

LEGAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

SHEVARDNADZE'S GEOSTRATEGIC CARAMBOLA

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ABSTRACT

Search for Geopolitical Strategy for Georgia means finding a special road to a civilized future that will be in line with the country's historical and cultural specificity and uniqueness. After the unfavorable conditions, there was created a short but very profitable term implementing its geopolitical and geostrategic interests. Everything depended on the ability of the Georgian politicians, how much they would you be able to determine, understand and mobilize the situation. In this case Georgian diplomacy was appropriate. The government which was in a very difficult position soon clarified the situation and was able to use this chance as much as possible. Accordingly, the country received an impressive geopolitical dividend. Georgian diplomacy achieved great success in the geopolitical context. The factor of the President of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze, played a major role, he created a desirable background for Western politics in Georgia with his authority in world politics and great political activity.

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The essence of geopolitics for definition and achievement of political goals of the state lies on Spatial Factors. Geopolitics is a part of foreign policy of the state, the importance and quality of which are determined by both specific circumstances and situation. In addition, geopolitics can be defined not just by the foreign policy of the given state, as an objective attitude towards geographical location, but it can be determined as an objective attitude of the subject of international relations to the unity of material factors, which allows this subject to carry out control over space.

Currently space control is especially diversified, multilateral and developed in most cases, it can not be described in the direct military or political control categories. The results of civilization development (especially in the field of informatization and telecommunication technologies) gives you the opportunity to explore the entire new dimension of space and promises tremendous changes.

Global changes in the world testify, that the practical significance of geopolitics was actually revealed (even applied discipline - geostrategic formation) and certain real results were achieved, the processes in recent years proves this mentioned fact. According to Caucasus, Svante E. Cornell co-founder of the Stockholm Institute for Security and Development, Director of the Caucasus-Central Asia Institute of the US Research Center emphasizes: The Geopolitical Importance of Georgia "the importance of the Caucasus is not During Mongols and Temur-Leng, Russia, the Ottoman Empire and the Persian Empire, the Caucasus is still considered to be a place of "meeting" of East and West, North and South. It performs the role of a bridge or barrier between Europe and Asia, Russia and the Middle East... Caucasus, which from the beginning of the 19th century to the 21st century was under control of Russia, today slowly, but still persuaded to restore its positions on the international arena "...¹

¹ Svante E. Cornell. „The Raucous Caucasus“. *The National Interest*. Volume 12, Number 6, May 2, 2017. <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2017/05/02/the-raucous-caucasus/> verified 14.05.2018

Search for Geopolitical Strategy for Georgia means finding a special road to a civilized future that will be in line with the country's historical and cultural specificity and uniqueness. By the end of the 20th century after gaining independence, Georgia the geopolitical thinking began to revive in the state-minded part of the political elite. To get geopolitical dividends for the state started the following activities: bring out the country out of the chaos, state rebuilding, operated geopolitical advantages, attractive delivery to the world and so forth. One of the main directions of geostrategy was implementation of the idea of Georgian political and public figure Niko Nikoladze (1843-1928) and first president of Georgia Zviad Gamsakhurdia (1939 - 1993), according to which Georgia should become a corridor between East and West (Oil pipelines, gas pipelines, the modern variation of silk road, etc.) The newly born non-functioning state should gain a function, which would ensure its dignified state development in the world community and which would be necessary, attractive and acceptable for the world.

Despite the emotions caused by the declaration of independence and Russia's temporary confusion over the collapse of the Soviet Union, the current situation indicated, that Georgia had very little chances to separate from Russia at that moment. Russia had the closest relationship with Georgia. For Russia it was a major stronghold and strategically important region for centuries. According to Karl Marx (1818 – 1883), founder of scientific communism: Tbilisi was "Central Point of Russian Authority in Asia".¹

In the 90s of the 20th century, the political, socio-economic environment created in the country was not favorable for Georgia:

1. Georgia was not able to come out from Two hundred years close political, socio-economic and mental relations with Russia. Informally, Georgia was still under political and military influence of Russia (military bases, economic attachment, agent network, etc.)

2. The political unstable environment was clearly visible. The security services confronted with each other which aimed at seizing power. The Georgian political elite was divided into separate parties, which often created conflict of interests;

3. Civil war created political, socio-economic, psychological and lots of other problems

4. In the fields of international relations and diplomacy the newly created independent state had no experienced staff.

5. In Georgia's Russian special services created a strong network in which Georgia had unprotected environment.

6. In order to start a new life, compared with Georgia, both countries Azerbaijan and Armenia had better conditions. Azerbaijan had impressive rich natural energy resources (oil and gas). In many countries of the world Armenia had a politically and financially influential Armenian lobby. At the same time Georgia did not possess a fossil, lobby and had no function. Its role, meaning, purpose was not clear. In politically unstable Georgia there were going civil confrontation and war.

7. In addition to these factors, companies owning oil and gas pipelines were not interested in Georgia. The reason for this was the following fact: the shortest and cheapest way from Baku to Turkey went through Armenia. While in politically unstable and unpredictable Georgia, the same main road from Baku to Turkey was lengthened and was getting more expensive.

After the above-mentioned unfavorable conditions, there was created a short but very profitable term implementing its geopolitical and geostrategic interests. Everything depended on the ability of the Georgian politicians, how much they would be able to determine, understand and mobilize the situation.

The most important aspect of the development of foreign policy strategy is to evaluate its goals and objectives, capabilities and forces. Also important is to have specific understanding of the country as a subject in the relations with potential objects of this strategy. If there is no pragmatic approach and there is lack of emotional ambitions and wishes, the desired foreign policy results will not be achieved.

In this case Georgian diplomacy was appropriate. The government which was in a very difficult position soon clarified the situation and was able to use this chance as much as possible. Accordingly, the country received an impressive geopolitical dividend. In the transformation trends of world geopolitical basics, creating a new organization of the European space, geostrategic management headed by the USA, in Georgia's long-term strategy there exactly was defined position of the country with its historically relevant "balanced" type of diplomacy.²

¹ Marx K., Engels F. Works. Volume .11, M., 1958, p. 639.

² In this last concept considering policy that actively uses the principles from "foreign political realism": This is the way using old wisdom creatively, the weakened state has chance of survival if it has two or more strong neighbors" Georgian history testifies that this fact has played a crucial role in the survival of the country among the big nations.

What atmosphere was created and what was its profit, specifically in the fight for the geopolitical dividend of transit function?

Russia's enormous and invincible empire was suddenly destroyed which made the political elite was shocked and confused. For Georgia Boris Yeltsin's (1931 - 2007) period of presidency was favorable to certain aspects for Georgia. The most important aspect implied rivalry with Armenia for obtaining transit function. In the mentioned conditions Georgia had to obtain as much political benefits as possible. After Vladimir Putin came to power, the situation has changed drastically ...

Armenia had problems with Karabakh. This problem solving completely depended on Russia. It could not get involved in the global political processes initiated in the South Caucasus. The country was not able to pay proper attention to the struggle for geopolitical benefits. Since Armenia had a war with Azerbaijan, the country needed a neutral, loyal neighbor - Georgia.

The only way to have relations with Russia and the West was Georgia's strategic alliance with Russia and the West was the most important way to Armenia.

Azerbaijan. In the war for Karabakh Azerbaijan needed neutrality of Georgia due to the unstable situation around Nagorno Karabakh. At the same time, there were identified common interests with Georgia as well as created geopolitical challenges of the region. Accordingly the infrastructures of energy and transport became the most important for both countries (regardless of different religions and political vectors, etc.)

Turkey. Geopolitical thinking strengthened both the convergence of state interests and the interdependence. The oil pipeline and the traffic corridor turned out to be the potential creating a long-term co-operation for these two countries in the unstable South Caucasus. According to geopolitical confrontation caused by Karabakh, Turkey supports stability of Georgia as it own increasing economic and energy relationship. In this situation Turkey is considered to be Georgia's growing trade and investment partner increasing its own transit status¹.

The West (USA, EU). After the Soviet Union collapse, the West has been actively seeking routes of alternative, cheap and safe transportation for Central oil and gas reserves of Asia. In the early 90s, the main concern of the West was Eastern Europe, as it was an urgent and foremost task accelerating its integration with United Euro Atlantic space.

Since the middle of the 90s, the interest towards the South Caucasus region has been increased gradually. The Russia considered South Caucasus, to be the sphere of its own influence. The West was gaining and strengthening its positions carefully and gradually in different directions. For example, current programs and projects implemented by donor organizations (EU, World Bank, USAID, USA etc.), provided the country with financial support and investments enhancing its development process.

Iran. In the 90s Iran was less involved in Caucasian affairs and preferred to stay in the shadows due to various circumstances.

Despite the short geostrategic progress, the following several questions were still arised: how could nonfunctioning Georgia attract the West? How would it be able to increase its own interests in a complete unfavorable environment? How could Georgia overcome the barriers in such circumstances? In the mentioned situation, the Russian barrier looked incredibly insurmountable.

At this time, Russia had a very difficult period: the totally depleted economy, including both canceled famous big machine factories and poor raw material processing enterprises, destroyed agriculture, and the devalued rouble. Russia had become more aggressive. The country could not adapt with the demolition of the empire and still tried to tear down the ruins. For this reason, Russia used all means. For example, "Nezavisimaya Gazeta" published **Constantin Zatulin's** and **Andranik Migranyan's** project on Empire's new revival, entitled «CIS: the beginning or the end of history». Later it became **the government's policy document**². The authors pointed out that "... the situation in the post soviet space ... needed a special approach in the most effective organization of the post-Soviet space in accordance with Russia's interests. ... Otherwise Russia would win state reconstruction of former Soviet republics. Only active action (destabilization of the internal political situation in the regions where the anti-Russian and anti-intelligence forces were particularly active) could prevent the process ... These countries were going to leave Russia and become CIS's (Commonwealth of Independent States) fiction. The priority changes would give Russia a chance to revise the existing system of current agreements on the territorial separation of the

¹ From the early 90s, Turkey managed to develop two big projects - the Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline and the Baku-Arzum gas pipeline with Georgia, Azerbaijan and west governments

² Затюлин К. Ф., Мигранян А.М. СНГ: начало или конец истории. К смене вех. Независимая газета. 26 Марта 1997.

republics after the USSR collapse. Russia would also be able to ignore the principles of its territorial integrity, as well as increase the issue on space distribution.

At this time, the Kremlin had already developed many “currosive” mechanisms, including **Zatulín-Migranyan** according to which: "...Russia should actively support the reduction of the anti-Russian movement in Azerbaijan and Georgia and at the same time is should demonstrate its economic and military-political presence in Armenia. ...The country should immediately release the blockade upon Abkhazia ... We should support strengthening of the relationship between North and South Ossetia as well as encourage separatist tendencies in Adjara. In addition, we could indicate to Armenia that if Georgia would lengthen an anti-Russian line, Armenia would be able to unite de facto Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe districts to Armenia, that would guarantee direct communication of Armenia with Russia. The threat of such a serious destabilization towards Georgia, demonstrating strength of Russia, would be the serious factor for the current Georgian leadership and they would be obliged to make steps forward¹.

In such a condition, the Kremlin excluded the existence of an alternative transit corridor through Georgia and struggled with all its forces to prevent its implementation. Russia was further more aggravated about the West's decision expanding NATO's "East" side. Despite the disconcertion caused by collapse of empire, Russia was still a superior state for Georgia. The Kremlin was against the creation of an alternate transit network. Therefore, the Kremlin used all the imperial, enormous resources (skilled diplomats, satellites, agent networks, media outlets, military bases, conflict regions, appointed ministers by Kremlin in strategic spheres, etc.). Even the Kremlin was not avoiding to make official statements: "in this way, the TRACECA project has been opposing to the federal national interests of Russia".²

At the same time, America's influential and financially powerful Armenian assembly, led by Van Krikorian, was actively working against Georgia's "oil and corridor policy". By the help of strong supporters, it tried to activate both the cheapest and the shortest routes through territory of Armenia.

In the period of global political disorder, even the "West" could not dare to interference in the spheres of influence of Russian Empire, which possessed strong nuclear weapons as well as was unpredictable and had nostalgies of old glory. According to this Georgia which owned no “big policy” appeared to be quite in a complicated situation. In this situation an experienced politician **Eduard Shevardnadze** (1928 - 2014) played an important role. World historical experience testifies, despite favorable and ideal geopolitical conditions, the state is not always able to use the chances given by history, if at the moment there is no large-scale state-minded politician. According to the history, in most cases such individuals have played a decisive role.³

Eduard Shevardnadze received a chance to use his experience, which he had obtained when he was the Minister of the Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union. Eduard Shevardnadze also received a chance to show his knowledge of the nuances of the world's superior governments (unlike leaders of other small countries) named him “White Fox” as well as got an opportunity to satisfy his own ambitions as an independent politician, fully revealing the diplomatic potential in Georgian government which was filled with anarchy but still maintained independence (without obligations to Russian government). In almost hopeless situation and in the hardest conditions where the country was completely ruined and destroyed, under great political efforts, Eduard Shevardnadze still managed to bring out Georgia from chaos in the shortest possible time. He created necessary background for foreign policy administration.

The Kremlin had many mechanisms against destabilized and the “little Georgia”. The Russian political elite had already predestined Georgia as disbanding country. They considered that it was just a matter of time. The Russian special services were working in full force to destroy Georgia and Russian politicians were even drowsy in such circumstances. This situation was favourable for president of Georgia. Behind tactical fake loyalty Eduard Shevardnadze utilized multi-pronged approaches⁴.

¹ Затулин К. Ф., Миграция А.М. СНГ: начало или конец истории. К смене вех. Независимая газета. 26 Марта 1997.

² Кусов Олег. Шёлковый путь в Европу. Радио Свобода, 23 Апрель 2004. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/24196657.html> verified 22/06/2018

³ Davit Aghmashenebeli (David IV of Georgia; 1073-1125) used the opportunity given by history at the time when the forces and resources of the entire Muslim world watched attentively and were waiting for the result of the war with the Crusaders.

⁴ Shevardnadze intentionally designated Kremlin favorite ministers. Then, at the National Security Council sessions, he discussed "Secret" issues with them. It would be understandable if we recall his words: "it's easy for you to deceive the special services when you are working with your well-known (disclosed) agents." On this visible backdrop, Shevardnadze was invisible, but actively and efficiently employed a small group of staff in the US and European countries and he aimed to create a suitable background for the interests. At that time the South Caucasus was practically still considered to be a sphere of Russian influence.

Moscow considered that it had trapped the President of Georgia. Completely unexpectedly for the Kremlin, Eduard Shevardnadze was able to launch his own Georgian high-level international policy and started strategic management of Georgia's geopolitical interests.

In the hard times the current situation in the South Caucasus, the international situation and the reasonable use of the similar interests have been developed effectively by the Georgian president. Step by step, Georgia's interests in the international relationship system have been directed in the desired direction. Thereafter, opponents had to face completely new redistribution of forces which were created in the region. Even though this level of status was not reviewed in the foreign doctrine of friendly US government where advantage was given to Azerbaijan. For example, **Zbigniew Brzezinski** (1928 - 2017) in his famous work "Great Chessboard", noted that a new Eurasian political map would be able to identify both five main geostrategic actors and five geopolitical centers of the world. According to his opinion, five main geostrategic actors had included France, Germany, Russia, China and India and five geopolitical centers were "Ukraine, Azerbaijan, South Korea, Turkey and Iran, which were considered principal important geopolitical centers"¹. For the time being, the Western interest in the South Caucasus was especially focused on Azerbaijan, the oil-rich country, which in some cases intended to replace the unstable and undemocratic oil exporter - Russia.

Opponents which had created long term chaos intended to divide Georgia. Accordingly such actions were not excepted from an anarchic country. Thus, the Kremlin delayed reaction about changes in the balance of power in the region. This situation gave more opportunities of progress to geostrategy for Eduard Shevardnadze. Eduard Shevardnadze created a strategic union with president of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev (1923-2003)² who was an experienced politician. They gradually stepped forward.

On 8 March 1996, the Presidents of Georgia and Azerbaijan signed a agreement about construction and exploitation of pipeline in the west side ". Russia got blowed from the so-called " "Early" oil route, **Baku-Supsa** oil pipeline.

The above mentioned fact was followed by big oil pipeline (in Russia there was nervous, atmosphere, this fact was announced by its own mass media). On May 20, 2000, the Parliament of Georgia ratified a package of intergovernmental agreements on the **Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan** main export oil pipeline project. On October 18, the Georgian government and eight oil companies signed "Treaty of the Ownership of the Territory" and thus started the development of the pipeline project.

During Shevardnadze's administration began to work on the pipeline project of the **Shah-Deniz** (South Caucasus or Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum). The work was continued by the following government.

On April 4, 1996, another big project was founded. At the highest level meeting of the Presidents of Georgia and Turkey, there was accepted a declaration about Construction and Design of "**Tbilisi-Kars**, Railway Line Connecting Two Countries".

Despite the presence of serious Armenian lobby and oil-rich "Brzezinski Baku", Georgia joined the Council of Europe earlier than Azerbaijan and Armenia.

"Silk road"³ strategy⁴ was still active which was supported by the congress of The United States⁵. European Union member states, Central Asia and South Caucasus began rapprochement.

In 1993 the technical assistance program of (TRACECA Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia - Europe-Caucasus-Asia Transport Corridor) was created. It was initiated by the EU and aimed to develop transport corridor under the auspices of the East. On the March 17, 2011 General secretary of the The International Union of Motor Transport (IRU) **Martin Marmy** awarded **Eduard Shevardnadze** for his great contribution in the project developing silk road⁶.

¹ Brzezinski Zbigniew. Great chess board. Tb., P. "Artanuji", 2014, 336 p.p.

² President Heydar Aliyev has a special role in history of Azerbaijan. He restored the independence of Azerbaijan, established its position as a stable state, brought the country out of a permanent chaos and avoided a civil war. He dynamically developed all areas.

³ Shevardnadze Eduard. Great Silk Road. TRACECA. PETRA Europe-Caucasus-Asia Transport Corridor Eurasia common market. Political and economic aspects. Search. "Science", Tbilisi, 1999.

⁴ By the way, in September 1990, at one of the Conference held in Vladivostok Soviet Union Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze posed the idea for a ten year program for the convergence of European and Asian continents. It also included the idea of transforming the historic silk road into a modern multifunctional traffic corridor. Its implementation became possible only after the disintegration of the USSR (Vashakmadze Marina, Silk Road. <https://www.magticom.ge/magazine/1999-2/1999-2-8-g.html> verified 04.06.2018).

⁵ Shevardnadze's speech at the UN General Assembly. "Republic of Georgia". # 253, 21 September 1999.

⁶ President of Georgia Eduard Shevardnadze. Official website of the President of Georgia <https://www.president.gov.ge/ka-GE/Eduard-Shevardnadze.aspx> Verified. 04.06.2018

During the presidency of **Heydar Aliyev** and **Eduard Shevardnadze** even the enemies of of Georgia **Zatulin-Migranyan** had to recognize the failure of Russian diplomacy in the South Caucasus: "Aliyev and Shevardnadze successfully continued their activities, and they rationally defeated Russian diplomacy. In over the past few years, especially since the Chechen war Russia completely lost as an initiative and orientation in the Transcaucasus. By coordination of their forces with both Western countries and Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan have achieved significant results in many directions (consolidation of regimes, oil superprojects, the decision of oil transportation via Georgia, the use of Russian diplomacy or the pressure on Armenia ...).

Due to the results of the policy of **Eduard Shevardnadze**, " as Absolutely unique figure in the post-Soviet space, " (Head of Washington National Center for National Interests **Dimitri Sims**; **Dimitri K. Simes**)¹ Georgia had claimed the status of a dynamic geopolitical center state. As he noted such status was not predicted even by **Zatulin-Migranyan**'s original prediction. For centuries Georgia" was naturally determined to be "centrifuge" because of its geographical environment. Geopolitics implies the influence of geoServis on the goals and interests of the state. As **Karl Haushofer** (1869 - 1946) said, geopolitics was the geographical mind of the state.

I the period of Georgian geopolitical geostrategic clutter the Armenian factor played one of the most important roles. Our small neighbors which owned talents, convenience, religioun , patriotism and enthusiasm for all of Armenia, many countries in the world have a large diaspora dedicated to the historic homeland and have the power to influence the power of these countries² (from 11 million Armenians, only 3.3 million live In the Republic of Armenia).

Armenians are distinguished by having a large and well-organized diaspora. Despite the different places of birth and the trajectory of diverse migration, most of them perceive Armenia as a historical homeland and have spiritual and financial relations with it. Diaspora has economic connection with the Armenian state (for eg tourism, money transfers, direct investments, transfers, etc.); Political ties (lobbying of state interests and intermediary services, etc.); charity and intellectual cooperation (exchange of technologies, experiences, and specialists; social, sports and cultural interaction, etc.

It is clear that in the modern international relationships diaspora is a resource base for effective policy. For Armenia Armenian World Diaspora is the force that affects international processes that can not only help in developing the positive tendency of the state and its economy, but also can significantly strengthen Armenia's positions on the international arena. Diaspora has economic connection with the Armenian state (for eg tourism, money transfers, direct investments, transfers, etc.); Political ties (lobbying of state interests and intermediary services, etc.); charity and intellectual cooperation (exchange of technologies, experiences, and specialists; social, sports and cultural interaction, etc. This is a special socio-cultural phenomenon with extraordinary political influence. According to the principles of the World Assembly of Armenia "the Armenian diaspora is today the most effective integrator of the national will, staff and ideological resources,"³ For example, many people write about the influence of the Armenian lobby. "American Armenians have a tradition of lobbying, experience and relevant organized groups are like the American Armenian Assembly⁴ and the Armenian-American Committee of Action". As American observers note, that only in California State, the Armenians are in all major structures of the state. In fact, the Armenian Diaspora has a great influence on the US Senate. The above mentioned is demonstrated by the fact that Armenia has reached the US support by imposing sanctions against the (amendment of 907) and despite the Azerbaijan's active objection it was left in force. In the meantime, Azerbaijan had its own oil, it had a very important role in US foreign policy.

Of course, Georgia is in the center of attention of the American Armenian lobby as well. As noted above, the Assembly of American Armenians leded by **Van Krikorian** worked actively against Shevardnadze's "oil and corridor policy". The third President of Armenia (2008-2018) **Serzh Sargsyan** awarded him with honorary order in 2017.⁵

¹ Simon Dimitri, Interfax, Tbilisi, 13.06.1998

² The Armenian diaspora includes about 7.7 million people in 80 states. The largest number of large communities is the following: the US - 1 ml., Russia - up to 2 ml, France - 500 thousand and so on.

³ Halmukhamedov A.M. The Armenian diaspora as a sociocultural and political phenomenon. Sociological studies, No. 2, 1999, p.58. http://ecsocman.hse.ru/data/827/136/1231/008_halmukhamedov.pdf verified 10.06.2018

⁴ The Armenian Assembly of America was founded in 1972 in Washington. Is the largest common national non-governmental organization and is committed to solve common Armenian problems.

⁵ Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Van Krikorian Awarded Armenia's Medal of Honor by President Serzh Sargsyan. Armenian Assembly of America. <https://armenian-assembly.org/2017/10/30/armenian-assembly-co-chair-van-krikorian-awarded-armenias-medal-of-honor-by-president-serzh-sargsyan/> verified 21.05.2018

Armenians had a stronger lobby in Russia¹. In this country they governed and handed a strong control in many directions of the internal part of the ideological and information spaces. By the way, **Sergey Lavrov**,² (1950; father of Tbilisi Kalantarov) famous international politician has an Armenian origin. The fact is that there is no sphere of state and public life, district or direction without people with Armenian origin. The Russian lobby was so strong that, for example, after the announcement of independence, Georgia was covered by an anti-Russian hysteria (only at the emotional level and not politically, as Georgians had no time as they were involved in a mortal struggle between each other) At the same time, Russian Armenians hidden under Russian patriotism were actively involved in the theoretical provision of Russian policy against Georgia's unity and statehood (for example, **Andranik Migranyan**), it is natural that in Russia Armenians were driven by Armenian interests. The sudden destruction of the great empire caused confusion of political elite.

The Russian foreign policy (orientations) and the experienced diplomatic school with great traditions seemed confused and paralyzed. It could not maintain the usual sustainability of the moment. In such circumstances, under the influence of the Armenian lobby, Russia's pro-Armenian orientation towards the South left behind in the of the Kremlin's policy for strategic perspective without substantial profitable dividends, moreover, they turned out to be in the geostrategic deadlock which became more clear in the future" Because of Kremlin's anti-Georgian political course, Russia will completely disrupt the Caucasus as a whole. Coincidence revealed in Armenian-Russian political interests soon reflected in the Abkhazian region and Armenians together with the Russian citizens fought against the territorial integrity of the Georgian state.³

Despite the powerful support of the strongest lobby in the world, by the end of the XX century, due to significant obstacles in geostrategy, **natural geopolitical pluses of the Armenia became minus**. Which is due to the factor of Karabakh. It is known that in 1988, during the "Perestroika" initiated by **Mikhail Gorbachev** (1931) in the Soviet Union, fighting for Karabakh was significantly activated.⁴ The Armenians tried to move Karabakh from Soviet Azerbaijan to Soviet Armenia. But the global political processes did not work in favor of the above mentioned project. On the contrary, after the Soviet Union collapse, Armenia could not fully utilize both its domestic and foreign advantages. The Karabakh conflict erupted in the full-scale war in the early 1990s. Regardless of the official ceasefire agreement signed in 1994, military confrontation has been continued in the region. As it was mentioned, **Armenia declared its independence with problem of Karabakh. Solution of the problem linked Armenia to Russia. Consequently, Armenian foreign policy has been handed down to the wings**. In the Russian orbit, it turned out to be far distanced from pro-western political space. The conflict with Azerbaijan had worsened unfriendly situation with Turkey. In such circumstances, Armenia did not pay proper attention to the struggle for both involvement of global geopolitical processes in the South Caucasus and the utilization of maximum geopolitical benefits.

Thus, Georgia, which was recognized by many of the international subjects and researchers, turned out to be a center of Eurasian regional power. Now the country has created certain possibilities developing both its own geopolitical interests in foreign policy and the interests of its partner countries. The possible combinations of these means will further diversify if this trend of development will not be prevented by the sharp (non-logical) aggravation of the international situation and the domestic political and economic situation in Georgia. As it was noted, Georgia had to pass through "barbed and narrow way" and only after these difficulties Georgia has obtained this above mentioned "unexpected" geopolitical status.

After the announcement of independence, (Russia was confused with the unexpected defeat of the Empire, Armenia was in the fight for the geopolitical benefit of Karabakh's problem) if the Georgian political elite did not use the situation, if it did not act effectively and did not create attractive background for the foreign policy of the West, Georgia would not be able to claim status of the first rank transit country. It can be said that the political role of **Eduard Shevardnadze** and his successful policy (which was based on the principle of "measure twice and cut once") was extremely

¹ Zakaryan Nairi. The Armenian diaspora announced the creation of a new consolidating organization. Armenian Museum of Moscow and the Culture of Nations, 2018. <https://www.armmuseum.ru/news-blog/2018/5/7/--3> verified 10.06.2018

² In 1994-2004 Sergey Lavrov was a permanent representative of the Russian Federation in the United Nations Security Council, and he is the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation since 2004 till now.

³ This tone does not mean that the author is against Armenia. Armenians, their history and talents deserve great respect, they acted in the interests of their homeland and it could not be otherwise. (Although it is impossible to forget the bloody crime of Abkhazia in relation to Armenians).

⁴ By the way, "the emotional patriotism", not dominated by the Georgians, but also politically harmed Georgians.

important. **Otto von Bismarck** (1815 - 1898) said: "Politics is the art of this possibility." According to these words **Eduard Shevardnadze** managed to use this opportunity as much as possible. As it was noted, the process would have been harder for Georgia to fight for this function with Putin's reinforced Russia at the back of the passive West. So the systematic but rude, irrelevant heroic-back policy of further President **Mikheil Saakashvili**¹ and the non-systematic and passive foreign-policy style of the Georgian Dream government, as well as the redistributed forces of the world, resulted the fact that Georgia obtained high quality dividends.

Even **Zbigniew Brzezinski** recognized the fact that "Georgia became a reliable partner of the United States as well as represents an example for the entire region". He also also noted: "Both President **Eduard Shevardnadze** and Georgia give us a clear example of how to fight for the independence of the country".²

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¹ However, we should say that during the presidency of Mikheil Saakashvili, a strategic dividends were found to be the key for both "occupation" and "occupied territories" : the status quo set by Moscow in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions was under Russian power. The central government of Georgia and "governments" of the separatist regions were perceived to be part of the conflict for the international community, and Russia was an international peacekeeper and without its permission nobody could act in these regions. There was no chance to resolve the existing conflict objectively. The totally unprofitable status quo for the Georgia was changed after Russia's aggression in August 2008. Russia is no longer an intermediary and peacekeeper as it is already a part of the conflict. Unlike previous periods today, for the world Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions are parts of Georgia occupied by Russia.

² See, newspaper "Republic of Georgia", # 186, 14.07.1999.