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Georgian Peacekeepers
In The KFOR

By Koba Liklikadze
MoD Press Centre

Since September 26, 1999, 34 servicemen of the Kodjori training centre of the MoD have participated in the peacekeeping operation in Kosovo as a part of the KFOR. In modern history of Georgia, it is the first Georgian unit to take part in a NATO-led international peacekeeping operation. Reportedly, the Georgian peacekeepers perform quite efficiently. According to Grigol Katamadze, deputy defence minister, they carried out a special operation in the village of Neprebishtina (Germany's sector of responsibility) on December 31 and January 1, confiscating a large amount of ammunition, three pistols and three submachine guns. As a result, the MoD press release said, the Turkish battalion command praised the Georgian peacekeeping unit, especially Lt. Zurab Khalizov, Sgt. Merab Arabuli, David Akhundov and Zaza Ormotsadze. It must be mentioned that a week earlier, on December 24-25,

the unit was inspected by David Tevzadze, the defence minister. The Georgian delegation included also General Tamaz Dumbadze, the head of the MoD special missions group, and Revaz Adamia, the chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee.

The Georgian peacekeeping unit, together with an Azerbaijani one, constitutes a part of the Turkish peacekeeping battalion. It is deployed in the village of Mamusha (the south-east sector) in the zone of responsibility of the German brigade. The HQ of the brigade is located in Prezren - the fourth largest city of Kosovo, which is currently populated almost entirely by Muslim Albanians. A Serb minority of the city is under permanent protection of the KFOR as some extremist groups continue to operate in the region. A terrorist action took place in Vitina on December 19, wounding nine local Serbs. However, such facts became less common after the KFOR took control of the region. Cities and villages, including Mamusha, bear signs of war - lots of people have been killed, and houses were burnt down. The 55 thousand-strong KFOR maintains peace in Kosovo and somehow stimulates economic revival there. Small wonder, local population obviously welcomes the KFOR patrols.

Functions of the Georgian peacekeeping unit include organisation of check-points and disarmament operations. If necessary, the unit may be re-deployed to another sector, while in three instances Georgian peacekeepers were assigned to escort official delegations, Senior Lt. George Quparashvili, the commander of the unit, said. Particularly, they escorted Suleiman Demirel, the president of Turkey, during his visit to Mamusha.

The Georgian and Turkish peacekeepers, who are accommodated in a comfortable three-storied building, are quite well paid (by Georgian standards). In Quparashvili's words, the government spends \$600 a month on each Georgian peacekeeper. Some money was also granted by Turkey. Besides, NATO provides daily payments - \$5 for privates, \$10 for sergeants and \$22 for officers. In total, the monthly spending on each peacekeeper amounts to \$900-1,000. The Georgian peacekeeping unit is equipped with Turkish armoured personnel carriers and automatic guns. However, the use of weapons is limited to self-defence purposes only. On the whole, the KFOR functions are strictly regulated in order to avoid conflicts between the KFOR personnel and civilian population. The Georgian servicemen well learned "the rules of the game" and were repeatedly praised by commands of the German brigade and Turkish battalion.

The Georgian peacekeepers have quite good background and training. Before the Kosovo mission, they took part in several PfP exercises and completed special training programs, including one-month training in Turkey, under American and Turkish instructors. These programs were focused mainly on

humanitarian aspects, the KFOR legislation base and the English language. In accordance with the KFOR regulations, the Georgian peacekeepers should be replaced in six months - in April 2000 - but as they are going to get quite a valuable experience, the MoD is considering a possibility to prolong the term of their deployment for two months. The successor group is currently under intense training in the Kodjori centre.

Finally, Georgia's participation in the KFOR gives hope that if the idea of common Europe - from Brest to Vladivostok - becomes reality, one chamber of the common European house will be named "Georgia".

New Masters Of Colonies

By Irakli Aladashvili

On January 1, 2000, the penitentiary system of Georgia was re-subordinated from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Ministry of Justice. In Soviet times prisons and colonies used to be under the MIA, more exactly under warder units of the Internal Troops. These last were responsible for both external (check-points, watch-towers, perimeter guard, etc.) and internal (barracks and wards) control. A few months before the break-up of the USSR (November-December 1991) it became evident that Soviet internal troops, which rapidly transformed into Russian internal troops, would be inevitably withdrawn from Georgia after the country declared independence. However, prisons and colonies needed guarding anyway. That is why, at the end of 1991 the Ortatchala-based warder unit of the Soviet internal troops was quite peacefully ceded to a newly created department of the Internal Troops of Georgia. Penitentiary institutions of the country have been guarded by warder units of the Internal Troops ever since. Their functions were co-ordinated by the Internal Troops department for protection of facilities.

Unlike the Soviet penitentiary system, Georgian law-enforcement authorities introduced some novelties. The warder service of the Internal Troops became responsible only for external control, while the penitentiary department of the MIA took full charge of the internal situation in prisons and colonies. Last eight years (1991-99) showed that such division of responsibilities between two bodies (even though both were parts of the same structure) caused a lot of problems. A series of mass escapes in 1993-94 (in average 150 prisoners fled colonies in each case) only added to these problems.

By and large, the Georgian penitentiary system consists of the following institutions:

Avtchala Colony (for adults)
Avtchala Teenager Colony

Central Prison Hospital
Colonies I and II (both in Rustavi)
Geguti Colony (mainly for former law-enforcement personnel)
Khoni Colony
Ksani Colony
Ortatchala Prison
Sagaredjo Strict-regime Colony
Women Colony

It must be mentioned that among other post-Soviet republics Georgia is one of the last to adopt a western model of the penitentiary system. For instance, Azerbaijan did it in 1993, while Russia two years ago. Re-subordination of the penitentiary system to the Ministry of Justice is surely a step in the right direction but given the Georgian reality, it may pose lots of problems at least at the initial stage. First of all, one should note that the ministry will have to allocate huge funds to repair and defence of prisons/colonies. Although the MIA is officially no longer responsible for the system, it will take some time until the Ministry of Justice, which lacks qualified personnel, completely replaces the warder units of the Internal Troops. At present, the ministry is busy with selecting volunteer warders. Informal sources say the selection is rather inefficient - warders are literally recruited in the streets. Formerly, servicemen of the Internal Troops were screened for several months (to make sure they have no imprisoned relatives, etc.) before they were assigned to the warder service. It must be mentioned also that the transition process made relations between the MIA and the Ministry of Justice somewhat tensed. The former obviously disliked guarding colonies and prisons (and spending money to this end), which are formally under the latter. However, the tensions helped step up the process. The Ministry of Justice has already taken over the Women Colony. The Khoni, Geguti and Avtchala (teenager) colonies are next in line. On the whole, the process must be completed by February 10. As to the warder service of the Internal Troops, it seems likely to transform into a separate regiment.

It must be mentioned that the Internal Troops Command is quite satisfied with the above change in functions. Being released from guarding duties in prisons/colonies, the Internal Troops are now able to focus entirely on combat missions.

Military Chronicle
Press reports

Conflict zones

A car was mined in the Achigvara village, Ochamchire district of Abkhazia, killing Vice-Colonel Khyidar Djindjolia, commander of an engineer battalion of the Abkhaz army, his son and three more passengers. Sukhumi blamed the incident on Georgian guerrillas.

"Resonance" No. 332, December 3, p. 3

Reportedly, the Gudauta-deployed Russian military base (Abkhazia) ceded four armoured personnel carriers, one helicopter and a lot of light weapons to the Abkhaz army. It must be mentioned that in accordance with the Russian-Georgian statement (annex 14 of the final act of the OSCE summit in Istanbul), Russia must withdraw its equipment from the Gudauta base no later than 31 December 2000, while the base itself shall be disbanded and withdrawn from Georgia by July 1, 2001.

"Resonance" No. 332, December 3, p. 3

Conflict in Chechnya and Georgia

Hizri Aldamov, the authorised representative of Chechnya in Georgia, said Russian security services may attempt to carry out subversive operations, including assassination attempts on the president, in Georgia using Chechen terrorists, who may be allegedly masked as refugees.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 277, December 2, p. 5

Chechen militants may penetrate into Georgia and launch terrorist actions against Russian citizens, first of all in the Vaziani military base and the Russian embassy in Tbilisi, Alexander Zdanovich, the head of the public relations department of the Russian federal security service (FSB), said. Acting on this tip-off information, the Georgian government reinforced defence of the Russian embassy and set out to re-register all the Chechen refugees in the country.

"Resonance" No. 333, December 4, p. 2

"Droni" No. 149, December 6, p. 3

The Ministry of Refugees and Settlement, and the SDFD made a joint statement, claiming that Georgia was no longer able to grant asylum to Chechen refugees. According to official information, 4,460 Chechen residents were granted the refugee status by December 16 (informal sources claim their real number to be almost twice as big). Most of them were accommodated in the Akhmeta district of Georgia, particularly in the Pankisi Gorge (an area along the Chechen sector of the Russian-Georgian border populated by Kisti residents - Veinakh group). Seven wounded Chechen residents reportedly underwent medical treatment in the 1st Hospital of Tbilisi. D. Tchelidze, deputy chairman of the SDFD, and Koba Buchukuri, the state commissioner of the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, held informal talks with Hizri Aldamov and M. Batukayev, the prefect of the Itum-Kale district of Chechnya, in Shatili (Georgia). The Chechen officials were told that

considering the still unsettled problem of almost 300,000 refugees from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the country's limited resources, the Georgian government decided to restrict the inflow of refugees into Georgia. The SDFD also resolved to prohibit foreign citizens from visiting the frontier area along the Chechen sector of the Russian-Georgian border. However, informal sources said the number of Chechen refugees increased drastically at the end of December. As a result, the crime situation substantially deteriorated in the Akhmeta district. Lacking foods, the refugees resorted to stealing and robbery. Reportedly, adult men, including several comrades-in-arms of Shamil Basayev, a notorious Chechen leader, also found shelter in Georgia along with women and children.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 331, 334, 341; December 7, 10, 17; p. 1

"Akhali Taoba" No. 338, 349; December 8, 19; pp. 2, 3, 5

"Resonance" No. 338, 340; December 9, 11; pp. 2, 3

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 283, December 9, p. 1

"Meridiani 44" No. 143, December 10-13, pp. 1, 7

According to informal sources, the MSS and MIA have deployed special units in the Akhmeta district in order to improve law-reinforcement there, while the police began to detain Chechens in the streets of Tbilisi and convey them to police stations for identification. Police officials say every foreigner, not only the Chechens, are required to pass registration for residence permission. Law enforcement authorities reportedly confiscated a lot of weapons from Chechen refugees, though Valeri Chkheidze keeps claiming that the frontier control is reliable enough to prevent smuggling of weapons to Georgia from Chechnya.

"Resonance" No. 350, December 22, p. 3

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 294, December 22, p. 2

Hizri Aldamov appealed to the Georgian government to open the border and allow the Chechen refugees in. In his words, about 2,000 Chechens - mostly women, children and elderly - were camping at the border in critical conditions (without foods, medicines and warm clothes), waiting for permission to enter Georgia. The Georgian president appealed to the UN on December 14 for enlargement of the international humanitarian aid as Georgia, in his words, became actually unable to sustain the steadily increasing number of Chechen refugees.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 347, December 17, pp. 3, 7

At the beginning of December Georgian law enforcement authorities arrested and deported from Georgia 12 foreigners - nine citizens of Turkey, one of Jordan, one of North Ireland and one of France - for attempted trespass on the Chechen territory through the Russian-Georgian border. All of them had entry visa to Georgia. Some time later, three citizens of Kazakhstan - Aslambek Salamov, Sultan Salamov and Ruslan Khazbulatov - were arrested in the village of Mchiti, Dusheti district of Georgia, and deported from

Georgia for the same reason. On the whole, according to Vakhtang Kutateladze, the security minister, 32 foreigners, mainly citizens of Muslim states, were deported from Georgia and almost 200 of them were denied entry visa by the Georgian consulate in Turkey for alleged intention to trespass on Chechnya during last several months.

"Resonance" No. 352, December 24, p. 2

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 307, 324-325; December 8, 24, p. 1

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 283, 288; December 9, 15; pp. 2, 5

The Georgia-stationed Russian military bases, including the HQ of the Russian Troops in Transcaucasus (GRVZ), were reportedly put on full alert due to the war in Chechnya. Besides, the personnel of the Vaziani base increased by 150. The Russian military imposed a curfew in the bases, while officer families, who used to live outside of the bases, were accommodated on their territories. Russian officials explained such measures by the danger of terrorist actions, pointing to an increasing number of Chechen refugees in Georgia. David Tevzadze, the defence minister of Georgia, said there were no grounds for such a panic.

"Resonance" No. 340, December 11, p. 2

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 286, December 13, p. 2

"Droni" No. 155, December 18, p. 3

The Russian media accused the TAW of producing weapons for Chechen militants. This information was so absurd that it was not worth commenting, the MFA said. For its part, Nodar Beridze, deputy director general of the TAW, emphasised that for some objective reasons the TAW was unable to produce enough weapons even for the Georgian army, let alone Chechen forces.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 341, 352; December 17, 28; pp. 1, 3

Commenting on the Chechen president Aslan Maskhadov's recent proposal to carry out Chechen-Russian peace talks in Georgia, the Georgian president's press-secretary Vakhtang Abashidze said the Georgian government welcomed every attempt to settle the conflict peacefully and was ready to arrange such talks on the Georgian territory, provided both conflicting parties agreed. Georgia, in his words, is vitally interested in prompt settlement of the conflict as it will allow to repatriate the Chechen refugees from Georgia.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 341, December 17, p. 1

On December 17, at about 10:00 a.m., Russian helicopters violated the Georgian air space and bombed the vicinity of the Shatili village using unguided air-to-surface missiles. No casualties were reported. The incident was discussed at the December 17 closed-door sitting of the NSC (the problem of the Georgia-stationed Russian military bases was also on the agenda).

"Resonance" No. 346, December 18, p. 2

"Droni" No. 155, December 18, p. 3

On December 22, at about 5:00 p.m., the Georgian border check-point in the Shatili village (Chechen sector of the Russian-Georgian border) was bombed by several rockets, wounding four frontier guards. The Georgian government blamed the incident on Russian federal troops, which carried out a large-scale landing operation in southern parts of Chechnya earlier this month, and resolved to deploy additional forces at the border with Chechnya and Dagestan. At the same time, informal sources point to the fact that some time before the incident Georgia denied asylum to about 100 Chechen refugees - mostly women and children - who were deported to Russia and, therefore, it might be an act of revenge. On the other hand, the authorities explained that Chechen refugees were free either to settle in the Akhmeta district or to migrate to a third country. Some of those, who chose the second option, moved to Turkey and Azerbaijan, while some decided to get back to Russia, officials sources said.

"Resonance" No. 351, December 23, pp. 1, 2

"Akhali Taoba" No. 353, December 23, p. 2

The Georgian parliament issued a special statement, denouncing Russia's current anti-Georgian policy. Particularly, the statement highlighted that due to the escalation of conflict in the North Caucasus, Russian fighters regularly violated the Georgian air space and twice bombed Georgian villages, while Russian officials kept groundlessly accusing Georgia of supporting Chechen militants. The parliament expressed its deep concern with the Russian military operation in Chechnya since it threatened stability and security of Georgia. At the same time, being alarmed at the persistent Russian pressure, the Georgian government appealed to the UN and OSCE to deploy international observers at the Chechen sector of the Russian-Georgian border, who are supposed to verify the reliability of the Georgian frontier control there. The OSCE has already decided to assign its observer mission to the border. It is noteworthy that some time earlier Tbilisi agreed to Russia's similar proposal to deploy Russian frontier officers at the border but no Russian observer has appeared in Georgia so far.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 334, 341; December 10, 17; pp. 1, 3

The December 21 statement of the Russian foreign ministry accused Georgia of providing medical care for "dozens of wounded Chechen militants" and supporting transits of arms and mercenaries to Chechnya. Besides, Russia protested against the Georgian government's "practice of appealing to international organisations in such issues that do not require their interference and should be settled at bilateral level". For its part, the Georgian MFA denied flatly all the Russian accusations, emphasising that in the light of the coming presidential elections in Georgia such a policy must be considered unfriendly and Russia should accept full responsibility for its consequences. The MFA underlined that Georgia appealed to the OSCE

for an international observer mission at the border only because Russian observers were not deployed there so far. Importantly, the MFA said, the Russian representative in the OSCE also voted in favour of the deployment of OSCE observer mission in Shatili. In its December 25 resolution, the Georgian parliament denounced the Russian foreign ministry's statement. Russia's accusations were absurd and may create grounds for serious destabilisation not only in Georgia but in the whole South Caucasus, the parliament said. At the same time, the statement stated that Georgia recognised territorial integrity and state sovereignty of Russia, and acknowledged the necessity to fight against terrorism and aggressive separatism but by adequate means - terrorism could not be defeated by a large-scale military operation.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 294, December 22, p. 2

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 322-323, December 23, p. 1

"Akhali Taoba" No. 355, December 25, p. 3

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 349, December 25, pp. 1, 2

At the end of December, the SDFD completely closed the Chechen sector of the Russian-Georgian border to Chechen refugees. Earlier, informal sources said Russian security services were planning to use pro-Russian militia of Chechnya led by Beslan Gantemirov, former mayor of Grozny, against Georgia. Allegedly, Gantemirov's militants may penetrate into Georgia for subversive operations, including an assassination attempt against Shevardnadze.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 358, 359; December 28, 29; pp. 3, 7

Russian mass media reported that Russian forces checked a Chechen militants' attack, which was launched from the Georgian territory. The news was followed by the Georgian former defence minister Tengiz Kitovani's statement, who claimed that about 1,500 Chechen militants camped in the Pankisi Gorge. Georgian governmental agencies, in his words, fail to control this area. Besides, Kitovani feels sure that after the Russian army takes Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, Chechen forces will have to retreat to Georgia. There will be a lot of Russian secret agents among them, he argues, who may carry out provocations in the frontier areas. The MSS flatly denied this information. However, some anonymous sources said Chechen militants really camped in Georgia and the government was well informed about such a situation.

"Resonance" No. 358, 01; December 30, January 4; pp. 1, 3, 4

Army building

A conflict between the MoD and Military Procurator's Office continues. It began in 1997, after the MoD imported 1,000 Czech-made machine guns, most of which appeared out-of-order. The deal cost six high-ranking officers of the MoD their career. At the same time, the MoD leadership and the Office reached an informal agreement: the Office undertook not to prosecute the

dismissed officers, while the MoD pledged to repair the guns. However, according to the Office, none of them have been repaired so far.
"Resonance" No. 338, December 9, p. 2

Having investigated materials provided by the State Audit Chamber, the Military Procurator's Office claimed the MoD leadership to be involved in a recently revealed embezzlement case connected with private food supplies to the army. At first, the chief military procurator Badri Bitzadze said, the Office was going to abstain from prosecuting responsible officials in the hope that the MoD would make "decisive steps to improve the situation". In reality, however, the situation remained the same, if not worsened, he said. That is why the Office decided to "apply the law to the full" in order to "eliminate desertion and improve the situation in the army". In response, the MoD declared non-confidence to the Military Procurator's Office and required that the case should be investigated by the procurator general. It was just the MoD leadership that repeatedly informed the Office about financial violations in the army but to no effect, the MoD press centre emphasised.

"Droni" No. 151, December 9, p. 6

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 333, 335; December 9, 11; pp. 1, 2, 3

Accusations of the Military Procurator's Office against the MoD leadership may be reportedly based on conclusions of NATO experts. They examined the MoD and revealed deeply rooted corruption there, informal sources said. However, both the president and the defence minister assured that they knew nothing about such examination. If these conclusions really existed, Shevardnadze said, they should be examined by the MoD Board.
"Kviris Palitra" No. 49, December 6-12, p. 9

Revaz Adamia, the chairman of the parliamentary defence and security committee, accused Badri Bitzadze of bribery. In protest, the latter appealed to Djamlet Babilashvili, the procurator general, for fair investigation of Adamia's accusations. According to Adamia, two Turkish vessels under the Abkhaz flag were detained by the Georgian Coast Guard in October and released some time later at the demand of the Military Procurator's Office, which, in Adamia's words, was bribed by the Turkish marines. For its part, the Office claimed that the vessels were arrested in neutral waters and must have been released (the incident cost career to several Coast Guard officers).

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 296, December 24, p. 2

According to Valeri Chkheidze, the SDFD is currently developing a large-scale program, based on historical traditions of Georgia, to employ the population of frontier areas in the country's frontier defence system. For instance, frontier bases in Zemo Adjara, Kodori Gorge (Abkhazia), Mestia and Shatili are manned entirely with locals, while the gamebeli of

Shatili (Chechen sector of the Russian-Georgian border) is at the same time the commander of the Shatili frontier base. In scarcely populated areas, the problem, in his opinion, must be solved through special state assistance programs, which should encourage frontier officers to settle there, i.e. the government must grant them lands and accommodation, and establish communication lines and secondary schools. Besides, with the USA assistance, the SDFD is working out a program to develop small businesses and farming in frontier areas. According to preliminary calculations, the money raised from such activities may allow to cover 40% of the total frontier defence expenditures. The SDFD also plans to open cadet corps in frontier areas, which will be available for children from poor and large families. In Chkheidze's words, the American aid is the largest to help the SDFD. In 1999 the USA granted \$13.5 mln to the Georgian frontier defence. However, the SDFD remains unable to check smuggling efficiently mainly because most of the smugglers are protected by some high-ranking Georgian officials.

"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 336-337, December 12-13, pp. 1, 4

Georgian frontier guards arrested a lorry-tank with contraband fuel in the Gardabani district of Georgia on December 12 and another one in the same district on December 17. The incidents triggered confrontation between the SDFD and the State Customs Department. The latter blamed the SDFD for having gone beyond its competence. Officials of the SCD claimed they were shadowing the contraband trade in order to reveal the entire smuggling chain - from buyer to customer - but interference of the SDFD spoiled their plans.

"7 Dge" No. 149, December 20-21, p. 5

The so-called Georgian Officers' Council made a special appeal to the government. Having emphasised problems of the army - the lack of foods and uniforms, a huge arrears of salary, widely spread corruption and "irresponsible behaviour of the top military officials" - the Council warned that the Georgian officers were on the brink of revolt.

"Akhali Taoba" No. 346, December 16, p. 3

Law enforcement authorities arrested Capt. Parsmanishvili, the head of the artillery service of the Koda-stationed 11th MRB of the MoD for weapon trafficking. The police revealed 31 rockets (RL) and some other ammunition in his car. The case is investigated by the Military Procurator's Office. According to preliminary information, Parsmanishvili may be a chain of illegal weapon exports. Several high ranking officers of the MoD are also allegedly involved in the case.

"Droni" No. 147, 148; December 2, 4; pp. 1, 2

Tengiz Makhviladze, a 43-year-old officer of the Tqibuli Battalion of the Internal Troops, fired at a police patrol and wounded two policemen in

Kutaisi late on December 14 night. The incident occurred when Makhviladze, who appeared drunk and armed with a Kalashnikov submachine gun and several grenades, was halted by the police patrol. The case is being investigated by the Military Procurator's Office.

"Resonance" No. 344, December 16, pp. 1, 2

The National Guards celebrated their 9th anniversary on December 20. On occasion of the date Eduard Shevardnadze awarded MG Djemal Tchumburidze, the commander of the Guards, and MG Tamaz Dumbadze, deputy defence minister for special missions, military rank of Lieutenant General.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 293, December 21, p. 2

The AES-TELASI company (the monopolist distributor of electricity in Tbilisi owned by the AES company, USA) cut off the power supply to the MoD for three days as the ministry owes it some 300,000 GEL (about \$150,000). The company warned that it would cut off electricity at all, unless the MoD paid off its debt.

"Droni" No. 158, December 23, p. 7

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 295, December 23, p. 5

Visits, negotiations, co-operation

Presentation of a NATO agency for technologies and strategic studies took place in the MoD on December 1. According to Grigol Katamadze, deputy defence minister, the agency may help Georgia utilise outdated bombs and environmentally hostile materials. Particularly, NATO may grant Georgia a mini utilisation plant.

"Kavkasioni" No. 45, December 1-7, pp. 7, 8

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 301, December 1, p. 1

David Tevzadze took part in the December 3-5 sitting of the defence ministers of NATO member and partner states in Brussels. The sitting approved several documents, including PARP Ministerial Guidance (main principles of the PfP program till 2006), Comprehensive Report on the Implementation of the Enhanced Operational Partnership, Operational Capabilities Concept for NATO-led PfP Operations, PfP Training and Educational Enhancement Program, Summary Consolidated Progress Report on the Development of the South East Europe Initiative. In his speech Tevzadze emphasised that compatibility with NATO was one of the main goals of the current military reform in Georgia. Tevzadze hopes that Georgia may greatly benefit by learning experience of NATO states in solving such problems as, say, defence spending. Besides, in his opinion, the experience of NATO-led peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and Bosnia should be applied to other conflicts, for instance in Abkhazia.

"Dilis Gazeti" No. 278, 280; December 3, 6; p. 2

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 306, December 7, p. 2

General Johnny Pirtskhalaishvili, the chief of the General Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces, submitted a regular progress report on Georgia's activities in the framework of the PfP program to Irakli Menagharishvili, the foreign minister and the chairman of the state commission for implementation of the PfP program. According to the report, in 1998 Georgia took part in 50 PfP activities; in 1999 it participated in 91 activities and did not in 74 due to "technical problems and insufficient financing". In 2000 Georgia is going to take part in 270 PfP activities (15 of them will be carried out in Georgia), including:

- seven multi-national exercises;
- six staff exercises;
- 90 training courses;
- 35 symposiums;
- more than 120 conferences/seminars

"Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 326, December 25, p. 2

To examine prospects of a PfP multi-national military exercise, which is expected in Georgia in 2001, a delegation of NATO experts visited the Poti and Batumi sea ports, and the Qulevi and Gonio firing grounds on December 5-7. "Dilis Gazeti" No. 281, December 7, p. 5

A NATO delegation visited Tbilisi on December 15-19 for talks with David Tevzadze. The delegation also visited the state scientific centre "Delta", TAW and Institute of Cosmic Engineering. "Svobodnaya Gruzia" No. 314, December 15, p. 1

The Caucasian office of the international migration agency organised a seminar "Inspection Of Travellers And Documents - Preliminary Inspection" for Georgian frontier guards. On the whole, 25 frontier guards were certified (five of them as instructors). "Dilis Gazeti" No. 279, December 4, p. 2

An international conference "Peaceful Caucasus - Without Future Mines" with participation of Azeri, Armenian, Georgian, Russian, Chechen, Nagorny Karabakh, Abkhaz and Dagestani delegations, and several international organisations took part in Tbilisi on December 5-7. According to various estimates, there are 50,000-150,000 anti-personnel landmines in Abkhazia, let alone the territory of South Ossetia. However, Georgia abstains from joining the international ban on landmines for two reasons, Firstly, Tbilisi fails to control Abkhazia and South Ossetia and, respectively, cannot accept responsibility for mine-cleaning operations there. Secondly, Georgia lacks finance and professionals to carry out such operations. "Kviris Palitra" No. 49, December 6-12, p. 9
"Akhali Taoba" No. 337, December 7, pp. 7, 10

Valeri Chkheidze visited Erevan for talks on the prospects of the Georgian-Armenian co-operation in the field of frontier defence. The situation at the Georgian-Armenian border (206 km) remains complicated for some disputed territories. It must be mentioned that the countries have not demarcated and delimited the border so far.
"Sakartvelos Respublika" No. 332, December 8, p. 1

Valeri Chkheidze took part in the December 13-15 conference on illegal migration, weapon- and drug-smuggling, and frontier problems in Rome in the framework of the pan-European "Budapest Process".
"Akhali Taoba" No. 342, December 12, p. 3

Eighteen Georgians, including one girl, are reportedly going to apply for a fellowship of the West Point Academy, USA. Some of them are still attending secondary schools, the others are already students. Most of them come from large cities - Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Rustavi - as the teaching of the English is better there.
"Droni" No. 151, December 9, p. 4

On December 15 Grigol Katamadze, deputy defence minister, and British and American military attaches signed a UK-Georgia and USA-Georgia 2000 military co-operation plans respectively. Both are mainly focused on personnel training and educational programs.
"Akhali Taoba" No. 346, December 16, p. 2, 3

The German embassy in Tbilisi issued a press-release on the results of the Georgian-German military co-operation. According to the document, Bundeswehr and MoD began to co-operate in 1995. In the framework of educational assistance programs, 89 Georgian officers and cadets have passed various training courses (from one-month to 3.5-year ones) in Germany since then (Bundeswehr allocated 30 mln DM to this end), while 31 officers and cadets will have such an opportunity in 2000. Since 1998 Georgia and Germany have carried out 23 expert consultations on the following themes: problems of the army-building, logistical services, planning and implementation of the military training, verification problems, military medical assistance programs, military-political issues. Ten such consultations will be held in 2000. Since 1996 three Bundeswehr-sponsored German language classes have begun to operate in the JMA. Besides, Germany granted several million DM worth of equipment to the MoD, SDFD and some other governmental agencies, including mine-cleaning devices, vehicles, military medical equipment, etc.
"Dilis Gazeti" No. 295, December 23, p. 6+

Yury Yaroy, CIS Executive Secretary, visited Tbilisi on December 20 for talks with Eduard Shevardnadze on the agenda of the forthcoming CIS summit in Moscow (scheduled for January 2000). Reportedly, the parties agreed that

Tbilisi would consent to prolong the mandate of the RPF for yet six months. It is noteworthy also that Georgia pledged to pay its CIS membership fee, though it has been abstaining from doing so until recently.

"Resonance" No. 349, December 21, p. 2

A sitting of the CIS Defence Ministers Board took place in Moscow on December 21-23. It was the first-ever one with participation of David Tevzadze. Earlier, the minister used to avoid such meetings and the Georgian delegation was usually led by one of his deputies. Reportedly, the Georgian delegation signed no documents there. While in Moscow, Tevzadze attempted to settle the problem of the Georgian exhibits (of the international arms exhibition EXPOMIL-99 in Romania) detained by the Russian customs service of the Sheremetev airport but in vain. Russian officials keep claiming that the exhibits fall into the category of combat arms and, therefore, must be confiscated in accordance with the Russian customs legislation.

"Droni" No. 158, December 23, p. 7

"Resonance" No. 357, December 29, pp. 1, 2

Miscellany

A Russian civilian Tu-134 plan of the "Rossiya" airlines company was hit by an accidental bullet in the Batumi airport on December 14. According to preliminary investigation, the bullet might have been fired from the Gonio military firing ground, which belongs to the Russian Troops in Transcaucasus. Aslan Abashidze, the Adjarian leader, suggested that the ground should be shifted to another place in order to avoid such incidents in the future.

"Resonance" No. 347, 350; December 19, 22; pp. 1, 2

ABBREVIATIONS

MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MIA - Ministry of Internal Affairs

MoD - Ministry of Defence

MRB - Motorifle brigade

MSS - Ministry of State Security

PfP - Partnership for Peace

RPF - Russian Peacekeeping Force in Abkhazia

SDFD - State Department of Frontier Defence

TAW - Tbilisi Aircraft Works