in place to pursue independence, benefiting all along from the dilatoriness of the official bureaucracy that structured international diplomacy. Meanwhile, Georgia's initial ambitions to diversify its foreign policy became more outspokenly directed against Russia and gradually coupled with a growing and increasingly decided demand for Russian military retreat from Georgia. As a result, the composition of alliances shifted over the course of the peace process. Contrary to the point of departure when Georgia had courted Russia, as time passed the Abkhaz viewed their positions best represented by Russia, while Georgia looked for support for its position elsewhere. In terms of the shifting alliances, the thesis traces a correlation over time between the intensification of the Russo-Abkhaz relationship on the one hand, and Georgian attempts to first diversify its foreign policy away from sole dependence on Russia and later on align it with the Euro-Atlantic powers on the other hand.

While this correlation needs to be investigated in further detail in another scientific study, the nature of the formed alliances had practical repercussions that often negatively and lastingly affected the peace process and which also continue to be understudied. The Rose Revolution of 2003 represented the most decisive moment of departure for alliances being reshaped. While the revolution brought a series of necessary changes to Georgia, the peace process did not necessarily benefit from the radical alterations to the existing modus vivendi. Georgian President Saakashvili restructured the responsibilities for the conflict portfolios after taking office in 2004 in a way that existing channels of communications ran dry and long-standing Georgian-Abkhaz networks were incapacitated. No room was accorded to more gradual changes or passing on of accumulated know-how, best practices, or proper handovers. Removing and largely isolating those who had overseen the conflict portfolio in such a radical manner was arguably a lost opportunity for the new Georgian administration. While the young government demonstrated a clear desire to deal with the conflicts in both South Ossetia and Abkhazia at its own discretion, it was doing so without full disclosure of past practices. Among the examples highlighting the disadvantages of this decision was the fact that it took the new administration years before rediscovering the usefulness of the Bilateral Joint Coordinating Commission headed by Zura Lakerbaia. The loss of knowledge due to an inadequate transfer was so large that it affected the overall information flow in a lasting fashion. Factors such as the involvement of the OSCE in the Abkhaz Georgian conflict during its early stages remained forgotten together with other important facts that were under-documented and could have therefore only been passed on by

oral account.[1011] The huge loss of information was partly rooted in the schism and emotional restart that Georgian politics experienced after the Rose Revolution that went hand-in-hand with settling accounts with a part of its former elite. It was also a by-product of the shifting importance accorded to past events versus the new Georgian era in which the country experienced the kind of geopolitical repositioning mentioned above.

Moreover, the information void was soon filled with mere propaganda that added to the state of misinformation in regard to the conflict and the peace process and caused anxiety in Georgia and Abkhazia alike. Instead of using the historic moment after the Rose Revolution to reestablish trust between Georgians and Abkhaz and seek joint solutions to deescalate the conflict, Saakashvili's initial attempts were erratic and his eventual focus on militarization and NATO membership, territorial reintegration, and alternate governing structures for the conflict regions added new intensity to the conflict. The initial success Saakashvili had experienced with regard to courting the United States and European powers into supporting Georgia had detrimental effects for the Georgian-Russian relationship and manifested itself as an outspokenly anti-Russian aspect of Georgia's domestic and foreign policy. In addition, the alleged geopolitical rivalry over domination of the space, important access routes to Central Asian markets and resources became an underlying argument in order to attract foreign support for Georgia's position in the peace process. As a consequence, the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process lost its domestic component almost in its entirety, while prominence was accorded to geopolitical actors and their agendas. Apart from the obvious players, i.e. the United States and Russia, the European Union matured into a rising global actor with geopolitical ambitions in the South Caucasus during the Saakashvili years. It has been argued here, however, that its policies with regard to the peace process remained ineffective before 2008 due to the inability to reconcile its soft power image with its new geopolitical ambitions and a resulting lack of credibility. The EU was neither able to devote sufficient resources nor able to devise a common approach to its neighboring regions that from its inception should have included a strategy factoring in Russia and its interests. The latter point, the inability to devise or put into practice a viable Russia strategy, must be regarded as a failure of both the EU and US approaches to the peace process and their respective support for the Georgian position that contributed to the escalation of the conflict in 2008.

Although Russia's Georgia policy should be the topic of another scientific inquiry, it has been argued here that Georgia has traditionally been regarded as a buffer state that has been controlled by an outside power and by Russia for most of its modern history. Following a logic put forth by Spykman,

---

[1011] Minister of Conflict Temur Iakobashvili was among the individuals who negated the involvement of the OSCE at any point in the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process during an interview with the author. Other respondents e.g. members of the Georgian Parliament and the Abkhaz Government in Exile lacked in-depth knowledge about the beginnings of the process up until 2003.

Georgia's right to exist as a small state neighboring disproportionally larger powers after the demise of the Soviet Union was thus rooted in its continued function as a buffer. As Spykman noted: "Small states have [nevertheless] survived, in spite of marked differentials in power potential between themselves and their neighbours. The explanation lies in part in the fact that their continued existence is of strategic significance to some larger states and that they are therefore not dependent for their territorial security solely on their own strength. They can count on support from third parties."[1012] With the uncertainties after the end of the Cold War it was safer for Russia to preserve Georgia as a buffer state than to entertain a common border with NATO member Turkey. As a result, Georgia enjoyed a relative high degree of independence in the 90s while at the same time being obliged to adopt a special kind of foreign policy that interlinked its own security with "the security which its neighbors derive from its continued existence." [1013] It is posited in this thesis that Russia regarded Georgia as a buffer and as such expected it to "pursue a precarious policy of neutrality. Any variations which leave the impression that the bond with one neighbour is becoming stronger may tempt the other neighbour to replace the security obtained from the existence of an independent buffer with a security obtained from actual occupation of the buffer territory." [1014] The relatively high degree of Georgian independence with regard to its foreign policy was thus part of a careful balance Shevardnadze had devised during his time as Georgian ruler in accordance with Russian Presidents Yeltsin and later on Putin. The Saakashvili government, itself a product of a new era of globalization after the end of the block confrontation, soon displayed a lack of appreciation of the buffer state concept. It breached Georgian neutrality and began to populate the Georgian no man's land in accordance with US guidance. The full weight of Saakashvili's misjudgment of the Georgian position in the international arena and especially vis-à-vis Russia and the United States only came to the fore in the wake of the Georgian-Russian war of 2008. Even prior to that, however, Georgia's attempt to fully emancipate itself from Russia displayed a clear disregard for the interdependence with Russia with regard to border regions, Russia's revisionist 'Near Abroad' claims, and the role of the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia as an integral part to Russia's mediation diplomacy aimed at maintaining a sensitive degree of control over Georgia.

With the multiplication of agendas as a logical consequence of breaching an invisible Georgian-Russian contract, the degree of complexity around the search for a solution to the conflict in Abkhazia increased. The conflict increasingly became a means to an end instead of its resolution representing an end itself. In this highly complex and fragile environment, no external actor other than Russia was prepared to push for a solution of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. In accordance with an inverted logic

---

[1012] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Frontiers, Security, and International Organization." 440.
[1013] Nicholas J. Spykman. "Geography and Foreign Policy, II." 227.
[1014] Ibid.

of conflicts, and pursuing a form of traditional imperial divide and rule strategy, Russia increasingly gained the upper hand in the struggle as the only player benefitting from a situation of continued instability. Meanwhile, the Georgian leadership demonstrated a lack of appreciation for the historical records of the Georgian-Russian relationship by putting all of its eggs in one basket and maneuvering itself into a situation of reduced policy flexibility, instead of broadening its foreign policy options. The geopolitical reasoning underlying the push for externalization of the conflict eventually backfired when it became apparent that this strategy positioned Georgia in direct opposition to Russia, propagating an incompatibility of its own views with Russian interests in the region. While Russia certainly acted as a spoiler of a successful process, the Georgian administration contributed to perpetuating a situation in which the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process could not come to a successful resolution as well. At the end of a long, yet unsuccessful peace process, war broke out between Russia, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia on the one hand and Georgia on the other. The 2008 Russo-Georgian war and the subsequent Russian recognition of Abkhaz independence functioned as a game changer, representing a paradigm shift for the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process with a very negative projection into the future. Meanwhile, its international repercussions especially with regard to breaching the Charter of Paris still echo within the international community to this day.

Bibliography

"Abkhazia's Separatists Reject German Plan to Prevent Conflict with Georgia." *The New York Times* 18 July 2008: n. pag. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.nytimes.com/2008/07/18/world/europe/18iht-georgia.4.14615798.html>.

"Abkhazia: Ways Forward." International Crisis Group, 18 Jan. 2007. Web. 1 June 2007. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/caucasus/georgia/179-abkhazia-ways-forward.aspx>.

Agnew, John. "Capitalism, Territory and 'Marxist Geopolitics'." *Geopolitics* 16: 233. Print.

Agnew, John. "Contemporary Political Geography: Intellectual Heterodoxy and its Dilemmas." *Political Geography* 22: 603-606. Print.

Agnew, John. "Emerging China and Critical Geopolitics: Between World Politics and Chinese Particularity." *Eurasian Geography and Economics*: 569-570. Print.

Agnew, John. "Is Geopolitics a Word that should be Endowed only with the Meaning it Acquired in the Early Twentieth Century?" *Progress in Human Geography* 28: 634-637. Print.

Agnew, John. "The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory." *Review of International Political Economy* 1: 53-80. Print.

Agnew, John A., and Stuart Corbridge. *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Ágoston, Gábor. *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*. New York, NY: Facts On File, 2008. Print.

Aguazhba. "Abkhazians in the First World War." *The Abaza Magazine* 26: 30-32. Print.

Amkuab, G., and T. Illarionova. *Chronicle of the Undeclared War, Part I, 14 August-14 September*. Moscow: 1992. Print. Translated from Russian.

Ammon, Philipp. "Die Wurzeln des georgisch-russischen Konflikts (1783-1832)." N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Jan. 2013. <http://www.conflicts.rem33.com/images/Georgia/wurzeln_1783_1832.pdf>.

Anchabadze, G.. "Georgia in the Beginning of Feudal Decomposition." Archive of the Republic of Georgia, n.d. Web. 26 Mar. 2012. <www.parliament.ge/pages/archive_en/history/his8.html>.

Arbatov, A.. "Russia: A Special Imperial Way?" Russia in Global Affairs, 8 Feb. 2006. Web. 29 May 2014. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_6199>.

Ardzinba, V., U.N. Voronov, P.V. Florensky, and T.A. Shutova. "Appeal of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Abkhazia to the State Council of Georgia, 12 August 1992." *White Book of Abkhazia - 1992-1993 Documents, Materials, Evidences*. 1993. Print. Translated from Russian.

Ardzinba, V., G. Amkuab, and T. Illarionova. "Decree issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Abkhazia on Mobilization of Adult Citizens and Distribution of Arms to the Regiment of the Internal Troops of Abkhazia, 14 August 1992." *Chronicle of the Undeclared War, Part I, 14 August-14 September*. Moscow: 1992. Print. Translated from Russian.

Ardzinba, V.. "Decree issued by the Supreme Council of the Republic of Abkhazia on Transferring of the Agencies of Procuracy and the Ministry of Interior under the Jurisdiction of Abkhazia, Sokhumi, 24 January 1992." n. pag. Print. From the personal archive of Tamaz Diasamidze.

Ashot, M.. *Sicherheitspolitik im Kaukasus (Security Policy in the Caucasus)*. Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2002. Print. Obtained from the Bundesministerium der Verteidigung in 2002.

Asmus, Ronald D.. *A Little War that shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.

Asmus, R.. "A Little War that shook the World." Heinrich Böll Foundation. Tbilisi. 15 Apr. 2010. Panel Discussion.

Assefa, Hizkias. *Mediation of Civil Wars: Approaches and Strategies - The Sudan Conflict*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987. Print.

Axford, B., R. Huggins, D. Smith, and S. Wright. "Towards a Post-National Polity: The Emergence of the Network Society in Europe." *Whose Europe? The Turn Towards Democracy*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. Print.

Badie, Bertrand, and Marie-Claude Smouts. "The Turnaround of the World." *Geopolitics* 5: 85-93. 2000. Print.

Bailey, Sydney D.. "Non-Official Mediation in Disputes: Reflections on Quaker Experience." *International Affairs* 61: 209-210. Print.

Banks, M., and C.R. Mitchell. "Third Parties: Principals and Neutrals." *In Handbook of Conflict Resolution*. London: Pinter, 1996. Print.

Barroso, José Manuel. "Response and Responsibility: The European Partnership for Aid and Development." European Commission. London School of Economics, London. 20 May 2005. Speech. <europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-05-291_en.htm>. 6 August 2013.

Barseghyan, K., and Z. Karaev. "Playing Cat and Mouse: Conflict and Third Party Mediation in Post-Soviet Space." *The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution*: 192-209. 2004. Print.

Bartak, Karel. "Désengagement ou Nouvelle Colonisation? Moscou dans le Bourbier Caucasien." Le Monde Diplomatique, 1 Apr. 1993. Web. 1 Aug. 2013. <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1993/04/BARTAK/10493>.

Bennett, Andrew, and Alexander L. George. "Process Tracing in Case Study Research." *Process Tracing*. MacArthur Foundation Workshop on Case Study Methods, October 17-19, 1997, n.d. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://users.polisci.wisc.edu/kritzer/teaching/ps816/ProcessTracing.htm>.

Bercovitch, J., and G. Schneider. "Who Mediates? The Political Economy Of International Conflict Management." *Journal of Peace Research* 37: 145-165. Print.

Bercovitch, J., J. T. Anagnoson, and D. L. Wille. "Some Conceptual Issues and Empirical Trends in the Study of Successful Mediation in International Relations." *Journal of Peace Research* 28: 11. Print.

Berdzenischwili, D. and W. Kaufmann. "Georgiens Größtes Innenpolitisches Problem." *Diaspora, Öl und Rosen: Zur innenpolitischen Entwicklung in Armenien, Aserbaidschan und Georgien*. Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2004. Print.

Berman, William C.. "Global Games." *Reviews in American History* 8: 561-566. Print.

Blank, Stephen, S.E. Cornell, and S.F. Starr. "From Neglect to Duress: The West and the Georgian Crisis Before the 2008 War." *The Guns of August 2008 Russia's War in Georgia*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2009. Print.

Boden, Dieter. "10 years after the peace plan", Democracy and Freedom Watch. 20 October 2011. Web 1 May 2015, <http://dfwatch.net/10-years-after-the-peace-plan-95247-894>

Bodin, Jean. *Les Six Livres de la Republique*. Paris: 1577. Print.

Bonner, R.. "Georgian Fighter Wields Guns, Money and Charme." *The New York Times* 16 Dec. 1993: n. pag. Print.

Bowman, Isaiah. "Geography vs. Geopolitics." *Geographical Review* 32: 646. Print.

Brown, M.. "Democratic Governance: Towards a Framework for Sustainable Peace." *Global Governance* 9: 141-146. Print.

Browning, C.S.. "The Region-Building Approach Revisited: The Continued Othering of Russia in Discourses of Region-Building in the European North." *Geopolitics* 8: 56-58. Print.

Brzezinski, Zbigniew. "Living with Russia." *National Interest Fall 2000*:6. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://nationalinterest.org/article/living-with-russia-919>.

Brzezinski, Zbigniew. "The Nature of the Soviet System." *Slavic Review* 20: 351. Print.

Brzesinski, Zbigniew. "Tactician for the Establishment." *MERIP Reports* 54: 19. Print.

Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*. New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1997. Print.

"Bucharest Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on 3 April 2008." Bucharest NATO Summit, 3 Apr. 2008. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.summitbucharest.ro/en/doc_201.html>.

Bull, Hedley. "Civilian Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 21: 151. Print.

Bumiller, E.. "Bush Tells Putin Not to Interfere with Democracy in Former Soviet Republics." *The New York Times* 8 May 2005: n. pag. Web. 30 May 2013. <www.nytimes.com/2005/05/08/international/europe/08prexy.html?pagewanted=print&_r=0>.

Burton, John Wear. *Conflict and Communication: The Use of Controlled Communication in International Relations*. London: MacMillan, 1969. Print.

Börzel, Tanja A.. "Towards Convergence in Europe? Institutional Adaptation to Europeanization in Germany and Spain." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 37: 573-596. 1999. Print.

"Bush Doctrine." Princeton University, n.d. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Bush_Doctrine.html>.

Bush, George. "Forward." *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. Washington, DC: 2002. Print.

Bush, George H.W., Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "Public Papers of the President of the United States, Toward a New World Order" *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998. Print.

Buzan, Barry, Ole Waever, and J. de Wilde. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Rienner, 1998. Print.

Chauffour, C., and F. Gremy. "Interview with Dov Lynch, Berg Karabakh, Südossetien, Abkhasien: Einblicke ins Innere der europäischen Politik im Südkaukasus, 28 November 2004." Caucaz. Web. 2 December 2006. <www.caucaz.com>.

Checkel, J.T., M. Green Cowles, J. Caporaso, and T. Risse. "The Europeanization of Citizenship?." *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001. Print.

Cheterian, Vicken. *War and Peace in the Caucasus: Ethnic Conflict and the New Geopolitics*. New York: Columbia University, 2008. Print.

Chivers, C.J.. "Georgian Forces Persist in Attacks on Militia." *The New York Times* 27 July 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.nytimes.com/2006/07/27/world/asia/27georgia.html?scp=6&sq=Kodori&st=nyt>.

Churchill, Winston S.. "Iron Curtain Speech." Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri. 5 Mar. 1946. Speech. <www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/churchill-iron.html>.

Ciută, Felix. "Déjà vu Geopolitics: Marxism and the Geopolitical Undead." *Geopolitics* 16: 223-224. Print.

Ciută, Felix, and Ian Klinke. "Lost in Conceptualization: Reading the "New Cold War" with Critical Geopolitics." *Political Geography* 29: 323-330. Print.

Clausewitz, Carl von. *Hinterlassene Werke des Generals Carl von Clausewitz über Krieg und Kriegführung – Vol. I*. Berlin: F. Dümmler, 1832-1834. Print.

Clausewitz, Carl von. *Hinterlassene Werke des Generals Carl von Clausewitz über Krieg und Kriegführung – Vol. II*. Berlin: F. Dümmler, 1832-1834. Print.

Cloos, J., A. Wenger, and V. Mauer. "EU Foreign Policy: Where Next after the European Security Strategy?" *Securing Europe? Implementing the European Security Strategy*. Zürich: Center for Security Studies, 2006. Print.

Cohen, J.. "Incentive or Obstacle." *Accord: A Question of Sovereignty, The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process*. London: Conciliation Resources, 1999. Print.

Cohen, Saul Bernard. *Geopolitics of the World System*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003. Print.

Collier, Paul, et al.. *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*. Washington, DC: World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2003. Print.

Commission of the European Union. *COM 2003/104:4*. Brussels: European Union, 2003. Print.

"Communication from the Commission, European Neighborhood Stragegy Paper, COM 2004/373." European Union External Action, 12 May 2004. Web. 12 Sept. 2009. <ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/strategy/strategy_paper_en.pdf>.

"Communication from the Commission: Paving the way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument." Commission of the European Communities, 1 July 2003. Web. 6 July 2012. <http://ec.eurhttp://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/wider/wider_en.pdfopa.eu/>.

"Conference Report, Aspects of the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict." 14th Conference, Heinrich-Böll-Foundation & Center for Citizen Peacebuilding at the University of California, Irvine. Istanbul: 14-15 June 2007. Print.

"Conflicting Reports Prevail over Ongoing Kodori Operation." Civil Georgia, 26 July 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=13166>.

Cooper, M.. "McCain Calls for Halt of Violence in Georgia." *The Caucus, The Politics and Government Blog of the Times – The New York Times* 11 Aug. 2008: n. pag. Web. 20 September 2010. <thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/08/11/mccain-calls-for-halt-of-violence-in-georgia/?_r=0>.

Coppieters, B. and J. Cohen. "The Roots of the Conflict." *Accord: A Question of Sovereignty, The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process*. London: Conciliation Resources, 1999. Print.

Coppieters, Bruno, et al.. *Europeanization and Conflict Resolution: Case Studies from the European Periphery*. Gent, Belgium: Academia Press, 2004. Print.

Coppieters, B., G. Nodia, and Y. Anchabadze. *Georgians and Abkhazians: The Search for a Peace Settlement*. Belgium: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1998. Print.

Coppieters, Bruno, Tamara Kovziridze, and Uwe Leonardy. "Federalization of Foreign Relations: Discussing Alternatives For the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict." *Working Paper 2, Caspian Studies Program, Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government*: 13. Print.

Cornell, Svante E.. "The Growing Threat of Transnational Crime." *The South Caucasus: A Challenge for the EU*. Paris: Institute for Security Studies, European Union, 2003. Print.

Cornell, Svante E.. *Small Nations and Great Powers a Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*. Taylor and Francis, Inc., 2000. Print.

Cornell, Svante E., David J. Smith, and F. Starr. *The August 2007 Bombing Incident in Georgia: Implications for the Euro-Atlantic Region*. Silk Road Paper, 2007. Print.

Cornish, Paul, and Geoffrey Edwards. "Beyond the EU/NATO Dichotomy: The Beginnings of a European Strategic Culture." *International Affairs* 77: 587-603. Print.

Corso, Molly. "Saakashvili Travels to St. Petersburg for PR Meeting with Putin." Eurasianet, 12 June 2006. Web. 1 June 2014.
<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav061306.shtml>.

Council Joint Action 2004/523/CFSP. Brussels: European Union, 28 June 2004. Print.

Curtis, G.E.. *A Country Study: Georgia*. Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1994. Print.

Cvetkovski, Nikola. "Appendix 1: Chronicle of Events of the Conflict 1989-1992." *The Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict - Dissertation Aalborg University*. Danish Association for Research on the Caucasus. 1999. Web. 15.3.2002
<http://www.caucasus.dk/publication5.htm>.

Dalby, Simon. "Imperialism, Domination, Culture: The Continued Relevance of Critical Geopolitics." *Geopolitics* 13: 414-418. Print.

Danilov, D. and J. Cohen. "Russia's Role." *Accord: A Question of Sovereignty, The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process*. London: Conciliation Resources, 1999. Print.

Darchiashvili, D. and B. Coppieters. "Georgian Defense Policy and Military Reform." *Statehood and Security: Georgia After the Rose Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005. Print.

Darchiashvili, D.. "Policy Brief # 2, The President's New Initiative for South Ossetia: What will it bring about for Georgia in the Future." Caucasus Institute for Peace Democracy and Development, 19 Apr. 2007. Web. 1 Sept. 2007.
<http://www.cipdd.org/files/44_146_593118_CIPDDpolicybrief2Eng.pdf>.

Dartschiaschwili, D. and W. Kaufmann. "Georgien und die euroatlantischen Sicherheitsstrukturen." *Diaspora, Öl und Rosen: Zur innenpolitischen Entwicklung in Armenien, Aserbaidschan und Georgien*. Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2004. Print.

"Declaration on Observing Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity and Inviolability of Borders of the CIS Member-State." *Svobodnaya Gruzia* 19 Apr. 1994, 62: n. pag. Print. Translated from Russian.

Diasamnidze, T.. "Communique on Russian-Abkhaz Consultations, 6 May 1993." *Regional Conflicts in Georgia: The Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia, the Autonomous SSR of Abkhazia (1989-2005) - Collection of Political Legal Acts*. 2nd ed. Tbilisi: Regionalism Research Centre, 2005. Print.

Diasamnidze, T.. "Decree Issued by the Parliament of Georgia on Withdrawal of Russian Military Units from the Conflict Zone in Abkhazia, 27. April 1993." *Regional Conflicts in Georgia – Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia, Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia (1989-2005)*. Tbilisi: Regionalism Research Centre, 2005. Print.

T. Diasamnidze. "Final Document of the Moscow Meeting." *Regional Conflicts in Georgia: The Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia, the Autonomous SSR of Abkhazia (1989-2005) - Collection of Political Legal Acts*. 2nd ed. Tbilisi: Regionalism Research Centre, 2005. Print.

Dekanozishvili, W.B.. *Regional Preconditions for the Development of an Integrated European Policy towards the South Caucasus*. Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2004. Print.

Delyagin, Mikhail. "From Global Controversies to Regional Conflicts." Russia in Global Affairs, 8 Feb. 2005. Web. 18 Feb. 2012. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_4410>.

Der Derian, James. "Great Men, Monumental History, and Not-So-Grand Theory: A Meta-Review of Henry Kissinger's Diplomacy." *Mershon International Studies Review* 39: 179. Print.

Devdariani, J.. "Pulling back Troops, Georgia calls for European Help." *Civil Georgia*: n. pag. 31 August 2004. Web. 5 Apr. 2009. <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=7722>.

Devdiarini, J., and B. Hancilova. "EU Broaches Peacekeeping Possibility in Georgia." *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst* 7 Mar. 2007: n. pag. Print.

Diasamnidze, T.. "Protocol of Negotiations Between the Governmental Delegations of the Republic of Georgia and the Russian Federation, 9.April 1993." *Regional Conflicts in Georgia – Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia, Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia (1989-2005)*. Tbilisi: Regionalism Research Centre, 2005. Print.

Diasamidze, Tamaz. *Regional Conflicts in Georgia: The Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia, the Autonomous SSR of Abkhazia (1989-2005) - Collection of Political Legal Acts*. 2nd ed. Tbilisi: Regionalism Research Centre, 2005. Print.

Diekmann, Andreas. *Empirische Sozialforschung: Grundlagen, Methoden, Anwendungen*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1995. Print.

Diez, T.. "Europe's Others and the Return of Geopolitics." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 7: 319-335. Print.

Diez, T., I. Manners, F. Berenskoetter, and M.J. Williams. "Reflecting on Normative Power Europe." *Power in World Politics*. London: Routledge, 2007. Print.

Dittmer, Jason, and Klaus Dodds. "Popular Geopolitics Past and Future: Fandom, Identities and Audiences." *Geopolitics* 13: 437-457. Print.

Dodds, Klaus-John, and James Derrick Sidaway. "Locating critical geopolitics." *Environment and Planning: Society and Space* 12: 515-524. Print.

Dorpalen, Andreas. *The World of General Haushofer*. New York, Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1942. Print.

Duchêne, François. "A New European Defense Community." *Foreign Affairs* 50: 69-82. Print.

Duchêne, François and R. Mayne. "Europe's Role in World Peace." *Europe Tomorrow: Sixteen Europeans Look Ahead*. London: Fontana, 1972. Print.

Duchêne, François. *Jean Monnet: The First Statesman of Interdependence*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994. Print.

Duchêne, François, M. Kohnstamm, and W. Hager. "The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence." *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign-Policy Problems before the European Community*. London: Macmillan, 1973. Print.

Eckstein, H., F.I. Greenstein, and N.W. Polsby. "Case-Study and the Theory in Political Science." *Handbook of Political Science, Vol. I*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975. Print.

"Economy and Peace Research Group of the South Caucasus." *From War Economies to Peace Economies in the South Caucasus*. London: International Alert, 2004. Web. 17 June 2007. <www.international-alert.org/publications/181>.

"Editors: Independent Newspapers not going to Print in Abkhazia." Civil Georgia, 18 October 2004. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=8103>.

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Paul." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d. Web. 29 Mar. 2013. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/446907/Paul>.

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Treaty of Georgievsk." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 15 Mar. 2013. Web. 20 March 2013. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/230341/Treaty-of-Georgievsk>.

Efferink, Leonhardt van. "Global Position and Political Integration - Interview with Federico Bordonaro." March 2009. Exploring Geopolitics. Web. 1 February 2010. <http://www.exploringgeopolitics.org/Interview_Bordonaro_Federico_European_Union_Global_Power_Position_Political_Integration_Relationship_Russia_Geopolitics_Geopolitical_Briefing.html>.

Efferink, Leonhardt van. "The European Union: Geographical Imaginations - Interview with Luiza Bialasiewicz." September 2009. Exploring Geopolitics. Web. 17 October 2011. <http://www.exploringgeopolitics.org/Interview_Bialasiewicz_Luiza_European_Union_Geographical_Imaginations_Self_Representation_Border_Security_Mediterranean_Black_Sea_Global_South.html>.

Ekedahl, Carolyn McGiffert, and Melvin A. Goodman. *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*. Dulles: Brassey's Inc., 2001. Print.

Erler, G., F. Mueller, and D. Dettke. "Region of the Future: The Caspian Sea. German Interests in European Politics in the Trans-Caucasus and Central Asian Republics." *A Great Game No More: Oil, Gas and Stability in the Caspian Sea Region*. Washington, DC: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1999. Print.

"European Neighbourhood Policy Reference Documents, EU/ Georgia Action Plan, ENP Action Plans and Country Reports." European Union External Action, n.d. Web. 21 July 2009. <ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/georgia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf>.

European Parliament. "European Parliament Resolution of 20 May 2010 on the need for an EU Strategy for the South Caucasus (2009/2216(INI))." N.p., 20 May 2010. Web. 26 Sept. 2013. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0193+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>.

European Parliament. "EU Strategy for the South Caucasus." *Procedure File: 2009/2216(INI)*. N.p., n.d. Web. 26 Sept. 2013. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?id=583055>.

"EU Signals Plans to Engage More in Conflict Resolution." Civil Georgia, 22 Mar. 2006. Web. 27 September 2013. <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=12143&search>.

"Excerpts: Bush to Remain 'Committed' to War on Terror." The Washington Times, 11 Jan. 2005. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2005/jan/11/20050111-114349-9789r/?page=all#pagebreak>.

"Ex-Envoy's Hearing at War Commission end in Brawl." Civil Georgia, 25 November 2008. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=20026>.

Fisher, Roger, William Ury, and B. Patten. *Getting to Yes*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1991. Print.

"Foreign Minister Comments on Abkhazia, Russia's Role." Civil Georgia, 4 August 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=13250>.

Foucher, Michel. "The Geopolitics of Front Lines and Borderlines." *Geopolitics* 5: 163-165. Print.

"Treffen Putins mit Saakaschwili." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 12 Feb. 2004, 36: 7. Print.

Frei, Christoph. *Hans J. Morgenthau: Eine Intellektuelle Biographie*. Bern: P. Haupt, 1993. Print.

Frenz, Alexander. "The European Commission's Tacis Programme 1991-2006: A Success Story." European Commission, n.d. Web. 25 Sept. 2013. <ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/regional-cooperation/enpi-east/documents/annual_programmes/tacis_success_story_final_en.pdf>.

Frum, David. *The Right Man: The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush*. New York: Random House, 2003. Print.

Fukuyama, Francis. "The End of History." *The National Interest* 16: 8. 1989. Print.

"Full Text: 1996 CIS Treaty on Abkhaz Sanctions." Civil Georgia, 7 March 2008. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=17293>.

Furniss, Edgar S.. "Discussions and Reviews: A Review: Zbigniew Brzezinski, Alternative to Partition Henry A. Kissinger, The Troubled Partnership Timothy W. Stanley, NATO in Transition: The Future of the Atlantic Alliance." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 9: 532-537. Dec. 1965. Print.

Furniss, Edgar S.. "The Contribution of Nicholas John Spykman to the Study of International Politics." *World Politics* 4: 383-397. Apr. 1952. Print.

Gachechiladze, R.. "Geopolitics in the South Caucasus: Local and External Players." *Geopolitics* 7: 113-131. 2002. Print.

Gaddy, Clifford G.. "The Russia-Ukraine Natural Gas Battle." The Brookings Institution, 7 Jan. 2009. Web. 3 Sept. 2013. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/interviews/2009/01/07-russia-natural-gas-gaddy>.

Gamsakhurdia, Z.. "Decree issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia on introduction of state of emergency on the territory of town of Tskhinvali and the Java District, 12 December 1990." *Bulletins of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia* 12: 20-23. Print. Translated from Georgian.

Gegeshidze, Archil. "The New Silk Road: A Georgian Perspective." *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 5: n. pag. 2000. Print.

George, Alexander L. and P.G. Lauren. "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structures, Focused Comparison." *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory and Policy*. New York, NY: Free Press, 1979. Print.

George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998. Print.

"Georgia, Extraordinary Presidential Election, 5 January 2008: Final Report." Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 4 Mar. 2008. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/georgia/30959>.

"Georgia Sets up 'NATO Standard' Military Base in Senaki." Civil Georgia, 19 November 2005. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=11173>.

"Georgia - UNOMIG - Background." United Nations Observer Mission to Georgia, n.d. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unomig/background.html>.

"The Georgian Chronicle, Monthly Bulletin." *The Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development* 4:10. Oct 1995. Print.

Gerace, Michael P.. "State Interests, Military Power and International Commerce: Some Cross-National Evidence." *Geopolitics* 5: 107. 2001. Print.

German, Tracey. "Abkhazia and South Ossetia: Collision of Georgian and Russian Interests." *Russie.Nei.Visions* 11: 16. 2006. Print.

Ghazaryan, S.. "A Geopolitical and Geo-Strategic Perspective of Post-Modern Politics in the EU and its Borders: Europeanization as a Cultural Phenomenon in Transcaucasia." *University of Trieste, Italy*: 2006. *Open Starts*. Web. 27 Sept. 2013. <www.openstarts.units.it/dspace/bitstream/10077/877/1/g7sarkis.pdf>.

Giegerich, Bastian. *European Security and Strategic Culture: National Responses to the EU's Security and Defence Policy*. Berlin: Nomos, 2006. Print.

Gilpin, Robert G.. "The Richness Of The Tradition Of Political Realism." *International Organization* 38: 287-304. Print.

Gorbachev, Mikhail. "Decree issued by the Supreme Council of the USSR on Events in the Abkhaz ASSR, 17 July 1989." *Bulletins of the Peoples' Deputies Congress of the USSR and the Supreme Council of the USSR* 7: 257. Print. Translated from Russian.

Gotsiridze, R.. "Economic and Social Consequences of the International Conflicts in Georgia." *Parliament Budget Office of Georgia*: n. pag. 2003. Print.

Government of Georgia. "Memorandum: Basic Principles on Conflict Resolution." A Non-Paper circulated by the Georgian Government: August 2006. Print.

Grant, Richard. "Economic Globalisation: Politics and Trade Policy in Ghana and Kenya." *Geopolitics* 4: 57-82. 1999. Print.

Gremy, Damien. "Interview: Die EU und der Kaukasus – ein Gespräch mit Damien Helly, 2 November 2004." Caucaz. Web. 2 December 2006. <www.caucaz.com>.

Griffiths, Ieuan Ll.. "African Land and Access Corridors." *Geopolitics and International Boundaries* 2: 69-81. 1997. Print.

Grimm, Hans. *Volk ohne Raum*. München: A. Langen, 1926. Print.

Grono, Magdalena Frichova. *Georgia's Conflicts: What Role for the EU as Mediator*. London: International Alert, 2008. Print.

Gusseinova, M.. "Russian Interest in the Abkhazian Conflict and the Position of the USA." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 8:3. 1995. Print.

Haass, Richard N.. *Conflicts Unending: The United States and Regional Disputes*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990. Print.

Haindrava, I., and A. Gegeshidze. "Transformation of the Georgian–Abkhaz Conflict: Rethinking the Paradigm (Georgian Perspective)." Conciliation Resources, Feb. 2011. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.c-r.org/resources/transformation-georgian%E2%80%93abkhaz-conflict-rethinking-paradigm-georgian-perspective>.

Halbach, Uwe. *Der Kaukasus in neuem Licht: Die EU und Russland in ihrer schwierigsten Nachbarschaftsregion*. SWP-Studie, 2005. Print.

Halbach, Uwe. "Ein Jahr Primakow: Bilanzen russischer Außenpolitik 1996." Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, 19 Feb. 1997. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/4674>.

Halbach, Uwe. "Kleinkriege im Südkaukasus: Ein Beispiel für asymmetrische Gewalt?" *Asymmetrische Kriegsführung - ein neues Phänomen der Internationalen Politik?* Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2004. Print.

Halbach, Uwe. "Russland und Georgien: Konfrontationen im Umfeld Europas." *SWP-Aktuell* 32: 1. 2007. Print.

Halbach, Uwe. *Ungelöste Regionalkonflikte im Südkaukasus*. Berlin: SWP, 2010. Print.

Ham, Peter van. "Europe Gets Real: The New Security Strategy Shows the EU's." *American Institute for Contemporary German Studies (AICGS)*: 9 January 2004. Print.

Hardt, J.P., and R.F. Kaufman. *The Former Soviet Union in Transition*. New York, NY: Joint Economic Committee, The Congress of the United States, M.E. Sharpe, 1993. Print.

Haushofer, Karl. *Der Kontinentalblock, Mitteleuropa, Eurasien, Japan*. München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1940. Print.

Haushofer, Karl. *Grenzen in ihrer Geographischen und politischen Bedeutung*. Berlin: K. Vowinckel, 1939. Print.

Haushofer, Karl, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "In Defense of German Geopolitics, from Total Power; A Footnote to History (1948)." *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998. Print.

Haushofer, Karl. *Weltpolitik von heute*. Berlin: Zeitgeschichte Verlag, 1934. Print.

Haushofer, Karl, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "Why Geopolitik? From The World of General Haushofer." *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998. Print.

Haushofer, Karl, et al.. *Bausteine zur Geopolitik*. Berlin-Grunewald: Kurt Vowinckel, 1928. Print.

Haushofer, Karl, et al. *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*: 301. 1933. Print. Cit.n. Heyden, Günther. *Kritik der deutschen Geopolitik: Wesen und soziale Funktion einer reaktionären soziologischen Schule*. Berlin: Dietz, 1958. Print.

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung. *Diaspora, Öl und Rosen: Zur innenpolitischen Entwicklung in Armenien, Aserbaidschan und Georgien*. 1st ed. Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2004. Print.

Herder, Johann Gottfried. *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*. Web. 19 July 2014. <http://odysseetheater.org/goethe/herder/ideen.htm>.

Heyden, Günther. *Kritik der deutschen Geopolitik: Wesen und soziale Funktion einer reaktionären soziologischen Schule*. Berlin: Dietz, 1958. Print.

Hillen, J., and M. Noonan. "The Geopolitics of NATO Enlargement." *Parameters* 28: 22. 1998. Print.

Hix, Simon, and Klaus H. Goetz. "Introduction: European Integration And National Political Systems." *West European Politics* 23: 1-26. 2000. Print.

Hook, S.W.. "Review of Henry Kissinger: Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the Twenty-first Century." *International Studies Review* 4: 187-188. 2002. Print.

Howorth, Jolyon. *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.

Emil Hözel and A. Hettner. "Das geographische Individuum bei Karl Ritter und seine Bedeutung für den Begriff des Naturgebietes und der Naturgrenze." *Geographische Zeitschrift* 2: 378-444. 1896. Print.

Hume, Cameron R.. *Ending Mozambique's War: the Role of Mediation and Good Offices*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1994. Print.

Huntington, Samuel P., cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "The Clash of Civilizations, Foreign Affairs, The Council on Foreign Relations" *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998. Print.

Hyde-Price, A. and B. Tonra. "Interests, Institutions, and Identities in the Study of European Foreign Policy." *Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004. Print.

Imedi TV, Tbilisi, 16:02GMT, 9 September 2005, BBC Monitoring Online.

Ingram, J.. "Putin warns Georgia: Don't provoke Russia any further." *The Seattle Times* 5 Oct. 2006: n. pag. Print.

Iseri, Emre. *The US Grand Strategy and the Eurasian Heartland in the 21st Century.* Routledge, 2009. Print.

Jäckh, E.. *Mitteleuropa als Organismus*. Weimar: Deutsche Politik, 1916. Print.

Jackson, E.. *Meeting of Minds*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1952. Print.

Jervis, Robert. "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma." *World Politics* 30: 167-174. 1978. Print.

Jervis, Robert. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978. Print.

Jinjolia, S.. "On Condemnation of Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing and other Crimes committed by the Military-Political Authorities of Georgia against the Population of Abkhazia during the Georgian-Abkhazian War of 1992-1993." *Resolution of the People's Assembly – The Parliament of the Republic of Abkhazia*. 1997. Print.

Johansson-Nogues, Elisabeth. "The (Non-)Normative Power EU and the European Neighbourhood Policy: An exceptional policy for an exceptional actor?" *European Political Economy Review* 7: 181-94. 2007. Print.

Joseph, J.. *Pipeline Diplomacy: The Clinton Administration's Fight for Baku-Ceyhan (WWS Case Study)*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Web. November 2012. <wws.princeton.edu/research/cases.xml>.

Kaldor, Mary. *The Imaginary War: Understanding the East-West Conflict*. Oxford, OX, UK: Blackwell, 1990. Print.

Kaufmann, Walter. "A European Path for Abkhazia: Yesterday's Pipe Dreams?" *Caucasus Analytical Digest (CAD)* 7: 2-6. 2009. Print.

Kelman, Herbert C.. *International Behaviour: A Social Psychological Analysis*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965. Print.

Kennan, G., and S. Sestanovich. "A Tale of Two Post-Soviet Presidents." *The Wall Street Journal* 30 July 2004: n. pag. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.cfr.org/foreign-policy-history/tale-two-post-soviet-presidents/p7230>.

Keohane, Daniel, and Tomas Valasek. *Willing and Able? EU Defence in 2020*. London: Centre for European Reform, 2008. Print.

Keohane, Robert O.. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984. Print.

Keohane, Robert O.. *Neorealism and its Critics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. Print.

Keohane, Robert O., Joseph S. Nye, and G.T. Crane. "Interdependence in World Politics." *The Theoretical Evolution of International Political Economy: A Reader*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1997. Print.

Keohane, Robert O., and Joseph S. Nye. "Power And Interdependence Revisited." *International Organization* 41: 725-753. Print.

Keukeleire, Stephan. *The European Union as a Diplomatic Actor*. Leicester, England: University of Leicester, Centre for the Study of Diplomacy, 2000. Print.

Khanna, Parag. "In conversation with Joanna J. Myers." *Carnegie Council*: 16 April 2008. Print.

Khanna, Parag. *The Second World: How Emerging Powers are Redefining Global Competition in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2008. Print.

Khutsidze, Nino. "Military Expert on Kodori Operation." Civil Georgia, 26 July 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=13170>.

Khutsishvili, George. "Intervention in Transcaucasus." *Perspective* 4: n. pag. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.bu.edu/iscip/vol4/Khutsishvili.html>.

Kissinger, Henry. *Die sechs Säulen der Weltordnung*. Berlin: Siedler, 1992. Print.

Kissinger, Henry. *Does America need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century*. New York: Touchstone, 2001. Print.

Kjellén, Rudolf, and J. Sandmeier. *Der Staat als Lebensform*. Berlin: K. Vowinckel, 1925. Print.

Kjellén, Rudolf. *Studier öfver Sveriges politiska gränser*. Stockholm: 1899. Print.

Klare, Michael, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "The New Rogue State Doctrine, The Nation" *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998. Print.

Kleiboer, M.. "Understanding Success And Failure Of International Mediation." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40: 381. Jun. 1996. Print.

Kleiboer, M., and P.'t Hart. "Time to Talk? Multiple Perspectives on Timing of International Mediation." *Cooperation and Conflict* 30: 307-348. 1995. Print.

Kochan, T.A.. "Step-by-Step in the Middle East from the Perspective of the Labor Mediation Process." *Dynamics of Third Party Intervention: Kissinger in the Middle East*. New York: Praeger, 1981. Print.

"Kokoity, Bagapsh among Participants of Roundtable Discussion with Putin." Civil Georgia, 29 September 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=13712>.

Kolodziej, Edward A.. "Review: Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the Twenty-First Century." *Political Science Quarterly* 109: 906. Winter 1994-1995. Print.

Kondrashov, S.. "The Caspian Sea as a Mixture of Economics and Geopolitics." *What the Papers Say* 1 Jan. 1997: 3-5. Print.

"Kosovo: International Law and Recognition." Chatham House, 22 Apr. 2008. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/International%20Law/il220408.pdf>.

"Kosovo Precedent 'Terrifying': Putin." The Star, 22 Feb. 2008. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.thestar.com/article/306151>.

Kossatschow, K.. "Europa ohne Trennlinien." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 13 Dec. 2004: n. pag. Print.

Krasner, Stephen D.. *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979. Print.

Krell, Gert. *Weltbilder und Weltordnung Einführung in die Theorie der internationalen Beziehungen*. 2nd ed. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2003. Print.

Kriesberg, Louis. *Social Conflicts*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982. Print.

Kriesberg, Louis. *Timing the De-Escalation of International Conflicts*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991. Print.

Krylov, Alexander. "The Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict; The Security of the Caspian Sea Region." Oxford University Press, 4 July 2013. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://books.sipri.org/files/books/SIPRI01Chufrin/SIPRI01Chufrin16.pdf>.

Krylov, Alexander. "The Security of the Caspian Sea Region - The Georgian-Abkhazian Conflict." Abkhaz World, 15 Oct. 2008. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://abkhazworld.com/aw/conflict/739-the-security-of-the-caspian-sea-region>.

Kupatadze, A.. "The Impact of the Rose Revolution on Smuggling through Abkhazia and South Ossetia." *Insight Turkey* 7: n. pag. Print.

Kvarchelia, L.. "An Abkhaz Perspective." *Accord: A question of sovereignty, The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process*. London: Conciliation Resources, 1999. Print.

Lacoste, Yves. "La géographie, ça sert, d'abord, à faire la guerre." *François Maspéro/Petite Collection Maspero* 165: n. pag. 1976. Print.

Lacoste, Yves. "Rivalries for Territory." *Geopolitics* 5: 128-156. 2000. Print.

Ladrech, Robert. "Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 32: 69-88. 1994. Print.

Laffey, Mark. "Things Lost and Found: Richard Ashley and the Silences of Thinking Space." *Review of International Studies* 36: 989-1004. 2010. Print.

Lang, David Marshall. "Georgia under Russian Imperial Rule (Excerpts)." *A Modern History of Soviet Georgia*. New York: Grove Press, 1962. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.conflicts.rem33.com/images/Georgia/Lang_3.htm>.

Lang, David Marshall. *The Last Years of the Georgian Monarchy, 1658-1832*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1957. Print.

Lazdaja, Andina, Inga Munteanu, and Burmaa Nyamaa. "EU in Conflict Resolution in Georgia." Roskilde University, 1 Jan. 2007. Web. 22 Sept. 2013. <rudar.ruc.dk/bitstream/1800/3965/3/zGeorgia.pdf>.

Leonard, Mark. "Europe's Transformative Power." Centre for European Reform, 1 February 2005. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.cer.org.uk/publications/archive/bulletin-article/2005/europes-transformative-power>.

Levy, C.J.. "The Georgian and Putin: A Hate Story." *The New York Times* 18 Apr. 2009: n. pag. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.nytimes.com/2009/04/19/weekinreview/19levy.html>.

Lindner, Rainer. "Das Ende von Orange: Die Ukraine in der Transformationskrise." SWP Studie, Aug. 2006. Web. 29 Aug. 2012. <http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/studien/2006_S20_ldr_ks.pdf>.

Lindner, Rainer. "The Pursuit of Energy Security. Quixotic Search or Heroic Quest." *Schlossplatz* 2:21. 2007. Print.

Livny, Eric, Karine Torosyan, and Mack Ott. "The Economic Impact of the Russian Trade Embargo on Georgia." International School of Economics at Tbilisi University, n.d. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.iset.ge/index.php?article_id=251&clang=0>.

Luke, Timothy, cit.n. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. "The Discipline of Security Studies and the Codes of Containment: Learning from Kuwait, Alternatives: Social Transformation and Humane Governance." *The Geopolitics Reader.* London: Routledge, 1998. Print.

Luttwak, Edward N.. "From Geopolitics to Geoeconomics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce." *The National Interest* 20: 17-23. 1990. Print.

Lynch, Dov. "Security Sector Governance in the Southern Caucasus – Towards an EU strategy." Österreichs Bundesheer, 2004. Web. 2 Sept. 2013. <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/10_ssg_04_lyn.pdf>.

Lynch, Dov. *The Conflict in Abkhazia: Dilemmas in Russian 'Peacekeeping' Policy*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, 1998. Print.

Lynch, Dov. *Why Georgia Matters*. Paris: Institute for Security Studies, 2006. Print.

MacFarlane, S.N., A. Schnabel, H.-G. Ehrhart, and D. Haglund. "Russian Approaches to Peacekeeping." *The "New Peacekeeping" and European Security: German and Canadian Interests and Issues*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1995. Print.

Mackinder, H. J.. "The Geographical Pivot of History." *The Geographical Journal* 13: 2-437. 1904. Print.

Mahan, A. T.. *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*. 12th ed. Boston: Little, Brown, 1918. Print.

Mandelson, Peter. *The European Union in the Global Age*. London: Policy Network, 2007. Print.

Manners, Ian. "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction In Terms?" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40: 235-258. 2002. Print.

Manners, Ian. "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" Roskilde University Digital Archive, 2002. Web. 1 June 2014.

<http://rudar.ruc.dk:8080/bitstream/1800/8930/1/Ian_Manners_Normative_Power_Europe_A_Contradiction_in_Terms_COPRI_38_2000.pdf>.

Manners, Ian. "Normative Power Europe Reconsidered." CIDEL Workshop. Oslo 22-23 October 2004. From civilian to military power: the European Union at a crossroads?, 22-23 Oct. 2004. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.sv.uio.no/arena/english/research/projects/cidel/old/WorkshopOsloSecurity/Manners.pdf>.

Markedonov, S.. "Unrecognized Geopolitics." *Russia in Global Affairs* 1: n. pag. Web. 4 January 2012. <*http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_6186*>.

Matlary, J. H.. "When Soft Power Turns Hard: Is an EU Strategic Culture Possible?" *Security Dialogue* 37: 105-121. 2006. Print.

Maull, Otto. *Politische Geographie*. Berlin: 1925. Print.

McLachlan, Keith. "Introduction." *Geopolitics and International Boundaries*. Routledge, 1997. Print.

Mehring, Franz. *Über den historischen Materialismus, Kleine Bücherei des Marxismus-Leninismus*. Berlin: Dietz, 1950. Print.

Meister, S.. "Recalibrating Germany's and EU's Policy in the South Caucasus." *DGAP Analyse* 2: 4-11. 2010. Print.

Merlingen, Michael, and R. Ostrauskaite. *EU Peacebuilding in Georgia: Limits and Achievements*. The Hague: Cleer Working Papers, 2009. Print.

Meyer, Christoph. "Theorizing European Strategic Culture: Between Convergence and the Persistence of National Diversity." *Centre for European Policy Studies Working Document* 204. 2004. Print.

Miall, Hugh. *The Peacemakers: Peaceful Settlements of Disputes since 1945*. London: Macmillan, 1992. Print.

"Michail Saakaschwili." Council of Europe, n.d. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.coe.int/T/d/Com/Dossiers/PV-Sitzungen/2004-01/CV-Saakashvili-de.asp>.

Mickolus, Edward F., and Susan L. Simmons. *Terrorism, 1992-1995 a chronology of events and a selectively annotated bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997. Print.

Migranyan, Andranik. "Georgia Propelling its Disintegration." Russia in Global Affairs, 9 Nov. 2004. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_3878>.

Mikhailov, S.. "Why have Regional Conflicts Become a Business Of an Extremely Limited Number of People?" *Press Club* 18: n. pag. Yerevan Press Club. 2002. Print.

Minorities at Risk Project. "Chronology for Abkhazians in Georgia." N.p., 2004. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,CHRON,GEO,,469f388ca,0.html>.

Mitchell, C. R.. "Classifying Conflicts: Asymmetry and Resolution." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 518: 26-31. 1993. Print.

Mitchell, C.R.. "Motives for Mediation." *New Approaches to International Mediation*. New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1988. Print.

Monten, J.. "The Roots of the Bush Doctrine: Power, Nationalism and Democracy Promotion in US Strategy." *International Security* 29: 112-156. 2005. Print.

Müller-Kraenner, Sascha. *Die Europäische Nachbarschaftspolitik*. Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2004. Print.

Nan, S.A.. "Civic initiatives." *Accord: A Question of Sovereignty, The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process*. London: Conciliation Resources, 1999. Print.

"NATO and Russia Discuss Peacekeeping in Bosnia." *RFE/RL Newsline*: n. pag. Print.

"NATO's Relations with Georgia." North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 31 Mar. 2014. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_38988.htm?selectedLocale=en>.

Neuerer, Dietmar. "Erler fordert Stabilitätspakt für den Kaukasus." *Netzeitung* 9 Sept. 2004: n. pag. Web. 5 July 2006. <http://www.netzeitung.de/>.

"News in Brief." The Moscow Times, 10 June 2003. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/news-in-brief/237916.html>.

Nikoladze, G.. *The War in Abkhazia*. Abkhazia Institute for Social and Economic Research, 2007. Print.

Northedge, F. S., and Michael D. Donelan. *International Disputes: The Political Aspects*. London: Europa, 1971. Print.

Nye, Joseph S.. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs, 2004. Print.

Ohmae, Ken. *The Borderless World: Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy*. New York: HarperBusiness, 1990. Print.

Ohmae, Ken. *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies*. New York: Free Press, 1995. Print.

O'Brien, Richard. *Global Financial Integration: The End of Geography*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992. Print.

O'Loughlin, John, and Herman van der Wusten. "Political Geography of Panregions." *Geographical Review* 80: 1. 1990. Print.

Orbie, J.. "Civilian Power Europe: Review of the Original and Current Debates." *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic Studies Association* 41: 123. 2006. Print.

Orme, John D.. "U.S. Mediation in Revolutionary Conflicts, 1944–1986." *Mediation Quarterly* 7: 60. 1989. Print.

Ó Tuathail, Gearóid. "Borderless Worlds? Problematising Discourses of Deterritorialisation." *Geopolitics* 4: 141-143. 1999. Print.

Ó Tuathail, Gearóid. *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.

Ó Tuathail, Gearóid. "Political Geography of Contemporary Events VIII the Language and Nature of the 'New Geopolitics' - The Case of US-El Salvador Relations." *Political Geography Quarterly* 5: 73-85. 1986. Print.

Ó Tuathail, Gearóid. "Theorising Practical Geopolitical Reasoning: The Case of the United States Response to the War in Bosnia." *Political Geography* 21: 603. Jun. 2002. Print.

Ó Tuathail, Gearóid. "Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Society." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22: 109-113. 1999. Print.

Ó Tuathail, Gearóid, and John Agnew. *Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy*. 1992. Print.

Ó Tuathail, Gearóid, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge. *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998. Print.

Pain, R.. "Globalized Fear? Towards an Emotional Geopolitics." *Progress in Human Geography* 33: 466-485. 2009. Print.

Pain, Rachel, and S.J. Smith. *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life*. London: Ashgate, 2008. Print.

Parfit, T.. "Kremlin Targets Georgians after Spy Row." *The Guardian* 6 Oct. 2006: n. pag. Print.

Parliament of Georgia. "Appeal of the Georgian Parliament to the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, To President of the Russian Federation Mr. Boris Yeltsin." *Bulletins of the Parliament of Georgia*. 1991. Print.

Parrott, Bruce. *State Building and Military Power in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995. Print.

Parsons, Robert. "Russia and Georgia: A Lover's Revenge." Open Democracy, 5 Oct. 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-caucasus/georgia_russia_3972.jsp>.

Peck, Connie. *Sustainable Peace: The Role of the UN and Regional Organizations in Preventing Conflict*. Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998. Print.

Peters, I., and A. Krohn. "The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe." *The Baltic Sea Region: National and International Security Perspectives*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1996. Print.

Peters, Ingo, and Jan Bittner. "EU-US Risk Policy in the European Neighbourhood: The Cases of Moldova and Georgia." *Transatlantic Relations and Global Governance*. Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins University, SAIS, Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2006. Print.

Peuch, J.C.. *Ukraine: Regional Leaders set up Community of Democratic Choice*. Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty. 2 Dec. 2005. Web. 8 July 2006. Transcript. <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1063461.html>.

"Plebiscite on NATO Integration; Official Results from the Ministry of NATO Integration."
CEC Election Administration of Georgia, 2008. Web. 1 December 2010.
<www.cec.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=14&info_id=3698>.

Plekhanov, Georgii. *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus*. Stuttgart: J.H.W. Dietz,
1896. Print.

Pöhlmann, Robert von. *Hellenische Anschauungen über den Zusammenhang zwischen Natur
und Geschichte*. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1879. Print.

Posen, B.. "The European Security Strategy: Practical Implications." *Oxford Journal on Good
Governance* 1: 33-34. 2004. Print.

"Statement of an IMF Staff Mission at the Conclusion of a Visit to Georgia." International
Monetary Fund, 7 Mar. 2008. Web. June 2010.
<http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2008/pr0846.htm>.

"Putin, Saakashvili Meet At CIS Summit." Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 16 Sept. 2004.
Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1054877.html>.

"Putin Saakashvili Spar at CIS Press Conference." Asbarez Armenian News, 17 Sept. 2004.
Web. 1 June 2014. <http://asbarez.com/50704/putin-saakashvili-spar-at-cis-press-
conference/>.

"Putin says Georgia acts like Stalin's Henchman." *Reuters* 2 Oct. 2006: n. pag. Print.

Radaelli, Claudio M.. "Whither Europeanization? Concept Stretching and Substantive
Change." European Integration Online Papers, 17 July 2000. Web. 20 Sept. 2013.
<eiop.or.at./eiop/texte/2000-008a.htm>.

RAPID. "Press Release, EU Energy Security and Solidarity Action Plan: 2nd Strategic
Energy Review." N.p., 13 Nov. 2008. Web. 4 Apr. 2010.
<europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction. do?reference=MEMO/08/format=HTML&aged=0(
uage=en&guiLanguage=en>.

Ratzel, Friedrich. *Politische Geographie*. München und Leipzig: R. Oldenbourg, 1897. Print.

Reagan, P.M.. "Third Party Intervention and the Duration of Intrastate Conflict." *Journal of
Conflict Resolution* 46: n. pag. Print.

"Report by the Government of Georgia on the Aggression by the Russian Federation against
Georgia." Civil, 1 Jan. 2010. Web. 1 June 2014.
<http://www.civil.ge/files/files/GeorgianGovernmentReportWar.pdf>.

"Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia."
IIFFMCG-CEIIG. September 2009. Web. 4 Sept 2010. <http://www.ceiig.ch/Report.html>.

"Report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia
(S/2001/401)", Web. 6 May 2015, <http://reliefweb.int/report/georgia/report-secretary-
general-concerning-situation-abkhazia-georgia-s2001401>.

"Resolution 876, Adopted by the UN Security Council 19 October 1993 to Letter of 12
October 1993 by the Chairman of the Georgian Parliament, UN Document S/26576." United
Nations Security Council, October 1999. Print.

"Resolution 1255 (1999) Adopted by the Security Council at its 4029th meeting on 30 July 1999." United Nations Security Council, 30 July 1999. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3b00f1b472.html>.

Respublika Abkhazia 109: 5-6 November 1997. Print.

Rettman, A.. "Russia is not Neutral in Black Sea Conflict, EU says." *EUOBSERVER* 12 Oct. 2006: n. pag. Print.

Richmond, O.P.. "Mediating Ethnic Conflicts: A Task for Sisyphus?" *Global Society* 13: 185-197. Print.

Risse, T., A. Wiener, and T. Diez. "Social Constructivism and European Integration." *European Integration Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Print.

Rogers, James. *From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power": Explicating the European Union's "Grand Strategy" through the Articulation of Discourse Theory*. Journal of Common Market Studies, 47: 831-862. 2009. Print.

Rommens, Thijs. *The Impact of the European Neighborhood Policy on Democratisation in the South Caucasus (Paper Presented at the Changing Europe Summer School 2008)*. Bremen: Central and Eastern Europe in a Changing World - University of Bremen, 2008. Print.

Rüegg, Walter. *Geschichte der Universität in Europa Band 3: Vom 19. Jahrhundert zum Zweiten Weltkrieg 1800 - 1945*. München: Beck, 2004. Print.

Saakashvili, Mikheil. "Remarks by President Mikheil Saakashvili at the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly." The Administration of the President of Georgia, 15 Sept. 2006. Web. 30 July 2011. <www.president.gov.ge/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2731&i=1>.

Saakashvili, Mikheil. "Remarks by the Georgian President Saakashvili at the Dinner Dedicated to the 42nd International (Security) Conference in Munich." The Administration of the President of Georgia, 3 Feb. 2006. Web. 2 May 2011. <http://www.president.gov.ge/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2687&i=1>.

Saakashvili, Mikheil. "Remarks On the Occasion of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly." United Nations, 21 Sept. 2004. Web. 1 June 2014. < http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/59/statements/geoeng040921.pdf>.

Saakashvili, Mikheil. "Speech delivered by Mikheil Saakashvili at Johns Hopkins University." The Administration of the President of Georgia, 4 Feb. 2004. Web. 28 Feb 2011. <http://www.president.gov.ge/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2779&i=1>.

Saakashvili, Mikheil. "Speech Delivered by the Georgian President Saakashvili at the Meeting with Members of Supreme Council of Abkhazia." The Administration of the President of Georgia, 10 Sept. 2004. Web. 11 Mar. 2010. <http://www.president.gov.ge/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?a=200409>.

Saakashvili, Mikheil. "Statement by his Excellency Mr. Mikheil Saakashvili President of Georgia at the 61st Session of the United Nations General Assembly." United Nations General Assembly, 22 Sept. 2006. Web. 8 June 2014. <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/61/pdfs/georgia-e.pdf>.

Saakashvili, Mikheil. "Verbatim Record of the 59th Session of the General Assembly, Remarks On the Occasion of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly." United Nations, 21 Sept. 2004. Web. 6 Oct 2009. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/516/10/PDF/N0451610.pdf?OpenElement>.

"Saakashvili Outlines Tbilisi's Abkhaz Initiatives." Civil Georgia, 28 Mar. 2008. Web. 13 Nov 2011. <www.civil.ge/eng/print.php?id=17473>.

"Saakashvili Speaks of Russia, Hails Putin as 'Historic Figure'." Civil Georgia, 23 February 2007. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=14683>.

"Saakashvili Unveils 'Fresh Roadmap' in UN Speech." Civil Georgia, 22 September 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=13621>.

"Saakashvili Upbeat after Talks with Putin." Civil Georgia, 10 June 2007. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=15251>.

Saldastanischwili, K. and B. Schröder. "Georgien auf dem Weg in die Europäische Union." *Georgien-Gesellschaft und Religion an der schwelle Europas*. St. Ingberg: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2005. Print.

"Sanakoev Appointed as Head of S. Ossetian Government." Civil Georgia, 10 May 2007. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=15089>.

Sarotte, M. E.. *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009. Print.

Sayer, A.. *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1992. Print.

"Schlaining Process." Conciliation Resources, n.d. Web. 7 Mar 2010. <www.c-r.org/our-work/caucasus/schlaining.php>.

Sepashvili, G., and T. Gularidze "Putin Meddles in Abkhazia Presidential Race." Civil Georgia, 31 August 2004. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=7721>.

Sestanovich, Stephen. "Where does Russia Belong?" The National Interest, US Department of State, Center for Defense Information, 1 Dec. 2000. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://nationalinterest.org/article/where-does-russia-belong-629>.

Shamba, Sergey. *Russia-Abkhazia: History and the Present*. Print. Document obtained from the personal archive of the Prime Minister of Abkhazia, 2010.

Shamba, Sergey. "Substantiation of Illegality of Proceeding Regime of Sanctions against Abkhazia." Print. Personal files of Sergey Shamba, Sukhumi, 2008.

Shamba, Sergey. *Untitled Document obtained from the Personal Archive of the Prime Minister of Abkhazia, 2010*. Print.

Sharansky, Natan, and Ron Dermer. *The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to overcome Tyranny and Terror*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2004. Print.

Shervashidze, Michael. *Materials and Notes on Possession and Property Rights of Descendants of his Highness Prince Michael Shervashidze, Last Possessor of Abkhazia*.

Verdun: 1913. Print. Document obtained from the personal archive of Prime Minister of Abkhazia, 2010.

Shevardnadze, Eduard. "Address by Mr. Eduard A. Shevardnadze, Chairman of the Council of State of the Republic of Georgia." General Assembly: Forty-Seventh Session - 12th Meeting. United Nations. UN Headquarters, New York, NY. 25 Sept. 1992. Speech.

Shevardnadze, Eduard. *Als der Eiserne Vorhang zerriss: Begegnungen und Erinnerungen*. Duisburg: Peter W. Metzler Verlag, 2007. Print.

Shevardnadze, Eduard. "Decree issued by the Presidium of the State Council of the Republic of Georgia on Introduction of the State of Emergency on the Railway Transport, 10 August 1992." n. pag. Print.

Shevardnadze, Eduard. "Open Letter by Shevardnadze to the Russian Vice-President Alexandre Rutskoi." *Republic of Georgia newspaper* 21 June 1992: n. pag. Print. Translated.

Shevardnadze, Eduard. "Speech of Eduard Shevardnadze before the 47th session of the General Assembly." 2 Oct. 1992. Speech.

Sidaway, James D.. "Iraq/Yugoslavia: Banal Geopolitics." *Antipode* 33: 601-609. 2001. Print.

Sjursen, Helene. "What Kind of Power?" *Journal of European Public Policy* 13: 172. 2006. Print.

Smith, Karen Elizabeth. *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World*. Oxford, UK: Polity, 2003. Print.

Smith, Karen Elizabeth and J. Zielonka. "The Instruments of European Union Foreign Policy." *Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy*. The Hague, The Netherlands: Kluwer Law International, 1998. Print.

Smith, Martin A., and Graham Timmins. "Russia, NATO and the EU in an Era of Enlargement: Vulnerability or Opportunity?" *Geopolitics* 6: 69-76. 2001. Print.

Socor, Vladimir. "Ashton's Office Proposes Abolishing EU's Special Representatives for Moldova and South Caucasus." *Eurasian Daily Monitor* 4 June 2010: n. pag. Print.

Socor, Vladimir. "NATO Prospects in the South Caucasus." *IASPS Policy Briefings*: 26 April 2004. Print.

Socor, Vladimir. "New Group of Georgia's Friends Founded." *Eurasian Daily Monitor* 6 February 2005: 2:26. Print.

Solana, Javier. "A Secure Europe in a Better World." Consilium, 13 Dec. 2003. Web. 1 Mar. 2013. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>.

Solana, Javier. *Speech by Javier Solana, The Sound of Europe Conference.* S030/06, Salzburg, 27 January 2006.

Sparke, Matthew. "From Geopolitics to Geoeconomics: Transnational State Effects in the Borderlands." *Geopolitics* 3: 66. 1998. Print.

Spegele, Roger D.. *Richard Ashley's Discourse for International Relations*. : Millenium – Journal of International Studies, 1992. Print.

Sprengel, Rainer. *Kritik der Geopolitik: Ein deutscher Diskurs, 1914-1944*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996. Print.

Spykman, Nicholas J.. "Frontiers, Security, and International Organization." *Geographical Review* 32: 436-447. 1942. Print.

Spykman, Nicholas J.. "Geography and Foreign Policy, I." *The American Political Science Review* 32: 28-37. 1938. Print.

Spykman, Nicholas J.. "Geography and Foreign Policy, II." *The American Political Science Review* 32: 213-228ff. 1938. Print.

Spykman, Nicholas J., and Abbie A. Rollins. "Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy, I." *The American Political Science Review* 33: 394-409. 1939. Print.

Spykman, Nicholas J., and Abbie A. Rollins. "Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy, II." *The American Political Science Review* 33: 602. 1939. Print.

"Statement of the Georgian Parliament." *Bulletins of the Parliament of Georgia #9-12*. 27 Sept. 1993. Print.

Stent, A.E., "The Munich Speech". *The Limits of Partnership, U.S.-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton University Press. 2014. Print.

Stewart, S.. *Die Konstruktion des Feindbildes Westen im heutigen Russland*. Berlin: SWP Studie, 2008. Print.

Strausz-Hupe, Robert. "Review of Nicholas John Spykman, The Geography of Peace." *Military Affairs* 8: 144-145. Print.

Svobodnaya Gruzia 27 June 1992: 82. Print.

Tagliavini, H., A. Menger, and V. Mauer. "Edouard Brunner's Mandate in Georgia." *Edouard Brunner ou la diplomatie du possible*. Zürich: ETH Zürich, 2001. Print.

"Tashkent Agreement, 15 May 1992." *Tashkent Agreement, 15 May 1992*. Federation of American Scientists, 15 May 1992. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/cfe/text/tashka.htm>.

"Tbilisi Unveils Principles for Abkhazia Peace Plan." Civil Georgia, 9 June 2006. Web. 1 June 2014. <www.civil.ge/eng/_print.php?id=12789>.

"Text: Bush's speech in Georgia." BBC News, 10 May 2005. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4534267.stm>.

"Text of the Berlin Declaration." BBC News, 25 Mar. 2007. Web. 26 Sept. 2011. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6491487.stm>.

Toal, Gerard. "Book Forum: Derek Gregory's The Colonial Present." *Political Geography* 27: 342. 2008. Print.

Toal, Gerard. "Re-Asserting the Regional: Political Geography and Geopolitics in World thinly known." *Political Geography* 22: 653. 2003. Print.

Tocci, Nathalie, M. Keating, and J. McGarry. "EU Accession and Conflict Resolution in Theory and Practice: The Case of Cyprus." *European Integration and the Nationalities Question*. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Tocci, Nathalie. *The EU and Conflict Resolution: Promoting Peace in the Backyard*. London: Routledge, 2007. Print.

Touval, Saadia. "Biased Intermediaries: Theoretical and Historical Considerations." *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations* 1: 51-69. 1975. Print.

Touval, Saadia. *The Peace Brokers: Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982. Print.

Touval, Saadia, and I.W. Zartman. *International Mediation in Theory and Practice*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985. Print.

"Treaty of Georgievsk." Wikisource, 3 Feb. 2013. Web. 1 June 2014. <http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Georgievsk>.

Trenin, D.. "Russia's Sphere of Interest, not Influence." *The Washington Quarterly*: 16. 2009. Print.

Truman, Harry. "The Truman Doctrine." US Department of State. 12 Mar. 1947. Web. 14 May 2010. <usinfo.org/PUBS/LivingDoc_e/trumandoctrine.htm>.

Tsygankov, Andrei, and Pavel Tsygankov. "Pluralism or Isolation of Civilisations? Russia's Foreign Policy Discourse and the Reception of Huntington's Paradigm of the Post-Cold War World." *Geopolitics* 4: 48-52. 1999. Print.

United Nations. *A/47/49*. New York: United Nations, 1992. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/1997/558*. New York: United Nations, 18 July 1997. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/1997/827*. New York: United Nations, 28 October 1997. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/1998/51*. New York: United Nations, 19 January 1998. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/1999/60*. New York: United Nations, 20 January 1999. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/1999/805*. New York: United Nations, 20 July 1999. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2000/39*. New York: United Nations, 19 January 2000. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2000/697*. New York: United Nations, 17 July 2000. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2001/1008*. New York: United Nations, 24 October 2001. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2002/742*. New York: United Nations, 10 July 2002. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2002/805*. New York: United Nations, 10 July 2002. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2003/412*. New York: United Nations, March 2003. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2004/26*. New York: United Nations, 14 January 2004. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2004/570*. New York: United Nations, 14 July 2004. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2004/822*. New York: United Nations, 18 October 2004. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/32*. New York: United Nations, 17 January 2005. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/269*. New York: United Nations, 25 April 2005. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/453*. New York: United Nations, 13 July 2005. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2005/657*. New York: United Nations, 19 October 2005. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2006/19*. New York: United Nations, 13 January 2006. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2006/173*. New York: United Nations, 17 March 2006. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2006/435*. New York: United Nations, 26 June 2006. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2006/771*. New York: United Nations, 28 September 2006. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2007/15*. New York: United Nations, 11 January 2007. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2007/182*. New York: United Nations, 3 April 2007. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2007/439*. New York: United Nations, 18 July 2007. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2007/588.* New York: United Nations, 3 October 2007. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2008/219.* New York: United Nations, 2 April 2008. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2008/480.* New York: United Nations, 23 July 2008. Print.

United Nations. *Report of the Secretary General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia S/2008/631.* New York: United Nations, 3 October 2008. Print.

United Nations. *Security Council Debate, Security Council 5839th* Meeting S/PV.5839. New York: United Nations, 18 February 2008. Print.

United Nations. *Security Council Report, Extraordinary Meeting of the Security Council after the Declaration of Independence of Kosovo, S/ PV.5839.* New York: United Nations. Print.

"Uranium Stored in Abkhazia Might Have Been Sold to Terrorists." The Nuclear Threat Initiative, 29 June 2002. Web. Aug. 2012. <http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/uranium-stored-abkhazia-might-have-been-sold-terrorists/>.

US Embassy. *Cable, 06Almaty211, Secretary Johanns' January 11, 2006 Meeting With Georgian President Saakashvili.* Almaty: US Embassy, 23 January 2006. Print.

US Embassy. *Cable, 06Moscow7863, Georgia-Russia: Putin-Saakashvili Meeting off, Leaving Little Clarity and Much Suspicion.* Moscow: US Embassy, 21 July 2006. Print.

Venusberg Group. *A European Defence Strategy*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2004. Print.

Venusberg Group. *Beyond 2010: European Grand Strategy in the Global Age*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2007. Print.

Venusberg Group. *Enhancing the European Union as an International Security Actor: A Strategy for Action*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2000. Print.

Venusberg Group. *Why the World Needs a Strong Europe (...) and Europe Needs to be Strong: Ten Messages to the European Council*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2005. Print.

Vogel, Walther. "Rudolf Kjellén und seine Bedeutung für die Deutsche Staatslehre." *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 81: 193. Print. Cit.n. Sprengel, Rainer. *Kritik der Geopolitik: Ein deutscher Diskurs, 1914-1944*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996. Print.

Walker, R. B. J.. "Contemporary Militarism and the Discourse of Dissent." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 9: 345-364. Print.

Walsh, Edmund A.. *Wahre anstatt falsche Geopolitik für Deutschland*. Frankfurt/Main: G. Schulte-Bulmke, 1946. Print.

Waltz, Kenneth N.. *Theory of international politics*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1979. Print.

Wendt, Alexander. "Anarchy Is What States Make Of It: The Social Construction Of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46: 394-395. 1992. Print.

Wendt, Alexander. "On constitution and Causation in International Relations." *Review of International Studies* 24: 102. 1998. Print.

Wendt, Alexander, C. Bretherton, and J. Vogler. *The European Union as a Global Actor*. London/New York: Routledge, 1999. Print.

Wennmann, A.. "The Political Economy of Transnational Crime and its Implication for Armed Violence in Georgia." N.p., 1 Jan. 2004. Web. 7 July 2012. <http://www.cimera.org/sources/105_117.pdf>.

Wetzinger, Johannes. "Georgiens Außenpolitik unter Michail Saakaschwili: Ein riskantes Spiel im Spannungsfeld zwischen Washington und Moskau." *FES-Analysen* 1:2011. Print.

Wheatley, Jonathan. *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union*. Surrey: Ashgate, 2005. Print.

Wheeler, Charles. "Review: The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives by Zbigniew Brzezinski." *International Affairs* 74: 913. 1998. Print.

Whitfield, Teresa. *Friends Indeed? The United Nations, Groups of Friends, and the Resolution of Conflict.* United States Institute of Peace. 2007. Print.

Witney, Nicholas K. J.. *Re-Energising Europe's Security and Defence Policy*. London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2008. Print.

Wittfogel, Karl A.. *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus*. 1929. Print.

Wright, Esmond, and Henry A. Kissinger. "The Necessity for Choice: Prospects of American Foreign Policy." *International Affairs* 38: 83. Print.

"X" (George F. Kennan). "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." *Foreign Affairs*: n. pag. July 1947. Print.

Yarrow, C.H.. *Quaker Experience in International Conciliation*. Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1987. Print.

Yeltsin, Boris, and Eduard Shevardnadze. *Diplomatic Internal Report about Communiqué jointly issued by Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze about the Dagomys Meeting on June 24, 1992*. 1992. Print. Personal Archive of author.

Young, Oran R.. *Intermediaries: Third parties in International Crisis*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967. Print.

Zagorsky, A. and Dov Lynch. "Russia and the Shared Neighbourhood." *What Russia Sees*. Paris: Institute for Security Studies, 2005. Print.

Zakareishvili, P.. "A Georgian View." *Accord: A Question of Sovereignty, The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process*. London: Conciliation Resources, 1999. Print.

Zartman, I.W. and J.Z. Rubin. "Explaining Disengagement." *Dynamics of Third Party Intervention: Kissinger in the Middle East*. New York: Praeger, 1981. Print.

Zartman, I. William. *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. Print.

Zartman, I.W., J. Aurik, L. Kriesberg, S.J. Thompson. "Power Strategies in De-Escalation." *Timing the De-Escalation of International Conflict*. New York, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991. Print.

Zhidkov, S.. *Brosok Malov Imperil (The Spurt of a Small Empire)*. Maikop: Adygeya, 1996. Print.

Zielonka, Jan. *Europe as Empire: The Nature of the Enlarged European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Print.

Interviews

Alasania, Irakli. Former personal representative of the Georgian President for the Georgian-Abkhaz talks. Personal Interview. 2010.

Anchabadze, Giorgi. Historian. Personal Interview. 2010.

Badie, Bertrand. Faculty Institute d'Etudes Politiques Paris. Personal Conversation, 2006.

Darchiashvili, Dato. Member of Georgian Parliament. Personal Interview. 2011.

Gegeshidze, Archil, Senior Fellow Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies Personal Interview. 2010.

Gugulia, Gennady. Businessmen Sukhum. Personal Interview. 2010.

Gurgulia, Manana. President Sukhum Media Club. Personal Interview. 2010.

Haindrava, Goga. Former Georgian State Minister of Conflicts. Personal Interview. 2010.

Haindrava, Ivlian. Director South Caucasus Studies Program Republican Institute. Personal Interview. 2010.

Halbach, Uwe. SWP Berlin. Personal Interview. February 2006.

Iakobashvili, Temur. Former Georgian Minister of Conflicts. Personal Interview. 2010.

Inal-Ipa, Arda. Deputy Director Center for Humanitarian Programs. Personal Interview. 2010.

Jinjolia, Sokrat. Second Prime Minister Abkhazia. Personal Interview. 2010.

Khajimba, Raul. Former Vice President Abkhazia. Personal Interview. 2010.

Khintba, Irakli. Deputy Foreign Minister Abkhazia. Personal Interview. 2010.

Khutsishvili, Giorgi. Founder International Center of Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN). Personal Interview. 2007.

Kvernadze, Eldar. Former Member of Georgian Parliament. Personal Interview. 2010.

Lakerbaia, Zurab. Georgian-Abkhaz Coordinating Commission. Personal Interview. 2010.

Lakoba, Stanislav. Former Secretary Security Council of Abkhazia. Personal Interview. 2010.

Lapins, Wulf. Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Personal Interview. 2006. 2007.

Lordkipanidze, Vasha. Former personal representative of the Georgian President for the conflict in Abkhazia. Personal Interview. 2010.

Magradze, Guguli. Faculty Tbilisi State University. Personal Interview. 2010.

Mamradze, Peter. Former Chief of Staff Georgian Chancellery. Personal Interview. 2010.

Members of the Abkhaz leadership in Sukhumi. Personal Interview. 2010.

Menagarishvili, Irakli. Former Georgian Foreign Minister. Personal Interview. 2010.

Müller-Kraenner, Sascha. Former Heinrich Böll Foundation Director for Europe and North America. Personal Interview. 2006.

Nodia, Ghia. Director International School for Caucasus Studies at Ilia Chavchavadze State University. Personal Interview.

Reisner, Oliver. European Commission Delegation to Georgia. Personal Interview.

Rondeli, Alexander. Co-Founder and President Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. Personal Interview. 2010.

Shamba, Sergey. Former Prime Minister Abkhazia. Personal Interview. 2010.

Sharashenidze, Tornike. Researcher Georgian Institute for Public Affairs. Personal Talk. 2010.

Shevardnadze, Eduard. Former President of Georgia. Personal Interview. 2011.

Smith, David. Lecturer Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. Personal Interview. 2010.

Tenenbaum, Charles. Researcher Institute d'Etudes Politiques Paris. Personal Interview. 2004.

Undisclosed Interview Partners. Personal Interview. 2010.

Unnamed German diplomat. Personal Interview. 2010.

Unnamed high-level member of the IEOM to Georgia. Personal Interview. 2010.

Unnamed representatives. Personal Interview. 2010. Among them a member from a foreign diplomatic mission to Georgia, a member of the OSCE election observer mission, a member of UNICEF Georgia, a member of a foreign delegation to Georgia in the context of the peace process 2008; all in their private capacity.

Wolleh, Oliver. Berghof Conflict Research. Personal Interview. 2006.

Zakareishvili, Paata. Georgian State Minister of Reconciliation. Personal Interview. 2007. 2010.