

УДК 327

**THE INTERESTS OF THE U.S. IN THE
CONFLICTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA****ІНТЕРЕСИ США В КОНФЛІКТАХ
В РЕСПУБЛІЦІ ГРУЗІЯ****Baghirova A. M.,**

PHD student of Institute on Law and Human
Rights of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences
(Azerbaijan), e-mail: aysel-baghirova@mail.ru

Багірова А. М.,

докторант, Інститут права та прав людини
Національної Академії Наук Азербайджану
(Азербайджан), e-mail: aysel-baghirova@mail.ru

The article discusses some issues relating to US interests in conflicts occurring around the Republic of Georgia. It is noted that one of the main threats to international peace and security are intrastate and intergovernmental conflicts in different parts of the world. It is emphasized that the South Caucasus has a favorable geopolitical position for the great powers. It is noted that the Armenian-Azerbaijani, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the conflicts in Georgia are detrimental to regional security and cooperation in various fields. The research was conducted on aspects of US-Georgia and NATO-Georgia relations. In the process of preparing the article, scientific research methods were used, which are used in the study of international relations, such as induction, deduction, examination of documents, a systematic approach and others.

Keywords: U.S., Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, NATO, NATO-Georgia Commission.

Розглядається деякі питання, що стосуються інтересам США в конфліктах що відбуваються навколо Республіки Грузія. Відзначається, що однією з основних загроз міжнародному миру і безпеки є внутрішньодержавні і міждержавні конфлікти в різних частинах світу. Підкреслюється, що Південний Кавказ має вигідне геополітичне положення для великих держав. Відзначається, що Вірмено-азербайджанський, нагірно-карабахський конфлікт і конфлікти в Грузії завдають шкоди регіональній безпеці і співробітництва в різних сферах. Дослідження проводилося по аспектам відносин США-Грузія і НАТО-Грузія. У процесі підготовки статті були використані методи наукових досліджень, які застосовуються при вивченні міжнародних відносин, такі як індукція, дедукція, експертиза документів, системний підхід і інші.

Ключові слова: США, Грузія, Абхазія, Південна Осетія, НАТО, Комісія НАТО-Грузія.

(стаття друкується мовою оригіналу)

Georgia's independence was recognized by the U.S. on December 25, 1991. Diplomatic relations between U.S. and Georgia were established on March 24, 1992. After recognition of Georgia's independence by U.S., the American Embassy in Tbilisi was established on April 23, 1992. Chargé d'Affaires ad interim former was Carey Cavanaugh who was U.S. Ambassador/peace mediator and is currently a professor at the University of Kentucky [22].

Georgia as a South Caucasian state has been one of the leading countries not only among South Caucasian states but also Europe and Eurasia's countries getting U.S. foreign and military aid. In the 1990s (FY1992–FY2000), the U.S. government provided over \$860 million in total aid to Georgia (\$96 million a year on average) [7]. In the 2000s, U.S. aid continued to Georgia, too. Georgia was the third-largest recipient in Europe and Eurasia by getting the largest per capita aid from U.S. in FY2001 to FY2007, total aid to Georgia amounted to over \$945 million (\$135 million a year, on average) [3; 4].

The U.S. – Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership was signed between U.S. and Georgia on January 9, 2009. The US – Georgia Strategic Partnership Charter has shown how closely US – Georgia relations are. The framework for much of the bilateral relations of the two countries was determined in the Charter on Strategic Partnership. The Charter has great importance on developing, strengthening and deepening relations between the countries in the future, too. The first meeting of the Strategic Cooperation Committee was held on 22 June 2009. At the first meeting, four working groups on priority areas which identified in the Charter were set up: democracy, defense and security, economic, trade and energy issues, and people-to-people and cultural exchanges [3; 30].

Section 4 of Ukraine Freedom Support Act 2014 – Sanctions relating to the defense and energy sectors of the Russian Federation indicated cases of the sanctions against Russian entities: (II) transfers defense articles into Syria or into the territory of a specified country without the consent of the internationally recognized government of that country; (3) specified country means (i) Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova; and (ii) any other country designated by the President as a country of significant concern for purposes of this subsection, such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the Central Asia republics [3; 27]. Ukraine Freedom Support Act 2014 (Public Law 113–272) which enacted by Congress of U.S. in December, 2014 gives the President of the U.S. the authority to expand assistance to Ukraine, increase economic sanctions on Russia, and provide equipment to counter offensive weapons [9, p. 22].

In the House of Representatives, U.S. 660 resolution on September 8, 2016 U.S. supports Georgia's territorial integration: «Whereas the United States – Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, signed on January 9, 2009, underscores that «support for each other's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders constitutes the foundation of our bilateral relations». This resolution was engrossed in House in a 410–6 vote in which 2/3 required [3; 8].

In the first section of S.Res.106 of 115th Congress in March 30, 2017 expresses the sense of the Senate to support the territorial integrity of Georgia. With this resolution U.S. condemns Russia's military intervention and occupation of Georgia and its continuous illegal activities along the occupation line in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and calls upon the government of Russia to: (1) withdraw its recognition of Georgia's territories of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia as independent countries, (2) refrain from acts and policies that undermine Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and (3) take steps to fulfill the August 12, 2008, Ceasefire Agreement between Georgia and the Russian Federation. S.Res.106 affirms that a free, united, democratic, and sovereign Georgia is in the long-term U.S. interest [26].

The Countering Russian Influence in Europe and Eurasia Act of 2017 (P.L. 115–44, Title II, §253) states that The United States, consistent with the principle of

ex injuria jus non oritur, supports the policy known as the «Stimson Doctrine» and thus does not recognize territorial changes effected by force, including the illegal invasions and occupations of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Crimea, Eastern Ukraine, and Transnistria [3, p. 13; 24].

The US openly supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within internationally recognized borders. During his visit to Tbilisi in August 2017, Vice-president Mike Pence said that the United States «strongly condemns Russia's occupation on Georgia's soil» [3; 32].

In January 2018, the State Department stated that «The United States condemns the Russian Federation's ratification of an agreement with the de facto leaders in Georgia's breakaway region of South Ossetia regarding a joint military force. We do not recognize the legitimacy of this so-called «treaty», which does not constitute a valid international agreement. The United States' position on Abkhazia and South Ossetia is unwavering: The United States fully supports Georgia's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The United States urges Russia to withdraw its forces to pre-war positions per the 2008 ceasefire agreement and reverse its recognition of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia» [28].

Prime Minister of Georgia Kvirikashvili announced new peace initiative: «Step toward a Better Future» on April 4, 2018. The Prime Minister stated: «This is yet another open statement on our part to reaffirm that the peacemaking political trajectory pursued by our government will surely continue which, despite many challenges, remains our unwavering, consistent, and continuous trajectory. In taking this step, we are countering the challenges, and this step is designed to build confidence and step up the process of reconciliation». The US Department of State welcomed the new peace initiative announced by the Georgian government, and the US government supported Georgia's commitment to a «peaceful dialogue and the peaceful settlement of the conflict» [29; 21].

U.S. interests in Georgia are also reflected in the NATO documents. NATO's South Caucasus and Central Asia policies cover three periods since 1991. The first period was in 1991–2001. The second period covers 2001–2010. Finally, the third period began in 2010 after the adoption of the new Lisbon Strategic Concept of NATO [1, p. 89].

One of the main priorities of Georgia's security and foreign policy is to become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [14; 12, p. 5]. In this regard, NATO's role is essential to strengthening security and stability in Georgia. Accordingly, the reforms carried out by the Georgian government are fully compatible with the NATO's recommendations and significantly contribute to the development of democratic processes in the country. Georgia's goal here is not only to strengthen national security, but also to play an important role in strengthening the overall Euro-Atlantic security. After declaring the independence of Georgia, he joined the NATO North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1992, which was then transformed into the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997 [15]. This program

envisages bilateral cooperation between NATO and partner countries. Georgia actively participates in regular international military exercises, as well as international conferences and seminars on modern security issues initiated by the NATO and the Partnership for Peace program. Georgia is actively involved in NATO-led operations to ensure Euro-Atlantic security. In 1999–2008, Georgia supported NATO's Kosovo operation with contributed troops. The Georgian peacekeeping forces, together with the NATO forces, participated in Kosovo peacekeeping operations by composition the German brigade and Turkey's battalion [20]. Georgia also contributed International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan on fighting against terrorism. Among non-NATO member states, Georgia has been one of the strongest powers to support operations in Afghanistan [23].

Georgia's NATO integration process started on November 21, 2002, at NATO's Prague summit, when Georgia clearly voiced its intention to join the Euro-Atlantic alliance [10, p. 4]. Although NATO – Georgia relations existed in the 1990s, the NATO – Georgia relations became more intensive and dynamic after the Rose Revolution in 2003 in Georgia.

NATO – Georgia Individual Partnership Action Plan was launched on October 29, 2004 in order to successfully implement democratic reforms and meet NATO standards. Georgia was the first country to start operating within the Individual Partnership Action Plan [17].

In 2008 NATO Bucharest summit, NATO members agree that Georgia will become a NATO member in the future. In Bucharest Summit Declaration was emphasized «NATO welcomes Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO» [21]. NATO's Bucharest declaration addresses the resolution of the conflicts in South Caucasus by the principle of the territorial integrity [25, p. 161; 2].

In the meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Foreign Ministers held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels on 19 August, 2008 allies expressed their concern over the situation in Georgia and stated that the solution of the conflict must be based on full respect for the principles of Georgia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity recognized by international law and UN Security Council resolutions. Foreign ministers of NATO member states stated that they are deeply deplore the use of force in the conflict between Georgia and Russia [13]. For overseeing and taking an action to support the process of the membership of Georgia to NATO was decided to create NATO – Georgia Commission. NATO-Georgia Commission (NGC) was established in September 2008. In September during the two days visit of the North Atlantic Council to Georgia the framework document on the establishment of the NATO-Georgia Commission was signed [16].

On August 27, 2008, the Allies condemned Russia for recognizing Georgia's South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions and called Russia to abolish this decision. NATO recognizes Georgia's territorial integrity and

sovereignty internationally within its boundaries [23]. This has been repeatedly emphasized in the statements of government leaders of NATO member states and the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General stated that NATO does not recognize elections in South Ossetia in 2009 and Abkhazia in 2011, and holding of such elections undermine the peaceful and lasting settlement the conflict [6].

On April 15, 2011, the NATO-Georgia Commission adopted the joint declaration at the level of Foreign Ministers. In this statement, NATO Foreign Ministers also reaffirmed their continued policy of non-recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia [11].

Georgia's reform plans and future prospects for cooperation were discussed in the meeting of NATO Defense Ministers with their Georgian counterpart Irakli Alasania in the NATO-Georgia Commission, on June 5, 2013. The ministers also thanked Georgia for making a significant contribution to the NATO mission in Afghanistan [5].

On September 4–5, 2014, NATO summit in Wales, NATO leaders confirmed NATO – Georgia package for Georgia's efforts to develop defense capability and attempt to become a NATO member. In Wales declaration was once again stated that NATO continued support to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders [31].

At NATO-Georgia Commission meeting on December 6, 2017, NATO foreign ministers once more reaffirmed their practical and political support to Georgia, as well as their commitment to Georgia's accession to the Alliance. They stressed that NATO remain concerned by the deepening of Russia's relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia and call for Russia to stop recognition of Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions and withdraw its troops from Georgia [18].

On December 4, 2018, NATO Foreign Ministers held a meeting with Georgian and Ukrainian Foreign Ministers for the aim to address security situation in the Black Sea region and Alliance's support for two countries. The NATO presence in the Black Sea region has increased in the sea, air and ground in the past few years. The Alliance continues to strengthen ties with Georgia and Ukraine [19].

References

1. Bağbaşıoğlu, A., 2014. 'Beyond Afghanistan NATO's partnership with Central Asia and South Caucasus: A tangled partnership?', *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 5, p.88–96.
2. 'Bucharest Summit Declaration'. https://www.nato.int/cps/us/nato/hq/official_texts_8443.htm
3. Cory, Welt, 2018. 'Georgia: Background and U.S. Policy. Congressional Research Service 7–5700', *Updated*, September 5. at: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R45307.pdf>
4. 'CRS calculations, based on data available in the U.S. Department of State's annual U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with Eurasia reports for FY2001 to FY2007'. at: <https://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rpt/>
5. 'Defense Ministers reaffirm NATO support for Georgia's reform efforts'. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/nato/hq/news_101172.htm
6. 'Deepening relations with Georgia'. https://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/Deepening_Relations_with_Georgia_EN.pdf
7. 'Foreign aid totals from FY1992 to FY2000 include all agencies and accounts. Over 40% of this total was for humanitarian food assistance. See U.S. Department of State, U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities With the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union, FY2000 Annual Report (Appendix)'. at: <https://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rpt/nisasst/index.htm>
8. 'H.Res.660 – Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives to support the territorial integrity of Georgia.114th Congress (2015–2016)'. at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-resolution/660/text>
9. 'Hybrid warfare and the gray zone threat', 2016, [edited by] Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr., *Senior National Security Strategist. Terrorism, commentary on security documents, 1062–4007*, volume 14, *Oxford University Press*, 376 p.
10. 'Irakli Chkhaidze. NATO and Georgia'. http://www.parliament.ge/files/292_886_471587_NATOandGeorgiaeng.pdf
11. 'Joint Statement'. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_72697.htm?mode=pressrelease
12. Mankoff, J., 2011. 'Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics', *Rowman & Littlefield Publishers*, Second edition (September 22), 352 p.
13. 'Meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Foreign Ministers held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels'. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_29950.htm
14. 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. Foreign policy strategy 2006–2009'.
15. 'Ministry of Foreign affairs of Georgia. Information on NATO-Georgia Relations'.
16. 'NATO – Georgia Comission'. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/nato/hq/topics_52131.htm
17. 'NATO – Georgia relations. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia'.
18. 'NATO Foreign Ministers vow practical and political support for Georgia'. <http://agenda.ge/en/news/2017/2686>
19. 'NATO Foreign Ministers show strong support for Georgia and Ukraine'. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/nato/hq/news_161114.htm?selectedLocale=en
20. 'Peace Troops from the East'. https://www.nato.int/KFOR/chronicle/1999/chronicle_199903/p11.htm
21. 'PM Announces New Peace Initiative «Step toward a Better Future»'. <http://georgiatoday.ge/news/9774/PM-Announces-New-Peace-Initiative-%E2%80%9CStep-toward-a-Better-Future%E2%80%9D>
22. 'Policy & History'. <https://ge.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/>
23. 'Relations with Georgia. Last updated: 14 Sep. 2018 09:38'. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_38988.htm
24. 'S.1221 – Countering Russian Influence in Europe and Eurasia Act of 2017'. At <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/1221>
25. Shiriye, Zaur. 'Nato and the South Caucasus: the impact of the northern distribution network', *Latvian Institute of international affairs*, p.135–167.
26. 'S.Res.106 – A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate to support the territorial integrity of Georgia.115th Congress (2017–2018)'. at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-resolution/106/text>
27. 'Ukraine Freedom Support Act 2014. Public law 113–272—DEC. 18, 2014'. at: <https://www.congress.gov/113/plaws/publ272/PLAW-113publ272.pdf>
28. 'U.S. Department of State, «Russia's Violations of Georgian Sovereignty», January 26, 2018. at: <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/01/277705.htm>
29. 'U.S. Department of State, «United States Welcomes Georgia Peace Initiative», April 4, 2018.
30. 'U.S.–Georgia Strategic Partnership Commission'. at: <https://www.state.gov/p/eur/ci/gg/usgeorgiacommission/>
31. 'Wales Summit Declaration'. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/nato/hq/official_texts_112964.htm
32. White House, «Remarks by the Vice President and Georgian Prime Minister in a Joint Press Conference», August 1, 2017. at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-georgian-prime-minister-joint-press-conference/>

* * *