

ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL DOCUMENTS FORMING THE FRAMEWORKS OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY OF GEORGIA AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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Abstract

In order to understand the foreign policy of Georgia and the Russian Federation, and especially the regional policy, the study of the national security strategies adopted by the government is of great importance. It is essential to understand how geopolitical developments have affected the strategy of both countries. In the article, we analyse the national security strategies of Georgia and the Russian Federation, their priorities and the changes that have taken place after geopolitical developments.

In the course of scientific work, we have set ourselves the following goals.

- To study the national security strategies of Georgia and the Russian Federation,
- To analyse the changes that took place after the geopolitical developments, which were included in the strategies of the two countries,
- To analyse the strategic approaches of both countries for national security and multilateral policy.
- During the study, we used the method of document and content analysis, as well as the historical comparative method.
- Based on the goals set before us, we reached the following conclusions.
- The National Security Concept of Georgia does not fully represent the situation that exists in the politics of Georgia.
- The main changes in Georgia's strategies are related to Russia, but it does not fully represent the current realities. Current changes in Russia's national security strategies are mainly related to geopolitical developments
- In strategic approaches, Russia considers relations with the South Caucasus at the regional level. Many of Russia's strategic approaches have lost their relevance after the developments related to Ukraine in 2022.

Keywords: Georgia, Russia, national security strategy, the West, foreign policy, South Caucasus, bilateral relations, multilateral diplomacy.

ՎՐԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԵՎ ՌՈՒՍԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԴԱՇՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ԱՆՎՏԱՆԳՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՇՐՋԱՆԱԿՆԵՐԸ ԶԵՎԱՎՈՐՈՂ ՀԱՅԵՑԱԿԱՐԳԱՅԻՆ ՓԱՍՏԱԹՂԹԵՐԻ ՎԵՐԼՈՒԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

ԿԱՐԵՆ ՂԱԶԱՐՅԱՆ

ԵԴՀ միջազգային հարաբերությունների ֆակուլտետի
քաղաքագիտության ամբիոնի ասպիրանտ

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Համառոտագիր

Վրաստանի և Ռուսաստանի Դաշնության արտաքին քաղաքականությունը, հատկապես՝ տարածաշրջանային քաղաքականությունը հասկանալու համար կարևոր նշանակություն ունի կառավարության կողմից ընդունված ազգային անվտանգության ռազմավարությունների ուսումնասիրությունը: Հատկապես կարևոր է հասկանալ, թե ինչպես են աշխարհաքաղաքական զարգացումներն ազդել երկու երկրների ռազմավարությունների վրա:

Գիտական աշխատանքի ընթացքում մեր առջև դրվել են հետևյալ նպատակները.

- ուսումնասիրել Վրաստանի և Ռուսաստանի Դաշնության ազգային անվտանգության ռազմավարությունները,

- վերլուծել այն փոփոխությունները, որոնք տեղի են ունեցել աշխարհաքաղաքական զարգացումներից հետո և արտացոլվել են երկու երկրների ռազմավարություններում,

- վերլուծել երկու երկրների ռազմավարական մոտեցումներն ազգային անվտանգության և բազմակողմ քաղաքականության ուղղությամբ:

Ուսումնասիրության ընթացքում կիրառվել են փաստաթղթային և բովանդակային վերլուծության մեթոդները, ինչպես նաև պատմահամեմատական մեթոդը:

Ելնելով մեր առջև դրված նպատակներից՝ հանգել ենք հետևյալ եզրակացություններին.

- Վրաստանի ազգային անվտանգության հայեցակարգը լիարժեք չի ներկայացնում այն իրավիճակը, որն առկա է երկրի քաղաքականության մեջ:

- Վրաստանի ռազմավարություններում հիմնական փոփոխությունները կապված են Ռուսաստանի հետ, սակայն դրանք ամբողջական կերպով չեն արտահայտում առկա իրողությունները:

- Ռուսաստանի ազգային անվտանգության ռազմավարություններում փոփոխությունները հիմնականում պայմանավորված են աշխարհ-

հաքաղաքական զարգացումներով:

- ՌԴ-ն իր ռազմավարական մոտեցումներում Հարավային Կովկասի հետ հարաբերությունները դիտարկում է տարածաշրջանային մակարդակով:

- Ռուսաստանի մի շարք ռազմավարական մոտեցումներ կորցրել են իրենց արդիականությունը՝ 2022 թվականին Ուկրաինայում տեղի ունեցած զարգացումների հետևանքով:

Բանալի բառեր՝ Վրաստան, Ռուսաստան, ազգային անվտանգության ռազմավարություն, Արևմուտք, արտաքին քաղաքականություն, Հարավային Կովկաս, երկկողմ հարաբերություններ, բազմակողմ դիվանագիտություն:

Introduction

The beginning of a new phase of Georgia-Russia relations was formed in 1991, when Georgia became an independent state. Good relations have been formed between the two countries since the 90s, which was connected with several historical realities, religious and cultural ties, as well as having a common security and political environment in the USSR. Even during the years of Shevardnadze's administration, the Russian Federation began to have a significant influence on the life of Georgia, registering a dynamic growth within the framework of cooperation in almost all spheres. We cannot say the same about the years of the next president, Saakashvili's rule. On the Georgian side, work on the national security strategy began in this period. The period of Saakashvili's administration can be considered unique in Georgian history, which was caused by sharp changes in the vector of foreign policy and a deep crisis in relations with Russia. The new team announced that it considers the Euro-Atlantic vector of the country's foreign policy to be superior and irreplaceable and that there is an intention to enter the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) and the European Union (EU) (Melikyan, 2016). At that time, in order to activate the mentioned foreign political directions, the President of Georgia, in 2004, created the position of the Minister of State for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration issues in the structure of the government by Order No. 597 of December 17. The staff of the Minister of State was created on December 31 of the same year. For effective work and implementation of the tasks, three departments are created in the new structure: European integration, Euro-Atlantic integration and coordination of EU programs. In 2005, two state commissions were established: The State Commission for NATO Integration and the State Commission for EU Integration. Only in 2003, following the "Rose Revolution" and 2004, after Saakashvili was elected president, did the work on the development of the strategy begin to intensify. After the draft of the

strategy was prepared, it had to be submitted for approval by the country's parliament and signed by the president.

Analysis of Georgia's 2005 National Security Strategy.

In 2004, Mikheil Saakashvili's administration initiated the drafting of a fundamental conceptual document aimed at defining the priorities of Georgia's foreign policy and identifying threats to its national security. With financial and technical assistance from the United States, the leadership of Georgia finalized the preparation of the country's National Security Concept. The document was officially adopted by the Georgian Parliament on July 8, 2005 (Melikyan, 2016). Its introduction opens with the statement: "Georgia is at an important stage of its centuries-old history." In the introduction, there are also references to 2003 about the importance and significance of the "Rose Revolution" and the countries belonging to European traditions and values. It is noted that "Georgia's national security concept is a key document that presents the country's security development approaches and fundamental national goals and interests. It points out the challenges, risks and threats to national security and states the main directions of the national security policy. The draft of the document reflected both the national fundamental values of Georgia and national interests, challenges, the main directions of the national security policy of Georgia, as well as the priorities of its foreign policy. According to the document, they were considered the national interests of Georgia. 1. territorial integrity, 2. national unity, 3. regional stability, 4. strengthening of freedom and democracy in neighbouring countries and the region, 5. The country aims to strengthen its transit function, provide an alternative energy supply, ensure ecological security, and protect national and cultural identity. The importance of building a pro-Western foreign policy line, continuing support for "strategic partnership" with the United States of America, Ukraine, Turkey and Azerbaijan, partnership with Russia and "pragmatic cooperation" with the Republic of Armenia were mentioned in the section of the main priorities of Georgia's foreign policy (National Security Concept of Georgia, 2005). At the same place, it is stated that Georgia undertakes to ensure the protection of the interests, rights and freedoms of all ethnic and religious groups living in Georgia. For the protection of fundamental national interests, as well as for the elimination of challenges and threats, the authors of the concept proposed the following priorities of the state: 1. strengthening of state administration, 2. strengthening of democratic institutions, 3. strengthening of the country's defense capability, 4. restoration of territorial integrity, 5. Euro-Atlantic integration, etc. (Kakachia and Georgian, 2013). For the first time, in the document representing Georgian national interests, considerable importance was given to developing the country according to Western

standards and to the Euro–Atlantic direction in foreign policy. Focusing on the Euro–Atlantic integration of Georgia, we should note that in order to spread the idea of Euro–Atlantic integration within the country, the President of Georgia, in 2005, by Order No. 752 of September 19, established the NATO and EU Information Centre, which has the status of a legal entity under public law. In addition to the main office in the capital of Georgia, the centre has eight representative offices in the regions of the country. The projects of this structure are financed from the state budget of Georgia, as well as by NATO and the EU. Significant space was given not only to neighbouring states, but also to relations with regional and extra-regional actors. The document also attached great importance to a number of principles and features representing the national interests of Georgia. In the national security strategy adopted by Georgia in 2005, the internal and external priorities, strategic approaches regarding the future of the country and the formation and development of relations were also clearly mentioned. According to the representatives of the National Security Council of Georgia, the document was prepared over almost 10 years. In the last year, a special group of experts of the National Security Council of Georgia prepared the final version of the document. It should be noted that in the last 10 years, several power agencies (for example, the State Department of State Border Protection in 1997 under the leadership of General V. Chkhaidze) or research NGOs have presented their drafts of national security concepts.

However, for various reasons, they were never put together based on a unified document, which was supposed to present the approaches of the country's leadership to the issues of national security of Georgia. In addition, the institutional and personal weakness of the main body called to carry out this work, the National Security Council of Georgia, as well as the crisis of the entire Georgian management system, the uncertainty of determining the main priorities of the security sector, domestic and foreign policy, also hindered the creation of a unified project of the strategy. According to the authors, the strategy should also show Georgia's aspirations for full integration into NATO and the EU, as well as the establishment of security in the Black Sea region as an integral part of the Euro–Atlantic security system. It is also noted that the Georgian government will implement the concept through “long-term initiatives for the protection of fundamental national values and interests”. As the document emphasises, “The concept of national security should serve as a basis for all strategies and programs. Any revision of the concept will also require changes to the corresponding strategies and plans (Veranyan, 2007). The second chapter of the concept is dedicated to the fundamental national values of Georgia, which are based on the following principles: sovereignty, security, peace, democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and

fundamental freedoms, and the well-being of the country. According to the document, the protection of these values is vitally necessary for the existence and security of Georgia. The third chapter refers to the national interests of Georgia. They are the principles of territorial integrity, national unity, regional stability, establishment of freedom and democracy in neighbouring countries and regions, establishment of transit functions of the country and provision of alternative sources of energy supply, as well as ecological security. According to the document, restoring the country's territorial integrity is the most vital national interest of Georgia. The fourth chapter is devoted to national security threats, risks and challenges. Violation of the integrity of the country's territory, military invasion, penetration of existing conflicts in neighbouring countries, international terrorism, Russian military bases, smuggling and transnational organised crime are considered threats. In the concept, the challenges of Georgia's national security are considered to be corruption and the ineffective system of state administration, ecological, social, energy, informational and economic challenges (National Security Concept of Georgia, 2005). The document also mentions that the possibilities of open aggression against Georgia are minimal, but cross-border attacks by state and non-state actors are quite real. The fifth chapter defines the main directions of Georgia's national security policy, which are based on the principles of strengthening state administration and establishing democratic institutions, strengthening the country's defence capabilities, restoring constitutional order throughout the country, integrating and joining the European Union and NATO, and establishing foreign relations. In the chapter (item 5.5: "Strengthening of foreign relations"), Georgia's strategic partners are the USA, Ukraine and Turkey. 5.5.4. The point is entitled "Partnership with Armenia and Azerbaijan". The initial impression is that the authors of the concept tried to present relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan on the same level in a systematic way, especially in terms of general economic cooperation, regional stability and well-being. The importance of the peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict and "more active involvement of the international community in the peace process" is also mentioned. However, in the part concerning Azerbaijan, it is already mentioned that "Georgia's relations with Azerbaijan are developing as a strategic cooperation". In other words, more important and high-level relations with Azerbaijan, which would later become one of the most important areas of cooperation, especially in the Georgia-Turkey-Azerbaijan format. Along with the emphasised importance of joint energy, transport and communication projects, there is also talk of close cooperation between the two countries in the field of security and politics, as well as Euro-Atlantic integration processes. "Georgia and Azerbaijan's cooperation within the framework of the GUAM and participation in the EU ENP and NATO PFP programs contribute to the

harmonization of security interests and the development of a joint position on various strategic issues.” (Kakachia and Georgian, 2013) At the same time, the strategy only mentions “close cooperation with Armenia in all spheres of bilateral relations”.

The anti-Russian emphasis continues in the following points, where the violence, human rights violations and inhumane treatment carried out in the territories occupied by Russia are discussed. Among the following challenges, socio-economic, terrorism, environmental protection, cultural, cyber security, demographic and other challenges are also distinguished. In the next section, where national security priorities are discussed, there is again a significant focus on relations with Russia, and the mediation of the international community is also given importance in these relations. Regarding bilateral relations with Armenia, it is emphasised that “Georgia hopes that Armenia will benefit from its transit position for transporting Armenian goods through the territory of Georgia.” At the same time, the authors of the concept note that Georgia “welcomes the deepening cooperation of Armenia with NATO”.5.5.6. The point talks about a partnership with the Russian Federation. It is noted that “Georgia strives to establish neighborly relations with the Russian Federation based on the principles of mutual respect”, and in 1999 The full implementation of the decisions of the OSCE summit held in Istanbul on the withdrawal of Russian military bases “will undoubtedly contribute to the relations between Georgia and the Russian Federation.” This chapter also talks about Georgia’s interaction and cooperation with the Black Sea region, GUAM, Baltic, Central Asian countries, multilateral relations within the OSCE, UN and other organizations, as well as Georgia’s contribution to the fight against international terrorism (National Security Concept of Georgia, 2005). Under the new leader, a new reality emerged not only for Georgian-Russian relations, but also for the entire region, because the relations of regional states are formed in such a way that the development of any new scenario affects all regional states. In particular, a number of issues of great economic importance changed the situation dramatically. Armenia was temporarily cut off from the land connection with its strategic ally through the territory of Georgia, and the Georgian side began to search for alternative energy options, naturally thinking about Azerbaijan first, and also did not rule out sectoral cooperation with Iran. Turkey was trying to take advantage of the situation and increase its presence in regional developments, especially in Georgian life. The West was also not left out of the task of filling the vacuum with its influence. Although the West assured the Georgian side, in the form of the United States, that it had great power on its side, the events showed that Georgia did not receive tangible help, except for appeals and later threats of sanctions. By tangible help, we mean that the Western Armed Forces did not enter Georgia and did

not stop the Russian forces, which reached several dozen kilometres from Tbilisi. Naturally, all this brought about new changes in the context of regional developments. New interests and interests emerged for Georgia, which were fixed in the new concept of national security.

Analysis of the 2011 National Security Strategy of Georgia.

The new national security concept of great importance for Georgia, which was adopted by the parliament in 2011, implied quite important changes. It should be noted that two main changes have been made to the document. First, Russia has turned from a partner country (as envisioned in 2005) into “the main threat and challenge of Georgia’s national security”. In particular, the following wordings were given: “Russian occupation of the territory of Georgia”, “danger of new military aggression by Russia” and “terrorist actions organised from territories occupied by Russia”. Secondly, the role of the country’s Euro-Atlantic integration was strengthened. According to the document, this direction was and continues to be “one of the most important priorities of the country’s foreign policy and national security”. At the same time, the authors especially noted that the August war with Russia could not change the country’s aspiration to join NATO, and in 2004, the country made “great progress” in this direction. In 2011, the concept did not mainly refer to relations with neighbouring countries in the region. The new document established relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan as a “strategic partnership”, and the definition of the relationship with Armenia changed from “pragmatic cooperation” to “close partnership”. The foreign policy of Georgia at that time can be called two-fold, in terms of establishing relations with the USA, European partners and countries of the region (Turkey, Azerbaijan) (Melikyan, 2016). The strategy in the introductory part clearly emphasises the important elements and components that require strategic approaches and also mentions the importance of the document, where there are clear separations regarding actions and directions. Then the document formulations about the safe environment of Georgia follow, where great changes have taken place. Mentioning Georgia’s safe environment in the second part, it immediately refers to the strained relations with Russia, where the Russian side is mentioned as the main security threat for Georgia (National Security Concept of Georgia, 2011). It clearly mentions Russia’s occupation of Georgian territories and non-respectful attitude towards Georgian sovereignty, the biggest manifestation of which was in 2008 (Kakachia and Georgian, 2013). The priorities of Georgia, which are related to democracy, internal and external independence, and, as an important direction of foreign policy, the development of integration processes and the dynamic development of relations with the EU and NATO as a result of serious work towards future membership, are also emphasised.

The ongoing conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh, which undermines security in the region, is also mentioned among the concerns of a safe environment. There is also talk about the dynamic development of relations with the leading democratic states. Great attention is also paid to free economic relations, creation of an active and safe economic environment as a result of cooperation and active communication with countries with developed economies and key structures (Smolnikova, 2011). According to the new concept, sovereignty, territorial integrity, democracy, law and rights, freedom, peace, security and prosperity are considered national values of Georgia, paying great attention to fundamental human rights and freedoms. In the next section, where Georgia's national interests are discussed, points 1-7 emphasise security and stability of economic activity through institutional reforms, and point 7 emphasises energy security (New Concept of National Security of Georgia, 2011). Among the next interests are the need for sustainable operation of transits of regional economic channels, as well as cultural, demographic issues, cyber security and relations with the diaspora. The next section on risks and challenges also begins with an emphasis on threats and aggressive policies from Russia, where they try to create the impression that these threats are serious challenges not only for Georgia, but for the entire region. It is also emphasised that the Russian occupation of Georgian territories and the recognition of the independence of these territories are a big blow to the accepted international norms, and the structures that recognised these territories as Georgian (UN, OSCE, etc.) should also be concerned about this issue. It seems that this emphasises the gauntlet thrown by the Russian side at the internationally accepted norms. Russia, it is noted that the Georgian side welcomes the processes aimed at strengthening democratic values, which can contribute to the improvement of bilateral relations and regional development. However, considering other factors, it becomes clear that great importance is given to the economic relations with Russia, but the non-restoration of the territorial integrity of Georgia will always hinder the process of normalisation of relations. The reference in the following sections is mainly related to moving Georgia's foreign policy in the Euro-Atlantic direction. Great importance is attached to the formation and dynamic development of good relations with the EU and NATO and member states, considering this direction as the main priority ("NATO-Georgia Relations"). The regional policy section talks about relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan, describing relations with Armenia as close cooperation and relations with Azerbaijan as strategic cooperation. Considering also the importance of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Suspa oil pipelines, which represent the importance of the energy sector emphasised by Georgia, as well as the importance of the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzrum gas pipeline, it seems that relations with Azerbaijan were given greater importance (Gorvett, 2013).

There is also talk about the importance of relations with Armenia in all fields, but taking into account many circumstances, including the Turkish factor and Georgia's economic and energy dependence on Azerbaijan and Turkey, we believe that the gradually deepening relations of the Georgian side in a trilateral format will reveal new realities in the region, which is so will not be favorable for Armenia, the strained relations between Armenia and Russia are added to all this. In other words, Georgia, which is strategically important for Armenia, has strategic cooperation with Turkey and Azerbaijan, which are the main threats to Armenia's security. In the conceptual approaches of bilateral relations, the Georgian side attaches great importance to the relations with the USA and Ukraine. Within the framework of economic interests, great importance is also given to relations with China, Japan, South Korea, Israel, the countries of the Persian Gulf, Canada and Latin American countries. In the following sections, reference was made to the enhancement of Georgia's role and cooperation with international organisations, particularly the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, etc. The idea of ensuring Georgia's active participation in multilateral forums and other formats deserves special attention. Moreover, the following sections talk about the important and effective fight against terrorism, about Georgia's cooperation with local and international structures, as well as with states. In the last part, the importance of the development and implementation of policies has already been addressed, particularly concerning educational, environmental protection, cultural, cyber security, economic, energy security, health, social and other spheres. In general, the strategy received quite a lot of criticism from Georgian experts and figures, and one of the justifications was that the concept does not fully reflect Georgian interests and strategic directions. It is also mentioned that there are unrealistic provisions and inflexibility, as well as emotional provisions. Naturally, the Russian side followed similar developments. However, it was hard to imagine that the Georgian side would go so far and put several issues related to Georgian security at risk. Over time, Georgia's strongly expressed Euro-Atlantic foreign policy and the continuous intensification of anti-Russian rhetoric further complicated the already poor relations of the new Georgian leadership with the Russian Federation, bringing the two countries to the "August War". The Georgia-Russia conflict in August 2008 had disastrous consequences for Georgia, leading to Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states (De Waal, 2018). Summarising the results and conceptual approaches of Georgia's foreign policy during the presidency of Mikheil Saakashvili, it should be noted that the Euro-Atlantic vector of Georgia has become more important and has become the main direction of official Tbilisi's foreign policy activities. In addition, relations between Georgia and the Russian Federation were in a deep crisis, which led to the 2008 war and the lack of

diplomatic relations between the two countries. At the regional level, Georgia presents itself as a transit country, a “geopolitical crossroads” at the crossing points of “North–South” and “West–East”, as well as “the centre of the Caucasus”, as former President Mikheil Saakashvili liked to say (Saakashvili, 2024). Conceptual approaches and dynamics of Georgia’s foreign political activity changed in 2012. after October 1, when Bidzina Ivanishvili’s opposition “Georgian Dream” coalition celebrated victory in the parliamentary elections. Ivanishvili took the post of Prime Minister (Dmitrienko and Biryukova, 2012). From the very first days, the new leadership of Georgia announced that it was partially revising the country’s foreign policy, completely abandoning provocative anti–Russian policy and rhetoric. Other foreign policy vectors, regional and Euro–Atlantic, remained unchanged. Thus, traditional strategic relations with the USA, balanced and neighbourly relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey were preserved. During the period of the “United National Movement” government, the new authorities of Georgia, as the country’s foreign policy priority, noted the partnership and friendly relations with the EU and expressed the desire for further integration into NATO and the EU. However, despite the assurances of the Georgian authorities, foreign policy issues, in particular relations with Russia, have repeatedly become the object of criticism by Georgian oppositionists, who raised the issue of Georgia’s “European future” to the management of the “Georgian Dream (Dvali, 2021). The new foreign policy document of Georgia for 2019 also clearly reflected the issues of strategic significance that were highlighted in the list of priorities of Georgia. Among the values, peace is also mentioned, and in terms of things to be done, importance is again given to the Western integration processes by joining the EU and NATO. Again, a whole section is devoted to threats from Russia and issues related to Abkhazia and Ossetia. Referring to the relations with the neighbours, we should note that in relation to Armenia, it is mentioned that Georgia values the relations with Armenia and the cooperation with the EU and welcomes the active cooperation of Armenians with NATO. Georgia also attaches importance to the regulation of Armenian–Turkish relations. This was a new reality about the neighbours, which was fixed in the concept. In the new concept, internal and external priorities of Georgia are again addressed in connection with energy, economic, political and other spheres. It should also be noted that Georgia’s 2006–2009 concept (MFA Georgia, 2006) and the adopted foreign policy concept for 2019–2022 (Caucasus Watch, 2019) complemented the national security strategies and provided deeper insights into foreign policy priorities. However, the strategic approaches in the concepts and strategies are the same.

Analysis of Russian national security strategies.

As regards the approach of the Russian side to security and presenting the approaches in a documentary version, the Russian approach differs to a certain extent from the approaches adopted by other states. In particular, the state policy of ensuring national security in Russia in general, including fundamental issues, is defined by the laws “On Security”, “On Defence”, “Concept of National Security”, annual messages of the President to the Federal Assembly, as well as “Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation”—Russian foreign policy doctrine” and other such internal documents. The Russian practice of adopting the most important conceptual documents for the security sector is partly based on the experience of the former USSR. In the last years of the latter’s existence, attempts were made to reform the outdated system of ensuring the country’s security and to adopt a number of legal and political documents regulating the sector. In December 1990, amendments were made to the Constitution of the USSR, aimed at improving state administration. With those changes, it was planned to create a Security Council of the USSR. It had more modest functions than the current Security Council of the Russian Federation. In July 1991, a commission was created under the chairman of the Russian Federation, which was tasked with preparing the draft of the “Security” law. A relatively small staff of the Security Council worked for about a year, led by Skokov. During that time, the Law “On Security” was prepared and passed by the Supreme Council of the RSFSR, which confirmed the functions, powers and competence of the Security Council as the central coordinating body in the field of national security (Federal Law, 2024). In the summer of 1993, the new Secretary of the Security Council, E. Shaposhnikov, published the Basic Provisions of the already prepared security concept and announced the start of its implementation (Russian Council on International Affairs, 2014). The next stage of the creation of the security concept is connected with 1994. The development of Russia’s national security strategies followed a different trajectory. The process began within the framework of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, which was tasked with providing academic support for the elaboration of a national security doctrine. However, it was only in 1997 that President Boris Yeltsin formally approved Russia’s first National Security Concept (Minasyan, 2006). In January 2000, under Acting President Vladimir Putin, the document was updated and adopted in a revised version, replacing the 1997 edition. The national security of the Russian Federation means “the security of its multi-ethnic people as the bearer of sovereignty and the sole source of power in Russia.” “The concept of the national security of the Russian Federation” is a system of views that ensures the security of the person, society and the state in the Russian Federation, in all spheres of life, from external and internal threats, including terrorism. Its distinctive concept

is explained by Russia's special status as a state. In particular, as a multinational state, its interests, internal and external threats, differ significantly from those of other states. In the case of Russia, Russia's short-term and long-term interests are also of great importance, not only in the region, but also outside the region, concerning the interests of the Russian role on bilateral and multilateral platforms and adopted policies. It is also essential to emphasise that the Russian side, as a great power, sometimes represents its interests at the regional level. For example, the South Caucasus is also considered one of the regions mentioned in the priority directions of the Russian foreign policy. The Russian Federation does not address the individual countries of the South Caucasus, but considers the shared regional interests. In the Russian security rhetoric, a special place has always been assigned to the spread of US and NATO influence among the challenges. Of course, changes over time can lead to changes in interests and priority directions, but for the most part, fundamental changes in priority directions of this kind are still not observed.

National Security Concept of the Russian Federation 2005

In Russia, the work on the preparation of the “National Security Concept of the Russian Federation” was published in a new edition in 2005 (On the Concept of National Security of the Russian Federation, 2005). The peculiarity of the “Concept of National Security” of the Russian Federation is that the main object of the country's national security is the person with his constitutional rights and freedoms, society with its spiritual and material values, all population groups with their rights and freedoms, the state with its constitutional order, sovereignty, territorial integrity, with national property and other national interests. The structure of the concept of national security also depends on the definition of the concept of national security, as well as the security objects and entities. For example, if the Russian theory of national security views security as the national security of the trinity of person, society, and state, then this is also reflected in the conceptual documents. “Concept of National Security” is a political document in which the most important directions of Russian state policy are formulated. Based on that document, Russian ministries, departments, state and non-governmental organizations form or adjust their conceptual base, as well as legal documents related to their activities in the field of ensuring Russian national security (for example, “Military doctrine of the Russian Federation” or “Russian Federation the concept of foreign policy”, which, are the determination of the provisions of the concept for the relevant spheres of activity of state power bodies). As for the current situation, based on the concept, every year the administration of the President of the Russian Federation prepares the “Report of the President of the Russian Federation on the Internal and External Situation”(Annual Report of the Commissioner for Entrepreneurs' Rights Protection), as well as the

“Message of the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Assembly”. The report and the message specify the current goals and objectives of the state, as well as the plans of the ministries, agencies and organisations that make up the security system of the Russian Federation. Thus, the concept determines two directions of activity of state institutions. The first is the provision of national interests and goals while performing their daily functions. The second is the provision of national security by identifying and neutralising internal and external threats, with security forces and means. These two directions of work are interconnected and mutually dependent. According to Russian experts, from the fundamental differences between the “Concept of National Security of the Russian Federation” and the same document of several other countries (and they operate in quite a large number of countries and have different names: doctrine, strategy, etc., in which we are talking almost exclusively about the external aspects of interests and security). one is that in the Russian document, national interests and security in the domestic and foreign spheres are considered together and interconnected. Moreover, the possessor (especially in the first edition of 1997) was considered the observation of internal factors (Russian Council on International Affairs, 2014). Later, the approach of close interdependence of internal and external aspects of national security was widely used in many post-Soviet countries as well. In the conceptual documents of many post-Soviet countries, the Russian practice of defining national security as the triple security of a person, society and the state took a strong place. However, it should be noted that such a definition of security, where there is a significant orientation towards “human security”, is not merely a Russian scientific achievement. As mentioned, it was also formed in the West, where it was already formed, in the 1970s. In the late 1980s. At the beginning, works dedicated to the problems of general and human security and their correlation with national and state security appeared. However, in world practice, this approach was probably the first to be officially confirmed in Russian conceptual documents (in the 1992 Law “On Security of the Russian Federation”, the 1997 “Concept of National Security of the Russian Federation” and all subsequent documents). This is largely explained by the fact that, unlike many developed Western countries, in which there was already an orderly practice, traditions of adopting national security concepts, and it was even a common thing, in the Russian Federation (and in most post-Soviet countries) the process “started from scratch”. and it was easier to put forward the mentioned approach and fix it in the process of adopting conceptual documents of the field (Protopzhanov, 2019).

National Security Concept of the Russian Federation 2015

The new national security concept of the Russian Federation, which the

president signed on December 31, 2015, presented the complete information about the interests and tasks of the Russian side, which was planned until 2020. Several chapter, and extra-regional politics of the Russian Federation. In 116 articles, the wordings related to various fields clearly indicate a large range of actions that are intended to satisfy the interests of the state. Among the national interests mentioned in the initial part of the strategy, long-term national interests are singled out, in particular: strengthening the country's defense, ensuring the integrity of the Russian constitutional system, sovereignty, independence, state and territorial integrity, strengthening national harmony, political and social stability, development of democratic institutions, state and civil improving the mechanisms of interaction between society, improving the quality of life, strengthening the health of the population, ensuring the stable demographic development of the country, preserving and developing culture, traditional Russian spiritual and moral values, increasing the competitiveness of the national economy, strengthening the status of Russia as one of the leading world powers, whose activities are aimed at the frontline maintaining stability and mutually beneficial partnerships in a multi-centered world (Pivulsky, 2001). Ensuring national interests is carried out through the implementation of the following strategic, national priorities: national defense, state and public security, improving the quality of life of Russian citizens, economic growth, science, technology and education, healthcare, culture, ecology of living systems and rational management of nature, strategic stability and equal strategic partnership (Pivulsky, 2001). Taking into account the fact that the immediate neighbours value relations with each other, which is more expressed in the conceptual documents of Georgia, it should also be noted that the Russian side considers the importance of Georgia in conceptual approaches at the regional level. However, the importance of the Georgian side is also reflected in many bilateral documents.

Analysis of the national security concept of the Russian Federation for 2021. The 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, geopolitical developments, particularly the strained relations with the Western states, as well as the contradictions between the nuclear powers regarding joint nuclear control agreements, forced Moscow to adopt a new national security strategy. If previously there was an agreement to have joint control over nuclear warheads, as of 2020, the contradiction among the nuclear powers has led to the point that there is no longer trust in each other. The Russian Federation also designed the process of adopting the new constitution, where, for the first time, in case of conflict between the constitution and an international treaty, the constitution prevailed. The above was a unique approach, not only in the Russian approach, but also in the global approach. On July 2, 2021, Russia adopted a new national security strategy, which differed from its previous strategy of 2015 in a number of

issues. The modern world is going through a period of transformation. “The increase in the number of global economic and political development centres, the strengthening of the positions of new global and regional leading countries, lead to a change in the structure of the world order, to the formation of a new architecture, rules and principles of the world. The desire to preserve the hegemony of Western countries, the crisis of modern models and tools is of a continuous nature.” This is how the section of the strategy “Russian Federation in the modern world” is mentioned. It is mentioned in the national interests of the Russian Federation. “Taking into account the long-term trends in the development of the situation in the Russian Federation and the world, its national interests at the current stage are: 1) the salvation of the Russian people, the development of human potential, the improvement of the quality of life of citizens 2) the constitutional order, sovereignty, independence, state and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation defense, strengthening of the country’s defense. The following chapters discuss the importance of military-political and economic information security, as well as the importance of scientific and technical development (National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, 2021). They also talk about the need to maintain international stability, respect interests, respect the historical past, history and culture. In the “International cooperation and stability” section, the foreign policy priorities of the Russian Federation, bilateral and multilateral cooperation are discussed, highlighting the countries and regions of primary importance for the foreign policy of the Russian Federation. In particular, it is noted that Russia is interested in “deepening cooperation with the CIS member states, the Republic of Abkhazia and the Republic of South Ossetia on a bilateral basis and within the framework of integration associations, first of all, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Union State”. Continuing, it is noted that Russia attaches importance to “Ensuring the integration of economic systems and the development of multilateral cooperation within the framework of the Greater Eurasian Partnership (National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, 2021). Development of comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation relations with the People’s Republic of China, especially preferential strategic partnership with the Republic of India, including in the Asia-Pacific region in order to create reliable mechanisms to ensure regional stability and security; deepening multidisciplinary cooperation with foreign countries in the formats of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS, strengthening the functional and institutional foundations of cooperation within the framework of the RIC (in the format of Russia, India, China). Regions (National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, 2021). In other words, we should note that the South Caucasus is not mentioned as a separate region. However, the territories of the CIS and EAEU are mentioned as important areas

for the Russian foreign policy.

Russia and South Caucasus relations and basic documents between the RF and Georgia

The importance of the South Caucasus is mentioned in many other documents of the Russian Federation in applications. Armenia–Russia relations in the economic sphere continue to register dynamic growth; the nature of Russia–Azerbaijan relations has become strategic. Russia and Georgia have had mutual interests since their independence, which was quite a serious incentive for enriching the legal contract field in the political, economic, and cultural spheres. More than 90 interstate agreements were signed between the two countries, and cooperation in various fields was carried out (Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia on Russian Military Bases, 1995). In order to mitigate the processes taking place in the internal life of Georgia and the war situation, the Russian Federation began to take a more active part in regulating the internal life of Georgia. Back on June 24, 1992, Georgia and the Russian Federation signed the Dagomis Agreements on the principles of settlement of the Georgian–South Ossetian conflict (Yalanuzian, 2012). This is how the first Georgian–Ossetian war of 1991–1992 ended. On February 3, 1994, the Free Trade agreement was signed between Georgia and the Russian Federation (Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Georgia on Free Trade, 1994). The agreement, consisting of 22 articles, set the bilateral economic relations on a new, higher level, as a result of which the Russian market opened up to Georgian products with greater opportunities. 1994 deserves special attention in the legal contract field of both countries. On February 3, the signing of the agreement on “friendship, neighbourliness and cooperation” between Georgia and the Russian Federation in Tbilisi (Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia on Friendship, Good Neighborliness, and Cooperation, 1994). The first article qualifies the relations between the two countries as friendly. The following points 2–5 talk about the cooperation of the two sides, including military cooperation, emphasizing that the parties undertake not to get involved in such processes and groups that may conflict with each other’s interests. This effectively established the strategic nature of the relations between the parties, which is also important for the peace and stability of the region. The following articles talk about the economic cooperation between the parties, as well as the maintenance of agreements and joint efforts in the Black Sea and adjacent areas, referring also to the agreement signed in Istanbul (Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia on Friendship, Good Neighbourliness, and Cooperation, 1994). It is particularly noted that “on the basis of the agreement, the two countries are ready to effectively use the

natural resources of the Black Sea, respecting the existing agreements between the parties, as well as the internationally accepted norms.” Emphasising the development of bilateral relations, on September 15, 1995, the parties signed an important agreement on the placement of Russian military bases in the territory of Georgia (Legal Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs List of Bilateral International Treaties of the Russian Federation). The above-mentioned agreement was also the basis of the agreement. In particular, it was mentioned that the parties agreed on the following: “Considering that the further development of friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation derives from the fundamental interests of the peoples of the two states and serves the cause of peace and security, being convinced of the need for the gradual development of bilateral cooperation in the field of military development, guided by the unconditional respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia and the Russian Federation principles, based on the fact that the basic principle of deploying the military formations of the Russian Federation on the territory of Georgia provides an opportunity to more effectively ensure the security and defense capabilities of both countries, peace and stability in the Caucasus”. The parties hereby also reaffirm their commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations (Legal Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs List of Bilateral International Treaties of the Russian Federation). On March 19, 1996, the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of Georgia, based on the provisions of the September 15, 1995 agreement between Georgia and the Russian Federation on Russian military bases in the territory of Georgia, based on the friendly relations established between the parties, guided by the mutual desire to further develop multilateral military cooperation, Georgia in order to support the strengthening of the defense capability, at the request of the Georgian side, Russian military advisers and specialists will be sent to Georgia (Regulatory Framework of Bilateral Consular Relations). This bilateral agreement, consisting of 10 articles, clearly states the dates, quantitative and other information related to the mission of the Russian side. In particular, it is noted that the Russian experts will provide great support to the Armed Forces of Georgia in order to operate more efficiently and effectively, to carry out special tasks, and to settle issues of a security and military nature. Many bilateral agreements signed after the 2008 “Five-Day” War were frozen or ceased to exist. However, everything changed after 2012, particularly in the economic sphere, as relations between the parties began to develop, and a number of important new agreements were reached between Russia and Georgia, thanks to the “Karasin–Abashidze” format meetings and other discussions.

As for the economic relations with Georgia in recent years, we should

underline that, despite the tension in political relations between Georgia and the Russian Federation and the contradictions regarding Abkhazia and Ossetia, the economic relations between the two neighbouring states have registered a dynamic growth since 2012. In 2019, after a ban on direct flights from Russia to Georgia was imposed in 2019 due to protests in Georgia and strained relations, Russia lifted the ban in 2022, marking a symbolic gesture towards improving ties. This allowed for easier travel and a potential boost to tourism and trade. The Russian tourism market has also been a major contributor to Georgia's economy, with a significant rise in the number of Russian tourists visiting Georgia each year.

After the 2019 restrictions, in 2022, Georgian tourism from Russia showed a significant recovery. In 2023, it was reported that around 500,000 Russian tourists visited Georgia, making it one of the largest sources of foreign visitors to Georgia (National Statistics Office of Georgia).

This influx of Russian tourists is attributed to the relaxation of travel restrictions and the appeal of Georgia's low-cost, high-quality tourism sector. Despite political differences, Russia and Georgia continue to cooperate in the energy sector, especially in natural gas and electricity. Russia supplies Georgia with natural gas, and the two countries have cooperated on energy infrastructure, though Georgia has increasingly diversified its energy sources since the early 2000s.

In recent years, there have been discussions about improving energy transit through Georgia, as the country serves as a key corridor for Russian energy exports to Armenia and Turkey. Georgia has become one of the largest exporters of wine, fruit, and mineral water to Russia. Wine, in particular, is one of Georgia's main export products, and Russian demand has been strong in recent years. Russia has been one of the largest markets for Georgian wine. In 2023, Georgian wine exports to Russia grew by approximately 10%, reinforcing economic ties in this area. Agricultural exports such as fruits, vegetables, and watermelons, as well as mineral waters like Borjomi, continue to be significant trade items, bolstering economic relations.

(National Statistics Office of Georgia). In 2022, the Russian Federation ranked second among Georgia's foreign economic partners (after Türkiye). In January–August 2024, the share of the top ten trading partners by imports in the total imports of Georgia amounted to 69.4 per cent. The top partners were Türkiye (USD 1,761.8 million), the USA (USD 1,186.4 million), and Russia (USD 1,167.3 million). In January–August 2024, the share of the top ten trading partners in the total external trade turnover of Georgia amounted to 68.7 per cent. The top trading partners were Türkiye (USD 2,085.3 million), Russia (USD 1,636.2 million) and the USA (USD 1,278.8 million) (National Statistics Office of Georgia).

Conclusion

As a regional player, Georgia also plays a major role in the foreign policy of the Russian Federation. The numerous bilateral agreements, official announcements and the presence of documents of strategic importance are a vivid proof of this. The influence of the Russian Federation in the life of Georgia is gradually increasing, which was recently facilitated by the tension between Georgia and the West in connection with the law on “Foreign Agents” adopted by the Georgian government, after which the EU ambassador to Georgia announced that Georgia’s EU membership process had been frozen. Let us add that back in November 2023, Georgia received the status of a candidate to become a member of the EU. Georgia–Russia relations are active against the background of tensions between Armenia and Russia, as well as against the background of the development and deepening of relations between Armenia and the West. In other words, some provisions mentioned in the strategies lose their relevance, because in reality, we have a different picture after the geopolitical developments between the states. Although the Georgian side continues to consider the Russian Federation as the main security threat in strategic documents, the relations with the Russian Federation are growing dynamically, especially in the economic sphere, which prepares fertile ground for effective cooperation in other spheres as well. The Georgian side continues to consider EU and NATO membership as a foreign policy priority. Moreover, contrary to that, the Russian Federation is increasing its influence on the life of Georgia day by day. The strategic approaches of the two countries, as outlined in the document, give a clear idea of the internal and external priorities of these countries. However, the rapid geopolitical developments and changes necessitate a review of some of the approaches outlined in the document. Sometimes the documents do not reflect the reality on the ground, but studying them and understanding the approaches outlined in them is crucial for understanding the foreign and domestic political perceptions and approaches of the countries. Russia continues to consider the CIS area as the most important direction in its foreign policy, as outlined in its strategic documents. For the Georgian side, relations with neighbours are the top priority, with a focus on cooperation with Western countries and structures, as well as final integration. Although the document of 2011 mentions the Russian Federation as the main security threat, compared to the document adopted by Georgia in 2005, the relations between Georgia and the Russian Federation are different. At least in the economic sphere, they are growing dynamically. Georgia–Azerbaijan–Turkey tripartite cooperation and the deepening of relations are strategically a great threat to the national security of the Republic of Armenia, which takes on even more dangerous shades in the background of the tension between the Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation. The documents adopted by

the government of Georgia do not fully represent the realities of its politics in the country, and also do not address the problems that prevented Georgia from joining the EU and NATO.

Suggestion: We think that many strategic approaches of both countries have lost their modernity, and both countries need new strategies, which will more clearly define the realities after the geopolitical developments.

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