

The Russian-Georgian armed Conflict

Background information



Population
• 142 mil.

Population
• 4,4 mil.

Background information: breakaway regions

Abkhazia
• 216,000

Ajaria
• 376,000



South
Ossetia
• 70,000

Background information: history of conflict

- Late 18th century – Ossetia was incorporated into the Russian Empire and divided into northern and southern regions
- 1918-1921 – Georgian independence from Russian Empire
- 1921 - Georgia was annexed by the Soviet Union
- 1922 - South Ossetia was established as an autonomous region of the Soviet Republic of Georgia

Background information: history of conflict

- 1989-1990 - South Ossetia tried to gain independence from Georgia
- April 1991 - Georgia received independence
- 1991-1992 - brutal clashes between South Ossetians and Georgians, 1,000 dead*
- 1992 – Ceasefire agreement brokered by Russia

Background information: history of conflict

- 2003 – “Rose Revolution” in Georgia
- 2004 – fighting broke out in South Ossetia.
- 2007 – Georgia calls for internationalization of peacekeeping force in the region
- August 2008 – 5 days armed conflict between Russia and Georgia

The second phase of escalation

- The second stage of escalation of the conflict started 18 years after the ceasefire agreement in 1992. State weakness was the key problem that undermined Georgia's development since its independence. National-building efforts to achieve national integration were ill-prepared as well as state effectiveness (or "state capture") to provide territorial control. After Mikheil Saakashvili came to power, he launched a policy of consolidating the Georgian state, developing the elementary features of functional statehood

The second phase of escalation

- Saakashvili's major goals were to accomplish a process of **transformation of Georgian state, struggle against corruption and poverty in the country, achieving NATO membership and territorial integrity.**
- Georgia verbally emphasized its desire for a peaceful settlement of the conflicts. The new Georgian government emphasized the need to deal with the issue of territorial control to build a strong state.
- The first success on this way was achieved in Adjara by overthrowing Aslan Abashidze's regime in 2004. This event meant double victory for Georgian government:
 - 1. the victory over autocratic ruler in the name of democracy
 - 2. a victory in the state building process.
- After Adjara had become a part of Georgia without major international complications or an outbreak of violence, the Georgian government started to deal with the issue of South Ossetia.

The second phase of escalation

- Before 2004 there was no major deterioration of situation on the conflict zone with South Ossetia.
- Georgians and South Ossetians were engaged in active trading across the zone.
- Georgian government believed that the problem was only the corrupt clan of Eduard Kokoiti ruling in South Ossetia and South Ossetians would be willing to struggle against him.
- In 2004, Georgia launched a **campaign against smuggling in South Ossetia**. Unlike expected outcome, Ossetians consolidated behind the de-facto government. That led to a crisis culminating in August 2004, when an outbreak of armed conflicts between Georgian and Ossetian soldiers erupted. Unlike the triumph in Achara this development indicated overall setback and worsening relationship in the conflict zone.

South Ossetia



- Since the development in 2004, Saakashvili's strategy was to achieve success through **internationalization of Georgian conflicts, NATO membership and gaining support of from the West.**
- In July 2005, President Saakashvili announced a new peace plan for South Ossetia that offered substantial autonomy and a three-stage settlement, consisting of demilitarization, economic rehabilitation, and a political settlement.
- South Ossetian "president" Eduard Kokoiti rejected the plan.

South Ossetia

- In March 2007, President Saakashvili proposed another peace plan for South Ossetia that involved creating “transitional” administrative districts throughout the region.
- In July 2007, President Saakashvili decreed the establishment of a commission to work out South Ossetia’s “status” as a part of Georgia.
- The JCC finally held a meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia, in October 2007, but the Russian Foreign Ministry claimed that the Georgian emissaries made unacceptable demands in order to deliberately sabotage the results of the meeting. No further meetings were held.

Roki Tunnel – Only road passage from Russia to South Ossetia



http://graphics8.nytimes.com/images/2008/09/16/world/16georgia_600.jpg

Convoy of Russian soldiers by the Caucasus mountains



http://cache.boston.com/universal/site_graphics/blogs/bigpicture/georgia_08_11/georgia1.jpg



Russian forces in Goergia



The 2008 South Ossetia war



- Railroad
- Airport
- Road
- 6000 m
- Georgian offensive (August 7-10)
- Russian counteroffensive (August 8-16)
- Area shelled by the Georgian artillery
- Russian air attacks
- Russian naval movements
- Georgian naval movements
- Russian airborne forces
- Naval engagement
- Territory controlled by the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia prior to the war
- Abkhazian and South Ossetian territory loyal to the Georgian government that was lost to the separatists and Russian forces
- Georgian territory (outside Abkhazia and South Ossetia) occupied by the Russian army
- Georgian defensive position after August 11



Conflict Analysis: Interests

Stakeholder	Interests
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Return breakaway regions• Display that territorial integrity is under threat• Promote NATO membership• Demonstrate Russia's aggressiveness
South Ossetia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate violation of human rights• Show that Georgia is aggressive state• Get international recognition of their plight• Desire for independence or incorporation into Russian Federation
Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undermine Georgia's territorial integrity• Prevent Georgia from joining NATO• Send strong message to Ukraine• Protect its sphere of influence• Control of the Caucasus and its energy resources• Promote "regime change" in Georgia? West's recognition of Kosovo? U.S. Missile Defense Shield?

Conflict Analysis: Interests

Stakeholder	Interests
EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human rights protection• Observance of international law• Access to energy resources
NATO/US	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Security and stability in the region• Observance of international law• Energy security• Commitment to idea of democracy• NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP)

Oil and Gas pipeline that pass through Georgia



Conflict Analysis: Actions

Stakeholder	Actions
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accusing Russia of supporting separatist movements• Military attack on Tskhinvali, capital of South Ossetia• Accusation of violation of human rights and ethnic cleansing• Attack South Ossetian-populated villages in S.O.
South Ossetia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encouraged support from Russia• Militias attack and loot Georgian-populated villages in S.O.
Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disproportionate counter-offensive attack• Invasion of Georgian cities and ports• Accusation of violation of human rights and ethnic cleansing• Recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states
EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shuttle diplomacy between Russia and Georgia• Signing ceasefire agreement, ambiguity• Accusing Russia of disproportionate response• Appeal of use of diplomatic means to resolve conflict• Suspension of EU-Russia Partnership talks
NATO/US	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accusing Russia of disproportionate response• Suspension of NATO-Russia Council

Conflict Analysis: Stages

- 1992-2008 – Frozen Conflict
(Summer 2004 – Active)
- 2008 – Escalation of Conflict
- 2009 – Conflict Unresolved

Conflict Analysis: Consequences

- Deterioration of peace, stability and security in Europe and beyond
- Dramatic shift in Russian-Western relations
- Energy security
- Disregard for and enforcement of international law
- 158,000 displaced people (according to UNHCR)
- Reconstruction and Reconciliation

Georgian soldiers in Gori



Tskhinvali: the Aftermath



http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/44920000/jpg/_44920204_01_ap.jpg&imgrefurl=http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7559270.stm&usg=__ysJudalHL6N7Bj8K9Np-gwFy92E=&h=300&w=466&sz=40&hl=en&start=4&sig2=K1A5s04k5Jq31E9eG7G2PA&um=1&tbnid=uBm0Nj3JYMtQLM:&tbnh=82&tbnw=128&ei=vRmLSbKFD4naMLfQodoH&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dtskhinvali%2Bcivilian%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-US:official%26sa%3DG

Six-Point Ceasefire Plan

- 1. Not to resort to force;
- 2. To end hostilities definitively;
- 3. To provide free access for humanitarian aid;
- 4. Georgian military forces will have to withdraw to their usual bases;
- 5. Russian military forces will have to withdraw to the lines held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Pending an international mechanism, Russian peace-keeping forces will implement additional security measures;
- 6. Opening of international talks on the security and stability arrangements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Geneva talks

- In the aftermath of the Georgian-Russian war in August 2008, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) called for the establishment of a mediation forum aimed at security and stability in the South Caucasus. The initiative goes back to the “Six-Point Ceasefire Plan” reached by French (and then EU) President Nicolas Sarkozy and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev, which brought to an end the military confrontation between Moscow and Tbilisi.

Geneva talks



Geneva talks

- Initially Georgia urged the forum to include also the replacement of Russian military forces with international peacekeepers, EU monitoring within the separatist entities (i.e. an extension of EUMM); and the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity.
- By contrast, Russia insisted on modifying the mandates of the OSCE and UN missions in the region. The parties failed to reach an agreement and the OSCE as well as the UN were forced to leave.

Recommendations

- Establish an international peace mediation and monitoring process
- Encourage dialogue and reconciliation
- Aid the return of displaced persons
- Reconstruct areas damaged or destroyed by the conflict

Challenge for the International Community

How to establish a mechanism or process to hold Georgia, Russia and South Ossetia accountable for their actions, but without isolating them from the international community in order to prevent such aggressive actions from happening in the future?

A LITTLE
WAR
THAT SHOOK
THE WORLD



GEORGIA, RUSSIA, AND THE FUTURE OF THE WEST

RONALD D. ASMUS

PREFACE BY STROBE TALBOTT

Consequences

- Because of the war, Georgia has become a country without definite borders of its own territory, and hence it does not meet one of the key requirements for new NATO members declared in a NATO study on its potential expansion. Opponents of Georgian membership in NATO have been using this unquestionable fact intensively in recent years. However, it is only a secondary argument. The main problem lies in the lack of willingness in the West to provide Georgia with any obligations, as it is unable to defend it.

- The conflict in the 90s was about how to define political arrangements in Georgian state; it was more about the clashes between national projects and their legitimacy. The conflict which took place almost five years ago was more about state borders and territorial integrity. Furthermore, unlike the situation in 90s, Georgian states demonstrated its ability to resist and survive military defeat: the political regime maintained in power even after the conflict and continue to function; even the armed forces reformed their ranks, without undergoing disintegration or collapse. Most importantly, the Russian-Georgian armed conflict demonstrated that the **radical nationalism of 80s and 90s has changed to a form of state patriotism**, when armed confrontation is organized by states and the clashes between regular armies.

- **Mass mobilization** which was a key factor in the first escalation phase disappeared as a factor in the second escalation phase. Mobilization of masses, which led to the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003, was a struggle against electoral frauds, corrupted elites and state weakness. In the latter one, the state is not endangered by popular movement, rather the **state itself is the actor**, initiating change through its military might rather than through nationalistic appeals of political leaders manipulating with the aspect of ethnicity.
- The conflict which erupted in 1980s was sparked by the **fear from assimilation** and fear to lose cultural heritage of minor groups. This time the conflict did not touch the hearts of Georgian and the issue of their self-identification. It was more about defending Georgian territory and state's borders. The issue in stake in 2008 was the **pro-Western orientation** of Georgia and Russia's interests to undermine the penetration of other powers in the South Caucasus region. In this way, we can argue, that **territorial issues, that played a primary role in the second escalation phase were correlated with ideological aspects.**

Consequences



- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4P4nePpBHKc>

References

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