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## GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION OF GEORGIA RESULTING FROM THE WAR WITH THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN 2008

*The analysis of geopolitical situation of modern Georgia, which was folded after the war with Russian Federation of 2008, is carried out in the article. The conclusion is that for Georgia the five-day war not only didn't reach the intended goal of becoming independent from the Russian Federation but also resulted in a military defeat. However, the five-day war did not affect the policy of the Georgian authorities and their pro-Western stance, and participation in energy projects.*

**Key words:** *Russian-Georgian war 2008, geopolitical situation, Georgia.*

Today's world is full of hazards that may directly threaten human life and health. Thanks to modern technology and the ease of messaging we learn about them on a regular basis. Therefore, the changing security level causes new challenges for the modern world. Unfortunately, despite wider analysis of contemporary security, many events continue to surprise security researchers as well as political scientists and sociologists. This occurred in August 2008, when the escalation of the conflict between Georgia and the Russian Federation began. Although it's been eight years since those events, there is yet to be one convergent version that would objectively show, who is responsible for the outbreak of the Five-Day War.

The armed conflict that broke out between Russia and Georgia in early August 2008, resulted in the need for a new approach to the political situation in the South Caucasus area, as well as contemporary military thought associated with local conflicts, in which an international superpower is one of the sides.

South Ossetia and Abkhazia were the source of the conflict, and military actions that have been taken by the Georgian forces were supposed to re-stake control of the rebel regions. This short five day war generated a lot of information about type of warfare used by the participating countries. This conflict also proved to be a test of the big players' actions on the international arena, meaning the European Union, the United States and even Russia itself.

The Five-Day war revealed new strategic aspirations of the Russian Federation; to rule on areas deemed important for its security, which also lie outside its national borders.

The Georgian-Russian war was only an element in the history of the conflict over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which began in the early 90's and continues till today. However, the Russian Federation, believes that the conflict is over due to its recognition of the independence of the separatist republics. While Georgia says that these lands are still occupied, as Russian forces are stationed there.

Georgia is a small country, only 69.7 thousand km<sup>2</sup>. It's located in the western and central parts of Transcaucasia. Currently, Georgia is bordered by four countries; by Russia from the north, Azerbaijan to the north-east, and Armenia as well as Turkey from the south. The western border of Georgia is the 310 km shore of the Black Sea. The total length of Georgia's land borders 1461 km.

The longest part is with Russia - 723 km, followed by Azerbaijan - 322 km, Turkey - 252 km and Armenia - 164 km. For comparison, we can cite the length of the Polish borders, which in total amount to 3511 km [8, s.11-12]. The capital of Georgia is Tbilisi, whereas from 2012 the parliament is in Kutaisi, and the constitutional court in Batumi [14]. Currently, it's territory is divided into two autonomous republics (Abkhazia and Adjara), nine administrative regions and the Tbilisi - township. Lower-level units, which both republics and autonomous administrative regions share, are areas [8, s.12]. Regional division of Georgia was established in 1994-1996. Administrative regions were appointed state commissioners, who are appointed by the president. On the territory of Georgia, due to armed conflicts, the following separatist republics were formed: Abkhazia (the 1992-1994 war, defended its independence in an armed conflict in 1998), South Ossetia (the 1991-1992 war) [11, s.52]. However, the Georgian constitution was later needed to regulate their reorganization and to give them greater autonomy. In the days of the Soviet Union, the Georgian SSR included the South Ossetian Autonomous Region as well. After the collapse of the USSR, formally a part in the Georgian

SSR, the autonomous Abkhazia region declared its independence in 1999 and using military action ousted Georgian troops from their lands. Since 1993, it's virtually an independent state. Nevertheless, the independence of Abkhazia is still reconsidered only by a few countries (Russia, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru, Vanuatu, Tuvalu and three other unrecognized republics : South Ossetia, Nagorno Karabakh and Transnistria) [24, s. 185].

Georgia is a multinational state, though certainly less so than it was a few years ago. For centuries, Georgian state lands were areas where ethnic composition underwent many changes. It happened a result of the current diversity: ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural. Large population movements can be seen in Georgia followed its inclusion to the Russian state. Rapid changes in ethnic composition of Georgia took place after it regained independence. In the population census, even in the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic (1989) days, as much as 30 percent national minorities were noted. In 2002 it fell to only 16%. However, the decline in the number of national minorities may be due to Georgia losing power in South Ossetia and Abkhazia resulting in the population census not being carried out in 2002 [24, s. 184]. Currently, 84% of the population are native Georgians, comparing to only 68.8% in 1989. The most numerous ethnic groups are Armenians - 6%, Abkhazians - 2%, Ossetians - 1%, the Russians - now 1%, and in 1989 it was more than 7%. There are also small groups of Greeks, Ukrainians and Poles as well. Jews living in these areas are one of the oldest communities in the world – they were resettled from areas of Israel in ancient times. In recent decades there have been many bloody conflicts with ethnic backgrounds which resulted in migrations of many of these minorities - Ossetians to Ossetia and Russia, and Georgians from South Ossetia to Georgia [24, s. 177]. The decline in the number of members of minority national groups corresponded to the bad economic situation of the state, coupled with political instability and the nationalist rhetoric of the Georgian authorities in the early nineties of the twentieth century. At the end of the last century this country had an atmosphere of hostility towards minorities, because, at that time, some regions (Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Adjara) gained independence from Georgian rule. With time, Georgian authorities managed to solve the problem of separatism in Adjara inhabited by Muslim Georgians. In contrast, Abkhazia and South Ossetia remain outside the jurisdiction of the Georgian authorities [1, s. 24-25].

It should be noted that in recent years due to the many conflicts that took place in the area, the Georgian Diaspora notably increased in size. Georgians can be found in Turkey (1.5 million), Russia (1 million), Iran (600 thou), Azerbaijan (2 thousand) and Afghanistan (1 thousand) [24, s. 177].

Due to the diverse topography, population distribution is very uneven. Almost 90% of Georgians live in areas below 1000 m AMSL. The average population density is 72 people per km<sup>2</sup>, however in Adjara it's over 250 people per km<sup>2</sup>. Religion is an important element in shaping the national consciousness of Georgians. The population is very varied in this respect. Most believers follow the Georgian Orthodox Church - 83.9%, and Islam - 9.9%, while 3.9% declared belonging to the Armenian Apostolic Church. Catholics in this area represent only 0.8% and 0.7% of the population states that it has no religion [1, s. 20]. Christianity has been recognized as a national religion in Georgia for 337 years, and declared such by King Miriana. In the 20s of the XI century the Gregorian Patriarchat was adopted (as sixth in the world). In the cities, together with the Georgians lived representatives of other religions - Jews, Armenians, Persians, Arabs, and also less numerous Baptists, Adventists, and Old Believers. For centuries, Georgia had its cultural centers in Jerusalem, on Mount Sinai as well as in Cyprus [10, s. 49-50]. To this day, it has preserved continuity of religious institutions. An interesting characteristic of this nation is incorporating pre-Christian traditions in their religion. It should be noted that even during the period when Georgia was one of the Soviet republics religion has not lost its position in a secularized society, because for many Georgians it was regarded as one of the symbols of national traditions. Related to this is the belief of many Georgians; that the change of religion is also renunciation of their nationality, with one exception: those who, under duress, embraced Islam in the past, for example, Adjarians [24, s. 176].

The evolution of the political system of Georgia in the twentieth and twenty-first century is similar to that of other countries in the South Caucasus. The similarities are mainly due to geographic proximity and the same initial conditions. Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia began their path of

development as a part of the USSR. In addition, geographic proximity determines a similar geopolitical situation.

According to the Constitution of 24 August 1995 Georgia is a republic headed by a president, elected by popular vote for a five-year term. The emergence of that country as an independent entity is related to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Earlier, the Georgian state functioned as the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic (GSSR, 1936-1990), part of the Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Republic (TSSR, 1921-1936) and as an independent state in the interwar period [16, s. 129].

Reacquiring sovereignty marked the beginning of transformations in the political system and economy, which continue to this day. Although Georgia is now an independent, democratic state with large aspirations for membership in NATO and the EU, it still suffers from major problems. The most important issues are: poverty of a large part of the society, weak of state institutions, corruption, and vulnerability to Russian economical blackmail [22].

Abkhazia is a small, self-proclaimed republic, with an area of only 8.6 thousand km<sup>2</sup> and is now inhabited by approx. 250 thousand residents. Currently, due to the war, Abkhazia is a very dilapidated and deserted region. Despite the announcement of independence in 1992, it is still a country not recognized internationally. Under international law, the autonomous republic is part of Georgia and called Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia. The reasons that mainly deter potential investors and tourists are: unregulated status, political tensions and economic ruin [8, s.53]. Currently, Abkhazia possesses all the attributes of statehood except international recognition (recognized only by Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Nauru). Resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations placed a two person observation mission in the country in 1993, and since 1994, Russian peacekeeping forces. However, the peace talks conducted with Abkhazia, Georgia, Russia and the United Nations did not produce results [4].

The conflict in Abkhazia erupted in the late 80s and early 90s. The main reason was the ongoing collapse of the USSR. Another one was the long standing ethnic conflict between Georgians and Abkhazians, the intensification of nationalisms and the struggle for independence of Georgians and Azerbaijanis. Russia was the main ally of the separatists, so they were able to, as a result of armed conflict, take control of disputed areas and to defend their independence. In the controlled areas they formed internationally unrecognized parastatal bodies, which really are Russian protectorates.

Despite many actions and activities, the conflict, which lasts since the collapse of the Soviet Union, has not been formally resolved. In 2003, when Mikheil Saakashvili became the Georgian President, he has launched a series of actions aimed at resolving the conflict. One of the first ideas was to grant Abkhazia broad autonomy (cultural autonomy, economic, e.g. a free trade zone, the right of veto in matters concerning Abkhazia, etc.). However, this proposal was rejected, which resulted in the use of force. For years, frequent armed incidents took place (e.g. the 2006 seizure of the strategic Kodori Gorge and placing the pro-Georgian Abkhaz government-in-exile in power there). In 2007, unknown helicopters shot up Georgian administrative buildings in Kodori.

It should be noted that the situation has suddenly deteriorated in the spring of 2008, due to the statements made by Russian President Vladimir Putin, about legalizing the Russian help provided to the Abkhazians, as well as taking steps to further the recognition of Abkhazian independence. Russia conducted media activities and policy changes aimed directly at the Georgian state. "Unmasking" Georgian plans to invade Abkhazia, can be shown as an example of this, as well as declarations on the protection of Russian citizens (Abkhazians) in case of aggression. Also, Russian peacekeeping forces were strengthened to the upper limits (from 1.8 thousand to 3 thousand). Russian railway troops were placed in Abkhazia as well, which turned out to be an unauthorized activity. These events were accompanied by numerous protests from countries and organizations (USA, EU, NATO). A number of activities aimed at reducing tensions were carried out, e.g. meetings of western politicians with representatives of the sides of the conflict (Javier Solana - Secretary General of the Council of the EU visiting Tbilisi and Sukhumi) [4].

South Ossetia is a region in northern Georgia, which includes the area of the Autonomous District of South Ossetia (created in 1991), which is a part of the then Georgian SSR. South Ossetia is a colloquial term the northern part of the historical region of Inner Kartli. Most often it's identified

with the area of the former Autonomous District of South Ossetia. Currently, the area is inhabited mostly by Ossetians.

South Ossetia was an autonomous district within the Georgian SSR until 1990. Before the Soviet period it did not possess any form of independence from Georgia. It was only as a result of the armed conflict in 1990-92, that it managed to win (with Russia's support) independence from Georgia.

Relative calm prevailed in these areas until M. Saakashvili came to power in Georgia. The ruling forces focused their activities on restoring territorial integrity to the country. It was in South Ossetia that the inefficiency of peace negotiations and Russian mediation was criticized the hardest. At the same time a new model of conflict resolution was developed with the support of the European Union and the acceptance of the OSCE. Another goal was reducing the power of separatist authorities and undercutting their economic bases. The main achievement of these activities was creating a rift among the separatists and the creation of an alternative pro-Georgian government with the support of Georgian villages. Since then, frequent incidents, arrests and clashes took place (only in July 2004 dozens of people were killed) [4].

It should be noted that, for Georgia, regaining its lost territories (South Ossetia and Abkhazia) is both symbolic and prestigious. It also corresponds to the expectations of the public, which are fueled by the government. Importantly, resolving these conflicts would significantly reduce the instruments of political pressure exerted by Russia on these countries. For Georgia, this would increase opportunities for economic development and facilitate closer cooperation with the West. Conflicts in this region significantly deter integration with the West, and are therefore considered as an absolute last resort.

The South Caucasus is regarded an area of strategic importance by the Russian Federation, both before the collapse of the Soviet Union and today. First of all, this area is the site of geopolitical rivalry with the West (mainly US), for control over the corridors that transfer Caspian oil and gas, which bypass Russian territory. This would create opportunities for the countries of the Caucasus to become independent from Russian raw materials. No wonder that the Russian authorities were not happy when Georgia began to pursue closer relations with the countries of the West [23, s.123-126].

A weakening of Russian-Georgian relations occurred after the "Rose Revolution". In 2003, E. Shevardnadze was forced to resign as president, and the new leader of Georgia, M. Saakashvili, was elected in the course of a democratic election. Even after the first meeting of W. Putin with the new president of Georgia some tension could be felt. Initially, Russian authorities perceived M. Saakashvili as a lesser evil, but he chose not to continue the policy in which Russia could intervene, which had a huge impact on the deterioration of relations between Moscow and Tbilisi.

Another factor that negatively affected the relations between Russia and Georgia was the pro-Western orientation of the new government. Georgia has become a country that, in a very enthusiastic manner, started to introduce pro-Western reforms and become a leading candidate for membership in NATO. W. Putin realized that if Georgia became the first country to build a truly liberal democracy in the South Caucasus, it would open the possibility of reform to the entire region and the loss of influence. Although the reconstruction of the region to a certain extent would also be positive for Russia, Georgian aspirations were perceived in a negative way, and equated to loss of control over the republics of the former Soviet Union. Therefore, the Russian authorities preferred to rely on old and proven imperialist strategies that were based on the principle of "divide and conquer", and as we know, old habits "do not die easily" [2, s. 120].

Another serious crisis that appeared on the Russian – Georgian line occurred in 2006, when the Russian authorities have banned the import of Georgian wine and "Borjomi" mineral water, which was a huge blow to Georgian economy [7, s. 243]. At the beginning of that year, most likely as a result of sabotage, there was an explosion of a gas pipeline located in the North Ossetia which cut off the supply of Russian natural gas. Electricity supplies were limited as well. Georgian authorities could not be indifferent to such events and accused Russia of deliberate sabotage of the Georgian energy system.

In 2008, there were hopes for further improvement of Georgian-Russian relations. During the swearing-in for his second term, M. Saakashvili spoke about the will to improve relations with the

Russian Federation, and even the head of Russian diplomacy, Sergei Lavrov, took part in the ceremony. In March, flights between Tbilisi and Moscow resumed.

Immediately after Kosovo gained independence, the conflict between Russia and Georgia resurfaced. The event was in some sense the "casus belli" in the Russian-Georgian war. Two days before the declaration of independence of Kosovo, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed about the change of policy towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and Prime Minister W. Putin announced increased support for the Russian territories. In addition, the situation worsened at the beginning of 2008, when Georgia's potential invitation for membership in NATO was discussed. At this point, Russia's ambassador to NATO announced that Georgia's chance for NATO membership will begin the secession process for Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Shortly after these words, Russia announced its intention to establish special legal ties with the two separatist republics, which triggered mass protests from Georgia, The United States and European countries.

In April 2008, Russia accused Georgia of organizing an armed offensive against Abkhazia, and used it as the reason to increase the number of its peacekeepers in the area. They also announced that they might resort to military means if the safety of its "compatriots" will be threatened by the outbreak of the conflict in Abkhazia or South Ossetia. Georgian authorities, in response to the Russian statement, said that "the prospect of war between Georgia and Russia has become very real". A month later, several hundred unarmed soldiers were sent Abkhazia by the Russian Federation, under the pretext of repairing the Abkhazian railway, which was met with further protests from Georgian authorities. At the same time, there was a growing number of armed incidents on the border with the Republic of South Ossetia. During the following airspace violations by Russian military aircraft, Georgia recalled its ambassador from Moscow (on July 10th), which was the prelude to the five-day war [8, s. 69].

Georgia gaining independence had a negative impact on Georgian-Russian relations. One reason could be Russia's role in the conflicts threatening the territorial integrity of Georgia [21]. A signal of impending conflict was a Georgian unmanned aerial vehicle being shot down by a Russian fighter. This incident occurred April 20, 2008. As a result of this, and due to the sense of an explicit violation of its territorial integrity, Georgians used diplomatic measures to force its neighbors to confess to the attack, and the Kremlin to withdraw its support for the breakaway province. However, it should be noted that Georgia's policy makers had false hopes that there will not be an open Russian aggression, because they were not prepared to fight with such a huge opponent. The Georgian side tried to avert the conflict at all costs, but the authorities of the Republic of South Ossetia and the Russian Federation refused to accede to peaceful dialogue [12]. There was even a meeting between President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili and Russia's President - Dmitry Medvedev . During the meeting, M. Saakashvili presented a proposal to resolve the conflict, which was to rely on Russia guaranteeing the autonomy of Abkhazia within the borders of Georgia, it was completely ignored. Diplomatic efforts on the part of Georgia have found support among the Baltic States, in Poland, Ukraine and the UK. On July 9, 2008 the separatist forces of the Republic of South Ossetia shelled Georgian peacekeepers and villages [2, s. 285]. Georgians, knowing that war was inevitable, prepared for mobilization. But, suprisingly, a day before the escalation of hostilities, M. Saakashvili announced a unilateral ceasefire and offered to engage in dialogue. At the same time, Georgian armed forces were already centered around South Ossetia. On the same day in the afternoon there an exchange of fire took place, as well as shelling Ossetian border villages. Just within two hours of notification of the armistice, the Georgian authorities reported that they are considering an operation to "restore constitutional order" in the Republic of South Ossetia.

Deadline for the attack was not chosen randomly. It was known at that time that Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin (elected on May 8th, 2008) will be attending the Summer Olympics in Beijing, as well as US President George W. Bush, while Russian President Dmitry Medvedev was on holiday, just as Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary. The only person present at his post was EU foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, who immediately appealed to M. Saakashvili for peaceful negotiations with South Ossetia [8, s. 101].

On August the 8th during the opening ceremony of the Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, the Georgian army proceeded to attack the capital of the breakaway region of Tskhinvali. The operation carried out by the army was called "Clean Field". From the outset, both sides blamed each other for starting the conflict. However, it should be noted that formally Russia and Georgia have not declared war, didn't break diplomatic relations and, despite the failure to comply with the third Hague Convention, were convinced that they were correct in their demands [5]. Georgia tried to convince international public opinion that it is a small country attacked by a neighbour; Russia claimed that it was the opposite, and that Georgia started the conflict [8, s. 99]. President of the Republic of South Ossetia Eduard Kokojote began accuse Georgian troops of committing mass "genocide" of the Ossetian people. As aptly noted by Wojciech Jagielski in his publication, Ossetians accuse Georgians, and Georgians accuse Ossetians and one couldn't really know what to believe [9]. After the initial stage of the aggression, authorities in South Ossetia asked the Russian government for help. Russia began to justify their actions with humanitarian intervention. Ossetian authorities accused Georgia of preventing civilian evacuation.

The Caucasus conflict shocked the international public opinion to some extent. It was the most popular topic in the post-Soviet space. Both sides had their supporters and opponents. We must also remember about the failure of the official activities of the Russian Federation, which wanted to convince public opinion in the region to its case. None of the countries of the former Soviet Union decided to recognize the Republic of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Reactions in the region were limited to declarations, preserving silence or simply condemning Russian actions. Repeated notions of a common front of post-Soviet countries in response to the war in August 2008 are just a great and unacceptable over-simplification [20, s. 327].

One of the main allies of Georgia in the course of the war was Ukraine with President Viktor Yushchenko at the helm. Since the victory of the so called "Color revolutions" in these countries, the two presidents became close allies. In addition to the common interests on the state level, they were also great personal friends. The leaders of Ukraine and Georgia were in constant contact throughout the crisis. On August the 12<sup>th</sup> a mass support rally was held for Mikheil Saakashvili, which was attended by Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko, Polish President Lech Kaczynski, Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus, Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Latvian Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis.

Belarus was always considered to be an ally of Russia. It is difficult to question the nature of their relationship. Definitely, it continues to be close. However, the political alliance and cultural proximity does not mean that there are no tensions and misunderstandings between the two countries, especially at the political elite level. You could expect that due to the close alliance of Belarus and the Russian Federation, the Belarusian president will be one of the main allies of Russia's policy towards Georgia, Abkhazia and the Republic of South Ossetia. However, the predictions proved to be wrong and the ambivalent attitude of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko surprised many observers, and has become a cause of disappointment for Russian politicians. During the five days of the war, Belarusian politicians remained ostentatiously indifferent, and only under pressure from the Russian ambassador, the Belarusian authorities issued a sparingly worded statement recognizing the legitimacy of Russian actions in defense of its own citizens on the territory of the Republic of South Ossetia [20, s. 327].

Actions of the Polish authorities in response to the Georgian crisis in 2008 can be divided into two styles of conducting eastern policy. The first was the one pursued by the Polish president Lech Kaczynski, which was characterized as anti-Russian, and even tended to be confrontational. The second style was personified by Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski. During the crisis, the politician positively assessed the activity of the French diplomacy, which sought to reach a consensus with Russia, contradicting the rhetoric of the Polish presidential administration. It should be noted that the recognition of Georgia as an "innocent" victim of Russian aggression adopted by the Polish head of state, definitely limited the Polish diplomacy's ability to act in the crisis [15, s. 301].

A big impact on the development and course of the conflict were the actions taken by the Western countries, i.e. The United States, Germany, France, Poland and the Baltic countries -

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. On the second day of the conflict the international community began to strongly intervene. German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced her visit to Moscow on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August and the desire to conduct talks with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. August 26<sup>th</sup> Angela Merkel condemned the Russian action and stated that they are completely unacceptable and in contradiction of the principle of territorial integrity [8, s. 165]. In addition to German Chancellor, the actions of the Russian authorities were also condemned by the representatives of the United States (George W. Bush urged Moscow to reconsider its decision on the violation of Georgia's territorial integrity), Sweden, who spoke about Russian confrontational politics not only with Europe, but the entire international community, and foreign Minister of Great Britain David Miliband said he was working on the assembly of "(...) the largest possible coalition against Russian aggression in Georgia". Not only states stood in opposition but also international organizations - the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) and the G-7 (or G-8 without Russia) [8, s. 165]. For the US, the war between Georgia and Russia and the situation in South Ossetia became a part of the election campaign. John McCain's staff issued its statement first, in which by means of their candidate they called for Russian troops to withdraw from the sovereign territory of Georgia. The reaction of Barack Obama's staff was a bit more reserved, but was gaining firmness with every new statement. It may be noted that despite the positions of the United States coming from different places, their opinion on the Caucasian conflict was at the same – consistent, clear and unambiguous [13].

The Georgian-Russian war in August 2008 was a war that shook the world. The outbreak of this small conflict shocked Western countries, who were convinced that war in this part of the world belonged to the past. This belief has caused them to ignore the signals that pointed to a gradual embittering conflict between Russia and Georgia. The war challenged the relations between Russia and the West. This country regarded by many politicians as "difficult to work with, but very few thought of it as being able to undertake a military offensive against one of its neighbours" [2, s.373]. After five days the two separatist republics solidified their status of independence from Georgia. Georgian authorities have been forced to take part in the peace talks, which proved to be completely unfavorable to the country. French President Nicolas Sarkozy and the President of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe - Alexander Stubb, contributed exceptionally to ending the conflict. Talks between them and Dmitry Medvedev were undertaken, during which a consensus has been established and six-point plan to resolve the conflict created.

The French president admitted, at a press conference held in Moscow, that Russia has the right to defend its citizens abroad. While the leaders of countries such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Ukraine gave full support to Georgia in the conflict. A rally that was then organized in the capital reportedly contributed to the fact that the city has not been taken by Russian forces [19]. On August the 13<sup>th</sup> there was a meeting between Nicolas Sarkozy and Georgian authorities, which took place in Tbilisi. The theme of the talks was signing the agreement created in Moscow. Despite the preliminary acceptance, Georgia's opposition to the sixth point of the document led to the talks being suspended. A day later Georgia left the CIS, the decision was taken unanimously in a vote in parliament. On August the 15<sup>th</sup> the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice arrived in Tbilisi, and gave political support to Georgia. The Baltic States expressed their support as well. During this visit, the President of Georgia signed a ceasefire plan with the revised wording of paragraph six [19].

The international response to Russia's actions during and after the conflict was miniscule. After the signing of the ceasefire agreement, the backlash to the Russian Federation, as a party not complying with the agreed upon rules, came from representatives of Ukraine and the Baltic states (including the Polish President), the same ones who at the rally in Tbilisi supported Georgia's right to territorial integrity. Based on observations and the exchange comments politicians unanimously decided that the most important thing is to implement the ceasefire, which in fact has not yet taken place. They also suggested the urgent withdrawal of all military intervention and establishing peacekeepers from the EU. It was also noted that Georgia has sought membership in NATO structures. All of these points and the reaction of politicians were raised to make the world pay attention to what is happening in Georgia [6, s. 377].

Since the Rose Revolution in 2003, Georgia's foreign policy was redirected to a pro-Western direction. Currently, Georgia maintains close relations with the US. Both countries are connected by a "strategic partnership" formalized in January 2009. The Georgian state also seeks to increase cooperation with members of the European Union, bringing attention to its European identity on the international level [18, s. 398].

Since the beginning of the conflict, as well as after its completion, solidarity with Georgia was declared by Poland, in particular the Polish president - Lech Kaczynski. The Polish people gave the Georgian occasional financial support in the amount of 1.3 million euro and humanitarian aid in the form of medicine, bandages and food, inviting children from areas destroyed during the conflict for the holidays, and undertaking the sponsorship of Shertul village. A special training program for Georgian officials was also organized in Poland as well as internships in the Polish government and cooperation of local governments.

However, in the Georgian society one can increasingly often meet with the will to get closer to the Russian state once again. The undecided states gathered in the framework of NATO and the EU are often blamed this situation. At this point, the Georgian foreign policy is at a crossroads. Georgia was considered a victim of the "new" Cold War between Russia and the West [17].

Georgia still chooses to follow pro-Western ideals blindly, despite some signals that it should take a different path. Georgian state being loyal to its western allies for a long time, ended up sending a lot more of their troops to Afghanistan than many full-fledged members of NATO. They also took part in the Gulf War. In return for the commitment they received many thanks from the west but nothing else. Repeatedly American and Western politicians promised Georgia membership in NATO in the near future, but, as it is known, these are only empty promises. Sometimes American troops will conduct exercises with Georgian armed forces, which is defined as the next step in strengthening relations. Despite so many assurances Georgia continues to be left alone, barring a few examples of good will from Western countries.

Georgian-Russian relations are now quite problematic. Between these countries there are a number of interrelated points of contention, which definitely makes it difficult to re-establish a relationship. Since Georgia regained independence, Russia used different forms of pressure on the Georgian authorities, including economic, in order to influence the foreign policy of its southern neighbour.

The Five-day war became another example of Russia not wanting to give up its dominance in the Caucasus region. The signing of the document specifying the ceasefire exemplifies this well. The rules were worded in an imprecise manner which allowed the Russian Federation not to abide by them. Many times the Russian side justified their actions based on the "vagueness and ambiguity of certain provisions" [6, s. 375].

Eventually it turned out that each of the points of agreement is effectively being ignored. By 2009, Russia resorted to threats of violence against Georgia, thereby breaking the second point of the provisions of the ceasefire, as well as performing armed strikes along with separatist units. Also, international organizations were often obstructed in access to the victims of the war. In practice humanitarian aid to South Ossetia came only from Russia, and Georgian refugees who could not return to their homes, found help in the depths of their country.

The last signed agreement would involve discussions regarding Ossetian and Abkhazian ambitions of full independence. And once again the provision was not fulfilled. The Russian Federation fully recognized the independence of two separatist republics, were not allowing European Union observers on their territories. In addition, in June 2009 the Russian authorities blocked the activity of observers from the UN and the OSCE, the only organizations which had the ability to act in separatist areas [6, s. 375].

Moreover, Georgia finally resigned from the Commonwealth of Independent States, and thus declared a complete cease of cooperation with the former hegemony. However, despite all the previous actions, former Georgian leaders have warned that a Russian offensive may come in the near future. Russia can quickly gain an advantage over western countries that are yet to propose concrete solutions so that Georgia, hence the Georgian society may come to believe that approaching their

powerful neighbour will be the best solution in this situation.

At the moment of defeat Georgia in the Russian-Georgian conflict in 2008, Russia imposed a number of restrictions in mutual economic relations and also took part of the Georgian state lands. Moreover, the Russian authorities continue to work to undermine confidence in Georgia in NATO and the European Union. Therefore, at this point in time, the former Soviet republic has no chance of closer integration with these organizations. Although an association agreement has been signed, due to the actions of the Russian Federation, Georgia was pushed out of the orbit of interests of the European Union. The EU also elected not to relieve the laws related to the entry visas for Georgians.

The Russian Federation, through the Five-Day war, achieved one of its strategic objectives, namely thwarting the possibility of Georgia joining NATO for years to come. Georgia is the first among the former Soviet republics to declare its desire to join NATO, at the time of becoming a part of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council - in 1992. Accession to Euro-Atlantic structures would allow Georgia to improve relations with Western countries greatly, which also would result in reducing Russian influence. Therefore, membership in NATO has been a priority of Georgian foreign policy for many years.

The accession of Georgia to NATO would without doubt bring benefits to the Western world. The strategic location of the country in the Caucasus makes it a kind of transition area to the rich energy resources of Azerbaijan. With access to Azerbaijan and its mineral deposits western countries will be able to become independent of supplies from the Russian to a greater extent. No wonder that in this region there is an ongoing power struggle between the Western world and the Russian Federation [3].

The Five-day war showed how different strategic objectives are for the Russian Federation and the West. The political and military involvement of Western countries in the South Caucasus has been received by the Russian Federation as interference in its strategic sphere of influence as well as a breach of its security. Russian military interventions in Georgia are seen among the population of the state as a good decision, and the outrage and criticism from the United States and other Western countries is completely incomprehensible to them. During the conflict with Georgia, the Russians showed that fewer and fewer of them care about international opinion and do not feel the need to justify their actions.

In analyzing the causes of the Five-Day war it is worth noting, that in recent years, especially after the Cold War, Russia began to be marginalized by the Western countries. Many post-soviet countries began to strengthen both political and economic cooperation with the West and distanced themselves from Russia. These actions were not accepted by the Russian authorities, which saw the decline in significance of their country as a superpower, and began to take initiative in regaining control of its former sphere of influence. At the same time, seeing no reaction from the West, the actions of the Russian Federation continued to be more and more daring.

The five-day war was a kind of lesson in the dominance of Russia in the post-Soviet countries. During the conflict in Ukraine no state had the courage to stand up to Russia.

Analyzing the events and consequences of the war, it should be noted that the victory of Russia was keeping the separatist republics (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) in their zone of influence. Russia also won militarily. It also won the propaganda war - Georgia was presented as an aggressor on the separatist republic. To highlight their position, two weeks after the fighting ended, Russia recognized the independence of both republics. The fact is that the Russian state has achieved its goal of checking the reaction of the European Union countries. At an extraordinary summit - the EU member states have developed a single position criticizing the actions of the Russian forces, but did not impose any sanctions on Russia.

While for Georgia, the five-day war not only didn't reach the intended goal of becoming independent from the Russian Federation but also resulted in a massive military defeat. However, the five-day war did not affect the policy of the Georgian authorities and their pro-Western stance, and participation in energy projects. This way Georgia did not allow Russia to achieve another success, which would be the isolation of an independent state in the South Caucasus on the international arena.

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***Малачовська К., Геополітичне становище Грузії в результаті війни з Російською федерацією 2008 р.***

*В статті здійснюється аналіз геополітичної ситуації сучасної Грузії, яка склалася після війни з Російською Федерацією 2008 року. Зроблено висновок про те, що для Грузії п'ятиденна війна не тільки не досягла поставленої мети стати незалежною від Російської Федерації, а й призвела до військової поразки. Проте зауважено, що п'ятиденна війна не вплине на політику грузинської влади і їх прозахідну позицію і участь в енергетичних проектах.*

***Ключові слова:*** російсько-грузинська війна 2008 р., геополітична ситуація, Грузія.

***Малачовська К., Геополитическое положение Грузии в результате войны с Российской федерацией 2008 г.***

*В статье проведен анализ геополитического положения современной Грузии, сложившегося после войны с Российской федерацией 2008 г. Сделан вывод о том, что для Грузии пятидневная война не только не достигла намеченной цели стать независимой от Российской Федерации, но и привела к военному поражению. Тем не менее, пятидневная война не повлияет на политику грузинских властей и их прозападную позицию и участие в энергетических проектах.*

***Ключевые слова:*** российско-грузинская война 2008 г., геополитическая ситуация, Грузия.