



## ***Report on the joint seminar***



### ***“Examining Current Security Issues in light of the War in Ukraine: Lessons for the Future”***

***Organized by the Scientific Research Center (SRC) of  
David Aghmashenebeli National Defense Academy (NDA)  
of Georgia***

***and***

***the Centre for Stabilisation (CFS) at the Royal Danish  
Defense College's (RDDC) Institute for Strategy and  
War Studies,***

***within the frames of the cooperation agreement signed  
on September 4, 2023.***





## ***Background:***

On September 27-28, the NDA and the RDDC held a joint seminar in Gori that focused on current security issues in South Caucasus and the Black Sea region against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine. The seminar was attended by researchers from Georgian institutions as well as from different countries, including the US, Belgium, United Kingdom, and Denmark. Aside from facilitating lively discussions and gathering up-to-date knowledge on relevant security political matters, the seminar also aimed at enhancing the relationship and cooperation between the NDA and RDDC as well as other relevant stakeholders in the region.

The seminar was divided into four sessions spanning two days and after each session, a panel debate was held, where the speakers answered questions from the audience.

- 1) NATO, Russia & the New World Order: Implications for Georgia;
- 2) Strategic Analysis of War: Theoretical Course and Military Practice;
- 3) Emerging Security Challenges: Information Warfare and Cyber Security, Drones, and AI; and
- 4) Regional Security Dilemmas and Georgia: Navigating in a Tense Neighbourhood.

The seminar was opened and the participants were welcomed by the leaders from both David Agmashenebeli National Defense Academy of Georgia and the Centre for Stabilisation at the Royal Danish Defense College.

## ***Key Conclusions:***

*From the seminar, six key analytical takeaways can be identified:*

1. NATO and the EU is gradually increasing its engagement in the South Caucasus and Black Sea region, which they see as strategically and geopolitically important. This can create tensions as the regions are characterized by a plethora of diverging and sometimes conflictual interest or regional and outside powers.
2. States have the ability to learn from one another and enhance their military capabilities through Professional Military Education (PME). Despite potential tensions, focus could profitably be on the comparison and sharing of competencies and concrete war-experiences thereby taking advantage of different national specializations.
3. Traditional, classical approach to war, strategy and tactics remain important but technological developments have changed the nature of war in certain ways - amongst them at the individual and psychological level by increasing the role of emotional intelligence and leadership in general.
4. Institutional politics within NATO and EU has become more flexible in response to external challenges – especially following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. This is inter alia evident in the new regional security and defence plans of NATO.
5. The war in Ukraine has shown that small states, such as Georgia, can benefit from investing in asymmetrical/hybrid approaches to warfare comprising – among other things – cyber and drone capabilities with the view to deter hostile actors in their vicinity.
6. Russia's role in South Caucasus is declining due to resource scarcity and inability to divert focus to the region following the war in Ukraine. However, Russia still poses a significant threat as future political elites are likely to continue adversarial strategies towards the region. Moreover, the outcome of the war in Ukraine will significantly affect the security situations of a country like Georgia, although it is unclear in what way such an affect will manifest.

The parties of the seminar emphasize its success as it provided ample opportunities to discuss, obtain new knowledge and draw relevant conclusions on the challenges facing South Caucasus and the Black Sea region in general and Georgia in particular. The parties underline their continued aspiration towards further solidifying their bilateral cooperation through future joint engagements.



## ***Contents of the seminar:***

### ***Session 1: NATO, Russia and the New World Order: Implications for Georgia***

The first session of the seminar, contained presentations by subject matter experts from Aarhus University in Denmark, the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the National Defense Academy of Georgia. The session dealt with, among other things, Russia's future foreign policy towards Georgia and the way of thinking of Moscow's political elite, NATO's focus on the Black Sea region, and the diverging and potentially conflictual approach to the South Caucasus between Russia to the North, EU/NATO and the US in the far West, and Turkey to the Southwest. The presentations underlined that Russia's influence in South Caucasus is likely to diminish in the future due to the resources allocated to the war in Ukraine and also because the EU and NATO is gradually engaging with the region. The Black Sea region is emphasized as a strategically important area of interest for NATO, who currently – despite of certain limitations – are planning to draft a regional security and defense plan. Although Russia's influence may be declining, there is evidence that supports the assertion that Vladimir Putin as well as future opportunist political elites in Russia will resort to bashing Georgia and Ukraine to assert power.

During the Q/A-session, the participants discussed whether the problems between NATO and Russia were of systemic nature or they were rather a product of Putin's authoritarian and Machiavellian character; the flexibility of NATO's approach, and whether this was effective enough in dealing with growing challenges from Russia, China and other countries. According to selected researchers, NATO has changed its approach towards different countries. In particular, the plan developed by NATO, which provides for a specific flexible approach to each region at the institutional level was emphasized. In this direction, the changed approach of NATO towards the Black Sea region was discussed. The session also revolved around China's increasing engagement in Georgia – the extend of which will determine whether it would be viewed as worrisome from a security perspective by Western partners. Eastern European countries, for example, have lately taken a more sensitive approach to China, as their influence is linked to Russian security policy.





*Session 2: Strategic analysis  
of war: Theoretical course  
and military practice*



In the second session of the seminar the topics were presented by researchers from RDDC, American Enterprise Institute and NDA. One particular focus of the second session was on the contemporary and potential future role of Professional Military Education (PME) in light of the war in Ukraine. PME constitutes but one tool which can enable states to learn from one another and enhance their military capabilities. It was emphasized that there is a need to pivot away from sharing experiences by comparing institutions or programs and instead look at comparing the competencies that different militaries have, potentially taking advantage of specializations. Differences in the circumstances that nations endure such as geography, size, and history can render it difficult to facilitate mutual learning - however, scrutinizing concrete experiences from war-situations, such as the ones in Ukraine, is pivotal to bring about better understanding of both the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. It is also important to highlight the need to assess a country's PME system based on that country's specific needs. Lastly, the session also highlighted the importance of not overlooking the non-conventional sides of warfare since these have been proved to be important in the war in Ukraine.

After the presentations, the issues discussed were related to the practical and theoretical wisdom of wars in terms of what experiences soldiers have drawn from wars and how wars can be fought better and more effectively in the future. Despite the fact, that the role of new technologies has significantly increased, conventional warfare and approaches to war still remain effective and thus relevant. The Q/A-session was also focused on the increasing push towards solely focusing on Multi Domain Operations (MDO) which, according to one of the presenters, may forcefully cause an unlearning of other important competencies e.g., counterinsurgency (COIN). Moreover, Ukraine's ability to quickly adapt and implement certain NATO-standards that they are able to work with while disregarding others was also a topic of discussion.



### *Session 3: Emerging Security Challenges: Information warfare and cyber security, drones, and AI*

On September 28, the second day of the seminar the first session contained presentations by experts from RDDC, Center for Naval Analyses and NDA. One of the central themes of the session was how the war in Ukraine has highlighted the importance of drones and cyber capabilities and has shown their practical usages and advantages. Drones in particular can

be a cost-effective technological option for smaller states with limited budgets and industrial capabilities, since the global supply is currently abundant. While cyber can also be an effective tool for smaller states, particularly allowing for plausible deniability, it requires support from western countries and significant cooperation with private actors to be effective. Private companies in the tech-sector seem to have become new security political actors in the contemporary art of warfare where war is a service being delivered. Despite the major focus on AI in public debates and media, its practical application in a military setting is still debatable. The increased importance of these emerging and evolving technologies underlines the importance of cooperation with especially private tech companies and suppliers. However, there is also an inherent risk associated with the uneven distribution of production capabilities globally. Despite the widespread use of drones and newer technologies in the war in Ukraine, one of the speakers underlined, that a so-called revolution in military affairs has still not taken place, but it can be expected from great powers in the future.

The presentations were followed by a panel discussion, focusing on the different skills future officers should ideally possess, such as an understanding of complex systems, innovativeness and technological literacy. Furthermore, the panel discussed the role of Georgia and other small states neighbouring potentially hostile major powers. It was suggested that Georgia could look to Israel as an example of a small state with a significant deterrence posture, achieved through military means. Especially investments in asymmetrical approaches to warfare and utilizing emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence was highlighted.





#### *Session 4: Regional Security Dilemmas and Georgia: Navigating in a tense neighbourhood*

The final session contained presentations by experts from King's College and NDA. The main topic of the session was the changing security complex in the South Caucasus region in light of the war in Ukraine. The war has increasingly pulled Russian military capabilities away from the South Caucasus, which has emboldened Azerbaijan to increase military pressure towards Armenia. Russian inaction has, in turn, caused deteriorating relations between Russia and Armenia. Turkish and Iranian influence is expanding in the power vacuum, and China is also taking on a stronger role. However, it is important to maintain that Russia still poses a threat to the Caucasus countries despite their weakened position – a threat that is not going away in the nearest future. The participants expressed their opinions and hopes regarding NATO and EU, stressing that increased cooperation with the West is the only viable position for Georgia in order to deter further Russian aggression. The session was followed by a discussion regarding the future prospects for the South Caucasus region, particularly the possibility of increased multilateral cooperation between Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan and implications for Georgia in the case of a Russian defeat in Ukraine. Speakers and participants shared the opinion that policymakers should carefully step up their engagement in the current tense situation.

