

NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPT OF GEORGIA

Georgia's citizens' firm will is to establish a democratic social order, economic freedom, a Rule of Law based social state, to secure universally recognized human rights and freedoms, to enhance the state independence and peaceful relations with other peoples
Preamble to the Constitution of Georgia

1. Introduction

Georgia is at an important stage in its centuries-old history. Georgia regained its independence in 1991, after seven decades of occupation. Since then, it has undergone a period characterized by internal conflicts supported from outside of Georgia, and by political and economic instability. Nevertheless, the people of Georgia have made an unequivocal decision to build a democratic and free state that ensures the rule of law, human rights, security, prosperity of its citizens and a free market economy.

The Rose Revolution of November 2003 once again demonstrated that democracy and liberty are part of the Georgian traditional values that are of vital necessity to the people of Georgia. Georgia, as an integral part of the European political, economic and cultural area, whose fundamental national values are rooted in European values and traditions, aspires to achieve full-fledged integration into Europe's political, economic and security systems. Georgia aspires to return to its European tradition and remain an integral part of Europe.

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

The Government of Georgia shall implement the National Security Concept through relevant long-term measures that will safeguard fundamental national values and national interests by adequately addressing security threats, risks and challenges to national security. The National Security Concept shall serve as the basis for all strategies and plans. Along with any revision of the Concept, relevant strategies and plans should be updated as well.

2. Fundamental National Values of Georgia

Georgia's fundamental national values are the foundation of Georgian Statehood. Protection of fundamental national values is of ultimate importance to the very existence and security of Georgia, and to the security and prosperity of its citizens. Georgia will protect its fundamental national values by all available lawful means. The fundamental national values of Georgia are:

2.1 Independence: Georgia is a sovereign, independent state that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states and expects the same from them. Georgia rejects the interference of any state in its domestic affairs.

2.2. Freedom: The rights and freedoms envisaged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms are fundamental national values of Georgia. Georgia guarantees the protection of universally recognized human rights and freedoms of all individuals and groups residing on its territory, respects their freedom of choice, and creates favorable conditions for the realization of every individual's opportunity.

2.3. Democracy and Rule of Law: Georgia adheres to universal democratic values and principles, based on which it is establishing a democratic system of governance. In this system, state authority is defined by law and separated among three branches of government. The Georgian political system guarantees a strong and independent judiciary. Georgia promotes the development of civil society and ensures freedom of the media.

2.4. Prosperity: Georgia secures sustainable economic development based on democratically established and transparent rules. Through these rules, Georgia ensures the implementation of an effective social policy aimed at increasing the welfare of, and creating decent living conditions for, all citizens. Georgia fosters the development of a free market economy and creates favorable conditions for entrepreneurship, enhancement of foreign trade, and attraction of investments.

2.5. Peace: Georgia aims at establishing good relations with every state based on the norms of international law. Development of friendly relations with neighboring states is of particular importance for Georgia. Georgia resolves all disputes by peaceful means, based on the norms of international law. A free, independent, united, prosperous, and peaceful Georgia will significantly contribute to strengthening regional security and stability.

2.6. Security: Georgia aspires to guarantee security of the state, its institutions and citizens, within its internationally recognized state borders. While safeguarding security, Georgia adheres to the norms of international law.

3. National Interests of Georgia

The national interests of Georgia derive from the contemporary international and domestic setting. National interests are based on fundamental national values. The realization of national interests will ensure the stability and development of the state, as well as the prosperity, security and protection of rights and freedoms of the citizens of Georgia. Failure to protect national interests will endanger Georgia's fundamental national values. The national interests of Georgia are:

3.1. Ensuring Territorial Integrity: Georgia is dedicated to restoring and maintaining its territorial integrity and ensuring the non-violability of its internationally recognized borders. Georgia will employ all available lawful means to resolve peacefully and justly all issues that might arise in the process of restoring the constitutional order on the territory of Georgia.

3.2. Ensuring National Unity and Civil Accord: Georgia ensures protection of the interests, rights and freedoms of all ethnic and religious groups residing in the country. For this purpose, Georgia is building a society based on the principles of pluralism, tolerance, justice, solidarity and non-discrimination. Georgia strives to foster respect for the Constitution among its citizens and to ensure their self-identification as citizens of Georgia.

3.3 Regional Stability: Processes taking place in Europe are the foremost determinants of Georgia's security environment, although processes in the Middle East and Central Asia also have serious influence. Georgia attaches particular importance to developments within the Black Sea basin, the Caucasus and Russia. Maintenance of peace and security in this area, as well as peaceful resolution of existing disputes, is of vital importance to Georgia. Georgia contributes to the strengthening of the regional security system through cooperation in bilateral and multilateral formats.

3.4. Strengthening Freedom and Democracy in Neighboring States and Regions: Georgia welcomes and contributes to the strengthening of democracy, free markets and civil society in neighboring states and regions, and considers them as important preconditions for ensuring regional stability and security.

3.5. Strengthening the State's Transit Function and Energy Security: Georgia attributes special importance to strengthening its transit and energy corridor functions. Therefore, it actively participates in international energy, transportation and communications projects. Ensuring alternative energy and strategic resource supplies, as

well as development of strategically important regional infrastructure, are connected to the maintenance of stability, economic growth and prosperity in Georgia.

3.6. Environmental Security of the Country and the Region: The quality of environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources are closely related to public security and health. Taking into consideration Georgia's biodiversity and its role as a transit country, special importance is attributed to the ecological safety of large international and local projects.

3.7. Preserving National and Cultural Uniqueness: Georgia, as a state with a centuries-old history and rich cultural heritage, considers the preservation of cultural diversity and national identity as a necessary element for ensuring national security.

4. Threats, Risks and Challenges to National Security

4.1. Infringement of Georgia's Territorial Integrity: Aggressive separatist movements, inspired and supported from outside of Georgia, led to armed conflicts in the country that resulted in de facto separation of Abkhazia and the former Autonomous District of South Ossetia from Georgia, and loss of control over these territories by the Georgian authorities. This infringement of Georgia's territorial integrity is a major national security threat. Infringed territorial integrity is the main source of a number of other problems that undermine the political, economic and social stability of the country: up to three hundred thousand Georgian citizens were forced to leave their legitimate residences; Georgia's state borders remain undefined; uncontrolled territories host illegal militant groups, create conditions favorable to a variety of terrorist groups and provide fertile ground for contraband and transnational organized crime; and separatist regimes systematically violate human rights.

Consequently, the infringement of territorial integrity, if not addressed in a timely and efficient manner, may endanger the existence of Georgia as a viable state.

4.2. Spillover of Conflicts from Neighboring States: The potential spillover of conflicts represents a serious threat to Georgia's national security because it could destabilize the country. These conflicts may elicit provocations from other state and non-state actors, as has happened on a number of occasions over the Pankisi Gorge. The spillover of conflicts from neighboring states may also cause a large-scale influx of refugees into Georgia and create favorable conditions for transnational criminal activities and contraband.

Lack of control over the state border of Georgia with the Russian Federation along the perimeters of Abkhazia and the former Autonomous District of South Ossetia exacerbates the above mentioned threat and creates further obstacles to deal efficiently with the problem. Prolonged, unresolved conflicts in neighboring states, and possible deterioration of stability in Russia, particularly in the North Caucasus, could drag Georgia into conflict. In addition, the Russian Federation's military presence on the territory of Georgia would be a risk factor to the stability of the country in certain circumstances.

4.3. Military Intervention: While the likelihood of open military aggression against Georgia is low, cross-border incursions by state and non-state actors are real, and they threaten the security of the country. Georgia has faced infringement of its sovereignty and territorial integrity on numerous occasions in the form of systematic violation of Georgia's land, air and maritime space, and by sporadic military attacks.

Illegal military and paramilitary formations in territories uncontrolled by the Georgian government and near the borders of the country considerably raise the possibility of renewed armed conflict and destabilization in Georgia. In this context, the ongoing process of granting Russian citizenship to residents of the breakaway regions of Georgia is a potential threat because, in certain circumstances, it could be used as a pretext for intervention in Georgia's internal affairs.

4.4. International Terrorism: International terrorism is a considerable threat to the national security of Georgia, especially in view of Georgia's proximity to terrorist havens in neighboring regions.

As an active participant in the international anti-terrorist coalition, Georgia may become a target of international terrorist attacks. These may be directed against strategic infrastructure such as international oil and gas pipelines and other states' assets located in Georgia.

4.5. Contraband and Transnational Organized Crime: Unsettled conflicts in neighboring states, lawlessness in Georgia's separatist regions of the former Autonomous District of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and poor control of the state borders, add up to opportunities for contraband and transnational organized crime that seriously damage the national security and economy. These threats hinder establishment of law and order in the country, jeopardizing the stability of Georgia and the entire region. The possibility that Georgia's natural transit location could be misused in the commission of transnational crimes is also a tangible threat to Georgian security.

4.6. The Russian Federation's Military Bases: Military bases of the Russian Federation located in Georgia are no longer a direct threat to Georgia's sovereignty. However, until their final withdrawal, they remain a risk to national security, and still negatively affect the security environment in Georgia.

Georgia welcomes the transition of the Russian Federation's military bases to the "withdrawal regime" and believes that irreversible realization of the Joint Declaration of the Foreign Ministers of Georgia and the Russian Federation of May 30, 2005 will facilitate normalization of bilateral relations and strengthening of mutual confidence.

4.7 Corruption and Inefficient Public Administration System: Lack of a democratic tradition of governance and mechanisms of checks and balances has led to an increase in corruption. During recent years, corruption has penetrated the public sector and become so systemic and dramatic that it jeopardizes the security of the state by draining its resources, undermining people's confidence in democratic values and institutions and hampering economic development, thus negatively affecting civic cohesion and social balance. Georgia's recent experience shows that corruption and inefficient state governance, if not tackled systematically and diligently, may become a threat to national security.

4.8. Economic and Social Challenges: Without sustainable economic development, competitiveness of the national economy remains low. This underdeveloped economy is a serious challenge to the national security of Georgia. Backwardness of the national economy has brought about a decline in living standards, degradation of healthcare and education, deterioration of the demographic situation, increased unemployment and increase in those living under the poverty line. In turn, these conditions have resulted in the engagement of individuals in unlawful activities. Uneven social and economic development and the absence of a strong middle class widen the gap in living standards between different social groups. Moreover, social and economic disparities between the capital and the regions of Georgia further aggravate the situation. This could trigger social tension and political extremism that may endanger sustainable development of the state, stability and national security.

4.9. Energy Related Challenges: Dependence on energy imports from mainly one country, where free market and property rights are not secured, as well as underdevelopment of local energy sources, unstable energy supply and poor technical conditions of energy infrastructure render Georgia vulnerable and create conditions for foreign leverage. Energy related challenges, if not addressed in a timely and efficient manner, may endanger not only economic development, but also the national security of Georgia.

4.10. Information Related Challenges: Georgian national security may be put at risk because of the absence of a cohesive national information policy, weakness of infrastructure implementing such policy, and public administration based on insufficient and incredible information. In addition, the existence of an unsatisfactory classified information protection system, the possibility of illegal access to state information systems with the purpose of acquiring or destroying information, and a likelihood of conducting large scale information

attacks on Georgia from outside countries represent serious challenges to national security.

4.11. Environmental challenges: Deterioration of Georgia's natural environment, including natural and man-made hazards, could eventually endanger its natural environment, the well being of its citizens and its biodiversity. Georgia's location in a seismically active area increases its vulnerability to natural disasters. Terrorist attacks against the energy infrastructure could also cause serious environmental damage in Georgia. Finally, the damage of major industrial assets in neighboring countries could cause significant environmental harm and other negative consequences in Georgia.

5. Main Directions of Georgia's National Security Policy

The goals of Georgia's national security policy are to defend Georgia's national interests that are based on fundamental national values, to respond to national security threats, and to prevent risks and challenges from developing into threats or exacerbating existing threats.

5.1. Strengthening of Public Administration and Consolidation of Democratic Institutions

It is the firm will of the citizens of Georgia to build a free, democratic society and to create a transparent and accountable system of governance based on the rule of law and the equality of every citizen before the law. This system will become the guarantor of the rights and freedoms of all citizens without distinction, and will serve as a substantial basis for the further development of the country.

The Constitution of Georgia provides for separation of powers among the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, which is the basis for the democratic system of governance. In parallel to reforming and optimizing the functioning of the government's legislative and executive structures, the judiciary and law-enforcement agencies are also undergoing profound reforms. The Governmental Commission on Reforms in Public Administration is responsible for ensuring effective implementation of functional and structural reforms in public administration. The Strategy of Good Governance is being elaborated, aimed at perfecting the public administration system, increasing transparency of the public sector, increasing public involvement, establishing the rule of law, and securing the independence of each of the three branches of government.

Georgia attributes special importance to the establishment of an efficient system of local governance and self-governance. In order to carry out reforms in this field and decentralize the state governance system, the State Commission on Good Governance and Reforms in Territorial Administration has been established.

Georgia guarantees the conditions for the development of the non-governmental sector and the mass media. This will contribute to the establishment of a strong and vibrant civil society and will increase the government's accountability to society.

Establishing a democratic system of governance is impossible without minimizing corruption in the public sector. Increasing the government's transparency and accountability and creation of a strong civil service with respective social guarantees will significantly downscale corruption. A number of significant institutional and legislative changes have already been implemented to strengthen mechanisms that prevent corruption. The National Anti-corruption Strategy, which sets forth relevant anti-corruption measures, has been elaborated and approved. Based on this strategy, the government will develop and implement an action plan that sets forth necessary measures, a timetable for their implementation and the agencies responsible.

5.2. Strengthening State Defense

Georgia is enhancing its state defense by strengthening its Armed Forces, reinforcing mechanisms of civilian defense, cooperating with the international community to promote world peace and security, and developing crisis management mechanisms.

Georgia is carrying out large-scale defense reforms aimed at developing modern, efficient and sustainable armed forces in line with NATO standards. The reformed Georgian Armed Forces will have increased defense capabilities to counter military threats to national security and to participate in international anti-terrorist and peace support operations. They must also be prepared to assist civilian authorities in post-crisis rehabilitation and management, maintaining law and order, and providing security for Georgian citizens. Defense reforms envisage not only structural changes, but also the modernization of armaments, equipment and infrastructure, and optimization of the number of troops required for particular missions. In the process of building the armed forces, Georgia attributes high importance to enhancing bilateral relations and the assistance provided by partner countries.

The Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO and the ongoing Strategic Defense Review are fundamental for the implementation and sustainability of these reforms. Establishment of effective democratic civilian control over the military is one of the central elements of the defense reforms. The Ministry of Defense has been transformed into a civilian agency headed by a civilian Minister. Functions and responsibilities are being divided between the Ministry and the General Staff. Public accountability of the defense system is guaranteed by the Parliament through its power to define state defense policy, approve the defense budget, monitor defense expenditures, adopt laws in the defense sphere, and carry out control over their implementation.

The Georgian authorities consider it necessary to develop efficient reserve and mobilization systems to enhance Georgia's defense capability. At the same time, it is important to create a civil defense system to provide security for the Georgian people. Civil defense must serve as a supportive mechanism to the state defense system in case of a serious threat or crisis. It will prepare the civil population for defense and ensure the protection of material and cultural values by minimizing or eliminating consequences of crises or emergencies.

By participating in multinational anti-terrorist, peacekeeping, search and rescue and humanitarian operations, Georgia acquires valuable experience, but more importantly, contributes to Euro-Atlantic security. Georgia, as a member of the international anti-terrorist coalition, contributes to the establishment of peace and stability in different parts of the world. Georgian troops participated in the NATO led operations in Afghanistan; currently they are involved in NATO operations in Kosovo, as well as in the stabilization mission in Iraq.

Georgia is creating a crisis management system that will be able to prevent and respond to crises, manage post-crisis situations in a timely and efficient manner, and ensure prompt decision-making and implementation. The crisis management system will provide for coordinated actions of state agencies, as well as precise delineation of functions and responsibilities of the governmental, non-governmental, international and humanitarian organizations involved in the crisis management process. The creation of the unified and centralized crisis management system is underway at the National Security Council of Georgia.

5.3. Restoration of the Territorial Integrity of Georgia

Infringed territorial integrity, that is, the existence of uncontrolled territories within Georgian borders, hampers Georgia's transformation into a full democracy. Therefore, reintegration of the state and restoration of the rule of law on the whole territory of Georgia is one of the top priorities of the national security policy. The state reintegration policy envisages participation of Abkhazia and the former Autonomous District of South Ossetia in developing the constitutional order of Georgia.

The Georgian Government is committed to take timely and efficient measures aimed at peaceful settlement of the conflicts, based on the principles of international law, and is ready to ensure protection of civil, political, economic, social, religious and cultural rights of all ethnic groups residing on its territory.

Georgia has given impetus to political dialogue with the de facto authorities of Abkhazia and the former Autonomous District of South Ossetia on the political status of breakaway regions and separation of powers between the national and regional governments, based on the principles of Georgian territorial integrity and broad regional autonomy.

Regarding the former Autonomous District of South Ossetia, the new proposal of the President of Georgia - Initiative of the Georgian Government with Respect to the Peaceful Resolution of the Conflict in South Ossetia - represents a solid foundation for confidence building and settling of existing disputes between the two sides. This initiative offers autonomous status to the former Autonomous District of South Ossetia and calls for renunciation of force. It is based on the principles of self-determination of nations, cultural identity, minority rights, human rights, and freedom and equality of citizens as stipulated by the Constitution of Georgia.

Regarding Abkhazia, the document drafted by the former Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations to Georgia, Dieter Boden, under the UN auspices with the participation of Secretary General's Group of Friends (France, Germany, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States)-Document on Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competencies between Tbilisi and Sokhumi-creates a framework to guarantee a special status for Abkhazia, broad powers for its government, and the rights and interests of Abkhazia's multinational population. The activities of the Secretary General's Group of Friends and continuation of the Georgian-Abkhazian peace negotiations within the Geneva framework are of high importance for resolution of the Abkhazian conflict.

Returning internally displaced persons and refugees to their legitimate places of residence with full security guarantees should be ensured in accordance with the principles of justice, equality, human rights and freedoms, and the international law.

In order to ensure successful settlement of these conflicts in accordance with the peace initiatives set forth by Georgia, more active involvement of the international community is required. This will end the monopolization of the peace process by one particular actor. Georgia welcomes any proposal and initiative aimed at peaceful and fair resolution of the existing conflicts on its territory.

5.4. Integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union

Georgia, as a Black Sea and South-Eastern European state, has historically been a geographic, political and cultural part of Europe. Therefore, integration into European and Euro-Atlantic political, economic and security systems is the firm will of Georgian people. Georgia welcomes NATO and EU enlargement and believes that integration of the Black Sea states into NATO and the EU will significantly reinforce the security of the Black Sea region as the South-Eastern border of Europe. Integration to NATO and the EU represents a top priority of Georgian foreign and security policy.

5.4.1. Membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Georgia views NATO as an organization of collective defense that is the central mechanism for providing security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. Georgia's cooperation with NATO contributes to strengthening of democratic values in the country, accomplishment of democratic reforms, especially in the field of defense, as well as establishment of a secure and stable environment. Membership of NATO would not only endow Georgia with an unprecedented degree of military and political security, but would allow it to contribute to strengthening the security of Europe, particularly the Black Sea region. Georgia has already proved its readiness to share the responsibility of the collective security by sending its troops to Kosovo and Afghanistan.

On October 29, 2004, NATO approved Georgia's Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP). Implementation of IPAP is essential for NATO membership. IPAP encompasses complex reforms in political, defense, security, economic and other fields, which are necessary to develop Georgia into a stable democracy and a reliable partner for NATO.

Georgia is implementing an action plan that outlines concrete measures for fulfilling IPAP. In order to facilitate the NATO integration process, various institutional reforms are underway. Georgia is fully committed to the irreversible implementation of the IPAP provisions, which are essential to Georgia's quest for a NATO Membership Action Plan. Georgia actively cooperates with NATO members and other aspirant states within the scope of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. Georgia attributes special importance to bilateral and multilateral cooperation with NATO member states in the political, security and defense fields.

5.4.2 Integration into the European Union

Georgia views the EU as a community of nations that ensures the peace and prosperity in Europe. Georgia's cooperation with EU contributes to the implementation of democratic reforms and to strengthening the market economy and security of the country. Values and objectives shared by the EU are common to Georgia, which considers EU membership an important guarantee for its economic and political development. Georgia's accession to the EU will strengthen Europe by restoring the Black Sea region as a European trade and stability zone.

The current legal framework for the relationship between Georgia and the EU is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). Objectives of the partnership include strengthening of political dialogue, market economy, democracy, trade, investment and harmonious economic relations, and providing bases for legislative, economic, social, financial, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation. Implementation of the National Program of Harmonization of Georgian Legislation with EU Legislation is underway within the framework of the PCA.

In June 2004, Georgia was included in the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), which represents an important mechanism for further movement with the European Union. The ENP provides opportunities to ensure the "four freedoms" of movement (goods, services, capital and persons), to increase efficiency of state institutions, and enhance scientific-educational cooperation with the EU. Moreover, there is an opportunity for cooperation in the fields of political dialogue, border protection, crisis management and the rule of law.

Georgia attributes great importance to the elaboration and successful implementation of the action plan within the ENP in order to exploit fully all opportunities offered by the EU. After achieving tangible progress in socio-economic, institutional, legal and political spheres, Georgia intends to develop a format ensuring a higher level of integration with the EU until full membership becomes possible. Legal and institutional reforms are underway in Georgia according to EU standards.

Georgia fully subscribes to the European Security Strategy, A Secure Europe in a Better World, and is ready to take part in its implementation.

The assistance of the EU to Georgia through various projects under the Technical Assistance to the CIS (TACIS) program and EU Rule of Law Mission to Georgia (EUJUST THEMIS) has been instrumental in fostering Georgia's reforms in a variety of spheres.

5.5. Strengthening Foreign Relations

Foreign policy is one of the main directions of Georgia's national security policy, aimed at establishing a favorable international security environment for Georgia. In order to achieve this goal, Georgia cooperates with the international community in bilateral and multilateral formats.

5.5.1. Strategic Partnership with the United States of America

Georgia continues to develop its strategic partnership with the United States of America. From the very day Georgia declared independence, the United States has strongly supported development and strengthening of Georgia's statehood, democracy, defense capabilities and economy. The United States' continued support to Georgia through various forms of cooperation and assistance plans is instrumental to Georgia's pledge to become a

full democracy with a viable market economy, and to its aspirations to move toward European and Euro-Atlantic integration. US administered educational programs play important role for Georgia since they are instrumental in increasing the level of education and qualification of Georgian students.

Georgia's defense capabilities have significantly increased as a result of assistance programs conducted by the United States. The Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP) initiated by the US has proved to be a major success in the process of building the modern Georgian Armed Forces. The new Sustainment and Stability Operations Program (SSOP) is advancing Georgia's defense capabilities to a higher level. Units trained under these programs constitute the core of the Georgian Army.

Georgia actively provides political and military support to the anti-terrorist coalition led by the US. Units trained under US assistance programs successfully fulfill their missions in anti-terrorist and peace support operations in and outside Georgia. Currently, Georgia has deployed up to 850 troops to support the US led stabilization mission in Iraq.

5.5.2. Strategic Partnership with Ukraine

The Rose Revolution of Georgia and the Orange Revolution of Ukraine, as confirmations of the belief in common values of democracy and freedom, opened a new era in the relations between the two nations.

The strategic partnership between Georgia and Ukraine is rooted in historically established friendly and good neighborly relations between the two nations. After the two countries regained independence, relations between them were institutionalized by the unprecedented 1993 Agreement between the Republic of Georgia and the Republic of Ukraine on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. Georgia and Ukraine have established a partnership in different fields such as free trade, industrial cooperation, and military education and assistance. Georgia and Ukraine are dedicated to exploit fully the opportunities of the strategic partnership to the optimal mutual benefit.

Georgia and Ukraine cooperate in the fields of foreign and national security policy, not only in bilateral format, but also in multilateral fora, such as the United Nations, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova), Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR) and others.

Georgia would welcome Ukraine's possible participation in Secretary General's Group of Friends.

Partnership with Ukraine on the way to NATO and EU integration is indispensable to Georgia. Georgia welcomes Ukraine's "Intensified Dialogue" with NATO and action plan within the EU ENP. Coordinated efforts in foreign and security policy between Georgia and Ukraine will be mutually beneficial to both countries' bid for NATO and EU membership.

5.5.3. Strategic Partnership with Turkey

Turkey is a leading regional partner of Georgia that supports Georgia in its efforts to develop stable economic, political and military institutions.

Since Georgia's independence, Turkey has been an important trade and economic partner for Georgia. Further enhancement of economic relations and successful implementation of joint regional transportation and energy projects, such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipelines are of strategic importance for Georgia and Turkey. It is also important to deepen cooperation with Turkey within the context of the Black Sea region. Turkey has been a valuable military partner for Georgia. Turkish assistance in training of Georgian troops, improving technical and logistical capabilities, and in modernizing military infrastructure has significantly contributed to the strengthening of Georgian Armed Forces. Turkey has also played an important role in educating military personnel by contributing to

the development of Georgia's National Defense Academy and conducting various military educational programs.

5.5.4. Partnership with Armenia and Azerbaijan

Historically established traditional good neighborly relations connect Georgia to Armenia and Azerbaijan. Georgia believes that it is of utmost importance to elaborate joint approaches about the future of the region. Deepening regional cooperation and establishment of a common economic space and single market would contribute significantly to the stability and prosperity of the region.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict endangers stability of all states in the region. Georgia would welcome peaceful resolution of this conflict and more active involvement of international community in the peace process. This would strengthen and facilitate regional security and cooperation.

Georgia aspires to deepen its partnership with Armenia and Azerbaijan on the basis of cooperation in spheres of mutual interest. Realization of large-scale economic projects also has the function of strengthening regional security by promoting cooperation and strong, long lasting business relationships.

Georgia's relationship with Azerbaijan has developed into a strategic partnership. Joint energy, transportation and communications projects significantly contribute to the stability and prosperity of the two countries. Two major regional energy projects - the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline - not only have economic importance but also play a stabilizing role in the region. Once these projects become operational, alternative energy resources will be delivered to the world market. For this purpose, Georgia maintains close cooperation with Azerbaijan in the field of pipeline security.

Georgia cooperates closely with Azerbaijan in the political and security spheres, as well as in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration. Partnership of Georgia and Azerbaijan in GUAM and participation in the EU's ENP and NATO's PfP program contribute to harmonization of security interests and elaboration of common positions on various strategic issues. Georgia enjoys a close partnership with Armenia in all spheres of bilateral interest. Georgia believes that strengthening good neighborly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation with Armenia is in the national interest of both countries, and it contributes to strengthening traditional friendship, economic prosperity and political stability between the two states. Both countries should reap the benefits from the realization of joint economic, energy and transportation projects. Georgia believes that Armenia should benefit from Georgia's transit location by transporting Armenian goods through its territory. Georgia and Armenia actively cooperate in BSEC. Georgia supports Armenia's involvement in EU's ENP and welcomes its stronger cooperation with NATO.

5.5.5. Partnership with the Russian Federation

Georgia aspires to build cooperation with Russia upon the principles of good neighborly relations, equality and mutual respect. Georgia would welcome transition of Russia into a stable democratic state with a functioning market economy and respect for European values. Democratization and foreign policy predictability of the Russian Federation would positively influence Georgia's and the regional security environment.

Georgia expresses its readiness to intensify political dialogue, deepen trade, economic and socio-cultural relations, cooperate in solving regional conflicts, and to fight against terrorism and transnational crime with the Russian Federation. Georgia believes that conclusion of the framework agreement on friendship and cooperation will create favorable conditions for the improvement of relations between the two states. Georgia reiterates its commitment to sign the framework agreement without delay.

The Russian Federation must fulfill the obligations undertaken at the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit regarding the withdrawal of its military bases from Georgian territory within the agreed timeframe. This will undoubtedly improve the relations between Georgia and the Russian Federation.

5.5.6. Regional Cooperation within the Black Sea Region

The Black Sea region is an integral part of Europe. The new European security system based on transformed European and Euro-Atlantic organizations cannot develop fully without establishing a reliable Black Sea Security system as an essential element of the whole Euro-Atlantic security. This is a unique opportunity for NATO and the EU to work together to assist Black Sea nations to secure sustainable regional stability and security.

The security policy of Georgia is based on the principle that security in the Euro-Atlantic area is indivisible, and that Georgia, as a Black Sea country, is an integral part of it. Georgia welcomes ongoing integration of the Black Sea countries into NATO and the EU, and firmly believes that Georgia's future lies with the more secure and stable Black Sea region and, consequently, with NATO and the EU. Membership of Georgia and other Black Sea states would secure what has become NATO's and EU's important southern flank. Georgia welcomes NATO's active participation in Black Sea security cooperation. Georgia attributes high importance to the involvement of NATO in the fight against illegal trade of weapons and drugs, trafficking in human beings, terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction on the Black Sea.

Strengthening cooperation with the Black Sea states is of utmost importance for Georgia. In this respect, Georgia attributes special importance to the cooperation in the following regional initiatives:

5.5.6.1 GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova): Georgia regards GUAM as a regional organization of the partner states that are united on the basis of mutual interest in democracy, prosperity and security. Transformation of GUAM into a full-fledged organization promoting economic and social development and democratic stability and security is of vital interest for Georgia. Implementation of specific projects under the US-GUAM framework program, such as Trade and Transport Facilitation and the Virtual Law Enforcement Center, contributes to enhancing cooperation between the member states in such fields as trade, transportation, law-enforcement, fight against international terrorism and organized crime, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

5.5.6.2 Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC): Georgia views BSEC as an organization providing considerable security and economic impact on the region because of its serious economic potential and geopolitical importance. Georgia seeks to enhance cooperation within BSEC in such fields as trade, energy, communications, information technologies, transportation, and tourism and infrastructure development.

5.5.6.3 By participating in the **Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR)** and cooperating within the **Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM) on the Black Sea (so-called "Ukraine Initiative")**, initiatives aimed at enhancing peace and stability in the Black Sea area and increasing regional maritime cooperation, Georgia contributes to the security of the Black Sea region and to confidence building between the regional states. Georgia welcomes cooperation of BLACKSEAFOR with other partner states and international organizations that would contribute to strengthening stability and security in the Black Sea region.

5.5.7. Inter-regional Cooperation

Georgia actively cooperates with the Baltic Sea states on a wide range of issues. It is especially important for Georgia to share the Baltic experience of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The Baltic States' support for Georgia's aspiration to integrate into NATO and the EU is instrumental for the harmonization of national legislation and institutions, as well as for reform of the defense sector and other spheres of public policy.

Georgia considers it very important to deepen political and economic cooperation with the states of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, and to secure their support for the reforms proceeding in Georgia. The participation of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland in the New Friends of Georgia group of countries contributes to Georgia's European aspirations.

Georgia, as a natural link between West and East, pays a great deal of attention to the development of a close relationship with Central Asian states. The main goal of co-operation with these countries is to promote the free flow and exchange of energy resources, goods and information between West and East.

5.5.8. Forum for Multilateral cooperation:

Cooperation with the international community in multilateral fora is an important priority of Georgian foreign and security policy.

5.5.8.1. Georgia believes that the **United Nations** should have the leading role in the process of establishing and maintaining global peace and just resolution of conflicts around the world. For this purpose, it is necessary to enhance effectiveness of the UN via comprehensive reform of its activities. Georgia also supports the UN's role in the elimination of social inequality and poverty, and in the amelioration of the effects of natural and ecological disasters.

5.5.8.2. Georgia regards the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)** as an important collective security organization that plays a significant role in promoting stability in Europe. The Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty remains the cornerstone for providing security in Europe. Georgia attributes special importance to the timely and irreversible fulfillment of the decisions of the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit. The Government of Georgia attributes particular importance to the assistance rendered by the OSCE in the process of strengthening democratic institutions and ensuring stability in Georgia. The Georgian government welcomes more active involvement of OSCE in the process of conflict resolution in the country. The now defunct Border Monitoring Operation had played an important role in ensuring stability at the Georgian borders. The OSCE has launched a new Border Guard training program, which Georgia considers very important, however, the border monitoring issue still remains problematic. Georgia cooperates closely with the international community to find a solution to this problem.

5.5.8.3. Membership of the **Council of Europe** is a good opportunity for furthering European values and norms in political, legal, cultural and social spheres. Georgia adheres to the standards of the Council of Europe, which provide for the establishment of a democratic state with western values and norms. Georgia is dedicated to implementing the recommendations of the Council of Europe aimed at strengthening local and regional democracies, improving protection mechanisms for human and minority rights, and strengthening the rule of law in the country.

Georgia attaches great importance to the participation of its members of Parliament in the Assemblies of the Council of Europe and OSCE, which it considers essential for consensus building at a political level.

5.6 Fight against International Terrorism, Contraband and Transnational Organized Crime

Georgia opposes any form of terrorism and acknowledges the growing threat of international terrorism and its new forms. The national anti-terrorist policy of Georgia aims at providing security for Georgian citizens and state and non-state institutions. To achieve this goal, Georgia is developing capabilities for fighting terrorism, including strengthening of special units of the armed forces and law enforcement agencies. In order to avoid the misuse of the Georgian territory for transit functions by international terrorists, the Government of Georgia is strengthening border protection and cooperating closely with neighboring countries in anti-terrorist activities. Other actions for fighting terrorism should include establishment of clearly defined procedures for investigation of terrorist acts, reinforcing the capabilities of anti-terrorist intelligence and counterintelligence, and identification of individuals involved in ordering and executing terrorist acts.

By participating in multinational anti-terrorist operations, Georgia is acquiring valuable experience, but more importantly, contributing to the efforts of the anti-terrorist coalition. Particular importance is attributed to the protection of transport and energy infrastructure, particularly oil and gas pipelines. Georgia actively cooperates with other countries for effective accomplishment of this task.

Georgia attributes high priority to taking specific robust measures in the fight against smuggling, illegal arms and drug trade, trafficking in human beings and other transnational organized crimes. Tackling these problems successfully requires political will, consolidated efforts, and reform of the relevant agencies.

Since the 2003 Rose Revolution, the Georgian leadership has demonstrated strong will to deal with these problems. Contraband and transnational organized crime have diminished significantly as a result of targeted state policy. This has been reflected in a drastic decline of the shadow economy, improvement of economic situation and growth of government revenues.

In order to ensure the sustainability of this process, it is necessary to conduct specific reforms and adjust the legal framework more explicitly to the requirements of countering contraband, transnational organized crime and terrorism. It is important to streamline law enforcement institutions, decentralize law enforcement services and ensure coordinated activities of the relevant state institutions. However, without the restoration of constitutional order on the whole territory of Georgia and establishment of lasting peace in its neighborhood, addressing these threats and challenges will consume huge resources and efforts without eliminating Georgia's vulnerability to them.

During the reform process, the Interior and Security Ministries have been modernized and united under the Ministry of Interior, thus eliminating duplication of functions, overlapping, and the lack of coordination between the two previously independent agencies. Intelligence services have also been streamlined, bringing counter-intelligence under the Ministry of Interior, while subordinating the Foreign Intelligence Department to the President of Georgia. Transformation of the State Border Protection Department from a militarized security force into a civilian border police service is also underway. Further reforms have to be undertaken, backed by external assistance programs to complete a setup of the institutional system of law enforcement that will guarantee implementation of the rule of law.

5.7. Economic Security Policy

The economic security policy of Georgia aims at providing the necessary economic conditions for ensuring Georgia's development and strengthening its national security. The ongoing process of economic recovery is a result of governmental policy aimed at achieving long-term sustainable economic growth based on free market principles.

The priorities of Georgia's economic security policy are:

- strengthening macro-economic stability through improvement of the tax collection system, implementation of effective monetary policy, introduction of a medium term expenditure policy and efficient state debt management;
- development of the private sector and job creation through deregulation of the economy, stimulation of small and medium size enterprises, improvement of the investment climate and protection of private property rights;
- improvement of the investment climate in the agriculture sector and development of an agricultural land market;
- creation of a favorable business environment for development of traditional and innovative industry sectors;
- development of tourism and full exploitation of Georgia's capacities in this field;
- implementation of a regional policy aimed at reducing social and economic disparities between the capital city and the regions, provision of equal opportunities for regional development, including implementation of target programs aimed at the development of mountainous regions;

- development of basic infrastructure, modernizing Georgia's road infrastructure and realization of Georgia's comparative advantages - its transit, transport and communication potential;
- active participation in international economic projects, which would facilitate Georgia's integration into the global economy;
- development of Georgia's export potential;
- creation of conditions for fair competition and equal opportunities in business by prohibiting exclusive rights that might limit fair competition, especially in the communication and energy sectors.

Since the Rose Revolution, significant progress has been visible in the economic sphere. The level of the shadow economy and corruption has declined, state budget revenues have significantly increased, a robust privatization process has started, salaries have been raised, and the process of infrastructure rehabilitation has started. Georgia is implementing these reforms based on the Government's Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Program.

5.8. Social Security Policy

In order to ensure social security and social cohesion of the Georgian population, Georgia is implementing a social security policy.

The priorities of Georgia's social security policy are:

- eradicating extreme poverty and social exclusion, reducing poverty, improving living standards and facilitating the development of a strong middle class;
- curtailing high unemployment, providing opportunities for employment, especially in regions, and increasing labor mobility;
- establishing a modern education system, ensuring primary and secondary education for every citizen of Georgia, improving the quality of higher education through its alignment with the requirements of the national and global labor market and conforming with international science and education systems;
- reforming pension and social protection systems, developing targeted social assistance programs, gradually covering arrears in pensions and other debts;
- reforming the healthcare system so that availability of high quality health care is guaranteed, developing an effective insurance market and promoting healthy lifestyles and environment;
- preventing socially dangerous diseases such as tuberculosis, AIDS and drug-addiction.

The Georgian Government has been pursuing an active social security policy. Important changes have already taken place: the education system is undergoing intensive and robust reforms, a significant portion of accumulated pension debts has been paid and social assistance programs are proceeding unimpeded.

5.9. Energy Security Policy

Georgia is a part of the East-West and North-South energy corridors, which is important for political independence and economic development of the country. The Georgian government realizes the role that Georgia plays as a component of the supply corridor of energy resources from Caspian and Central Asian regions to the rest of the world. The Baku-Supsa and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipelines are already functioning, whereas the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline will be operational in 2006. The Georgian government is committed to ensure efficient functioning of these projects.

In order to ensure energy security and independence Georgia should conduct a policy aimed at diversification of energy generation and import sources, greater energy efficiency and creation of an energy crisis prevention and management system. For these purposes, Georgia should create favorable conditions for attracting foreign investments, enhance international cooperation in the energy sector, and actively participate in European and Western energy projects.

The Georgian government has already started reforms in the energy sector. The short-term priorities are:

- eradication of the energy deficiency;
- rehabilitation of energy infrastructure;
- liberalization of the energy sector and improvement of its financial conditions;
- privatization of the energy distribution system and certain hydropower stations.

5.10. Information Security Policy

Georgia realizes that effective public administration can only be ensured if the state information policy is cohesive and the decisions are based on credible information. Coherent and persuasive presentation of state positions, both internally and internationally, is an essential element of any state's national security. Georgia attributes considerable importance to the protection of classified information, legal regulation of security of information technologies, and protection of the critical information systems of the state. Moreover, secure flow of credible information before and during crises is a necessary precondition for successful crisis prevention and resolution.

In this respect, the Georgian Government is developing the legislative basis and infrastructure necessary for the improvement of the information technologies and secure flow of information. A Special Communications and Information Agency under the oversight of the National Security Council has been established. The establishment of the crisis management center with a situation room is underway at the National Security Council to facilitate unimpeded flow of information during the crises, inter-agency coordination and coordinated management of crisis or emergency.

5.11. Environmental Security Policy

Georgia's environmental security policy is aimed at the protection of individuals and the environment through measures preventing substantial depletion of natural resources and environmental pollution and minimizing the consequences of man made and natural disasters. Special importance is attributed to large-scale industrial accidents and natural disasters, such as floods, landslides, avalanches and earthquakes. Regular risk assessments and public awareness campaigns must be carried out, and an efficient crisis prevention and post-crisis management system developed.

The priorities of environmental security policy are:

- control over the sources of air pollution, prevention of pollution and degradation of agricultural soils, and radioactive waste and rocket fuel cleanup;
- food security;
- harmonization of Georgian legislation with United Nations and European environmental protection standards.

The Government of Georgia acknowledges that provision of environmental security requires close regional and international cooperation. Successful cooperation among Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in the field of environmental protection contributes to strengthening the ecological security of the region.

5.12. Preservation of Cultural Heritage

The Government of Georgia acknowledges that development in the cultural sphere is a necessary precondition for the nation's sustainable development and security.

Georgia seeks to maintain and develop the nation's unique cultural heritage, which enriches the world's cultural heritage. In this respect, an active policy of preserving national cultural heritage, promoting modern and traditional Georgian arts, and protecting architectural and natural values is a must. Georgia is creating favorable conditions and guarantees for the preservation of the cultural heritage of national minorities residing on its territory. Georgia promotes and protects its state language and seeks to ensure respect for the Georgian language throughout the country.

Conclusion

Georgia puts forward its National Security Concept for the first time since its independence. By this document, Georgia demonstrates to its people, and to the world, the very direction it will follow to build a strong society and state. The people of Georgia have made a firm decision to join the community of democratic nations that respect human rights and freedoms and the rule of law.

For these purposes, each ministry and agency of Georgia will elaborate a strategy within its field of competence and take immediate steps for its implementation according to specific plans. Only through such commitment and endeavour can the fundamental national values and interests set forth in this document be secured.

This document describes some steps Georgia is already taking and lays out an ambitious but necessary path ahead that derives from the aspirations of the Georgian people. Georgia fully recognizes that following this path will take time, dedication and courage. However, in addition to the many challenges to overcome, there are opportunities from which to benefit.

Through the commitment of the Georgian Government and people, and with the assistance of friendly countries, Georgia will be able to build a state that inspires pride in its citizens, is guided by the principles of peace and democratic values, and that will occupy a respectable place in the community of nations.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia