



Seminar Report on

"Georgia War 2008 and its Effects on European Security Architecture"

Compiled by

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Security Sector Governance Programme

Institute for Security Studies

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**Institute for Security Studies Boardroom
Pretoria, South Africa**

Overview

On midnight August 7, 2008, Georgian troops and tanks entered into South Ossetia and two hours later reached Tskhinvali, the capital city of South Ossetia. Simultaneously, Moscow decided to launch countermeasures and ordered its military forces to enter the Roku Tunnel to South Ossetia. Four days later, on August 12, Nicolas Sarkozy, the French president and the 'President-in-Office' of the European Union succeeded in arranging a preliminary cease-fire. The terms of the ceasefire were: no recourse to



violence; definitive cessation of hostilities; free access to humanitarian aid and to allow return of refugees; the withdrawal of Georgian forces to their normal bases of encampment; the compulsory withdrawal of Russian military forces to the lines prior to the start of hostilities and the opening of international discussions on the modalities of lasting security in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The ISS/Security Sector Governance Programme invited Dr. Witold Patoka of the National Defence College in Stockholm, and also expert on European Affairs to speak on the topic.

Dr. Naison Ngoma, head of the SSG Programme chaired the seminar and in his introductory and welcoming remarks noted that the topic was not so far removed from Africa's situation and that there were some lessons and parallels that could be drawn between the two continents of Europe and Africa.

The speaker's presentation was mostly a history of Georgia and its tumultuous relationship with Russia until and since gaining independence from the Russian Federation in 1991. Dr. Patoka made a comprehensive presentation on Georgia's location in Europe noting that it remains a controversial subject. (Please find attached the Maps Dr. Patoka presented marking Georgia's borders with Russia and Europe). Some maps include minor parts of Georgia in Europe while others exclude it. Using the maps Dr. Patoka outlined the parts of Georgia located in Europe including the Khevi, Tusheti and Khevsureti regions. Georgia's attachment of its long-term growth to the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline, and the Kars-Akhalkalaki Railroad were also highlighted as part of its strategy to capitalize on its strategic location between Europe and Asia and its role as a transit point for gas, oil and other goods.



Georgia is yet to join NATO even though EU-Georgia bilateral relations are regulated by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which entered into force on 1 July 1999. The enlargement of the European Union on 1 May 2004 brought a historical shift for the Union in political, geographic and economic terms, further reinforcing the political and economic interdependence between the EU and Georgia. It offered the opportunity for the EU and Georgia to develop an increasingly close relationship, going beyond co-operation, to involving a significant measure of economic integration and a deepening of political cooperation.

NATO-Russia relations on the other hand formally began in 1991, when Russia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, later renamed the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997, which is a forum that was created to foster transparency and dialogue with the European countries after the end of the Cold War. Dr. Patoka spoke on the implications of the Russia-Georgia war on the relations between the West and Russia noting that the war affected NATO's coherence because: of Georgia's wish to join the European Union; the growing US and EU influence in Georgia, especially through the proposed EU and NATO membership; the US military assistance programme to Georgia and the construction of the Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan pipeline. These factors have contributed to straining the Georgia- Russia relations and thereby by implication negatively impacted on the European Security architecture.

During the ensuing discussion, the location of borders was raised by the Russian delegation present during the seminar, seeing that Russia recognizes South Ossetia as an independent state. They also differed with Dr. Patoka on the unfolding events in



Georgia, reproving it for arming itself with the help of the United States. The delegation also made the point that Georgia was to blame for the deaths that occurred as a result of the war and questioned the power of NATO, noting that the European Union had no Security Architecture to speak of.

Commenting while closing the seminar, the Chair, Dr. Ngoma drew conclusions on the presentation, pointing out that conflicts are not events peculiar only to the African continent and that it is not just Africa that was uniquely affected by the issue of borders. There were therefore indeed lessons that Africa and the West after-all share, and could learn from each other, and in particular on the issue of borders and conflicts.

The seminar ended at 12.00pm.

Appendix A

ISS Seminar: Georgia War 2008 and its Effects on European Security Architecture Pretoria, 23 September 2008

Hosted by the Security Sector Governance Programme, ISS Tshwane (Pretoria)

On midnight of 7 August 2008, Georgian troops and tanks entered into South Ossetia and two hours latter reached Tskhinvali, the capital city of South Ossetia. Simultaneously, Moscow decided to launch countermeasures and ordered its military forces to enter the Roku Tunnel to South Ossetia. A few days later, on 12 August, Nicolas Sarkozy, the French President and the President-in-Office of the European Union, succeeded to arrange a preliminary cease-fire.

These events created the hottest flashpoint in Western-Russian relations since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of Cold War. Does its mark the end of détente between the West and Russia? How does it affect NATO coherence? How might these events affect European Security architecture?

Speaker: Dr Witold M Patoka, National Defence College, Stockholm, Sweden

Venue: ISS Conference Room, Block C, Brooklyn Court, Veale Street, New Muckleneuck, Pretoria

Time: 10h00 – 12h00

Date: 23 September 2008

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